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The Psychology of Religious Edification as Applied to Children

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS EDIFICATION
AS APPLIED TO CHILDREN

BY

HAZEL ALTA OLIVER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

Theoretical: Psychology of Religious Education,
or Edification

- I. Introduction
- II. Definition of Person
- III. Definition of Religion
- IV. Definition of Psychology

PART II

Practical: Description of (1) Means, and (2)
Methods by which we build up Sent-
iments of Awe, Admiration, Reverence,
Devotion, Love in Children from
Infancy to Adolescence.

- V. The Development of the Sentiment of Religion
in Children.
- VI. Mechanics of Religious Edification
- VII. Conclusion

CHAPTER I

Introduction

This dissertation is important for all Christians and especially for teachers in Bible School. It is not a theological study aiming to tell how to prepare souls for a world to come,-- though it does that incidentally, nor in that it adopts its premises from revelation. But it is theological insofar as it unifies all of religious education in one objective, purpose, goal or ideal. It is philosophical in the same sense, that it unifies all of religious education in one objective. It aims to simplify all the efforts of religious education which we here call edification of the saints, by bringing them all to one focal point.

The end or aim is the one set by our Lord for His Kingdom,¹ and for His Church.² It is the one that Paul set for every individual Christian.³ This is nothing less than the moral perfection of each Christian. He shall become perfect even as the Father is perfect in distribution of good things to others.⁴ The aim of Christian education or edification of the saints presented in this thesis is one, supreme, and everlasting. It is an ideal that unites the Church, all Christians, and in a sense all those who strive for their moral self-betterment.

¹See Matt. 5:48

²See Eph. 4:12

³See Phil. 3:14, 15; Col. 1:28, 29

⁴See Matt. 5:43-48

The method of treatment is psychological. We first define religion itself as a human experience, enjoyed on earth by man alone. Specifically, in each Christian, it is a religious sentiment consisting of ideas, emotions, and congruent behavior. Such a sentiment is known both by introspection and behavior. It can develop in individuals both by ordinary experience and by formal education. It appears in various stages in growing Christians. Its highest form is Christian Love, the Master Sentiment that integrates, unifies and inspires the Christian man. As it can be developed in normal people by educational methods its development is in harmony with the method used by Jesus. Jesus taught the disciples in His school, and commissioned them to do the same in all nations.

When Jesus said, "Go....teaching" He gave teaching first place in the function of the Church. That which is taught makes an indelible mark on the Church.

...the local church is the fountain of Christian character and life to meet the needs of the world. Here little children have their minds filled with the eternal truths of God and their impressionable souls imprinted with the character of Christ. Here young people are inspired to enlist in the service of the King and give themselves to making a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness. Here men and women find courage and inspiration to walk in the Way and give themselves to answer the prayer which Jesus taught, "Thy Kingdom come...on earth."¹

God has placed in the child the emotion out of which the religious sentiment is to be built. "The nature of the superstructure reared upon it depends upon the materials which

¹O. L. Shelton, The Church Functioning Effectively (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1946), p. 85, 86

we teachers bring, and the conditions which we secure for the building thereon."¹

The leaders of the Church should be vitally interested in that which is presented in the name of religion, for the sake of the child, for the sake of the Church, and for the sake of the world. The aim of teaching is two-fold in Christianity; First, to present the person with the facts concerning Christ and induce him to accept Jesus as Lord; and secondly, to challenge and encourage the individual to grow toward perfection as the Perfect Person is revealed in Christ. All too many times the Christian is left as a babe in Christ² without adequate teaching to aid him in growing to perfection.³ To call attention to this kind of edification is the purpose of this study.

Our study will be divided into two parts: (1) theoretical, (2) practical. The theoretical deals with the psychology of religious edification, or education. The practical will be a presentation of the means and methods of building up in children, from infancy to maturity, the sentiments of awe, admiration, reverence, devotion, and Christian love.

The center of attention is the person. He is the only religious creature on earth. Chapters II, III, and IV are primarily concerned with definitions: a person, religion

¹Edith E. Read Mumford, The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1925) p.111.

²Heb. 5:13

³Heb. 6:1-3

and psychology. For the purposes of this study religion is a sentiment. It is composed of many emotions fused together around an idea of God. We list the emotions, and the idea of God which arouse these emotions and excite congruent actions.

The practical part of our study begins with Chapter V. It includes a table of the sentiments. A description of the means and methods of their development in the child is also given. Children shielded from religion, and those physically handicapped make a religion for themselves. Our study includes a treatment of the way normal children receive their idea of God and the kind of religion that they may secure.

The mechanics of edification are presented in Chapter VI. The surroundings of the home, and the things the child is taught there, have a great deal of influence on the child's idea of God. Furthermore, all agree that the personality of the teacher is as important as the method of presenting his message. The materials made available to him have value only insofar as they are usable, or the teacher has ability to use them.

The teacher in the Church-school joins Jesus in His great work of teaching the way that leads to perfection. Teaching is more than mere words. "Teaching in childhood, if only words are employed, is as good as thrown away. What the child experiences, he knows."¹

Since the teacher holds such an important place in the edification of the child it is the responsibility of the Church leaders to make teachers, and make available the best

¹Op. Cit., Mumford, p. 51.

teachers possible. Only as the child knows and follows the way to perfection will he be able to gain the "abundant life" that Jesus desired for all men.

CHAPTER II

Person

Of all the creatures on earth, man is the only one who is religious. David Brinton the anthropologist, remarked that religion ". . . is something distinctly human, and not shared in any definite form by even the best developed of the lower animals."¹ As religion is a trait of man only, it is necessary in our study of religious edification to study the nature, composition, development and function of this human being, or person. We seek that characteristic mark of the person wherein lies the secret of his religious disposition and tendency. In such a search the word "person", by which a man is designated among us, is of first importance.

The word person is made up of two words "per" through, and "sona" sound. It is derived from the Latin "persona" which is borrowed from the Greek, taking its meaning from the stage-actor's mask that indicated the character he impersonated.

"Persona" always implied that the being so designated had a part to play in some kind of social intercourse, such as is represented in a drama; and that of such social intercourse no mere animal but only a human being is capable.²

From its use on the stage it came to be applied to both the actor and also his part in the play. From the latter use it derived the reference to the part any man plays in social intercourse. The word became a symbol of that which is real and true.

The appropriation of the word to express the dignity of

¹Daniel G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), p. 36

²C. C. J. Webb, God and Personality (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1920, p. 36

the rational human being, in relation to his fellowmen, took root in the modern languages of Europe when "persona" was used by the Latin-speaking theologians of the Christian Church as the equivalent of the Greek word *ὑπόστασις*, which they used to designate the members of the Trinity.

The word has as its antonyms matter, beast, material, mechanism, machine, solids, liquids, gases. Its synonyms are expressed in man, mind, human being, individual human, somebody, mankind, character, mind.

In this person we must next search for an attribute or factor that enables him to develop religion within himself. Mere consciousness, or mere thinking, feeling and willing are not enough to explain man's religion, for some of the most intelligent animals manifest signs of all three in some degree; and yet they show no real signs of having a religion. To consciousness must be added "self-consciousness," or consciousness of one's thinking, feeling and willing. This consciousness of self is not just for a moment, but it must last throughout the life of the person, so that memory can link together the fragments of temporary experiences, and so contribute to that self-continuity beyond the momentary self-identity. The being capable of forming a religion must, first, possess abstract ideas; and secondly, be able to say, "I am the same man I was when I first discovered and adopted the rudiments of a religion for myself." We must analyze this human being to find that factor in him which contributes to his religion, and how he works to build it.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the person is his self-consciousness. He has the ability to think, feel and will, and knows his thinking, feeling and willing. He knows his activities from those of other beings. He ever strives for his own self-betterment. Lower animals struggle for mere existence. Man's aspiration is to function as a human being at its best. The best depends upon the end that the human being, himself, selects. It is our desire to present the perfect person Jesus Christ that men might desire, and work to attain this highest end, which is to be like Him.

As a person, man is conscious and knows he is conscious. He is endowed with the ability to think. Through the special senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell he can obtain knowledge. He has the ability to remember, that is store, recall and recognize past experiences. Through his imagination he can put together old experiences in a new way. He can form new ideas, day-dream, fancy or imagine with a purpose. He can imagine constructively; arranging material for ends and purposes of the future. He can reason formally, as in pure logic and mathematics; inductively, as in the formation of a science. Through examining a complex situation he can understand by discerning its cause or end. Through his power to judge the worth of ends, the means to ends have value. This is practical reason or common sense.

That which gives continuity to a person is a constituent that never changes into something other than itself, but endures throughout all other changes in the life span. It is called "spirit." To its existence and function in men, religion

primarily owes its beginning and development as an experience in individuals. In contrast to "matter", which is inert, spirits are spontaneous, and not only set themselves in action but also move certain animate bodies of matter. Spirits think, feel and will, and besides, in persons, as we have indicated, also know their mental activities. They give both unity and continuity to otherwise distinct and fragmentary mental processes and products. For the spirit is the organizing activity of the mind, as "life" is the organizing activity of the body.

We now turn our attention to the meaning of this term spirit. It is of interest to note the meaning of the word as given in various languages, some of which we list:

Language	Word	Meaning
French	Esprit	Breathe or blow.
German	Geist	Ghastly, gas, invisible, shapeless. When contacted with the body it is breath or soul.
Sanscrit	Atmos	Atmosphere, sphere or spirit.
Hebrew	Ruah	To breathe, blow, wind.
Latin	Spiritus	Wind in motion, to breathe.

The figure of life was often represented under the figure of breath or air. The breath is the most obvious symptom of life, its cessation the invariable mark of death; invisible it stands for the unseen mysterious force behind the vital processes. The word is used in different but allied senses; as signifying a living, intelligent, incorporeal being, such as the soul; as the fiery essence or breath which we suppose to be the universal vital force; as signifying some refined form of bodily substance,

a fluid believed to act as a medium between mind and the grosser matter of the body.¹

The Hebrew Ruah signifies to breathe or blow, or air in motion. Physiologically it denotes the breath in bodies of man or animals. From the close connection between the breath and the phenomena of life and energy, the ruah came to be considered as the vehicle of life and even as life itself. When the ruah left the body entirely, death took place. It is also an organ of knowledge. It is the seat of volition and denotes the energy of the personality in particular manifestations.

The original meaning of the word was wind in motion, breath, and came to denote that which gives life or vigor to the human body and other objects. From the Bible usage it is designated as wind--the breath of life of God's creatures.² It is the habit of the biblical writer to explain the "spirit" in the natural man as the product or creation directly from God. It is only accounted for by the direct contact of man with God at his origin.³

All through the scripture "spirit" denotes life as coming from God, soul denotes life as constituted in the man. My soul is the ego, the self, and when used like "heart" for the inner man, and even for the feelings, has reference always to special individuality. Spirit is seldom used to denote the human being in this life -- is primarily that imparted power by which the individual lives.

