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A STUDY OF
THE USE OF POETRY IN WORSHIP SERVICES
FOR THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT

by

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A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

in

The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York City
April, 1938

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	
A. Statement of the Problem	2
B. Importance of the Problem	2
C. The Plan of the Present Study and the Method of Procedure	5
CHAPTER ONE	
THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT	
A. Introduction	8
B. The Development of Religion in the Senior	10
C. An Analysis of Conversion in Religious Experience	11
1. Definition of Conversion	11
2. Age of Conversion	12
3. Causes of Conversion	13
a. Physiological Causes of Conversion	13
b. Psychological Causes of Conversion	15
c. Other causes of Conversion	16
4. Types of Conversion	16
a. "Gradual Growth" Type	17
b. "Sudden" or "Cataclysmic" Type	18
c. "Decision" Type	19
5. Steps in the Conversion Experience	20
6. Summary	21
D. The Place of Doubts in Religious Experience	22
1. Age of Doubts	22
2. Objects of Doubt	23
3. Causes of Doubts	23
4. Value of Doubts	24
5. Summary	25

21839 Gift of author Nov. 1939

E. The Nature of Worship in the Religious Experience of the Middle Adolescent	26
1. Introduction	26
2. Definition of Worship	26
3. The Senior at Worship	27
4. The Psychological Bases for the Worship of the Middle Adolescent	29
5. Summary	30
F. General Summary	31

CHAPTER TWO

GROUP WORSHIP AND ITS FUNCTION FOR THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT

A. Introduction	33
B. Typical Senior Worship Situations	34
C. The Nature and Criteria of Adolescent Group Worship	36
D. An Analysis of Senior Worship Materials	38
1. Music and Song	38
2. Prayer	39
3. The Scriptures	40
4. Poetry	41
5. Other Worship Materials	43
E. Values of Group Worship to Middle Adolescents	44
F. Summary	49

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE OF POETRY AND ITS FUNCTION IN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

A. Introduction	52
B. Definition of Poetry	53
C. The Nature of Poetry in Relation to the Religious Nature of Middle Adolescents	55
1. The Element of Emotion in Poetry	55
2. The Element of Imagination in Poetry	57
3. The Element of Truth in Poetry	59
4. The Element of Beauty in Poetry	62
5. The Element of Rhythm in Poetry	64

D. The Functions of Poetry in Religious Experience	66
1. To Reveal God in Nature	68
2. To Provide a "Wider Awareness"	68
3. To Administer Healing	69
4. To Penetrate the Doubts of A Scientific Age	70
5. To Prepare for and Lead into Prayer	71
6. To Effect Creative Personality	72
E. Summary	73

CHAPTER FOUR

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE USES OF POETRY IN WORSHIP SERVICES FOR THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT

A. Introduction	76
B. A Survey of Poetry in Representative Worship Services for Middle Adolescents	81
1. International Journal of Religious Education for 1937	81
a. Survey Analysis	81
b. Interpretation of the Survey of the International Journal of Religious Education for 1937	85
2. Stacy, Gussie Brown: Worship for Youth, Volume II	87
a. Survey Analysis	87
b. Interpretation of the Survey of Worship for Youth, Volume II	89
3. Athearn, Laura Armstrong: Christian Worship for American Youth	92
a. Survey Analysis	92
b. Interpretation of the Survey of Christian Worship for American Youth	95
4. The New Hymnal for American Youth, H. Augustine Smith, Editor	97
a. Survey Analysis	98
b. Interpretation of the Survey of The New Hymnal for American Youth	98
5. The Church School Hymnal for Youth	99
a. Survey Analysis	99
b. Interpretation of the Survey of The New Church School Hymnal for Youth	100
C. General Summary	100

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE USE OF POETRY IN SENIOR WORSHIP SERVICES

A. Introduction	104
B. Recommendation Regarding the Frequency of Use of Poetry in Senior Worship Services	104
C. Recommendation Regarding the Selection of Poetry to be Used in Senior Worship	106
1. Suggestions Concerning Authors	106
2. Suggestions Concerning Type of Poetry to be Used in Senior Worship	107
a. Standard for Judging Poetry on the Basis of Adolescent Needs	107
b. Standard for Judging Poetry on the Basis of Literary Merit	110
D. Recommendation Regarding the Manner of Using Poetry in Senior Worship Services	113
E. Summary	115
GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY	123

INTRODUCTION

THE USE OF POETRY IN WORSHIP SERVICES FOR THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT.

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem.

The problem of this study is to investigate the use of poetry in worship services for the middle adolescent.¹ Obviously this investigation implies a survey of poetry now being employed in worship services for middle adolescents and an analysis and evaluation of its use. It is at once apparent that the value of poetry in a worship service cannot be determined without an understanding of the worship experience. Thus a subsidiary problem emerges, namely, an inquiry into the nature and function of worship in the religious experience of middle adolescents. What, psychologically, constitutes the religious experience of the middle adolescent is another problem which, at this point, is seen. The present investigation, therefore, is three fold. It seeks: (1) to discover what is involved in the religious experience of the middle adolescent; (2) to ascertain the nature and function of worship; and (3) to determine what place poetry has, and may have, in the worship experience.

B. Importance of the Problem.

Brightman declares that "the life of religion depends

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1. By "middle adolescent" is meant a young person between the ages of fifteen to seventeen inclusive.

upon the worth of worship."¹ Particularly for the senior does the life of his religion depend on the reality of his worship. Because of this fact, Verkuyl states that the first aim of the Christian leader, as he seeks to bring young people into daily fellowship with God, is to help them worship aright.² Binford points out that worship like everything else is learned by practice, through experience, and adds that "a service that does not train adolescents in worship trains adolescents not to worship."³ Such statements as these indicate that one of the foremost concerns of religious educators today is the matter of the worship service for the adolescent. This interest in worship is further demonstrated by the fact that practically every type of religious meeting in which seniors participate (Sunday School, young people's meetings, clubs, and the like) begins with a worship service.

Moreover, the value attached to the worship experience and the care given to the planning of a program are suggested by the variety of materials now being used. Such materials include drama, pictures, stories, and poetry, in addition to the long used music, prayer, and the Scriptures. The inclusion of poetry in worship services for seniors is not surprising when consideration is given to Boddy's statement that "poetry is the natural language of religion,"⁴ and to Caroline Miles Hill's comment that "poetry is

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1. Brightman, Edgar Sheffield: Religious Values, p. 185.
2. Cf. Verkuyl, Gerrit: Adolescent Worship, p. 11.
3. Cf. Binford, Anna Branch: Worship in the Young People's Division of the Church, p. 5.
4. Boddy, William H.: "Poetry and Religion", International Journal of Religious Education, May 1931, pp. 14, 15.

the natural language of youth, freedom, joyousness, and love of beauty."¹ Furthermore, one is reminded of the tendency of man through the ages to express in psalms of lyric praise those feelings which arise from the depths of his nature. Especially is this true when those feelings spring from man's awareness of fellowship with the God of the Universe, as is indicated by the glorious lyrics of the Psalms, the rapturous melody of the "Gloria in Excelsis,"² or the chaste beauty of the "Magnificat".³ It appears that leaders are now recognizing the natural affinity of poetry and religion and are sensing the tremendous importance of emphasizing the feeling element, as well as the intellectual, in the worship experiences of the middle adolescent.⁴

The significance of the present investigation is seen, therefore, in its purpose to analyze the sacred relationship of an individual to God at the period in the life of that individual when his whole being is alert, alive, and avid for every experience with reality. Further, the importance of the present study lies in poetry itself, in its nature and in its appeal to seniors. A preliminary survey reveals that this material chosen for special examination, while generally used in worship, is little discussed by authorities writing on adolescent worship. The import of the present research, then, rests in its attempt to open for study the

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1. Hill, Caroline Miles: The World's Great Religious Poetry, p. xiii.
2. Cf. Luke 2:14.
3. Cf. Luke 1:46-55.
4. Cf. Shaver, Erwin L: How to Teach Seniors, p. 83.

field of poetry as it relates to the religious experience of the middle adolescent, who readily worships with the help of verse.

C. The Plan of The Present Study,
and The Method of Procedure.

The threefold nature of the present study has been stated above. Chapter one will present as a foundational study an analysis of the religious experience of the middle adolescent. After an introduction dealing with the development of religion in the growing person, three phases of religious experience will be treated: conversion, doubts, and worship. Since the approach to the subject will be psychological, the nature of worship will be dealt with in this chapter. This implies and so necessitates a definition and an analysis of the worship experience in the light of the psychology of the middle adolescent.

Chapter two will be concerned with the functional side of worship. This discussion will center about the dual value of the worship experience, that is, its intrinsic and its extrinsic benefits.

Chapter three will proceed with an analysis of the nature of poetry and an investigation of its function in religious experience. Such analysis and investigation, together with a discussion of the senior's feelings about poetry, will lead to certain conclusions respecting its appropriateness in adolescent worship.

The results of a survey of poetry now being used in worship services will be given in chapter four. Senior worship

services in the International Journal of Religious Education will be surveyed, along with the services in representative hymnals for youth and in senior worship books. This survey should reveal the extent of the use of poetry, the types of poems that are being used, and the nature of their use. Obviously the method of use, that is, the function of poetry in worship, is the thing with which the investigator here is most concerned.

In the light of the proposed survey and on the basis of the analysis of the nature of poetry, of the middle adolescent, and of worship, chapter five will set forth certain recommendations and suggestions for the larger use of poetry in youth worship. Specific ways by which poetry may be used extensively and helpfully in worship will be presented. On the basis of the findings reported in chapter four, chapter five will set forth briefly principles to guide one in the choice of poems to be used in senior worship.

Finally, there will be presented the general conclusions of the present study along with an organization of its significant findings.

CHAPTER ONE

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT

CHAPTER ONE

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT

A. Introduction.

The most significant time of life from the standpoint of religious development, as well as from every other point of view, is, according to Starbuck, the period of adolescence.¹ Emphasis must be placed on the words "time of life"; for, says Tracy, adolescence if viewed rightly is "not a life by itself but a stage in the total life."² Furthermore, it has no characteristic "whose germ may not be found in childhood, and whose consequences may not be traced in maturity and old age."³ It is this age which offers to the psychologist a rich and engaging field of study because this is the age of the most interesting religious phenomena. Strikingly enough these phenomena are most evident in the middle teens. One who attempts, therefore, to study the religious experience of the middle adolescent finds himself face to face with the most challenging three years of life, from the standpoint of religion.

Before a discussion of the phenomena which characterize the religious experience of the senior is begun, it is necessary to

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1. Cf. Starbuck, Edwin Diller: The Psychology of Religion, p. 195.
2. Tracy, Frederick: The Psychology of Adolescence, p. 5.
3. Ibid., p. 5.

state what is meant by "religious experience". Hickman points out that the term "religion" is sometimes used to denote a system of beliefs and sometimes to indicate a special kind of reaction to certain stimuli.¹ He further shows that religion is a matter of intellect, emotion, will, and social attitude.² Edward speaks of religious experience as "an experience of God and of our relationship with him."³ William James explains that religion is

"the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, as far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."⁴

Without multiplying definitions, which it is possible to do almost without end, one is willing to accept as the basis for the present study Tracy's statement that religion

"whatever it may involve in its details, has to do in its inmost essence with the relation between man and his Maker, or, more exactly with man's attitude towards whatever he believes to be the supreme reality in the universe."⁵

Religious experience for the senior, therefore, is a matter of relationship between him and his Maker. If this relation is of peculiar significance, that is not to say that it originates in middle adolescence or is confined, in any sense, to the senior age. On the contrary, it is apparent that the senior but experiences the emergence of a religious life that had its germ in childhood and infancy.

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1. Cf. Hickman, Frank S.: Introduction to the Psychology of Religion, p. 49.
2. Ibid., pp. 49-67.
3. Edward, Kenneth: Religious Experience: Its Nature and Truth, p. 18.
4. James, William: Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 31.
5. Tracy, op. cit., p. 183.

B. The Development of Religion in the Senior.

Moxcey in treating the religious life of the middle adolescent explains that a religious "instinct", like the sex instinct, was supposed formerly to begin to function in adolescence.¹ She adds, however, that psychologists now agree there is no such thing as a "religious instinct."² It is nevertheless true that because of the senior's enlarged capacity to think, to feel, to will, to do — indeed, because of the striking connection among all his psychic powers³ — his religious life frequently takes on a great new richness and fulness. This Pratt has in mind when he speaks of adolescence as the "flowering times for religion."⁴ Religious expression in the middle teens is different from that of earlier years. The intense interest in personality, the strong sense of loyalty, the deep yearning for a center about which one's personality may be organized, the exuberant physical, mental, and emotional energy,⁵ — all these call from the senior an enthusiastic response to Christ's invitation, "Follow me." It is not surprising then that the period of middle adolescence is the outstanding time for conversion. On the other hand, the quickening of all his mental powers makes the senior ready to question, and thus one discovers that middle adolescence is the age for the beginning of intellectual doubts. Serving as a great steadying force, however, is the experience

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1. Cf. Moxcey, Mary E.: The Psychology of Middle Adolescence, p. 171.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 171.
3. Cf. Tracy, op. cit., p. 6.
4. Pratt, James Bissett: The Religious Consciousness, p. 108.
5. Cf. Moxcey, op. cit., pp. 173 - 191.

of worship, which is of particular import for the middle adolescent because of his deepening intellectual and emotional powers and his increasing aesthetic appreciation.¹

Conversion, doubts, and worship, therefore, constitute the religious experience of the middle adolescent. These will be discussed in the order named, but it should be understood that no attempt will be made here to treat any one of the three exhaustively. Each is a vast field about which scores of authorities have written. It is the purpose of the present study to investigate only some of the most salient features of each of these phenomena.

C. An Analysis of Conversion in Religious Experience.

1. Definition of Conversion.

Approaching "the most striking adolescent religious phenomenon",² conversion, one is almost overwhelmed by the volume of the material that has been written on the subject. Moreover, one is somewhat baffled by the great variety of attitudes and opinions concerning this phenomenon, there being apparently as many different definitions for the word "conversion" as there are persons who attempt to define it. G. Stanley Hall says,

"In its most fundamental sense, conversion is a natural, normal, universal, and necessary process at the stage when life pivots over from an autocentric to an heterocentric basis."³

Pratt points out that the whole moral and religious process of

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1. Cf. Kupky, Oskar: The Religious Development of Adolescents, pp. 83-96.
2. Pratt, op. cit., p. 122.
3. Hall, G. Stanley: Adolescence, Vol. II, p. 301.

adolescence may be called conversion.¹ It is interesting that both Hall and Pratt use the word "process", thus suggesting one of the chief types of conversion. Hickman, suggesting another type, asserts that conversion is "a pronounced mental revolution through which a life consciously irreligious becomes consciously religious in its aims and loyalty."² One questions Hickman's emphasis on the intellectual aspect of the experience to the apparent exclusion of the emotional and volitional aspects. Starbuck, on the other hand, stresses the volitional phase of the experience when he says conversion is the "surrender of personal will to be guided by the larger forces of which it is a part."³ Elsewhere he speaks of it as an "unselfing",⁴ as "an awakening into larger life",⁵ as "suddenly forsaking the lower for the higher self."⁶ Whatever else conversion may mean, and apparently it may mean various things to various individuals, for the senior it must involve the integration of personality about a central object of loyalty (the object for Christians being Jesus Christ) and the unification of the individual not only within himself but also with his social environment.

2. The Age of Conversion.

As has been suggested already, conversion seems to be an adolescent phenomenon; that is not to say that it may not, and

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1. Cf. Pratt, op. cit., p. 122.
2. Hickman, op. cit., p. 215.
3. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 146.
4. Ibid., p. 145.
5. Ibid., p. 147.
6. Ibid., p. 156.

indeed does not, occur at any time of life. Nevertheless, practically all writers agree that it belongs to the period of middle adolescence. Starbuck in his very thorough study discovered that for females the peak of conversion occurs at sixteen with smaller peaks occurring at thirteen and eighteen; for males the peak is sixteen, with smaller peaks at twelve and at eighteen or nineteen.¹ Moxcey discusses conversion as the outstanding religious experience of the middle teens.² Ames also mentions the three ages for both males and females and gives sixteen as the peak.³ It appears, therefore, that while writers may not agree as to the nature of the conversion crisis they do agree that it is more likely to occur during middle adolescence than during any other period in life, sixteen being the high point for both males and females.

3. Causes of Conversion.

Since it is agreed that conversion belongs preeminently to middle adolescence, the investigator immediately questions why this should be true. Practically all students of this age have discovered that the explanation emerges when the adolescent is considered physiologically and psychologically.

a. Physiological Causes of Conversion.

G. Stanley Hall in his monumental work on adolescence explains that it is "no accidental synchronism of unrelated events

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1. Cf. Starbuck, op. cit., pp. 28 - 34.

2. Cf. Moxcey, op. cit., pp. 182 - 188.

3. Cf. Ames, Edward Scribner: The Psychology of Religious Experience, pp. 264 - 265.

that the age of religion and that of sexual maturity coincide,"¹ and he goes on to add that the gospel "makes sex love at the best the type and symbol of love of God and man."² Starbuck corroborates Hall's opinion by saying that "the phenomena of the religious life are to a large extent based on the sexual life."³ Starbuck quotes Havelock Ellis as saying that the religious instinct is dependent on accession to puberty, rapid physical development, and transformation in mental life.⁴ When consideration is given to the rapid physical growth that comes with puberty, to the consequent instability in the nervous system, to "the storm and stress" felt in the whole inner life, to the expanding mental life, to the deepening of the emotional life, to the ferment of new life, joy, enthusiasm, distress, despondency, and despair, — indeed, when all these aspects of the physical development of the adolescent are taken into account, it is at once evident that the adolescent is prepared perfectly for the experience called conversion. Moreover, Starbuck shows that in adolescence the higher intellectual centers in the brain begin to function so that instead of a self of sense there is a world of ideas and spiritual perceptions with which "I" and the personality are identified.⁵ This, he says, underlies conversion. Tracy speaks of the physical, intellectual, emotional, and volitional development of the adolescent as occasioning a great

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1. Hall, op. cit., p. 292.
2. Ibid., p. 293.
3. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 205.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 207
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 254.

inner restlessness which in many cases eventuates in conversion.¹

b. Psychological Causes of Conversion.

