The religious consciousness in childhood

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THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS IN CHILDHOOD

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THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS IN CHILDHOOD.
THE PURPOSE in this piece of work is to describe the religious consciousness during childhood, that is, from birth until adolescence. My aim is to give a description of the average, normal child with no specifications as to race or sex. The child in an essentially Christian environment or rather in a Christian country will be the subject of my thesis. The topic is treated from a biological-psychological point of view, as this seems necessary for an understanding of the development which has been treated in tentative stages. I have tried to give credit for all material quoted.

The child may have a continuous religious experience, and never need to go through the crisis that often occurs when revivals cause men and women to live a better life. The loyalty and devotion of the child may always rest in God as the "summun bonum" of life.

The religious consciousness is a complex outgrowth of the various capacities and instincts, which comes about through sharing the common social consciousness. I have tried to show how the basis of a definite religious life is laid during the period of childhood.
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CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

There is an interesting analogy between the religious development of consciousness in childhood and that of the race. The primitive credulity of the little child to believe absolutely all it is told raises the serious question of the religious responsibility of the parent in the matter. Then at adolescence, the critical faculty becomes prominent revolting against authority when discoveries are made, so that the early religious ideas do not correspond with scientific facts. But early beliefs and concepts cannot be wholly eradicated. After the storm and stress period of adolescence, religious beliefs reappear as religious feelings and dominate the rest of the life.

So also the race had a period of credulity when everyone believed in the infallibility of the church and readily assented to all its doctrines. But when the eyes of the people were opened by Martin Luther in the Reformation, the critical faculty and demand for intellectual freedom revolted against the dogmatism of the church. And a period of great skepticism swept over Europe. But this wore itself out, and strong religious feelings developed out of ecclesiastical reforms, so that faith has been stronger than ever in the individual who can now, in Protestantism, develop his religious ideas as he desires.

"Religion", says Pratt, "is the attitude of a self toward an object in which the self genuinely believes". ¹ This is a

broad definition. But there are four points to be observed. First, there must be an attitude, which includes attention, feeling, and a tendency to some movement. Then, there must be a self or a personality which takes the attitude. There is the object which we shall define as God, and finally, there must be belief or faith in God.

First, let us consider the connotation of the term, "child". This human being is not a "miniature adult"; he is not a "little animal" destined sometime to become an intelligent human being; he is not a "little sinner"; he does not come into the world with an innately depraved nature; nor does he come "trailing clouds of glory from heaven which is his home". A child is a plastic human organism endowed with latent capacities awaiting development and with instincts clamoring for expression. The child has a very long period of plasticity and dependence for growth and attainment through educational influences. What he will ultimately become is determined by heredity, environment and the will of the growing self.

As to the origin of religious consciousness in children, we must discountenance the popular notion that a child is born with a specific "religious instinct". We cannot say this in a psychological treatment of the subject although some writers have this point of view. "Renan asserted that the religious instinct is as natural to man as the nest-building instinct is to birds". Jastrow adds, "The certainty that the religious instinct is, so far as evidence goes, innate in man, suffices as a starting point for a satisfactory classification", and also, "the definite assumption

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1McDougall, William. "An Introduction to Social Psychology". p.91
of a religious instinct in man forms part of almost every definition of religion proposed since the appearance of Schleiermacher's discourses. Further emphasis is given by Coe who says, "To speak positively, the possessor of a positive religious nature implies three things: (a) that a child has more than a passive capacity for spiritual things—a positive spiritual nature goes forth spontaneously in search of God. (b) that nothing short of union with God can really bring a human being to himself—failing to find Him we lose even ourself. (c) that the successive phases in the growth of the child personality may be, and normally are, so many phases of the growing consciousness of the divine meaning of life".

Psychologically speaking, we cannot say that a child has by original nature any religious impulses. Religion is natural, universal, and a persistent part of the whole life of man. The natural and normal activities of human nature give rise to a religious consciousness. It is not wholly a matter of instinct or impulse; nor is it entirely feeling, thinking, or willing; but it is a variable indefinite complex. "There is no trace of an instinct that functions by itself, but only of a tendency within the instincts taken as a whole". The various instinctive capacities are molded by the social environment toward a definite response. Education and environment have a powerful influence over the native tendencies, instincts, and interests of the child, by stimulating the

3 Coe, George Albert "A Social Theory of Religious Education", p. 142
good, by weeding out the bad, and by suggesting new and desirable activities. For the child has tendencies both to goodness and to evil.

An instinct may be defined as the uniform, inborn tendency of a race, with its basis in the neuro-muscular system, for it involves some form of activity and emotion. McDougall says an instinct is "an inherited or innate psychological disposition which determines its possessor to perceive and pay attention to objects of a certain class, to experience an emotional excitement of a particular quality upon perceiving such an object, and to act in regard to it, in a particular manner, or at least, to experience an impulse to such action."¹

The valid conception of the child's original nature must include the instincts, organic tendencies, and reflexes, plus the capacity to react to a personal environment and to develop moral conduct motivated by God's will. Not until adolescence does moral conduct in its real sense cause the child to take full cognizance of its acts in relation to the social world.

During childhood, the potential moral nature is being established. The social experiences through training, habit, and volition are building moral discriminations which shall bring forth the real moral self during the period of adolescence.

The unlearned types of behavior or original responses of the child are classified as automatic actions, reflexes, instincts, and capacities. These may be treated quite briefly.

¹McDougall, William, "An Introduction to Social Psychology," p.29
The automatic processes control the heart-beats, digestion, circulation, and respiration. These have stimuli within the organism. The reflexes are simple responses to stimuli outside of the organism and consist of contraction of the eye from light, sneezing, winking, coughing, and a few others. The instincts or instinctive acts include curiosity, vocalization, collecting, pugnacity, fear, feeding, gregariousness, desire for approval, and motherly instinct. And the capacities refer to subtle traits by which skill, tact, or ability is acquired in some pursuit. These unlearned tendencies have general characteristics but differ in simplicity and modifiability. This complex of instinctive tendencies is early molded by experience and shaped into an individual character. It is the social inheritance of the race which takes this original nature and destines what the child is to be.

The child's capacity for religion is determined by social heredity, particularly by the home influences during the first few years of his life. These early ideas and habits of Christian nurture become the religious consciousness of the child. Henry B. Robins in "The Biblical World" for November, 1917, says that the spirit and the belief of the social group determines whether "God will be a loving Father, a hideous idol, a menacing and a capricious spirit, or a neglected factor."

In the development of a religious consciousness, many of the instincts are suffused into a definite, growing concept of God. It may be well to note some of the more important instincts that aid this growth. The impulse of self-preservation is often
necessary during the years of dependence, but the child soon learns there are many things over which he has no control. Then there arises naturally a sense of mystery concerning many things in God's world of nature, of which the mind cannot grasp the significance. Wonder and mystery apply to nature and objective realms of inquiry as well as to the subjective promptings of the human nature. Even though the child is incessantly active, yet there always is a certain restlessness and dissatisfaction with present conditions. Von Humboldt says, "All religion rests on a need of the soul; we hope, we dread, because we wish." One of the most potent factors for religion is the latent feeling of the sublime. Fear may develop into a feeling of awe and reverence before a Superhuman Power, or God. The parental instinct fosters love and devotion. The instinct of gregariousness grows into desire for companionship and fellowship which ultimately leads to desire for the Heavenly Father who understands all things. Other instincts function in varying proportion to form this complexity, which gives the foundation for a religious consciousness during childhood.

Just as creative imagination is necessary for progress in art, science, or literature, so it is for growth in religious conceptions. The little child of four or five years uses his imagination to create a world of fancy, and this is generally in accordance with those ideas he has gained through constant imitation of the group of which he is a member. This may be consciously or not. Then, as the intellect functions, the child comes to have a definite concept of God as the Heavenly Father, who cares for all he has created, and who loves everyone and wants them to
do right. The little child can be taught that God works through natural laws and forces and that He is everywhere in the World. A child may acquire as much knowledge of God as his capacities for receiving ideas allow. This capacity, be it large or small, is largely a social matter, and may be summed up, by the child's ability to form an image of God, and by his ability to take an attitude of intellect, feeling, and will toward Him. Religious consciousness is a personal matter. The finite self must have an attitude toward God, the Infinite Self.
CHAPTER II.

Fundamental Principles of Child Development.