¹Michael Maher, Joseph Bolland, "Spirit", Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol. XIV, p. 220

²Cf. Gen. 6:17, 7:15

³Gen. 2:7

Spirit is an entirely original biblical term for the peculiar factor of man's life. It is almost inseparable from the idea of man's relation to God whether in creation or redemption. All through the O. T. it is the supreme term for human life. God is spirit and man has spirit. The spirit returns to God who gave it. It denotes the direct dependence of man on God. The spirit is the God given principle of man's life.

In the N. T. that in man which is spiritual, is that which is influenced by the Spirit of God--by the new spirit of regeneration. Spirit is used to indicate that received by the renewed man, though there is still a clear and appreciable distinction maintained between the two. Man's life from the first is dignified by the direct inbreathing of the Almighty, his new life is now signalized by a term identical with that of the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity. Christ is the head of the new humanity and becomes a life giving -- a quickening spirit.

The spirit begets every kind of breathing. It is the first and the last movement of life. It maketh alive. God inspires all men. His spirit is in all men. The whole person is the soul. God has breathed into him His spirit. Man is spiritual and has a mind. He thinks, feels and wills and knows his thinking, feeling and willing. Spirit is defined by its function. It thinks, feels and wills. The spirit is the factor in the situation that does not change into something else.

The mind is the person's conscious processes. It is his consciousness, with its capabilities; capabilities including all faculties, powers, capacities, aptitudes, and dispositions which

have been acquired or are innate. It has to do with that series of changes occurring in consciousness.

. . . .man, by the very constitution of his mind, has three ways of thinking open to him. He can look outwards, upon the world around him; he can look inwards, upon the self within him; and he can look upwards, to the God above him, to the Being who unites the outward and the inward worlds and who manifests Himself in both. None¹ of these possibilities can remain entirely unrealised.

The person has a body which is made up of matter and is derived from organic creation. It is in a continuous process of change.

For our use we shall define a person as a self-conscious organism. He knows his own thinking, feeling and willing and unites them into one whole throughout conscious life. He is a self-conscious, self-directing organism; composed of spirit, mind and a body. He is derived from organic creation; and is aspiring to self-betterment without limit, that is to perfection.

Of the human spirit's activities, its thinking, feeling and willing, or consciousness, or "mind" in the psychological sense of that term, emotion is probably the most important. In the multitude of emotions that human beings enjoy, sentiments are most important for religion. In fact, religion is frequently called the "religious sentiment". As such it is the one that unites in one organic whole the sentiments of rationality, or truth; the aesthetic sentiment of beauty, and the moral sentiment of goodness, all three when thus united, being directed toward the Perfect Person, or God. Our next step in this analysis of the religious man, will be to consider the emotions, especially as they appear in those acquired forms called sentiments.

¹Edward Caird, The Evolution of Religion (New York: MacMillan Co., 1893), I, p. 77

CHAPTER III

Definition of Religion

The previous chapter we presented the nature and composition of the natural man who is the only religious creature on earth. In this chapter we will study that particular constituent of his nature that makes us distinguish some men as religious. All men, as common observation and personal testimony assure us, seek their own self-betterment. The brutes are satisfied with self preservation.

Man, being self-conscious, not only judges himself, but possessing as he does the ability to form ideas of himself not yet existent, can, in imagination behold a "better self", and can, because he is free from both physical necessity and from merely animal appetites and instincts, strive to realize that self that he beholds in the ideal. Many men strive for self betterment by using their own and their fellows' powers only. They are called "humanists." Others invoke the aid of Superhuman Being in their striving and so are called "theists" or religious men. It is this peculiarity of religious men that we now proceed to analyze in this chapter. Usually, it has been separated from the concrete person, and its idea has been subjected to definition. As no perfect or complete definition of anything in the world can be given, we need not be surprised to find many definitions extant, and to discover that none of them are perfectly satisfactory. One author, James Leuba¹, has collected forty-eight such attempts in one volume. In "The Religions of

¹James H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912, Appendix

Mankind", Soper quotes John Morley when he says, "There are said to be ten thousand definitions of Religion".¹

Religion has had many meanings, diverse and even contradictory, and has played many different roles in man's history. Any attempt to express its character in a definition seems to be doomed to failure. "Whatever element be named as essential to religion," says Edward Caird, "it seems easy to oppose a negative instance to it."² There are religions of love, and religions of hate, and religions of indifference. There are religions whose gods are helpers of men, and there are religions whose gods can be hindered from destroying him only if they can be propitiated by mystic ceremonies and bloody sacrifices. The gods have been regarded as human in all things, except that they are fairer in form and greater in strength and stature, and that whatever they do is right. On the other hand, man, it is alleged, has found his gods in plants, and animals, and even in stocks and stones and the things most opposite to himself. There are religions without any gods at all.

There are many difficulties involved in the definition of religion. Religion is an idea of man bound up in a word. The meaning of the word is in a continuous process of change. People make religion according to their idea, definition, or meaning of it for conduct, making it practically impossible to discover or imagine a class of activities alike in such an attribute that they could be permanently labelled "religion."

¹Edmund Davison Soper, The Religions of Mankind (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1921,) p. 23

²Edward Caird, The Evolution of Religion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1893), V. 1, p. 31

Turning to the Dictionary for a definition we find it given as:

the recognition on the part of man of a controlling super-human power entitled to obedience, reverence, and worship; the feeling or the spiritual attitude of those recognizing such a controlling power; also, the manifestation of such feeling in conduct or life.¹

The word is derived primarily from the Latin words re, denoting, back, again; and ligare, bind. Legion, a body of soldiers brought together, from the Greek lego, or logos. Re legere--bind back. Re-legare--bring together. Thus to bring together, or to bind again, or bring back to God. Synonyms are veneration, reverence, godliness, devotion, holiness, sanctification. It has as antonyms irreverence, ungodliness, sin, profaneness, blasphemy, sacrilege.

Religion represents a persistent outreach on the part of man for meanings and values to inspire and guide him in his search for a fuller and a more satisfying life. It is held by many that religion had its origin in the emotional life, in reverence, fear or awe; and many make one emotion the distinguishing mark of religion. Since religion is a part of the struggle for the preservation and perfection of life, it involves from the very beginning emotional states. If any sentiment or emotion, such as reverence, fear or awe is found at the dawn of religion it exists as part of a response in a particular situation, to a sense of the presence of an invisible Being, upon whom one depends and with whom one desires to hold satisfactory relation. The emotion belongs to an experience involving the whole man; that

¹Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language. (Springfield, Mass: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1942)

is the feeling, thinking and willing being.

James B. Pratt in his well known book defines religion as: "The serious and social attitude of individuals or communities toward the power or powers which they conceive as having ultimate control over their interests and destinies."¹ "Attitude" is here used to cover that responsive side of human action as found in attention, interest, expectancy, feeling and tendencies to reaction. It presupposes an object of some sort; it is itself a relatively active state of consciousness which is a subjective response to the given, it is not to be confined to the "knowing, feeling and willing" of the mind but involves factors that belong to each. Religion as an "Attitude" involves the whole man. It is the attitude of a self toward an object in which the self genuinely believes.

A number of definitions of religion have been collected by various writers. James Leuba in his book on religion presents forty eight definitions, several of which we quote.

Max Mueller in his definition of religion says;

Religion is a mental faculty of disposition, which independent of, nay in spite of, sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the Infinite under different names, and under varying disguises.²

G. J. Romanes follows in this same trend as he defines it as "a department of thought having for its object a self-conscious

¹James B. Pratt, The Religious Consciousness (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1927), p. 2

²Max Mueller, Theosophy, p. 13, 14, quoted in James H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912, p. 339

and intelligent Being."¹ The emphasis here is intellectual in that it stresses man's effort to grasp mentally an understanding of the infinite.

Schleiermacher calls it our sense of ultimate dependence upon God, "the essence of religion consists in the feeling of an absolute dependence",² which completes an earlier definition when he said:

The sum total of religion is to feel that, in its highest unity, everything that stirs our emotions is one in feeling; to feel that aught single and particular is only possible by means of this unity; to feel, that is to say, that our being and living is a being and living in and through God.³

McTaggart treats religion as a sentiment, saying it is "an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large."⁴ These men with others place the emphasis on the emotional nature of the worshipper.

"Religion is the recognition of all of our duties as divine commands,"⁵ says Kant, deriving it from morality. Brinton contends that;

This universal postulate, the psychic origin of all religious thought, is the recognition, or, if you please, the assumption, that conscious volition is the ultimate source of all force. It is the belief that behind the sensuous, phenomenal world, distinct from it, giving it form, existence, and activity, lies the ultimate, invisible, immeasurable power of Mind, of conscious Will,

¹G. J. Romanes, Thoughts on Religion, p. 41 quoted in James H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion. (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912), p. 344

²F. Schleiermacher, Speeches on Religion, p. 50 quoted in James H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912), p. 348

³Ibid, p. 348

⁴John McTaggart, Some Dogmas of Religion, p. 3 quoted in James H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912), ps. 349

⁵E. Kant, Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft, Viertes Stuck, erster Theil, quoted in James H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912) p. 358

of Intelligence, analogous in some way to our own; and--mark this essential corollary,--that man is in communication with it.¹

Here we have men making volition the basis for religion.

In making our definition of religion we must consider the basis for religion in human nature. Animals seek self-preservation. Man seeks not only self preservation, but also self-betterment. The self-betterment is never satisfied short of Perfection. This is a universal trait and is a vital part of the basis of religion in man.

Men can strive for this self-betterment and adjustment of life by invoking human aid or superhuman aid. When he secures that aid from himself or his fellow beings alone, he is a humanist. When he invokes the aid of some superhuman being or power, he is a theist, and has religion. On this definition the mere striving to realize ideals is not the essential of religion. It is cooperation of men with superhuman beings that is religion's necessary and decisive mark. On this definition, the ideal involved in religion is never reachable, and religion is itself an eternal progress.

Religion, as we have indicated, has been defined in many and diverse ways. Like definitions of everything else, it must be first put in a class and its characteristics given. Its formal definition treats the term "religion" which has stood for those human, rational activities of mind and body which men per-

¹Daniel G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples, p. 28, quoted in James H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912), p. 359

form to relate themselves rightly with some Superhuman Being. Naturally, and especially in recent years, many substitutes, some of them masquerading, have been substituted in the definition for faith in any Superhuman Being. Mere, ordinary idealism, mere devotion to some social betterment, or even to some ideology of government by men, have been boldly labelled "religion," and act similar to selling spurious and impure compounds under false labels in the market.

