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L. A. Weigle & Walter S. Athern

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What Is Research in Religious Education?*

I can best answer the inquiry by a brief statement of what is being done in my own department at Yale, where courses in Religious Education are offered both in the Divinity School and in the Graduate School. The aim of the Divinity School courses, which constitute a part of the curriculum leading to the degree of B.D., is to fit future ministers to care for the educational work of the churches which they serve, and to prepare men to become directors of religious education or educational secretaries of the Y. M. C. A. and like organizations. These courses, in other words, are meant to afford professional training.

The Graduate School courses in Religious Education include some which are also offered in the Divinity School, but add others of a quite different type. Even in those cases where students from the two schools sit side by side in the same classes, the instructor has a different aim in view for the graduate student, makes heavier demands upon him, holds him to a different standard of work, and gives to him a larger degree of personal stimulation and direction. The courses in the Graduate School lead to the degree of M.A. and Ph.D.

A Graduate School, Dean Woodbridge is quoted as having said, concerns itself with the subject, not with the student. Thus baldly stated, the antithesis is doubtless exaggerated; but it indicates in principle the difference between a professional school and the Graduate School of a university. The professional school exists to train men. It takes subjects, programs or methods as established in its field, and undertakes to train men to teach, preach, organize or administer these. The Graduate School, on the other hand, is concerned with the various subjects, programs and methods themselves, which it looks upon as subject to revision, extension and revaluation. It aims to extend the bounds of human knowledge and to increase human resources. The professor in a Graduate School is primarily an investigator. His concern with the students who come to him is to engage them also in investigations of the sort which occupy him, to direct their efforts, and so through practice in research to train them ultimately to become investigators in their own right.

We conceive research in Religious Education to involve in principle the same sort of scholarly activity as constitutes research in any of the other fields with which the Graduate School is concerned. The general rules of the School require that the dissertation submitted in candidacy for the doctorate "should show that the candidate has technical mastery of the field in which he presents himself, is capable of doing independent scientific work, and is able to formulate such conclusions as may in some respects modify or enlarge what was previously known." The rules of the Department of Education, within which the work in Religious Education lies, state that "the dissertation is primarily required in order that the student may show his ability to conduct an independent investigation, in which he handles effectively the knowledge already available upon his subject and produces a con-

*The first answer to this question, prepared by Prof. Mark A. May, was published in *RELIGIOUS EDUCATION* for October. The second, herewith, is by Luther Allen Weigle, who is *Horace Erzhnell* Professor of Religious Education at Yale University.

structive result of worth and importance. The subject chosen must be definite and of limited range, the method of investigation must be exactly formulated, the sources employed must be evaluated, and the conclusions must be fully supported."

That research in Religious Education, so conceived, can justify itself as at once scholarly and fruitful, we have no doubt. If there were questions on that point here at Yale, they were answered at the last Commencement, when the John Addison Porter University Prize of \$500.00 was awarded to George Stewart, Jr., for his essay entitled "An Outline of the History of Religious Education in Connecticut to 1861." This prize is open to all members of the University, and is offered "for the work of scholarship in any field where it is possible, through original effort, to gather or relate facts or principles, or both, and to present the results in such a literary form as to make the product of general human interest." Mr. Stewart's essay was his dissertation submitted in candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, which was conferred upon him at the same time. Brought up to date, it will shortly be published as "A History of Religious Education in Connecticut." It represents three years of painstaking investigation in a most interesting and profitable field.

There are a host of unsolved problems and untilled corners in the history of religious education—indeed the whole subject may be said to be comparatively untouched as yet. We have studied church history, the history of doctrine, the history of ethics, and the history of education, but a comprehensive study of the history of religious education remains yet to be made. Much of our graduate work at Yale is being done in this general field, partly because there are splendid materials at hand in the University Library, partly because the historical method seemed to furnish a profitable and much-needed approach to the complex problems of religious education today.

You will not expect me to catalog particular problems in so vast a field; and I will but mention certain pieces of work that are in progress. The Rev. C. H. Brewer has nearly completed "A History of Religious Education in the Protestant Episcopal Church" which he will present in candidacy for the doctorate next June. Another graduate student is at work upon the history of religious education in Massachusetts, upon which he will present a dissertation in 1923. One of the members of the department is working at a monograph upon Jean Gerson, with translations of his tractate "On Bringing Little Children to Jesus Christ" and other writings on religious education. Individual students are working upon Caesarius of Arles, Theodulf of Orleans, and Rhabanus Maurus. A brief study of my own, on the development of penance in the Roman Catholic Church, to the displacement of the early catechumenate, was delivered last spring as the Holman Lecture on the Augsburg Confession at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, and will shortly be published. I am engaged this year, with Dr. O. A. Petty, in the preparation of a syllabus and source-book in the history of religious education, which we plan to publish in the fall of 1922.

In a second great group the problems are psychological. They concern the moral problems and religious needs of developing childhood, youth and manhood and womanhood; the psychology of ideals and of appreciation; the psychology of leadership and of public opinion; the psychology of

religious experience in its varieties; the problem of tests and standards of moral and religious development; and the like. With problems of this group we have done little as yet, though two students have entered the Graduate School this year who expect to find the subjects of their dissertations in some one of this group of problems.

A third group of problems concerns curricula of religious education. Here we are doing more. A student who will present his dissertation in 1923 is at work upon the curriculum for the junior department of the church school. The M.A. degree has been awarded for theses on the place of memorization in religious education, with a suggested memory curriculum, and on a curriculum of religious education for the church schools of Japan. Individual students are now making studies of the International Uniform Lessons in the various stages of their development, with a view to determining the adequacy of the system as the instrument of Bible study, and exhibiting the character of the departmental adaptations which are embodied in the Improved Uniform Lessons of the past few years. There has been no end of opinion expressed on these points; and we are anxious to get the facts, as far as they can be gotten.

L. A. WEIGLE.

A BRIEF STATEMENT*

I have a feeling that the term "research" is sufficiently well defined in academic circles and that workers in the field of religious education can proceed with their inquiries and investigations on the basis of the usage generally accepted in graduate schools. I think there is need first for the endowment of research in the field of religious education in a number of graduate centers so that the present resources of these centers can be capitalized for work in this field. Second, I think there is need of cooperation among those who are doing research work for conferences of college men engaged in research work for the purpose of exchanging information and arranging for certain division of labor which will prevent duplication of effort and for the purpose of projecting general surveys and inquiries over larger areas, in which uniformity of method is necessary.

WALTER S. ATHEARN.

*Quoted, by permission of Prof. Athearn, from a letter on the subject.

SURVEY OF WEEK-DAY WORK

Professor Erwin L. Shaver, of the chair of Religious Education at Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas, has been engaged to make the intensive field survey under the direction of the special committee on survey, and he is already at work.

The co-operation of all persons interested is especially solicited in the matter of information regarding new schools. Since there is no system for the registration of schools it might easily—and very unfortunately—happen that some schools would be omitted from the general survey.