Some of the fundamental principles of child development need to be generalized. The child is a "creature of activity, not of passivity". There is scarcely a moment of the waking hours of a healthy, normal child when he is not moving all, or at least, a part of his body. And even when asleep, the little legs twitch, the arms are tossed this way and that, and the lips open and close. He is a "bundle of instincts" and impulses clamoring for expression, a human dynamo fully charged with nervous energy. Back of every instinct there is a definite neural structure so that active adjustments may be made, and also that the craving for use may be satisfied. So when the motor sensations are reported to consciousness, perceptions arise from their fusion with the sensations of hearing, seeing, or touch, and thus, an avenue of learning is effected and definite ways of reacting come about.

And then, behavior is always conditioned by changes and developments going on in the physical and neural structures, which "develop side by side and reciprocally". We cannot expect a child to comprehend so adequately as an adult for the former is a plastic organism in process of growth and maturation. At six months, the associative areas are developed to some extent, and nervous coordination comes about as soon as neural structures are developed sufficiently for expression in some definite way.
Every structure craves for expression, but the difference in the time of perfection of the various parts of the organism explains the tentative periods when certain tendencies are dominant over others. They may have been present in a nascent stage for a long time previously and not made any marked appearance. Or they may naturally wane and pass away after their use has been satisfied. For the greatest mental ability there must be a sound physical body. And from the Christian standpoint, there must be a beautiful mind with ideals for extending God's social will. It is through free contact with the world that a child develops a background of concepts, experiences, and feelings. And so, the behavior of a child may be the attainment of the wonderful possibilities of "strength and activity, of unlimited knowledge, of a pure and noble moral character, which shall fit him for a life of service among men, and of communion and companionship with the divine".  

The development of self-consciousness is essentially a social product which comes from the inter-play between personalities and between self and society. The self is quite dominant during the individualistic stage, and a personality emerges during the competitive stage when a child is among those of his own age and characteristics, each of whom is giving himself, yet must respect other selves. McDougall in his "Introduction to Social Psychology" gives us certain stages or levels of conduct which may be briefly summarized as follows.

1 Chapin, Lucy S., "The Cradle Roll of the Church School", p.3.
ly by the attendant pleasure or pain caused by the act. If a piece of brightly colored candy is held before a nine months old baby he will instinctively reach for it. And if he has succeeded in carrying other objects to his mouth, he will bring this also and probably experience pleasure. So the next time he sees a similar object, even though it be a marble, he will repeat the act and begin to learn there is a difference in stimuli. The child does not think as yet.

In the second stage, instinctive impulse is modified by the rewards and punishments of society. A frown from the mother will cause a young child to refrain from some act which he wanted to do, but over which he has had no self control. Social approval or disapproval is a most powerful factor in the early molding of instincts.

Then, there is the stage a little more advanced in which the conduct is controlled by anticipation of social praise or blame. The child knows pretty well by this time what is right and wrong, but is often unable to make definite decisions and be the controlled of his conduct.

The highest stage of conduct is regulated by an ideal which enables man to act in the way that seems right to him regardless of the praise or blame of his immediate social environment. The interests, instincts and impulses of his life have been centered upon a standard of conduct which calls for devotion and loyalty to a noble cause. Christ gave us the ideal of conduct for our lives; he was both praised and blamed by his age, but he lived above it all.
Now the capacities that are given to the child are to be developed best by sharing in the common social consciousness. The family group has the first opportunity for putting its stamp upon the infinite possibilities of child-life. The child copies everything around him. This is the first learning process. Even before he can understand or think, so far as we know, he absorbs the feelings and attitudes of others into his delicate nervous structures. These soon become fixed into his very nature, for responses take place and every recurrence digs more deeply the channel of reacting in the synaptic connections. And, if religion is an everyday affair, the child will have a normal, healthy life under the social discipline of a vitally religious environment which shall be treated more fully as soon as the suggested stages of childhood have been analyzed.
CHAPTER III

The Stage of Early Infancy.

We cannot say there are any clear-cut divisions or stages in the development of the child, for the mental and physical processes are not uniform. Accelerations and retardations cause overlapping so that they vary considerably, but certain processes of development must be passed through before the more advanced can be entered upon. A child must go through certain basic, physical and mental adaptations in order to develop into a man, for the infant is not a "miniature adult" as some may think. "From the very first the various processes are not marked off clearly from one another. The entire child is essentially in every reaction, and it is only to the observer that he seems now in a state of emotion, now in one of cognition."¹ In order to give a picture of the average growing child as he appears physically, mentally, and socially, the last including his relation to God, I shall speak of various stages through which he passes and show how they leave their characteristics upon his plastic organism.

These suggested stages are so closely interwoven that a mental trait may begin in one and then grow stronger through each period, or it may be curbed by external conditions for a time. Or physical development may be retarded by sickness, and then go

by leaps and bounds during the next period which may be one of general slow growth. Mental and physical growth condition each other in the normal child. And so for clearness, we will say that childhood has four general stages: that of infancy, extending from birth to two and a half or three years, that of later infancy extending from the end of the first to six or seven years, the transitional stage from seven to nine years, and the period of childhood covering the years from nine to thirteen.

I shall treat each stage under three main heads, that of physiological characteristics, that of psychological, and that of religious characteristics which grow out of social and moral activities.

The first period consists of only three years at the most, but from many standpoints these three years are the most significant in the life of man. It may not appear so to the casual onlooker, but the beginning has been made in a certain direction from which there can come few, if any, deviations from the path first trailed out. At the end of three years the child is self conscious, has acquired a language, and shares the common consciousness of those about him. Beginning as an active little animal endowed with capacities, he has become a member of society. The reflexes, instincts, and impulses necessary to keep him alive, till consciousness should direct his actions are now under the control of a self which imitates everything and person with whom it comes into contact. And influenced consciously or not, the conduct and personality of the child is now decided largely for the whole life. Every parent has a tremendous responsibility; the destiny of a child of God is in his hands; he is to shape
First, the physical growth of the average normal child from birth to at least three years needs to be considered. There are certain norms of development that psychologists have agreed upon that may be well to notice. At birth the average child weighs about seven and a quarter pounds and measures about nineteen inches in height, with a circumference of head measuring thirteen and ninety-five hundredths inches. At the close of the period, the average weight is thirty-two pounds; height, thirty-five inches; and circumference of head nineteen and twenty-five hundredths inches. This is a period of rapid growth; the child nearly doubles in height and weighs about four times as much as at birth.

The gain in the control of muscles and the coordination of effort is perfectly marvelous for such a short time. From a helpless, crying, stretching, kicking infant of a few hours to a running, laughing, jumping, talking intelligent human being is a wonderful development. More helpless and dependent than any animal at birth, it surpasses the most intelligent animal in its fullest development by the end of three years or before. Human consciousness is differentiated from animal consciousness.

At birth, the child makes random movements. It is supplied with a mechanical equipment of instincts and reflexes which need no conscious direction. But the impulses accompanying his organism will need control and direction when they make their appearance. The first actions of a new-born child include spontaneous kicking, grasping, crying, sucking, stretching, and various facial
movements. A babe of a few hours has such a grasp that it can support the weight of its body for a few seconds by clinging to a rod. This is due to reflex action. At first the little babe sees nothing; it stares into space. But at two months the eye follows moving objects. At three months it turns in the direction of sounds, begins to lift its head and seize objects voluntarily. At seven months the average normal child sits up, begins to crawl, creep, and hitch around. By the tenth month, it pulls itself up by the mother's knee and begins to stand. At twelve months it begins to walk and say a few words. By the end of two and half or three years, it has gained control of arms, hands, and feet, and can run, jump, climb, and talk quite fluently provided the environment were suitable.

The purpose of these physical activities is to make simple necessary movements, to gain control and coordination of the muscles, and to correlate the motor and sensory processes.

The second group of characteristics is psychological. Under sensation, we shall see how these develop, either along with or distinct from one another. There is no coordination at first. The eye soon becomes accustomed to the light, although the infant stares fixedly for the first two weeks of its existence. Locke says, "Even as the soul thirsts for ideas, so the eye of the child thirsts for the light." From the third to the fifth month the child seems to recognize the mother because of certain repeated movements. Moving objects seem to attract more quickly than do stationary objects. Then, too, the mother is the source of the milk-bottle or the food-supply which the little babe's nature craves, so he begins to associate idea with object and to
take an attitude toward his mother or nurse.

By the end of the third week, if the child reacts to sounds we know the child can hear. Many children of eighteen months appreciate the rhythm of music. As soon as a child can see and hear, it is all ready using the sense of touch to learn about itself and things in the outer world in general. This is the germ of the consciousness of a self, as well as of a world of other selves. These are the most important senses although a child of a few months learns to discriminate between agreeable and disagreeable tastes and smells.