Not only does the physical development of the adolescent predispose him for conversion but also certain psychological factors make possible the experience. Hickman emphasizes the new sense of selfhood that comes in early adolescence, by which authority shifts from without to within.² With the old external authority cast overboard, youth feels the need for that unification of personality about some supreme object, which unification comes with conversion. It is almost paradoxical that at the same time there is a new sense of selfhood there is a new social sensitiveness, a feeling of "common consciousness."³ This sensitivity to social approval stirs the adolescent to emulate a person greatly admired, and for this reason Jesus makes a strong appeal.⁴ Furthermore, Pratt states that psychologists attach great significance to the adolescent's "vague sense of incompleteness", to his habits of introspection, and to the whole psychical readjustment necessary as an individual passes from childhood to manhood or womanhood.⁵ Starbuck suggests that the breach between the motor areas in the brain and the ideational centers, which breach almost drives the adolescent to despair, is another factor that prepares for the conversion experience.⁶

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1. Cf. Tracy, op. cit., pp. 194, 195.

2. Cf. Hickman, op. cit., p. 202.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 208.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 209.

5. Cf. Pratt, op. cit., pp. 111 - 113.

6. Cf. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 257.

c. Other Causes of Conversion.

In addition to those causes which might be considered strictly physiological or psychological, Pratt suggests that in Protestant countries a tumultuous religious experience issuing in conversion is to be expected in view of the "theological prepossessions with which our youth are so often brought up."¹ One wonders if perhaps the great numbers of adolescents who come into the church do so because they are reared to think such a step is expected sometime between twelve and twenty. On the other hand, the individual who is a theist and who has a place in his thinking for the supernatural is not willing to explain conversion wholly on the basis of what has been discussed above. Rather does he feel there must be some place for the supernatural action of the Spirit of God, who in His own loving way speaks to the individual heart of youth and makes possible the "New Birth".

4. Types of Conversion.

With some of the principal causes of conversion in mind, one is led next to question just what forms the conversion phenomena may take. In other words, what are the chief types of experience commonly known as conversion? In the consideration of this phase of the subject, great diversity of opinion is found. Those who have made investigation by means of questionnaires have discovered almost as many kinds of experience as there are cases

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1. Pratt, op. cit., p. 113.

reported. However, a careful examination reveals at least three main types.

a. "Gradual Growth" Type.

The first may be termed the "gradual growth" type. Ames in his chapter "Normal Religious Development" takes as his thesis that the normal religious development of adolescence is one of gradual growth and that all those experiences usually spoken of as conversion are evidences of abnormalities.¹ He substantiates his position by citing a number of cases, notably that of Edward Everett Hale, in which persons have no consciousness of ever having passed through a religious crisis. One frequently meets individuals who have been reared in Christian homes and in contact with church schools and who testify that they have never experienced a crisis. They know of no time when they did not feel themselves to be children of God. Kupky speaks of continuous religious development being the ideal but also of its being rather rare.² Pratt says conversion may be so gradual as to be largely unconscious. Likewise Starbuck speaks of conversion as "a process in which the deeper instinctive life most strongly functions."⁴ Tracy discusses the two opposite poles of belief with regard to conversion and then states his own opinion by speaking of conversion as a natural process, emphasizing however that the "natural" and the "supernatural" need not be considered necessarily antithetically.⁵

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1. Cf. Ames, op. cit., pp. 236 - 256.
2. Cf. Kupky, op. cit., p. 61
3. Cf. Pratt, op. cit., pp. 124 - 125.
4. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 65.
5. Cf. Tracy: Op. cit., p. 198.

If the opinion of those who have made careful studies of religious phenomena is accepted and if any weight is given to the testimony of Christian people who say they have never experienced unrest and struggle, the investigator must conclude that one type of conversion is that which may be termed growth. This does not mean, however, that growth always proceeds in a perfectly even fashion in one's religious development any more than in any other phase of development.

b. "Sudden" or "Cataclysmic" Type.

Directly opposed to the type of conversion which may be called a process is the "sudden" or "cataclysmic" type. It is this type which some theologians and some denominations consider necessary for the "New Birth", and it is this type which churches have in mind when "revival" meetings are held and evangelists come for a special season. It is evidently this sudden type which Cole has in mind when she says that conversions are rare now except among a certain class of Negroes.¹ Many Christians, however, can give the exact day and hour when they became children of God and can relate vividly the agony of spirit preceding conversion. The "sudden" type must be recognized, therefore, as a fact. However, Hickman shows that even in conversions of the "cataclysmic" type there has usually been preparation; he suggests further that "unconscious cerebration is a strong factor."² Indeed, Hickman

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1. Cf. Cole, Luella, Psychology of Adolescence, p. 173.
2. Cf. Hickman, op. cit., p. 241.

feels that in early adolescence the conscious element is largely lacking while in the middle teens there is the greatest mixture of conscious and automatic factors.¹ Pratt takes a similar position when he says that sudden conversions are not nearly so common as people generally believe.² Nevertheless there are certainly individuals who consider their experiences to be sudden. Moxcey speaks to the point in a striking way by indicating that there are twenty-seven million American youths between the ages of five and twenty years who are under no religious instruction whatever.³ Obviously these persons are ignorant of Christian ideals or perhaps are antagonistic to them. Moxcey, therefore, concludes:

"If the Christian religion wins their attention and loyalty, they must be turned about in their lives, which turning is the original meaning of 'conversion'."⁴

Often one sees middle adolescents for whom conversion appears impossible unless brought about by some violent, catastrophic experience.

c. "Decision" Type.

Somewhere in between the two extreme types of conversion just suggested, there is yet a third type which may be styled "decision". This type frequently partakes of the nature of one or the other of the previously discussed types and is illustrated by the experiences of Paul⁵ and Luther.⁶

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1. Cf. Hickman, op cit., pp. 238, 239.
2. Cf. Pratt, op. cit., p. 153.
3. Cf. Moxcey, op. cit., p. 183.
4. Ibid., p. 183.
5. Cf. Hickman, op. cit., p. 238.
6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 218, 219.

For both these men conversion was a sort of shifting of loyalty from one center to another.¹ In Paul's case the shifting seemed to be sudden and violent, while in Luther's case more of a process is apparent. In other words, in all types of conversion there is evidence of preparation for the experience. Thus the inquirer attempts to discover in what this preparation consists and just what steps comprise it.

5. Steps in the Conversion Experience.

Practically all authors on the subject agree that the most important pre-conversion phenomenon is "the sense of sin". This is set forth by Pratt,² by Starbuck,³ by Ames,⁴ and by others. This sense of guilt is likely vague and perhaps wholly imaginary in girls, but in boys it is often a very real thing which is a natural result of yielding to some temptation. Another pre-conversion phenomenon is a sense of incompleteness or imperfection. Tracy says this consciousness of personal failure to realize an ideal is much more significant than consciousness of personal guilt in the sight of a holy God.⁵ Still again there is the fear of eternal punishment and of death. Regardless of the type of pre-conversion phenomena experienced and regardless of their intensity and duration, they are always followed by some point of

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1. Cf. Hickman, op. cit., pp. 234 - 238.
2. Cf. Pratt, op. cit., p. 113.
3. Cf. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 215.
4. Cf. Ames, op. cit., p. 259.
5. Cf. Tracy, op. cit., p. 202.

transition, which may be considered a second step in the whole experience. This, in turn, is followed by peace and joy, the third and final phase of the experience.¹ As a rule, the senior in a greater or lesser degree experiences these various phases of conversion and finds his peace and joy when, in his passion for personality, he responds to the living personality of Christ.

It is striking to note the naturalness with which adolescents in the various stages of the conversion experience turn to poetry. As Schillito explains, often a poem may help an individual to see the ugliness of sin and to appreciate the true blessedness of forgiveness.² Seniors in the midst of the conversion experience not only turn to the poetry of others but also, in many cases, actually write poems. Kupky gives decisive proof of this fact by including in his book numerous examples of senior literary productions.³ This relationship of poetry to the religious experience of the middle adolescent will be treated more fully in chapter three of the present study.

6. Summary.

The section of the present investigation treated above has revealed that conversion is a vital phase of the total religious experience of middle adolescents, that the chief causes of conversion (aside from the supernatural elements which may be

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1. Cf. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 83.

2. Shillito, Edward: Poetry and Prayer, pp. 55, 56.

3. Kupky, Oskar: The Religious Development of Adolescents, pp. 121, 122.

present) are found in the physiological and psychological nature of the adolescent, and that the experience may be of a gradual, sudden, or decision type. Finally, something of the relationship of poetry to the experience has been suggested.

D. The Place of Doubts in Religious Experience.

1. Age of Doubts.

Although conversion is generally considered the most important phase of the religious development of adolescents, doubts also are thought to be distinctly adolescent phenomena. As part of religious experience, they must be given at least brief consideration here. In spite of the fact that intellectual doubts are peculiarly adolescent phenomena, they do not belong to the whole period of adolescence nor in the same measure to girls and boys. Just as the period of "storm and stress" belongs especially to early adolescence and is felt more strongly by girls than boys, so the period of doubts belongs in the middle adolescent period, continues into the later period, and is experienced more keenly by boys than girls. Pratt explains that the period of doubts does not come earlier because it presupposes a rather high degree of intellectual development.¹ Tracy, too, speaks of this period as that age when conscious criticism begins.² Most students of adolescents seem to agree that the age of doubts begins about the

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1. Cf. Pratt, op. cit., p. 115.

2. Cf. Tracy, op. cit., p. 191.

fifteenth or sixteenth year and continues to about the twenty-first or twenty-second year. The investigator attempts to discover why this period of doubts should occur just at the year when most conversions occur. Perhaps a glimpse at the list of the chief objects of doubt will suggest causes for the occurrence of the phenomena largely in the middle adolescent period.

2. Objects of Doubt.

Hickman states that there is a tendency to doubt everything which has been taken for granted in childhood and more specially suggests those things which have been injected into the child's mind in dogmatic fashion.¹ Starbuck in a detailed study of the problem discovered that the most frequent objects of doubt and the order of frequency, in both sexes are: "the authority or inspiration of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, some attribute of God, His existence, and immortality."² This same investigator makes the interesting observation that men begin to doubt specific things and to work their way towards the most abstract and universal conceptions whereas women frequently take just the opposite course.³ As a matter of fact, Pratt says girls frequently doubt nothing in particular yet "everything".⁴

3. Causes of Doubts.

When an individual reads the list of the principal

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1. Cf. Hickman, op. cit., p. 206.
2. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 236.
3. Cr. Ibid., pp. 237, 238.
4. Cf. Pratt, op. cit., p. 116.

objects of doubt, he feels Hickman must be right in saying adolescents doubt those things which have been taken for granted or have been taught dogmatically. Surely the dogmatic teaching which many children receive makes a period of doubt in adolescence highly probable. Pratt indicates this when he says inner discourd is aroused "by some newly discovered fact which fails to harmonize with beliefs previously accepted and revered."¹ Another common cause of doubts is the study of science and philosophy.² Conscious of his new powers to reason, the senior takes great delight in questioning everything (nothing is too sacred to come under his scrutinizing examination) and in casting aside many old beliefs simply as an indication of intellectual independence. Tracy is of the opinion, however, that adolescent doubts are never a matter solely of the intellect but are tied up with emotional tension and physical upheaval.³ Starbuck likewise asserts that one has to go behind sociological and historical causes for doubts to the "psycho-physiological organism."⁴ Other miscellaneous causes might be suggested, such as, disease, unanswered prayer, and the natural skepticism of the age.

4. Value of Doubts.

Though the occurrence of doubts is to be deplored, one need not be overly alarmed; for this is a natural adolescent

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1. Cr. Pratt, op. cit., p. 116.
2. Cf. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 233.
3. Cf. Tracy, op. cit., p. 191.
4. Cf. Starbuck, op. cit., p. 234.

phenomenon. Moreover, when young people are given a sympathetic and wise leadership, they usually emerge from this trying time with a strong and sure faith. One great value is that religious ideas previously accepted by the adolescent are now made a vital part of his being. He makes a conscious effort to grasp and to incorporate into his own life those things which were given him as a child on external authority. As Starbuck says:

"Doubts is a means of calling up and utilizing latent possibilities of one's nature. If there is a boundless substratum of healthy life on which to draw, and if there is a high degree of earnestness in the desire to know truth in order to use, it, doubts are rather to be met and mastered than to be shunned."¹

One of the great aids in mastering doubts is poetry, which draws from seniors a ready and appreciate response.

Kupky, in commenting on the tendency of adolescents to express their experience with God in exalted, poetic language, declares that "even the experience of a break with God may take poetic form."² Not alone, however, through their own poetic efforts may seniors dispel their doubts; but more likely will the mastery of doubts come through the reading of the works of the great poetic minds which have met and conquered doubt triumphantly. It is evident, then, that poetry is related to religious experience, even that phase termed "intellectual doubts."

5. Summary.

In the light of the facts presented above, it is

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1. Starbuck, Edwin Diller, The Psychology of Religion, p. 243.
2. Kupky, Oskar: The Religious Development of Adolescents, p. 93.

apparent that intellectual doubts are a part of religious experience. The present study has shown that the fifteenth or sixteenth year is the time when doubting begins, that the things most frequently doubted are those which have been presented dogmatically, and that the chief causes for doubts lie in the "psycho-physiological organism."¹ Moreover, it has been pointed out that doubts, if mastered, have a real value and that poetry may help in the conquering of them.

E. The Nature of Worship in the Religious Experience of the Middle Adolescent.

1. Introduction.

Pasing from the study of conversion and doubts, two phenomena which belong in a peculiar sense to the adolescent, one comes to a third phase of the religious experience of the teenage, that of worship.² This experience, while not a phenomenon belonging preeminently to the senior, is, nevertheless, very important for him. One is led to question the reason for the significance of worship in the senior age. In other words, what is worship to the senior? and what are the psychological bases for the worship experience?

2. Definition of Worship.

In many respects, worship is to the adolescent what

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 24.

2. Whenever the term worship is used in this study, one of course has in mind Christian worship.

it is to any individual; that is to say, it is a subject-object relationship. The senior as subject feels himself to be in communication with God as object. As Weigle and Tweedy express it: worship is "our attempt to express ourselves to him (God) in ways we deem possible and appropriate. It seeks to communicate to him our attitudes, to establish intercourse with him, to enter into as direct fellowship with him as we can."¹ Underhill states that worship should be considered "in its deepest sense, as the response of man to the Eternal."² Verkuyl explains that worship always involves a recognition of the worth-ship of God.³ Cabot defines the term thus:

"Worship is the self-conscious part of the natural recovery of value in life, when it has grown stale. For worship is the conscious love of the Spirit of the Universe, and we need it regularly like food or sleep."⁴

One questions whether or not the first part of this definition is especially pertinent to adolescence, yet one feels that for the senior worship is a response to a definitely felt need. Often worship is thought of simply as a communion with God, a seeing Him face to face.⁵

3. The Senior at Worship.

Although definitions for worship could be set down

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1. Weigle, Luther Allen and Tweedy, Henry Hallam: Training the Devotional Life, pp. 262, 263.
2. Underhill, Evelyn: Worship, p. xi.
3. Cf. Verkuyl, Gerrit: Adolescent Worship, pp. 29, 30.
4. Cabot, Richard C.: What Men Live By, p. 273.
5. Cf. Shaver, Erwin L. and Stock, Harry T.: Training Young People in Worship, p. 21.

almost indefinitely, suffice it to say here that for the middle adolescent worship is an awareness of God, transcendent yet immanent, and an experience of His presence. It is that experience which causes a group of young people of the middle teens to stop suddenly in rapt silence as they reach the top of a hill after a steep climb and look off into the brilliant glow of a sunset sky. It is that experience which leads the senior, attending a Young People's Conference, in the sacred solemnness of a closing communion service to make full commitment of himself to his Lord. It is that experience which calls from the middle adolescent, kneeling alone in his bed room, the outpouring of his heart in confession for sins (real or imagined) and the plea for forgiveness and guidance. Furthermore, it is that experience of the presence of God that draws from the senior the ready, enthusiastic song of praise as he joins with other young people his own age in a beautiful, orderly, well-planned service of worship. The several experiences indicated above are only a few of the many occasions through which and by means of which the adolescent responds to the "impact of Eternity".¹ Underhill has expressed this thought very aptly when she says that all the ways by which individuals worship are "chapels of various types in the one Cathedral of the Spirit."² Although one finds the study of these "chapels" a fascinating reflection, one is interested

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1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 4.
2. Ibid., p. xii.

even more to discover what makes possible for the adolescent such diverse worship experience. What are the psychological bases for the worship of the middle adolescent?

