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SCHOOL AND CHURCH IN MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

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Since the writer does not know what discussion will precede the presentation of this paper it seems necessary to briefly state several propositions that outline fundamental conceptions upon which its conclusions are based. These are as follows:

Under divinely appointed natural law man's whole nature has been shaped, through ages of time, by his reaction to the physical and spiritual world in which he dwells.

In this process, whenever there arose traits or tendencies which aided to so adjust him to his environment that he could more successfully live his life, these were preserved and strengthened and became a heritage of the race.

Man's moral and religious nature arose in this way as a part of the equipment which serves to bring him into right relations with the material and spiritual world in which he lives.

Education consists not so much in giving the child knowledge concerning his environment which the race has accumulated and stored as in bringing these powers and impulses to such development that they may safely guide him through life.

The educational process consists in essence in leading the child through carefully selected, grouped, and condensed experiences similar to those by which the race through long periods of time gained its mental development.

Moral and religious education are special phases of this general educational process which can hardly be separated except by a process of abstraction, for throughout the history of the race the same experiences of life have shaped the whole nature, and the response to any one is a complex in which religion or morality may appear, but in which they are intimately blended with reason, volition and feelings of various kinds.

Ideal conditions would demand, then, more than that moral and religious education should be closely correlated with that of the schools. It should rather be a part of a process that is carried on in one series of schools, by the same teachers and quite largely through the same lesson material. In the home and the kindergarten such unified educational effort is the rule today. It

is because religious instruction has been excluded and moral training neglected in our public schools that the Sunday school and other educational agencies of the church have taken upon themselves these special phases of training.

However desirable it may appear to some, it is not at present possible, and for many generations will not be possible, to abolish the Sunday school and carry on the whole work of moral and religious education in the public schools. The present problem is to so adjust the work of the two institutions that the greatest possible degree of educational unity is secured. To effect this end considerable change in present plans is essential. Because the public school is so entrenched in our political life, and because of its superior pedagogical efficiency, the greater amount of reconstruction and adjustment must at present be made by the Sunday school, but certain changes in the methods and curriculum of the public school may reasonably be sought.

Under such possible readjustment some special opportunities of school and church which seem feasible to the writer are outlined below.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Certain changes in the general attitude toward the problem must be expected. Moral education must be a more conscious and definite aim in the thought of the supervisor and teacher. It must be realized that morality is the product of training rather than instruction, and in method the emphasis must be accordingly placed. Religion must be presented from the standpoint of racial experience and not from that of any sect or church.

The methods that suggest themselves are as follows:

1. Direct culture of the developing moral nature of the child on its emotional side through activities which would be largely informal, but which would be carefully guided by the teacher. Genetic psychology now reveals enough of the unfolding of the moral nature to make this quite possible. The feeding, protection and taming of birds, making scrapbooks and dressing dolls for children's hospitals, giving for sufferers from famine or fire, may be mentioned as examples.

2. The development of an intellectual consciousness of moral law in the child, not by studying abstract relations but through

the discussion of the concrete moral situations that arise in school home and play, and by a very considerable measure of self government as soon as it becomes possible. There is no good reason why it should be necessary that a child should be convicted in a police court before he can profit by such methods as are used by the George Junior Republic and the best reformatory institutions.

3. The purposed and thoughtful use of history, biography, and literature as illustrations of the ultimate dominance of moral law, and especially to add what might be called the inspirational element to moral instruction. This moral end could be accomplished chiefly, if not entirely, in the regular classes in these topics, though biography would probably need a larger emphasis than it now has in the average curriculum.

4. In the latter part of the high school course a more formal study of ethics from the evolutionary point of view, which would be based largely on facts with which the child has become acquainted in classes in nature-study and science, and through his own observation of the living world about him. This course should trace the origin and development in the lives of the lower animals and of savage peoples of the impulses which form the basis of the highest morality, should show their value in the struggle for life, should show how Nature requires more and more of these virtues as her creatures rise in the scale of development, and at the close should leave the student with clear conceptions of moral duties and standards. Presented in such a concrete and genetic way this would form one of the most interesting and easily mastered courses of the high school curriculum.

