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ARTICLE II.

HOW SHALL WE TEACH RELIGION?

BY REV. A. A. BERLE, D. D.

The present revival of interest in, and discussion of, the subject of religious education, may well be said to mark the beginning of a new epoch of Christian thought upon the question of the religious training of the young. It is epoch-making, first of all, because it points out with relentless clearness and tenacious reassertiveness the utter failure of certain scholastic programs to produce certain other religious results. It makes it evident that there is a very clear and unmistakeable difference between religious and secular education. It shows that the progressive elimination from all public educational institutions of anything like definite religious teaching has resulted in a moral and spiritual decline, which all the optimism in the world cannot gloss over. It accentuates a relation between religion and morals which many have been fond of saying did not exist, and has produced a religious situation in the land which is as bewildering as it is disheartening. Moreover, it indicates that there is no present expectation of accomplishing anything by means of a general reformatory movement among the adult population. Nobody appears to think that either the habits of thought or the practices of the generations mature enough to think for themselves will be changed. By a common consent which is rather remarkable, every one turns to the young for a new order, and seems to hope that only in the education of the youth will a change be brought about. This skepticism concerning the mature mind, and this prevail-

ing unbelief in the possible reformation of the adult population, is itself one of the most significant things about the whole movement. "Educate the young," is the universal rallying cry. "To the school and the college," is written on all the battle standards of the new crusade.

Coincident with this general skepticism concerning the present governing adult population in the church, and allied to it, is a prevailing feeling of the incapability of the clergy successfully to grapple with the question. The new movement generally looks not to the clergyman, but to the college professor, as its leader and inspirer. We know this is true, because the college professors tell us so, and because they alone appear to have the materials and the training by which the reform is to be successfully accomplished. The new movement is to be an educational movement. It is to have the form and the methods of education. It is to be allied pedagogically and psychologically with the most advanced ideas in these branches. It is to have scientific character and to be scientifically justifiable. Now the ministry, in general, is not held to be competent for this task. The present generation of ministers, it is said, has not had the opportunities which are absolutely needful for sufficiency in these things. The sciences which are supposed to create capacity for this work have been developed so recently, and applied so lately to the question of religious training, that there has been no time for the doctrines and methods to get into the pulpits of the land except in very rare cases. It is by no means an exaggeration, to say, that, in general, the feeling of the incompetency of the ministry for the new tasks of religious education is as wide-spread as is the feeling that the whole existing *régime* for the religious instruction of the young has hopelessly broken down. Indeed, the two opinions rest substantially upon the same facts. A competent ministry would not have permitted the present situation to

arise. The deplorable inequalities of the prevailing methods of training the young, and the pitiful failure of the existing means for their instruction in the fundamental truths of religion, prove the fact. The depressing situation and an incapable ministry are corollary facts. This, in general, represents the situation in the minds of those who seem to be in the foreground of the new crusade.

Perhaps it may be worth while to reënforce this view of the case by quotations, which will lift the discussion out of the realm of mere personal opinion. President Eliot, speaking before the Connecticut State Teachers' Association, urging more money for the public schools on account of their shortcomings, distinctly enumerates drunkenness and gambling as having, in the main, not been diminished perceptibly by public-school education, and goes on to declare that the unpunished crimes, the abounding mass of bad or degrading reading-matter, the prevalence of medical delusions, the failure of city government, the general practice of divorce, the survival of the spoils system in politics, and a variety of other ills show conclusively that the American public-school system, certainly up to this point, has failed to keep down the growth of evil in the land. The southern belt of the country is still blood-stained with the ravages of lynching parties, whose revolting details cannot be repeated in mixed assemblies. The whole of the university environment of Chicago cannot produce clean streets, or stop the smoke nuisance. The progress of knowledge and the immense increase in the higher education in Illinois, one of the most remarkable facts of recent educational history, could not prevent a scene at Springfield, the other day, which proved conclusively that sometimes absolute violence alone can preserve freedom in one of the most enlightened commonwealths in the American Union. The pitiful story of St. Louis' corruption, which now appears to have extended throughout

the state government as well, shows a lack of moral perception and quality which is amazing when we remember that this is the beginning of the twentieth century, and that Missouri has been one of the foremost States in the Union in expenditures for public education. Says President Eliot: "Our forefathers expected miracles of prompt enlightenment; and we are seriously disappointed that popular education has not defended us against barbarian vices like drunkenness and gambling, against increase of crime and insanity, and against innumerable delusions, impostures, and follies. We ought to spend more money on schools, because the present expenditures do not produce all the good results which were expected, and may reasonably be aimed at." Therein the president of Harvard University states his view of the facts, and also what he considers the next step in the direction of improvement. It will be noticed that he does not discredit the theory that education will ultimately cause moral improvement, but merely suggests that the thing has been inadequately performed. But that the failure of the school on the side of morals is palpable and beyond question, he affirms without hesitation and with abundant citation.

Now it must not be overlooked that this arraignment of the public school is at the same time an arraignment of the churches of the land, for these also have had their opportunity; they, too, have spent abundant money, and have been carrying on vast enterprises which were supposed to emerge in the moral and spiritual enlightenment of the multitudes. If the facts are as President Eliot presents them, then the Christian churches of America cannot escape their measure of responsibility for the existing situation. Indeed, it is the recognition of this fact that has led to the religious-education movement which we are now discussing. In the secular field, President Eliot says, it is the lack of expenditures which has made the schools

morally inefficient. In the field of religious education, notably in the Bible schools of the land, in the main it is charged to an incapable ministry, which in turn has produced incapability through the whole educational machinery of the church. It is worth while to mention, simply in passing, that, among the propositions which the president of Harvard University brings forward for the betterment of the situation in the public schools, is one which has to do with pensions for teachers, and various other proposals which shall give to the teacher greater security, more permanent tenure, greater peace of mind, and other conditions *sine qua non* to effective teaching. If these are needful for power and efficiency in teaching, what shall we infer as to their necessity to the preacher and pastor? The subject of salaries for pastors, tenure of office, and other similar matters may have a bearing upon this question which is worth careful examination and discussion.