4. Psychological Bases for the Worship of the Middle Adolescent.

Hartshorne discusses five attitudes or feelings which he says constitute fundamentally the abiding values of life and form the basis for worship. The five are reverence, gratitude, goodwill, faith, and loyalty.¹ The adolescent, having passed through two or three years of "storm and stress" (in which every expression of feeling was intensified), having become conscious not only of his own rebirth but of the awakening self in his friends, and having become for the time a vibrant emotional being, reaches the middle teens peculiarly equipped for the worship experience.² As Shaver and Stock say, "This very emotional expressiveness . . . is the raw material out of which worship is to be made."³ These authors further show that this emotional expressiveness is the groundwork of the fundamental attitudes listed above.⁴ The sense of dependence, which Verkuyl calls the main element in religion and a leading motive for prayer, the developing aesthetic sense,⁶ the effervescent appreciation for beauty in nature, in poetry, in music, and in all forms of art,⁷ provide "the roots of reverence

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1. Cf. Hartshorne, Hugh: *Worship in the Sunday School*, pp. 50-58.
2. Cf. Shaver and Stock, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 42.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
4. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 42 - 44.
5. Cf. Verkuyl, *op. cit.*, p. 35
6. Cf. Kupky, *op. cit.*, pp. 92, 93.
7. Cf. Starbuck, *op. cit.*, pp. 272, 273.

for God."¹ In the consciousness of forgiveness for confessed sins, in an awkwardly expressed "thanks", and in an eagerness to repay a gift or favor "in kind", one sees the basis for gratitude. Moreover, when one sees a senior hastily express his congratulations in an athletic contest,² make a generous response to a call for help for the underprivileged, and enthusiastically select a gift for the "best friends", one realizes that in such acts there lies the basis for the Church's emphasis on love and goodwill. Likewise it is evident that the senior's buoyant optimism, his joyous altruism, his utter confidence in his friends open the way for an active faith in God. Furthermore, in almost countless lesser loyalties, such as loyalty to family, friends, school, team, club, outstanding hero of the day, one finds the foundation for the supreme loyalty to Christ and His Kingdom.³ Thus it appears that Hartshorne is correct in naming as fundamental the five attitudes which he gives; for, as water gushes forth from five crystal springs and converges into one rushing stream, so from these five attitudes (reverence, gratitude, goodwill, faith, loyalty) the middle adolescent pours forth a surging torrent of praise, love and personal commitment to God. The worship experience of the senior is, therefore, the climax of his entire religious experience.

5. Summary.

The foregoing discussion has attempted to set forth

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1. Shaver and Stock, op. cit., p. 42.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 43.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 43.

the salient facts with reference to the nature of worship. Various definitions for worship have been given, the simplest and perhaps the most significant for seniors being "communion with God." Moreover, one has endeavored to show that the five fundamental attitudes given by Hartshorne¹ have their psychological basis in the adolescents nature. What worship may do for the middle adolescent and what its function and value may be in the adolescent's life will be discussed in the next chapter. The present treatment has indicated merely the striking way in which the senior, because of his very nature, is fitted for the worship experience.

F. General Summary.

One realizes, therefore, in how true a sense the youth of the middle teens because of his physiological, intellectual, emotional, and psychological development is ready for conversion (be it calm or cataclysmic), for a time of doubting, and for worship, which experiences taken together comprise religious experience for the senior.

Looking at the eager, earnest faces and into the clear, steadfast eyes of middle adolescents, one understands that here are individuals capable of a vital fellowship with their Father and one says with the writer of old, "also he hath set eternity in their heart."²

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 29.

2. Ecclesiastes 3:11a.

CHAPTER TWO

GROUP WORSHIP AND ITS FUNCTION FOR THE MIDDLE ADOLSCENT

CHAPTER TWO

GROUP WORSHIP AND ITS FUNCTION FOR THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT

A. Introduction.

In the preceding chapter an attempt was made to set forth the nature of worship, emphasizing particularly the psychological bases found in the adolescent's nature. Although it was indicated that a senior may, and indeed does, worship in multitudinous ways, the planned worship service was pointed out as one of the important ways through which teen age youths fellowship with God. The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of an investigation of corporate worship and especially of the function of such an experience in the life of the adolescent. The chapter will seek to answer the following questions: (1) What actually occurs when seniors come together in a place dedicated for worship and at a time specified for such an experience? (2) Through what sort of procedure or what type of service are they often led? (3) What are the characteristics of a worship service designed in the light of adolescent interests, capacities, and needs? (4) With what materials is the service constructed? (5) What values in adolescent life accrue from a well-planned and properly executed worship program? Such questions must be answered if one is to have a comprehensive view of the whole experience of corporate worship as it applies to seniors. An

understanding of the whole worship service, its aims, its materials, its values, must precede an analysis and evaluation of any one of the materials. What then really takes place by way of worship when seniors assemble in their department on Sunday morning or in a young people's meeting on Sunday evening?

B. Typical Senior Worship Situations.

The person who seeks to discover how seniors worship together soon finds that one of two situations is likely to exist. The one situation is illustrated by the following: the hour for Sunday School has arrived. Outside the church stands a group of high school youths, engaged in an enthusiastic discussion of the basket ball game held the night before in the church gymnasium. Suddenly someone notices the time,-- five minutes past the hour for the opening of the worship service. The group enters the church and makes its way to its own department, meeting in the gymnasium perhaps. Since all the back seats are taken, these late-comers make their way over uncarpeted floors to seats near the front of the room, where they join half-heartedly in the singing of a hymn or two. They listen with apathy to the reading of a few poorly selected verses from the Bible and sit quietly with open eyes as the Superintendent prays his way around the world without touching the vital interests and needs of the seniors themselves. When the service is over, the adolescent goes out into a world of reality.¹

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1. Cf. Athearn, Laura Armstrong: Christian Worship for American Youth, p. 3, for a corroborating report of such a service.

The worship service, for this may be so called, has meant nothing to the senior; he has seen nothing in the whole procedure that vitally affects his own life. He may have made a pretense of fellowship with his Creator; and, as Verkuyl says, "pretensions are poor practices between human acquaintances; in the presence of God they are folly."¹ Obviously, the picture just drawn is that of a negative situation; but, sadly enough, it is a picture of a condition which actually exists in too many churches.

In contrast, one may discover groups of young people worshipping in a definitely constructive and helpful fashion. Such adolescents are none the less enthusiastic than those described above; but, upon entering the place of worship, they yield to the atmosphere created by uplifting music, by light falling upon them through stained glass windows, by the symbolism of the decorative designs in the room, and by the reverence and purposefulness of the leader. They unite their hearts in praise to God through the singing of a few well-chosen hymns. They listen with interest as one of their number reads from the Word. They thoughtfully pray with the senior boy or girl who audibly expresses their adoration, their gratitude, and their petitions. They hear an appropriate poem read, are stirred by its message, and in the quiet of their own souls make a new dedication of themselves to their Lord. They come from the service, having had a genuine worship experience.² The

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1. Verkuyl, Gerrit: Adolescent Worship, p. 3.

2. Cf. Athearn, op. cit., p. 33, for the description of a similar worship situation.

days that follow are different because they have been with their Master and have learned to recognize His presence with them day by day. Worship and life are seen to be a unit.

Although the two pictures just sketched may be somewhat exaggerated and although most services of worship for adolescents may appear to have both positive and negative characteristics, the two worship situations do exist. The student of adolescent worship, therefore, seeks to discern those features in a service which make possible a definitely positive worship experience.

C. The Nature and Criteria of Adolescent Group Worship.

Brightman says that worship consists of reverent contemplation, revelation, communion, and fruition.¹ This means that a well-planned worship service must lead seniors first of all to seek "after God by deliberate attention to the Divine,"² in other words to come into His presence by means of "reverent contemplation". This may be considered a preparatory step in the worship experience and may be brought about by silence, Scripture, prayer, song, or the spoken word.³ If contemplation is the senior's seeking after God, then revelation is God's seeking to make Himself known to the senior. This revelation may come in various ways, through the inspired Word or through the inspired work of some artist, musician,

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1. Cf. Brightman, Edgar Sheffield: Religious Values, pp. 179 - 184.
2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 10.

or poet, "those who think God's thoughts after Him." A worship service vitally affecting the lives of middle adolescents provides not only for contemplation and revelation but also for communion, the latter being the means by which "the mind of God becomes known to the mind of man."¹ Moreover, when adolescents have genuine worship experiences, they achieve ultimately God-likeness in character, this achievement being the fruition of worship.² While every service may not contain in full measure the four characteristics just named, all four elements will be present at least to a degree wherever young people worship "in spirit and in truth."

Since the characteristics just discussed deal largely with the nature of the worship experience, it becomes necessary to consider briefly some of the more specific qualities of a good worship service. Shaver and Stock list reality as the first essential and, in so doing, reveal their knowledge of the adolescent's nature. On all sides, the senior is surrounded by a world of reality.³ Through his studies in school, through his recreational activities, and through his social contacts, he becomes increasingly familiar with a world of fact. If the worship service is not as real as the tangible, visible world, if it does not bring youths into contact with the Source of all reality,⁴ it not only is useless but also may be a definite influence for evil.

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1. Athearn, op. cit., p. 11.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 11.

3. Cf. Shaver, E. L. and Stock, H. T.: Training Young People in worship, pp. 59, 60.

4. Cf. Verkuy1, Gerrit: Adolescent Worship, p. 11.

Besides being real, a service for Christian young people should be both religious and Christian in character. Certainly if it is religious, it will relate individuals directly to God and to the God who is best known in Jesus Christ. In this sense it is Christian.

Furthermore, a well-planned worship program will have unity, a climax, dignity, beauty, intelligibility, and conciseness¹. These nine characteristics should be present in every service that seeks to meet the needs of seniors and attempts to lead them into a vital and constructive worship experience. What materials will go into the making of a service which will have all these essentials will be suggested in the section following.

D. An Analysis of Senior Worship Materials.

1. Music and Song.

From time immemorial, men coming together to worship have used certain rites, rituals, ceremonies, and materials; for true worship "must have embodiment, concrete expression."² One of the oldest mediums of expression and the one which Gates calls "the most necessary vehicle of expression"³ is that of music. He further states that music is the very "language of worship,"⁴ and one might well add, the universal language. Evelyn Underhill

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1. Cf. Shaver and Stock, op. cit., pp. 60 - 64. See also Gates, Sherwood: Youth At Worship, Christian Quest Materials, pp. 22 - 25.
2. Underhill, Evelyn: Worship, p. 12.
3. Gates, Sherwood, op. cit., p. 13.
4. Ibid., p. 13.

explains that much controversy about the artistic aspect of worship would cease if people recognized music and poetry as indications of the essential character of the worship experience.¹ Music not only "belongs" in a worship service but exerts a great influence in arousing emotions, purposes, and attitudes, in determining ideals, and in releasing spiritual power within the worshipper.² As the "language of the emotions," it is "pre-eminently the art for youth."³ Middle adolescents, therefore, who voice their praise in hymns of an accepted type find themselves united in a new way to one another and to God, and discover a quickening in their ideals and purposes and a stimulation to participate intelligently and enthusiastically in Christian enterprises.⁴

2. Prayer.

If it is fitting to speak of music as the "language of worship", it is equally appropriate to characterize prayer as the "heart of worship".⁵ Prayer is one of the most important materials available for worship, for through it an individual seeks to enter into fellowship with God. It is not only a means of fellowship but an actual communion with "the Holy Other", such communion being "the very essence of worship."⁶ Many are the forms

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1. Cf. Underhill, op. cit., p. 29.
2. Cf. Gates, op. cit., p. 13.
3. The Aims of Religious Education. The Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Religious Education Association - Boston - February 12-16, 1905, pp. 121, 122.
4. Cf. Gates, op. cit., p. 14.
5. Ibid., p. 17.
6. Cf. Shaver and Stock, op. cit., p. 107.

which prayer may take in a worship service; thus, on occasion, the adolescent may sing his prayer, may follow in prayer as another leads, may express aloud in a sentence his own yearnings, may join with his fellows in praying the "Lord's Prayer," may quote a Scripture verse as a prayer, or may be still and through the quiet come to know that God is.¹ Whatever the form, prayer "has greatest value for adolescents when it prepares them to meet the challenge of life and when its answers are wrought out in vigorous activity."² In other words, prayer is more than the means by which God reveals Himself to seniors; it is the means by which these seniors become related to God's purposes for their lives individually and to His plans for establishing the Kingdom.³

3. The Scriptures.

Still another type of material, long used in services of worship and considered by some a necessary part of every program, is the Scriptures. Verkuyl, in speaking of the value of the Bible for adolescents, states that "had the whole Bible been written by mature minds, it might nevertheless be useful for those younger;" for, he adds, "because of the forward look and the sense of ultimate victory, our best-known sacred writings are essentially youth literature."⁴ Scripture passages to be used in services for the high school age should be carefully chosen and presented if they are

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1. Cf. Shaver and Stock, op. cit., pp. 107 - 115.
2. Gates, op. cit., p. 17.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 17, 18.
4. Verkuyl, Gerrit: Adolescent Worship, pp. 152, 153.

to relate helpfully to the experiences, problems, and needs of the adolescents.¹ Furthermore, the Scriptures, when rightly used, render a two-fold service to youths, that of being a mirror for their souls and a window toward heaven.² Adolescents are inclined to introspection; and, if they look within through the Scriptures, they see themselves not only as sinners but as potential children of God. Because of the sense of sin with which many teen age youths are burdened, the Word is most important in worship as a means of revealing Christ who lived the sinless life and died that young people might grow like Him.

"The value of God's Word, then, is not merely in the words we learn to love, but more yet in the principles of life that lie underneath the words. The use of the Bible as worship material implies the mastering of certain phrases and passages, . . . the tasting of great spiritual principles . . ."³

More than this, it implies the inculcation of the principles in daily life.

4. Poetry.

Although mankind in moments of great emotional stress has tended to express himself rhythmically, and although the Scriptures (from the stirring poem of Creation to the glorious Hallelujahs of The Revelation) are filled with poetry of the most superb type, only in recent times have individuals begun to consider poetry as one of the significant worship materials. Underhill affirms that

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1. Cf. Gates, Sherwood: Youth At Worship, Christian Quest Materials, p. 19.
2. Cf. Verkuy, op. cit., p. 153.
3. Ibid., p. 154.

rhythmic speech is a great stimulant to corporate worship and adds that

"even the great liturgic value of the psalter does not entirely depend on the spiritual truths which the psalmists convey: but at least to some extent on that peculiar quality in poetry which tends to arouse and liberate the transcendental sense."¹

As was noted in the foregoing analysis of adolescents, their capacity for feeling, for imagination, and for reality, make them equipped by nature to respond instantly and intelligently to great poetry as it is presented in the worship service. Alfred Noyes explains that there are certain spiritual faculties in the young which enable them to apprehend spiritual beauty and spiritual truth in a way not possible to older individuals. He further states that Plato and Wordsworth knew this and that "a greater than they said, 'Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth . . .'" Moreover, Noyes reminds one that Goethe spoke of the sacraments as "the visible symbols of the Divine", and thus, as the highest part of religion;² and this English poet adds "art and literature at their highest are themselves sacramental in that they reveal the infinite through finite symbols and images."³ Since poetry in a peculiar sense is able to reveal the infinite, and since it is the chief function of worship to manifest the Infinite God, the appropriateness of poetry in a worship service is at once apparent. One of the very significant materials, therefore, is poetry, which,

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1. Underhill: Worship, p. 33.

2. Cf. Noyes, Alfred in The Obligation of Universities to the Social Order, p. 374.

3. Ibid., p. 375.

because of its highly imaginative quality, can "weave a garment for God."¹ Because of the importance of poetry, and because the present study is concerned preeminently with its value in the worship experience, the chapter to follow will be given to a more detailed treatment of this subject.

5. Other Worship Materials.

In addition to the important materials discussed above, there are yet other materials which may contribute largely to the worship experience. A person need hardly comment on the story and talk, for their value has long been recognized and they have served again and again as means of making the theme of a service concrete.² Still another material is that of art, which, in the form of symbols, paintings, and sculpture, may give meaning and reality to emotions and ideals and may intensify the tendency of youth to reach out after and to respond to the beautiful.³ Furthermore, there is the element which among all peoples has always been a part of genuine worship, namely, the offering. Not only does the offering help to objectify and make real emotions, attitudes, and purposes, but also it arouses within the worshipper a sense of fellowship with God, of cooperation with Him in building His Kingdom. Essentially, the offering makes the service of worship psychologically complete.⁴

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1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 30.
2. Cf. Gates, op. cit., p. 20.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 21.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 21.

A survey of worship materials convinces one that many and varied are the means by which the soul experiences the presence of a holy God and communes with Him. It should be understood that perhaps in no single service would all the available materials actually be used, but at various times all may furnish to adolescents the opportunity of pouring out their hearts in adoration. When materials are used effectively and when a service has all the essential characteristics, results in the lives of worshippers do appear. Certain of these results will now be considered.

E. Values of Group Worship to Middle Adolescents.

Verkuy1, in speaking of worship achievements, raises the following questions: "Are we justified in expecting results when we worship? If so, what kind? If results are spiritual chiefly, how soon may they be realized?"¹ Only an affirmative answer can be given to the first question, for everywhere there are individuals who slowly but increasingly reveal the likeness of God, and testify to the help they have received through worship.² Such individuals bear out the truth of Paul's statement:

"But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."³

This transformation into the likeness of God is possible for young people as well as for adults, as will be testified by leaders who

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1. Verkuy1, op. cit., p. 188.
2. Ibid., p. 189.
3. II. Cor. 3 : 18.

have had experiences with seniors in the capacity of teacher, counselor, or friend. Those who know the teen age best and who understand the real nature of worship agree that a genuine experience with God does bring forth fruit in the lives of the worshippers though the development of such spiritual fruit may be, and often is, a slow process. Apparently then, Verkuyl is right in suggesting that results from group worship may be expected. But what are these results?

The first great value of worship, notably important because it is basic, is "the repeated sharing of communion with the Father."¹ In discussing this point, Shaver and Stock draw a beautiful analogy to human friendship and show that just as the rich companionship with worthy friends is its own justification, so fellowship with the Father is of inestimable worth.² Seneker likewise emphasizes the fact that the first value of worship is that it awakens and quickens the consciousness of the individual to the realization of the presence of God. He adds, moreover, that the remarkable thing about the experience is that the worshipper feels himself "encouraged and enabled to draw near" and to commune with the Father.³ If nothing resulted from worship other than that for a few moments each week adolescents were led into the presence of their Maker, who was shown to be both transcendent and

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1. Shaver, E. L. and Stock, H. T.: Training Young People in Worship, p. 19.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 18, 19.
3. Cf. Seneker, James Seehorn, in Lotz, P. Henry and Crawford, L. W., Editors: Studies in Religious Education, pp. 102, 103.

immanent, if only for a brief time youths were enabled to look into the Divine Face and see a true Friend and companion, — if worship meant only this — it would still be eminently worthwhile. As Underhill says, the perfection of worship is "getting to the place where only God matters."¹ The chief function, and therefore the primary value, of worship is to bring seniors to this place and so to teach them to love the Father through the repeated experience of being in His presence that they will acclaim Him their All in All in all their experience.

