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The religious crisis of early adolescence.

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"The Religious Crisis of Early Adolescence."

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Man a developing being - the fourfold division of human life - childhood, youth, maturity, and age - youth or adolescence a very significant period - only recently studied scientifically - several factors leading up to this study - the study of the child, the reformation of primary education, the rise of young people's societies - the new word adolescence, its meaning, years it includes - the subdivisions of this stage, early, middle and later adolescence - these periods variously named.

This thesis leads us to consider early adolescence - sometimes called the pubertal period - meaning of puberty and limits of this stage - a period of radical changes, a critical time. The most obvious changes are the physical - bodily growth in height and weight - growth of reproductive organs, heart, lungs, muscles etc. - "new baptism of vitality" - changes in the nervous system and "connecting up" in the brain. The changes at this time not only physiological but mental - the feelings more varied, more intense, take a new emotional significance - marked also by an intellectual revolution, abstract truth understood, logical reasoning possible - idealism begins, a time of visions - new social awakening, awakening of the social consciousness - this period, also, marked by transition from egoism to altruism, moral qualities rise rapidly, - "old things passing away, all things becoming new," "the birth of a greater self" - by logical inference this natural period for new religious awakening, new spiritual birth. Beside the argument from inference normal changes of pubertal period tend naturally to bring new epoch in religious experience - the intellectual expansion makes possible new spiritual insight, the aroused social consciousness easily turned toward idea of getting into right relations with
Supreme, fuller ethical sense, feeling of moral accountability has ripened, youth feels he must settle his relations with the higher law, with God, face to face with a great spiritual crisis. Also external evidence that early adolescence is natural time for soul's awakening, which means a religious crisis:

1. The pubic rites, practically universal among primitive peoples, inducing youth into the civil and religious life of the community - crude often, yet a recognition of the importance of this new religious epoch.

2. The confirmation rite practiced by the Jewish and Christian religions for generations occurs ordinarily in most branches that use it somewhere in the early adolescent years.

3. Evidence of accurate statistics indicating that a large proportion of members of all churches made choice of religious life in this period.

II. Religious awakenings in early adolescence not all alike, in this crisis individuals react differently:

A. Several fairly distinct types

1. Gradual growth, born and reared in a true religious atmosphere, transition to spiritual maturity without any "hitch or breaks," Edward Everett Hale - such cases very infrequent.

2. Emotional conversion, more or less of abruptness and intensity of emotion, typical case, in milder forms occurs in early adolescence.

3. Spontaneous awakening, first awakening to a vital experience of religious truth, arises as naturally
as any of the mental or physical, typical instances.

4. Peaceful awakening, penitential element inconspicuous, quiet decision of religiously trained child when adolescent awakening comes.

B. Explanation of these different types, why do individuals react differently in this crisis - only recently any scientific attempt to answer the question, one of the best by Prof. George A. Coe - some factors in the explanation on the surface.

1. Sudden and striking conversions usually occur in communions which value them highly and seek to realize that type.

2. Change also more marked and intense when one has sinned long and grievously - this difference may be noticed even between the opening and the closing years of early adolescence.

3. Deepest factor, however, of explanation of difference between the sudden, dramatic conversion and the peaceful, quiet transformation, is that of temperament

C. Prof. Coe's study - sought to find if there are certain temperamental conditions that lead naturally to striking religious transformations and others that lead normally to more uneventful experiences - his conclusion, three sets of factors favor attainment of a striking
religious transformation, the temperament factor, the factor of expectation, and the tendency to automatisms and passive suggestibility - the whole question a very complex one.

D. Is there one ideal type of religious experience for all youth - in some quarters tendency to highly exalt sudden, emotional type and recognize it as the only type - in some other quarters tendency to look upon the gradual type, the quiet, ethical spiritual transformation as the one type - latter often conceived as absolutely even growth to maturity without any stages or culminating points - such cases rare - natural religious development is epochal - the remarkable expansion of self in early adolescence marks a new religious epoch and a natural spiritual crisis - even in the life which has been religious all along this period is, of necessity, a turning point for now there must be a definite personalizing of religion if the spiritual life is to go on normally - testimony of Coe, Koons, Lewis, and Starbuck on this point - this personalizing of religion, this personal decision apt to be accompanied with at least some little friction or questioning

III. Another question arises here, how best secure, in this crisis time, a decisive choice of the religious life.

A. One method used is the revival - what a revival is - is it a wise method.

1. Some dangers, insisting on some type of experience for
everybody without any regard for age, sex or temperament, tendency to extreme emotionalism which is apt to be followed by a grave reaction, danger of forgetting the importance of the gradual processes of instruction and training that necessarily precede and follow conversion, and each of due respect for the individuality of others.

2. Some reasons why revival needed, view of President King of Oberlin, some people fitted by nature to respond most easily to some special appeal and for such, revival is peculiarly adapted to win a decision; the fact that character sets early and right choice is much to be desired suggests the use of every rational method, including the revival, to bring about right decision; revival provides opportunity for prolonged and concentrated attention to the great realities of religion which tends to induce the "sober and strenuous mood" out of which our greatest decisions commonly grow; gives proper emphasis to feeling in religion; sane revival, in some respects appeals particularly to early adolescence.

B. Another method of bringing youth to a decision is decision day - the weeks of preparation by pastor, superintendent of the Sunday school, and officers, and cooperation of parents - the day, the Sunday School program, the appeal and signing of decision cards - some shortcomings of the method, form of social suggestion often used is open to question, unfortunate effect upon those who year after
year refuse, tendency to expect too much of one day or a few weeks, danger of shiftless preparation and failure to properly follow it up.

C. A third method is the confirmation class - found in the liturgical churches - ordinarily its members are in the early adolescent period - announcement and program, length of course, the devotional side - confirmation and first communion - are dangers to be avoided, that the training may be merely intellectual and formal, that confirmation may be looked upon as an end instead of the beginning of a mature Christian life - it has generations of practice behind it - best results perhaps if it be a regular part of the Sunday School in the intermediate department.

D. One other method of leading youth to the choice of a religious life, educational evangelism - its purpose evangelistic, same as the revival - its method educational, brings people to God through the agency of education - the larger meaning of education, the development of the inner capacities of the soul - child a living organism, a growing life, passes through several stages between birth and maturity - education aims to meet the needs of the child and help him to live the fullest life at each unfolding stage - following the principles of general pedagogy, educational evangelism seeks by proper religious training to "call forth the fitting response of the soul at every stage of its growth" but this problem becomes acute in early adolescence - through childhood educational evangelism aims to promote a quiet
and normal growth but with the coming of the period
of personal choice at early adolescence its aim be-
comes directly evangelistic for adjustment to the di-
vine order now includes a free choice of obedience to
God - this decision it endeavors to secure not by a
strong appeal to the emotions but by the educational
method - to win this decision of the will it relies
chiefly upon the truths of the gospel taught and
"invrought into the mind by methods that are in
essence educational" - position of educational
evangelism, then, is that the child is in the king-
dom, needs only to be normally developed by broad
religious training, and at early adolescence to choose
the religious life will be a natural and easy step.

As to agencies used by educational evangel-
ism, its honors all religious agencies of the home and
the church without any special services - principal
agency the Sunday School - to do best work it must be
broadly educational and graded - in the intermediate
department the religious instruction will have a directly
evangelistic aim and will naturally dwell upon individ-
ual ethics and personal responsibility - it will be
biographical with the study of the life of Christ cen-
tral - great value of a strong Christian friend at this
stage - educational evangelism in its broadest sense in-
cludes personal evangelism - here opportunity for the
true Sunday School teacher - every pupil should be given
some appropriate opportunity to make a definite choice
of the religious life before he leaves the intermediate department - every wise and faithful teacher in this department will watch for the psychological moment to speak the quiet, earnest word that may lead to a decision to lead a Christian life - this followed naturally by a public confession of Christ and entrance into the church and active Christian service - dangers to be guarded against - its particular field is youth - promises to become chief reliance of the church in winning youth to do the will of God - the beginning of the Christian life in the soul - the work of the Holy Spirit.
THESIS.
Man is a developing being. Hence human life may be divided into different periods more or less clearly defined. In the light of an enlarging body of scientific knowledge numerous divisions of life have been made in recent years. Some of these schemes are more and some less valuable; some are quite simple and some are quite complex. The great primary divisions of man's life, however, were discovered long ago. Five hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era the ancient Greek philosopher, Pythagoras, made this fourfold division of human life; child, one to twenty years; young man, twenty to forty years; man, forty to sixty years; old man, sixty to eighty years. The Omaha tribe of North American Indians divided life into four periods:

1. Childhood, which began when the child was able to walk.
2. Youth.
3. Manhood
4. Old age

Indeed, as a broad outline, a fourfold division of man's life has been recognized by many primitive peoples. At the same time, as far as it goes, this division into childhood, youth, maturity and age is scientific and meets all the demands of modern scholarship.

In some respects the most interesting and most significant period of human life is youth, those adolescent years lying between childhood and complete maturity. What is youth? A wide deep river, dividing childhood from manhood; a river which, like the river of death, must be crossed without bridge or boat; through which each soul must go; into whose turbid waters the child must descent alone, knowing well that beneath their flood his childhood will be buried to rise no more; a stream both broad and tur-
bulent, not to be crossed in a day or a year; whose buoyant waters will indeed bear him up, but not without his efforts, whose currents will land him somewhere on the other shore, but 0, so far down stream on the dusty plains of sordid, sinful manhood, far out of sight of those gree hills of childhood that were so near to heaven" (Educational Evangelism, McKinley p. 12-13)

So numerous and fundamental are the changes that usher in this period that the distinction between it and the preceding period has been recognized by all peoples in all ages as the widespread pubic rites clearly indicate. It was left, however, for the present generation to make a special study of youth - a period which was practically ignored by the philosophers and educators of former days. For "although from of old the bloom time of youth has been a favorite subject of literary art" it was only about thirty years ago that scholars began an accurate analysis and a scientific study of the phenomena of this period of life. The stimulus for this study came partly from the growth of physiological psychology, but more largely from educational needs. First came the children's era. The study of childhood preceded that of youth. Froebel and his followers, making a scientific study of the mind of the child, opened the way for a better understanding of the nature and needs of the child and revolutionized the system of elementary education. This new and accurate investigation of the native interests and essential needs of childhood led naturally to a similar study of the following period of youth. "The development of primary education made imperative a reformation of secondary education." This, in turn, called for a larger and more intimate knowledge of the distinctive characteristics of youth and a far more accurate understanding of the process by which the child becomes a man.
The rapid rise and multiplication of young people's religious societies in the latter part of the 19th century also raised new and important problems which emphasized the need of a clearer and more comprehensive acquaint ance with youth. And although it may have been true formerly that the attitude of most people was about this: "Childhood we know and manhood we know, but who or what art thou?" there has been in recent years a growing recognition of the critical importance of the 'teen age and already an epoch making work has been done in this field by expert scientists.

