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THE TEACHING VALUES OF AMOS FOR JUNIORS

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Dedicated to

DR. REBECCA RUSSELL PRICE

with gratitude for
her immeasurable help to me
during college and seminary days.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

THE TEACHING VALUES OF AMOS FOR JUNIORS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Reason and Purpose for the Study

The Bible, the Word of God, was given in its entirety to guide men into Life through Jesus Christ. It is, as Calvin said, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. But some parts of the Bible are less familiar to the average Christian than others, and are less likely to be used as a guide to faith and practice.

One of these sections is the Minor Prophets. One reason for the lack of familiarity with the Minor Prophets may be that they are frequently neglected as a part of a child's curriculum. The writer received the following replies from two outstanding publishers of Christian education materials for children:

"In our graded lessons for Juniors we have made only casual reference to the prophets you mention."

"Upon investigation, we find that none of our church school materials for Juniors relate to the Minor Prophets."

It is true that the Minor Prophets are not as easily adapted for teaching children as are the historical parts of the Bible that are full of stories, and the question arises, "What teaching values for children are found

in the prophets?" To contribute toward the answer of this question, the writer has selected one prophet, namely Amos, and it is her purpose in this study to ascertain what teaching values for Juniors Amos contains.

B. The Plan of Procedure and Sources of Data Used

From previously acquired knowledge the writer had considered the four minor prophets of Jonah, Amos, Micah and Malachi as having possible teaching values for Juniors, and had originally planned to use all four in this investigation. But after considerable amount of study it was found that Amos was rich enough in teaching values to constitute a complete thesis. Therefore, the remainder of the study was limited to determine the teaching values for Juniors found in Amos only.

To determine the teaching values of Amos for Juniors, the writer will first study the characteristics and needs of Juniors as they are evident at home, at school, at play and at church. This information will be found in authoritative literature on the Christian education of children. The objectives for the Christian education of Juniors which are determined by the characteristics and needs of Juniors in relation to God, themselves, society and the church will then be enumerated. These will be taken from several statements of objectives published by the International Council of Religious Education and by a denominational

board of Christian education.

The next chapter will be devoted to setting forth the teaching values of Amos which would help fulfill the objectives of Christian education for Juniors. These objectives will form a natural outline for the chapter. The teaching values will have been discovered through direct study of the prophet and through reference to commentaries.

The chapter of summary and conclusions will include some additional considerations and will offer some specific suggestions for teaching Amos to Juniors.

C. Definition of Terms

By "teaching values" is meant the content that meets the objectives for the Christian education of Juniors and that can be taught by methods suitable to Junior nature.

Juniors are boys and girls who are nine, ten or eleven years of age. The teaching values will be considered in the light of the average stage of spiritual, social, mental and physical development of boys and girls this age.

The study of the book of Amos will cover its message, the messenger it reflects, and the situation in which it was given.

CHAPTER II

THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF JUNIORS

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THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF JUNIORS

A. General Statement Regarding Objectives

All Christian education must have objectives in order to be complete, organized and effective. These objectives are determined by the nature, needs and experiences of the pupils to be taught in relation to God, self, society and the church. The Word of God reveals the needs of man; human experience witnesses the truth of this revelation and points out specific applications. The book of Amos is valuable for Juniors insofar as it contains teaching values that will fulfill the true objectives for the Christian education of Juniors.

Because this study is specifically about Juniors, their nature and needs will be considered first, in order to see many of the bases for the objectives for their Christian education.

B. The Nature and Needs of Juniors

1. General Statement¹

Junior boys and girls are those of the ages of nine, ten or eleven years. These children vary anatomically,

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1. Cf. Whitley, Mary Theodora: A Study of the Junior Child for Junior Teachers, pp. 58-61.

physiologically, mentally, socially and spiritually, and the levels of maturity in each of these aspects of growth must be considered by the one who would nurture them well. It is difficult to describe average Juniors because of the many variations between them. But in spite of these wide differences, there are many characteristics that are typical of most Juniors.