This communion which is the basic value of worship is not a means to an end, yet inevitably it bears fruit in the life of the worshipper.² The second value of worship, therefore, is that "it helps to fashion character according to the will of God."³ If a great human affection can prove a restraining influence, an "expulsive power", and a creative instrumentality, how much more will friendship with the Son of God prove a mighty force in molding the character of a middle adolescent.⁴ Specific manifestations of the fashioning of character in harmony with spiritual values may be varied, depending on the individual nature and needs of the senior. An exhaustive treatment of the extrinsic values of the worship experience can not be given, therefore, though some of the more salient results will be presented.

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1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 5.
2. Cf. Athearn, Laura Armstrong: Christian Worship for American Youth, p. 25.
3. Shaver and Stock, op. cit., p. 19.
4. Ibid., p. 19.

Muriel Lester has made a helpful study of the results of worship and has discovered a number of values which apply particularly to adolescents. For instance, she declares that "worship releases us from the domination of self."¹ Teen-age youths, having just come into a new consciousness of the "ego" and having begun to feel their own importance as individual personalities, need to be helped to an understanding and a control of the "self". The person who reaches adulthood in bondage to self suffers incomparable torture, as is attested by the current writings of psychiatrists.² It is the function of worship to keep young people from this suffering by releasing them from the domination of self and by integrating and unifying all their motives, purposes, ideals and habits.³ This unification of life which dynamic worship effects is of particular significance when one recalls that middle adolescents are often "a bundle of conflicting emotions."⁴ The organization of the personality that results from fellowship with God thus saves the youth from the slavery of self and gives to him an inner peace, adequate personality integration.⁵

Not only does worship free from self but also it releases from the domination of others.⁶ Anyone who has witnessed

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1. Lester, Muriel: Why Worship? p. 20.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 20. See also Sadler, William S. and Sadler, Lena K.: Piloting Modern Youth, pp. 34 - 38.
3. Cf. Seneker in Studies in Religious Education, op. cit., p. 108.
4. Cf. Shaver and Stock, op. cit., p. 22. See also Ante, p. 14, 29.
5. Cf. Shaver and Stock, op. cit., p. 29.
6. Cf. Lester, op. cit., p. 29.

the speed with which any new fad or fashion sweeps through a high school realizes how sensitive adolescents are to the opinions of others. It is strikingly paradoxical that the very age that is especially self-centered is the age of the most acute awareness of others. Through worship, however, seniors may become increasingly sensitive to the mind and will of God and so less slavishly submissive to the opinions of others.

Furthermore, vital worship is, according to Underhill, "creative and redemptive" because "it wakes up and liberates that 'seed' of supernatural life, in virtue of which we are spiritual beings."¹ Miss Lester explains that the inhibition of the creative instinct is one of the worst indictments against the present social system.² This sense of inhibition is often markedly strong in youths of the middle adolescent age who find their visions and ambitions far outstripping their powers to perform. Worship, however, enables seniors to understand that fellowship with God makes "every circumstance and every moment rich in creative opportunity."³ Thus life is seen "whole".⁴ As adolescents, worshipping in a group, align their purposes with the purposes of God, they are released to "otherwise only half-discovered . . . possibilities."⁵ They are free to create in and for the Kingdom of God.

Although all the values discussed above are important

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1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 18.

2. Cf. Lester, op. cit., p. 48.

3. Ibid., p. 50.

4. Cf. Seneker in Studies in Religious Education, op. cit., p. 103.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 103.

for adolescents, there remains yet another value of much consequence, a sense of mission. The warning has been given that "it is a serious mistake to accentuate the emotional appeal so as to induce sudden decisions which will almost certainly weaken in later moments of thoughtfulness."¹ The authors who make this statement, however, go on to add that "seasons of worship are times when valiant leaders are recruited."² It is evident then that worship results not only in the growth of Christ-like character in the individual but, in a very true sense, in the growth of the Kingdom of God on earth.

F. Summary.

In spite of the fact that almost innumerable specific values of group worship could be given, the more general ones discussed above show clearly the real import of the worship experience. The two values which are of greatest prominence and which include all the others are: (1) the repeated fellowship of the Father and (2) the shaping of character "unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of Christ."³ Nevertheless, one needs to be reminded that these values come only from that worship experience which has contemplation, revelation, communion, and fruition. Moreover, the above discussion has indicated that a worship service should have among other qualities the essential characteristics of reality and intelligibility, the latter implying a selection of materials

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1. Shaver and Stock, op. cit., p. 21.
2. Ibid. p. 21.
3. Eph. 4:13b.

on the basis of adolescent interests, needs, possible future responsibilities and on the basis of world needs.¹ Furthermore, it has been pointed out that there is a wide variety of materials available, among which the more important are music, prayer, the Scriptures, and poetry. The significance of poetry in a worship service has already been suggested. It will be the purpose of the next chapter to discuss somewhat in detail the nature of poetry and its place in religious experience.

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1. Cf. Shaver and Stock, op. cit., pp. 82, 83.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE OF POETRY AND ITS FUNCTION IN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER THREE

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A. Introduction.

Chapter one of the present study set forth that which constitutes the religious experience of the middle adolescent and was followed in chapter two by a detailed consideration of group worship as one phase of that experience. This consideration revealed that a variety of materials may be used in a worship service and that such materials, when effectively used, bear fruit in the lives of worshippers. From this foundational investigation, one comes now to the pivotal point about which the present study turns, an inquiry into the nature of poetry and its function in religious experience.

Poetry is thus singled out from other worship materials not because it is the only means by which seniors worship nor because it is necessarily the most important means but because it is one of the ways by which they worship and is the chief concern of the present investigation. That poetry is significant in group worship has been indicated. It will be the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to show further why it is important and how it functions in religious experience. Both the importance of poetry and its function are best understood by exploring its nature,

and it is this task with which the investigator must deal first. Furthermore, it is clear that in this discussion poetry is being considered in its relationship to the adolescent in worship.

Although wide reading has been done in the vast field of poetry, only such facts as are pertinent to the present problem will be presented. Obviously the approach to poetry that seeks to evaluate it as a literary type is different from that which seeks to evaluate it as worship material. It is the latter approach which the present chapter attempts to make; and, in so doing, the chapter will answer the following question: (1) Of what does the nature of poetry consist? (2) What is there in the nature of poetry that makes it particularly appropriate for middle adolescents? (3) What are its chief values in the religious experience of middle adolescents?

B. Definition of Poetry.

Before one seeks to investigate the value of poetry in religious experience, he finds it necessary to decide what is meant by the term poetry. The word is so broad in its scope that allows many definitions; and, indeed, even among literary authorities there is great divergence of opinion as to the correct meaning of it. Neihardt goes back to the Greek word meaning "to bring to pass, to bring about, to creat" and says a thing is poetic if it indicates that the creator during his mood of production "lost his habitual self and his familiar standardized world in a

flash of the wider regard."¹ This definition is much like that given by Phillips Brooks in one of his famous lectures. He, too, takes into consideration the derivation of the word and defines the poet as "the man who makes something" and poetry as "the great making-power."² In the same address he states that "poetry is the sense of beauty", and adds, "this poet-power, this creator-power of making a world of beauty in the soul out of the beauty of the earth outside,"³ is one of the values of poetry. In thus defining the term, Brooks touches vitally upon one of the important functions of poetry which will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

Another significant definition of poetry is that given by Amy Lowell when she says, "It is the height and quintessence of emotion, of every sort of emotion. But it is always somebody feeling something at white heat . . ."⁴ This definition is helpful because of the light it throws on the nature of poetry. Still another description of the term, like the one given above, indicates something of the nature of poetry and declares it "is an art whose medium is spoken language, language used in such a fashion that the sound is of very great importance as well as the sense."⁵

A comprehensive answer to the question "What is

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1. Neihardt, John G.: Poetic Values - Their Reality and Our Need of Them, pp. 98, 99.
2. Brooks, Phillips: Essays and Addresses, p. 238.
3. Ibid., p. 240.
4. Lowell, Amy: Poetry and Poets, p. 4.
5. Chilton, Eleanor Carroll and Agar, Herbert: The Garment of praise - The necessity for Poetry, p. 8.

poetry?" is given by Stedman, who, beginning with Plato, sets down definitions stated by various individuals in all periods of history.¹ These definitions reveal a striking variation in point of emphasis. Stedman then gives his own definition:

"Poetry is rhythmical, imaginative language, expressing the invention, taste, thought, passion, and insight of the human soul."²

The present study will proceed on the basis of this latter definition, which not only defines but also epitomizes the whole nature of poetry and in a sense synthesizes all the definitions. In the section that immediately follows a more detailed analysis of its nature will be presented.

C. The Nature of Poetry in Relation to the Religious Nature of Middle Adolescents.

1. The Element of Emotion in Poetry.

More than one of the definitions given above pointed out the indispensability of emotion in poetry. This opinion is held likewise by Prescott, who, in emphasizing the necessity for reading poetry aloud, affirms that "behind the voice there must first be poetic processes - of feeling and imagination - in the reader's mind."³ Moreover, he declares that "poetic thought is always emotional" and that a poem is understood only when the reader feels his way into the mind of the poet.⁴ It appears, then, that the

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1. Cf. Stedman, Edmund Clarence: The Nature and Elements of Poetry, pp. 5 - 27.
2. Ibid., p. 44.
3. Prescott, Frederick Clarke: Poetry and Myth, p. 2.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 3.

empathetic regard is necessary for the appreciation of a poem as well as for its creation.¹ Still further emphasis is given the feeling element by Chilton who speaks of poetic words being

"so inextricably provoked by and provocative of emotion and thought, all rising together from the depths of experience, that it would be impossible for any one, even the poet who uttered them, to say which preceded which, . . ."²

Such statements as these just cited are corroborated further by Stedman's assertion that "feeling is the excitant of genuine poetry" and that "the poet's nature, 'all touch, all eye, all ear', exalted to a creative pitch, becomes emotional."³ Elsewhere this writer speaks of poetry as "uttered emotion" and of the impassioned tone as a mark of really great poetry.⁴ It is evident that there is rather widespread agreement on the importance of the emotional or feeling element, inherent in the very nature of poetry.

It is this feeling quality which makes poetry appeal so strongly to adolescents. Reference has been made previously in the present study to the adolescent's emotional development and to the significance of this in his religious experience.⁵ With his enlarged capacity to feel and to feel deeply, the senior responds enthusiastically to a lyric that stirs within him a sense of fellowship with God and for him "makes the whole world kin."⁶ "This quickening of the senses and perceptions not to airy nothings, but

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1. Cf. Neihardt, op. cit., pp. 96 - 98.
2. Chilton, op. cit., p. 45.
3. Stedman, op. cit., p. 49.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 262.
5. See ante, p. 14.
6. Cf. Stedman, op. cit., p. 264.

to miraculous realities . . ."¹ is the very thing that makes poetry valuable in worship for teen age youth. No one will say religious experience, even that phase called worship, is all feeling; yet all students of the psychology of religion aver that the emotional element looms large, particularly in the experience of the middle adolescent.² Thus through the use of poetry in a worship service, ideas and ideals are made comprehensible "in terms of human feeling and interest;" and the young person comes from such an experience charged with spiritual power.³ It is evident that emotion is basic not only to the nature of poetry but also to its appeal to the senior and to its effectiveness as a means of worship.

2. The Element of Imagination in Poetry.

Closely associated with emotion in poetic creation and in its significance as a fundamental element of poetry is imagination. This fact is graphically expressed by Stedman: ". . . whether passion or imagination be first aroused, they speed together like the wind-sired horses of Achilles."⁴ This same author also remarks: "The sovereign of the arts is the imagination, by whose aid man makes every leap forward."⁵ The imaginative power of the poet enables him to see what others do not see and to

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1. Noyes, Alfred in *The Obligation of Universities to the Social Order*, p. 354.
2. Cf. Hickman, Frank S.: *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, pp. 211, 212.
3. Cf. Noyes, op. cit., p. 351.
4. Stedman, op. cit., p. 262.
5. Ibid., p. 5.

hear what others do not hear.

"Other men have length and height, but he has also depth; and that new world of the imagination through the mystery of the poem becomes strangely near and intimate to the reader,"

as Shillito affirms.¹ Moreover, Prescott declares that imagination is a "sine qua non, and its presence or absence a true test of poetry."² In addition to this, he calls it the "eye of the mind" by means of which the poet is gifted with a kind of "second sight" and sees, through all the commonplaceness of routine existence, an ideal life.³ This element of imagination, inseparably bound up in the nature of poetry, may be of two types: (1) the reproductive, that recalls to the mind actual images; and (2) the productive, that remakes and combines actual images so as to form new ones, ideal ones.⁴ In any case, imagination is a "seeing into" things and is a vital quality in true poetry.

Here again, as with emotion, is an element that finds its counterpart deeply ingrained in the adolescent's nature. Although it is customary to think of childhood as the imaginative time of life, Tracy says that "at no other time in life does it (imagination) show such buoyancy and such virility, as in the period of adolescence."⁵ This exuberance and fertility of imagination is most conspicuous in the middle adolescent period,

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1. Shillito, Edward: Poetry and Prayer, p. 8.
2. Prescott, Frederick Clarke: The Poetic Mind, p. 140.
3. Cf. Prescott, Frederick Clarke: The Poetic Mind, p. 139. See also Stedman: op. cit., pp. 229 - 231.
4. Cf. Prescott: Ibid., p. 145. See also Neihardt, op. cit., pp. 97, 98.
5. Tracy, Frederick: The Psychology of Adolescence, p. 90.

during which time the imagery of the senior gradually becomes more and more rational and intelligible.¹ If Chilton is right in saying "a man can only view life spiritually in so far as his intellect and his imagination and his emotions are harmonious allies",² then truly poetry, through the power of its inherent nature, can be a dynamic force in worship; for, combining as it does intellect, imagination, and emotion, it reaches the senior's inner being and enables him to "view life spiritually."³ Such a viewing of life is, in a sense, the consummation of worship. It is clear, therefore, that the imaginative quality of poetry is one of the chief causes for the adolescent's interest in verse and one of the most telling reasons for its value in worship.

It must be understood, however, that an imaginative poem is not the result of some individual's vagrant fancies and eccentric day dreams. On the contrary, the imaginative power of the literary artist is in no way opposed to reality. Rather, as was shown above, the poet is the one who sees into the heart of common, every day things and, seeing truthfully as well as imaginatively, enables others to see aright. Truth, then, is a third and essential element of genuine poetry.

3. The Element of Truth in Poetry.

Amy Lowell in speaking of the indispensables of poetry

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1. Tracy, op. cit., pp. 90, 91.

2. Cf. Chilton, Eleanor Carroll and Agar, Herbert: The Garment of Praise - The necessity for Poetry, p. 13.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 13.

says, "The true test of poetry is sincerity and vitality It is nothing in the world but the soul of a man as it really is."¹ And again, "Every form is proper to poetry so long as it is the sincere expression of a man's thought."² What this writer is really saying is that poetry must be true. Can it be true and imaginative at the same time? asks the investigator. Chilton answers this question conclusively by showing that poets have always meant by reality not the world of the matter-of-fact, not the world with its pseudo-scientific data, proved today and disproved tomorrow, but the world of the spirit, the perdurable world of the eternal verities.³ Indeed, as Chilton declares:

"Poetry affirms that reality and truth are to be found in the sphere of the ideal, of the creative imagination, and that there is not only no necessity, but no excuse, for confining ourselves to the realm of physical fact."⁴

Miss Chilton does not intend to suggest that the poet is hostile to scientific truth, as she clearly indicates in her subsequent discussion of the matter.⁵ What she does emphasize, however, is that the poet with his love of the visible world and with his power to imagine creatively can get at the truth of the real and the unseen in a way not possible to the mere scientist.⁶ This same idea is expressed by Prescott, who shows that the scientist succeeds rather than precedes the poet.⁷ Moreover, this writer

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1. Lowell, Amy: Poetry and Poets, p. 6.
2. Ibid., p. 7.
3. Cf. Chilton and Agar, op. cit., p. 3.
4. Ibid., p. 4.
5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 4 - 6.
6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 6 - 8.
7. Cf. Prescott: The Poetic Mind, p. 84.

explains that the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Hindoos, the saints of the Middle Ages, and other contemplative peoples grasped truth and contributed to the world a great store of religious knowledge which later was systematized as theology.¹ As Prescott suggests, this is the usual process. The poet, by means of imagination, a kind of intuition, and revelation, sees into things and seizes upon the truth therein. Later comes the scientist who examines and tests all things and who finally pronounces as true this or that thing; but all the time the poet knows what is true.² Poetic truth, however, must not be confused with cold scientific facts, for the truth of every art is that "of nature's capabilities, seen by man's imagination, captured by the human hand, expressed and illumined when our Creator, intrusting his own want to us, bids us test its power ourselves."³ The poet of imagination, therefore, "reads without effort the truth of things," invisible things perhaps but none the less real.⁴

This content of truth in poetry, as well as the emotional and imaginative content, calls forth from middle adolescents an immediate response. Quick to discern hypocrisy, the senior turns instantly from any work of art that to him seems to give a distorted view of life or to present only half-truths; but with equal alacrity he receives that poem which bears the mark of sincerity.

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1. Cf. Prescott: *The Poetic Mind*, p. 83.

2. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 82 - 85.

3. Stedman, Edmund Clarence: *The Nature and Elements of Poetry*, p. 202.

4. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 188, 189.

When a poet, in earnestness of spirit and in faithfulness to his art, gives a true transcript of life and nature as he sees them, he makes it possible for teen age youths to perceive the reality of the things of the spirit. Poetry of this type is of inestimable value in the religious experience of adolescents.

Though truth, imagination, and emotion have been discussed as separate elements of poetry, they are closely bound together and are a part of the very nature of poetry. Still another quality, closely associated with the three elements treated above and particularly joined to truth, is beauty.