The term that is now ordinarily applied to this period of youth in human life is "adolescence." The word is from the Latin adolescentia from adolescere, to grow up, past participle adultas, grown up, English "adult" As commonly used by writers on adolescence it designates the period of growth that intervenes in every individual's life between childhood and maturity or complete adulthood. Dunglison's Medical Dictionary defines adolescence as the period of human life that lies between puberty and the time at which the body acquires full development. In males, according to this authority, the period extends from about the 14th to the 25th year or later, and in females from about the 12th year to the 21st year. Hence adolescence, although a somewhat indefinite term, extends, speaking broadly from about the age of 11 or 12, when the first premonitory mental symptoms of puberty appear, to about 25 for males and 21 for females. These figures, however, it must always be remembered, are not absolute but only approximate. The recent tendency has been to extend the upper limits for both sexes. This is due, in part, to the fact that the growing complexity of modern life, with the elaborate education it demands, has naturally lengthened the adolescent period. Formerly the word adolescence was applied particularly to the latter part of this transition, from 18 to 25 years, but the term has now been extended to cover the entire period.
While, however, the greater natural divisions of immature life, childhood, and youth, have long been recognized the new scientific study of the developing mind has discovered certain somewhat clear secondary natural periods. Within the years of youth there is a certain order of development, of progression so definite and so universal as to justify a subdivision of the general period into early, middle, and later adolescence. While the interests of one period are not excluded from the others the special character of each is plain. These subdivisions may be expressed in terms of years although the age division differs with the sexes, the male sex developing more slowly, while even within sex limits the periods vary with individuals. A division recognized by several authorities is as follows:—

First period, 11 to 15 in females, 12 to 16 in males; second period, 15 to 17 in females, 16 to 18 in males; third period, 17 to 21 in females, 18 to 24 in males. It must always be borne in mind, however, that the beginnings and endings of these periods are not all distinctly marked and all these age limits are necessarily only average and approximate. These subdivisions of adolescence are variously designated by different authorities. Some call the first, the physical; the second, the mental; and the third, the social period of adolescence. Other authorities recognize the initial or nascent stage, the middle stage, and advanced adolescence. Others recognize the early or ferment stage, the middle or crisis stage, and the later or reconstruction stage. Still other students consider adolescence under the stages of transition, reception and amplification, and selection and concentration. All these titles, as well as those others not noted here, which have been applied to the subordinate division of adolescence by scientific writers on this period, are more or less suggestive and valuable. As yet, however, no designations for the three stages of youth have been suggested that are sufficiently accurate and comprehensive to command universal adoption.
Our thesis leads us to the first period of youth known generally as early adolescence. For Sunday School purposes this period covers the years from 12 to 16 inclusive and is the same for both sexes. Although, however, it is necessary to give this stage definite and exact limits for the work of the graded Sunday School the period of early adolescence in reality has no such exact boundaries for both sexes and all individuals. The beginning of early adolescence, at least, is indeed, quite clearly marked but not by years. It begins with puberty and is sometimes called the pubertal period. The word puberty comes from the Latin "pubertas," root "pu," to beget. It is the period when the reproductive organs begin to function. No "hard and fast" rule can be given for the advent of puberty. Indeed "puberty varies greatly as to the time of its appearance. Race, climate, habits of life, general health, luxury, ease and recreation are modifying factors in the time of appearance of this stage. Ease and luxury hasten puberty, while hard work, privation, disease and worry retard it. Puberty has appeared as early as the eighth year, and in a few instances even earlier, but these are exceptions. Very few persons reach the age of puberty before the eleventh year and many do not reach it till two or three years later. Puberty occurs earlier, more abruptly and lasts a shorter time in females than in males. Premonitions of this change are experienced two or three years before it occurs."

(The Pedagogical Sunday School, S. B. Haslett p. 142) The upper limit of the pubertal period, the initial stage of adolescence, is not marked by nature quite so clearly as its beginning. Nevertheless if this upper boundary were to be expressed in years, to give an average, most authorities would agree that early adolescence closes at about the end of the 16th year. All the stages of youth, this critical period of adolescence, are important and most critical, but the most important is the initial
stage, the period of puberty. Indeed while the most definite natural transition, the most radical changes, that are experienced in human life between the cradle and the grave, occur in the adolescent period. The greatest changes, the most marked upheaval takes place in early adolescence. The most fundamental changes of this stage, of course, are those connected with the development of the reproductive powers. The development of the sexual powers and instincts underlies all the other changes of this period. Rousseau spake truly in that familiar sentence "We are born twice, once to exist and again to live; once as to species and again as regards to sex."

The most evident changes of puberty are the physical. Early adolescence is a time of unusually rapid bodily growth. It is the time when the child suddenly shoots up in height. During this period the rate of growth, both in height and weight, is not only much more rapid than in the years immediately preceding but more rapid than it will ever be again. The following express in a definite and impressive way this sudden outburst of growth in height and weight in the pubertal period. "During the three years from the 12th to the 15th birthday boys increase in weight forty per cent, while girls increase in weight thirty-six per cent and in height ten per cent. At 15 years of age a boy has attained ninety-two per cent of his adult height and seventy-six per cent of his adult weight; girls have reached in height ninety-seven per cent and in weight ninety per cent of their full growth. After 17 girls almost cease to grow, and boys grow comparatively little and that mainly in weight. The years of most rapid growth in height are the 12th and the 13th for girls and the 14th and 15th for boys. In weight girls grow most rapidly from the 12th to the 15th year, boys from the 13th to the 17th years. Girls are taller than boys from the 12th to the 15th years, and heavier from the 13th to the 15th years. After 15 boys exceed both in height and weight."
This summarizing, by Professor Weigle, of the results on this point is, of course, to be considered as tentative rather than the final word. Further investigations and fuller data may change these figures somewhat. Nevertheless they are approximately accurate and further study will not change but simply emphasize the broad fact that early adolescence is a period of very rapid bodily growth. Moreover not only the body as a whole but most of its parts show an augmented rate of growth in the pubertal period although it is more marked in certain organs than in others. The reproductive organs, at this stage of life, manifest a sudden and radical development.

The heart increases in size with a growth nearly parallel with that of the body. The lungs and chest also share largely in the augmented development of this "age of growth." The muscles enlarge, before this period is over, at an accelerated rate that is marked. As the muscles and bones, however, do not always grow at a uniform rate the youth, for a season, may appear loose-jointed and awkward. Yet at the same time there is a "great gain in rapidity and accuracy of movement in many lines," and a decided increase in strength and energy. Indeed early adolescence witnesses a "new baptism of vitality." It is marked by a vigor that is almost tireless and an activity that is absolutely irrepressible. "The boy of thirteen is a dynamo. Ten or twelve boys together make a veritable power house." In the boy the voice changes and other less obvious changes take place which are peculiar to the male sex. In the girl there are also changes peculiar to her sex such as the enlargement of the pelvis and the development of "certain glands which with other changes that occur with more or less convulsions indicate that reproduction is functioning." In both sexes also, at this time, there are great changes.
decided transformations in the nervous systems although these as yet are only partly understood. Although the physical brain has already reached adult size there is now a "shooting together," a "connecting up" of different parts, of various centers and the result is new powers, activities and possibilities.

The transition from childhood to youth, however, is not merely, or even chiefly, a physiological one. The transformation that takes place in the mental realm is fully as profound as that which occurs in the physical nature of the child. In other words the mental traits of this stage are as clearly defined and as important as are its physiological characteristics. Indeed there is evidently a very close and reciprocal relation between the physical changes and the mental development of the pubertal period. Contemporaneously with the sudden and rapid growth of the body and the functioning of new physiological powers there is a sudden and rapid broadening and deepening of the intellectual, the emotional and the moral life.

The feelings and emotions become much more varied and intense than ever before. The development of almost entirely new organs, the changes in the absolute and relative size of the body and its various parts, and changes in the rate and intensity of the physiological processes of respiration and circulation and nutrition, together with the radical increase of the reproductive organs, provides the background for and gives rise to a rapid and remarkable development of the feelings and emotions. This is particularly true of the intellectual, social, aesthetic and moral feelings as for example, fear, anger, antipathy, self-esteem, love, pity, jealousy, respect, emulation, ambition, sympathy and sexual passion. Some of these apparently, appear now for the first time, others reach a
new degree of strength, and still others take on a new emotional significance. These new emotional experiences of course, tend to deepen and widen life and add to its import.

This period also witnesses an intellectual revolution. Looked at from the viewpoint of the intellect early adolescence marks the beginning of a new period of thought development. It is now that the higher powers of the intellect begin to function. "New intellectual interests and powers spring up spontaneously. New modes of thought spring up. The youth is better able to understand truths which are expressed in abstract rather than concrete form. He begins to compare facts and to form judgments and to perceive the relations between judgments." In other words he is becoming a conscious and logical reasoner. And not only the ability to reason but the ability to argue develops rapidly. The youth not only questions but his questions are of real importance to him. Mere fragments of knowledge are no longer sufficient and satisfactory. "He wants to see things in their relations." He can no longer take things for granted or accept them on mere authority. He wants to know why and wherefore. He must have evidence, proof and see and understand for himself. Led on by nature he is beginning to search the very grounds of things, he is seeking a rational basis of life. And all this means that the pubertal stage of life normally sees a decided increase of intellectual independence. "The child, dependent alike in body and mind, has become a youth who thinks for himself."

Early adolescence is also marked by the beginning of a real idealism. The notion of the ideal now becomes clear and the youth begins to form his own ideals of life and conduct. Up to this time he has been restricted almost entirely to the actual and individual. His mind has been occupied with the present and particular. "But now he looks further into the world and
Further into the future. General notions appeal to him, "the universal infatuates him." He catches glimpses of the great abstract ideals of faith, hope, love, truth, self-sacrifice. Great questions now arise naturally in the mind of the youth; what am I what am I to do, what am I to become? He begins to dream over life. The ends set up for attainment are remote and vast. Pattee calls this the period of halos, of visions, of unbounded possibilities. The youth now feels the "torment of the infinite" as Weigle puts it. And Coe declares that the youth of this stage becomes enamoured of ideals and ravished with ambitions, he is almost overwhelmed in a confusion of ambitions and longings. Nothing but the greatest is great enough for him, nothing but the perfect is worth while.

The pubertal period also witnesses a new social awakening. The social instincts now mature rapidly and for the first time come to blossom. It is said that the gang spirit reaches its maximum at thirteen. This does not mean, however, that the youth becomes less social with the decline of the gang spirit. The truth is he has come to recognize a larger world and has entered upon a broader social development. The child has lived in his own little sphere and knows little of the great world while the thought of the "human family" has doubtless never occurred to him. In a word the child has no conception as yet, of the organic relation of the individual to the race. But with the coming of adolescence there is an instinctive awakening to the larger social interests and a definite recognition of social values. Not only does the social consciousness with reference to the other sex become very different but, in general, the field of view is extended and the relation to others is changed and given greater moment. There is a self conscious effort after social life and social adjustment. There enters into the life a new sense of how others think and feel. Beyond his own individual self he comes to recognize and appreciate to a much greater extent the larger
social self. There is a greater regard for the general principles of social behavior. There is a new interest in manners and dress. On the social side the youth becomes much more sensitive. The pain of embarrassment and the pleasure of success are manifold greater than heretofore. In other words "adolescence is the time in which the individual enters naturally upon social relations. At this time his social nature blooms into full power, so that the inner capacities and energies respond for the first time with spontaneity and depth of interests to the established customs and institutions of the race. The limited and external attitude of the child give way before a sense of the importance of the group and of the ideal values of the social." (Psychology of Religious Experiences, E. S. Ames p. 218)

Early adolescence is also a time of transition from egoism to altruism. The impulse to act for the good of others is now much stronger. A new devotion to the group appears. It is in this period that "team work", "interference" and "sacrifice plays" begin. And this is simply an indication in the play life of the youth, that the great principles of loyalty to the group, the effacement of self for the good of the whole, altruism, are beginning to rule. In earlier years, to be sure, the spirit of loyalty to others may be aroused by cultivation but in this period it is more a matter of natural growth. It develops spontaneously and often in a marked degree. "Life now pivots over from an egoistic to an altruistic basis." Not that he is never again thoughtless of the feelings of others but he now feels instinctively the worth of unselfishness. In his devotion to the interests of others he does not hesitate, indeed he is glad to make real sacrifices. If we study the statistics concerning the aspirations of youth we find that at puberty there is a new appreciation of the "heroes of philanthropy." G. Stanley Hall, after a broad investigation with reference to the choice of ideals during childhood and youth
comes to the conclusion that while civic virtues rise, and position, fame, honor, and general greatness increase rapidly yet moral qualities rise highest and also fastest at this time. Dr. Thurber's replies from thousands of children in New York with reference to what they wanted to do when grown showed that "the desire for character increased throughout, but rapidly after 12, and the impulse to do good to the world, which had risen slowly from 9, mounted sharply after 13." So that it may be said that it is in this period of early adolescence that love, in its larger sense, is born, and this new force profoundly effects the soul. "Far off, at first, and dimly, looms up the great conception that life after all is not to be lived for self, but for others, and the instinct of subordination, of sacrifice, of service begins here." (The Intermediate Worker and His Work, E. S. Lewis, p. 207)

It is not our aim, however, to attempt any comprehensive and complete analysis of all the changes which take place in the developing life during the years of early adolescence. Our purpose has been selective rather than analytic in any broad and full sense. Perhaps, then, we have said enough to suggest clearly the thought we here desire to indicate, namely, that the pubertal period witnesses a decided and fundamental physical and mental change in every normal life. The body increases in size very rapidly, profound nervous changes occur, and the mind expands in numerous ways. Indeed there takes place at this time a comparatively sudden and marked expansion of selfhood, so remarkable and profound that it may properly be called the "birth of a greater self." And although this is a period of contradictions and surprises, a time when naturally there is an almost bewildering mingling of old instincts and tendencies with new impulses and ideals yet through it all there are certain specific changes that occur and the result is "the birth of a new and larger personal consciousness." In general this is a time when "old things are passing away and all things are becoming new." It is a time of
new powers, new opportunities, new possibilities. The youth now passes into
a new and larger world through the changes that take place in mind and body.
No less an authority than G. Stanley Hall calls it a time of physical and
mental "new birth." It is the awakening of manhood and womanhood. And all
this would seem to indicate that this is the natural period for a new religious
awakening, a new spiritual birth. Inasmuch as man has a spiritual nature as
truly as he has a mental and a physical nature, and since, in early adolescence,
both the physical nature and the mental nature show an unusual and marked growth
and development this period, it would seem by logical inference, should wit-
ness a radical growth or enlargement of the life of the spirit.