To show that the president of Harvard University is not alone in his opinion, let us cite the testimony of another eminent educator, who represents a totally different type of thought. Speaking on the subject "State Education: Its Rise and Present Standing," President Jacob Gould Schurman, of Cornell University, after reviewing the conditions prevailing in the public schools of the land, closed his estimate with the following paragraph:—

"Here then is the situation as I see it. The schools at present do next to nothing for moral culture, and nothing whatever for religious training, which is indispensable for the energizing of moral culture. Yet these ends are all-important. In Germany and in England they are legally assigned to the schools, as they were also by the Puritan founders of the New England commonwealths, and in China they form the most important object of all education. Our schools are criticised for this notable deficiency. The teachers, in my judgment, are not qualified to meet it."

Here we have, not only the judgment expressed as to the conditions with which we have to deal but we have the important addition, to the estimate of the conditions, that the teachers are not qualified to meet the emergency which is thus thrust upon them. It is interesting to note that, as a partial remedy for this state of affairs, Dr. Schurman proposes the coöperation of the churches, and to introduce religious training into the public schools through the introduction into the schools of the ministers of all denominations according to the proportion of the students who choose their teaching.

President Schurman, whom we have already quoted, adds here also an interesting testimony, which certainly cannot be supposed to proceed from any instinct of religious conservatism, or from any particular fear of radical or destructive teaching. It will be seen, in the passage we are about to quote, that several things are distinctly affirmed; namely, the essential difference between mere academic instruction and religious teaching, the general inability to link the two successfully together, the power of personality as the supreme factor in religious teaching, and the necessity for authority, that is substantially the requisition for a kind of conviction in the teacher which is the assertion of a superior and effective authority for the message imparted. Says President Schurman:—

“The school provides intellectual instruction; it is neither a state church nor reformatory. For this moral and spiritual vocation the teachers have neither the necessary aptitudes nor credentials. Much as I am devoted to the public schools, and greatly as I appreciate their democratic spirit and the discipline they furnish in prudence and the minor virtues, I do not want the teachers either as priests or moralists for my children—and that though teachers be proficient in their work and of character irreproachable.

"Do I then disparage moral and religious instruction? Far from it. That men be pious and good seems to me more important than that they be educated. And I am firmly persuaded that children are trained in goodness, not by any study of ethical text-books, but by contact with good men and women and also through the awakening of the sentiments of duty and righteousness by means of direct religious teaching. In children, as indeed in the generality of mankind, morality without religion is in constant danger of degenerating into expediency and convenience: it lacks both support and authority."

There is probably not a single intelligent observer of the situation as it exists in this country at present, who has thought along these lines for any considerable period, whose convictions these words do not express with substantial accuracy.

RELIGIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION.

In discussing the possibilities of the new educational movement for religious education, it is to be noted that there is here a demand for a scientific training which shall be in accord, as the statement goes, with the pedagogical and psychological principles which govern, or are supposed to govern, in other departments of instruction. In other words, scientific instruction is to be the norm by which religious education is to be judged and carried on. Now it cannot be regarded as irrational opposition to the proposed program, if we raise the question whether there is not a vital difference between scientific education and religious education which renders the methods of the one, subject to more or less variation when transferred to the other. Scientific teaching of chemistry or geology is possible, undoubtedly. We raise the question, Is there no fundamental difference between the scientific method employed in teaching chemistry or geology, and that necessary for

teaching religion? Religion here must not be confused with the history of religion, observe, or even the Bible; for the external facts of the Bible, or the history of religion, or even church history may be taught utterly without any bias, or even the slightest personal interest, on the part of the instructor. But it is religion we are to teach, and it is religious instruction that we are to seek. Moreover, religious instruction here is not to be confused with ethics or the teaching of moral maxims. Let us steadily keep in mind what we have in view, namely, religious instruction. Is there no essential difference between the method and fundamental requirements incident to the teaching of chemistry and those required in religious teaching? To ask this question is itself in part to answer it; but, nevertheless, we will answer it directly. Professor Trowbridge, of Harvard University, has lately given us the determinate quality of scientific knowledge or experiment. It lies, he says, in the quality of "repeatableness." A genuine scientific experiment, says Professor Trowbridge, is one which any one suitably skilled, and with suitable appliances, can reproduce at will. This takes it out of the region of individual opinion, caprice, or point of view. This is what makes it "science," and everything that has the character "scientific," has, as its determinate characteristic, this quality of repeatableness. Now we know this can be done in chemistry, geology, or any of the recognized sciences. Is a purely scientific demonstration from this point of view possible in religion? Can religion be scientifically taught, keeping in mind what the professor in physics at Harvard says is the determinate quality of a scientific experiment or method?

Moreover, scientific education takes no account of personalities. The professor of physics or chemistry or geology may, or may not, be personally admirable or otherwise. He may be agreeable or disagreeable to his pupils.