A correlation of motor and sensory processes has come about within a short space of time. "The infant starts with direct, impulsive, uncoordinated responses to all sorts of stimuli." The simple, uncoordinated, useless movements found in reflexes, and instincts have been organized into harmonious, complex activities with some end in view. Consciousness becomes more definite and takes more paths, as the purposes chosen make adjustments more difficult. When movements are repeated in certain ways, then definite sensations will ensue, and the child will begin to recognize their relation to each other and give meaningful experiences.

Emotions are subjective and therefore difficult to analyze. Pillsbury says, "Emotion is the conscious side of instinct." This is a part of the original equipment of man. One reason why the emotions are so variable during childhood is because of the lack of mental and motor control. Emotions are the feeling as-

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1 Irving King, "Psychology of Child Development", p. 77.
pect of instinctive responses. Because of the close relation of instinct and emotion, we know that some of the more complex emotions, as gratitude or aesthetic appreciation, do not come until the instinct for such is developed in later childhood when the intellect functions more strongly. McDougall has a firm belief in the organization of the emotional life into sentiments. "The sentiment is a growth in the structure of mind, that is not natively given in the inherited constitution." And it is an abiding sentiment only when the emotional tendencies clustering about an object are organized into a system. So, in childhood, the emotions must be redirected and controlled by such experiences the worthy sentiments will be created.

The emotion of fear may cause recoil from danger and so save life. A little child is more afraid of loud noises than of strange objects until he has had a disagreeable experience with objects. Then, the same stimulus will again call forth the same emotion. A neural habit has been formed which accounts for a scared child always retaining some of that feeling. Then the emotion of anger accompanying the instinct of pugnacity needs conscious direction, not elimination, for it may become a fine sensibility for justice and for the rights of society. Strange sights or sounds will cause the emotion of wonder to show in a babe of four or five months. Surprise and curiosity are natural, spontaneous tendencies to react to new things. In fact, the instinct of curiosity is of prime importance in education and is strong during the question period with most children.

1William McDougall, "Introduction to Social Psychology" p.159.
Affection appears very early. A smile may come over the face of the child quite unconsciously, but this soon becomes one of recognition and the babe cows at two or three months of age. A real laugh may be expected at five months. The little child responds to the love of the mother, for he derives nearly all of his happiness and satisfaction from her. Naturally, this love becomes one of the strongest restraining and guiding influences of life. Love and affection grow through expression but this is not limited to members of the family. In children under three years of age, affection may cluster about some familiar object, as a roll of cloth or a rag doll. Amy was about two years old when she formed a strong attachment for a little old shawl that had been frequently wrapped about her. It became a part of her life, so that, wherever she went, the shawl was a part of the equipment.

A child does not become sympathetic in the real connotation of the term, though he may copy actions and moods, until he comes to have a consciousness of other people and hence of himself. This is a complex instinct and for some time the child is too busy with his own needs and feelings to think about others. But he can accept sympathy when he bumps his head and his mother kisses the spot, telling him it is all right.

Jealousy appears early and may become firmly entrenched in the nature of the child unless it be directed. It seems more active in some children than in others. An older child often resents the caressing or admiration of a younger child. This trait of jealousy must be trained so that the child will have self-re-
spect and also respect for others. "As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined". All of these instinctive emotions must be con­trolled and directed, as they emerge, into channels of usefulness. It is when these instincts and emotions are in their nascent stages that adjustments may be made, for repetition tends to establish a definite path or way for reaction when a stimulus presents itself.

During the first year of a child's life, there is little sense-perception and image-formation except through familiar ob­jects in concrete situations. He recognizes his mother by voice, touch, and familiar expressions of love. During the second year the child begins to sense the relation of objects as to space and to compare the near with the far, thus getting a standard idea of objects. Many images and concepts are being formed which come in­to the experience through all the senses so that related wholes are build up.

The memory of a former experience is a part of the mode of education. It is the restimulation of an old tract so that a con­cept again comes into consciousness. Memory is the retention, re­call, and recognition of past experiences. Some experiences make deep modifications in the neural structures, while others are easi­ly effaced. As to the recall of an experience, those ideas which are most closely associated tend to revive others. This is deter­mined largely by the recency, frequency, vividness of associated experiences, and the purpose in mind at the time. Recognition in­cludes a feeling of familiarity when a past experience is revived and is accompanied by a consciousness that it has been experienced
before. The following instance seems to show that the child had a mental image of an object in his experience. Perhaps the recency and frequency of the use of the telephone in his home helped recall the experience. A child of two and a half years was visiting his grandmother for the first time. His parents left him there for a week. On the first evening he went into the corner of the room and said, "Hello, I'm at grandma-----house." He remembered the telephone at home. Three months later he surprised his father when he pointed to an object in the field they were passing and said, "That's what they have at grandma's". It was a windmill. As to the memory of the windmill, it must have been due somewhat to the new experience which cut a deep channel in his neural pathway. He had often looked at it and had heard his grandmother tell about the well that had been drilled and how the windmill was moved to its present position over the new well. The keen little mind had been absorbing these facts and recognized a similar object when he saw it. The former example was spontaneous recall, the latter was a recognition of sensory experience by the identification of a similar object.

Associations are acquired connections in the mental life. Objects or events which have been experienced together tend to be revived together whenever any member of the group is present in consciousness. A little boy had been taught the prayer:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep".

When he got this far, all he could think of was,

"If he hollers, let him go."

In the case of the boy trying to recall the prayer, the mental
content was lacking for the proper words following "If". So the idea of the jingle beginning "If he hollers" popped into his mind. This thought may have been more recent than the prayer.

Another child of about two and a half years perceived what was meant when the parent said, "It's about time Jim went to a little b-e-d", for he immediately answered, "I do not want to go to a little b-e-d", with much vehemence. In the case of the child not wanting to go to bed, the word had been spelled out by the parents previously so that he had retained the meaning of the word in his mind. And now when it was repeated, he recalled the association of the words of the parents with the action of being put to bed. He recognized the sound of the spelled letters as being identical with the spoken word. B-e-d had come to have as much meaning as the word, bed used to have. He also had formed a concept of self by using the word, "I" instead of "Jim" as his parents did.

The idea of a self begins to emerge during the third year. The child begins to think of objects as belonging to him. He thinks he has a right to own and use everything. And right at this point, he distinguishes objects of the external world as being different from himself. "All parts of his experience not referred to a world of external reality remain as a nucleus of his idea of himself".¹ And this external world is composed of inanimate objects as well as persons and animals. At first, the child personalizes objects and tries to feed the doll that must

¹William McDougall, "Introduction to Social Psychology", p.189.
be hungry. But soon, persons come to have more of an attraction than do inert objects and he begins to copy and imitate their conduct. He sees that there is a bond of relation between himself and other selves, and that he has been included in the common social consciousness which molds his plastic life.

The social and moral influences of the first three years lay the foundation for the kind of religious experience we may expect in later years, especially during adolescence. The first year is pre-social, but the other two are given over predominantly to imitation and to socialization. During the first year, certain habits are formed from the influences about the child, such as the sensory stimulations, movements, persons and things, and he responds much as animals do. As yet the minds of people have little influence over him. Everything is impersonal; there is no feeling nor emotion during the first few months as far as an observer can tell. But the child begins to look for customary moving objects which give satisfaction. So the mother or nurse may be first recognized as the giver of material comforts.

The child comes into a ready-made world, which throws its cloak of custom about him as soon as born and asks him to conform to certain established attitudes, feelings, observances, and ideals of its environment. This "candidate for personality" is endowed with reflexes, impulses, senses, and enough muscle coordination to preserve life until it becomes a person by conscious or unconscious imitation of its social environment. He perceives interesting movements and so initiates motor processes
which are established and made permanent by repetition. Then a mental attitude is formed out of this reaction and its attendant feeling, so that actions expressive of religious feelings may be ingrained while the neural connections are being formed. The wise parents will show before their children, expressions of reverence and love to God so that they may make vital impressions of this sort, as well as of the natural, physical, and mental images necessary for growth.

By the end of this period, the child has learned a language through imitation. He has always had the physical apparatus though undeveloped at first, but by constant exercise of the sensations, mere babble grows into whatever language he hears spoken. He now shares the social consciousness of the family group and does simple tasks. Imitation is the most prominent tendency of the second and third years. From the very first month, he has an interest in moving objects. There is always a stimulus to grasp objects. For instance, he may happen to strike his mouth with some object and then try again and again to repeat the act. Finally, there is enough coordination of effort and he puts it into his mouth. The next time he sees the object or a similar one, he desires to repeat the act and he soon decides which of several objects he wants. There is nothing his keen eyes do not see and he copies the actions of those about him, though he has an original way of doing it. Imitation is a continuous delight. He wants new experiences; his nature craves for new feelings and new sensations. He watches the expressions on the faces and shares the emotional states of those around him.