The argument here, however, is not merely, that early adolescence
witnesses a new physical awakening and a great psychic awakening and hence
we should logically expect also in this period a marked spiritual awakening.
This statement is true and the inference is undoubtedly correct. But this
is by no means all of the argument. The very changes in body and mind which
occur normally in the pubertal period, and to which we have just referred, tend
naturally to bring in a new epoch in religious experience. The new emotions
arising at this time endow the soul with that ability to feel deeply that is
essential to religion in its full sense. The marked intellectual expansion
of this stage makes possible that broader grasp of the mind which necessarily
precedes real spiritual insight. This rapid intellectual development in
early adolescence as Prof. Starbuck has pointed out, "either furnishes some
of the elements that enter directly into religion or brings the individual
suddenly into such ripeness of mental capacity that religious impulses may
have an adequate organ for their reception and expression." The awakening
of the social impulses in these years has a vital bearing upon the religious
life. It is natural for the youth to become interested in the whole "other
than myself, individuals, groups the whole human family. The social instinct easily seeks not only friendship with men but with the Invisible, the Supreme. The social impulse to get into proper relations to human society is readily turned toward the idea of getting into right relations with the kingdom of God. The birth of the moral ideals and the altruistic impulses in the pubertal period, is of great importance for religion. The ability to understand the general notions of right and wrong, duty and obligation, selfishness and altruism, sin and holiness is now present. The youth becomes an ethical being in the full sense of the term. Genuine selfishness and wrongdoing have their beginning here. Before the altruistic instinct arises the child may be self-centered yet he could hardly be called, in a deep sense, selfish. But when the higher impulses move in his soul and the youth refuses to follow, when he choses the worse instead of the better, the lower rather than the higher, he is genuinely selfish, and is guilty of real wrong. Moreover, the individual comes, in the period of youth, to a much clearer recognition of his personal relation to God. And this gives a new significance to right and wrong. In the light of this personal relation "wrongdoing stands out clearly as sinfulness, as the guilt of one person who has wronged another." (The Child's Religious Life, W. G. Koons, p. 49) Up to this time the child has been a dependent being. During the years of early childhood, and only less so during the years of later childhood, the individual has comparatively little personal choice. The time for that has not yet come. The choices, to a large extent, are made for the child by the parents or other adults and upon them, in a large measure, rests the responsibility. But in the pubertal period, although the youth is not by any means beyond the influence and help of others, he becomes capable of moral choices and personally responsible for his moral and religious life. Now that he has reached a fuller self-consciousness and the sense of
moral accountability has ripened the "soul is clearly ready for the distinctively religious appeal". For the first time in his existence the youth has come into possession of all the natural capacities and powers essential to moral character and religious life. Among the various questions with which he is brought face to face, in his new independence, among the numerous problems that press upon him is the religious problem. He somehow feels instinctively that he "must settle his relations with the higher law, the moral order, the spiritual and unseen world, in a word, with God." Hence a study of the developing soul leads to the conclusion that a new religious awakening in early adolescence is natural and inevitable in every normal life. The new powers capacities and functions open the way to a great realm of new religious possibilities and the inevitable result is a far-reaching spiritual crisis.

But in addition to the evidence of inference, and beside the internal evidence to which we have just referred, there is strong and convincing external evidence that early adolescence is the normal time for the soul's awakening. There is evidence as wide as the race that the adolescent awakening includes not only awakening of the body and awakening of the mind but awakening of the soul. And this awakening of the soul means a spiritual crisis. This external evidence we shall consider briefly in three divisions:

First, we glance at what are commonly known as the pubic rites. These are the rites, practiced among primitive peoples, which mark the close of childhood and the beginning of manhood or womanhood. For among savage races that "delicious pause between infancy and maturity" that we call youth has no place. The passing of childhood and the advent of puberty means marriage and the beginning of life for themselves. The pubic rites, then, are those ceremonies by which children upon the arrival of the pubertal stage, are initiated into the tribe, formally inducted into the civil and religious life of the community. Moreover, these initiatory rites have been practically
universal. For the Christian religion and cultured peoples are not alone in making this stage of life that we now call early adolescence a turning point. It has been a world-wide custom among primitive peoples to signalize the advent of the adolescent period by special initiations, fastings, symbolic ceremonies, and mystic rites. Upon the conclusion of the initiation a patrimony is granted, or ornaments are bestowed, or a new name is given, or a different cloak or head gear is put on as a mark of manhood or womanhood, as a sign that they have entered upon the duties and privileges of membership in the clan. An interesting and somewhat comprehensive list of these pubertal practices, "signalizing the simultaneous initiation of the youth into manhood and into the mysteries and covenants of religion" has been given by Daniels in the American Journal of Psychology, (vol 6, p 61)

And although, among primitive and savage peoples, the initiatory rituals originated and used were very crude, and although such practices and observances as bodily markings, knocking out teeth, beating, tattooing, hair offerings, torture, enforced seclusion in the forest to die or live according to one's stamina, these customs which came ordinarily at puberty or soon after, doubtless seem to us strange and even revolting yet to those people they were exceedingly meaningful and even sacred - frequently having a religious significance.

Indeed all the varied pubic rites, observances, and customs unite to bear witness to the fact that even barbaric peoples in all ages have recognized the radical change that takes place in the individual at this time. Moreover, the solemn character of many of these rites, the religious ceremonies that cluster about the pubertal years among savage peoples testify impressively to their sense of the critical religious importance of this stage, this new epoch. Hence the fact that pubic rites are found to be practically universal among primitive peoples, that they occur, speaking broadly in the years
of early adolescence, and that they frequently had a religious significance is certainly very suggestive in its bearing upon the truth that the individual enters normally, at this time, upon a larger religious life, that it is natural in early adolescence for religious awakening to take place.

Next we notice the bearing of religious confirmation upon this same truth. In the crude rituals of savages with their fasting, mutilation of the body, change of apparel and mane we see in the embryo some of the later and more spiritual aspects of religion when the youth is taught, trained, robed and confirmed in the temple of worship. For the rite of confirmation as observed in enlightened society corresponds in a general way with the initiatory rites of primitive peoples although, of course, confirmation is a more definitely and exclusively religious ceremony and represents a much higher spiritual stage. But we are interested more particularly in the age of confirmation and we find that it coincides closely with the age of primitive initiations. Confirmations take place usually during early adolescence. "The Jewish and Christian religions have always recognized the critical nature of this epoch and its peculiar temptations and invoked the aid of transcendent motives before intelligence and self-control are able to cope with the strong, new instincts that now spring into life. Hence a religious majority is celebrated in the early teens when the young become members of the religious community as well as of the home, and parents seek divine and ecclesiastical cooperation in the further nurture of their offspring" (G. S. Hall, Adolescence, vol II, p 261 ) Among the orthodox Jews the oldest form of confirmation, dating from the fourteenth century, the Bar Mitzvah or son of the commandment, occurred when the youth reached his thirteenth birthday. He now reaches his "religious majority." By a simple ceremony in the synagogue on the sabbath the son assumes the responsibility for his acts which has hitherto
rested upon the father. The youth becomes a member of the congregation, wears his own phylactery at morning service, and is now privileged to participate in the worship of the synagogue. The Roman Catholic church has no universal rule in regard to the age of confirmation so that the age varies in different countries. In Italy the rite may be received when the child has reached the age of seven. In France and Belgium the applicant must be at least ten years old while in America eleven or twelve is the lower limit. In the Church of England and in the Episcopal Church in America boys are not ordinarily confirmed before fourteen or girls before twelve while in many instances the rite is received a year or two later. The Lutheran Church, the mother of the protestant churches, observes the rite of confirmation at the age of fourteen or fifteen years. That is, the Jewish and Christian churches after many generations of practical experience have selected the beginning of early adolescence, to take the average, as the best time for confirmation. And the bearing of this fact upon the question we are discussing is evident. For this fact involves a recognition of the fitness and readiness of the child now for the first time to receive this rite and to enter into this new relation to the church, the religious community. It means that the rite of confirmation, which makes the youth a member of the church, and which experience has placed at about the beginning of puberty, is really a practical recognition of the new spiritual epoch that dawns naturally in the life of the individual at that time. So that the widespread confirmation rite in the religion of enlightened society bears witness to the new outburst of spiritual life that comes normally in early adolescence.

But there is a third division of the external evidence to the fact that puberty ushers in a new religious epoch, that early adolescence is the normal time for religious awakenings. It is the evidence of scientific statistics. These we proceed to consider, bearing in mind that they are con-
fined largely to the field of evangelical, protestant Christianity. Prof. Coe declares that the empirical method, although in a somewhat crude way, was first applied to religious phenomena by the evangelist. Revival preachers urging their congregations to seek the Lord have long been accustomed to warn the unconverted against procrastination by a simple object lesson. The evangelist asks all who began the religious life before they were twenty years of age to stand and about three-fourths, as a rule, rise. Then he invites those who were converted after forty-five to stand and there are only a scattering few who rise. Thus the revivalist took the first step in the empirical method when he began to get statistics with regard to the age at which people entered upon the Christian life. More recently, however, the age of conversion, as well as other religious phenomena has been taken up in a more thoroughly scientific way. The pioneer in this more scientific and comprehensive study was G. Stanley Hall, President of Clark University, who, in 1891 published an article on the moral and religious training of children which was written in the light of the modern psychology of childhood and adolescence. Since then Dr. Hall, several of his pupils and others have gone on to make further studies, observations and analyses in this department. And although some may overestimate the results already attained one significant and well established fact which the new empirical psychology of religious experience has discovered is that religious awakening, decision or conversion belongs primarily to the years between ten and twenty. A number of investigations have been made and the tabulated results in all cases agree that conversion is confined almost entirely to the period bounded by the ages ten and twenty-five while a large percentage of the members of all the churches have made their decision to serve Christ between eleven and sixteen. Prof. Starbuck, (Amer. Journal of Psychology, vol IX, p 80) in a study of the con-
version of fifty-one men and eighty-six women, found the average age of conversion for males was 15.7 years and for the females 13.8 years. Starbuck also found that the average of conversion of 776 graduates of Drew Theological Seminary was 16.4. Prof. Coe, (The Spiritual Life, p. 43) in a study of eighty-four men in regard to conversion, found the average to be 15.4 years while there were more who made their decision in the years 12 to 16 inclusive than in any other period of equal length.