On the moral side he may be absolutely neutral, without vitiating the scientific authority of his instruction, or the validity of his conclusions in his particular field of inquiry and instruction. But is this true in religion? Or has the personality of the instructor a value, in the department of religion, which it has not anywhere else? And is not this value an educational value; that is, one that gives greater or less validity to the method and material of instruction? To ask this question also seems to be answering it; for, if there is anything that seems to be settled, it is that the personal element in religious teaching and work is so largely the predominant element, that orthodoxy and heresy are becoming almost exclusively matters of personality. At all events, certain personages are allowed to hold opinions and express them which are not tolerated in others, and the judgment of most councils, and other bodies which have to do with authorizing teachers of religion, takes more account of what they call "the spirit of the man" than they do of the special doctrines he holds. They somehow seem to feel that a right spirit will ultimately teach the right things. Of course this is exactly along the New Testament line that, "Whoever will do the will, shall know of the teaching"; but of this circumstance at present we take no account. The main fact to be noted is, that almost universally the personality has not only force, significance, and authority in the matter of religious instruction, while it has absolutely none in scientific teaching, but that such personality is the supreme and often decisive element, almost to the exclusion of many other important elements in such instruction.

If there is an exception to this contrast, it is in the science of pedagogy. We are not aware whether pedagogy is or is not yet properly a science; but, if it is, it is a science in which provision must be made for the personal element. Pedagogy and personality are so inextricably linked to-

gether in the teacher, that it would be exceedingly difficult to know which was which. The most successful teachers, as a rule, are not able to define exactly what it is that gives them their success; just as the greatest preachers seem unable to explain satisfactorily to intending candidates for the pulpit, what it is that gives them their power. Certainly, when we discuss the science of teaching, we introduce a personal element which must qualify, if it does not often invalidate, whatever scientific instruction may be given in this department.

The difference which is here brought to view is, in the judgment of the present writer, fundamental and vital. There is a large measure of difference between scientific and religious instruction which rests upon data, materials, and facts of personality which makes what is sound and effective in one sphere, only approximately so in the other. Whoever states he has a scientific method for religious instruction, therefore, either cannot mean what the clearest-headed men of science mean by scientific method, or else ignores elements which in religious teaching cannot possibly be ignored, or fails to make proper and absolutely necessary distinctions between religion and the mere external data by which religion expresses itself to the world. But there seems to be no escape from the conclusion, even most superficially viewed, that, where there is religious instruction in the true sense, the paramount authority and effective dynamic lies in the personality of the instructor.

Nor is this the whole argument for the view that there is a significant difference between the method and factors of scientific and religious teaching. It is asserted that active identification with the cause of religion by a teacher of philosophy, the branch of knowledge with which pedagogy and psychology are most closely allied, is a distinct hindrance to efficiency in this department. Professor Royce, of Harvard University, read lately, before the

American Philosophical Association at Washington, a paper on "The Attitude of Teachers of Philosophy towards Religion," which, after stating that such an attitude should be "frank as it is conciliatory, as judicially critical as it is reverently earnest, as free from dogmatic presumption as it is from indifference," has the following passage:—

"For the rest, I am glad when, under the conditions as they exist to-day, the philosophical teacher's convictions are such that he sees his way to avoid all connection with any sect or form of the visible church. I say, I am glad of this result when it occurs; because, first, I am persuaded that a personal relation to the visible church has to-day a value which concerns chiefly the man engaged in certain practical philanthropic tasks. These tasks are indeed of utmost social importance, but they form no part of the philosopher's peculiar and special social function—a function that I have already characterized. I like to see the philosopher devoted to his own business. And, secondly, as I hold, the philosopher, by holding aloof from the visible church, helps himself to maintain in himself, and to display to his students, that judicial spirit which I have insisted upon as his special possession. The mass of mankind cannot cultivate this judicial spirit, except as a mere incident of their practical life. The philosopher has to make it his professional business, and I think, therefore, that he gains by an avoidance of relation to the visible church, just as a judge gains by declining to be a party man. To the invisible church the philosopher, if loyal to his task, inevitably belongs, whatever be his opinions. And it is to the invisible church of all the faithful his loyalty is due."

Thus science and philosophy unite in making conditions which are practically impossible in religious instruction. Scientific teaching demands that what is taught

must have impersonal veraciousness, capacity for repetition, utterly without relation to the personal element in teacher or pupil, no concern for moral quality or defect in either, and purely responsive to an academic standard of physical or intellectual truthfulness. Philosophical teaching, according to one of its most eminent representatives in America, gains in judicial spirit and poise by holding aloof from all organized religion in the form of any visible church. As religious teaching properly viewed cannot produce the first condition, it must necessarily remain outside the sphere denominated scientific. As it must almost necessarily be allied to some form of the visible church, it must lose philosophical poise and the judicial spirit. Is anything further necessary to show that religious teaching and secular, or what generally may be termed scientific teaching, are two things, in which there are certain deep, fundamental, and ineradicable differences, which cannot be glossed over, and which are palpable, permanent, and must be taken into account in any serious and fruitful discussion of the matter of religious education?

ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION OF THE DIFFERENCE.

We have shown that there is a far-reaching and fundamental difference between the method which is involved in dealing with the factual material of scientific phenomena, and that which takes into account the personal quality of the teacher, which is so predominant in the religious sphere. We have indicated, with reasonable clearness, that this difference is recognized best by those who are clearest in their outlook, and whose judgment is least controlled by merely external conditions. There is the difference indicated. The question now is, What is its cause? Here again we must not be dogmatic or presumptuous. There may be more than one explanation, or there may be many elements in the true explanation. We propose now

to give an outline of one possible explanation of the difference, which may or may not be the right one, but which is at least entitled to consideration on its merits.