5. The latter part of the high-school course might also provide for a brief elementary course in the history of religion which should give an account of each of the great general classes of religions. Here, as in the last mentioned course, the genetic method should be followed. The value of religion as an aid to survival should be pointed out, its development through various stages to the highest forms should be indicated, with interesting and significant details of the conceptions of deity, rites of worship, and moral influences of each. The discussion of each religion should be sympathetic, aiming to show the youth the best that there is in it, and at the same time giving him a basis for a fair estimate of relative values. Such a course need not give

offense to the non-Christian citizen, and would surely form a splendid basis for such further instruction as might be given by the Christian church.

6. As a part of the preceding course, or closely correlated with it, should be given a course of reading made up from the choicest passages from the religious classics of such peoples as have sacred literature. Here too the aim would be to show forth the peculiarities of each faith, and at the same time to show it at its best. This course would include selections from the Old Testament, and would culminate in quotations from the New Testament, all of them chosen for their religious rather than their literary significance. No sect of any religion should receive mention in either of these courses on religion, except as it may be to indicate that it is included in the group.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BY THE CHURCH.

If we assume as the starting point the better type of graded Sunday school of today, the chief changes that should be sought in the educational effort of the church seem to the writer to be in the line of broadening of the curriculum and especially of unifying the effort with that of the public schools. This latter aim is not to be accomplished by any formal joining of forces in administration or use of buildings and equipment, or by any other external or superficial method of union, but by carrying the thought of the school into the church and there building upon the foundation that has thus been laid. That is, it should mean a return to Nature's plan of using the same experiences for moral and religious as well as for intellectual, economic, and social impression. More and more, I believe, it will become the function of the educational agencies of the church to interpret in terms of religion the facts and principles with which the public schools deal, to make the inspirational appeal based upon such an interpretation, to bring the feelings that are thus stirred to fuller consciousness through well-ordered worship, and to provide the activities which give expression to the unselfish impulses and at the same time lead them to fuller development.

Some of the lines of effort which are involved are as follows:

1. Courses of nature-study for the youngest children, designed especially to aid the child by concrete means—by God's own ob-

ject lessons, which first stirred into being the religious consciousness of the race—into a knowledge of God, His power and goodness and His relations with His creatures.

2. Courses of Bible-study for the various grades which need not differ essentially from the better courses now in use, except that there should be especial effort to show that the moral laws presented are the same that nature enforces, and that the moral heroes who appear have their counterparts in history and in the life of today.

3. For adolescents and adults, courses on the problems and duties of every-day life, which will gather their material from biological and social science as well as from the Bible, and which will have a very practical aim.

4. A course to be given late in the adolescent period, which will seek to relate in a more philosophical way than has been attempted in the presiding courses, the teachings of ethics, religion, and science, thus aiding the youth to form that unified conception of life and its problems which is so often attained only at the cost of moral loss as well as much of mental storm and stress.

5. Perhaps more important than any of these steps already mentioned would be the provision for every grade above the primary of activities in the form of worship and particularly of social service which would provide expression, and consequently development, for the moral and religious feelings. These should be very carefully adapted to the needs of each grade, with consideration of the stage of moral development and the opportunities in the social environment in each case. It is here that our Sunday schools are weakest today. This kind of "self-expression" of the Sunday-school lessons should be substituted for a very large proportion of the manual work that consumes so much of the time of the pupil and the energy of the teacher in many schools today, and which has almost no moral or religious value.

Such are some of the special opportunities of school and church in moral and religious education. The suggestions are very far from exhaustive. All these, though briefly presented, have taken pretty clear and definite form in the writer's mind and seem wholly possible of accomplishment.

In closing, he desires to offer a word of criticism of one

method largely advocated today. He believes that if one afternoon of the week were set apart by the public schools for religious instruction under church auspices it would mark a distinct retrogression for the following reasons:

1. It would tend to lessen the interest in and the feeling of responsibility for moral and religious education on the part of public school teachers.
2. It would be likely to have a similar effect upon the workers in the Sunday school.
3. It would militate against the unity of teaching that has been urged above.
4. Since it would be impossible to gather the volunteer forces of the Sunday school at such a time it would commonly involve instruction by the pastor of large ungraded or poorly graded groups.
5. It would be almost certain to degenerate into sectarian and ecclesiastical instruction.

To summarize, it would seem to be the most logical step toward a return to the old system of formal catechising by the pastor.

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