In 6,641 cases totaled from the observations of five investigators, 5,054 conversions or nearly five-sixths of the entire number occurred between the ages of 12 and 20 while 2,289, more than one-third of all, took place during the intermediate years (Lewis, The Intermediate Worker and His Work, p 79) Prof. Coe, (The Spiritual Life, p 45) combining several studies found 16.4 years to be the average of conversion of 1,784 men. G. Stanley Hall (Adolescence, Vol II p 290) brings together 4,054 men in whom the average of conversion is about 16. Luther Gulick (Sex and Religion in Association, Outlook, Dec. 1897, p 54) notes that of 526 officers of the Young Men's Christian Association in the United States and British Provinces the average age of conversion was 16.4. There is also an additional statement that Gulick makes here which suggests another fact that we must needs bear in mind in connection with the age of conversion. His statement is that the average at which 512 of these officers report that they were first deeply affected by religious influences was 13.7 years. For there may be a real religious awakening while conversion or decision may not occur until a year or two later or even not at all. A recent study (Coe, Education in Religion and Morals, p 255) shows that in a group of growth cases, reaching into the hundreds, the most distinctive period
of spontaneous interest falls at the age of 12 years. Prof. Coe also (The Spiritual Life, p. 41) secured a report from 99 men in regard to their age at each marked religious awakening, however resulting, and he found that the largest percentage occurred at 13 years. Looking now at the figures quoted we find these general facts established beyond question. A very large percentage of all decisions and conversions take place in adolescence, i.e. between 12 and 25 years of age. The large part of these awakenings and conversions that occur in adolescence take place in the years 12 to 16 inclusive, the period of early adolescence. The largest number of conversions taking place in any one year occur at 16. The first great wave of religious interest comes at about 12 to 13 years of age. All the tables of the investigators show a sudden and large increase in the number of religious awakenings and decisions at that time.

Hence the accurate statistics, gathered in recent years by our psychologists, concerning the age at which individuals enter upon a religious life indicate very conclusively that it is an actual fact that a very large proportion of religious awakenings, decisions and conversions do take place in the years of early adolescence and particularly at its beginning and its close.

To sum up this thought, then, there occurs in every normal life in the pubertal years a marked physical awakening, and a great psychic awakening and this would lead us naturally to infer and expect a radical spiritual awakening at this same time. A study of the developing soul, at this stage, with its new powers and capacities leads to the conclusion that a new religious epoch is not only possible now but normal and practically inevitable. The scientific statistics gathered by the scholars with regard to the age when most people choose Christ and His servie indicate clearly that the period of puberty is preeminently the normal time for religious awakenings and decisions. And thus all these unite in pointing to early adolescence as natures appointed
time for the individual to "experience religion."

But while the individual normally experiences an increased religious interest, a new religious awakening and attitude in early adolescence this spiritual new birth does not always come in the same way in every life. To expect that all youth will pass through an absolutely uniform spiritual experience at this stage is a great mistake. Indeed a careful study of adolescent religious experience makes clear that the religious awakenings of this period arise from a variety of sources and come in various ways and different individuals, in this crisis, react very differently. Although, however, when the religious crisis of puberty is reached individuals react differently and the resulting phases of experience are varied, there are a few somewhat clearly marked types. We shall notice four types of adolescent religious awakening or entrance upon a radically larger religious experience remembering that while some individuals are quite true to type others are difficult to place and might be placed in either of two classes. Bearing in mind, then, that this is merely a rough classification, for the sake of definiteness and the little additional clearness it may give, we shall distribute all individuals into four general classes according as they react in the religious crisis of early adolescence.

And first we shall consider the type known commonly as gradual growth. The people of this class are they who make the transition from religious childhood to spiritual maturity without any "hitch or break." Their spiritual development has been an undisturbed process of unconscious growth. They are apparently so fortunately and happily constituted, their environment has been so pure and wholesome, born and reared in a true and wise religious atmosphere, that the awakening of new spiritual life "comes as quietly as the growth of a plant" and it is not possible to find any marked transition
points in their progress from religious childhood to a vital grasp of spiritual things. They gradually assimilate the life about them and enter into a healthy spiritual manhood or womanhood without knowing how or when or where. Some place Samuel in the Old Testament, and Timothy, in the New Testament, in this class. But, however, that may be, there are people today, who are living earnest and worthy religious lives, who have never known anything about a crisis hour, an outstanding decision, or a change of heart. They have grown, as Prof. Starbuck suggests, "something like a tree, which year by year has been added to a little; and when the process is completed, one can only say it was then a tiny sprout, now it is a sturdy oak." (The Psychology of Religion p 298.)

One of the best examples of harmonious development, of uneventful growth, is the case of Rev. Dr. Edward Everett Hale, the noted Boston divine. He states it in this way. "I observe with profound regret, the religious struggles which come into many biographies, as if almost essential to the formation of the hero. I ought to speak of these, to say that any man has an advantage, not to be estimated, who is born, as I was into a family where the religion is simple and rational; who is trained in the theory of such a religion, so that he never knows for an hour, what these religious or irreligious struggles are. I always knew God loved me, and I was always grateful to Him for the world He placed me in. I always liked to tell Him so, and was always glad to receive His suggestions to me. To grow up in this way saves boy or youth from those battles which men try to describe and cannot describe, which seem to use up a great deal of young life. I can remember perfectly that, when I was coming to manhood, the half philosophical novels of the time had a deal to say about the young men and maidens who were facing the problem of life!' I had no idea whatever what the problem of life was. To live with all my might seemed to me easy; to learn where there was so much to learn seemed
pleasant and almost of course; to lend a hand if one had a chance, natural, and if one did this, why, he enjoyed life because he could not help it, and without proving to himself that he ought to enjoy it. I suppose that a skillful professor of the business could have prodded up my conscience, which is, I think, as sensitive as another's. I suppose I could have been made very wretched, and that I could have made others very wretched. But I was in the hands of no such professor, and my relations with God whose child I am, were permitted to develop themselves in the natural way." (Quoted from the Psychology of Religion. E. D. Starbuck, p 305-6) This, however, it should be said is a rare case. Such a gradual, harmonious, even, spiritual development during the adolescent years is very infrequent. Such a transition from religious childhood to religious manhood or womanhood without any friction, or difficulty, or break, or crisis, must be for most people for a long time to come only an ideal.

In contrast with the gradual growth type, and at the other extreme, is what is known as emotional conversion. This word conversion, it is true is sometimes used in a general sense to designate the change from religious immaturity to maturity. And G. Stanley Hall has this broad meaning in mind when he says: "In its most fundamental sense conversion is a natural, normal, universal and necessary process at the stage when life pivots over from an autocentric to an heterocentric basis" (Adolescence. G. Stanley Hall, vol II, p 301) Here, however, we use the word conversion in its narrower sense and we mean by this term a sudden, emotional change by which one passes into the fuller religious life and which takes place often in what are commonly called revivals or missions. Conversion in this sense, characterized by more or less of abruptness and intensity of feeling, occurs chiefly among those evangelical protestant denominations in which there are many people who have passed through a similar change and value it highly, and in which the methods
used by parents, Sunday School teachers, pastors and evangelists are such as tend to suggest and induce such an experience. A typical conversion would be that of one, who has lived in disobedience to God and in ways of wickedness, who suddenly becomes convicted of sin and realized that he has grieved the Spirit of God. He is profoundly troubled on account of his sins and suffers poignant pain. There is deep contrition and a struggle between the old habitual life of evil and the new life of righteousness, and an earnest seeking after divine pardon. Then comes the climax or turning point and this is followed by a relaxation marked by a sense of relief and feeling of forgiveness. This consciousness of God's pardon and grace and love naturally brings an experience of great joy which sometimes manifests itself in shouts or songs or even tears. The life is completely transformed. "Old things are passed away, all things are become new." Not many, however, in early adolescence experience this extreme type of conversion. To be sure it is not difficult to induce such an experience at this time because it is so much a period of new problems and adjustments, of storm and stress. The emotional accompaniments, too, may be strengthened and heightened by direct control and suggestion. Yet the extreme type of conversion evidently does not very frequently occur at this state of life. On the other hand conversion in a milder but real form, a sudden, emotional spiritual change, does take place often in early adolescence although usually toward its close. There is conviction of sin and a sense of condemnation, a real contrition and sorrow for their wrong doings, confession and forgiveness, and a deep peace and satisfaction. There are not, however, ordinarily the extreme outward emotional manifestations. There is no weeping, as a rule, no groaning, no shouting, no singing. Yet they feel that they have given themselves to God, that He has adopted them into His family, that a real change has taken place in their hearts, and henceforth they endeavor to do His will.
Between these two extreme types of gradual growth and emotional conversion there are two other general classes that we notice. These types are not quite as distinct, perhaps, as the two former and it should be remembered that all four types shade the one into the other.

We notice next, then, what is known as the spontaneous awakening type. This term refers to those religious intuitions which arise suddenly and unexpectedly in the beginning of youth, those "first awakenings to a vital experience of religious truth which come after a credulous and thoughtless childhood."

(The Psychology of Religion, E. D. Starbuck, p 199.) The awakening, is apparently spontaneous. "It arises as naturally as any of the mental or physical changes of this period." As far as can be seen there is no human agency although the divine spirit, beyond doubt, is operative in all such cases. Without any apparent immediate cause, without any special religious influences about him, without any solicitation to begin a Christian life, the new life bursts forth. Not in the religious service only but in the home, or on a walk, or at a lesson there is a sudden awakening to a new life, a larger life, a nobler life. New aspirations, new insights, new resolves, new and noble ambitions suddenly arise and this may be a decisive hour for the individual and mark the beginning of a serious and religious life. "A girl, fourteen years of age, was walking in a neighbors garden when suddenly she was possessed by the thought that she had "passed from death unto life." There had been no apparent preparation for such a thought and experience and no particular thrill of emotion accompanied it but she has always looked upon the event as a decisive one" (The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity, G. B. Cutten, p 278) Here is another example: "At fourteen I became a Christian. I can give no cause of the change I then seemed to realize for the first time all the truths that had been presented to me before." (The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity, G. B. Cutten, p 278) We notice two more illustrations of spontaneous
awakenings taken from E. D. Starbuck, The Psychology of Religion. "It was a sudden awakening so that I could say in my heart 'Our Father in Heaven'" (p. 93)

"While sitting alone at home one Sunday, thinking of religious duties, I heard the distinct voice within me 'My son, give me thy heart'" (p. 197)

A study of spontaneous religious awakenings indicates clearly that they differ in suddenness, in intensity, and in the emotional phenomena that accompanies them sometimes. At one extreme they might even be called conversion, by those accustomed to such terminology, while at the other extreme some would look upon them as mere incidents in gradual growth. Investigations have demonstrated that spontaneous awakenings are confined almost entirely to the period between ten and twenty-five years of age, that most occur in the early adolescent years, and that, speaking broadly, they come a little earlier than conversions.

Then there is what might be called the peaceful awakening type. Dr. E. S. Lewis has described this type in this way. "This is quiet awakening. The penitential element is there, but it is not conspicuous. It is the typical awakening of a boy or girl. The wise teacher has not stressed the child's quiet nor has he told him that God is angry with him; but he has told him that God is his Father and that he loves him and wants him to come to Him and give his heart and life to Him. There is nothing more beautiful than the sweet simplicity with which a young girl or boy takes us at our word and comes as freely to God as to an earthly father. It is a true soul awakening. There is a new life following it. We have abundant evidence in the church of the reality, permanence and fruitfulness of experiences like these." (The Intermediate Worker and His Work, E. S. Lewis, p. 163)

So far as frequency is concerned this may be said. While peaceful awakenings occur even in revival
churches, they are the prevailing type in the liturgical churches which receive their children, after a special course of religious instruction, to communion in the years of early adolescence. Baptized in infancy, reared in Godly homes, trained and instructed in religious matters, when the adolescent awakening comes, they naturally decide to serve God and make public confession of their faith and purpose. Without any special feeling, as a rule, much less any tragic emotional disturbance, they do fully and freely choose the religious life, becoming gradually conscious of "the peace of God and the joy of salvation." Decisions made by boys and girls at the beginning of early adolescence, at twelve or thirteen years of age, are ordinarily of this sort. They are the logical outcome of wise religious training and instruction together with proper social suggestion.