"Everything that tends to individualize and define experience
tends equally to socialize it". The child is now a sharer of the common consciousness. He is happy when others are happy. The moods and emotions of the family are absorbed. As older people are the natural companions of a child at this age, it is necessary for them to guard the tone of voice. Anger in the child is often nothing but a mirror-like reflection from the parent. The germs of character and emotional life, now acquired, are building a self which shall be fundamentally the same as this throughout life.

The child is non-moral during this period. Social heredity made him a moral personality with a consciousness of what society approves or disapproves. Until then, he obeys human laws without comprehending the moral value. The child is not born "totally depraved" nor "trailing clouds of glory". He has capacities for good and evil. There must be a code of conduct to which early actions are referred. And even though a child does not understand why he must do a certain way, rather than the way his impulses direct, he will soon realize it is necessary for the good feeling in the family group which includes him as a member. God, the heavenly Father, should also be a member of this group. The child cannot realize all at once, the values of the complex social order, but he early begins to react. Until he is six or seven years old, he is naturally impulsive; for a few years he is rebellious; and then he begins to realize the need of rules for carrying out the ideals of society. Then he can reason and reflect so as to meet crises for himself.

1 Irving King, "Psychology of Child Development", p. 131.
In this socializing stage, the child is either shy or desires to "show off". He wants the approval of people and is encouraged; or he may fear, from some experience, what they say to or about him. The child is conscious of self when he thinks of his mental self as distinct from other selves; either as it shares, or as it is in contrast to them. Before this, he has not thought of himself as being controlled by others. It was just a reaction to social stimuli. But the self does not emerge suddenly and then always keep in the fore-ground. It serves throughout life as a background, disappearing for periods but emerging when necessary.

He acquires many antipathies and inclinations, so that these early impressions color his character for life. While he is thus sharing the mental life of those around him, it is necessary that the spirit of the people and the atmosphere of the home be of the sort that attitudes of love, reverence, and obedience to a heavenly Father may be formed. Therefore, pleasant, sympathetic relations in the family, as well as uniform conditions and treatment are necessary to bring about desirable habits of conduct.

These first three years are the most important of all for molding the emotions. A child may be taught to obey sweetly and to share the feelings of others, or he may become a little tyrant. This newly-discovered self is liable to make the child contrary and self-assertive, but the will of the child need never be broken. It should be firmly and consistently controlled for the self must have initiative for the duties of life.

This is the time to teach simple prayers, for the child has
a capacity for religion as soon as he is a person and takes attitudes. Where love, order, justice, and reverence are found in a home, there the child gets a good foundation. For the child imitates actions expressing religious feelings, and then the feeling comes to him. From his experiences, he commences to take attitudes of love and mystery toward his parents, much as an older person feels toward God, only infinitely less. Tracy says, "It is a tolerably safe assertion that a child, who, for any reason, has never worshipped his mother, will be by so much the less likely ever to worship any other divinity." ¹

"A child's capacity for religion is no less than the sum-total of all its capacities of thinking, feeling, and willing as a human being." ² And it is through the love of the father and mother whom it has seen, that a love and devotion for the Father whom it has not seen, but about whom it has heard much, may be developed. The discipline of the earthly father prepares the child for obedience and loyalty to the heavenly Father's will; and the mother's love anticipates God's love. God always loves his children but they must come to know and feel that he is consciously real, according to their capacity to receive the revelation. The child generally thinks anthropomorphically of God and brings an attitude of intellect, feeling, and will toward such an image. How fortunate for a child to be able to gaze into its mother's eyes and form such sentiments of love and dependence and loyalty as may later be directed to God. Childhood has

¹Frederick Tracy, Psychology of Childhood, 1909 edition, p.190
²Thomas Stephens, The Child and Religion, p. 120
all the latent capacities which may be used in a life of loyalty and service to God and hence, to man, and thus give the greatest satisfaction and happiness. "Child nature is a divine operation challenging human society to a task; child nurture is the attempt of human society to cooperate with God in the fulfilling of that task."

CHAPTER IV.
The Stage of Later Infancy.

The second period of a child's life is often called later infancy and includes the years from three to six or seven. Up to this time, he has been absorbing and copying all that went on about him, but he does not stop now, for he consciously selects from a wider range than that of the home, and his whole demeanor is becoming distinctly individualistic.

Physically, this is a time of slow growth and of "knitting up the ends". The child is very active and full of energy and life. He usually comes into the larger environment of the school. So we often find him easily fatigued during the sixth year because of the close confinement of the little body, formerly accustomed to freedom and boundless activity. It does not seem necessary to give specific facts as to height and weight or other physical measurements in this or the two following periods because of the emphasis on the religious development.

Psychologically, this is a time for great mental development. In the first three years of a normal child's life, it is the emotions that are largely molded, but during later infancy the intellect is shaped. "Each mental capacity follows a course of development somewhat parallel to, but not always closely correlated with every other."¹ The sense capacity seems to be stronger at first, while reasoning comes rather late in childhood.

¹ Waddle, Charles W., Introduction to Child Psychology, P. 298.
Yet, traits which are prominent in one period may be overshadowed by the growing traits of the next period. Some capacities are just in their nascent stage, nevertheless, they are present in some degree. So each stage merges into a succeeding one, and all of the capacities for life are present in varying degrees of intensity after the third year, at least.

This second period is rich in concrete and vivid imagery. Representation and dramatization are controlling factors. The senses are active and discriminating, so that the ends are knit up in the control of larger movements. Just as the child was dominated by sense impressions in the previous period, so now he is given over to the wildest flights of imagination. His earlier acts are refashioned into highly dramatic forms according to the whims of his fancy. He builds a fairy world and peoples it with imaginary companions.

Jim was four years and three months old when he had a mill to grind corn on the pump-platform over which was a wind-mill. All he had was a basin, an ear or two of corn, and a wrench. And he imagined that in the wood-shed nearby were bears that might come out and eat the man working in the mill. But he said that he would kill them or drive them back. His father owned a saw-mill which he naturally came to be familiar with, and so he created one, also, as his imagination lead him, and added the bear element for action. At five and a half years he enjoyed having an imaginary party with pictures cut out of magazines for the real food. Children like very much to play store, play visiting, or church and put the chairs in rows whether anyone acts as the
minister or not. The concrete imaginary activity of the child was largely reproductive and imitative of actions he had seen. The fancy he took to adding bears was due to the stories he had heard read. He wanted an image endowed with life. The creative imagination was growing as it should grow in a normal child, for this brings about productive thinking which is the basis for all progress. Thus the mental content of the child is enlarged and he acquires control over what he dramatizes, so that a conscious self comes to be dominant over the environment.

Even though a child has a vivid imagination, this does not mean that he can grasp ideas of God in the abstract, nor religious doctrine. He may play that he is a little lamb, yet resent being called "God's little lamb", for his materialistic, individualistic self would say that he did not want to eat grass. But never does a child receive impressions of God that are stamped more ineradicably on his mind than now. Clearer memory and better attention are marks of this period, so that curiosity and questioning come quite naturally. The child wants to know the ultimate source of things and will not be put off. This is the opportunity for the parents to give satisfactory answers to questions about God. For the concepts and ideas given now are retained as final, and make a permanent basis for his future religious belief. This is when the child has a special interest in such things. So we may say that by the end of the sixth year the basic religious ideas may be formed for life.

Socially, this is a period of individualization and of self assertion with a tendency to contrariness. The child begins
to realize he is a self, and to act independently, organizing his experiences as he desires. But this contrary stage may be passed pleasantly, if there is a well ordered, common consciousness which gives him some choice, yet firmly holds to ideals of conduct which he cannot disobey without bringing discomfort to those around him.

Jim was five and a half years old when he felt cross about being told to hustle around and dress. Finally, he went into the hall but soon came back smiling and happy, a changed boy. This child naturally obeys without resistance, but this morning he had ideas of his own. He wanted to stop and play a while. But he knew that the environment would furnish satisfaction, if he were obedient and self-controlled. Pleasurable results had tended to fix the habit, so that he was normally happy as soon as he did according to the wish of his mother. "Everything that tends to individualize and define experience tends equally to socialize it."¹ The interest in the common consciousness must be maintained along with the growing individual attitudes. The moral and religious consciousness may easily be united, for the child will come to think how God feels and thinks about his actions provided God has always been a member of the group.

A child sometimes imitates absent ones and pretends to be what he is not, so that a more real self is being built up. And he naturally comes to have confidence in a God whom he cannot see with his eyes. As religious ideas are so readily acquired in this

¹King, Irving, Psychology of Child Development, p. 131.
period of imaginative activity, they are woven into the mental fibre of the mind so that these concepts are permanent. The greater portion of the ideas of God come from the parents and friends, yet now the church school adds to the home training in the case of many children. God is all-powerful to the child. He can see through everything and know just what everyone is doing; He could even "see you right in the middle of a maple tree" as a child said.

