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Y. M. C. A. THE PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE Y. M. C. A.

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both the historical and constructive courses with the practical conclusions we may reach with respect to the particular persons, the men and women of our parish of "cases."

The very last requirement of the department is that the men who are approaching their graduation shall attempt to write a hymn on "Doubt" or "Faith" or "Prayer" or "Divine Love" or on any other great theme which may lie in the uttermost depths of the composer's own religious springs. This requirement is optional and the teacher never sees the hymn. Indeed in most instances the effort does not bear fruit in any hymn of literary merit. But the exercise itself has great devotional value. As Phillips Brooks used to say, the writing of even very poor verse brings rhythm and grace into the soul of the poet.

Y. M. C. A.

THE PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE Y. M. C. A.

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For several years this subject of Religious Education has been one of increasing interest among leaders in Christian work. Pastors and laymen, college professors and institutional workers have felt the impulse to a more intelligent, patient and discriminating endeavor which this movement has inspired. Leading an individual through boyhood and up through young manhood to a state of spiritual adulthood is found to be a holy art that requires sympathetic intelligent insight, a power of adaptation and appreciation of individual needs and temperament, a knowledge of the mental, spiritual and physical stages in the development of boys and young men, and is not the simple, slick process that it is sometimes supposed to be by the careless or the unthinking. Mr. Dooley when Hennesy asked him if he believed "in popular education," replied "Yis, I do, but not as a dhrug." Religious education is not a state produced by administering a pill or a powder. It is a growth, a development. It is the maturing and ripening of all the faculties of the soul in their true relation to God. One result of this rise of religious education has been to put evangelistic work in its proper

perspective in the Young Men's Christian Association. For some twenty-five years following the revival of 1857 the Association in America was largely dominated by the evangelistic ideal. There were long periods of time and large sections of the country where this conception was held almost to the exclusion of any other type of religious effort.

Along side of this evangelistic effort a broader idea of religious work for young men based upon the conception of the unity of man and the power of environment was being developed by McBurney, Morse, Sinclair and others who have built up the institutional work of the Young Men's Christian Association for the whole man, body, mind and spirit. This institutional form of work for the whole man recognized that whatever affects one part of man affects the whole, and also that daily environment, atmosphere, persons, contact form the unconscious habits of the soul, the sum of which makes character. Thus it has come about that evangelistic work is seen to be but a part in any systematic plan of religious education. The Young Men's Christian Association has become a great institutional agency for the elevation of the whole man.

The next development in the religious work of the Association was the introduction of graded Bible study. The college Association worked out courses for the four years of college life, the city Association a little later produced simple graded courses. The coming of boys' work brought in the principle of adaptation, and courses suited to different ages, to different stages of spiritual development and experience, have been prepared and are being improved. This building up of a Bible study department in the Association gave stability and character to the religious work. It fittingly supplemented the religious education which the evangelistic agencies and the welfare features were suited to provide.

Religious instruction adapted to the needs and ages of the student has become one of the chief features of Association effort. At first, on the analogy of the Sunday school, this was almost everywhere limited to a study of the Bible, but this principle demanded another step. The college Associations were already studying church history through the classes in foreign missions and missionary biographies. Personal work classes began to introduce biographical studies. It was seen that a religious education was a larger thing than study of the Bible. Dr. Ballantine at the Convention of the Religious Education Association in 1903 urged a broader program for religious education.† This larger concep-

tion of religious education has begun to take hold of the Young Men's Christian Association. Instruction in the needs and duties of the present day have been carried on in life problem classes, which have enrolled hundreds of students in all parts of the Association world. This department of the R. E. A. has produced the first of these courses, and has secured their publication by the International Committee. Though little effort has been made to introduce them they have been widely used.

The Round Table Course prepared by W. M. Wood of Philadelphia is already in large demand. The course in Social service which Dr. Fisher is presenting at Springfield promises to be an important and up-to-date contribution.