4. The Element of Beauty in Poetry.

Such is the affinity of truth and beauty that some authors use the terms synonymously. Keats, for instance, in lines familiar to all, says: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, . . ."¹ Emerson, likewise, feels the two are inseparably united. In his poem "Each and All", he tells of going out to seek truth:

"I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;
I leave it behind with the games of youth."²

From his search, however, a search that takes him forth into nature, he is led finally to say:

"Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole."³

So, he, like Keats, finds beauty and truth cannot be dissociated.

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1. Keats, John: "Ode on a Grecian Urn".
2. Emerson, Ralph Waldo: "Each and All".
3. Ibid.

On the necessity of beauty in poetry, Poe speaks with great conviction when he defines poetry as "the rhythmic creation of beauty."¹

So important does Stedman consider beauty that he discusses it first in his treatment of the various elements. Furthermore, he makes the striking statement that "if concrete beauty is not the greatest thing in poetry it is the one indispensable . . ."² If he is correct, one inquires then as to what is meant by poetic beauty. Stedman gives a helpful treatment of this subject, mentioning first "beauty of construction."³ What this term implies is best indicated by the epigram: "It (the poem) is read with the ear; it is written with the voice; it is heard with the eye."⁴ He further characterizes poetic beauty by the following words: simplicity, naturalness, correct selection and use of details, quality, charm, and evanescence.⁵ With all these, there is yet one needful thing; for, says Stedman,

"the vox humana must be heard . . . the most refined and artistic verse is cold and forceless without it. A soulless poem is a stained-glass window with the light shining on and not through."⁶

One may agree that beauty of the type described above is fundamental to the nature of poetry but may hesitate to

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1. Poe, Edgar Allan in Good Reading for High Schools - American Writers - , Tom Peete Cross, Reed Smith, and Elmer C. Stauffer, Editors, p. 549.
2. Cf. Stedman, op. cit., pp. 167, 168.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 174.
4. Ibid., p. 174.
5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 173 - 185.
6. Ibid., p. 178.

admit that this beauty has anything to do with the appeal of the poem to a youth. Do adolescents have an appreciation for beauty? Previously in this investigation, the aesthetic development of the adolescent has been considered.¹ This study revealed that teenage youths had not only a genuine appreciation for all beautiful forms of nature and art but also a yearning for ideal beauty. Poetry, therefore, that embodies even a partial and limited expression of perfect beauty meets one of the signal needs in the senior's life. In addition to this, such poetry may be of eminent value in the religious experience of young people, especially in worship; for it may enable them to see in Christ all excellences, even perfect beauty.

5. The Element of Rhythm in Poetry.

One other element, essential to the nature of poetry, must be considered, namely, rhythm. This is so widely recognized as a part of poetry and so generally understood that it need only be treated briefly here. Prescott explains that poetic passion is a form of energy and that "apparently all energy . . . comes not constantly, but in recurrent movements, or waves, - in other words, rhythmically."² He further states that strong and unrestrained emotion inevitably expresses itself rhythmically and that poetry, as an emotional expression, thus has rhythm.³ Moreover, this author

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1. See ante, pp. 11, 29. Cf. Tracy, Frederick: *The Psychology of Adolescence*, p. 159.
2. Prescott, Frederick Clarke: *The Poetic Mind*, p. 241.
3. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 241; Prescott: *Poetry and Myth*, p. 5.

avows that it is one of the miracles of language that both a writer's thought and his feeling can be carried - perhaps across many centuries - and can arouse similar thoughts and feelings within the reader.¹ The real poet, according to Stedman, is the one, who is born with this gift of rhythm;² but, as Prescott suggests, poets (except such strongly individual ones as Whitman) restrain and modify this natural gift through "regard for tradition and conventions of the poetic style."³ Nevertheless, however modified and restrained, rhythm is always present in real poetry.

For all the elements discussed above, some relationship to the adolescent's nature has been pointed out and in each case emphasis has been placed on the ability of poetry to function in religious experience. At this point, one may ask: Is the rhythm of a poem in any way responsible for the senior's response to verse? Is there any congruity between rhythm and worship? Affirmative answers must be given to both these questions. The middle adolescent with his feelings at concert pitch responds with all the full harmony of his being to the vibrant rhythmic touch of poetry. If a poem carries a spiritual tone, and Chilton says poetry is the true language of the spirit,⁴ then obviously it has a real value in religious experience. Especially in worship is the rhythmic quality of poetry significant. Underhill points out the

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1. Cf. Prescott: *The Poetic Mind*, p. 241.

2. Cf. Stedman, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

3. Prescott, *op. cit.*, pp. 241, 242.

4. Cf. Chilton, Eleanor Carroll and Agar, Herbert: *The Garment of Praise, The Necessity For Poetry*, p. 55.

necessity for man's religious action being rhythmic¹ and adds that

"ritual weaves speech, gesture, rhythm and agreed ceremonial into the worshipping action of man; and thus at its best can unite his physical, mental, and emotional being in a single response to the Unseen."²

So poetry, uniting rhythm, beauty, truth, imagination, and emotion touches all the adolescent's tentacles of awareness and thus helps the senior to see in all things and through all things the permanent spiritual values.

If, then, the nature of poetry is in part that which has been suggested above, one can say with Chilton:

"I believe that poetry is the highest possible expression of the individual soul in its attempt to live fully, intensely and with integrity in a perplexing world; that ideally it is an effort to phrase mysteries which have never yet been phrased so exactly that our reason may embrace them, and that any effort to do this, however, inadequate, is closer to real poetry than any facile success in the superficial subjects, however clever or momentarily beguiling."³

How such poetry may function in religious experience must now be indicated.

D. The Functions of Poetry in Religious Experience.

In the investigation of the nature of poetry presented above, a number of functional values were noted. The purpose of this section is to treat somewhat more in detail certain of these. No attempt will be made to consider all the possible functions of poetry in religious experience. However, the principal

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1. Cf. Underhill, Evelyn, *Worship*, p. 23.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

3. Chilton, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

ones will be dealt with, particularly those of greatest significance to adolescents. It is well at the outset to let the senior speak for himself concerning values he finds in poetry. The "English Journal" gives the results of a questionnaire which tested groups of high school students to determine their attitudes toward poetry. This testing proved conclusively that seniors do like poetry. Moreover, such statements as the following were made by these young people:

"Poetry often expresses my own ideas of life and human nature."

"Poetry sets me thinking about conditions."

"Poetry broadens my views of life."

"Nature poems appeal to me."

And, adds the investigator who reported these findings, through poetry these

"young readers may be led into a fuller understanding of human relationships and a deeper love for beauty in many forms. So may they receive their birthright of thought, of imagination, and of speech; and so may they, perhaps, learn the joy of creation."¹

While such statements as these do not expressly reveal the value of poetry in religious experience, they are at least suggestive and helpful; for certainly poetry could have little or no value for adolescents if it were disliked by them. Furthermore, the young person who wrote that "nature poems appeal to me" touched upon one of the values of definite religious significance.

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1. Dithridge, Rachel L.: "Do High School Students Like Modern Poetry?" in English Journal, October, 1934, pp. 664 - 670.

1. To reveal God in Nature.

Helping adolescents to see God in nature is one of the functions of poetry and is so recognized by Phillips Brooks, who says there is no doubt but that Christian poetry has opened man's eyes to nature. Once, Brooks declares, nature "was pretty, now she is holy."¹ One of the remarkable powers of poetry is that, through showing the holiness of nature's beauty, it may lead one to see anew the radiant beauty of the Holy Creator. This thought is strikingly expressed by Shillito in the following words:

"The man who ends his reading of Job anywhere but at the feet of God, has not mastered its meaning, or heard its call. And if the poets of the Old and New Testaments do this with supreme power, there must be something of the same priestly office, exercised by all poets, who take us with them through the fields of the earth."²

The nature lyrics of the Psalms, presenting as they do a God not only of beauty but also of power, majesty, and transcendence, are superb worship materials. Poetry, then, may reveal to young people nature as it really is and in so doing may enlarge and enrich the concept of God.

2. To Provide a "Wider Awareness".

Of greater significance for the adolescent than the revealing of nature is that function of poetry which expands his horizon. The teen-age youth, inclined toward introspection and self-consciousness, needs poetry, the technique of which, like the

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1. Brooks, Phillips: Essays and Addresses, p. 244.
2. Shillito, Edward: Poetry and Prayer, p. 38.

technique of all the arts, is "to set the general above the particular, to emphasize the larger relations, to merge the heedful self in the whole."¹ Neihardt further explains that all great poetry is generic, that the sense of individuality dies out, and that the universal is substituted for the particular.² Alfred Noyes voices the same opinion when he affirms that the arts and literature "help us to reintegrate our world after the specialist has dissected it."³ Moreover, he declares that the world of literature is a world where higher values take their proper place, where, (after the analyses of science) "the spirit begins once more to see all things in one," a world "resting on that Being whom 'old-fashioned people' called God."⁴ If poetry can give a "wider awareness" and can enable an adolescent to sense a unity within himself as well as in the universe, it thereby renders a great service to the senior's religious life.

3. To Administer Healing.

Another function of poetry, and one frequently overlooked, is its power to heal. Many young people, emerging from the period of "storm and stress", passing perhaps into a cataclysmic conversion experience, and then entering into a time of religious doubts, are the victims of terrific agony of mind and spirit. In increasing numbers, these maladjusted youths are trying all types of remedies to relieve their minds of dark and troublous fancies.

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1. Neihardt, John G.: Poetic Values-Their Reality and Our Need of Them, p. 105.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 114.
3. Noyes, Alfred in The Obligation of Universities to the Social Order, p. 353.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 354, 355.

Prescott declares psychopathologists have found a cure for such cases, the method being to secure a "complete expression, confession, and clearing up of the repressed desires and emotions."¹ Often, however, the adolescent's difficulty arises from the inability to express what he feels. Here poetry steps in and, unlike the doctor in Macbeth, can

" . . . minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain
And with a sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart."²

The poetry of the Scriptures may be a curative agent of highest value in relieving morbid emotional and mental states in young people and in giving a wholesome attitude, inner peace, and an integration of personality.³

4. To Penetrate the Doubts of a Scientific Age.

Still again, the investigator discovers another value of a somewhat different type, that of answering the questions of a scientific age. High school young people, trained to examine everything scientifically and to evaluate on the basis of the measuring rod and test tube, often come to think of life only in terms of material values. Furthermore, as a result of the study of science, such young people frequently ask: "Is the Bible valid?" "Is there a God?" "Is the soul immortal?" For all such questionings

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1. Prescott, Frederick Charke: The Poetic Mind, p. 276.
2. Shakespeare, William: Macbeth.
3. Cf. Prescott: The Poetic Mind, pp. 276, 277.

of youth, poetry has an answer. It comes to adolescents by way of the emotions and, awakening and quickening all the sensibilities, discloses the abiding values of life.¹

In a superb fashion does the poetry of that great Christian poet Robert Browning meet the needs of an age that seems to feel there is a conflict between science and religion.

Dr. Berdoe speaks of Browning as

" . . . one of our greatest spiritual path-makers and Alp-tunnellers. . . Those of us who have been down with the miners know how many obstacles Browning has cleared away; those who have worked under his orders, know how firm and straight is the roadway he has constructed. Not only has he established a modus vivendi between science and religion, but he has demonstrated that the one is the complement of the other. He has made scientific religion an accomplished fact."²

Such statements as this reveal the fact that poetry may function as a means of dispelling scientific doubts by making translucent things material so that the reality inherent is glimpsed.

5. To Prepare for and Lead into Prayer.

Not only does poetry quiet one's doubts and heal one's mind but also it ministers constructively to the deepest spiritual needs. Born in every human being is the desire to pray, and poetry may be the means by which this spiritual exercise is best accomplished. Edward Shillito, in his book Poetry and Prayer, discusses in a clear and comprehensive way the relationship of poetry to "the heart of worship". He indicates, among other things, that poetry can bring a person to the place of adoration, and indeed

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1. Cf. Noyes, Alfred, op. cit., pp. 373, 374.

2. Berdoe, Edward: Browning and the Christian Faith, p. xvii.

can be the medium through which his adoration is expressed.

"The poet may help us to adore not least by rescuing us from the Infinite, and showing to us a God Who is forever near, signalling to us in all things."¹

On the other hand, poetry may be a medium of confession, as Shillito points out when he declares that a person completing the reading of Othello and going to prayer feels like crying out: "God be merciful to me a sinner."² As in the case of Othello, poetry often takes the reader "to the utmost limit of the path along which we have taken the first step."³ Thus does poetry prepare for confession and through such a lyric as the fifty-first Psalm lead in confession. Moreover, poetry may make clear for young people the meaning of real intercession. Browning's Saul, for instance, powerfully manifests love as the secret of intercession, while Pippa Passes shows true intercession to be "one human being entering with love and longing into other lives, and lifting them into the light of God."⁴

6. To Effect Creative Personality.

Preparing for prayer, answering doubts, healing the mind, enlarging horizons, revealing God in nature, - all these functions, and more, does poetry perform. One other value, previously suggested, must be named again, the value of poetry as a "maker" or "creator".⁵ Truly poetry is a force that may

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1. Shillito, Edward: Poetry and Prayer, p. 40.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 50.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 52.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 67, - 78.

5. Cf. Brooks, Phillips: Essays and Addresses, pp. 238, 239.

produce a profound change in an individual.¹ Prescott draws an interesting analogy between poetry and play and affirms that just as a child learns the traditional lessons of the race through play, so

"in poetry the poet and the reader learn the same lessons in much the same way The poet thus secures our spiritual inheritance The poet is always present at the birth of ideas and in a broad sense is rightly named a maker or creator."²

"The poetic dream and creation," continues Prescott, "are our nearest approach to the 'vision and faculty divine';³ and, therefore, are preeminently significant in religious experience.

E. Summary.

Proceeding from a study of the religious experience of adolescents, the investigator has considered one phase of that experience, namely, worship. Various materials, situations, characteristics, and values have been investigated. The present chapter, taking but one of the worship materials, poetry, for examination, has attempted to define it as the imaginative and rhythmic expression of the thought, the feeling, or the deep insight of the human soul.⁴ Furthermore, the nature of poetry has been revealed through the treatment of the five fundamental elements: emotion, imagination, truth, beauty, and rhythm. Moreover this chapter has indicated that poetry may have at least six out-

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1. Cf. Neihardt, op. cit., p. 116.
2. Prescott, *The Poetic Mind*, p. 291.
3. Ibid., p. 296.
4. Cf. Ante, p. 55.

standing functions in religious experience. It may open one's eyes to see God in nature, it may expand one's horizon, it may heal a distraught mind, it may vanquish doubts, it may lead a soul to God in prayer, and it may release all one's potential creative abilities. The entire fore-going discussion has revealed the remarkable appropriateness of the use of poetry in worship services because of the nature not only of poetry and worship but also of adolescents themselves. Whether poetry is being used generally in all the fulness of its varied possibilities is another matter. The next chapter will report an investigation into actual, present-day uses of poetry in worship.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE USES OF POETRY IN WORSHIP SERVICES FOR THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT

CHAPTER FOUR

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE USES OF POETRY IN WORSHIP SERVICES FOR THE MIDDLE ADOLESCENT

A. Introduction

Having analyzed the religious experience of middle adolescents, having studied particularly the nature of worship and its function in that experience, and having examined the nature of poetry and its value in the religious experience of the senior, one comes now in this chapter to the heart of the problem with which the present investigation is concerned. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to set forth an analysis of the present use of poetry in senior worship services. This analysis will be presented by means of charts, preceded by an explanation of the method of survey and followed by an interpretation of the significant findings.

The first step in the survey has consisted of a preliminary examination of various worship sources and has revealed four distinct types of materials: (1) magazines, such as the International Journal of Religious Education; (2) books giving services for a whole year, such as Stacy's Worship for Youth, Volume II; (3) hymnals including worship suggestions, like The Church School Hymnal for Youth and The New Hymnal for American Youth; (4) textbooks, such as Athearn's Christian Worship for American Youth, which

include examples of various types of services. These four books and the "International Journal of Religious Education" have been selected, therefore, for special consideration because they seem to represent the chief types of materials available for adolescent worship services. Other books have been examined but are not included in the detailed analysis because their contributions to the present study appear to be negligible. For example, The Quest for God Through Worship by Philip Henry Lotz, containing services for a year, includes many poems; but, since the book is designed for the entire church school and not principally for seniors, it is not included in the survey. Moreover, the materials put out by one of the leading denominations have been examined; but the worship suggestions appeared too vague to be of any real value in the present study. Thus it is evident that the books chosen for careful examination represent fairly the kind of worship programs in which seniors today participate.

The worship services in the International Journal of Religious Education have been selected for particular study because of their great importance in the field of Christian education. The importance is due in a large measure to the fact that the Council represents forty-one Protestant denominations and twenty-eight state councils of religious education in North America. Moreover, the worship services and suggestions for the various divisions of the church school, presented in each issue of the magazine, are products of superior writers, who are thoroughly acquainted with the best trends in Christian education. All the services for the senior-young people's division for the year 1937

have been studied, and the analysis of the use of the poetry present in these services is given in the following section of this chapter.

Stacy's Worship for Youth, Volume II is included in the group of books for detailed analysis because it is a type of material widely used by Christian leaders. The book contains fifty-two worship services which have been carefully studied and are reported in the charts in the section which follows.

The two hymnals named above have been thoroughly examined, and the worship services included in them have been analyzed. These hymnals present significant source materials, for they are extensively used by many of the leading denominations and are planned to meet adolescent worship needs. Indeed, the editor of The Church School Hymnal for Youth declares the hymnal is "a book of worship" and is "graded to their (Intermediates, Seniors, and Young People) moral and religious needs and designed to voice and express their aspirations; inspire and enrich their communion with God; vitalize and deepen their fellowship with Jesus Christ."¹ In the light of this expressed purpose, it is of especial interest to discover the use of poetry in the services offered as model programs of worship.