"When I run about all day,  
When I kneel at night to pray,  
God sees, God sees.

Need I ever know a fear?  
Night and day my Father's near—  
God sees, God sees."  

A little child lay down on the grass under a tree, shut her eyes, and thought of God up in heaven living forever and ever and ever, a long time to her. The ideas of God are naturally anthropomorphic. A child wanted to know "what footstool?" when she heard older people talking about things going wrong on the whole footstool. And when she understood that the earth was the footstool, she said, "Why, God must have awful long legs." This crude image came spontaneously, for she could not understand the expression in any terms except those of her meager experience.

As education in all things is gained through active interests, so the child shows an interest and learns proportionately more the first six years of his life than in any other period of the same length. This is accomplished largely by means of ques-

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tioning. The child often annoys a tired parent by his repeated questions about apparently useless and trivial matters. Yet some questions are of such philosophical tendencies that an adequate answer is hard to give. Yet there should be sympathy for the fancies and limitations of child knowledge, so that he may develop rationally. True interpretation should be given.

"I know a person small-
She keeps ten million serving men,
Who get no rest at all!
She sends 'em abroad on her own affairs,
From the second she opens her eyes-
One million Hows, two million Wheres,
And seven million Whys!"

At the close of this period the child is quite individualistic in all he does and says. His conscious self is experiencing many, many new influences in his contact with a wider group of interests than formerly. His mind is filled with concepts which he has selected and organized, so that he has a sense of his own importance.

A little girl of five years said in all earnestness to her father, "Let me drive the car". He told her that she did not know how. Whereupon she answered, "Oh yes, I do! Before God sent me down to you, He let me drive His Ford 'most every day." This shows something of the child's imaginative power which she desired to act out in this concrete way.

The real self has emerged in a distinct way, and if the physical, mental, and social characteristics and tendencies of this period have been dominated by the ideals of a Christian

Kipling, Rudyard, from "Just So Stories."
home, the foundations for a vital religious life and experience will have been laid.
CHAPTER V.
The Stage of Transition.

The third stage sometimes called the "transitional" comprises the years from seven to nine. This is a period of stress and nervous disintegration. There is rapid growth with a tendency to fatigue resulting from the change to the primary grades from the comparative freedom of the kindergarten and also from the rapid brain growth. The child is peculiarly susceptible to the diseases common to childhood. Lack of nervous coordination often leads to stammering and self-consciousness. This is also a serious period physically, because of poor nutrition in the second dentition period.

Psychologically, this is a period of mental readjustment for the voluntary and purposive attention take the place of involuntary attention with its need for immediate satisfaction. Now the child is not merely interested in the process, but looks forward to the end. The instinct of collection has a purpose, and curiosity leads to more rational questions. Imagination is becoming constructive. With a greater mental capacity the knowledge of the external world is enlarging and habits are determining a personality so that respect for law may be ingrained as a conscious ideal. The child now learns habits for life.

Socially, this is the beginning of competitive play. The child is beginning to enjoy companions who have the same interests and so each one influences the other. Confidences are exchanged
and suggestions are readily assimilated or initiated. Self-confidence and self-assertion are still strong, for individuality does not like to have its rights and ideas trampled on by others. He soon learns that conformity to fundamental customs and laws is necessary for others as well as for himself, and so builds standards and ideals of conduct. Yet, he is not quite ready for merging his consciousness with that of the group. He stands on the threshold looking out at others enjoying competitive games. The child comes to respect the rights of others so that he may control his acts somewhat and meet the approval of others, who begin to challenge his attention and thought. Personal obedience in the home is necessary. And the home influences should become a little stronger so that external, false standards may not become a part of the growing personality. The home should still have the confidences and loyalty of the child who perhaps is baffled by many discoveries and new ideas. The child is beginning to get worldly-wise and needs loving counsel in quiet evening talks, not domineering but as companions who understand the perplexities arising in the child-life and its adjustment to the larger world.

The child has an increasing interest in stories of men and women of the Bible and credulously believes all he is told about these characters, so that, if broad, religious ideas are now given, there will not be so great an upheaval in religious feelings during adolescent religious experiences. The church and Sunday School now begin to have their influence on children so privileged as to be able to attend. Worship and reverence of
a wider scope now reinforce the teachings of the parents and make strong impressions on the child. Prayer may become spontaneous expressions of thankfulness for everyday blessings and comforts. In these days, there is not much danger of children becoming too pious; but rather, more emphasis should be given to laying a foundation for a life of joyful service and satisfaction to man and to God. Ideas planted before and during this period, can never be wholly supplanted by others; and here is the golden opportunity for a child to remain as God's child, if this is what a Christian nation desires. But definite training must be continuous with such an end in view.
CHAPTER VI.
The Stage of Childhood.

The fourth stage, that of childhood proper, comprises the years from nine to thirteen, or until puberty. This is primarily a laying-up period to meet the stress of adolescence. The physiological changes are slight. Growth of brain and body develop proportionately. There is rapid structural development, and the child is quite immune from disease and fatigue. He is full of life and energy and has unusually good health, "the bright, new morn of true self-development". Muscular coordination is shown in the skill and keenness with which he engages in all activities, such as running, jumping, swinging, skating, raiding orchards, or looking for some unusual form of amusement. This is the irresponsible, joyful period of childhood. The child is restless because of surplus energy, and so chews paper wads and moves his ears in school to amuse others as well as himself. He has an active interest in life.

Mentally, this is a formative period. The kind of play indulged in now, reveals a great many characteristics of this age. The children are now members of some group, be it large or small; and their play is competitive, purposeful, and voluntary. At no previous time are the associative centers coordinated so fully as now when the memory is especially good. The mind is "wax to receive, and marble to retain". A boy wants to make a bird-house. He readily remembers how a certain one was made by a neighbor's boy, so he sets out to make one as near like it as possible. The constructive instinct is becoming dominant at eleven or twelve
years of age.

The interest in competitive games, as puzzles, races, or checkers; the interest in pets, in sewing, in adventure, in reading, in printing, in hunting games, in playing Indian, and in all out-door activities is prominent. The child has concepts of objects as a whole and knows space perceptions as far as experience has lead him. On the whole, the instincts are turned into useful purposes and emotions are better controlled; there is greater courage and confidence; observation and discrimination are very keen.

Childhood is ultimately a period of competitive socialization. The child takes on the characteristics of other personalities, and becomes a "conscious member of a group who compete and cooperate in all sorts of ways". This is a very important and interesting time of his life history, for it develops personality as nothing else can. Habits are formed from the existing tendencies and the conduct of the child is shaped largely by the ideals of the group. The free exercise of interests which are amenable to the approval of the group, brings out qualities of leadership which mean much to later life. The self must also be subordinated to the wish of the group; and so, justice, loyalty, and obedience to a leader are now in the germ of development.

Character and personality are derived from group activities where individuality has a chance for expression and development. "The sharp corners of individuality are to a considerable extent rubbed off or suppressed, and the individual is made to conform to the

rule of social life." ¹

Some moral standards that may be expected now are: self-control in prompt obedience, in persevering at a task which he may dislike, in inhibiting a hasty temper. He will show loyalty to his friends, family, and groups of which he is a member. And the idea of loyalty should be extended to God as the Ultimate Reality. We cannot say he is altruistic on his own initiative. He still conforms to the group, largely through habit, but is building a foundation for the moral values of life. The group is, for the growing boy or girl, only a small society, out of which he may enter into a world-society with specific training in a perception and discrimination of right and wrong, and also, with the ideals of justice, loyalty, and brotherhood. During this period, the chief social influences are: the teacher, who stimulates manners as well as civil and social relationships; the parents who continue to develop the fundamentals, as love, sympathy, kindness, and patience; and the companions, who develop social qualities, a sense of independence, originality, and self-confidence so that qualities of leadership shall not lie dormant.