Religion may also be defined by assigning it to the general class of human, rational activities,--not unconscious nor instinctive,--composed of all those ideas, those emotions, and those acts of worship and of service to fellowmen, done because the agent has a conception of a Superhuman Being and faith in their efficacy to invoke the aid of this being. The form of this definition is correct; but it is easily seen that to discover the true characteristics of what people call "religion" is most difficult, but not one whit more impossible than to give all the peculiarities of any thing or activity of men. Besides, religion is not an activity already established, and fixed, like some material object. It is a growing developing, changing function of human beings, which not only changes, but also changes to suit the idea or the definition of it that men are continually forming. In this respect also religion is like any changing growing thing in the world. It can no more be fixed within a static definition than can a growing tree, a flowing river, or an evolving world.

Obviously such a rational and voluntary course of action

is under the control of human will which changes with human desires, or emphasis upon desires. Consequently, religion may change its purpose, its function, its means and methods, so that like any other human custom, under man's control, it cannot be rigidly confined within the limits of any known function. New ends and new functions are constantly being invented and discovered for the age old practice of men. Consequently, and in general, men find religion, like everything else, and especially like all changing and developing processes, most difficult, or impossible to picture or to define; a process that assumes that the thing defined will not change. All we can do is to take pictures or snap-shots of this activity, which present sections of it as if they were static, as every definition of everything defined does do for everything that develops in a changing world. Astronomy presents its stars as standing still, here, now. We can do the same with religion; realizing that in a moment it will be there, then. We define it as the operator takes a picture with a movie-camera, presenting a moving and changing object in a series of still-life studies, each as motionless as "a painted ship upon a painted ocean". Defining religion when properly understood presents no peculiar difficulties.

We will therefore offer an adequate, but not perfect definition by saying that religion is a human, rational activity, consisting of all those ideas, emotions, and actions, together with faith in the being and nature of a Superhuman Being, designed by men to invoke superhuman aid in bettering themselves.

Psychologically speaking religion is a sentiment. The sentiment consists of many emotions fused together around the idea of God. The instincts from which the emotions are aroused are natural impulses. These instincts we list with the object which excites it, the resulting emotion, and its desire.

Name	Object exciting it	Emotion	Conation
Pugnacity	Enemy	Anger	Flight, injure
Escape	Danger, strange	Fear	Flee
Curiosity	Strange	Wonder	Approach
Self-aggrandizement	Self	Elation	Self-assert.
Self-subjection	Self	Meekness	Self-submiss.
Herd	Kind	Sociability	Join
Acquisitive	Property	Want	Acquire
Parental	Weak off-spring	Love	Protect
			Nourish
Sympathy	Distress	Same	Aid
		Emotion	1

As religion is a sentiment, and the sentiments are formed by the fusing of the emotion around an idea of God we now consider the type of religion that is called forth in the person. We consider the sentiment aroused in the lowest form of religion and progress to that which is the highest.

The first and lowest sentiment is that of awe. It is a fusion of fear, wonder, and meekness brought about by the perception of strange events. It is manifested in prohibitions. The next sentiment, which is a little higher is reverence, or the sentiment toward the sacred or Holy. There is the idea of a God that is worthy. Fear, wonder and meekness are joined in this sentiment, making the response conduct that is appropriate to the idea. Devotion is the sentiment of monotheism. The idea

¹Arthur Holmes, The Human Side of Religion (New York: The Hobson Book Press, 1947), p. 23.

of one God only. The emotions of fear, wonder, feeling of littleness are called forth and conduct worthy of the idea is the result. The highest sentiment is Love, Agape. There is the idea of a God of love. Conduct congruent with the idea of God as love is the response.

After giving a formal definition of the term, and a material definition of the activity, man has often turned, unconsciously to a genetic definition of religion, and have given its origin, beginning, and development, its climax and decay. But, again, the history is so changeful that definition here fails to be exact, or satisfying. The fourth stage then comes when men try to define this operation by its function. It serves an end, or ends. It does this by many means used in many ways.

From what has been said above about defining in general, it appears plainly that no complete or perfect definition of anything can be given. For its characteristics would involve the mention of every other item in the world. Added to this is the fact that in an evolving world new items are coming into existence every moment. Consequently, all thinkers can ever do is to frame a definition adequate for the time, for their purpose, a definition ready to change as soon as either its characteristics or its end changes. Definitions are not fixed and final statements of the truth, as the ancient Christian councils would have us believe about their formulations of religious doctrines, but are mere snap-shots of a changing order, valuable for guiding us into further investigations of phenomena defined.

In certain fields where human imagination controlled by reason operates, as in pure geometry, for example, ideas are fixed by definition and are supposed to remain forever in the same condition. In such abstract and ideallistic realms of pure ideas definitions find their true home and habitat. But religion is a living, vital, changing, developing organic whole, engaging human personalities as units in their relation to God.

From the foregoing survey of definitions given by various authors, each one of whom has, himself, surveyed many descriptions which are epitomized in his own summation, we may offer the following account of the religious man:

1. He is one in whom the religious sentiment has been developed.

2. The religious sentiment consists of many emotions fused together around the Idea of God and subsidiary ideas, together with their congruent actions of worship or cult, derived from revelation, observation and reflection, all serving their possessor in their striving to realize their own moral perfection.

3. Thus conceived religion engages the whole man, his intellect, emotions and will, all unified by his spirit.

4. It is not a state of the person, but a rational activity of the self-conscious organism.

5. In any man it represents the meeting place of the Divine and human activities,--the picture of each man working out his own salvation while God works with him.

6. Such a striving for development is by no means alien or foreign to man's nature, but is the natural expression of

his self-conscious judging of himself as imperfect and his equally self-conscious striving for the realization of a Perfect Person which Ideal can always be approached but never fully reached.

CHAPTER IV

Definition of Psychology

Our thesis is a study of edification, or the building of religion in children. Religion to be built must be experienced, or a part of consciousness. Specifically it is the religious sentiment. This view involves the following factors;

1. Persons, who are the only beings on earth who are religious;
2. Religion, which is an experience, or a state of consciousness, or sentiment;
3. Psychology, which treats of conscious processes.

In our study we turn now to the meaning of psychology which treats of the conscious processes, having considered the person in whom religion is to be built and the religion that is to be implanted.

The word psychology is a compound word made up of psych-o-lōgy. The root, "psyche", comes from the Greek word *ψυχή* which is translated breath, life or soul. The latter part of the word is the Greek word *λόγος* which is translated 'discourse' or 'theory'. However this word when used as a suffix has come to mean 'the science of':

But it is understood among scientific men that when the word logos forms the last part of a compound English word it shall mean not simply 'talk about' a subject, but the science of that subject.¹

Therefore the word by its structure means the science of the soul or life. As the science of life, it is the science of life in the sense of psyche, that is the inner life, the "breath" of life.

¹E. B. Titchner, A Primer of Psychology (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1899,) p. 1

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."¹ This is the inner life that we seek to enrich through edification. When we remember the emphasis He placed upon the spiritual side of His teaching (Matt. 10:28,29) this must apply to life in the sense of psyche.

Psychology is the science of the phenomena of mind and is thus marked off from the physical sources which treat only of the phenomena of matter. The phenomena are such things as we call feelings, desires, cognitions, reasonings, decisions. The psychical process with which it has to do is an actual process that takes place in the life history of some individual. Psychology never transcends the limits of the individual and is never separated from the individual.

The Psychologist traces his science back to that phase of the early Greek philosophy which dealt with men and particularly the mind of man. The definitions which are given can be divided into two classes. Those that make the soul a necessary part of the study and those that merely describe our mental processes. Of the former Aristotle developed a study of the "soul" to which study he gave the name psychology from "psyche" soul.

Aristotle is usually considered the first teacher of a scientific psychology. This title is well deserved for the De Anima in particular and the other minor works associated with it in subject matter are the sources from which have been drawn most of the psychology taught in Europe down to the close of the eighteenth century.²

This psychology was an early branch of metaphysics. Such

¹John 10:10

²Encyclopaedia Britannica. (1942), V. 18, p. 707

psychology was called mental philosophy down to the nineteenth century.

In 1789 Wilhelm Wundt, the German scholar, transferred mental philosophy into psychology as a descriptive science. Such science necessarily omits all mention of soul, as a substance. To Wundt must be given credit for two great achievements. "He created the modern type of experimental psychology and he devised a method of analysis."¹

The method of analysis, which determined the greater part of the work done in the laboratory, was based on the view that psychical states as experienced are compounded out of simple elements. The mind can be analysed into three main classes of activities, ideas, feelings and volitions. The ideas are the ways in which we become aware of objects; they are presentations which are immediately known.²

This analytic followed the pattern of physics which analyzed material objects into ultimate constituents or atoms; and therefore was called "psycho-physics."

From this psycho-physics two streams of science flowed. One turned to mental observations and confined itself to intellectual processes. The other turned to the body and defined psychology as the study of the behavior of the whole or "Behaviorism".³

William James, a great American professor defines psychology in the following way:

Psychology is the science of mental life, both of its phenomena and its condition. The phenomena are such things as we call feelings, desires, cognitions, reasonings, decisions and the like; and superficially considered,

¹Ibid, p. 713

²Ibid, p. 713

³J. B. Watson, Behaviorism (New York: W. W. Norton, 1929)

their variety and complexity is such as to leave a chaotic impression on the observer.¹

James does not define mind but uses 'mental life' in his definition which makes his definition of mind functional. The mind is what it does. His word phenomena could be summed up in thinking, feeling, and willing.

Another brief definition, but quite modern, of the mental process is given by C. H. Judd, who says; "Psychology is the science of consciousness."² He then gives this definition of consciousness.

Consciousness is what each one of us has when he sees and hears, when he feels pleasure or sorrow, when he imagines or reasons, or decides to pursue a line of action.³

This definition does not define consciousness scientifically, but merely calls attention to the state.

As definitions are made to serve in reaching an end, the best definition of psychology for our study of religion is the one given by Dr. Lightner Witmer,

Human psychology is an examination of man's spiritual nature. The unit of observation is a performance, but the unit of consideration is personality, defined by perfectibility of behavior, which is measured or estimated in the unit of progress which man makes toward the perfection he prefers.⁴

Psychology is a department of science. Science, itself is a body of organized knowledge. Psychology is like modern

¹William James, Principles of Psychology (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1896) p. 2

²C. H. Judd, Psychology (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1907), p. 1

³Ibid, p. 13

⁴Psychological Clinic, Vol XVI, 1, 2, quoted in Arthur Holmes, The Human Side of Religion (New York: Hobson Book Press, 1947), p. 9

science which is descriptive, in that it is an organization of the briefest possible descriptions of mental processes. This is the content of psychology. We define mind by using the term 'mental processes' for the mind is the peculiar mental process of striving for ends, to realize purposes. Mind is defined by what it does. These then are the mental processes of observation, introspection and reflection.

We offer the following definition of psychology for our study, with the understanding that it is not complete but merely adequate for the subject of this thesis. Psychology is a body of organized knowledge, consisting of brief descriptions of mental processes, derived from observation, introspection and reflection, and used for saving men's time and energy in thinking and acting.