If, as we have shown that in the matter of religious instruction, the personal quality counts for more than any other single quality, it is worth while to inquire if one line of explication may not lie in the difference of end to be achieved by the contrasting methods and points of view. What, for example, we may ask, is the end to be achieved in making a given experiment in chemistry? Is it the transmission of so much knowledge of the physical world? Is it the cultivation of a form of intellectual approach to the phenomena of the world, or is it the attainment of a mental discipline which will result in a well-developed, all-round intellectual life? Probably most educated men would say, that, except in special cases, where the aim is original research or teaching, the chemistry which the average student is taught, partakes of all three of these elements; all, however, culminating usually in the general purpose of giving a thorough discipline of mind and an academic touch, which shall make for a reasoning and reasonable life. This is in general the end of education. When it has more added to it, it becomes technical or special education. But for the most part it is to produce reasonable and reasoning characters. The aim, therefore, of all such instruction, is academic discipline. Now is this end the one which we are accustomed to think of as that in which religious education is finally to emerge? When we think of religious instruction, do we think first of an all-round reasonable approach to the world, or do we think first of a definite special alliance of heart and purpose with God, out of which shall come a holy and a godly life? Probably the scientific instructor would say that a reasonable life is such a life. But is it? Is a scientific view of life and the world necessarily a religious one, or one that

has duty, love, and sacrifice as absolutely necessary elements?

Again, religious instruction almost invariably and almost necessarily allies itself with institutional life of some kind. Certainly, if there is to be a Bible school, there must be a church to maintain it. And if a church to maintain religious instruction, that instruction must contemplate, as one of its certain results, a constant inflow into its ranks of those who are thus instructed. Is not this the fact? Would the great mass of the teachers in the Bible schools of the land go to their work as they do, voluntarily, and without compensation, and often at the cost of time, strength, and sacrifice, which such work faithfully performed requires, were there not behind it the hope that those thus taught would take their places in the Christian church, and help thus to perpetuate the teaching, the inspiration, and the faith which the Christian gospel inculcates? Now this aim of itself must count for much in the instructor; and the degree with which he sees the relation of his instruction to the future of Christianity in the life of the world, is usually the degree of his efficiency in his chosen form of Christian work. Of course this is propagandism. But all missionary work is propagandism; and, unless we are prepared to affirm that all missionary work is to cease, we must hold that the spirit of propagandism is a necessary element in religious teaching. And is not this expressly enjoined in the New Testament? What else does the command "Go ye into all the world, and disciple all nations," mean, if not this? We think that the difference of aim between the form of instruction which contemplates merely the perfection of the individual life on the side of its own approach to an understanding of the world, and that which regards the subject-matter of its teaching as life-giving and fundamental to happiness and joy in the world, to say nothing at all about the question

of relation to Jesus Christ, may account for a good share of the difference between these two methods of teaching.

But there is a deeper reason, and one which is much more satisfying; namely, that the religious teacher is endeavoring not so much to discipline, that is train, as to create, life. He is working not in the factual region of data, but in the spiritual region of motive. He must, to be sure, deal with facts, but only as facts suggest motives, and as motives lead to decisions which involve creative purposes and personal transformations. To point out the evils of selfishness with all the abounding illustrations which are lying about everywhere, is a very different thing from creating the motive to adopt an unselfish life. The one may be done by a selfish person, one with only a slender equipment of unselfishness. But whosoever would move men to be unselfish, or teach children and youth to be such persons, must not only show the evils that follow in the train of selfishness, but illustrate the unselfish life also and at the same time; and the latter fact gives the teaching authority and power. This is true in the area of simple ethics. When we come to the sphere of religion, the thing is tenfold more important. To convey the idea of relationship to God, sonship in fact; to show the joy of such a relation, and its power and worth in life, requires not knowledge first, but godliness as the primary equipment for successful teaching. We take it that most of us still believe that men turn to God under the persuasion of the Holy Spirit, and that it is the Spirit that "convince[s] of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Is not the teaching of the Bible, for example, with the hope that those taught will be impressed sufficiently to become the proper and obedient subjects of the Spirit's teaching and guidance, a totally different object from that we have described as one of academic discipline? And is not the difference a world-wide one in content, outlook, form of procedure,

and general spiritual expectation? Why is it that we feel it just and right, and altogether fitting, to pray on beginning such a task, while we cannot but feel a certain incongruity in asking God to cause certain chemical reactions to take place, or certain geometrical propositions to prove true? What is there about the teaching of a Bible lesson that makes the devotional attitude artistically exact, and that renders the same attitude with reference to a problem in surveying, ludicrous? Is it not that, under one form, the teacher's own relation to God is a part of the task, and that the vital and important part?

We cannot but believe that the spiritual equipment of the teacher of religion—which equipment is not an academic, but a devotional or spiritual, product—is of the first and most far-reaching importance in the discussion of this whole problem. It is the confusion of ideas alone, that raises the hope that mere revision of academic method will lift us out of our Slough of Despond, and set us upon the highway of effective religious instruction. Thoroughness of identification, on the part of the teacher, with the ultimate things which he seeks to see produced in the life and character of his pupil, is the first and the greatest object to be achieved in any really effective reformation among us, in the matter of teaching religion.

The view here expressed has lately found utterance in the singularly clear and felicitous discussion of some of the fundamental moods and facts of life by Carl Hilty in his little volume on "Happiness, Essays on the Meaning of Life." Professor Hilty is the professor of Constitutional Law in the University of Bern, Switzerland, and has no particular school of theology or philosophy in mind. Speaking simply as an observer of life and life relations and influences, he remarks on the subject of idealism and religion: "No one becomes an idealist by being taught about it or by reasoning concerning it. Nor is this so

strange as it might seem, for the very trustworthiness of the human reason itself is proved to us only by experience. The very truths of religion remain unproved unless the moral power issues from them which provides their proof. That which has power must have reality. No other proof of reality is final. Even our senses could not convince us if our experience and the experience of other men did not assure us that we could—not unconditionally, but under normal conditions—trust them not to deceive. That which brings conviction to one is his experience, and that which rouses in him the desire and inward disposition to believe in his own experience is the testimony of others who have had that experience themselves.” Here we have a perfectly lucid and untheological statement of what most men know to be the facts concerning themselves, and in it the element of an believing and experienced personality is seen to be the supreme factor, not merely in the matter of the religious experience itself, but in the sustaining of confidence in the human reason, which is its ultimate court of appeal.