Every child is a whole person who cannot be divided to display only one aspect of his personality at a certain time. However, groups of characteristics which are especially manifest at home, at play, at school and at church will be considered in this study.

2. Juniors at Home¹

Juniors' parents have proudly and anxiously watched their children grow from infancy until they have attained the height of approximately fifty-three inches, but now their growth has been retarded. The parents are thankful for their children's good health, but they are frequently overwhelmed by their boundless energy.

Juniors are forming fixed habits, and it is hoped that their parents are training them in positive physical,

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1. Cf. Baldwin, Maud Junkin: The Juniors: How to Teach and Train Them, Chap. I.

Cf. Powell, Marie Cole: Junior Method in the Church School, Revised and Rewritten, Chap. I.

Cf. Whitley, op. cit., Chap. II.

social and moral habits. But the neglect of many children by their parents throws more responsibility on the church teacher. The teacher therefore should consider the whole child, because his development affects and is affected by his home life.

Juniors are exercising more and more independence within their own families. They need to be taught Christian respect for their parents, and to receive guidance in the wise use of legitimate independence. They need guidance in how to make their homes more Christian. Their increasing independence is due partly to friction caused by their immature judgment, their impulsiveness and their imperfectly developed sense of ownership. These qualities need development through actually and vicariously meeting life problems such as temptations to lie and to cheat in examinations.

Many Juniors of today are overstimulated, nervous and badly influenced because they are constantly attracted to radio programs, movies and reading material, many of which are negative in content. As far as possible they need to have their lives purged of these negative influences and to be given discernment to choose better attractions. They need to be introduced to wholesome materials and to be taught vital content by attractive yet sound educational methods. They also need a restraining hand, training in self control, and the quietness, meditation and strength which Christian nurture affords.

Thus the home is just one part of the Junior's world with its rapidly broadening horizons. The people he meets, the pictures he sees, his play, his recreation, his study and his church take him actually and vicariously to more and more experiences and places. The Junior manifests many more characteristics at home than those already mentioned, but these will be reserved for a study of other parts of his world.

3. Juniors at Play¹

Juniors show their true selves best at play, which is generally noisy and very active. Their quieter play may include elements of problem solving, language fun and collecting. They are competitive and gregarious. Their strong loyalty and gregariousness are manifested in gangs and clubs which may either help or harm their members, depending upon their nature. Children need training in discernment and moral courage to choose and stand for the right, whether it is with or against their gangs. They need positive and wholesome expression for their natural tendency toward play and social life. They also need standards for right and recreation so that they will acquire discernment to choose play that is consistent for them as Christians.

The church in its Christian educational program

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1. Cf. Baldwin, op. cit., Chap. I.
Cf. Whitley, op. cit., Chaps. I., VIII.

has many opportunities to meet these needs and thereby to bring the child into closer relationship to Christ and into harmonious relationship to others.

4. Juniors at School¹

The average Juniors are in fourth, fifth or sixth grade at school. A Junior may attend a traditional, conservative school that teaches the standard subjects transmissively, or he may attend a modern progressive school that teaches through creative child-centered activity. Or his school may be one that lies between these two extremes. The child from the traditional school may be obedient and thorough, though dependent and less flexible than a child from a progressive school. The latter may be more independent and wilful, though he may be very capable and have a broad factual knowledge. Both children need the stabilizing training in Christian character and Christian leadership which the church can provide.

Juniors have acquired certain skills and interests. They enjoy writing something that is not too long or laborious. They like to read almost anything of a simple vocabulary and of concrete meaning that lies within their

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1. Cf. Baldwin, op. cit., Chaps. I, VIII.
 Cf. Eakin, Mildred Moody: Teaching Junior Boys and Girls, Chap. V.
 Cf. Horne, Herman Harrell: This New Education, pp. 69-71.
 Cf. Powell, op. cit., Chaps. II, VI.
 Cf. Whitley, op. cit., pp. 41-56, 70-75, 102-108, 133.

actual or vicarious experience. They especially like prose literature which contains the following elements: heroism, action, people, animals, history, biography, travel, science, adventure and exploration, war and fighting, broad humor, mystery and the supernatural. Juniors are repelled by moralizing. Their literary tastes and their character are determined largely by the literature used in their schools and churches. Therefore, they need to be taught to read and appreciate the Bible and the finest Christian and secular literature which contains the literary elements that children enjoy.