A question, however, naturally arises at this point. What is the explanation of this variety of religious experience? What is the reason for these different types? Why do people in the same situation and facing the same problems react differently? Why do youth behave differently when the religious awakening of adolescence comes? In some lives, as we have noted, the spiritual transformation occurs suddenly and in others slowly; in some it is accompanied by emotion and agitation while in others it takes place peacefully and quietly. Why is it that this experience is abrupt and tragic in some cases and in others a process of gradual growth?

Until recent years this question, it is true, has scarcely been raised and, of course, no serious attempt was made to answer it. If the question did sometimes arise it was quickly referred by general consent, to the unfathomable ways of the Almighty. Within a few years, however, the psychologists have turned their attention to this problem. About fifteen years ago Prof. George A. Coe took up this question and bringing to his task a trained philos-
ophical mind and following the scientific method he made, according to such an authority as Starbuck, a valuable and permanent contribution to this subject.

To be sure, as Coe points out, some of the factors in the explanation of this problem lie on the surface. One of the factors is this to which I have already referred. Sudden and striking spiritual transformations take place usually in those communions that place high value upon such experiences and that endeavor, by such favorable conditions as direct evangelistic sermons, appealing gospel hymns, intense social feeling, and some outward indication of decision, etc., to produce marked changes. Then there is another factor that lies on the surface and reference to this, also, has been made in the present thesis. It has long been the custom to look upon the distinction between the sudden, emotional conversion and the gradual, quiet type as entirely a moral difference, or largely so, one class being morally worse than the other. The idea seems to be that if the individual has been nurtured in a religious environment, and makes the decision to obey God in youth, the decision and change will naturally be peaceful and quiet. On the other hand if the individual is a great sinner, if he has lived long in sin, gone far in the ways of evil, and become very wicked, when he turns to God the change will naturally be a great one, sudden and striking. And beyond doubt, if the individual be a great and confirmed sinner, these very circumstances will tend to intensify all the elements of conversion. There will be a profounder conviction of sin, deeper contrition, a more definite turning point, greater relief, more abounding joy, and in every way the transformation will be more dramatic. Moreover, this fact is evident in the religious experience of early adolescence. Religious awakenings come normally at the beginning of this period, at about 12 or 13, and at the same time there arises a natural impulse to choose the service of God. If, however, this impulse if resisted, or there is failure to act upon it, it drops into the background. But a few years later, toward the close of the pubertal
period, there is apparently another normal period of aroused religious interest and if the change takes place at this time, and under such circumstances, it will be a conversion rather than a decision. There will be more or less of emotion. But, while recognizing the factors just mentioned, Professor Coe, after his study of this problem, came to the conclusion that the most vital reason for the difference between the sudden, emotional conversion and the peaceful, quiet transformation is not to be found in the difference in environment of the two classes, or their moral difference but in their difference in temperament.

Professor Coe made a study of actual cases to discover the influence of temperament upon the behaviour of youth in the experience of decision or conversion (The Spiritual Life, G. A. Coe, p 104-150) In a very definite and exact study of seventy-seven persons, fifty-two males and twenty-five females, he endeavored to learn if there be any logical connection between certain temperaments and certain religious experiences. He sought to determine if there be certain temperamental conditions that lead naturally to striking religious transformation and other temperamental conditions that lead normally to more uneventful experiences. In his investigation Coe divided the seventy-seven subjects studied into those who had experienced a striking transformation, by which he means "a profound change which though not necessarily instantaneous, seems to the subject of it to be distinctly different from a process of growth, however rapid," (p 112) and those who had not. Then a cross division was made according to "expectation of transformation." By a combination of these two methods of division he secured two positive classes for his special study. Group I, "those who expected a transformation and experienced one." Group II, "those who expected but failed to experience." A third division, however, was found necessary in carrying out the plan. Group III, those who belonged in part to both. As the first result of his investigation Coe discovered
that of seventeen subjects in Group I there were twelve in whom sensibility was the predominating faculty while of the twelve in Group II there were nine in whom the intellect was clearly predominant. A second interesting result was that those whose expectation was satisfied belong almost wholly to the slow-intense and prompt-weak varieties, the temperaments approaching most nearly those traditionally known as the melancholic or reflective and the sanguine. On the other hand, those whose expectation was disappointed belonged more largely to the prompt-intense variety, or the energetic temperament, although the distribution between the energetic, reflective, and sanguine is not markedly uneven. Next Coe carefully examined his subjects with regard to mental and motor automatisms such as dreams, hallucinations, clapping of hands, uncontrollable laughter, etc. Here he found that there were eight persons having mental or motor automatisms in Group I and only one in Group II. This fact, of course, that the average of automatisms is about seven times higher in Group I than in Group II would indicate that automatic mental processes are peculiarly favorable to marked religious transformations.

Then once again Coe made a study of these same subjects with regard to their relative suggestibility. Here he looked for originality, rather than mere readiness or slowness of response. Dividing his subjects with respect to suggestibility, according to the standard of quality he secured two types which he calls the passive and the spontaneous. Of the fourteen cases examined in Group I there were thirteen of the passive type, in which external suggestion is more prominent. In Group II of the twelve persons examined nine were of the spontaneous type, in which auto-suggestion is more prominent. In other words he found a quite close "correlation between one's religious experience and one's type of suggestibility." (p.135)

Finally Professor Coe sums up the results of his study in these words "It has been shown that three sets of factors favor the attainment of a
striking religious transformation; the temperament factor, the factor of expectation, and the tendency to automatisms and passive suggestibility. Let us, in conclusion, note the effect of combining these three factors. Of ten cases in which there is expectation of a marked transformation, together with predominance of sensibility and passive suggestibility, the number whose expectation was satisfied was nine. But of eleven cases of such expectation, together with predominance of intellect or will, and with spontaneous autosuggestion, not one was satisfied. In short, everything goes to show that the chief mental qualities and states favorable to these striking experiences are expectation, abundance of feeling, and passive suggestibility with its tendency to hallucinations and other automatisms." (The Spiritual Life, G. A. Coe p 138) But notwithstanding this conclusion in regard to the close connection between temperament and the type of religious transformation experienced we must not forget that this whole subject is a very complex one and various factors enter into the process.

This discussion, however, although the last word is doubtless yet to be spoken, does throw some light upon another question that sometimes arises at this point. We have referred to four different types of religious transition. The new life, as we have noted, comes in different ways in different individuals. The question sometimes asked is this: Which is the better way? Which type of religious experience is the more desirable? Is there a normal type of religious experience for youth? The answer to this question in the light of what has already been said, is manifest. There is no normal, no one ideal type of religious experience for all youth. Religious experience not only differs in different individuals, but it must inevitably differ, the type being determined by such factors as natural endowment, training, environment, and temperament. Moreover, so far as naturalness and worth are concerned,
these different types should be placed on an equality. It is a mistake to think that one person is more truly religious than another merely because he has had a different and more striking religious transformation. Nevertheless, there has been a tendency, in some quarters, particularly among revival churches, to exalt the sudden emotional type of experience. These communions have exalted feeling too much and have honored thought and action too little. The individual who has had a striking and dramatic experience has been looked upon as in a higher state of grace, as more genuinely religious, than one whose experience has been of the quiet ethical type. Indeed the serene, uneventful type of religious transformation, if it is recognized at all, is accepted reluctantly and with the feeling that it is far from ideal. And sometimes the sudden emotional type of experience is set up as a norm and as the only normal and real religious transformation. It is considered the culminating, the ideal type by which all other varieties of experience are judged and condemned. If the individual has not had an experience marked by a deep emotional disturbance, if he has seen no visions, heard no voices, received no personal revelation, he is ruled out of the ranks of the truly religious. Now it is true that the sudden emotional religious transformation, as one type of experience, is recognized by the modern psychology as perfectly legitimate and indeed, for some people, the only natural and normal type. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to set up the abrupt and striking transformation as the one absolute and only ideal for all people. On the other hand there has been a tendency in some quarters, to exalt the gradual growth type of religious transformation. Moreover, gradual growth has been looked upon as an absolutely regular development, proceeding always in the same even way, through childhood and adolescence, without any periods or stages or culminating points. Such a development, however.
without any periodicity, or marked stages, or crises, is an ideal that is seldom reached and, as a fact, is found only in very rare cases. Indeed a growth during the adolescent years "so even and symmetrical that no crisis should be reached, that the capacity for spiritual assimilation should be constantly equal to the demands that are made on consciousness" must, in the very nature of things, be impossible for most people for a longtime to come. Psychology has discovered, among other things, the continuous but epochal nature of religious development. As in all biological growth, as in man's physical and his intellectual development so in his religious development there are level planes and even growth but also epochal periods and marked crises. And even in cases of gradual growth, early adolescence marks the beginning of a new religious epoch. At this time the youth enters into a new and larger world. He catches clearer and larger visions of God, of duty, and of religion. And this means a natural crisis. If the religious life is to continue developing there must now be made, in the light of the larger experience of this period, a free and full decision and choice of the life of obedience to God. Professor Coe has put it in this way: "We shall not be far from the truth of the matter, if we say that the broader, deeper questioning as to the meaning of life, together with the blossoming of the social instinct, brings the need of a new and more deeply personalization of the content of religion. The quickened conscience with its thirst for absolute righteousness; the quickened intellect with its thirst for absolute thirst; the quickened aesthetic sense, with its intuitions of beauty that eye hath not seen and hath not heard; the quickened social sense with its longing for perfect and eternal companionship; in short the new meaning-fulness and mystery of life - all this tends to bring in a new and distinctive epoch in religious experience. If one has not been religious in childhood now is the supremely favorable time for conversion; and if one has been religious, there is still need, in most cases for a personal decision and personal
acceptance that shall supercede the more external habits of childhood. Without giving to our terms any theological significance, we may say that conversion or some equivalent personalizing of religion, is a normal part of adolescent growth." (The Spiritual Life, p 30)

Koens puts it in this way "What does adolescence mean to the youth who reaches it in a really religious state? If the child has been so favorably situated that God's grace blended with proper training, has supplantd the inherited depravity, does the coming of the adolescent ferment have any special importance? In a general way it may be said that adolescence is a time of storm and stress for every child. The adolescent has a mass of new powers, physical, mental and religious and he scarcely knows how to use them or what to do with them. With his new powers the adolescent has a new native instinct to test everything and to look for the foundations.... So we see the religious adolescent searching carefully and critically the stock of religious ideas which he has gathered, testing in a serious way the religious feelings and habits which have been cultivated under the authority and guidance of others.... Broad investigation into actual cases leads to the conclusion that, even where the child seeks and professes conversion before the adolescent period, he is not saved from passing through a great crisis when this period actually arrives. After strife and storm he has to choose Christ anew and settle down to serve him. The child who has been properly trained and kept in the love of God, but has not professed conversion, passes through no greater change in reaching the same place in the religious life.... Be it understood we do not give the term conversion to this period of religious storm and stress through which the Christian child passes at adolescence; conversion in the limited sense has already taken place in the previous years. The element of conversion, lacking up to this time, is now supplied. The element is free personal choice. The child must now freely and fully accept, choose, adopt as his own the religious beliefs, feelings, habits and life which have been brought to him by the
grace of God and proper training." ("The Child's Religious Life" W. G. Koos  

Dr. E. S. Lewis has put the thought in this way. "The spiritual awakening of adolescence is in line with conversion, and an extension of this when it is not conversion. Previous consecration may have covered all the soul area of the past, but now the soul has enlarged and its horizon has broadened. It is natural that a new consecration should give this increment to God; and so extensive and profound is the new life that this later consecration is often accompanied with much more in the way of emotional experience than that which accompanied conversion in childhood." ("The Classmate, date unknown) And Professor Starbuck, after his study, came to the conclusion that even in the case of persons born in religious homes, and wisely taught and trained in religious things, the development during early adolescence as a rule, is not continuously even, smooth and peaceful. Such a harmonious growth, in this stage of life, without any difficulty or friction, indeed, he declares to be, even under the most favorable conditions, very improbable.