This again is true, because it springs from the quality of disinterestedness, which lies at the base of all genuine religion. This quality allies religion much more with art, than with science or philosophy; and, for this reason, poetry and song have been the favorite vehicles for the truest expression of genuinely religious ideas and emotions. A recent writer on this subject has a passage which, to our mind, is suggestive in the extreme: “What message has Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Virgil, or any true poet? The message we have the power to draw from him, and no two of us will draw the same. Art is a circle; it is complete within itself; it returns ever upon itself. There is no great poetry without great ideas and yet the ideas must exist as impulse, will, emotion, and not lie upon the surface as formulas. The enemies of art are reflection, special

ideas, conscious intellectual processes, because these things isolate us, and shut us off from the life of the whole, from that which we reach through our sentiments and emotions." Substitute for "art" the word "religion," and it remains almost as true. It is the same author, Mr. John Burroughs, who says: "Teaching literature is like teaching religion. You can give only the dry bones of the matter in either case. But the dry bones of theology [he might have added literary and historical criticism] are not religion, and the dry bones of rhetoric are not literature. . . . From every art certain rules and principles may be deduced; but the intelligent apprehension of these rules and principles, no more leads to mastery in that art, or even helps in the mastery of it, than a knowledge of the anatomy and the vital processes of the stomach helps a man to digest his dinner, or than the knowledge of the gunsmith helps make a good marksman. . . . To be a fiddler you must fiddle and see others fiddle; to be a painter you must paint and study the painting of others; to be a writer you must write and familiarize yourself with the works of the best authors. Studying an author from the outside by bringing the light of rhetoric to bear upon him is of little profit. We must get inside of him, and we can only get inside of him through sympathy and appreciation. . . . The laboratory way may give one the dry bones of the subject, but not the living thing itself." Insert here in the appropriate places the words "religion" and "Bible," and you have a pretty truthful record of how most of the effective Christian work of the world has been done, and is being done. Sympathy and appreciation, which are personal qualities springing from personal experiences of like character, form the basis of effective Christian teaching, and in fact of all religious teaching. And these are not taught by academic processes. They are the product of that continuous activity of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men

by which truth is revealed as truth, and is translated into life and service.

THE CHURCH AS A FACTOR IN THE PROBLEM.

Every educated man, and in fact every man who is intelligent enough to be familiar with the intellectual and scientific movements which are now in progress, knows that in the matter of education there is a so-called atmosphere, which is one of the most powerful elements in the whole business of education. Every university has an atmosphere, which makes or does not make for certain things. This is the reason why, from time to time, as the old graduate goes back to visit his alma mater, he is very severely tried to find that the spirit of the place has so completely changed that he often feels sorry that he came. The atmosphere is different. The things which were uppermost in his time have vanished, and other things are supreme. Now this prevailing temper, or point of view, is the real point of departure of all education, and especially of religious education. The young student goes to college with all his home-bred habits of steadiness, self-restraint, and sobriety. He finds very soon that the practices with which he is surrounded, and the standards by which he is judged, are very much broader and less exacting than those with which he was formerly acquainted. Gradually his own standards take on the qualities of those which prevail around him. He does not consciously abandon any idea which he held before, or deliberately vacate his views on given questions of morality or conduct: he simply extends his practice to fit those who are in constant contact with him, and makes the doctrine which he held before sufficiently elastic to include his present practices. Now this is exactly the procedure which has taken place in the last twenty-five years in the religious life of the nation. Many a man who would fight with all his

might to-day for his orthodoxy, in practice nullifies every fragment of moral standing-ground upon which it rests. The vocabulary of morality and religion has greatly increased, and brought into the sphere of quasi-religion many things which are only forms of philanthropy; in fact, so much is this the case, that many, like Professor Royce, think that the only good reason for belonging to a church is the attainment of some practical philanthropic aim. Severe thought the church no longer exacts of its worshippers. But this is not all: it makes no more severe drafts on faith or behavior. And this general extension of what is, so to speak, religiously tolerable, has produced a religious demoralization which has made an atmosphere in most churches which is itself the greatest bar to religious teaching of any effective kind. Some years ago the late Mr. E. L. Godkin, editor of the *New York Evening Post*, wrote an essay on the subject "The Church and Good Conduct," in which, stern, unyielding logician that he was, and relentless pursuer of shams as well, he stated some things from the point of view of a mere observer of men which may be interesting to theologians. It should be said that for theology Mr. Godkin had the supremest contempt. He could hardly speak with respect of the ministerial profession as regards its claim to intellectual recognition and worth; but he saw some things steadily and clearly enough, notwithstanding. Speaking of the Unitarian effort to make Christ's influence and authority rest on his moral teachings and example "without the support of a divine nature or mission," he says, that the attempt has "failed. The Christian church cannot be held together as a great social force by his teaching or example as a moral philosopher. A church organized on this theory speedily becomes a lecture association or a philanthropic club. . . . Christ's sermons need the touch of supernatural authority to make them impressive enough for the work of social

regeneration ; and his life was too uneventful, and the society in which he lived too simple, to give his example real power over the imagination of a modern man who regards him simply as a social reformer." Speaking further on the moral decline of the church, and especially its loss of moral authority, he adds these very impressive words:

"Church-membership ought to involve discipline of some kind, in order to furnish moral aid. It ought, that is to say, to impose some restraint on people's inclinations the operation of which will be visible and enforced by some external sanction. If, in short, Christians are to be regarded as more trustworthy, and as living on a higher moral plane than the rest of the world, they must furnish stronger evidence of their sincerity than is now exacted of them in the shape of plain and open self-denial. The church, in short, must be an organization held together by some stronger ties than enjoyment of weekly music and oratory in a pretty building, and alms-giving which entails no sacrifice, and often is only a tickler of social vanity. . . . The practice of the church will have to be forced up to its own theory of its character and mission, which would involve serious collision with some of the most deeply-rooted habits and ideas of modern social and political life. That there is any immediate probability of this we do not believe. Until it is brought about, members must make up their minds to have religious professions treated by some as but slight guarantees of character, and by others as but cloaks for wrong-doing, hard as this may be for that large majority to whom they are an honest expression of sure hopes and noble aims."

It is the serious judgment of the present writer, that this quotation touches the sore spot which we are trying to heal to-day by means of a new system of instruction. The question is not fundamentally one of intellectual method after all. It is a question of moral demand and of spirit-

ual power. The modern church has in it little of the atmosphere which is itself an education in benevolence and righteousness. It lacks the great force which comes of numerous majestic spiritual natures who are giving the visible evidence that their religious life is something more than weekly æsthetic enjoyment, and appreciation of the efforts of a body of earnest men to steadily extend for them the area of the enjoyable things of life into which they may come without loss of Christian status or character. The one thing which must impress every careful thinker on this subject is the paucity of the requirements which are made for membership in the church. In fact, it is not too much to say, as Mr. Godkin in another paragraph does say, that "of late years the church has been making a gallant effort to provide accommodations for the successful, and enable them to be good Christians without sacrificing any of the good things of life, and in fact, without surrendering anything they enjoy, or favoring the outside public with any recognizable proof of their sincerity."

This attitude of the church itself is a vastly greater factor in the problem of religious training than are any mere changes of method, or the introduction of new principles of pedagogy, or even changes in the conception of the psychological elements of religion. Character is built up, and moral strength comes, by being compelled to do those things which are not specially pleasant, and which are outside the domain of æsthetic enjoyment. The modern theory of the religious life seems, for the most part, utterly to ignore this fact. It seems to imagine that the world has neither interest nor right in calling for proof that protestations of religious devotion are sustained by sacrifices in life. It was no careless, thoughtless man who made the observations just quoted, but one of the strongest intellects of the generation just passed away. The theory of the religious life itself needs to be reëxamined; but we need to

discover, first of all, just what the nature of the religious life to which the young are to be led is, and what its practical demands and bearings are, before we set about a new form of the Sisyphean task of rolling this great human problem up the hill of intellectual theory again, only to have it roll down upon us once more. The young will feel the impulse and the power of religion tenfold more in a single example of sacrifice on the part of their religious instructors than in all the theory and method in the world. A daring personage, the other day, questioned whether the church as constituted to-day was a suitable place to teach the religion of Jesus Christ. This was, of course, startling, ill-mannered, and severe. But certainly the contrast between the theory of the church and the actual life of the church is marked, impressive, and uncomfortable. It is this contrast that nullifies the undoubtedly biblical, faithful, and sound teaching of many pulpits. It is this failure to provide the working model which makes all our appeals of none effect, and more than all creates the atmosphere alien to the growth of religion.

The distressing and unquestionable fact is, that many of the church people are not religious people. And many churches are not properly churches, but Sunday audiences which, in general character and respectability, are somewhat above the average, but governed by essentially the same ideals, and ready to enforce about the same standards, that are applied to the theater, the concert, and the lecture platform. If the services give pleasure and are enjoyable, all is well. If they become too severe either intellectually or in moral demand, or too uncomfortable in their searchingness, the average church-member holds that it is his inalienable right to go where more satisfactory conditions prevail. That this has its effect upon the vast body of the Protestant clergy, who are dependent upon the good-will of the congregation for support, is beyond denial.

And it is this fact which has brought about the religious and moral decline, which has now reached the secondary stage of crass ignorance, on the part of a large body of the constituency of the Christian church, concerning the Bible, Christian doctrine, and in fact all that makes for a distinctive religious, as contrasted with a worldly, life. To hope that this situation can be remedied by better instruction in the Bible, even by the most enlightened methods, is in our judgment a great error. To suppose that it is a question entirely of theological view is equally foolish. Where there is a genuinely sacrificial life enacting in the full view of mankind, nobody cares whether it is governed by a broad, a liberal, or a conservative theology. Few people care to know whether the man thus illustrating his religion, is of one denomination or another. Not many are disturbed even if he has numberless personal eccentricities, if these are seen to have no bearing on the main question. It is the union of teaching and life that tells the story, and that persuades. It is teaching by example which, after all, is the most effective teaching known to man. The factor of the spiritual life and habitual moral and religious tone of the church, as furnishing the medium in which religious ideas are absorbed, is more important even than the factor of a strong religious personality.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION INVOLVES ADVOCACY.

There is another feature of the discussion of this subject which quite curiously seems to be left out of most of the utterances concerning it. It is the relation of instruction and advocacy in the matter of religious teaching. The prevailing theory of religious teaching seems to be, that the facts of religion, and especially the facts of biblical history, can be taught in a perfectly dispassionate way, and that this is religious teaching. But, as a matter of fact, this is not religious teaching, and cannot ever become such.