Most music in the Juniors' day school is of good quality, though generally secular in text. Music is a fine medium of expression for them. They need this same mode of expression for their religious experiences, but it is tragic that many Juniors have never been introduced to such music.

"Good music is associated in many children's minds, not with the church school and its worship, but with other environments; and this when some of the loveliest art the world knows is at the disposal of the church, and is also well within the reach of even ten year old children.."¹

Juniors' chronological and geographical senses are now developing, so their horizons are broadened by the introduction of social studies into their curriculum. History is best taught biographically with characters representing certain ages. As children worship heroes of history,

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1. Whitley, op. cit., p. 45.

they need to become familiar with the finest characters, including those of the Bible and of church history. Geography is best understood in terms of places where certain people and animals live in various ways. Their geographical interest needs to be channelled toward a geographical understanding of the Bible and the church, and of the spiritual needs of people all over the world. Thus Juniors need to be taught Biblical history and geography, church history and missionary education.

Juniors love nature study; many like to collect specimens. Their love of nature needs to be directed to the Creator and Sustainer of nature so that they can have a concept of His relationship to the natural world which they love.

Juniors have very good memories which should be filled with valuable Biblical and other literary selections. Children tend to memorize verbally more than logically. Because of this tendency it is imperative that the teacher choose memory work which is appropriate for them, and that she seek to help them to understand the content of that which they memorize. Baldwin summarizes the values of Junior memorizing in the church school:

"Verbal memory is at its best, and for this reason the pupils are 'drilled' in the knowledge which should become automatic, such as the books of the Bible; outlines of the main contents of the Book; Bible geography. But the chief opportunity afforded by this characteristic is the opportunity to have the pupils memorize passages of Scripture and hymns which contain truths and commands of

value for immediate as well as for future use, and which supply them with a medium through which to express their feelings of love, trust, loyalty, praise and thanksgiving to God."¹

The Junior's imagination is vivid, realistic and matter-of-fact. He needs to have his imagination fed with the vivid details of the Bible and other good literature, and stimulated to creative expression.

Juniors like factual material, for they are literal minded, technical and exact. For this reason they need and like much Biblical material because it is true. It should be presented to them concretely and accurately.

Juniors enjoy broad humor. They are amused at the funniness of a concrete situation, such as seeing their dignified school teacher running after her hat which the breeze has swept away.

A Junior's reasoning power is weak; he thinks slowly when thought rather than rote memory is required. This necessitates that material be presented simply, and that his reasoning power be developed by being challenged with short simple problems. His limited ability to generalize needs to be developed through wider learnings and experiences.

Because children see only the most obvious relationships, and because their attention span is short, they need guidance in organizing their thinking, and they need

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1. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 12.

material of variety and of gradually increasing complexity.

Juniors are deepening their learnings by expressing them in writing, speaking and art. Many schools encourage creativity rather than copy or pattern work. Juniors need similar opportunities for expression of the religious learnings which they have gained in their Christian training.

The mental characteristics of Juniors have been considered in this section on the Juniors at school. Character and spiritual nature and needs will now be considered in the section, "Juniors at Church."

5. Juniors at Church¹

Rudolph Otto shows that there is a special aspect of human nature, the "numinous," which is distinctly religious. It cries out for Someone beyond itself Whom it can worship and with Whom it can have fellowship. Christians know that vital personal relationship with the Triune God is the only adequate answer to that yearning.