As to the religious nature of the child in this period, there is a certain strengthening and closing in upon the ideas and concepts formed previously. The interest in the men and women of the Bible increases and an influence is often seen in the conduct of the boys and girls because of their love for the hero or heroine. There is an inspiration to true living and

doing in the lives of these people of a long time ago. They had faith in God and were obedient, daring hardships that required as much strength of character as is demanded today. The child will want to be of mutual helpfulness both in the home and school, and show the qualities of the great leaders of the Bible and of missionary and reform leaders. The child may hesitate to talk freely on personal religious matters, but he will want to live as good a life as these noble characters did, and try to attain to the Great Ideal, Christ, in loving devotion and in a desire to do His Will. The child is really sincere in his religious belief, and this makes childhood so attractive. As yet, there are no doubts serious enough to disturb his equanimity. Religion is vital as well as practical to him. He may feel the Saviour just as precious to him as an older person does. He may have communion with Him, so that he feels His Presence near him in the home, in the school, and in his play. And, if a child has always been taught to give a portion of his life and thought to definite religious concepts that are broad enough so there will be only a slight jar, if any, at adolescence; then, we may say that he has had the essential opportunities and care. He should be loyal to the will of the heavenly Father in all he does and says.
CHAPTER VII.
The Development of a Religious Attitude.

There is a strong possibility of developing a religious attitude in the child which may be the basis for a genuine religious experience later on. We may say that religious consciousness is present when the child takes an attitude toward God.

Attitude may need a little explanation. It is one of the elementary aspects of consciousness which determines how the subject feels toward objects, and how he will be liable to act when in their presence. The child takes the clearest and strongest attitudes toward persons, for moving objects attract the attention most quickly. The child soon learns to feel love toward the mother who is the source of all satisfying things and to expect a response from her. The child takes an attitude as soon as attention, feeling, and a tendency to action are manifest in his behavior. This is very early. The mother may cultivate the attention and feeling, and then project them toward a superhuman, good God who controls the destinies of men. The little child is born with the capacity to respond to persons and to achieve beyond the young of the most intelligent animals. The child inheriting the largest number of traits and enjoying the longest period of plasticity will have the most varied individuality.

The next thing of importance is to know how a religious
attitude may be acquired by a child—how early and of what significance for life? The development of the physical, mental, and social characteristics has been touched upon. In the physical inheritance there is no basis for religion. "The child is, as it were, submerged in a medium in which he soaks till it permeates his whole being. This medium is constituted by the social heredity— the customs, attitudes, feelings, ideals,--of that part of the race to which he belongs." He is like a sponge which absorbs the water so readily. The very small child is unconscious of those things which are familiar to us. But as his capacities develop, he gradually recognizes various experiences as satisfying or not. The infant in his crib is unconsciously influenced by his mother bending over him in prayer. The expression on the mother's face, the tone of voice, the attitude of reverence, and love cause the child to recognize a difference in his mother's actions. And through suggestion, the feelings of the mother are evoked in the babe. The extent and vividness of the child's religion depends on the personality of the mother and father. The child is influenced more strongly by what the parents are, rather than by what they say. A home where love, order, and justice are dominant, makes the attainment of religious consciousness possible. The idea of God may be developed from a crude beginning, even as the "song of the lark comes from a songless egg." There is nothing which the child fails to imitate, yet he does this in his own inimitable way. The attitudes and feelings of those who associate most intimately with childhood leave indelible impressions on the delicate organism.

1Pratt, James B., The Religious Consciousness, p. 92
Religious consciousness has a beginning in the narrow circle of the home, which has the first opportunity of laying the foundations of social character and of forming social attitudes. Then the circle enlarges when the child enters school, and from this time on, there is a complex of interpenetrating circles, each with its contribution, and the result is--the personality of the child.

The direct influence of religious training comes through the home and through the church. Coe says "Education is to assist immature human beings toward complete self-realization, in and through fellowship with their fellows and God". The religious process commences in the family circle which includes God as an intimate sharer of the group consciousness. The home should inculcate right living and right thinking so that the heavenly Father may reveal Himself continuously in the everyday life of the family. Religion should be natural. A naughty child can be taught that God feels as bad as does his earthly father. Prayer may become natural expressions of gratitude and love to the Father who cares for his children and gives good gifts. Service in the home may be turned into joyful service for the Master. Amid such an environment the child gradually achieves a definite Christian attitude and purpose in this growing communion with God, and his life comes to assume a Christian character. Such children always remain children of God, and may take higher steps within the Christian life, rather than into it, or as some do during adolescence, step entirely out of it. A child who knows his mother prays for him, and who hears his name uttered in pray-
er cannot but feel that there is a divine Power who destines and controls the lives of men. The child must come to feel that God is real, and always loved the child; but until this is realized by him, there can be no real, mutual understanding.

Religion is a right of the child. His dependence on a few intimate persons molds the entire life in a certain direction and the home has a definite obligation in promoting social conduct which is permeated with the teachings of Christ. Ideas are not inherited; so, social ideas and education in the spirit of Christ are necessary.

The love for the heavenly Father is anticipated in the love of the mother; and the discipline of the father is a prerequisite for understanding that God has laws which even the parents obey. The roots of religion are buried in the home, which is entrusted with the great responsibility of a helpless, appealing infant that has capacities for both good and evil. And it is how these inborn capacities bear fruitage, that concerns the future of civilization and of Christianity.

The child is impressed by the daily life of the parents fully as much as by any intellectual training. Both are necessary. When the parents strive for perfection of character and control of their lower nature, being patient, forgiving, kind, courteous, ruling their tempers; then the child will imitate these same qualities. If the parents love the Bible, its truths, hymns, noble poems, and literature, the child will come to feel that religion is vital and real. There will be a continuous, spontaneous growth
in the comprehension of the Ideal Being who is the Supreme Source of all good things. In the imaginative period of the child's development, the child will form conceptions of God, crude perhaps, but meaningful to him, for he peoples his world with imaginary beings. The religion of the parents must be visible and audible to the children, for "a merely internal religion which has no outward modes of expression, cannot be a strong educative power".  

In the home, free conversation about things of God and of His relation to men and women of the Bible times; and how God was with them and helped them, without moralizing these stories, give a good foundation. The parents should love and commune with the same God who is woven into the texture of daily life. This is where religious consciousness must get its strongest impetus, provided the parents are not cowards nor lacking in vital religious experience themselves. For they cannot give what they do not have, but they are responsible stewards in telling Christ's message to their own best loved ones.

The child learns to do by doing, and when he talks with God, there should be a "spirit of reverence, concentration of thought, and effort of imagination directed towards the Unseen, and a feeling of gratitude and of love, which is the outcome of knowledge". The first prayer of a child should be one of gratitude, evoked when he feels especially happy over something. This will be natural as he copies the attitude of the parents. It is better for a child to think of what he wants to tell God than to repeat formal, external, meaningless expressions. It is well for him to

1Coe, George Albert, Education in Religion and Morals, p.276
2Mumford, Edith Read, Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child
thank God for the food that He has given the family. Just as the child feels more love than he can express, he comes to realize God is like a father, only much greater and one who always understands and loves.

Supplementing the home influences in religious training, the church and the church school are important factors. The teacher of religion should have qualities that will make religion concrete, natural, and attractive. Randall Condon in his "Teachers Creed" sums up his beliefs concisely. I will quote in part. "I believe in little children as the most precious gift of heaven to earth ------. I believe that in every child are infinite possibilities for good or evil, and that the kind of influence with which he is surrounded in early childhood largely determines whether or not the budding life shall bloom in fragrance and beauty with the fruit thereof a noble and God-like character. I believe in cultivat-in the intellect and the will but I believe too, in soul culture, and that out of this cultivation comes the more abundant life bringing forth the fruits of the spirit------love, and reverence for God and for each other, and for all His lowly creatures."

It is becoming customary in some churches for a children's sermon to be given during the regular church service, in addition to the sermon for the grown-ups. This preserves the family solidarity and makes an impression on the child's mind so that, in the large group of society, he assumes attitudes of reverence and devotion. Or, there may be a Junior service of worship taking place during the church service, in which the children may worship
by themselves under a competent leader. Either way has its commendations.

In the church school, it is well to have four departments for the period of childhood. These are the Nursery, the Kindergarten, the Primary, and the Junior. The Nursery comprises children from two to four years of age. The greatest service for them is carried on with the mothers who have meetings in which they study child life in all its aspects. The aim of the Nursery department is "To dignify parenthood and glorify childhood". The worship consists of song and prayer. The children associate with others in an informal way, being told simple stories.

In the Kindergarten department which cares for the religious instruction of children four and five years old, there is freedom of expression and a rather informal program. The child begins to worship in music, prayer, and scripture. Games of rhythmic action stamp an impression of the story given in the Circle talk upon the child's mind. He learns of God's loving care.

In the Primary department comprising children of six, seven, and eight years, and in the Junior department including the nine, ten, and eleven year old, there are the three periods of worship, instruction, and expression. These are much alike in many respects in both departments. The whole group in each department participates in the worship service. Then the children are instructed in classes of six or eight members. The main emphasis is on the story, which is elaborated upon by means of pictures and discus-
sions. In the expressional activities, note-book work, modeling, poster making, making maps in the sand-tray, and dramatization enforce the teaching of the lesson.