Finally, Athearn's book has been chosen for investigation because it is one of the most comprehensive treatments of worship and is written not only for leaders but for young people as well. Moreover, the twenty-three services included in Part III of

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1. Laufer, Calvin W., Editor: The Church School Hymnal for Youth, p. iii.

the book are planned particularly for the senior age, as is indicated by the following statement:

"To the host of high-school-age boys and girls with whom I have worked out the instructional material and the services of worship I express my sincere thanks and acknowledge a spiritual comradeship."¹

The way in which Miss Athearn uses poetry is, therefore, of decided consequence to the present investigation.

If, then, the selection of the materials for analysis has comprised the first step in the survey of the use of poetry, the second step has involved a thorough study of the books chosen. In order to record graphically and comprehensively the use of poetry in worship services, charts have been prepared giving the names of poems employed. Whenever no title was given, the first line, or a portion of it, has been placed on the chart and enclosed in quotation marks. Since the name of a poem in a given service has significance only when the poem is seen in its setting, the themes of the various services have likewise been included in the charts.

In addition to this, it has seemed helpful to list the authors in order to discover whether or not the poetry of certain individuals appears especially suitable for worship and whether or not the poetry of any particular age or period is preeminently valuable as worship material.

Likewise, it has seemed necessary to record the number of lines of poetry included in a given service since the mere

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1. Athearn, Laura Armstrong: Christian Worship for American Youth, p. ix.

naming of a poem does not reveal the extent of its use.

The concluding columns of the charts indicate the place in a service where the poem occurs, or the relationship of the poem to other materials in the service, and the method of use, or the function which the poem performs. Every effort has been made to analyze the worship services fairly and to ascertain, if possible, what function for the poems was in the mind of the persons who prepared the programs. If, however, no definite function was at once evident, this was indicated by the word "indeterminate". Moreover, in recording the function of a poem in a given service, the investigator has had in mind the values of worship and the values of poetry which were brought out in chapters two and three of the present study and, consequently, has used such terminology as will tend to show a synthesis of the ~~fore~~-going findings.

The charts worked out in the light of the above discussion now follow.

B. A Survey of Poetry In Representative Worship Services for Middle Adolescents

1. International Journal of Religious Education for 1937.

a. Survey Analysis.

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
For February: Forgive Us Our Trespasses "Without God" in our Lives	A Waking Prayer		15
	"Forgive our trespasses"	Elinor Lennen	14
	"I am Youth"	Margaret Hersey	19
For March: Faith in The Triumph of the Right "By This Sign, Conquer"	"I have looked again in the eyes of youth"	Rev. Fred Smith	12
	"And in my dream I saw a cross"	Carl S. Weist	12
"Wounding the Heart of God"	"There is no place where earth's sorrows"		2
"The Way of the Cross"	"They did not crucify my Lord"	Katherine Greenleaf Pedley	14
	"Calaphas, Pilate and Herod - "	Elinor Lennen	16
"Christ Triumphant"	From The Battlefield	William Cullen Bryant	4
	"I know that my Redeemer lives"	Harold I. Donnelly	20
For April: Worshiping God through Beauty Eyes That See	Small Town Wisdom	Thomas Curtis Clark	20
	Canticle of the Sun	Father Cuthbert's version - St. Francis of Assisi	21
Spring Awakening	Prayer in April	Sara Henderson Hay	12
	If They Forget to See	Edith Lombard Squires	14
Communion with God	God Is not Far	Thomas Curtis Clark	15
	Worship	Anna Hamilton Wood	11
Life Renewed	A Girl's Prayer	Marian C. Sherman	11

presentative Worship Services for Middle Adolescents
 al of Religious Education for 1937.
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POEM	AUTHOR	LINES	Opening	Close	Music	Talk	Response	Scripture	Prayer	Indeterminate	Prayer	Meditation	Focus Interest	Challenge	Create Atmosphere	Indeterminate
Waking Prayer		15			✓						✓					
Forgive our trespasses"	Elinor Lemmen	14							✓							✓
I am Youth"	Margaret Hersey	19							✓							✓
I have looked again in the eyes of youth"	Rev. Fred Smith	12				✓								✓		
And in my dream I saw a cross"	Carl S. Weist	12			✓						✓					
There is no place where earth's sorrows"		2	✓										✓			
"They did not crucify my Lord"	Katherine Greenleaf Pedley	14		✓										✓		
"Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod - "	Elinor Lemmen	16		✓										✓		
From The Battlefield	William Cullen Bryant	4							✓							✓
"I know that my Redeemer lives"	Harold I. Donnelly	20							✓							✓
Small Town Wisdom	Thomas Curtis Clark	20		✓							✓					
Anticle of the Sun	Father Cuthbert's version - St. Francis of Assisi	21		✓							✓					
Prayer in April	Sara Henderson Hay	12							✓		✓					
If They Forget to See	Edith Lombard Squires	14							✓		✓					
God Is not Far	Thomas Curtis Clark	15							✓		✓					
Worship	Anna Hamilton Wood	11							✓		✓					
A Girl's Prayer	Marian C. Sherman	11			✓						✓					

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
For May: Worshiping God through Beauty (Man)			
"Those Who Bear Burdens Patiently"	Salute to Man	Sara Henderson Hay	18
"Those Who Practice Neighborliness"	"The parson of a country church was he"	Chaucer	6
Those Who Work for a Fairer World - The Pioneers	Homesteader Whitman, We Come Pioneers of the Present	Carl John Bostelmann Claton S. Rice	14 18 22
For June: Finding God in Books			
Finding God in Literature	One of Psalms Ps. 19 (suggested)	Psalms of David	33
For July and August: Vacation Joys A Balanced Life	A New Day	Alfred Grant Walton	23
"Happy Vacancy"	Good as the Water	Helene Margaret	12
Joy in Work	"And is this all? Oh, what a harvesting!"	Jay G. Sigmund	14
Wider Horizons	"I have seen God"	Don West	21
For September: Finding God Through Study Recognizing God	"Be still and know" "The poets are God's listeners" "All beauty whispers to the listening heart"	Georgia Harkness Thomas Curtis Clark Mary Hallet	19 15 8
For October: Jesus Walks and Talks with Men			
Jesus in Normal Home Life	A Prayer for the Home		15

-82-

POEM	AUTHOR	LINES	Opening	Close	Music	Talk	Response	Scripture	Prayer	Indeterminate	Prayer	Meditation	Focus Attention	Challenge	Create Atmosphere	Indeterminate
					PLACE								USE			
Salute to Men	Sara Henderson Hay	18			✓						✓					
"The parson of a country church was he"	Chaucer	6							✓		✓					
Homesteader	Carl John Bostelmann	14					✓					✓				
Whitman, We Come	Claton S. Rice	18					✓							✓		
Pioneers of the Present		22			✓						✓					
One of Psalms Ps. 19 (suggested)	Psalm of David	33							✓							✓
A New Day	Alfred Grant Walton	23							✓							✓
Cool as the Water	Helene Margaret	12							✓						✓	
"And is this all? Oh, what a harvesting!"	Jay G. Sigmund	14				✓							✓			
"I have seen God"	Don West	21			✓									✓		
"Be still and know"	Georgia Harkness	19							✓							✓
"The poets are God's listeners"	Thomas Curtis Clark	15							✓							✓
"All beauty whispers to the listening heart"	Mary Hallet	8							✓							✓
A Prayer for the Home		15				✓					✓					

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
Jesus Preparing for His Life Work	"Youth, O youth, can I reach you"		12
Jesus Dedicating Him- self to His Calling	"O Lord of all the Upward Road"	Mabel Niedermeyer	4
Jesus Tests His Ideals	"A word of prayer"	Travis White	4
For November: Jesus Leads the Way Jesus Sharing the Joys of Friendship	Lord, What a Change	Trench	14
Jesus Leads the Way in Facing Misunder- standing	"O Lord of all the Upward Road"	Mabel Niedermeyer	4
For December: Jesus Brings a Message of Good Will			
Good will through Proving Friend to All	"O fill me with thy fulness, Lord." "Where a life is spent in service"	Francis R. Havergal James A. Blaisdell	8 16
Growing by Enlisting in God's Work	"O thou great God above" "To Be Alive in Such An Age" "Christ Has No hands but Our Hands" "I will follow the Upward Road" "Be Strong, We Are Not Here to Play"	Z. B. E. Angela Morgan Annie Johnson Flint Mary S. Edgar Maltbie S. Babcock	12
Food for the Growth of My Soul	"Prayer is the Soul's Sincere Desire" Savior, More than Life to Me Lord for Tomorrow and Its Needs	James Montgomery Fannie Crosby Sybil F. Partridge	
Good will in Keeping a Holy Day	The Word Made Flesh	Mrs. D. J. McCanne	16

POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
Youth, O youth, can I reach you"		12
O Lord of all the Upward Road"	Mabel Niedermeyer	4
A word of prayer"	Travis White	4
ord, What a Change	Trench	14
O Lord of all the Upward Road"	Mabel Niedermeyer	4
O fill me with thy fulness, Lord."	Francis R. Havergal	8
Where a life is spent in service"	James A. Blaisdell	16
O thou great God above"	Z. B. E.	12
To Be Alive in Such An Age"	Angela Morgan	
Christ Has No hands but Our Hands"	Annie Johnson Flint	
I will follow the Upward Road"	Mary S. Edgar	
Be Strong, We Are Not Here to Play"	Maltbie S. Babcock	
Prayer is the Soul's Sincere Desire"	James Montgomery	
avior, More than Life to Me	Fannie Crosby	
ord for Tomorrow and Its Needs	Sybil F. Partridge	
he Word Made Flesh	Mrs. D. J. McCanne	16

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
Standing Firm Under Criticism	Not Mine or Thine	Frances Crosby Hamlet	14
For January: Let Us Renew our Lives in Christ			
Growing in Awareness of God	Still, Still with Thee O God, the Rock of Ages	Harriet B. Stowe Edward H. Beckersteth	12 16
Growing by Learning God's Will for Me	Dear Lord and Father of Mankind	John Greenleaf Whittier	8
Growing through Under- standing Jesus and His Mission	"Lord, speak to me that I may speak" "O fill me with thy fulness, Lord" "Inspire in us" Once to Every Man and Nation The Hidden Years at Nazareth Into the Woods My Master Went	Frances R. Havergal Frances R. Havergal Z. B. E. James Russell Lowell Allen Eastman Cross Sidney Lanier	12 12

POEM	AUTHOR	LINES	Opening	Close	Music	Talk	Response	Scripture	Prayer	Indeterminate	Prayer	Meditation	Focus Attention	Challenge	Atmosphere	Indeterminate
ot Mine or Thine	Frances Crosby Hamlet	14				✓							✓			
till, Still with Thee	Harriet B. Stowe	12			✓											
God, the Rock of Ages	Edward H. Beckersteth	16			✓						✓				✓	
ear Lord and Father of Mankind	John Greenleaf Whittier	8		✓							✓					
Lord, speak to me that I may speak"	Frances R. Havergal	12					✓				✓					
O fill me with thy fulness, Lord"	Frances R. Havergal	12					✓				✓					
Inspire in us"	Z. B. E.			✓							✓					
mce to Every Man and Nation	James Russell Lowell									✓						✓
he Hidden Years at Nazareth	Allen Eastman Cross									✓						✓
into the Woods My Master Went	Sidney Lanier									✓						✓

b. Interpretation of the Survey of the International Journal of Religious Education for 1937.

An examination of the charts above reveals a number of noteworthy details which, taken together, present a comprehensive picture of the present use of poetry in senior worship services. Of the fifty-two programs in the International Journal for 1937, thirty-three are found to include poetry. These thirty-three services employ as worship materials forty poems, or parts of poems, six hundred and thirty-eight lines in all. It is striking that the number of lines used in a given service varies from two to thirty-three. The chart also indicates a great variation in authors, the name of any one author rarely occurring more than once in the list. Moreover, it appears that not many of the writers are individuals of wide reputation, that many are modern writers, and that the great Christian poets of the centuries find no place in the programs surveyed.

The most important findings, however, so far as the present investigation is concerned, have to do with the place of a poem in a service and its apparent function in that place. The chart makes clear the fact that the forty poems occur in seven different places in the services, or in seven different relationships. Some occur at the beginning of services, others at the close; some serve as responses, others to prepare for or to follow the Scripture reading; some are definitely related to the music of services, preceding or following a musical selection; others relate to a theme talk, to a picture talk or interpretation, or to

a story. In some cases, materials for a service rather than a planned program are presented; and since the place in a service where a poem might occur is not evident, the word "indeterminate" is used. Of the forty poems occurring in the International Journal for 1937, eleven are related to music, seven to the conclusions of programs, five to talks, three to responses, two to the Scriptures, and two to the opening of services. The place of ten cannot be determined.

In the light of the functions of poetry set forth in chapter three, discoveries concerning the actual present-day use are particularly significant. Of the forty poems referred to above, nineteen are used as prayer. If prayer is "the heart of worship"¹ and if almost fifty percent of the poems used serve as prayers, then one realizes immediately the real appropriateness of considering poetry a valuable worship material. Five of the forty, as the chart indicates, are used to challenge seniors to commitment of life or to increased activity in the work of the Kingdom. Five poems serve to focus interest, to prepare for something later in the service, or to suggest the theme and arouse interest in it. Three poems are found to aid in creating a worshipful atmosphere. One is used as meditation, while in the case of seven no use can be determined.

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 39.

2. Stacy, Gussie Brown: Worship for Youth, Volume II.

a. Survey Analysis.

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
Daring the Task	The Fear for Thee, My Country	Edwin Markham	12
The Christian's Breast- Plate - Right Living	If I Were a Voice "White Captain of my soul, lead on"	Charles MacKay Robert Freeman	9 8
The Christians Sandals - Peace	"Down the dark future, through long generations O Man of Galilee	Henry W. Longfellow A. F. R.	8 20
The Christian's Shield - Faith	The Knight Errant "Although I do not know God's wondrous ways"	Louise Imogene Guiney	8 18
Star of the East - Hope	"Peace abide beneath thy roof-tree"		9
Creative Yesterdays (New Year's)	"Listen to the exhortation of the dawn"	(From the Sanskrit)	14
	They Wait For You "If thou hast yesterday thy duty done"	Edwin Markham Goethe	6 4
	The Road to Heaven	Nancy Byrd Turner	7
Home - Seekers (The Christian Home)	Our Home Rule		4
Industrial Good-Will (Picture of Christ)	New Vistas	Thomas Curtis Clark	18
Abraham Lincoln (Inter-Racial Day)	Abraham Lincoln	Margaret Sangster	17
Good Cheer	The Hindered Christ Little Sister	Richard Burton	24 28
Meekness	The Cup of Pride	Edwin Markham	83
Sympathy	The Grace to Serve	Elsie M. Roberts	16
Charting The Way	Radiant Crusaders	Allen Eastman Cross	12
Kindling The Fire	"Pass on the torch"	Allen Eastman Cross	12

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[illegible]

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
Braving The Enemy	Dream and Daring	Cale Young Rice	22
Resurrection Flowers (Easter Service)	The Sacrament	Allen Eastman Cross	12
Love of Heroes (Decoration Day)	There Is no Death The Muster Roll He Fought 'Gainst Gloom	Hilton U. Brown, Jr.	12 59 16
Love of Freedom (Fourth of July)	"The faith our fathers fought for"	A. C. Swinburne	6
Wayside Flowers	God Is Not Far Away	Thomas Curtis Clark	14

POEM	AUTHOR	LINES	Opening	Close	Music	Talk	Scripture	Prayer	Indeterminate	Prayer	Meditation	Focus Interest	Challenge	Create Atmosphere	Indeterminate
					PLACE							USE			
Dream and Daring	Cale Young Rice	22	✓									✓			
The Sacrament	Allen Eastman Cross	12			✓							✓			
There Is no Death		12			✓									✓	
The Muster Roll		59			✓							✓			
He Fought 'Gainst Gloom	Hilton U. Brown, Jr.	16			✓									✓	
"The faith our fathers fought for"	A. C. Swinburne	6			✓							✓			
God Is Not Far Away	Thomas Curtis Clark	14			✓							✓			

b. Interpretation of the Survey of Worship for Youth, Volume II.

Stacy's book contains fifty-two worship services, nineteen of which make use of poetry. In these nineteen appear twenty-eight poems, having a total of four hundred and seventy-eight lines. The extent to which poetry is used by Stacy is somewhat less than that by the writers in the International Journal although the latter appear to use shorter selections for the most part than does Stacy. In this source the number of lines of poetry in any one service varies from four to eighty-three. On the whole, the poets represented in Stacy's program are of much the same type as those found in the services reported above. However, there are not so many different authors as in the International Journal of Religious Education, certain poets being represented by more than one poem. In Stacy's book, as in the programs already discussed, the most significant findings concern the place and the function of a poem in a service. Eighteen of the twenty-eight poems used in the services relate to music, to hymns or to some special musical selections. This is not at all surprising when one recalls that the rhythmic, singing quality of verse is a part of its inherent nature and one of the chief reasons for its appeal to adolescents. It seems entirely fitting, therefore, that a poem should be so placed in a service as to prepare the senior for intelligent and meaningful participation in the singing of hymns. Of the twenty-eight poems used, five appear in connection with some sort of talk, usually as the conclusion or climax of the message. Three other poems serve as the means of opening worship services; one is used in relation to a response; and one is

placed in the program preceding a prayer. Although the use of poetry as prayer has already been revealed in the services in the International Journal, its place in a service as preparation for prayer is not very general. In fact, in only one of the services by Stacy and in one by Athearn is poetry used in this relationship. Nevertheless, it is this function of poetry as a preparation for prayer that Shillito makes the thesis for his book Poetry and Prayer. If, then, the twenty-eight poems in the services worked out by Stacy are placed in the manner just suggested, what function or value do these poems have? The chart indicates that nine are used to focus interest, to grip the attention of seniors, to prepare them for what follows. Evidently Stacy agrees with the idea expressed in chapter three that it is wise to touch first the feeling capacity of individuals and then through aroused feelings to grasp their whole personalities.¹ That poems are used to lay hold of seniors, to arouse them, to stir them to action is clearly brought out in Stacy's book. Five of the twenty-eight poems suggest that the author has the definite aim of calling from middle adolescents a new yielding of their lives to Christ and a renewed zeal for His Kingdom. On the other hand, six of the poems have a calmer function, four contributing to the atmosphere of worship, one making possible meditation, and one serving as prayer. This last is in striking contrast to the nineteen poems of the International Journal programs used as prayers. For eight of the twenty-eight poems no function is

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1. Cf. ante, p. 56, 57.

apparent, which fact indicates a definite weakness in the services.