This leads to the last striking development in religious education in the Young Men's Christian Association which is based on the principle that self-expression is a necessary element in religious education. This law of self-expression applies to all forms of Christian work. The Young Men's Christian Association has developed evangelistic agencies, it has created an institutional activity for religious education environment, it has begun to develop agencies for religious instruction. There are indications today that it will furnish opportunities for self-expression of the religious life in a larger way than ever before through various channels of social service. Service is an essential element in a religious education. Without it the life of the soul is incomplete. Froebel has pointed out that self-activity is a vital pedagogical principle. If this is true of intellectual education, it is much more true in the moral sphere. Pestalozzi would not teach ethical principles like honesty, truthfulness, love, to children until they had first learned them through experience. The awakening of the Young Men's Christian Association to social service is the natural outcome of religious education, and is necessary to complete religious development.

I have brought before you first those principles of religious education which it seems to me have dominated the stages of growth of the Young Men's Christian Association, in order to illustrate in a concrete way their vital character.

I will now attempt to set forth in a more formal way the principles of religious education as they have been presented in the discussions of the last few years, referring again to some of those which have already been illustrated in the development of the Young Men's Christian Association.

(1) The Importance of the Emotions.

We are a practical people, and young men abhor sentimentality, and yet sentiment rules the world and young men are quickly responsive to genuine sentiment. Humor, appreciation, indignation, patriotism, heroism, self-sacrifice, duty, all find a sympathetic chord in the hearts of young men. President Eliot, of Harvard, says, "The world is still governed by sentiment, and not by observation, acquisition and reasoning, and national greatness and righteousness depend more on the cultivation of right sentiments in the children than on anything else."

The law of the emotions is that the feeling which is unexpressed dies. This explains one of the chief weaknesses in our plan for religious education; we make much better provision for arousing feeling than for its expression, and therefore much that we do, is useless or even harmful. We must give young men and boys opportunity to express the emotions aroused by exhortation and religious teaching in thought and action. The sending of the Gospel to young men in mission lands is one of the greatest of these opportunities, and the opening of new doors to social service is another. A great objective will develop the feelings.

The next principle is that the feelings are never reached directly—you tell a man to love God and love does not come, but to do something for God and the man begins to love Him. The old saying, "He who fights by my side is my brother," illustrates this principle that we must reach the feelings indirectly. The fear of punishment and the hope of reward here or hereafter are legitimate appeals to the feelings, but they are not the highest.

Another principle of educating the feelings pointed out long ago by Aristotle is that we love those we have benefitted more than they love us. It certainly is true that it is usually easier to get a person who has given money to a cause to give more, than it was to get him started. If we would have young men love Christ they must sacrifice and work for him. Benjamin Franklin tells how he won a political rival's friendship; he simply succeeded in getting his rival to do him a favor, and this awakened a real attachment. Men grow by service. The committee man who will accept some responsibility will later accept more. The workers will continue to work more and the drones less.

Another law of the will is the power of habit. The activities of the soul in thinking, feeling, and willing result in the formation of habits, and the sum of these habits is character. The aim

of religious education is to form right habits. This is the invincible wall against temptation like the discipline of the soldier which asserts itself in times of crises and leads to victory, so habit makes those "little unremembered acts of kindness which are the best part of a good man's life." Emerson says, "Our character is our destiny." We are aghast at the inexorableness of habit. God has made it the law of the soul. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

It will thus be seen that the emotions and the will in the minds of many thinkers today should occupy a much larger place in religious education than instruction. That our plan of religious training should be so adapted as to stir the will and create right feelings, and that through these we should come to doctrines, theological principles and religious ideas, instead of beginning with these abstract teachings and principles in the inculcation of theological views.