A Primary child should know the plan and truth of a reasonable number of stories, also memory verses and their meaning. And for special work the Christmas story, the Easter story, the Twenty-third Psalm, and the Lord's Prayer. Besides this, he should be able to use meaningfully fifteen or twenty songs.

A Junior child should know a reasonable amount of lesson material and the truths contained therein. Certain characters should be evaluated. He should also know some memory verses, as the Beatitudes, Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments. He should be able to dramatize the last part of the Twenty-fourth Psalm, the One-hundredth Psalm, the One-hundred-seventeenth, and selected scenes from the Old Testament. He should know the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of John, as well as certain parables, the Good Samaritan, the Talents, the Sower. He should also know some hymns, and songs of devotion, of challenge, and those for special seasons. The Junior child should also know some Bible geography and the mechanics of the Bible.

As in mental and social development, so in religious, there must be regularity and habit to form the ideals in the consciousness according to the teachings of Christ. As interest prompts processes, so actions resulting in definite responses must be started with this end in view.
CHAPTER VIII.
Children's Ideas of God.

The little child responds early to the common social consciousness, out of which self-consciousness gradually emerges. The attitude of a child toward his parents is quite likely to be the same in nature, as the attitude he will form toward God in adolescence. One of the most subtle influences on the child's religious consciousness is the imitation of actions which are expressive of religious feelings. In this way, he shares the mental attitude, and wonders and thinks about these matters for himself. Emotion always comes before ideation, before conceptual thinking, and also before reasoning. It is almost impossible to give adequate ideas to a child without images or sense perception. The child may reach upward with the love in its heart of the father whom it has seen to the love for the Father whom it has not seen. In the beginning, crude, anthropomorphic ideas of God dominate the child's thought and may linger in varying degrees through life. By the end of the period of childhood, the boy or girl can think in conceptual terms, perhaps not quite so rich as that of mature life, yet satisfying. Christ is the means of his knowing God more perfectly. The child will gradually motivate his conduct according to the ideas of the particular group of which he is a member. If this group is controlled by a spirit of love and loyalty to the heavenly Father, then the conduct of the child will doubtless be based upon the God-consciousness which is greater than mere social consciousness.
I have selected a few thoughts from the lives of children who come within the range of my experience. As I relate them, I will try to explain and interpret their bearing on the subject.

Helen had caused a playmate to feel badly. During the day, the wise mother told her that, if she were in her place, she would certainly ask God in her prayer at night, to help her be a better girl. So, this four-year-old asked God to forgive her for being naughty to Howard, and also asked Him to help her so she would not do it again. This little girl would never have uttered these words unless she had heard similar expressions on the lips of her parents. Their belief in and attitude toward a higher Power was being copied by the child and worked over by her into meaningful concepts. Direct training by the mother helped Helen to understand that God was displeased by wrong-doing. She also was learning to trust God and to think of Him as the Ideal Father who was omniscient, omnipotent, and loving all who did right.

Helen is seven years old now. She has a notion of saying a silent prayer. Her mother told her that God could understand what she was praying for just as well as if it were uttered audibly. The child had seen the parents, as well as people in church, bow their heads in silence. So she wanted to imitate their actions. This was a splendid preparation for the inculcation of the idea that God sees and knows what is in the mind of the child. There is a sense of awe and mystery about an Unseen Power who knows all about the individual. This little girl had received rather early, the training which will enable her to
share the mystic's point of view.

Robert, a younger brother five years old, never forgets his prayer. It is just as important to him as are his meals. He knows the Lord's Prayer, "Now I Lay Me", and several others. The prayer he uses just now:

"Father, we thank Thee for our homes,
And all our blessings there.
Oh may we grow more like to Thee,
In tender loving care."

The reason why Robert feels the necessity of prayer, is not, because he receives any direct value from it, but rather because the family includes God as a sharer of the common social consciousness. The attitude of the parents and older sister toward the heavenly Father is copied. Why should he break the harmony of the group life by disliking to do as they do? Anyway, he has no background of experience to allow doubts to creep in. He is beginning to build experiences of his own, out of the social environment. Because the home emphasizes religious observances, the children absorb its attitudes and ideals in regard to religion as readily as they do other ideas.

One day Helen asked if God were a real man like "Daddy". She also wanted to know what God's last name was. Both Helen and Robert asked, a long time ago, what the word God meant. These children are beginning to think for themselves. They still accept much in their primitive credulity. The wise mother was careful not to make assertions which their growing experience could refute, or characterizations of God that would seem strange to them. The child's imagination reaches much further than adults
realize, so misunderstandings are common. The child likes to think of imaginary playmates and so, the heavenly Father may also be an imaginary companion who watches over and is present whenever the child thinks of Him. Such an ideal intimacy with God results in a genuine love which grows stronger day by day. The pictures of Christ will help the child to think of God as the Father. Religious doctrine cannot be assimilated by the child. But broad religious truths must be given, so that early faith and belief in God may not be destroyed by a critical attitude arising in later years.

When Merton was nearly six years old, he asked his mother if God could see into houses. He also wondered how large God's eyes were. His uncle had been teasing him, and so, one night when he had come home from visiting there, Merton prayed "God bless Uncle Schuyler and make him stop his fighting". At Thanksgiving time he said he was thankful for potatoes. The story of Noah and the flood was told to him when he was about four years old. He asked "Why didn't God shoot 'em with a gun?" This last expression shows that guns and shooting came within his experience; while perhaps the effectiveness of the flood to destroy the wicked people could not be comprehended by him. This expression is a sure indication that a boy is the speaker. He had been told that God could see everything and so in his crude imagination, he would naturally think that God must have big eyes. He had mixed common-place ideas with fantastic imagery. He was thinking of God in anthropomorphic terms and trying to reconcile these ideas with His great power. The child put into words what he wanted God to
do for his uncle, as he had heard his parents ask God in regard to other things. He was copying their example in his own way. The child liked potatoes so that was why he said he was thankful for them. The child has an idea or purpose in mind for every expression he makes; but adults often fail to fathom the searchings of their little minds for the truth.

A little boy five years old was standing in a chair looking at the picture of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. Finally, he said, "Why do you not call me John Wesley if part of my name is that?" The mother told Wesley that the picture was of a very good man. After a moment the child said, "I will be a good man too." So ever afterward, he was called John Wesley. This shows the alertness and keen activity of the child's mind. This is also, the time when children ask questions about everything that may come into their experience in any way. Wesley had previously heard the man called by his full name, so an explanation was demanded. He was now satisfied.

A little girl of four years kept striking the ground with a whip and said, "God, why do you have it rain for? Glena can't come home from school." The parents had taught the child that God sent the rain; but she could not understand why a good God who loved everyone could prevent her sister from coming home by sending a shower at this inopportune time. It seemed quite inconsistent with her wishes. So she was showing her disapproval by a petulant spirit. She failed to understand that the rain was making the world beautiful.

Little Howard, aged three, used to pass a dish for a
collection in the home, as he had seen it done in the church. He also put his hand to his forehead as he had seen his uncle do while asking a blessing on the food. He used to stand up in a chair, shut his eyes, bow his head, and extend his hands as the minister did for the benediction in church; but he never said a word. This is nothing but conscious imitation of actions that impressed the child as being somewhat out of the ordinary. These acts are copied as the beginning of the external forms of religious practice. The child sees people worshipping and believing in practically the same ways and thus the teachings of the home, school, and church as to religious feelings, ideas, and ways of acting are assimilated in a few years.

A little girl named Clara had a baby sister, Victoria, who was not expected to live any time, so the mother sent Clara, eleven years old, to summon the father who was working in the field a mile or two a way. Time and again, she knelt down on the way and prayed that God would not let her little sister die. The baby lived and Clara believed that it was because of her prayer; for three or four months later she awakened to discover that Victoria had died during the night. Anguish and remorse filled her heart for she had not prayed for her little sister to be spared again, because she did not know she had been taken sick. Clara said that Victoria would have lived if she had only know and prayed for her. This little girl was brought up to believe in the efficacy of prayer. She had no doubts as to God's power; nor did this sorrow lessen her faith in God. She felt that she had not
done her part, and ever afterward had a stronger love and trust in God. There was no conflict between authority and experience for she had an inner life of intense and genuine religious feeling. God was an intimate friend and reality to her.

One of the most noteworthy observations is that of Edith, who was brought up in a home where Christ was reverenced and worshipped every day of the year. She was baptized when eight years old, and had a wonderful experience. She has intimate relationship with God who means so much in her life. She says "I guess I do know Jesus." He is like a personal friend to her. I will quote exactly as Edith wrote an account of "When I was a child" with the exception of punctuation in a few places. She is now fourteen and recently wrote her ideas of Jesus, as she remembered when she was about seven years old and "first began to think seriously of such things."