The fact is that in normal religious development the pubertal stage marks a new religious epoch - and a natural crisis. Even though the child has been reared under wise religious auspices, and his heart has always been right with God, and he is full of wholesome habits, yet when he arrives at early adolescence, and comes into possession of his fully self-determinative powers, and face what is virtually a new world, there must be, ordinarily, a new decision, choice, affirmation, or confirmation, whichever term may be most fitting. And, owing to the nature of life at this stage, when there is normally so much of uncertainty and instability, of confusion and hesitancy, of difficulty and turmoil, that for a long time early adolescence has been called a period of "storm and stress," this decision in most cases, will be
accompanied with something of friction, or struggle or questioning.

The pubertal period then, naturally ushers in a new religious epoch and normally brings the youth face to face with a personal religious crisis. Even if he is religiously nurtured, and has already chosen the way of virtue, a new decision, larger and deeper and more personal, to live a life of obedience to God, must now be made. And, if no choice has been made heretofore, he will come normally and inevitably, at this time, face to face with this question of surrendering his life to God. "Nature has ordered it. There comes the feeling that the crisis of life has arrived and that the decision is for all eternity."

But this brings us to another problem. How can we best secure, in this crisis time, a decisive choice of a religious life? How can we most appropriately and successfully lead our youth, in these critical years of early adolescence to freely and fully surrender themselves to the direction of a higher power or to put it in terms of the Christian religion, to submit themselves to the Lordship of Christ. There are several methods that are frequently used and we proceed to consider four of these in a brief way.

The first we shall notice is the revival. This word revival is ordinarily applied to a special series of evangelistic services. These are sometimes led by the minister but frequently by an evangelist. By direct and searching sermons, by touching gospel hymns, by the stimulus of the crowd and the force of example, by personal effort and suggestion every is made to induce the unconverted to surrender to God. The philosophy of the revival is the philosophy of attention. What can be said of this method? Should it be entirely eliminated or does the revival still have a place and a function? That there have been evangelists, sometimes, who have thought more
of the loaves and fishes than of the spiritual kingdom, that some revivals have been marked by undue excesses, no one will deny. Moreover, there are certain inherent tendencies in the revival method which, unless carefully guarded against, will lead to unfortunate results.

One danger, some think the greatest, is the tendency of the revival to insist upon one type of religious experience, and that the sudden and striking type, as the standard for every body without any regard for age or sex or temperament. In other words there is a natural tendency in the revival method to overlook and fail to sufficiently recognize the variety of individual temperament and problems. The attempt is made in religious experience, to cast everyone in the same mould, to force the same standard indiscriminately upon all. As a result of this, on the one hand, those people who naturally experience religion in this way, are sometimes apt to place too great value upon this momentary experience and particularly its outward form, its emotional accompaniments, and to think too little of a pure heart, clean hands and lofty ideals. On the other hand, those people who, on account of temperament, are hardly capable of the prescribed experience are sometimes apt to be thrown into confusion and darkness because, although they have earnestly and conscientiously sought the required experience, they have failed to attain it.

Another danger of the revival method is its tendency to emotionalism. The evangelistic service naturally appeals to the feelings and tends to arouse emotional excitement. This tendency sometimes goes to extremes. And thus in the excitement of the revival people, particularly young people, rise or go forward to the altar, express a decision to lead a religious life, scarcely knowing what they are really doing or why they are doing it. There is no conscious motive, no intellectual element whatever, it is pure feeling with their own feelings deeply stirred, and in the midst of a great company
of people whose emotions have been wrought up to a high pitch, they are carried away by the excitement, they are carried forward by "the irresistible force of the ensemble." And the unfortunate result is that when the revival is past and the excitement is over and the exalted feeling has evaporated there is apt to be a grave reaction. In some cases the religious interest, in a short time, subsides and then entirely vanishes leaving no permanent good. In some other cases a somewhat artificial and unnatural experience is maintained though it ends inevitably in either a strained or hollow religious life. In still other cases the reaction manifests itself in a feeling of indignation, on the one hand, or a feeling of comparative despair on the other, and in either case they rebel against the whole institution and they entirely reject religion.

Then another danger of the revival method is this. The tendency of the whole revival system is to place great emphasis upon the sudden and striking religious experience and its importance. Moreover, this emphasis is apt to somewhat obscure the importance of the gradual and permanent processes that must both precede and follow this culmination. And this inherent tendency of the revival method sometimes leads evangelistic workers to forget the long period of preparation for this crisis hour while they also fail to realize how essential it is that these marked experiences be followed by intelligent and sympathetic instruction and training so that the noble resolve may not end in mere emotion but may lead on to a consistently and symmetrically developing religious life.

Then there is still another natural tendency of the revival system, which sometimes goes to an extreme and causes unfortunate results: the very nature of the revival and its circumstances tend to lead earnest religious workers to forget the respectful regard, to fail to manifest that delicate reverence which is due the individuality, the personal life and initiative of
others. Undoubtedly this failure has been a stone of stumbling to many outside of the church while it has been a source of apprehension to some within the church. For somehow every intelligent man feels, unconsciously, that his personal religious life, his personal relationship with God, is something very sacred, something that cannot appropriately be revealed openly to the public always and everywhere. And the almost ruthless way in which, in revivals, evangelists and others have sometimes intruded the secret recesses, the inner sanctuary, of another life and have dragged these sacred experiences in various ways, into the gaze of the multitude, has beyond doubt done not a little harm.

What then shall we say of the revival as a method of leading people to choose a religious life. Because sometimes an evangelist is really a "cross roads fakir" or the revival is sometimes abused, or because it has tendencies that sometimes are allowed to go to extremes and do harm, shall the revival method be entirely discarded? Or on the other hand is there a real and permanent need of some form of revival effort? President H. C. King of Oberlin, who has made a very valuable contribution to the discussion of the revival, answers this latter question by declaring that "assuming above all, a wise leadership and assuming that the revival is carefully guarded against the dangers in revivalism and assuming that the pressure of it is not put upon young children, it seems to me that our answer must clearly and frankly be in the affirmative." (Personal and Ideal Elements in Education, H. C. King, p. 217) Moreover, he gives the reasons for his faith. He presents the positive, the affirmative arguments for the revival very clearly and cogently. Perhaps we cannot do better than to briefly summarize them at this point. Dr. King gives several reasons why he thinks the revival still has a real and important place.

I. There are some people in every community whose temperament preeminently fits them for the sudden and glowing experience. They will naturally respond
most easily to some special effort, some appeal out of the ordinary. And the revival season will likely provide the best time for these people to enter upon a religious life. Indeed for such the revival would seem to be almost necessary if their religious life is to be to them thoroughly real and vital.

II. It is not, however, a single temperament that needs the revival method. A wise revivalism seems to have a real contribution to make to us all. "The moments of insight, the times of vision, the fresh awakening to the significance of life, these mean very much to us all. And we may be wisely and rationally helped to them; and we all need such help." Four psychological facts are of significance here: (1) First there is the fact, which psychology makes clear that the most important life habits tend to establish themselves before adolescence is over, and that character tends to "set like plaster." And this, of course, suggests the great importance of right decisions made early in life and certainly every rational means, including the revival, that will better insure such decisions ought to be used. (2) Another psychological fact is this, Professor James declares that all those changes of heart, awakenings of conscience, etc., which make new men of us belong to the form of decision that takes place when we "suddenly pass from the easy and careless to the sober and strenuous mood." Hence the presence of such moods, out of which our greatest choices, decisions commonly grow, may be of most vital importance. (3) By observing the psychological laws of attention we can do something to make the "sober and strenuous mood" possible for ourselves and others. Through selective attention we may determine the elements of our environment that shall most influence us. If the great religious truths and facts are to bulk as large in our lives as they ought they must have attention. Moreover, we cannot get by mere scattered bits of attention what we can get by prolonged and absorbed attention. And it is the extended and concentrated
attention that leads most naturally and certainly to this "sober and strenuous mood," and causes a firmer hold upon spiritual realities, and gives these great realities their legitimate power with us, and religious interests become the supreme interests of our lives. And just the needed opportunity for prolonged and concentrated attention to the great truths and realities of religion is provided by an intelligent revival. (4) Then there is one other psychological principle which must be noted in this connection. Beyond question the fact that many others about us at a certain time are giving earnest attention to religion naturally helps to produce that "sober and strenuous mood out of which our great decisions are born." In other words there is what might be called a spiritual atmosphere, in a congregation, determined by the tone of the individual minds, which tends normally to induce that mood in which "we are capable of our best." Hence the season of religious interest is, in this respect, a social opportunity of real and large significance and here is another reason why a sane revival may bring valuable results to any of us.

III. In the third place the importance of feeling in all life should not be overlooked. President King refers to the suggestive fact that such a scholar and authority as Prof. James, of Harvard, in his lectures on "The Varieties of Religious Experience" places greatest emphasis upon the element of feeling in religion while he subordinates its intellectual part. Prof. Coe, another authority in this field, says that "we are suffering not from excess of emotion in religion but rather from too little emotion, from the narrowness of our emotional range." Indeed no one can doubt the fact that "feeling has great importance for religion as giving the sense of reality, and giving powerful motive for action." (Personal and Ideal Elements in Education, H. C. King p 220) Hence when emotion is rationally stirred, when feeling arises naturally in the presence of great religious realities and verities,
even as in other spheres of life, for from being condemned or ignored it should be commended and coveted. So that the revival, by its tendency to bring some real feeling into the religious life, has real psychological justification. But, to leave Dr. King's excellent discussion of the revival, what can be said of the revival for adolescence? Dr. Forbush declares that it appeals particularly to adolescence and is referring especially to early adolescence where he writes "It satisfies the emotional nature. It is a simple appeal to the heart. Take away the late hours, the long services, the untrained and fanatic exhorters - features which are incidentals - and reduce it to a 'children's crusade,' in which the social and emotional element is retained, where the ideal of the heroic and loving Christ and His grand and strenuous service are held up by the pastor or a wise specialist with children, and we have an instrument of historic dignity and perpetual value. The danger is of forcing the nature before it has come to its day of choice, and the neglect to follow up the decision by careful training. (Quoted from the Senior Worker and His Work, E. S. Lewis, p 265)

Hence we conclude that the sane and intelligent revival, as a method of inducing a religious decision, still has a place and is not to be entirely discarded. Indeed it is somewhat suggestive in this connection, that the sacerdotal churches are tending toward something like this very method in their so-called "retreats" and "missions."

Another method frequently used to bring youth to a choice of the life of obedience to God is that is commonly known as Decision Day in the Sunday School. Sometimes other names are used such as Acknowledgement Day, Witnessing Day, and Fruition Day. Although called Decision Day and culminating on a selected Sunday it is properly and really a period rather than a day. The pastor, superintendent and teachers of the Sunday School, who decide upon the date for
Decision Sunday, usually leave a month or six weeks, at the least, in which to properly prepare for it. During this time the minister takes it up in the pulpit in ways that seem to him wise and the young people give it a place in their prayer meetings. The teachers endeavor to be with their scholars, as much as possible, outside the Sunday School hour. They visit the homes of the pupils and, if it may be done appropriately, seek to lead them to a decision. Or a tender and earnest letter, making a personal appeal, is used to win them to Christ. An effort is made by the superintendent and teachers to secure the hearty cooperation of the parents. The mid-week prayer meeting, immediately preceding Decision Day, is often devoted to the Sunday School. The aim is to have all the Sunday School teachers and the parents, so far as possible, present at this service to engage in united prayer for the salvation of the youth. The pastor speaks of the great importance of this work. When the Decision Day session of the Sunday School comes and it is preceded by a special prayer meeting of the officers and teachers if convenient - the opening exercises are a little longer than usual and more than ordinarily devotional and evangelistic in spirit. The lesson for the day is either much shortened or entirely omitted. Familiar hymns that are tender and persuasive are sung. Some of the officers and teachers lead in prayer and offer testimonies appropriate to the service. The superintendent expresses his deep interest in the spiritual welfare of the scholars, the younger grades of course, not being present. An opportunity is then given the teachers to make their plea. Then the pastor, or some one in his stead, briefly and simply explains the meaning of this step, what it means to choose Christ as Lord and Saviour, and makes a quiet, earnest appropriate appeal for immediate decision. This is followed at once by an opportunity to accept and perhaps to confess Christ. Sometimes the scholars are asked to sign a decision card, sometimes they are invited to
rise or to come to the altar and afterwards sign a card. Those who decide to follow Jesus are usually gathered into training classes, ordinarily in charge of the pastor, where they are prepared for membership in the church. Sometimes the decision cards are given out the sabbath previous to Decision Day and are signed at home after consultation with the parents. Sometimes the teachers make it their principal endeavor to secure the decision of the scholars one by one, by personal appeal, beforehand and those who decide help to bring others to a decision. Decision Day thus becomes more truly a Witnessing Day.