3. Athearn, Laura Armstrong: Christian Worship for American Youth.

a. Survey Analysis.

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
Remembering The Contribution of Beethoven, Master Musician	"Where is the Master of Music"	Henry van Dyke	12
	"Music, they do thee wrong"	Henry van Dyke	2
	"Music is a house"	Robert Haven Schauffler	6
	"Great Master, touch us"	Horatio Bonar	8
Discovering America in Song	"They went forth in the name"		5
	Columbus	Joaquin Miller	24
	"We thank thee Lord, on this recurring day"	Thomas Curtis Clark	8
	"O God of nations"	Myrtle K. Cherryman	4
A Christmas Cycle of Worship			
1. He That Is Coming	"Send Thou, O Lord, to every place"	Mrs. Mary E. Gates	8
2. Glory to God in The Highest	"Angel harps our souls inspire"	Albert D. Watson	8
	"O little town, O little town"	Clinton Scollard	6
	"Out of the midnight sky"	John Erskine	13
	"Shepherds there were who in the field by night"	Helen Wieand Cole	12
3. Following The Star	The Pilgrim Ship	Katharine Lee Bates	8
	"I came from Tigris' sandy plain"	John Finley	20
	"We would see Jesus, lo! his star is shining"	J. Edgar Park	4
	"As with gladness men of old"	William C. Dix	6
	"Christians, lo, the star appeareth"	James A. Blaisdell	4
	"Who bears his brother's burden"	James A. Blaisdell	4
	"As they offered gifts most rare"	William C. Dix	6
	"Star of the East! show us the way"	Eugene Field	6

Armstrong: Christian Worship for American Youth.

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POEM	AUTHOR	LINES	Opening	Close	Music	Talk	Response	Scripture	Prayer	Indeterminate	Prayer	Meditation	Focus Interest	Challenge	Create Atmosphere	Indeterminate
Where is the Master of Music"	Henry van Dyke	12	✓										✓			
Music, they do thee wrong"	Henry van Dyke	2					✓					✓				
Music is a house"	Robert Haven Schauffler	6					✓					✓				
Great Master, touch us"	Horatio Bonar	8					✓							✓		
They went forth in the name"		5	✓										✓			
Columbus	Joaquin Miller	24			✓											✓
We thank thee Lord, on this recurring day"	Thomas Curtis Clark	8			✓						✓					
O God of nations"	Myrtle K. Cherryman	4			✓						✓					
Send Thou, O Lord, to every place"	Mrs. Mary E. Gates	8			✓						✓					
Angel harps our souls inspire"	Albert D. Watson	8			✓						✓					
O little town, O little town"	Clinton Scollard	6			✓										✓	✓
Out of the midnight sky"	John Erskine	13			✓										✓	✓
Shepherds there were who in the field by night"	Helen Wileand Cole	12			✓										✓	✓
The Pilgrim Ship	Katharine Lee Bates	8	✓									✓				
'I came from Tigris' sandy plain"	John Finley	20			✓							✓				
'We would see Jesus, lo! his star is shining"	J. Edgar Park	4					✓								✓	
'As with gladness men of old"	William C. Dix	6					✓					✓				
'Christians, lo, the star appeareth"	James A. Blaisdell	4					✓					✓				
'Who bears his brother's burden"	James A. Blaisdell	4						✓						✓		
'As they offered gifts most rare"	William C. Dix	6					✓								✓	
'Star of the East! show us the way"	Eugene Field	6		✓							✓					

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
4. Christmas Every- where	"Christmas once is Christmas still"	Phillips Brooks	7
	"The crest and crown- ing of all good"	Edwin Markham	16
	"O angels sweet and splendid"	Phillips Brooks	8
Palm Sunday	"Draw nigh to thy Jerusalem, O Lord"	Jeremy Taylor	12
Good Friday	"Is it not strange the darkest hour"		6
	"When Jesus came to Golgotha"	G. A. Studdert- Kennedy	12
	"Friendless and faint, with martyred steps and slow"	Edward Arlington Robinson	14
Easter	"O love triumphant over guilt and sin"	Frederick Lawrence Knowles	8
Appreciation for "Praying Hands"	"Let me but love my love without dis- guise"	Henry van Dyke	8
	"Dear Lord and Father of mankind"	John Greenleaf Whittier	4
	Praying Hands	Gertrude B. Walker	32
	"Friend Divine:- Then give our hands a touch divine"	Charles S. Newhall	5
The Way of Forgive- ness	Good Lord, Forgive Me	C. Maude Battersby	8
	"Though Fatherland be vast and fair"	Allen Eastman Cross	32
Self-Mastery	"Teach us to know thee as thou art"	Lucy Larcom	4
	"I have to live with myself"	Edgar Guest	12
	"Temper my spirit, O Lord"	Jean Starr Untermeyer	7
The Quest of Joy	"Let us with a glad- some mind"	John Milton	4
	"Open wide the windows of our spirits"	Christina Rossetti	5
	The Singer	Allen Eastman Cross	24
	"Lord of health, Thou life within us"	Percy Dearmer	5

POEM	AUTHOR	LINES	Opening	Close	Music	Talk	Scripture	Prayer	Indeterminate	Prayer	Meditation	Focus Interest	Challenge	Create Atmosphere	Indeterminate
'Christmas once is Christmas still"	Phillips Brooks	7	✓							✓					
"The crest and crown- ing of all good"	Edwin Markham	16				✓							✓		
"O angels sweet and splendid"	Phillips Brooks	8		✓						✓					
"Draw nigh to thy Jerusalem, O Lord"	Jeremy Taylor	12			✓					✓					
"Is it not strange the darkest hour"		6			✓						✓				
"When Jesus came to Golgotha"	G. A. Studdert- Kennedy	12				✓							✓		
"Friendless and faint, with martyred steps and slow"	Edward Arlington Robinson	14			✓								✓		
"O love triumphant over guilt and sin"	Frederick Lawrence Knowles	8			✓										✓
"Let me but love my love without dis- guise"	Henry van Dyke	8	✓								✓				
"Dear Lord and Father of mankind"	John Greenleaf Whittier	4			✓					✓					
Praying Hands	Gertrude B. Walker	32			✓					✓					
"Friend Divine:- Then give our hands a touch divine"	Charles S. Newhall	5			✓					✓					
Good Lord, Forgive Me	C. Maude Battersby	8			✓										✓
"Though Fatherland be vast and fair"	Allen Eastman Cross	32			✓						✓				
"Teach us to know thee as thou art"	Lucy Larcom	4			✓					✓					
"I have to live with myself"	Edgar Guest	12				✓									✓
"Temper my spirit, O Lord"	Jean Starr Untermeyer	7			✓					✓					
"Let us with a glad- some mind"	John Milton	4	✓								✓				
"Open wide the windows of our spirits"	Christina Rossetti	5	✓											✓	
The Singer	Allen Eastman Cross	24					✓								✓
"Lord of health, Thou life within us"	Percy Dearmer	5	✓							✓					

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
The Quest of Goodness	"O Lord Jesus, give us more charity"	Henry Alford	16
The Life of Christ	The Royal Pathway to the Cross	Thomas a Kempis	10
	"O Lord, and Master of us all"	John Greenleaf Whittier	4
The Beauty of Holiness	Holy Living	David Starr Jordon	30
Triumphant Christian Living	"Follow the Christ, the King, Live pure"	Alfred Lord Tennyson	3
	"White Captain of my soul, lead on"	Robert Freeman	8
Friendship and Goodwill	"Not in vain the distance beckons, forward, forward let no range"	Tennyson	12
	"The holy supper is kept indeed"	James Russell Lowell	6
	In Such an Age	Angela Morgan	31
The Great Physican	"Thy work O God, needs many hands"	Calvin W. Laufer	8
The Brotherhood of Sacred Song	"O Lord and Master of us all"	John G. Whittier	4
	"Thy kingdom come, O Lord"	Frederick L. Hosmer	8
	"To serve the present age"	Charles Wesley	4
	"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun"	Isaac Watts	4
	"Where cross the crowded ways of life"	Frank Mason North	4
	"These things shall be, - a loftier race"	John Addington Symonds	8
	"Grant us, O God, thy deathless love"	William Hiram Foulkes	4
The Word of Life	"O God, unseen, yet ever near"		8
	"Father in heaven Hear us today"	Charles G. Ames	8

POEM	AUTHOR	LINES	Opening	Close	Music	Talk	Response	Scripture	Prayer	Indeterminate	Prayer	Meditation	Focus Interest	Challenge	Create Atmosphere	Indeterminate
"O Lord Jesus, give us more charity"	Henry Alford	16			✓						✓					
The Royal Pathway to the Cross	Thomas a Kempis	10			✓										✓	
"O Lord, and Master of us all"	John Greenleaf Whittier	4		✓							✓					
Holy Living	David Starr Jordan	30			✓						✓					
"Follow the Christ, the King, Live pure"	Alfred Lord Tennyson	3				✓								✓		
"White Captain of my soul, lead on"	Robert Freeman	8			✓						✓					
"Not in vain the distance beckons, forward, forward let no range"	Tennyson	12			✓											✓
"The holy supper is kept indeed"	James Russell Lowell	6							✓		✓					
In Such an Age	Angela Morgan	31							✓					✓		
"Thy work O God, needs many hands"	Calvin W. Laufer	8			✓						✓					
"O Lord and Master of us all"	John G. Whittier	4						✓			✓					
"Thy kingdom come, O Lord"	Frederick L. Hosmer	8						✓			✓					
"To serve the present age"	Charles Wesley	4						✓			✓					
"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun"	Isaac Watts	4			✓							✓				
"Where cross the crowded ways of life"	Frank Mason North	4			✓							✓				
"These things shall be, - a loftier race"	John Addington Symonds	8			✓							✓				
"Grant us, O God, thy deathless love"	William Hiram Foulkes	4		✓							✓					
"O God, unseen, yet ever near"		8	✓										✓			
"Father in heaven Hear us today"	Charles G. Ames	8			✓						✓					

b. Interpretation of the Survey of Christian Worship for American Youth.

Athearn's is a text-book on adolescent worship for both leaders and young people and differs, therefore, from the book and magazine reported above. However, Part III of this text presents twenty-six model services, twenty-three of which use poetry. These twenty-three services employ fifty-three poems or parts of poems, totaling five hundred and fifty-six lines. A comparative study of the charts reveals at once that this is the most extensive use of poetry apparent in any of the materials investigated. It is at least a point of interest that Athearn makes use of some poems written by persons of international reputation. One notices, for instance, that John Milton, Christina Rossetti, Thomas a Kempis, Charles Wesley, Isaac Watts, Tennyson, and others occur in the list. In view of the discussion given above about the appropriateness of poems being placed in services in certain relationships, little need be said about Athearn's programs except to point out that, of the fifty-three poems used, twenty-four relate to music, seven to responses, seven to the opening of services, five to the close, four to talks, four to prayer, and two to the Scriptures. With reference to the use of the fifty-three poems, it is significant that twenty serve as prayers, eleven as meditations, eight as challenges, five as focal points for interest, and one for the creation of atmosphere. It is not possible to determine the value of eight of the poems placed as they are in the services, and such poems are marked on the chart "indeterminate". It is

noteworthy that only twenty-one poems of all those used in the five sources investigated serve as a means of meditation, yet eleven of these are so used by Athearn. Apparently this author feels that youth needs times of meditation and that poetry in worship services can help to meet this need.

4. The New Hymnal for American Youth - H. Augustine Smith, Editor.

a. Survey Analysis.

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
Mountains of Vision	St. Patrick's Breastplate		16
The Temple of the Out-of-Doors	"Lord, I do fear Thou hast made the world too beautiful"	Edna St. Vincent Millay	4
	"Climbing the mountain pathway"	(Japanese literature)	3
	"Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?"	Ralph Waldo Emerson	3
	"All cattle rest upon their herbage"	(Egyptian literature)	7
"Be Still, and Know That I am God"	"We thank thee, Lord, For all thy Golden Silences"	John Oxenham	31
Commemoration	"Who was the man who made us"	Arthur Farwell	21
	"And so they buried Lincoln"	James T. Mackay	9
	"Who goes there, in the night"	Thomas Curtis Clark	8

an Youth - H. Augustine Smith, Editor.

POEM	AUTHOR	LINES	Opening	Close	Music	Talk	Response	Scripture	Prayer	Indeterminate	Prayer	Meditation	Focus Interest	Challenge	Create Atmosphere	Indeterminate
					PLACE								USE			
St. Patrick's Breastplate		16			✓									✓		
"Lord, I do fear Thou hast made the world too beautiful"	Edna St. Vincent Milley	4			✓										✓	
"Climbing the mountain pathway"	(Japanese literature)	3			✓							✓				
"Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?"	Ralph Waldo Emerson	3			✓							✓				
"All cattle rest upon their herbage"	(Egyptian literature)	7			✓							✓				
"We thank thee, Lord, For all thy Golden Silences"	John Oxenham	31			✓							✓				
"Who was the man who made us"	Arthur Farwell	21					✓					✓				
"And so they buried Lincoln"	James T. Mackay	9					✓					✓				
"Who goes there, in the night"	Thomas Curtis Clark	8					✓					✓				

b. Interpretation of the Survey of The New Hymnal for American Youth.

As was indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the hymnal is an important source book of worship materials and one on which many Christian leaders strongly rely. The New Hymnal for American Youth offers as suggestive materials ten programs of worship. Four of these ten employ poetry, nine poems in all being used, totaling one hundred and two lines. In keeping with what other authors have done, the editor here relates five of the nine poems to music, three to responses, and one to the Scriptures. It is striking that seven of the nine are used as meditations, which emphasis Smith shares with Athearn, one to challenge, and one to create atmosphere. Although the editor presents so few services that it may not seem fair to judge the value he places on poetry as a worship material, he, nevertheless, has a section in the hymnal entitled "Devotional Poetry and Prose". This section includes eighty-nine poems, or parts of poems. Thus, it appears that, while this particular hymnal does not show by example the manner in which poetry may be effectively used, it implies an extensive use.

5. The Church School Hymnal for Youth.

a. Survey analysis.

THEME OF SERVICE	POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
A Christmas Service	The Indwelling God	Frederick Lucian Hosmer	16

. for Youth.

POEM	AUTHOR	LINES
The Indwelling God	Frederick Lucian Hosmer	16

Opening
Close
Music
Talk
Response
Scripture
Prayer
Indeterminate
Prayer
Meditation
Focus Interest
Challenge
Create Atmosphere
Indeterminate

b. Interpretation of the Survey of The New Church School Hymnal for Youth.

This hymnal contains fifteen worship services, but only one uses poetry. The one poem has sixteen lines, is placed in the service just following the Scripture passage, and is used as a meditation. In spite of the fact that there is seemingly scant use of poetry here, the editors of this hymnal have a part of their book entitled "Religious Poetry". This section presents thirty-three poems. It is evident, therefore, that the editors believe poetry can be used extensively and helpfully in worship services for young people.

C. General Summary.

This chapter has endeavored to set forth the results of a survey of the present use of poetry in senior worship services. Following an explanation of the plan of procedure, charts have been presented and their interpretation given. The most obvious conclusion of this investigation is that poetry is widely and helpfully used in worship services for middle adolescents. Of the one hundred and fifty-five services investigated, eighty use poetry. It is significant that approximately a third of the one hundred and twenty-nine poems used in these eighty services are related to music and serve as prayers. The relationships and functions of the remaining two-thirds which are listed on the charts, are rather evenly distributed. Another interesting finding, if not a particularly important one, is the little use that is made in the services investigated of the poetry of the really great Christian poets. Judging the poems

found in these services in as unprejudiced a manner as possible, one cannot but feel that much of the poetry used is of an inferior literary quality. If seniors can worship by means of such poetry as this, how much more meaningful might be their worship if poetry of genuine literary merit were employed. A third general conclusion which may be made on the basis of the present investigation is that those authors who do employ verse in worship services use it in ways thoroughly in harmony with the inherent nature of poetry and with its possible functions as given in chapter three. Certain values, however, discussed in that earlier chapter are not evident in the charts presented above. The two notable omissions are the function of poetry to administer healing and its function to penetrate the doubts of a scientific age. In none of the services surveyed are these two values apparent, unless the various authors consider the use of poetry as meditation as means of healing distraught minds and effecting desired integration of personality. Not one of the one hundred and twenty-nine poems reported on the above charts is used to dispel the doubts and questions which are often present in the minds of adolescents. Moreover, it is striking that Browning, the great Christian whose poetry preeminently harmonizes science and religion, is not represented in the above charts. It is evident, then, that the services surveyed reveal certain weaknesses, not so much in the amount of poetry used as in the selection of it and in the method of using it.

The purpose of the next chapter, therefore, will be to offer recommendations regarding the helpful use of poetry in

senior worship services and to present certain principles which the recommendations imply.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE USE OF POETRY IN
SENIOR WORSHIP SERVICES

CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE USE OF POETRY IN
SENIOR WORSHIP SERVICES

A. Introduction.

In view of the foregoing survey and on the basis of the analyses preceding it, one finds it necessary at this point to make certain recommendations regarding the use of poetry in senior worship. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to offer such recommendations and suggestions. This is not possible, however, without evaluation of the findings resulting from the survey. Moreover, in the light of expressed opinions concerning the poetry being used, brought out in the foregoing discussion, it is necessary now to present certain principles or standards by which poetry and its use may be judged. The present chapter, therefore, will make three recommendations: (1) regarding the amount of poetry to be used in senior worship; (2) regarding the selection of poetry; (3) regarding the manner of its use. These will be discussed in the order named in the sections that immediately follow. In treating each of these recommendations there will be presented such standards and principles as the suggestions imply.