"Jesus was the good shepherd who sought to restore the one little lamb which was missing from the fold. Every time I saw the picture of Jesus there arose in my mind how Jesus was everything, such as king, a counsellor, a healer, a working person, a friend, and a father, and a helper, and so forth. But of all these, by which of these was I to think of him, and call him—that was the question. I thought it all over.

"If I called him a friend, people would say he is of no relation, and a friend couldn't do all the wonderful things which he did.

"If I called him king, he deserved more credit than that,
for he was more mighty than king. The name of working person was too good for him. To me, the name, father, seemed old and I thought that people who are called father were sometimes queer in ideas, and of a stingy, mean disposition. And that was what I was afraid other people would think, so I thought of him as a healer, a helper, and an angel at all times.

"But I thought of him the most as Jesus, the good shepherd, taking care of his flock of little children and making sure that none should escape from the fold, and ever glad at any time, to have people say, 'Make me fit to enter the flock'. In the picture of the ninety-nine, I used to say to myself, 'I hope I'm not the little lamb which has strayed from the fold, and has to have someone go out and look for me. But oh, how that little lamb must have felt when, in the good shepherd's arms, safe and warm, and free from harm, knowing he was safe and within the arms of one who trusted and loved, wanting his flock to do the right. Oh how happy that little lamb must have been! How I sometimes wish I could have been the little lamb!

"I always thought of Jesus as an angel and as a good shepherd. I understood him better when I thought of him like this. I always felt that Jesus was watching every step I take, just the same as he did when he took care of his lambs. If I had done wrong, I could see his eyes upon me and felt he was reading me through like a book, and if I had been dishonest or had done some unworthy act, I could not feel honest enough to look at his eyes, and his gaze was so steady, that it made me ashamed. After that I would ask him, 'Is this right or is it
wrong?" that is, if I wanted to do right and 'most always he
would give the right answer. He always gave the right answer.
If you are in the wrong and do not know that you are, and you
think you are in the right, ask him, for he will always tell you
the truth. I think the lamb must have said, 'Jesus, the good
shepherd,' and I say the same."

This little girl is the only child of consecrated Chris-
tian parents. Therefore, she has come to absorb some of the
more mature religious consciousness and make it over according
to the dictates of her expanding mind. Religion produced a
sense of quiet joy, confidence, and friendship with Jesus. She
had a genuine love for the Christ who took care of His lambs.
The wide range of names for Jesus showed the sweep of her im-
gination. The discrimination is very interesting because she
gives the reasons for her choice. The thought that she might
be one of the little lambs that strayed from the fold showed
that she understood the symbolism of the good Shepherd, espe-
cially when she wished that He might have held her in His arms.
Then, too, she had the imagination to believe that He could see
her if she were doing wrong, and that He would direct her, if
she would only ask Him. She had naive, child-like faith in
Jesus who was her intimate protector and friend at all times.
Edith was nourished in a home where religion was dominant, and
so the appeal to her sensitive, susceptible mind found ready
acceptance. The seed started to grow early and there sprung
up out of a rich soil a tender plant that was fostered by God's
love. Continuous growth will soon lead to a Christian life in
its full fruitage. Others will imitate the example. The manner in which Edith clung to the figure of speech is quite remarkable. This seems to have made a deep impression on her mind. No doubts as to God's ability to answer prayer ever occurred to her. This concludes the brief observations of child-life which help to bear out the theories of religious consciousness in childhood.

By the end of the period of childhood, behavior should be regulated by a moral code with standards of harmony and unity. This moral code must have certain ideals which are prompted by the consciousness of the individual. The greatest ideal is that which motivates the conduct in accordance with God's will. The teachings and life of Christ are the criterion for establishing a religious attitude. And, in the social consciousness, the foundation will be laid for a superstructure of a life dominated by God's will for society.

Child-life presented a bright picture to Jesus. He said, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of Heaven." The little child may be true, loving, and imaginative at one time; at another time he may act like a little savage, just as if he had had no previous training. There must be continuous direction and wholesome influences to mold a Christian character, a character that will know how, as well as have a desire to participate in and further the activities of the kingdom of God. A growing Christian personality will be similar to this thought, "First, the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear."
SUMMARY

Every child takes an attitude toward his parents, which may be transferred to the loyal devotion of the heavenly Father. Childhood is a peculiarly appropriate time for religious consciousness to appear. "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune," says Shakespeare. So, the child may be trained in its early years and never need to go out of Christian life and then be converted.

As to the origin of religious consciousness, we must discountenance the popular notion that a child is born with a "specific religious instinct". There is no single instinct that can be called religious. There is a suffusing of various instincts through the common social consciousness. Some of these are mystery and wonder, a restlessness that cannot be satisfied by present conditions and by material things. Fear, also, develops into awe and reverence. Love and devotion come from the maternal instinct. And a desire for fellowship with God comes out of the gregarious instinct.

Religious consciousness is a growth. It may or may not be rather slow in appearing. This depends both on the capacities of the child, and also on the social heredity which is thrown about him as a cloak. I believe God endows every child with sufficient capacity for religious experience, but man often fails to perform his mission.

1Shakespeare, William. Julius Caesar, Act. IV, Sc. 3
As to the fundamental principle of child development, the first thing to note is the abundant energy and vitality of the healthy, normal child. The little babe comes with reflexes already functioning. And the instincts begin to play their part in directing movements, so that after a short time, muscular and neural coordination takes place.

Every structure craves for expression, as it develops. Tendencies vary in intensity at different periods. There are various levels of conduct. At first the instincts predominate and are influenced by the pleasure and pain accompanying their performance. If pleasure or satisfaction results, then the instinct will function until synaptic connections are made. Next, the instinctive impulses are modified by the rewards or punishments of society. And the family gives the first sanctions or disapprovals to certain modes of behavior. These are adopted by the child who imitates freely and begins to conform to the social consciousness. And in the next place, we have conduct controlled by the anticipation of social praise or blame of the larger group. The growing self realizes that other selves have rights worthy of respect. At the end of the period of childhood, right and wrong are differentiated to the child, but he is not always capable of choosing.

Finally, the highest stage of conduct is regulated by an ideal which controls the life and actions so strongly, that the compulsion is from within, rather than from society.

During childhood, there are four suggested stages of development. These are not distinct and separate, but are a continuous growth. I have treated each stage under three heads, physical,
mental, and social. Religious consciousness comes primarily from the last named.

During early infancy the child takes attitudes which, for the most part, will be permanent. The first three years are the most significant because reactions are becoming definite and tendencies are becoming fixed.

In later infancy, from three years to six or seven, the child is very imaginative. Whatever he desires that is not present, he invents, and so when the attitude toward the heavenly Father has been established in the preceding period, it is not strange that the child should think of God in anthropomorphic terms.

The transitional period from seven to nine years is one of readjustment. There is rapid growth, resulting often in fatigue. Mental capacity is growing stronger. Companions in school begin to exert influence over the child. And behavior is enlarging into conduct, motivated by ideals.

In the last stage, that of childhood proper, we include the years from nine to thirteen. This is a period for storing up energy to meet the readjustments of adolescence. Unusually good health marks the period. Its peculiar characteristic is competitive socialization. The self is subordinate to the group which calls for loyalty. A basis for religious is supposed to have been laid from the social contact in the home and in the larger environment. By the end of childhood the moral and social nature of the
child should be well-grounded.

As to the possibility of developing a religious attitude during childhood, there is strong evidence to support this idea. Yet, there is a primary condition for this. Social heredity must be of a religious nature. The child cannot absorb what does not exist for him. And so, when religion is an important factor in the lives of the parents, attitudes will be formed through imitation, and out of this selection, the child comes to have his own religious consciousness.

This is supplemented by direct and indirect influences. The home has the first opportunity. And then he comes into the larger group in the school and church school. The early attitudes may be strengthened or warped by outer influences, according as God's will is exalted or cast aside.

Children's ideas of God are most likely to be anthropomorphic in character. The father is the first image for the child to think in terms of. And later, Christ helps make the idea of God more concrete and vivid. Although children's ideas are limited largely by experience, yet they have value in their potency and promise.

The personality of the child unfolds gradually. How it unfolds and what it unfolds, lie in the original nature and the influence of the social heredity. Only a balanced life can unfold perfectly, revealing a will dominated by Christ. The fourfold life of Christ is the heritage of every child. "And Jesus
advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.\(^1\)

And the conduct of the child will be motivated by loyalty and devotion to Christ's will and purpose.

\(^1\)Luke 2:52.
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