Nor is the principle which is implied in this statement confined entirely to the domain of religion. In Mr. Webster's great speech on Samuel Dexter, he uses these words: "He had studied the Constitution *that he might defend it*. He had examined its principles *that he might maintain them*. . . . Aloof from technicalities, and unfettered by artificial rules, such a question [one of constitutional law] gave opportunity for that deep and clear analysis, that mighty grasp of principle, which so much distinguished his higher efforts. His very statement was argument. His inference seemed demonstration. *The earnestness of his own conviction wrought conviction in others. One was convinced, and believed, and assented*, because it was gratifying, delightful, to think, to feel, and believe, in unison with an intellect of such evident superiority." This is one of the most interesting pen pictures of a great man by a man, as a recent writer has remarked, who was himself the embodiment of precisely these things. Mr. Webster is here dealing with a great student and expounder of constitutional law. He was himself foremost among Americans in this same field. It is, therefore, doubly interesting to notice the elements upon which Mr. Webster lays stress in the matter of securing assent and allegiance for the theories of the Constitution for which Mr. Dexter stood, and for which Mr. Webster himself stood.

Notice, first of all, that the great advocate accentuates the motive which governed Dexter in his study of the Constitution and its underlying principles. "He studied the Constitution *that he might defend it*." This is no accidental choice of words. Mr. Webster knew exactly what he meant when he chose the word "defend." Now the teaching of religion, in a peculiar and exceptional sense, requires just this element. Religious opinions, and especially religious faith, are always in danger of assault by the careless, the unbelieving, and the ungodly. It is no-

torious that no opinions in this world have to run the gauntlet of indifference and hostility to the degree that religious opinions do. Therefore it requires, in a peculiar and exceptional sense, an underpinning of conviction girded with weapons of defense. If a great constitutional lawyer was great in the interpretation of the federal Constitution because the motive power of his study was the defense and the maintenance of the principles which it contained, it is of tenfold more importance that those who teach the Bible, and undertake to give religious training to the young, shall speak out of a conviction and an attachment which amounts to advocacy. Of course this opens one to the charge of partisanship or sectarianism to a greater or less degree. But the alternative, as we have already shown, is Professor Royce's no-churchism. Religious teaching requires, for effectiveness, belief in the doctrines taught, and anxiety that they who are taught shall not merely get information, but shall acquire conviction. Who cares how eloquently the orator sets forth the party principles if the votes are not won? Who cares how exquisitely a text may be expounded or the historical setting may be displayed, if the net result is to produce people who simply stand twirling tidbits of unusual information around in their minds, and, while always learning, never arrive at a knowledge of sufficient truth to enable them to identify themselves with the cause of Christianity in the world!

Observe again, if you please, the vocabulary which Mr. Webster employs in speaking of Samuel Dexter's persuasiveness in his pleading: "One was convinced, and believed, and assented." Is not this the language which we habitually employ in religion? Is it not the supremest purpose of all Christian teaching to convince, to cause to believe, and to win assent? And if, as Mr. Webster says, conviction, namely a position to maintain and uphold, is necessary to secure these results in the law, how much

more true is it in the matter of religion! The attitude of intellectual catholicity in these matters is the merest pretense. Men cannot be colorless in religion. Convictions are convictions precisely because they have color, and are differentiated from other convictions. The idea that religion can be taught, or that anything but the barest facts of religious history can be taught, without at the same time having in the teacher a great passion to win the pupil to his own view and to his own attitude of obedience and reverence, is as absurd as to imagine that merely to cause a sick man to look at a prescription is to take effective measures for his restoration. Oftentimes the prescription of the spiritual physician may also be in a foreign language. But just as often the taking of the medicine brings spiritual health and strength. Surely the phenomena of various wide-spread and current superstitions among us ought not to be lost upon us. Surely we ought to have learned by this time that giving expositions and treatises upon the various elements of religion is not inculcating faith, or producing the conditions antecedent to a religious life.

The objective point in religious instruction is to convince: that involves advocacy. Its purpose is to secure belief: that involves conviction. Its aim is to gain assent: that involves faith in the thing expounded. And this advocacy is of paramount importance. It might, once for all, be accepted as a truth, that most people never will attain the judicial attitude described by Professor Royce; or, having attained it, will be happy, useful, or religiously inspired by impartial aloofness from the church and her fellowship and ordinances. This everlasting attitude of neutrality, this eternal balancing of probabilities, is both practically useless and logically defective. This interrogative attitude in the schools has sent forth a type of men who cannot be relied upon in any emergency to grapple decisively with the great facts of life; and the whole

municipal situation in the United States proves it. It has sent forth moral indeterminates; and the facts in the change of the character of the criminal population shows that. It has sent forth as allies and substitutes for the grafter of low degree, the grafter of high degree, whose veneer of civilization has been but the effective disguise for deeper iniquity and greater shame. We are not advocating now any particular theory either of religion or theology. The bigotry which has characterized the literalists of other days, is in some ways more than matched by the bigotry of the lateralists of our own day. The vocabulary of scholastic vagueness and uncertainty has grown tenfold faster than has the development of scholastic announcement of effective principles. We appeal from the indeterminate dispenser of religion, to the advocate of the Christianity of Jesus Christ. All religious teaching involves advocacy, belief, conviction, and determination to win assent, as conditions *sine qua non* of power and persuasiveness. We have the authority of the foremost name in the history of American constitutional law, that this is true in that sphere. It is vastly more true in religion than it ever can be in the law. Better far indefensible doctrine with a brave heart and an unswerving faith behind it, than a defensible doctrine with a wavering, insecure, dilettante proclaiming it. We plead for conviction in teaching. We do not now discuss the quality or the character of the conviction. Let those who hold one class of theories take them bravely, faithfully, and aggressively into the school-room, the Bible-school, and the pulpit. Let us have determinate, intelligible teaching from men who believe in their teaching. Let those who hold other theories do likewise with theirs. By their fruits shall ye know them all. Personally I do not believe that the indeterminate attitude can be successfully maintained in many of the sciences. But whether that be the case or not, it is certain that religious teaching