CHAPTER V

The Development of the Sentiment of Religion in Children

In the previous chapters we have defined or described religion as a sentiment. Its origin, beginning and development in persons now becomes a matter of paramount importance to our thesis. First, the origin of religion, within the child, like all origins has its inception in capacities, powers and activities of both body and mind that are not always open to inspection or description. Secondly, the beginning of religion appears both in the child's consciousness known to himself, and also to others through observation of his behavior. Thirdly, religion begins with ideas; the idea of God, and subsidiary ideas. This idea comes to the child mind the same as his other ideas, for human beings are naturally religious, and can free themselves from its persuasive powers only by most heroic and soul-destroying efforts. Fourthly, religion however, is not inborn; only the components, or makings of religion are innate in every normal child.

Left to himself, the child or the youth will manufacture a religion, no matter how crude, for himself; or, denied formal religious education directed by experts, he will develop a mixture of superstition, magic, cult-practices, sentiments and conceptions derived chiefly from his family, play-mates or fellow youths, and from accidental acquaintances and haphazard incidents. Naturally, then we should desire to give the child as thorough a religious education as his secular education or moral education.

Such a formal education deals, first with the child's religious ideas, secondly, the emotions they regularly habitually arouse; and thirdly, the kinds of conduct, worship or treatment of other people, that they inspire and direct.

We have indicated in our study that religion is a sentiment. This sentiment has an idea of God which is formed by resulting actions of emotions called forth. In the following table we present a study of the sentiments, with the emotions aroused, and the resulting action, the idea of God that is called forth:

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. Awe is the first religious sentiment. | |
| I. Intellectual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Perception of strange events b. Reasoning from other causes c. Idea of a Power, Mana, Orenda, Churinga |
| II. Emotional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fear and wonder and meekness fused, in the face of this overwhelming super-human power. |
| III. Conational | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tabus, prohibitions, do not touch cult, worship |
| B. Reverence or sentiment toward the Sacred, Holy or God is the religious sentiment par excellence. | |
| I. Intellectual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Idea of God, or gods that are worthy. |
| II. Emotional | |
| 1. Awe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fear and wonder and meekness |
| 2. Admiration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Wonder and meekness |
| 3. Gratitude | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Meekness, want and love |
| III. Volitional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cult and conduct appropriate to the idea and emotion. |
| C. Devotion, the sentiment of monotheism. | |
| I. Intellectual | The idea of one God only. |
| II. Emotional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awe, with its fear, wonder feeling of littleness. Admiration, if the God is a person. |

Reverence with its primary emotion fear, wonder, elation want love.

III. Volitional

Cult conduct appropriate to the idea of God.

D. Love, Agape, of Christian theism.

I. Intellectual

The idea of God as Love

II. Emotional

Very complex sentiment called "love", agape.

III. Volitional

Cult and conduct congruent with the idea of God as love.¹

The first religious sentiment, as we have noted arising in the individual is that of awe. It is that primitive form of belief by which all natural objects and phenomena are endowed with personality and will, but not with individual souls. The appeal is made to that part of the individual nature that is open to the influence from what is higher, greater, grander or better than the self. Fear, wonder, and meekness are fused in the face of this overwhelming superhuman power.

The objects that call forth this sentiment of awe are the impersonal--the wonder of nature, the objects that transcend the understanding, the magnitude of the vastness of space, the infinity of time, the origin of life. Through the perception of strange things and events there is the conception of a power that is higher and greater.

From early childhood the idea of power as manifested in persons is known to the child. The father and mother have power to protect, punish, bring into subjection, take away possessions. As he realizes a power that has the power of creation of all

¹Arthur Holmes, The Human Side of Religion (New York: The Hobson Book Press, 1947), p. 24, 25

things, fear is brought forth, because of the power's ability to harm or destroy.

With this idea of God as power is brought forth the emotion of wonder from the curiosity instinct. There is the desire to approach, to draw near, and consider. In the drawing nearer it is with meekness. The recognition of a higher power brings with it the desire to make peace, to recognize prohibitions and to worship.

As strange events and manifestations of nature are witnessed there is an impulse of wonder, to draw near humbly, to consider the object. There is another impulse which neutralises it, which is the impulse of fear; to withdraw, or to run away. There is a suspension in the middle distance, neither approaching very near nor going quite away. The consciousness of a greater power brings forth meekness in the person.

Reverence, the sentiment toward the Sacred, Holy, or God, is the religious sentiment par excellence. There is an idea of a God who is worthy of worship. Few merely human powers are capable of exciting reverence. This sentiment is a blend of wonder, fear, gratitude, and negative self-feeling, with the idea of a God of Power, who is good, uppermost.

Reverence is composed of awe, admiration and gratitude. Awe is composed of the emotions of fear, wonder and meekness. Admiration brings out wonder and meekness. Gratitude is made up of tender emotion and negative self-feeling. Tender emotion is the parental instinct whose impulse is to protect. Negative self-feeling is brought out by the consciousness of the superior

power of another. One that is able to do for us what we are not able to do ourselves. This element of negative self-feeling is blended with tenderness in true gratitude, and the impulse to withdraw from the attention of, or the impulse to humble oneself in the presence of the object neutralises the impulse of the tender emotion to approach its object. This sentiment of reverence makes for conduct appropriate to the idea and emotion. It brings forth devotion to this God who is worthy of love.

The highest sentiment toward God is that of Love, or Agape. This is love in its highest. There is the idea of God as Love. The greatest love the world has ever known is that of our God who ". . . so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life."¹

The sentiment of love is a complex one. It includes a fusion of all primary emotions, except when perfected it excludes fear. It has as its object God. The Secondary sentiments--awe, admiration, reverence, gratitude, are fused in making this sentiment. The emotions of wonder, submission, tenderness, possession, elation are present. The actions that are called forth are those of approach, to serve, protect, acquire, and rejoice. When the love is not perfect and the element of fear is present, the desire to flee will be found present.

The child born with the usual capacities and powers of normal people will have the molds of religion ready for content from others.

¹John 3:16

Modern biologists are agreed with practical unanimity that we receive from our parents through physical inheritance only our organism together with those capacities for action and feeling which depend upon its marvelously complex nervous system.¹

He is born into a family. The parents are the first to give him ideas of religion. Other ideas come from his early playmates and companions.

His formal training and education in religious education usually begins when he is quite young. He is taught definitely to say prayers, to assume postures in praying, and at an early age usually goes to Sunday School or to some parochial school where he learns a catechism, forms of worship, modes of behavior, all denominated religious. Even if through born blindness or deafness, or both, he is cut off from the usual modes of communication with other people, he observes certain phenomena, and by his innate power of reasoning, he comes for himself to some conception of a Superhuman Being and perhaps invents some forms of worshipping that Being.

The meaning of the term God, and of any affirmation about Him, has to be construed by imaginative combination of thought materials derived from the child's previous experiences. He believes what parent, teacher or minister tells him. His notions are crude replicas of their statements, modified to be sure, somewhat in accordance with his state of language development.² He uncritically accepts all teaching because he has not the experiential and developmental backgrounds necessary for

¹Francis L. Strickland, Psychology of Religious Experience (New York: Abingdon Press, 1924), p. 78, 79

²Fowler D. Brooks, The Psychology of Adolescence (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1929), p. 337-8

their critical evaluation. His earliest religious beliefs rests upon unquestioned authority.

Before little children are able to make much of the instruction that has been given to them they have already entered socially into the common consciousness; that is the ideas, feelings, and attitudes shared in common by a social group. Children respond early to social situations, and build attitudes. These attitude-responses are usually of an emotional character and the acquisition of clearly defined ideals come later. If God is never mentioned in the home, and there are no acts which call forth the child's feelings towards God, attitudes on the part of the child cannot be developed. Whereas if God has a place in the home, if His divine will is held up as a standard of conduct, if the child sees his parents and other adults in reverent attitudes toward God, and hears the voices of those that he knows in prayer to God, there will be responses to this in the growth of certain feelings.

What we do not do is as significant as what we do. A father deciding to be fair with his children decided that he would not influence them religiously at all, particularly that he would teach them nothing about God. If possible he desired that the very word should be unknown to them until they were old enough to think out their religious philosophy for themselves. What he did was to give them a group life in which there was no God. This carried all the group significance of the absence of the need of God.

Children who are shielded from religious instruction by

accident or design secure an idea of God for themselves by using their reason.

Fannie D. Bergan has given an interesting account of a child whose parents made the attempt to bring him up with no religious instruction. Of course this was practically impossible, yet it is instructive to note the inherent demand of the boy's mind for some first thing that should start the others going. Thus, one day when seven or eight he passed a marsh and asked, "Father, where did the first frogs come from?" "From eggs," was the reply. "No," I don't mean those, I mean the very first frogs,-- before there were any to lay eggs." Another day he exclaimed, "If I could only find out where the very first sand came from!" The boy seems to have been brought up in an atmosphere of non-religious but scientific thought, and to have picked up many ideas from the conversations of his elders, which he often overheard. When nearly fifteen he had a serious talk with his mother in which he admitted his belief in some power back of life and the whole physical world, and though (owing apparently to what he had heard from his parents) he objected to conceiving this power anthropomorphically, he added, "When you ask me to give you my idea of this power it is very hard to do, for I don't believe, you see, in personifying it. When I try to think of it there looms up before me a great beneficent, exalted kind of man. I don't believe in this, and it is very unfortunate, but I can't help it, and it may take all of my life to get rid of this notion, which is very foolish, but which I cannot help."¹

This tendency seen in so many children to reason back to the first cause seems to be innate. To Pratt it suggests the question whether or not the reason alone, without any aid from authority or external suggestion, would be enough to bring about belief in a God; whether a child who grew up in complete isolation would have some incipient religious beliefs or would be utterly without any such ideas.²

¹Arena XIX, 296, quoted in James B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907), p. 211

²James B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907), p. 212

Children who have been born deaf have acquired a conception of God and later in life tell how they did it. Practically all of them reasoned from perceptions to a cause. Mr. Ballard says at the age of nine the question "How came the world into being?" was formulated in his mind and thus began a restless search for its answer. To a certain degree the orderly motion of the heavenly bodies and certain meteorological phenomena suggested a theological point of view.