As children grow physically, mentally and socially,

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1. Cf. Baldwin, op. cit., Chap. I.
 Cf. Eakin, op. cit., Chap. III.
 Cf. Jones, Mary Alice: The Church and the Children,
 pp. 20, 21.
 Cf. Jones, Mary Alice: Training Juniors in Worship,
 Chaps. II, V.
 Cf. Otto, Rudolph: The Idea of the Holy, Ninth Impression,
 p. 7.
 Cf. Powell, op. cit., pp. 95, 96, 105-110, 178, 360-365.
 Cf. Whitley, op. cit., Chaps. VI, X.

so they grow spiritually. As they need proper physical, mental and social nurture, so they need proper spiritual nurture. Simple nurture should begin in infancy and should become progressively more complex as the child matures. Thus the spiritual maturity of a Junior child reflects the training, or lack of it, which he has experienced in home, school and church.

A Junior's concept of God is limited; he thinks of Him in terms of his own experience. To Juniors God may be a benevolent old gentleman, or He may be a hard disciplinarian. They therefore need teaching that will broaden and clarify their concept of God. Juniors need to know God as a Father and Friend: to worship, love, pray to Him, to depend upon and obey Him.

Juniors need experiences of worship in which they can express their natural reverence and awe before the mysterious and unknown. Worship meets several needs of Juniors: it affords the quietness and confidence in which they may find necessary strength and motivation for right conduct and service; it convinces them of the worth and victory of ideals; it gives dynamic to desirable attitudes; it is an avenue of expression of their natural gratitude; it gives them a sense of companionship with God; and it affords progressive training in worship.

Juniors need help in learning to pray reverently, naturally and intelligently. Children also need instruction

in prayer so that they will understand the meaning, use and requisites of prayer. The mistaken conception of many children that we can get what we want from God needs to be changed so that the child will realize that prayer is communion with our Heavenly Father, which communion includes more than asking, and which is answered by a wise Father who knows what is best for His children.

Many Juniors' conception of Jesus Christ is also limited and needs strengthening. They can well understand Him and experience Him in their lives as Friend, Savior and Lord. Their Christian nurture needs to be focused into a challenge to accept Christ as Savior and Lord when they are most ready to take this step. Children need this challenge at the Junior age because they are now capable of independent decision; they are at an age of spiritual awakening; they have a sense of responsibility and obligation which needs directing for the work of Christ; and their high sense of loyalty is conducive to genuine loyalty and devotion to Christ. Having accepted Christ as their Savior, they need to be taught the responsibilities, such as stewardship, witnessing and consistent Christian living, that are involved in being a child of God, and to be helped to meet these responsibilities.

Children naturally have many negative character traits which need to be eliminated and positive ones which need to be developed. Developing good character in children

is most effectively accomplished by Christian training and by the regenerating and renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

Most Juniors are still self-centered and they need training in unselfishness and in the awareness of the needs of others. They need help in developing self control to replace their former impulsiveness. Children respect authority, and they need this outward authority to train them in the way they should grow. But they also need responsibilities through which they can develop self discipline and trustworthiness.

The Junior needs training and opportunity to "live out" his high sense of honor in loyalty to Christ, the church, his country and wholesome groups. His strong sense of justice needs to be appealed to in order to understand the justice of God and the need for justice in human relationships. He needs instruction, motivation, and experience that will help him to choose and stand for the right at all times.

Juniors are hero worshippers and imitators. Their heroes are people of action, courage and unusual ability. They may be personal acquaintances, famous persons, or fictional characters. Children are indiscriminate about the character of their hero who may be unworthy of imitation. Therefore, they need to become familiar with worthy heroes whose example they will do well to follow. The church must provide good heroes for the children:

"The best kind of material for this purpose is furnished by the courageous deeds of the Old Testament leaders and the wonderful works of Christ.."1 Juniors need to feel united with Godly men and women of history.