(3) The third principle is that fellowship produces character. It is one of the great principles in religious education. In fact, the whole system could be constructed on this principle alone. It is vital to any plan which is to be successful. Life is only produced by life. We know of no spontaneous religious generation. It is vital contact with a live spiritual soul that develops character. The message uttered from the pulpit, the quiet examples of a living friend, the memories of a departed mother, the personal influence of a teacher—these are the transforming powers which mould the heart. This principle lies at the root of what is called personal work. It was Jesus' method with his disciples. They caught spiritual life from Him. His glance, His touch, His thought, His example, His service by personal impress begot spiritual life in those around Him. This principle lies also at the root of religious teaching. Courses of study are but a small per cent. The teacher looms up large. Teaching is a great vocation. It is the imparting of one's personality to another. It is the touching of another's life; the awakening of another's faculties; the inspiring of another's soul. It is the giving of one's self. The teacher should be the kind of man he wishes his students to become. The most fateful word regarding the teacher is that "to be is to teach." Emerson says, "What you are speaks so loud I

cannot hear what you say." His chief power is himself. Imitation is an instinct. Prof. Horne defines it as "The tendency to repeat the thought or action of another. Its influence is bound up with the social order, and permeates all our conduct." People imitate what they like. The interesting things inspire imitation. Children will imitate the companion they like, good or bad. Prof. Horne says, "Describe a virtue like courage, and children get words; narrate a virtue as in the story of David, and children get images and ideas."

Now, these considerations of the primacy of the emotions and of self-expression in religious living, and the vital importance of personal association to the attaining of the Christian life are not sufficiently expressed in our present day scheme of religious education. The teaching of doctrine and the exhortation to do right are given a much more important place because they are much the easiest to do. And yet, if we are to give boys and young men a religious education we must develop a plan by which they live in the presence of the best; by which they form habits of right conduct; by which they learn to love the true, the beautiful and the good as seen in Jesus Christ and His disciples; by which they rise to do valiant service in advancing the Kingdom of God. Roosevelt's sporting remark that there is no fun like fighting for the right appeals to the heroic instinct.

(4) The fourth principle of religious education is the physical foundation for the moral life. I am not qualified to discuss this as a physician, but am sure that the modern emphasis upon the unity of man has been one of the chief factors in vivifying religious training. Does it not seem a paradox that a religious institution should have led in modern physical education? And yet there is a vital relation between the physical nature and religious education. It is even held by some that all sickness is the result of fatigue. Some extremists go so far as to claim that lying, dishonesty, ill-temper, irritability, licentiousness, and depravity are all caused by some form of low vitality. It is not necessary for me to dwell upon this principle of religious education before a body of workers in the Young Men's Christian Association, because the Association is in the lead among Christian workers in recognizing this principle. At the same time, the Church at large is only slowly awakening to the relation of the physical life to moral training. The training of the muscles and the motor life is one of the few ways we have of influencing the physical basis of the mind.

Play has a moral value of which we have little dreamed. If fatigue produces only a part of the evils charged to it, then recreation is a divine means of individual regeneration. Certain it is that the leisure hours are one of the greatest opportunities for evil, and sport has been one of the means for moral destruction. No scheme of religious education is complete or effective that does not recognize the unity of man and the physical basis of moral education. Religion is traced back to the love instinct. Even the emotions which are excited by religious enthusiasms may spend themselves in licentiousness. The religious teacher should have an intimate relation to the physical life and the play of those he would help, and the man who would acquire a religious education in the sense that it is a lifting of the entire man Godward must have a sane mind in a sane body.

(5) The fifth principle is the development of those already discussed, the place of work. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Work is one of the divinely ordained agencies for growth of the soul. Work may be worship. By it we become masterful. We grow into the image of God. We attain self-control, which is character. It is the Anglo-Saxon's conception of life.

The employment department of the Young Men's Christian Association is one of its chief opportunities for social service and for religious education, not simply giving a man a job, but a larger view of the economic life. The religious educator can glorify work by making it service, and by leading young men to find in it the expression of their souls, and their opportunity for giving the best of themselves to their fellow men. Joy in one's work is one of the satisfactions of life, and one of the best opportunities to grow religiously.