I believed the sun and the moon to be two round, flat plates of illuminating matter; and for these luminaries I entertained a sort of reverence on account of their power of lighting and heating the earth. I thought from their coming up and going down, travelling across the sky in so regular a manner, that there must be a certain something having power to govern their course. One day while we were haying in a field, there was a series of heavy thunderclaps. I asked one of my brothers where they came from. He pointed to the sky and made a zigzag motion with his finger, signifying lightning. I imagined there was a great man somewhere in the blue vault, who made a loud noise with his voice out of it, and each time I felt a thunder-clap I was frightened and looked up at the sky, fearing he was speaking a threatening word.¹

A few years later after learning of God from his teachers Mr. Ballard says:

From the uncertain perplexing round of speculation in which I had been groping back and forth through the dark depths of time seeking to discover the origin of the universe, I found myself translated into a world of light wherein my mind was set at rest on this great question; and I felt as though I had become a new being. This revelation of the truth seemed to give a new dignity to everything. . . and it seemed to elevate the world to a higher and a more honorable place.²

Mr. D'Estrella who was also born deaf was more successful in his lonely search. Early he came to the conclusion

¹Princeton Review. Jan. 1881 p. 104-128, quoted in James B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907), p. 212, 213

²Ibid., p. 213

that the moon was alive, but he was afraid of her. She had a great influence over his moral life and in some way became an influence on his conscience. The sun he considered a ball of fire which some "great and strong man, somehow hiding himself behind the hills", tossed up every morning and caught up every evening for his own amusement.¹ After he began to convince himself of the possible existence of such a mighty God, he went on with his speculations.

He supposed that the God lit the stars for His own use as we do the lights in the street. When there was a wind he supposed that it was the indication of his passions. A cold gale bespoke His anger, and a cool breeze His happy temper. Why? Because he had sometimes felt the breath bursting out from the mouth of angry people in the act of quarreling or scolding. When there were clouds, he supposed that they came from the big pipe of God. Why? Because he had often seen, with childish wonder, how the smoke curled from lighted pipes or cigars. . . . When there was a fog, the boy supposed it was His breath in the cold morning; . . . when there was rain, he did not doubt that the God took in much water and spewed it from His big mouth in the form of a shower.²

His idea of God and His activities came from his reasoning from the things that he knew.

Miss Helen Keller deprived of both sight and hearing, before she was ten years old wrote for her teacher:

I wish to write about things I do not understand. Who made the earth and the seas and everything? What makes the sun hot? Where was I before I came to mother? Why does the earth not fall, it is so very large and heavy? Please tell your little pupil many things when you have much time.³

¹Philosophical Review I. p. 615 quoted in James B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907), p. 213

²Ibid, 213, 214

³"The Story of My Life" Helen Keller, with a "Supplementary Account of Her Education", by John A. Macy. p. 268-270. quoted in James B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907), p. 215

Through her enlarged vocabulary she came to express her conceptions and ideas clearly, also comprehending the thoughts and experiences of others. She became acquainted with the limit of human creative power, and perceived that some power, not human must have created the earth, the sun, and the thousand natural objects with which she was perfectly familiar. Finally one day she demanded a name for the power the existence of which she had already conceived in her mind.¹

We can see through these examples of those born handicapped, that in some cases at least, reason and imagination, if left entirely to themselves and without any external help, will build up a belief in some kind of God. Children want to know the cause of things and the power that is behind their creation. Knowing the power of men to build and create things they make their God a creative and powerful one and usually personify Him.

Having considered children who have been shielded from religious instruction by accident or design we now consider how the normal child secures his idea of God.

The infant usually gets its idea of God first from its mother. Her love and care for him is his first experience. The feeling of absolute dependence, with the love flowing naturally out of the satisfaction of its needs, is the same kind of love that should later be felt toward God.

In speaking of finding God, Dr. Swain says:

"Do you know where I first met God", I asked, "not an emanation from Him, but God; the will that formed the worlds--

¹Ibid. p. 214

all the God there is?" "No", he replied. "Fortunately," I said, "I do. It was in my mother. When I was a little boy the great God at times enfolded me in human arms and looked into my face through benignant human eyes and spoke tender words with sweet accent. . . .If in these supreme moments God was not my mother, then it is useless to look for Him anywhere in the universe."¹

In analyzing the process by which a child develops his religion, we are saying that he secures his idea from his mother first, we do not wish to imply that the infant in arms either secures nothing but an idea, or on the other hand, secures a complete conception of his mother, or his God. Gradually the infant forms a perception of its mother; gradually an idea emerges, so that the baby cries for its absent mother and is appeased when she appears; and these percepts and this idea are mingled with the feelings of various kinds; and these ideas, like all ideas, direct to some extent, the baby's behavior.

The more the father and mother cultivate love toward themselves the more naturally will the child feel them toward God. If the parents are wise, good, loving, the child will easily believe in a God that is so, but if they are capricious, governed by moods or subject to the child's whims, his idea of God will be similarly defective.²

Children cannot wait for their religion until they are competent to decide these questions for themselves. They must get the religion of their elders, for there is no other religion to get.³

In most every instance a baby's theology is a perverted render-

¹From Dr. Swain's "What and Where is God?"

²Amy Tanner, The Child. (New York: Rand McNally & Co.) 1904, p. 268

³T. G. Soares, Religious Education. (Chicago: University Press.) 1938. p. 55

ing of older teaching.¹

The child sees others praying long before he prays. The mother, as she bends over the crib, in silence with moving lips in a reverent attitude bespeaks her trust in God. The whole family spend a quiet moment before each meal. Through the actions and attitudes of those of the immediate family the child forms his first concept of God. Stories about Jesus make one of the best approaches in teaching religion to the little child. To the nursery and kindergarten child Jesus is the little Babe, God's best gift to us. The birth in the manger, visit of the shepherds, wise men bringing gifts, the loving care of the parents will capture the imagination of the child and make Jesus real.

As the child grows older and hears God spoken of as a man it derives its idea of God from its father. His father will through his actions provide the attributes and activities which the child will assign to God. He will pick up ways of thinking and feeling as well as of active behavior. He catches the inflections of voice and the gestures that betoken the attitudes of the elder toward persons and things, and especially toward God. The respect and admiration given to God will be influenced by his attitude toward his father as a man. "The child must think in his own way or not at all, and the idea must be made concrete, naive, and usually visual, to have any real existence for him."²

The father is to the child the image of power. His physical power to make and move things, to defend from the in-

¹J. B. Pratt. The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: MacMillan Co.) 1907. p. 200.

²Ibid, p. 201

jurious, to protect from harm is great to the child. His ability to build makes the child think of him as a God. A child while watching workmen building a house asked if they were "gods".¹

Children receive ideas of God from their playmates, from the hired man, hired girl, nursemaid, from accidents. The authorized source of information in these matters may be the Sunday School teacher or the minister, but they only have the child for such a short time one day of the week that other influences have a great bearing. Much of the teaching is gained without plan, from every day life and happenings. Many of the ideas as given by hired girls are very erroneous and are given to produce fear that desired conduct might be obtained.

As children interpret God in terms of their familiar experience they many times make strange combinations. God may be considered as a big man, and Satan as a bogie. The idea of God at first is only that of a person more powerful than others. From his playmates he may get the idea of God as one with whom he should bargain, or one to be feared. Some children obtain their ideas of God from accidents or circumstances that surround them. At the death of a loved one they may realize a powerful God. Some, when they pray for the loved one to be restored at death, and they are not returned, fear or many times, hate God.

Little children are animistic and naturally interpret in terms of beings something like themselves or other persons, so that objects, and animals, to say nothing of the larger forces of nature, are looked upon as acting for or against the

¹Amy Tanner, The Child (New York: Rand, McNally & Co. 1904), p. 264

child. If the forces seem more powerful than he, the emotion of fear is aroused, and the attempt to propitiate is the form his incipient worship takes.

The idea of God is usually distinct from the world, and must be made concrete and usually visual. He accepts what his parents tell him but usually mixes a great deal of fantastic imagery with it.

Surveys have been made, by noted scholars, of many children to get their ideas of God. Most children personify Him, and though He is "ageless" attempt to give Him age.

Two children describe God as "living up in heaven and taking care of us all the time, especially at night." "He does everything for us and gives us all the good things we have."¹ Mr. Crisman reports a little girl as saying, "We must work. The Heaven-Man won't like us if we don't work. He knows all we do. We mustn't do naughty tricks. We mustn't make faces at the Heaven-Man. He will spank us; won't He? . . . God is everybody's papa."² One boy says, "God bosses the world,"³ but usually they think that the angels do the practical work.

To many children "God is a big blue man who pours rain out of big buckets, thumps clouds to make thunder, puts the sun and the moon to bed, takes dead people, birds and even broken dolls up there, distributes babies and is closely related to Santa Claus."⁴

¹Child Study Monthly III., 518. quoted in J. B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907), p. 201

²Ibid., p. 200

³Amy Tanner, The Child (New York: Rand McNally & Co.), 1904), p. 268

⁴G. S. Hall, Child Study: The Basis of Education, Forum 16, 438. quoted in J. B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907) p. 201

Lightning is God's turning on the gas quick, or (very common) striking many matches at once. . . .He lights the stars so he can see to go on the sidewalk or into church.¹

One of the most common attributes that children assign to God is omniscience. As a child, John Fiske thought of God as

. . . A tall slender man, of aquiline features, wearing spectacles, with a pen in his hand and another behind his ear. . . watching the deeds of men and recording them in the ledgers.²

"Many of the children feel that God is watching them, and some say 'He writes it all down.'"³

That God should be eternal and never have had a beginning is one point the child might question. That he should be very old is accepted; though the child tries to make His age, although great, at least finite. One child says "God must be awfully old--He must be most a hundred."⁴ But that there was a time when God did not exist, seems too much for a boy to accept. Hence the universal question "Who made God?" James Sully tells of a boy who,

having learnt from his mother that before the world there was only God the Creator, asked 'And before God?' the mother having replied, 'Nothing', he at once interpreted her answer by saying 'no: there must have been the place (i.e., the empty space) where God is.' So determined is the little mind to get back to the 'before' and to find something, if only a prepared place.⁵

¹G. S. Hall, The Contents of Children's Minds, Princeton Review, N. S. XI 262, 263, quoted in J. B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907), p. 202

²John Fiske, The Idea of God as Affected by Modern Knowledge (Cambridge, Mass: The Riverside Press, 1900), p. 116

³Earl Barnes, "Theological Life of a California Child," Ped. Sem., II, 443, quoted in J. B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907), p. 203

⁴Op. Cit. Pratt. p. 203

⁵James Sully, Studies of Childhood, p. 131, quoted in J. B. Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1907) p. 204

The most marked characteristic of God in the child's theology is His power. He makes things--that is His great distinction. Even though He has this power children seldom describe His activities. Less than five percent speak of Him as ruling the universe, making things grow or caring for their needs.¹

Dr. Angus H. MacLean of Teachers College, Columbia University tested 575 Sunday School children as to their knowledge of religion and prayer. The majority of the children's ideas show a striking parallel to the ideas expressed in religious literature and in church services. The answers of the children as to God is, may bring amazement to some people. "God" is a pleasant-looking gentlemen. He "is all bunk."² Most of the children agreed with the first statement, yet eight percent, agree with the second. Others describe God as:

"A man with long white robes", "A powerful doctor", "a very good man", and "a young man." A child said "God is as big as a cloud. He wears a long dress, and blackish beard". Another answered: "Mama has a picture of God. He has hair down to His shoulders. He is old."³

40 percent of the children think of God as a man, with flesh and bones, and beard. Fifteen percent mention Him simply as "a man", withholding other details. Twenty percent regard Him as a spirit, ghost, or fairy; 25 percent make some reference to His kindness and goodness, and 12 percent show a consciousness of His power. Two percent think of Him as "nature", and one child knows he has a head, but nothing more. Jesus is described as a doctor, God's son, God's brother, magic, "big man up in heaven" and "the man who makes the snow."⁴

Through our study we see that a child acquires religion

p. 22 1Op. Cit. Pratt. p. 204
 2Child Pictures of God. Literary Digest, (May 31, 1930.)
 p. 22. 3"Child Pictures of God" Literary Digest, (May 31, 1930)
 4Ibid, p. 22

as he does any other interest, by means of his sense adjustment to environment. Even though some children are shielded from teaching about God, and religion, they form an idea of God for themselves. Usually their idea of God is that of a creative power.