"The best form of card, perhaps, is one that may be signed by every pupil with four spaces in which the name may be entered as "Professing Christian and church member." Professing Christian but not a church member," "Not a professing Christian," "God helping me, I choose henceforth to lead a Christian life."

A religious census of the school is thus taken, and embarrassment is avoided, as every one signs a card." (The Pupil and The Teacher. L. A. Weigle, p 205)

But what shall we say of Decision Day as a method of leading youth to definitely choose the religious life? There are, undoubtedly, in this method some inherent shortcomings. For example; the form of social suggestion as Decision Day is ordinarily observed, is open to question and certainly leaves something to be desired. Some youth almost inevitably will sign a card because others are doing it, merely because of the social contagion of the time. Such decisions, of course, are superficial and the results are not likely to be lasting. There is also the unfortunate effect upon those who refuse to accept Christ when all the scholars are brought face to face with the great alternative. They see no direct and immediate evil result - no lightning stroke of retribution from heaven - and the next year it is easier to refuse. "Is it wholesome thus to lead young souls up to the great alternative and let the will fail, and do it year after year?"
Then there are certain dangers into which this method is quite apt to lead unless they are carefully guarded against. One is the mistake of expecting too much of a single day or a brief period and so placing too little emphasis upon continuous direct personal effort for each individual scholar. A few weeks, much less a single service, can never atone for or make up for months of neglect and carelessness. Another danger is a failure to prayerfully and wisely plan for and prepare for the Decision Day by a previous campaign which shall lead up to it in a natural and appropriate way. It must be remembered that, in every way, Decision Day should come "as the shooting up of the blade, and not the plucking up of roots." Still another peril is the mistake of not following up earnestly the work of Decision Day. In a sense our work for the youth who choose Christ at this service, instead of being ended, is only just begun. For now they must be further instructed and trained in the Christian life, and in due season enter into the fellowship of the Church, and be given some definite work to do. Nevertheless, notwithstanding its inherent shortcomings and possible dangers Decision Day has undoubtedly led a great many youth to a definite choice of the religious life. And although through shiftless preparation and mismanagement Decision Day has sometimes been a failure and the result has been worse than if no such attempt had been made yet when properly planned, and carried out, and followed up, and wisely safeguarded, it has accomplished much good. Still it is not an ideal method.

The third method, that we shall notice, which is frequently used to lead youth into the religious life and the church is the Confirmation Class. This is the usual method of the liturgical churches such as the Episcopal and Lutheran as well as the Roman Catholic. The Confirmation Class belongs normally in the early adolescent period. According to this
scheme of religious training the children are christened in infancy. The baptized child is looked upon as already in the kingdom, "potentially regenerate," "received into the grace of God." As soon as possible he is taught the simpler truths of the catechism and is nurtured with the expectation that when the years of discretion come he will enter into the privileges and responsibilities of membership in the church. Ordinarily the congregation is reminded by announcement in church of the approach of confirmation. The rector sometimes preaches a sermon on the importance and the significance of the rite. Candidates are then invited to send their names to the clergy. The hour for the meeting of the Confirmation Class is then appointed, the class meeting ordinarily once a week in a session of about three quarters of an hour. Twelve weeks is the usual length of the course although it varies somewhat. It is seldom shorter than ten weeks or longer than fourteen. Frequently the boys and girls are separated while receiving the confirmation construction. This, however, is not an invariable rule. The work of the Confirmation Class is properly both instructive and devotional.

In regard to instruction the candidates are taught the meaning of confirmation and instructed in the duties, responsibilities and privileges of the Christian life. The devotional side of the life of each member of the class is also given careful consideration, attention and guidance. Sometimes, about the middle of the course of preparation, each candidate is asked to send to the rector in charge of the class, a brief and simple letter answering the question "Why I wish to be confirmed." This is done to bring to a point the instructions already given and to prepare for what is to come. This letter will naturally open the way for and will be used as the basis of a frank personal talk with the candidate and turning point in the work of preparation. The rector makes use of this opportunity to learn if the candidate understands the real import of
the Confirmation Class and is doing the work intelligently. This inter-
view, however, will not have so much to do with his knowledge of the catechism
as with his devotional life, his personal religious attitude, and the aim will
be to lead to a genuine decision, to bring the soul into personal and vital
touch with God.

Moreover, this decision, if the meaning of the step is evidently
understood, this simple act of will is all that is required for confirmation.
A sudden conversion, an emotional experience, is not considered essential to full
membership in the church. The last meeting in the course of preparation is
naturally given largely to instructions with regard to the details of the con-
firmation service. The first celebration of Holy Communion, after confirma-
tion is sometimes attended by the new communicants in a body, and for this
reason the service is made especially impressive. Sometimes, on the Monday
evening following first communion, or soon after, the communicants are
invited to a social gathering at the parish house. Refreshments, perhaps,
are served and then there is a devotional service at which the rector delivers
a short address upon the religious life and urges the new members of the church
to take up some definite Christian work. It is quite common for clergymen,
at this time, to give each new communicant some little book on Christian living
and also a little book that deals particularly with Holy Communion.

And what shall we say of the Confirmation Class as a method of
leading youth to choose the will of God? That much can be said in its favor
no unprejudiced and intelligent person will deny. That it avoids some of the
shortcomings inherent in Decision Day, as that is usually observed, is undoubt-
edly true. "Its systematic leading up to decision, its proper use of social
suggestion to secure decision, its lack of hard conditions" (The Pupil and
The Teacher, L. A. Weigle, p 204) are all certainly, to be commended. There
are, however, some real dangers to which this method is liable and into which it frequently falls in actual practice. Two of these we shall notice. One danger is that the work of the Confirmation Class will be merely formal; that the crowning purpose of confirmation, the genuine personal contact of the soul with God, may be overlooked in the mere routine of the class. There is this real danger that the course of preparation for membership in the church may not be as profoundly spiritual and as directly personal as it ought to be. Consequently there will be no deeply personal choice of the religious life and no vital religious experience. The youth will be received as a communicant of the church merely because he has reached the age of discretion and has a fair knowledge of the catechism - it will be a merely formal step and the future years will be spiritually formal and fruitless.

The other danger although a grave one, we pass over quickly as it does not bear so directly upon our theme. The danger is that, having taken all the essential steps, having passed through all the necessary instruction, and having been confirmed as a communicant of the church, the youth will look upon himself as having already attained spiritual completeness. Hence that which should properly be matriculation day in a mature spiritual life becomes a sort of graduation day which ends all effort and progress.

These dangers, however, do not inhere in the method and may be guarded against. It should be remembered, too, that the confirmation system has long ages of practice behind it to testify to its worth. Moreover, it is a significant fact that "under various names and forms, such as catechetical classes, pastor's classes, and the like, which offer special instruction for those about to join the church, its essential features are coming back into the churches where it has been supplanted by the methods of the revival system." (Leaflet, author unknown) Indeed it has been suggested that in order
to secure the best results the Confirmation Class should be a recognized part of the intermediate department of the Sunday School, that it should be elective and taught by the minister. By this arrangement the pupils would enter the Confirmation Class in a perfectly natural way, when they had reached the early adolescent years, and it would become an integral part of a true system of educational evangelism.

The last method of leading youth to a choice of the religious life, that we shall notice is what is known as educational evangelism. This method, as its name suggests, is evangelistic in aim while it is educational in method. Its purpose is the same as that of the revival, namely, to bring youth to God, to secure the salvation of souls. To be sure salvation may be stated variously according as we look at it from one standpoint or another. The theologian, naturally, looks at salvation as a divine work wrought in behalf of and in the human soul. From the standpoint of the ordinary Christian disciple salvation means to be saved from sin, to be fashioned into the image of Christ. To the psychologist, however, who naturally thinks more particularly of what takes place in the soul itself, salvation is the attainment, by the individual, of his highest good "by a proper adjustment of his entire nature to his total environment" Moreover, educational evangelism, agreeable to modern thinking, conceives salvation as a willing surrender to God, a glad and positive choice of the divine will, a free, full personal adjustment to the eternal laws, that shall bring permanent and full satisfaction and peace to the soul. And this great salvation educational evangelism aims to accomplish.

But while it is evangelistic in aim it is educational in method. It pursues the evangelistic aim, it seeks the salvation of souls, it endeavors to secure a right adjustment of the individual to the divine order, by the
educational method, the normal development of the soul's capacity for God by the appropriate teaching of divine truths. Just as the evangelism of the revival attempts, by concentrated efforts and protracted gospel meetings to bring people to God, so educational evangelism proposes to accomplish similar results through the agency of education. In other words this new conception of evangelism is founded upon the principle that the Spirit of God can do his regenerating work upon the soul through educational means, by religious education and decision as truly as by the revival and conversion.

The word education, however, in this connection, must not be thought of in any narrow or partial sense. McKinley speaks of this larger meaning of the word education thus: "Education is the development of the inner capacities of the soul. "It is not possible," declares President Butler of Columbia College, "for us ever again to identify education with mere acquisition of learning.... It must mean a gradual adjustment to the spiritual possessions of the race," But the adjustment of life to the spiritual realities with which men have to do is precisely the work of evangelism." (Educational Evangelism, C. E. McKinley p 107) Oscar L. Joseph, writing in the Sunday School Journal (1913) on educational evangelism says suggestively: "It has given some the impression that this is an attempt to work the miracles of grace by education, by which they mean book learning. As a matter of fact, education aims at the development of the whole person. Religion cannot be thought of as an exclusive phase of life. So religious education endeavors to enrich intellect, conscience, and will in order that there may be a harmonious unfolding of a full personality which makes Jesus Christ conspicuous and central." Prof. Coe refers to the same general thought in these words: "Salvation by education is a possibility and a fact because education is not merely something that we do to and for the child, and not merely this united with the child's own efforts for himself. God is the central reality of the
whole. He is the moving force, the giver of the inner law, and the goal of all human development. Through education He extends His saving grace to the child. This implies that we understand education in no shallow sense. We may, of course, exercise one muscle while we permit another to atrophy, and just so we may train some of our faculties while others lie dormant, and this we may mistake for education. But when education is taken in the profound sense of bringing to expression that which is deepest and most real in men, then it becomes a means of making him conscious of the God in whom he lives and moves and has his being....It can and does bring men to the obedient recognition of God as the supreme reality, and of Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life. This is salvation by education." (The Religion of A Mature Mind, G. A. Coe p 319)

This is the larger conception of education of which scientific evangelism has caught the vision. For the modern educator looks upon the child not as a little adult but rather suigeneris. He is a living organism, a growing life, and in his development certain profound changes occur at comparatively definite times. Hence the child of ten years is very different from the child he was at four years of age and the youth of fifteen is almost entirely different from what he was at ten. In other words the child, in his development, passes through several relatively distinct stages of growth between birth and maturity. And the aim of education is to meet the peculiar needs of the child at each stage, to use those methods of training that will most appropriately and successfully bring out his innate powers and help him to live his own and his fullest life at each period. To be sure this is a recent discovery but one that has already exerted a great influence. And educational evangelism recognizes these principles of general pedagogy and seeks to utilize them in its program of religious education. To this end, and
for purposes of religious training, immature individuals are divided into different departments and classes according to the changes by which nature separates them. The aim is to help the soul realize its fullest possibilities at each unfolding stage of life. But while the business of educational evangelism is to so present divine truth as to "call forth the fitting response of the soul at every stage of its growth from infancy to maturity," and thus the religious problem is the same for all ages, nevertheless this problem becomes peculiarly acute and uniquely critical in the fateful years of early adolescence.