B. Recommendation Regarding the Frequency of Use of
Poetry in Senior Worship Services.

At the outset of the present investigation, it was

thought likely that suggestions concerning a larger use of poetry in senior worship would be the result of a survey analysis of the actual, present-day use. However, the survey revealed that poetry is already extensively used. In view of the fact that eighty of the one hundred and fifty-five services examined employed poetry, it seems hardly necessary to suggest that senior worship services need more poetry. Moreover, one recalls that chapter two of the present study, in presenting the values of group worship, discussed the various materials which might go into the building of a worship program. Poetry was found to be an important material, but other materials suggested were music, talks, stories, pictures, plays, and such. Because the senior must be interested in a worship service if he is to participate whole-heartedly and because he desires variety in all things, it appears unwise to declare that poetry should have a place in every service of worship. Tracy speaks to this point when he declares:

"Youth is impatient of the uninteresting, . . . but though its attention must be aroused through interest, yet its interest can be awakened through a much greater variety of channels than the interest of childhood . . ."¹

Since the interest of seniors may be captured in a variety of ways, all the worship materials at various times should be employed in that most sacred and most satisfying phase of religious experience, "communion with the Father."² The survey reported in the preceding chapter indicates that poetry is being used; and, since a little

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1. Tracy, Frederick: The Psychology of Adolescence, p. 210.
2. Cf. Ante, p. 27.

over fifty percent of the services examined included it, one can say poetry is being sufficiently used. However, a study of the poems revealed certain weaknesses with reference to their selection, two things being noted: (1) few of the great Christian poets are represented in the services; (2) many of the poems are inferior as literature. It is necessary, therefore, to make definite suggestions concerning the choice of the poems suitable for senior worship and to indicate principles regarding this selection.

C. Recommendation Regarding the Selection of Poetry
to Be Used in Senior Worship.

As has just been indicated, two considerations are involved in the selection of poetry appropriate for services designed for middle adolescents. One of these has to do with the authors and the other with the type of poetry used.

1. Suggestions Concerning Authors.

Dithridge in her tests of high school pupils, tests given to determine their feelings about and response to poetry, discovered that seniors "are on the way to good taste in poetry."¹ These very seniors, however, come to a church school and often are led in worship by means of poetry which they can not fail to recognize as far inferior to that with which they have become familiar in school. Furthermore, authors whose works they have come to appreciate and to enjoy they often discover are rarely quoted in

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1. Dithridge, Rachel L.: "Do High-School Students Like Modern Poetry?" in English Journal, October 1934, p. 666.

worship services. A study of the charts given in chapter four above reveals that such authors as Milton, Wordsworth, Browning, G. W. Russell (A. E.), Christina Rossetti, Matthew Arnold, Henry Vaughn, Henry van Dyke, Masefield, Whittier, Lowell, Bryant, Edna St. Vincent Millay-and scores of others who might be mentioned and with whom young high school students are familiar - find little place in the lists presented in the foregoing analyses. Everyone of these writers, however, has produced poems which can be used appropriately and helpfully in the worship of middle adolescents. It seems important, therefore, to suggest that leaders who plan worship services for seniors, services in which poetry is to have a place, select the works of authors who will compare favorably with those studied in school. More significant than the author, however, is the type of poem included in a worship program; for, if the lines be good in every sense of the word, the authorship is then not a matter of great consequence. But what should be considered with reference to the type of poem employed in senior worship?

2. Suggestions Concerning Type of Poetry to Be Used in Senior Worship.

When one begins to think of the type of poetry that should be included in adolescent worship, immediately he realizes there are two standards by which a poem must be measured: (1) the recognition of the adolescent's needs, and (2) of literary perfection.

a. Standard for Judging Poetry on the Basis of Adolescent Needs.

However good a poem may be, however widely recognized the author, it is valueless as a worship material unless it is in

harmony with certain adolescent characteristics and meets specific adolescent needs. Chapter one of the present investigation, in treating the religious experience of the middle adolescent, made clear a number of the senior's most striking characteristics and needs. An over-flowing emotional energy, a vigorous and virile physical life, an expanding mentality, and a deepening spiritual experience¹ are senior traits which leaders should consider in selecting poetry for use in their worship. Emphasis must be placed upon the necessity for poetry to measure up to the adolescent's intellectual capacity, and it is in this respect that a number of poems reported in the survey analysis appear to fail. On the other hand, care should be taken that poems chosen are not beyond the mental grasp of middle adolescents, for high school students who express a dislike for poetry usually give as a chief reason their own inability to understand it. It is clear, therefore, that a poem which is to have value in the senior's worship experience must be graded to his characteristics and capacities.

Moreover, as was suggested above, poetry should meet adolescent needs. The dominant need of the senior and the one which in a sense comprehends all others is that expressed by the term "personality integration". Chapter two above revealed that one of the chief functions of worship is its power to harmonize the oft-times chaotic forces within the middle adolescent and so to give inner poise and peace.² Furthermore, a value of poetry discussed

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 10.

2. Cf. Ante, p. 47.

in chapter three was found to be its ability to deliver one from the bondage of self, to enable one to see life in the large, to reintegrate a person within himself and with his world.¹ Poetry does exist that can effect a unity of life for the senior and can help him to see life "whole". Parts of Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra", lines from Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Renascence", stanzas from Shelley's "Adonais", Whittier's "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind" are a few examples of poems which are able to meet the needs of the adolescent indicated above.

Furthermore, high school young people need the opportunity of expressing the high idealism and lofty altruism which are striking characteristics of this age. As was shown in chapter three, poetry can release the creative power in youth, can show every moment to be filled with creative possibility, can stir an adolescent to action, and can enable him to realize his creative dream.² Worship, likewise, as was suggested in chapter two, may be the means of enlisting young lives in the enterprize of building the Kingdom of God on earth.³ Lines from Tennysons' "Idylls of the King" and from his "Ulysses", Edward Rowland Sill's "Opportunity", parts of Holmes' "The Chambered Nautilus", Maltbie D. Babcock's "Be Strong", and Frances R. Havergal's "Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak" are excellent examples of poems that challenge seniors to courageous Christian living in the present age and reveal to them the possibility

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1. Cf. Ante, pp. 73, 74.
2. Cf. Ante, pp. 72, 73.
3. Cf. Ante, p. 49.

of expressing their noblest ambitions. In addition to this, poetry which is to have a place in senior worship must be sincere, for above everything the youth of the middle teens hates hypocrisy.¹ It is not difficult to find poetry that meets this requirement, for, as Amy Lowell says, "The true test of poetry is sincerity . . ."² Moreover, the senior's aesthetic development makes beautiful poetry especially valuable as a worship material.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, it is apparent that one recommendation regarding the use of poetry in senior worship services concerns its selection in harmony with adolescent characteristics, capacities, interests, and needs. A poem, however, might measure up to this standard and still be an unsuited choice; for obviously it must be, first of all, good literature. What constitutes a fair method of evaluating a poem as literature will now be presented.

b. Standard for Judging Poetry on the Basis of Literary Merit.

A poem which is worthy of a place in a senior worship service not only must meet certain adolescent needs, as has just been suggested, but also must meet definite literary requirements. One does not mean to imply that only such poetry as the world calls "great" should be considered usable as a worship material, but one does mean it should be considered "good" poetry. Although there is very diverse opinion even among poets as to what constitutes a good

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 61.
2. See Ante, pp. 59, 60.

poem and although there is likely even greater difference of opinion among adult leaders concerning poetry that is good for worship, there are, nevertheless, a few generally accepted characteristics.

Chapter three above, in treating the nature of poetry, presented five essential elements of poetry, namely, emotion, imagination, rhythm, truth, and beauty.¹ Fundamentally, then, a poem to be used in worship should have these traits; but it should have more. Indeed, it may almost be said that the first requirement of poetry for worship is that it carry a message. Sidney Lanier declares: "First and foremost: look upon rhyme as merely the good garment of reason, and beware leaving the coat with no body in it."² Furthermore, Watts-Dunton in The Encyclopedia Britannica states: "The 'message' of poetry must be more unequivocal, more thoroughly accentuated, than that of any of the other fine arts."³ If the message is the sincere expression of the poet's heart,⁴ if it is expressed in concrete terms,⁵ it can be of great value in worship; for, "growing people are constantly in need of more language and imagery whereby to express their thoughts."⁶ This statement of Verkuyl suggests that a poem to be helpful in the worship experience must have, in addition to the five essentials given above and in

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 66.
2. Lanier, Sidney: *The Science of English Verse*, p. 296.
3. Watts-Dunton, Walter Theodore: "Poetry", *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. XXI, p. 879.
4. Cf. Ante, pp. 59, 60.
5. Cf. Benson, Louis F.: *The Hymnody of the Christian Church*, Lecture III, p. 118.
6. Verkuyl, Gerrit: *Adolescent Worship*, p. 185.

addition to worthwhile subject matter or a real message, good style. Gates says, "The words should be beautiful, lyrical, and literary, and the imagery suggested should be wholesome and Christian."¹ Moreover, if a poem is to be of worth to middle adolescents, its style must be clear and its message and language intelligible to them.

More important, however, than the considerations presented above is the matter of a poem's religious and spiritual merit. A poem may be good literature, may meet certain adolescent needs, may help the senior to build up ethical standards and establish a philosophy of life; yet, lacking the essence of spiritual truth, it can not be considered particularly valuable as a worship material. Since senior worship involves a relationship between the adolescent and God, it is necessary that poetry to be of help in the experience must present lofty concepts of God, noble concepts of Christ, and worthy concepts of the individual and humanity; for, "if spiritual insight, ethical vitality and emotional power be lacking, the loveliest of lyrics is not fitted for purposes of worship."²

If, however, such poetry as meets adolescent needs, literary standards, and requirements of teachers of religion is chosen, it may yet be of little benefit in a worship service. Obviously, it is possible for even a good poem to be so used as to be meaningless. How then should poetry be used in senior worship?

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1. Gates, Sherwood: Youth at Worship, Christian Quest Materials, p.14.
2. Weigle, L. A. and Tweedy, H. H.: Training the Devotional Life, p.36.

D. Recommendation Regarding the Manner of
Using Poetry in Senior Worship Services.

Possible uses and values of poetry in adolescent worship have been set forth in chapter three of the present study. The survey analysis reported in chapter four reveals that poetry is being used in a great variety of ways and, for the most part, wisely and beneficially used. Chapter three suggests general functions; chapter four, by means of charts points out specific functions. One observes, for example, that a poem may be a call to worship, and so may open a service; or it may take the place of a benediction and close a service. It may be the means of prayer and, as such, may serve as adoration, thanksgiving, confession, petition and intercession. "Prayer" by Trench, lines from "The Passing of Arthur" by Tennyson, parts of Brownings "Saul" and "Pippa Passes", the matchless closing chapters of Job, and the superb lyrics of the Psalms are suggestions of the type of poetry that can be used effectively in preparing seniors for prayer or in leading them in prayer. It is significant that about a third of the poems reported in the survey charts are so used.

Moreover, a poem may be used as the climax of a talk or as the climax of the entire service. A poem may be, indeed, the focal point of the whole program. Furthermore, it may create a worshipful atmosphere, may arouse a real interest in the music of a service, may be the means of dedicating the offering, and may prepare for the Scripture reading or may even be the Scripture reading. All these uses of poetry have been discovered in the

services examined.

Nevertheless, two functions of poetry, its power to heal and to penetrate the doubts of a scientific age¹ discussed previously in the present study, apparently are not being recognized. Whether the persons who prepared the various services examined were not aware of these functions or whether they could not find poems illustrative of these two powers, cannot be determined. Such poems do exist, however, and should be employed in services of worship as a means of meeting doubts and questions that often arise in the minds of high school pupils and as a means of calming and healing the distressed mind of a maladjusted youth. Poems capable of doing this latter are: "Whittier's "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind", parts of Wordsworth's "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey", Edwin Markham's "A Prayer", and lines from Matthew Arnold's "Self-Dependence". Illustrative of poetry's power to dissipate doubts are such poems as the following: lines from Browning's "Easter Day", his "Paracelsus", his "The Ring and the Book"; parts of Tennyson's "The Higher Pantheism", and his "Flower in the Crannied Wall"; Thomas Edward Brown's "My Garden"; and Bryant's "To a Waterfowl". Clearly, no attempt has been made to list all the poems which may serve helpfully in worship services for middle adolescents nor necessarily to suggest the best poem for a given function. Rather has one endeavored to show by a few examples that poetry can be used in a variety of ways in senior worship.

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1. Cf. Ante, pp. 69, 70.

The principal recommendation regarding the manner of using poetry, therefore, is that it be used in many ways, that it be employed not predominantly as prayer but that it be allowed to perform all the various functions of which it is capable. Moreover, when one recalls the number of poems used in the services investigated in a manner which could not be determined, one considers it necessary to suggest further that no poem be employed in a senior worship service unless there is in the mind of the leader a definite reason for its inclusion. When poetry is chosen with a purpose and function and is used effectively, it can be one of the most valuable of all worship materials.

E. Summary.

In the light of the findings of chapter four and on the basis of the whole previous investigation, this chapter has presented certain recommendations. It has suggested first of all that poetry be used in senior worship services, not necessarily more extensively than at present but that its present use be continued. Second, it has been pointed out that poetry must be chosen on the basis of adolescent needs, the merit of the author, and the value of the verse as a literary piece. A third recommendation is that poetry be placed with an aim or purpose in a worship program and that in various services it be used to perform all the many functions of which it is capable.

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study, as stated in the introduction, has been to investigate the use of poetry in worship services planned for middle adolescents. At the outset of the study, the investigator discovered that before the actual use of poetry could be intelligently investigated it was necessary (1) to study the religious experience of middle adolescents; (2) to investigate senior group worship, its nature and its function; and (3) to analyze the nature of poetry and to evaluate its effectiveness in the worship experience.

Chapter one, therefore, presented the results of the study of the religious experience of middle adolescents. The first phase of the experience considered was conversion, which was found to be of three types: one, a process of growth; a second, a sudden or cataclysmic experience; a third, a matter of decision or shifting of loyalty. The causes of conversion, apart from the supernatural factors which might be present in the experience, were discovered to be physiological and psychological. Moreover, it was pointed out that the age when most conversions occur is sixteen and that, strikingly enough, this is the age significant for the beginning of intellectual doubts. There followed then a study of these doubts. It was revealed that the objects most

frequently doubted are: the validity of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ, some of the attributes of God, His existence, and immortality. The developing physical, mental, emotional, and volitional life of the senior, and the dogmatic teaching received in childhood were presented as the chief causes of doubts in high school youths. Furthermore, it was indicated that doubts, if met frankly, may strengthen the adolescent's faith and may lead him not to accept but actually to lay hold of the fundamentals of the faith.

Proceeding then from the consideration of these two phases of religious experience, conversion and doubts, chapter one introduced a third phase, worship. This was designated as a climax in religious experience because it is not confined to the adolescent period and because it involves the senior's relationship with God the Father. The five fundamental attitudes - reverence, gratitude, goodwill, faith, and loyalty - were found to be particularly strong in the adolescent and thus to form the basis for his worship experience. In treating each of these three phases of religious experience, the investigator suggested that poetry was of value and indicated that its pertinence to the problem would be presented in detail later in the investigation.

Since this investigation of worship was from the standpoint of its nature, chapter two gave a treatment of the function of group worship in the lives of seniors. This involved a study of possible worship situations and made clear that a vital and constructive experience between the senior and God is possible only when a service definitely provides for contemplation, revelation,

communion, and fruition, when it has reality and both a religious and Christian character, and when, because of its planning, it has unity, climax, dignity, beauty, intelligibility, and conciseness.

Furthermore, it was revealed that many materials are available with which to build a worship program. Four materials, important for the present study, were discussed; and the especial significance of poetry was suggested. Following this, the principal values of group worship for the senior were presented and were shown to be: (1) the experience of repeated fellowship with the Father, and (2) the making of Christian character in His image. Specific examples of the second were found to be the releasing of personality from the domination of self or of others, the liberating of creative instincts, the giving of a sense of mission, and the integrating in an adequate way of the senior's entire personality.

Having indicated a number of worship materials which might be used with profit and effectiveness in senior programs, the investigator in chapter three gave a detailed treatment of poetry and its function in religious experience. The study included investigation into the nature of poetry and revealed that the essential elements are emotion, imagination, truth, beauty, and rhythm. Each of these elements was found to be related to the adolescent's nature and, by implication, to the nature of worship. Moreover, the chapter set forth the chief functions of poetry in the worship experience. It was pointed out that poetry may open the senior's eyes to the revelation of God in nature, that it may broaden the adolescent's horizon and give him the desired perspective,

that it may give quietness to a disturbed mind, that it may answer adequately the questions and doubts of teen-age youth living in a scientific age, that it may lead high school youth to deep experiences in prayer, and that it may release the creative forces in an adolescent's personality. In short, the appropriateness and the value of poetry in religious experience was clearly established.

In the light of the theoretical use of poetry given above, chapter four reported the practical present-day use of poetry as determined by a survey of representative senior worship materials. These sources included one hundred and fifty-five services, eighty of which used poetry. The one hundred and twenty-nine poems found in the services were placed in relationship to the opening of the service, the close of the service, music, talks, litanies, and responses, prayer, and the Scriptures. Moreover, the use was discovered to be prayer, meditation, gaining interest and attention, challenging, and creating atmosphere. The relationship and the function of certain poems could not be determined.

As a result of the survey analysis and in the light of all the previous investigation, chapter five presented certain recommendations regarding the use of poetry in senior worship services. These recommendations, with which the present study concluded, are:

- (1) Poetry should be used extensively in worship services for middle adolescents. The present use seems to be extensive enough and should be continued.

- (2) Poetry should be wisely selected as regards

author and type, the latter involving consideration both of adolescent needs and literary standards.

(3) Poetry should be used with a definite purpose in the mind of the leader and in a variety of ways.

When poetry is thus selected and so used, it is of inestimable value in the worship experience of middle adolescents.

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