CHAPTER VI

The Mechanics of Religious Edification

In Chapter V we have studied and described the psychology of religious edification in children. Some would call it the "philosophy of religious education". It presents the basis, in human nature, upon which all curricula, or contents, and all methods of religious edification should be built. To show the mechanics of religious education is the task of this chapter. It follows the usual principles of all good pedagogy, secular as well as religious; and adapts to its end, all the tried and proved practices of regular school pedagogy. The success here, as in all education of children, depends primarily, not upon the material equipment, nor upon the content taught, nor upon the curricula, nor upon the methods of teaching, but upon the teacher--his purpose or ideal, his personality, his knowledge, his power of inspiration and steadiness of guidance.

As we have definitely adopted the whole person as our unit of consideration in Christian edification, and the Perfect Person, manifested in Christ, as our Ideal, and specifically selected the religious sentiment as the essential organization within the disciple as the essential mental organization we are building, we invent and adopt all the methods and material we use to that most closely specified end. The highest religious sentiment in Christianity, is Agape, intelligent good will. This end, therefore selects, invents, and shapes our pedagogical mechanics.

They begin with arousing the pupil to formulate, or

else improve, his idea, or concept of God. That idea, which he forms comes naturally when he is aroused and inspired to form it.

Many of the most important ideas of the Christian religion get their meaning and richness from family life. When Jesus was seeking for a word which would most fitly express the meaning of God he went to the family for it. "Father" was the most characteristic name for God that Jesus found. He drew upon the family experience of his hearers to interpret God. God meant parenthood lifted to its highest terms.

The cohesive power of love which holds the family together, he took as the power which would resolve the differences among God's children and bind them into the great family of God. Thus within its own life and relationships the family creates and enriches the essential meanings of the Christian religion.¹

Little children today are more aware of machinery and its efficiency than of God and His purposes. But parents crave for their children something more than the benefits of science and invention. They recognize that true happiness comes from deeper sources. They feel that their children need God to bring them to the highest goal. They need His love, His wisdom, which will pervade all of living, every activity undertaken, every new insight gained.

Awareness of God will not take the same form as did that of the ancient Hebrews. Our children live in an age of science and invention and mechanical efficiency. They do not need to take the ark into battles to assure themselves of the presence of God in their struggles; but they do need faith in God when they have to meet situations requiring courage above their own power to achieve. They do not need fiery pillars in the sky to guide them on journeys; but they do need a

¹Home and Church Work Together (Chicago: International Council of Religious Education, 1940), p. 6.

sense of the companionship of the Eternal when they are venturing to try out new paths in human relationships based upon love. They do not need a burning bush to tell them God is near; but they do need a sense of the reality of God and of his regard for his children when they are discovering through the telescope a Universe immeasurably great wherein they shudder in insecurity.¹

The wrong ideas of God come to have a place in the life of the child as they are built out of his experiences, and the interpretations of these happenings, which he makes as a result of the comments and actions of others. The child cannot build an idea of the love of God in an environment of continual fault-finding. He will be led to believe that God's love is always turned to him only in so far as he is confident that our love is turned to him. If the child is to build an adequate idea of God, he must become aware of the thought, the love and the purpose of God as these are revealed to him by adults in the world in which he is living.

Since the child's idea of God is a growing thing the parent should not wait until a definite period in the child's life, and say that here and now she will begin to teach him about God. From the earliest days of his life the idea of God is being formed.

When Jimmie was brought home from the hospital where he was born, his mother placed above his crib a picture of Jesus. One of the first words he learned to say was "Jesus". Thus did the little boy's Christian education start with his very first days in the surroundings of his own home.²

¹How a Child's Idea of God Develops (Chicago: International Council of Religious Education, n. d.).

²Prospectus of Standard Graded Lessons for the Nursery or PreSchool Department (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 2

Children are placed in the hands of teachers in the Church to receive formal teaching about God. It is to these people that the parents entrust the formation of the correct idea of God. But before the teacher receives the child, and even during his formal teaching, the home and its teaching, in an informal way, is influencing the thought of the child.

The home is one of the most important units that we have in which an idea of God is developed. The love of the parent that is warmly expressed in the home bespeaks God's love. The mother's care of the child in infancy is one of love. From the beginning the child is dependent upon its parents. "The feeling of dependence is the ever present background of human and, I suppose, of higher animal life."¹ The child looks to the parent for protection, for the provision of its needs, for freedom from pain, hunger, anxiety and fear. To a large extent freedom from anxiety and fear helps him face life with confidence. "The family atmosphere teaches love is the greatest power in the universe or that force is supreme."² If, in the home, the child finds understanding, companionship, friendly interest in his achievements, and sympathy in dealing with his failures, then he builds an idea of God which reflects these experiences.

The kindness expressed one toward the other in the home will find its counterpart reflected in the child's attitude toward other peoples. Experiences in Christian living and service helps the child to learn to think of others. In his willing

¹James H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1912), p. 35

²You are teaching Your Child Religion! (Chicago: International Council of Religious Education, n. d.).

ness to help others he can see God's willingness to help him and his concept of God enlarges. Contact with persons of national groups makes for brotherhood and shows God's world wide family.

A chance to create and enjoy beauty in the home helps him to become a part of that which he sees and does. It is through his ability to create and enjoy beauty that he will see God in the beautiful. Through experiences of working with God to make the world beautiful, children are learning to know and to enter into God's purposes.

The power that the parent holds in love, and care of the child, in punishment is transferred to his idea of God as he learns that God is the Power that created the world, that He cares for His creation, and that He has power over the child's life.

Other ideas of power that the child learns in the home are transferred to God. The child early learns of ghosts, goblins, witches and the devil. Who has not heard the old saying "If you aren't good the goblins will get you?" These ideas of unseen powers are transferred to his idea of God, for he cannot see Him.

Many ideas of God that are given are not true and will later have to be corrected. A boy came into the room of an adult friend one evening, evidently disturbed. After a few moments of casual conversation, he burst out with, "Will God knock you dead with a bolt of lightning if you steal an apple?" Inquiry brought out the fact that he and another boy had stolen an apple from a neighboring grocer. A third boy had solemnly assured them that they would be found dead in their beds in the morning.

His aunt had told him that the Bible said that God would strike dead anyone who stole.

A mother, in a moment of exasperation, harshly assured her daughter that God would punish her because she had been disobedient. When, the next day, a dearly loved baby sister died suddenly, the child was sure that this was God's delayed punishment, and she was inconsolable.¹

When the idea of God as a power is set forth it will bring fear, wonder and meekness in the child. Many times it will bring about investigation on the part of the child to see if these things will happen. It will lead to caution on his part in some things, and others will be taboo.

One of the basic teachings that is instilled into children is to "Fear God and keep his commandments." It is an error to teach blind obedience to God's commandments by threats, to bring about a fear of God to children that as youths they will find to be an error. It is the express purpose of the Church School to so teach the child that he will take his place in the church by accepting Jesus as his Saviour and completing his obedience to Him. Jesus in His teaching presents God as a loving Father. In the place of the teaching that the child has received of a God to be feared, and obeyed, must be placed the idea of a God of love.

God is a God of love and this is the idea of God that we desire the child to know. Our aim as we teach is to bring the child into a close fellowship with Jesus, that he might desire to accept Him as his Lord and Saviour. If Jesus reveals God as a God of Love, and the teacher presents him in the idea of

¹How a Child's Idea of God Develops (Chicago: International Council of Religious Education, n.c.), p. 4

"Fear God and keep His commandments" the incongruity of it may keep the child from wanting to know more about God.

Admiration is one of the sentiments that is instilled in the child as we teach him about God. One evening as a little child was being tucked into bed he asked, "Is God as nice as you, Mummy?" "Yes, ever so much nicer," the mother replied. "Then he must be nice," said the child, and went happily to sleep. How different his idea of God from the boy who said, "Well, I haven't any use for God." It was unwise teaching which developed in the boy this attitude toward God. It is strange, but true, that some parents will teach his child that God will send punishments which the parent, himself, would not think of inflicting.

When the children are placed in the Church school for religious instruction, without exception, the teacher and not the abstract truth that is presented has greater influence. All the factors of the teacher's life that goes to influence others and which makes up his personality lends its impression on the life into whose presence it comes. "Fitness for a position is much more a matter of one's personality than of special training in the field of the job."¹

In choosing teachers the following questions might well be asked: Is the teacher attractive? Not necessarily in good looks or beauty, but in winsomeness, radiance, and whole-hearted goodness that makes one desire to know him more intimately. Does he like people, especially the age that he is to teach? Is

¹If You Want Teachers (Chicago: International Council of Religious Education, 1947).

he at ease with his pupils, possessing the ability to talk with them about interesting things? In the face of misfortune, the emotions must be well in hand, that the situation may be met with Christian calmness and fortitude.

The teacher must be resourceful, prepared, and have the ability to vision and dream, and work for the ends that he visions. He must live in the company of Jesus, knowing and trusting Him and through Him have a personal relationship with God. He must be reverent in manner, in speech, in thought, in conduct and in worship. He must know the message of Jesus and through his life, and the presentation of the message impart the teachings of Jesus to the child.

When the child is brought to the Church school he is placed in the Nursery Department or the Kindergarten. The ages of these children are from one to four. Most of the teaching will be directed toward the older child, although the younger children will gain much from observation. As for the younger child ". . . he is absorbing Christianity itself in what he sees you and your assistants doing."¹

As the child comes to the class in the Church school it is important that he be presented with a clear picture of Jesus for it is Jesus who taught, and showed what God is like. The child is interested in the stories of Jesus--His birth, childhood, His kindness, and helpfulness to people. We must help them understand the way of life that Jesus desired for all to have, by directing their thought to what Jesus said and did,

¹Dorothy F. Poulton (ed.) Nursery Teachers Quarterly (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1947), p. 6.

by bringing them into contact with people who are Christlike and by using home, church and neighborhood experiences, for putting into practice Jesus' way of life.