With children the object of scientific evangelism is, by proper instruction and training in righteousness, to promote a normal and quiet religious development. In order to develop the religious capacities of the child he is appropriately taught such truths as the being of God, His nearness, power, and kindness, the life of Christ, His love and sacrifice, and the elemental requirements of the moral law and the Christian life. To train the little ones in practical righteousness, to inculcate good habits, to teach obedience, kindness and cheerfulness, and "to keep the way open to God – this is to nurture true religion." (Elements of Religious Pedagogy, F. L. Pattee, p 53)

In this period of childhood, of course, no attempt should be made to draw a sharp line between saint and sinner, believer and unbeliever, saved and unsaved. But when the child reaches the years of early adolescence he enters the period of discretion and personal choice. The aim of spiritual effort is still the harmonious adjustment of the personal life to the divine order. This adjustment, now, however, includes and can be realized only as the soul intelligently and willingly adapts itself to the requirements of God. Here then the educational ideal and the evangelistic ideal become one. The aim of religious education in this period is directly evangelistic. The deliberate object of religious work for youth is to secure a sincere personal choice of the religious
life, to induce a definite decision to do the will of God.

This personal choice, however, educational evangelism would secure by educational means rather than by one, brief mighty appeal to the emotions. If there is to be a free personal adjustment to the divine order, if, to speak from the standpoint of Christianity, there is to be a willing and glad surrender to the lordship of Christ, it must come about by the positive and decisive action of the individual's own will. "But the act of will by which a life is brought into adjustment with the will of God is not to be conceived as a mighty effort of the self-determining faculty under stress of intense emotional excitement awakened by the sanctions with which some such appeal as "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" is enforced, but as the automatic consequence of voluntary attention given to the idea of personal fellowship with God until that idea has become winning, dominant, masterful. Whence it follows, as a regulative principle for evangelism, that the salvation of human souls is to be promoted chiefly by getting religious ideas into the focus of attention." (Educational Evangelism, C. E. McKinley, p 138). For educational evangelism believes with modern psychology, that "conscious processes of any sort, merely as such, must pass over into motion, open or concealed. The problem of right choice, then, is simply to find and bring to the fore the right idea." (Educational Evangelism, C. E. McKinley, p 136).

Hence again to use the words of McKinley who puts this thought very briefly and clearly, because of this immediate connection between ideas and actions "the most significant work that can be done to promote the salvation of men is the work of him who furnishes the young mind with its ideas of religion. The truths of the gospel, inwrought into the mind by methods that are educational, are more efficacious in winning the wills of men than any other
instruments whatever.... Let the truths of the gospel be actually taught, held in the focus of attention until they become an inalienable portion of the mental store, and their effects will duly appear in conduct and character. The Spirit waits upon truth so received, and God is pleased to impart the divine life to men by its means." (Educational Evangelism, Charles E. McKinley, p 143 and 145.)

This then is the position of educational evangelism. However it may be explained theologically or psychologically, constructive evangelism accepts the truth that Jesus declared when he put his hands on the little children and said "Of such is the kingdom of God." This does not mean, of course, that the child is spiritually mature and complete, nor does it mean that when children reach the adolescent period there is not to be any such experience as decision, confirmation or conversion. It means simply that conversion, that is the personalizing of religion "should follow in the child's life as the follows the blossom." Every child is a member of the kingdom of God, he possesses the birthright of religion, and all the child needs is that his capacity for God, his religious possibilities, be drawn out and properly developed as his life unfolds by appropriate religious environments and training. And this growth, as we have already noted, is normally gradual and uneventful during the years of childhood. But with adolescence the time arrives for the religion of childhood to come to its glory in a life that by a free, glad personal choice comes to love and serve God. For the child, however, who has been developed according to the true principles of scientific evangelism, "regeneration, in the sense of a conscious personal choice," at this time, will be a natural, easy and almost inevitable step. Hasleott has expressed the thought thus: "The ideal method is for the child to grow and develop through proper environment and instruction and training into a religious experience and life more and more advanced with the years and for the most part unconscious, and then when the golden time arrives, as arrive it will
naturally from about 12 to 18 years of age, there will be a normal tendency to manifest the religious change known as conversion publicly and in some more tangible and lasting form and when judgment and reason may give meaning to the experience." (The Pedagogical Bible School, S. B. Haslett, p 132)

As to the agencies which educational evangelism naturally uses to accomplish its results it "honors all the services of the church, all the religion of the home, as means of making disciples of Christ." Among the educational forces of the church may be mentioned the sermon, the sacraments, the mid-week prayer meeting, the young people's society, the confirmation class and above all the preeminent educational agency of the church - the Sunday School. And upon these ordinary agencies, without any special services or unusual appeals, and supplements only by constant and wholesome personal influence, constructive evangelism depends to do its work and win its victories.

The Sunday School, however, can never reach its highest possibilities for educational evangelism unless its program of religious training is in harmony with the principles of modern psychology and pedagogy. And this means that the Sunday School must be properly graded and broadly educational. It means that the Sunday School must recognize the wide sweep of religious education in its broad sense as the enrichment and enlargement of the whole nature and realize that religious education includes the training of the body as well as the mind and that it involves the exercise of the emotions and will as well as the intellect. Then the Sunday School must be properly graded. The scholars must be divided into different departments, according to the natural stages of life, and again into classes according to age and physical, mental and spiritual development. The methods of teaching, also, and the teaching materials must be suited to the intellectual powers, the dominating interests and the spiritual needs of the pupils. What this means in the intermediate grade, the years of early adolescence, is evident. For in the plan of educational
evangelism the teacher's aim, in this crisis stage, is immediately and directly evangelistic, to lead the youth freely and fully to choose to do the will of God. "Early adolescence is to the religious teacher what the revival period is to the evangelist." Hence the materials of religious training which shall meet the spiritual needs of this period, while following in natural order, what has preceded, must be selected with particular reference to the evangelistic aim. In other words the religious instruction of the intermediate department, the early adolescent years, must dwell upon individual ethics and personal responsibility. This demand is met in the International Series of Graded Lessons used by Protestant Christianity, by Old Testament biographical studies followed by biographical studies in the New Testament and church history, while in the fifteenth year when, broadly speaking, the first great wave of religious interest culminates, the lessons are in the life of Christ - the aim being so to present Him that scholars will voluntarily and gladly accept Him as Teacher, Lord and Saviour.

The work of the Sunday School, of course, as has been suggested, should be supplemented by all the other normal religious agencies of the church and home, while the help and influence of a personal friend of strong religious character is of inestimable value at this period of life. Moreover, to the Sunday School teacher, with his frequent personal contact and intimate individual knowledge of his pupils, is given a unique opportunity to be such a friend. No scholar in the Sunday School ought ever to be allowed to go through and out of the intermediate department without having an appropriate opportunity to make a definite, personal choice of the religious life. And no one, unless it be parent or pastor, can give this opportunity so naturally, and help in this new adjustment of life so efficiently, as the wise, faithful, and loving Sunday School teacher. Hence, the true teacher, in the inter-
mediate department, not only endeavors to instruct his pupils faithfully but he also seeks by personal fellowship and friendship to know their lives in an intimate and sympathetic way and then he waits and watches for the golden hour, the psychological moment, in which to speak the quiet, earnest, appropriate word that will, almost inevitably, lead to a definite personal choice by the pupil of the religious life, or more concretely, in the Christian faith, the choice of Christ as Lord and Master. This will naturally be followed by a public confession of Christ. The confession may be made in any one of several ways such as rising for prayers, signing a decision card, uniting with a young people's society, etc., but the best method, as a rule, is that which prevails in the church with which the individual is affiliated. Then, after proper preparation in the pastor's class or in some other appropriate way, the youth enters into the membership of the church and into active participation in its work.

Educational evangelism then believes that "the Word may be taught as well as preached with power." It places the Sunday School before the revival service as an agency for bringing youth into harmony with God. It looks upon the teacher as the "prince of evangelists." "It aims to provide for every youth an educational approach to personal religion, a religious training that is everywhere evangelistic in purpose but educational in method, that shapes its expectations, year by year, in accordance with the work that nature is then doing in the soul, and counts upon the saving grace of God to work along the lines of spiritual development." (Educational Evangelism, C. E. McKinley, p 224) It believes that such broad religious training will lead naturally, in early adolescence, to a definite and glad choice of the higher life, in the Christian religion of Christ and His service, and that those who come to this decision through educational evangelism will be intelligent, stable and efficient servants of God.
And what shall we say of educational evangelism as a method of leading youth to a choice of the religious life? That there are dangers, such e.g., as placing too much emphasis upon the merely intellectual, or failing to secure a clear and definite personal decision in early adolescence, or the ignoring entirely of the value of feeling, into which educational evangelism unless properly guarded, may fall is doubtless true. None of these, however, are inherent in the system. Moreover, it must be remembered, also that educational evangelism recognizes that, for those who have had no proper religious training or for any other reason have come to mature life unsaved, other and special methods are necessary. The particular field of educational evangelism is youth. Nor does it claim that it can "bring all even of the serious minded and well intentioned youth into the church." Nevertheless educational evangelism is certainly an admirable method of leading youth into a vital relation to God and a life of efficient service. It is in harmony with the teachings and methods of the Master and meets all the demands of modern science. It is pregnant with promise and bids fair to become the chief reliance of the church in winning youth to God.

Then there is another question, arising naturally in this connection, whose answer is implicit in what has already been written, but which perhaps ought to be answered more definitely before this thesis is concluded. While it is natural for the youth to experience a religious awakening, a new spiritual birth in adolescence it is not to be inferred that the event is merely a natural one; that it is entirely the work of nature with a small "n". The deepest and most vital factor in this experience is supernatural. The new spiritual birth is always a birth from above. While religious decision and the beginning of the Christian life are closely associated with the radical physical and mental changes and transformations of the pubertal
period, they are not merely the automatic result of these new physiological and psychical forces of early adolescence. "The physical has its effect upon the spiritual but it is not the cause...When it is desirable that the fire in a furnace should burn more briskly we open the draught door, and thereby admit the oxygen which has all along been enveloping the furnace and only awaiting for an opportunity to be used in the work of combustion. So the physical changes occurring at adolescence, while they do not produce religion, do, nevertheless, open new doors of impressibility whereby the ever-present divine Spirit may enter the mind and heart more fully." (The Spiritual Life, G. A. Coe p 53) Koons declares the same truth in this statement: "The fact that conversion most frequently accompanies the natural physical and mental changes of adolescence is no proof whatever that it is itself a mere natural change. The fact is that physical and mental conditions during adolescence are particularly favorable to religious awakening and impression, and that under proper human effort the adolescent is led to seek that change which can come alone through divine grace." (The Child's Religious Life, W. G. Koons, p 109) McKinley touches upon the same thought in these words: "The Christian character which we desire to see our youth attain is everywhere recognized as the efflorescence of a Christian spirit, the manifestation of an inner life... This beginning of the Christian life in the soul is itself everywhere regarded as in some sense a work of the Holy Spirit, the impartation to a human being of a spiritual life that draws from the boundless deep of deity." (Educational Evangelism, C. E. McKinley p 47).

This then, is our thesis. Early adolescence witnesses normally a genuine and far-reaching religious crisis. The marked expansion of the self, the attainment of a fuller moral responsibility, at this time, brings the individual, in a new sense, face to face with his relation to the divine order.
his duty to God. This means a personal choice. The youth faces a spiri-
tual crisis. A right choice is easier now than it will ever be again. Hence,
these are peculiarly fateful years. Unless a right decision is made before
early adolescence is over the chances that such a decision will ever be made
grow rapidly less. But these are also peculiarly fruitful years, years in
which more people enter upon the religious life, among us the Christian life,
than in any other period of similar length. The first great wave of religious
interest comes normally at about 12 or 13 years of age and culminates at about
15 or 16. Never again is the individual so open to religious impressions as
during these years. This is nature's own time for decision, confirmation,
conversion, the personalizing of religion. As to method this is the con-
clusion of our thesis. The most appropriate and efficient method of leading
youth in this crisis period to a free and positive choice of the religious
life is that of educational evangelism.
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