must have behind it religious conviction; that the teacher of religion must be an advocate for the thing which he is set to teach. If this means that he is classified and limited as to range and area of power, then that is simply saying, that what he loses in extensiveness, he may gain, and usually does gain, in intensiveness. But it is as clear as noonday that we must teach the Bible, to maintain its principles; that we must speak out of such warmth, such belief, such love, and such faith, that, to use Mr. Webster's phrase once more, the earnestness of our conviction shall create conviction in others; that men may be convinced, may believe and may assent, because it is gratifying, delightful, to think, to feel, and to believe with intellects of such evident superiority. We may not convince them of our intellectual superiority, but it is our great privilege and our unquestionable purpose to prove to them the superiority of the belief and faith by which our own lives are governed and regulated, that they may seek it for themselves. The instruction which has no advocacy behind it may be academically sufficient. It will never be religious instruction until to it is added a passion for winning adherents and allies.

GENERAL INFERENCES AND WORKING PRINCIPLES.

From what has already been said, a few general inferences and working principles on the general relation of academic discipline and religious teaching may be gained, which may well be made the basis for further thought on the subject. They are offered here, not as finalities, and not at all as embodying anything other than a certain measure of experience and observation in the matter under discussion. They represent, however, so far as they go, what we think every working minister can verify in his own parish, and what every Christian worker of even the most limited experience knows to be approximately true.

1. It may be laid down then, first, among the inferences and conclusions from what we have said, that no amount of academic discipline in the materials of religious knowledge necessarily emerges in religious instruction. This is one of the fundamental differences between the methods prevailing in general between the study of the sciences and training in religion. Biblical knowledge does not carry with it experience of the religion of the Bible, and, *ipso facto*, biblical instruction is not religious instruction. It obviously requires something more than the materials of religious knowledge, and something more than historical data and linguistic equipment, to produce capacity for adequately and effectively inspiring in students and others the spiritual desires which ultimately result in the religion of the Bible. Hence effort along this line, while useful and instructive for other purposes, gives us no substantial hope that in this direction shall we find light upon the perplexities involved in the need and general craving for religious education.

2. The disciplinary function in a religious education is always subordinate to the element of reproductive personality. That the teaching of religion has a disciplinary side, no one would care to deny. But that it is always subordinate to the element of personal love and quality of character as operative forces, is also beyond question. Here again we have one of the essential contrasts between the method of the sciences and that of religion. Experiments in chemistry or mathematics may be repeated without regard to moral or personal qualities of any kind whatever. There is no need for communion between the student and the teacher, either in local conditions, moral outlook, or relations of life. All these are of imperative importance in teaching religion. Christian teaching involves the elements of spiritual fellowship and mutuality of spiritual interest, which, being absent, cause a void

which nothing else can supply. The Christian personality is the first and most important equipment for effective religious teaching.

3. Religious instruction takes account mainly and primarily of the discovery of the dynamic motives in character building. Academic discipline, even with the materials of religion, looks first at the covering of a given area of intellectual effort. The teaching of the sciences raises no question as to the individual aims or purposes of the student. No university ever discusses the question of the moral uses to which the knowledge acquired at the university shall be put, or endeavors to inject a moral or spiritual motive into the knowledge thus dispensed. Religious teaching does this at every point, and cannot proceed a step without doing so. Christianity is first a spiritual motive, and then a philosophy of life. The motive makes the life, not the life the motive. The teacher of religion is in the sphere of motive-production, not in the attitude of a religious analyst. When he is a Christian teacher, he is in the sphere of the operation of supernatural powers also.

4. Religious instruction contemplates, as a direct and constant end, the alliance of the subject of such instruction with the institutions of religion, because religion is essentially social in most of its expressions. An engineer may construct an engine which another may govern and direct. An architect may erect a building which another may inhabit. But the building of a religious habitation by any one, involves that he shall inhabit it himself. The teacher of religion may not say: Yonder is your habitation; go into it. He must be able to say: This is your home; come into it; and must reside there himself. Religion, with very few exceptions, has not existed, except under social forms. The few experiments which are otherwise in quality and character have simply proved the rule, and have rarely survived the individuals who gave

them birth. Christianity contemplates a church. A church contemplates a fellowship. A fellowship requires, as its basis, a communion of faith expressed in a covenant. This practically makes religious teaching different in kind from all other instruction, in requiring a faith capable of social expression for its successful teaching.

5. Among Christian people, the supernatural element of teaching, namely, the coöperation of the Holy Spirit, cannot be left out of the consideration of the problem. Shall it have any place? If so, what place other than the first and supremest place? Any reasonable or intelligible adhesion to the teachings of the New Testament would seem to imply that, among Christian people, the greatest source of dependence for the teaching of the message of Jesus Christ lies still in the power of the Spirit of God.

These, then, are some of the reflections which we have to offer on the general theme which we have been discussing. We share, with all earnest thinkers on the subject, the great anxiety lest the truths which have been brought to us through many ages, shall die with us, because of our inability on the one hand, or our unwillingness on the other, so to master them that we may be made the suitable instruments in the hand of God for the proper dissemination of his truth. Let us at least patiently hear all that can be brought to us from whatever source. Let us not be stampeded from the common sense which has always been the stronghold of the church's effective service in the world. Above all, let us, in faith and prayer, prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.