Materials provided for the teachers of children are varied. In the books "Learning in the Nursery Class"¹ and the "Nursery Teacher's Quarterly"² all the lessons are listed under the subjects: "Learning about our Heavenly Father; Learning about the Baby Jesus, Here we Go to Church."³ Through conversation, stories, play activities and simple prayer the teacher seeks to enlarge the child's idea of God as they teach him of God's creation of the world, and its providence; as they associate the care given to him by parents and friends with that given by God; as his parents make provision for food and other comforts for him so God provides for His creation; through the teachings of Jesus, and association with friends they learn of God's love and care for all people.

In their classes the children learn about the world, and admire it; they build houses, draw, look at pictures. In their activities they build villages in the sand, plant bulbs and flower seed, use clay in moulding--they learn that they have the power to make and create things. The project method is used to a great extent for children of this age, both in the home and in the Church School. Instruction comes in the greatest part through pictures, objects, stories, and directed activities.

As our goal is the building of perfect persons we pre-

¹Eva B. McCallum, (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1944)

²Dorothy F. Poulton (ed.), (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1946).

³Ibid., p. 1.

sent the ideal Jesus Christ, the perfect person, as their example to follow. Stories about Jesus will be the means the teacher uses in acquainting the child with Him, and through Him they will learn about God.

In "The Good Shepherd,"¹ Jesus is presented as a shepherd who cares for the lambs of his flock and would lay down his life for his sheep. "The Good Shepherd and His 100 Sheep"² reveals him as the shepherd who is concerned over the loss of one little lamb who is lost. His tenderness is seen in his restoration of a sick boy to health, "Jesus Helps a Sick Boy"³; of the giving of sight to a blind man, "The Man Born Blind"⁴; of those physically handicapped, "Healing the Withered Hand"⁵; of those who are sick, "Jesus Helps Ten Unhappy Men."⁶ The stories that present Christ as a "strong and tender" Christ bear a definite impression on the life of the child.

Lessons are provided to cover spring, fall, summer and the beauties of nature. At each season of the year the child realizes a change is taking place, and through these changes the child can be taught how God cares for His world.

Children admire persons and their works. It is the good works that they want to reproduce in their lives. The actions

¹Lorin Root (ed.), The Standard Junior Teacher (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1947), p. 31

²Armilda Brome Keiser, Learning from Jesus (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1943), p. 116.

³Verna Mae Affsprung (ed.) Standard Primary Teacher (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1947), p. 13

⁴Ibid., p. 19

⁵Gordon D. Forbes, Junior Quarterly for the Teacher (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), p. 60.

⁶Margaret M. Clemens, First Year Primary Quarterly for the Teacher (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1940), p. 26

of the teacher and his associates, as they present the life of perfection of Jesus Christ, will have a great bearing on the child life. The teacher must make the life of Christ supreme in his life that the child will want to follow this example.

As the child learns of God as a Spirit and the revelation of God is through Christ they will build up a love toward Him. Their behaviour will be dictated by the idea that they build up of God, and their feeling toward it. The sentiment expressed will in the whole be that of admiration.

Children must have constant and careful instruction to acquire the central and fundamental Christian principles necessary for their growth. They have to be taught that there is a loving heavenly Father; that His Son, Jesus is our friend; that the Church is God's house, that the Bible is God's word and that through it we find His desires for us; that certain character and conduct are necessary for Jesus' followers. Jesus said of His mission: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."¹ In the teaching of children we are seeking to bring them to the goal of perfect persons in the likeness of Christ, to help them establish a right relationship to God and to others, and in so doing to bring them into the abundant life of which Jesus spoke.

Admiration for God is built through Christ. Jesus said "I and the Father are One,"² and it is through the life and works of Christ that they come to understand and love God.

The primary courses are planned to help children six,

¹John 10:10

²John 10:30

seven, and eight years old to find the abundant life as Jesus defined it. The aim is to lead every pupil to have fellowship with God through an acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and to follow the Christlike way of living. We are interested in the relationship of primary children to God, to Jesus; we desire to develop a sincere appreciation for the Bible; we are concerned that our children shall grow day by day in their ability to practice Christian living and build strong Christian characters; it is important for us to think specifically of their relationship to others, and to the church.

The lessons prepared for this group are prepared with the three years in view. Lessons are taken both from the Old and the New Testaments. Briefly stated the lessons are: The Giver of Good Gifts; Jesus, Friend of All; Worshipping God; Learning to Forgive; Learning to Obey God; Jesus, the Son of God; The Helpers of Jesus; Doing God's Will; Daring to do Right; The Son of God doing God's Will; How the Gospel Spread; The First Great Missionary.¹

As we observe this group physically they are in a period of emotional immaturity. Their interests are in persons, play, pets. They are entering the public schools and are developing the ability to read and write. They are developing a sense of individuality. As they are being taught they are receiving information about God in the midst of their living. They learn that God is good and they are expected to be good for they are God's children. God cares for them and loves them. This care gives them a sense

¹Dorothy Fay Foster (ed.), Primary Teachers Quarterly Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1947).

of security. They learn that He is Father of all, that He is a forgiving Father and that they can have fellowship with Him. They learn of God in terms of the best.

In the study of Jesus God is made real.

A teacher cannot develop Christian ideas of God without studying the children's attitude toward, and their ideas of Jesus, for Jesus makes God real through his life and words.¹

It is important that much of the teaching be based on the life of Jesus for He taught the love of God. The Old Testament scriptures used should be those most in keeping with the teachings of Jesus.

There is a great deal of value in group activity in this group, for through these experiences they will learn to get along together. The teacher shall guide and share in the discussions. A sense of sharing in God's work will be felt as they learn how they can help God in caring for the things of His creation.

There are three particularly potent factors in the development of a child's religion: the indirect influence of actions of older persons; the direct teaching on religious subjects, the natural development of the child's mind.²

If the child does not see in his parents and those about him an expression of reverence for a power greater than themselves, or a sign of worship or of religious feeling in their conduct, or in their conversation, his religion will probably be a very superficial sort.

It is more important that he should imitate actions which are expressive of religious feelings and thus come to wonder, think, and feel for himself, than that he

¹Ethel L. Smither, Teaching Primaries in the Church School (Chicago: Methodist Book Concern, 1930), p. 28

²Regina May Cameron, The Junior and the Church (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1926), p. 61

should learn any amount of pious words.¹

The child's religion should not be as much a matter of knowledge as of attitude and feeling. It is the duty, therefore, of the teacher to bring the child into periods of worship wherein he will want to worship God in an attitude of love, thankfulness, and reverence. "Children do not come to know God merely by being told about Him. They come to know Him through their own experiences of Him."²

The program for the children must provide things to do, stories, associations with persons, Bible study, worship services which will help the children actually to know God for themselves--that they might know what His purposes are, how He helps us, and what He expects of us. No matter how good the lesson courses may be the children cannot learn the Christian way of life unless the adults among whom they live show them the meaning of the way of life that they are being taught.

As we turn to a study of the nine, ten and eleven year olds of the Junior group the most outstanding and noticeable thing about them is their abundance of physical energy. Their growing muscles call for exercise and leads to the developing of skills and powers. These boys and girls are mentally alert, eager to explore new trails and learn new knowledge. It is a period of hero worship. They are becoming capable of thinking about a problem, and taking part in a discussion. They need guidance in making decisions and are

¹Ibid., p. 61

²Guide for the Children's Division of the Local Church (Chicago: International Council of Religious Education, 1939), p. 18

in the habit of making sweeping generalizations. They are interested in things of the moment and are eager to take up a new interest. They are interested in clubs and gangs and being members of a group. Loyalty to the group will sometimes displace a wish of their own.

Juniors are growing in their ability to distinguish right from wrong. They are quick to see when an injustice is done to another, and to see the failure of Christian principles that they have been taught. Many of their impressions and attitudes are gained from adults, and they will reflect the thinking and attitudes of the adult.

The great objective of Christian education is to lead each person to have fellowship with God and to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and to find in Jesus' teachings and life a pattern and guide for daily conduct. The child has advanced through the other classes of the Church school and has discovered that God is loving and good, and expects love and goodness from us; that He is the Creator of this world and the giver of good gifts; that He is still actively at work and He wants us to have a part in building a better and more friendly world. His love includes everyone and He expects us to help others to know of His love. He is glad to have us seek fellowship with Him in prayer and worship, and is always ready to help us to live at our best. As his concept of God grows, the Junior should be able to realize that God has a definite purpose and plan for His world and for each one of His children.

In the Junior Department we shall help the children to

begin a study of Jesus that will continue as long as they live. They should be led to a deeper appreciation of Jesus who reveals God and who makes it possible for us to live at our best, to have a sense of companionship with him, and to share in the responsibility for helping others to know and to love Jesus.

Our emphasis and teaching should be directed to bring the pupil to a wholehearted acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour. All children do not reach the point of maturity while in this group so it is our task to sow the seed that will bear fruit in future development.

As they are taught the Bible it should be with a growing appreciation that it is the revelation of God to all people, and it is the record of the religious experiences of people who were seeking to know God. It is the story of the life and teachings of Jesus and His early followers. It is God's means of speaking to His children.

". . . . Junior boys and girls should make steady progress in learning how to make the teachings of Jesus effective in their daily lives."¹ Juniors may be expected to develop a wholesome self-respect that will lead them to be interested in discovering and making the best use of their abilities. They should be responsible for their conduct, and grow in the ability to stand for the right when others in the group choose another way.

As they become acquainted with the life and activities of other people their interests are widening. They should dis-

¹Grace W. McGavran, First Year Junior Quarterly for the Teacher (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication), 1942, p. 10

cover that the many gifts and talents in the world are a part of God's plan for the richness of life. Their contacts with life will reveal to them that all people do not have equal opportunities and they should be helped to face the problems involved. Through their expanding view on life, and through their study of the teachings of Jesus, they should grow in respect for all human personality.

Lessons for this group are based on: Learning the use of our Bibles, Worshipping Together, My Church and the World, God's Laws for Living, Choosing Things to do, Christian Stewards, The Life of Jesus, Learning to Live Together, Our Church at Work at Home.¹

If the children are to build an adequate idea of God, they must become aware of the thought and the love, and the purpose of God as these are revealed to them in the world in which they are living. At the same time we may let them know of the experiences of others. We may introduce them to the great men of the Old Testament to whom God was so ever present a reality. We may tell them of Paul who knew that nothing could separate him from the love of God. We may lead them to know Jesus, who, even when all men forsook him, was not alone because the Father was with him. We may let them hear of the men and women through the years, in all walks of life, who, by faith in God, have overcome evil and brought about good when the odds were overwhelmingly against them.

The ideals revealed in the scriptural narratives must be

¹The Whole Picture (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, n.d.).

implanted in the life of the child. They must be given him with conviction. They must touch his emotional and volitional nature. They must become a part of him, that they may be used to help and guide when confronted with life situations that require decisions on his part.

It is not enough that the child have the mere factual knowledge of the Bible. He must be guided into an understanding of the truth and into righteousness. The teacher's task is a very important one, for he must serve as the guide to the child. The teacher must rely on the power of the truth and the Word of God and the working of the Spirit in the transformation and building of the spiritual life of the child.

The child's idea of God must be a growing one in his early years. It is not enough that the idea that he had as a mere child be sufficient as he grows into adulthood. It is through the teacher's guidance that his idea will grow. As he grows intellectually and emotionally so will his idea of God grow.

We must not be shocked or disturbed when little children express crude ideas of God. These expressions are thoughts of immature persons who need guidance. The child first thinks of God in the form of human personality. But if he thinks of God in terms of the highest that he knows in human personality, we need not be unhappy. Gradually he may be led to think of the spirit of life, of love of purpose, of intelligence apart from physical attributes and to know God as Spirit.

It has been said that "the curriculum is ninety percent

teacher"¹ and this assertion is being made by Christian educators with more and more conviction. From our study we have seen that most of the teaching up through the Junior groups is done through the project method. For effective teaching it is necessary that the teacher know how to effectively use the materials that are made available to him.

Some of the materials that are made available to teachers we now discuss. Pictures are used to effectively plant a truth in the child's life. To some the "eye" is a better means of acquiring the truth than the "ear". Many good pictures are being produced today and it is these that we suggest that the teacher use. Many teachers use a picture in a "Worship Center" to bring about a worshipful atmosphere, and through this to lead the child to the worship of God. Picto-Graph and flannel-graph pictures are being used with stories. Moving pictures are being used to depict bible truths and bring an awareness of the customs of the people of Jesus time. Building projects and activity books help the children learn to get along with one another and to express the truths of the Christian life. In teaching the use of the Bible the children learn of God's revelation to men.

Songs are used to build an idea of God. Truths are presented that appeal to both the intellect and the emotions. The teacher must choose songs wisely for some would give a wrong message to the child.

Many books have been written that will help both the

¹Hazel A. Lewis, The Primary Church School (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1932), p. 111.

teacher and the parent in teaching the child about God. Mary Alice Jones has written books that will appeal to the small child. "Tell me About God",¹ and "Tell Me About Jesus,"² are stories that will help the child learn about God and Jesus. Others that we would recommend are "God's Wonder World,"³ "Then I Think of God,"⁴ "As the Day Begins",⁵ and a book of prayers for small children is entitled "My Own Book of Prayers."⁶

In our study we have seen that the most widely used method in teaching children from the Nursery through the Junior age is that of the project. In some groups it is used as a teaching activity to a good advantage, while in others it serves only as a means of keeping the child "quiet", or "busy". The materials will aid in the presentation of the idea of God insofar as the teacher has the ability to use them.

When we reach the adolescent period of a child's life the method of presentation changes from the project, to teaching from the Word of God. God is here presented as Spirit and because the child has advanced in mental capacities he is able to understand. As he learns of the love, pity, and self sacrifice of Jesus for them they will want to requite this love

¹Mary Alice Jones, Tell Me About God (New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1946).

²Mary Alice Jones, Tell Me About Jesus (New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1943).

³Bernice Bryant, God's Wonder World (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1944).

⁴Mabel Niedermeyer, Then I Think of God (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1942).

⁵Elizabeth Shields, As The Day Begins (Richmond, Va: Presbyterian Committee of Publication of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. , 1944).

⁶Mary Alice Jones, My Own Book of Prayers (New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1938).

with theirs. It is at this period of life that the sentiment of love is the sentiment which is prominent in the child's life. They have an idea of a God of love, Agape, and to this love direct all their life and devotion. Admiration, devotion, and reverence is directed to this God who is worthy of all love.

Having directed our attention to a study of the child life from Nursery to Adolescence we are more than ever conscious of the part that the teacher plays in teaching religion.

". . . it seems to be the teacher himself who is the most effective lesson."¹ Perhaps this is what Jesus had in mind when He was preparing teachers to carry forth his message to the world. He taught by example. "If I then, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you."²

Paul recognized the importance of the teacher for as he wrote to the Corinthians he said, "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men;"³ James' admonition was: "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment."⁴ But there is a special delegation of responsibility to specific people. Paul explained this to the Ephesians when he said, "And He gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints. . . ."⁵

¹Paul H. Vieth, How to Teach in the Church School
(Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1937), p. 26

²John 13:14,15

³2 Cor. 3:2

⁴James 3:1

⁵Eph. 4:11ff.

The average Bible school teacher has a poor appreciation of the task and responsibility that is his. We shall endeavor next to point out the teacher's position in at least a partial way. Many of the points that will be made come from inference out of things the Master Teacher did and said, as well as had done and said about him.

First, we notice that the teacher takes a dangerous as well as a great position. The Lord said,

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.¹

Second, the teacher stands in a position where he must either represent God or misrepresent Him. Nicodemus came by night to the Master saying, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God."² Every teacher is such by the will of God for God did set people and the office in his church. This is one of the glories of the teacher's life. In representing God truly there is but one channel adequate for the task. This is the one used by Jesus when he taught the very words of God.³ The child that is taught or edified must see God in their teacher.

Third, the teacher is in a position to be an example. Jesus recognized that every teacher was an example of a sort and accordingly warned against the Jews saying, "All things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but

¹Matt. 5:19

²John 3:2

³John 8:28; cf. Mark 12:14

do not after their works; for they say and do not."¹ A final word from Jesus shows the absolute significance of the example of the teacher in the following words. "The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher."² Thus we see that one who edifies has but one life and that life is one that edifies.

Fourth, the position of the teacher in the total church program is important. It is an honor to be known as a teacher. The Master was known probably better as "the Teacher"³ than by any other reference. Paul gloried that he had been appointed "a preacher and an apostle. . . . a teacher of the Gentiles."⁴ It is the message or subject that is taught that gives it dignity. So it is that the teacher receives his glory in that he teaches the very Word of God. He is in a noble succession. Christ taught as the Father had taught him, and the Apostles in turn carried that message so that today the teacher of Christianity stands in their train. The Lord recognized the importance of teaching and gave it an immortal place when he put it in the great commission. The power of teaching is a final indication of its importance. This is illustrated by what the Apostles did in Jerusalem. The Jews were "sore troubled because they taught the people"⁵ thus giving mighty testimony as to the power of teaching.

Fifth, the teacher is in a position that is authoritative.

¹Matt. 23:3

²Luke 6:40

³Matt. 26:18

⁴1 Tim. 2:5-7

⁵Acts 4:1,2

Christ taught as one having authority and the result was astonishment.¹ The teacher who knows the truth and can teach it authoritatively, yet in love will not only have attention but will truly edify.

One might well ask, why so much importance placed on the teacher? This is a good question, for it is in this respect that we find the greatest failure in our Church Schools today. How are some teachers chosen? "We can't find anyone else and you are always here so will you take charge of this class until we can find someone else to do it?" Many times they are left in charge of the class for years. "All you need to do is keep them quiet for the hour, until church time." "The boys of this class all like you because you are a popular football star, will you take this class, for I know that you can keep them in their places?" Is it small wonder that many of the things that the child learns in the church is wrong, that is, that it brings the wrong response. Can we not see that it is here that the lesson plans and materials that are so faithfully prepared lose their importance and force.

The next question which confronts us is, "How shall we improve this condition?" This takes us to our trained leadership. We must train people to effectively take their place in the church. The leader that must first recognize the need is the pastor. He is the leader of the people. There is the necessity for trained pastor--teachers. Pastors are trained to so lead that people will want to accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour but too often his training has not been such that he can teach teachers

¹Matt. 7:28,29

to lead the individual on to perfection which is in Christ. So our first step is to train Pastor-teachers.

Second, we must institute teacher-training classes in the church. If there is no pastor-teacher, or pastor to lead this class, many times High School Superintendents or teachers are so trained that they can conduct them. The teacher must know this religion that he is trying to instill in other individuals. When they recognize the fact that religion is a sentiment, built around an idea of God, which the resulting emotions flowing out naturally they will realize that their task is more than one for an hour on Sunday. There will be the conscious recognition of many factors that influence the child life.

When the teacher recognizes that the highest religious sentiment in Christianity, is Agape, intelligent good will he will place this as the end for which he shall work. He will present as the ideal for the child to attain that as set forth by Christ when he said, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect."¹ Christ is the only perfect person so He shall be presented as the ideal to follow. They will study to make Him manifest in their own lives, that He may be presented by example. Through power and inspiration they will strive to guide the child to perfection, which is the end which religious edification seeks to reach.

Third, materials must be made available for the teacher that will express religion as a sentiment. This will only be

¹Matt. 5:48

produced when the need for it is felt. This need can be made known as we meet in conventions, conferences, and other church meetings. We must lead the child toward Perfection by presenting the Perfect Person who revealed the greatest love the world has ever known.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

Our thesis is a study of the edification or building of religion in children. Religion, to be built up, must be an experience, or a part of consciousness. In Chapter Two we noticed that the only being that is self-conscious is a person. It is his self-consciousness that sets him apart from the animal. The Person is seeking for self-betterment, and in this search he seeks a power outside of himself. His aim is for perfection.

In his search for a power to aid him to reach perfection, he is religious. If he has need only for the aid of persons like himself he is a "humanist". In Chapter Three we discuss religion, and the many definitions that is given it. For our definition we say that religion is "A human rational activity, consisting of all those ideas, emotions, and actions, together with faith in the being and nature of a Superhuman Being, designed by men to invoke superhuman aid in bettering themselves." Religion, psychologically speaking is a sentiment. This sentiment is composed of the emotions and their congruent actions.

As Psychology is the science which treats of the conscious processes we discuss it in Chapter Four. We offer as our definition for this study "A body of organized knowledge, consisting of brief descriptions of mental processes, derived from observation, introspection and reflection, used for saving men's time and energy in thinking and acting."

As education treats the processes of edification, or building religion in people, we turn to a study of what people themselves do. In Chapter Five we study the development of the sentiment of religion in children. We see that children who are shielded from knowledge of God, and those physically handicapped make a religion for themselves. Normal children's idea of God is a growing thing, and is influenced by all the contacts that he makes.

The Mechanics of Edification are treated in Chapter Six. We find that the home is an important factor in the developing of the God Idea in children. The teacher in the Church School is responsible for presenting the correct God Idea in the mind of the child. We then discuss the materials and methods that are used to teach children in the Church School, from the Nursery to the Adolescent. Our greatest failure is the unqualified teacher who directs the child in study and activity.

We recognize that the teacher is the most important factor in presenting Jesus Christ, the Perfect Person to others. His is an important position and one sanctioned by Jesus Christ. Our most outstanding need today is the education of teachers. This education will only come about when the consciousness of the leaders of the Churches is aroused to the great need.

Leaders must be trained, teacher training classes must be established, articles, books and lesson materials

must be provided making religion a sentiment that touches the whole person. Then will we be able to realize in the lives of children that which Jesus had in mind when he said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."¹

¹John 10:10

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