At this time of habit formation the Junior needs training to establish certain basic habits. Concerning what habits should be acquired, Baldwin says:

"It is vital that they acquire the following habits: daily Bible reading and prayer; church attendance; giving to the local church and its missionary enterprises; total abstinence from the use of liquor, tobacco, and harmful drugs; playing fair in all their games; right personal habits."2

There are some further characteristics and needs of Juniors which should be mentioned here. They are capable of appreciating beauty, but to do this they must have contact and experience with beauty in nature and in fine arts. They are forming ideals; it is imperative that correct ideals be firmly implanted in them while they are still at a "plastic age." The same is true of attitudes: Juniors have "caught" and have been taught basic attitudes which may have been negative or positive. They need to have negative attitudes destroyed and positive attitudes built up in them through instruction, worship and expressional experiences. Juniors have problems about which they may be reticent and which they need help in solving. They need Christian

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1. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 11.
2. Ibid., p. 12.

instruction regarding that problem, plus the help of their own personal use of the Bible and prayer.

If Juniors are to come into a growing personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ; if they are to realize a fine Christian character; and if they are to find solutions to their problems, they must become acquainted with the Bible, the Word of God; for it is the Bible that reveals the means of knowing God and of living the Christian life. They need to recognize its values devotionally and practically in instruction, in worship and in life experience.

It is the child's personal relationship to God that is his adequate dynamic for Christian living.

"The 'something more' which religion gives to a child beyond what is furnished by scientific guidance in overcoming behavior difficulties, by character education, by ethical codes--that sense of companionship in striving for the best way, that confidence that in the striving there is available courage and help--how sorely it is needed by our children for the achievement of a character able to meet the demands of present day situations!"¹

A young child is like the first shoot of a young vine. If the vine dresser trains it carefully, he can expect it to grow well and to bear fine fruit. But if he neglects it, he may expect only a wild vine that will never become what it was meant to be, and that will cause trouble in the vineyard. Let us remember Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will

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1. Jones, The Church and the Children, pp. 20, 21.

not depart from it."

C. The Objectives for the Christian Education of Juniors

Having considered the nature and needs of Juniors in relation to God, self, society and the church, the next step is to crystallize the objectives implied by these needs and thus to have a basis for evaluating the teaching values for Juniors found in Amos.

1. The Junior's Relationship to God¹

"The great objective of Christian education is to lead each person to a deep personal experience of God through Jesus Christ."² Therefore, a Junior should be led to know God as Creator and Sustainer of the universe, which He operates according to definite physical and moral laws. The Junior should also be led to know God as his Heavenly Father who loves him, cares for him, punishes him when he has sinned, and forgives him when he humbly asks forgiveness. God therefore expects of His child love, gratitude, reverence, dependance, trust and obedience. Thus the child's former concept of God which has been limited should

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1. Cf. International Council of Religious Education: Christian Religion in Growing Life, Book II: Christian Education of Children, Tentative Draft, p. 210.
Cf. International Council of Religious Education: Goals for the Christian Education of Children, p.7.
Cf. International Council of Religious Education: Objectives for the Christian Education of Children.
Cf. Rosser, Pearl: Your Child Grows Toward God, pp. 5, 9.
2. Rosser, op. cit., p. 5.

now be broadened through instruction, worship and experience. The child should be trained in prayer as an experience of real communion with God, that he may develop the habit of daily individual prayer to his Heavenly Father. Closely associated with training in prayer is training in group and private worship, that the child may exercise reverence toward God and be aware of His presence. He should seek to do God's will in every part of life. Christian education, therefore, "seeks to foster in Juniors a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience, and a sense of personal relationship to Him.."1

2. The Junior's Relationship to Jesus Christ²

"All of our emphasis and teaching should be directed toward the great goals of bringing each pupil in due time to a whole-hearted acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."³

Leading up to this time of acceptance, and contributing toward the child's spiritual growth should be his growing knowledge and appreciation of Jesus Christ's work, teachings and life, with an increasing grasp of the continuity of the story of Christ's life. The Junior should respond

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1. I. C. R. E.: Christian Religion in Growing Life, op. cit., p. 210.
2. Cf. I. C. R. E.: Christian Religion in Growing Life, op. cit., p. 212.
Cf. I. C. R. E.: Objectives for the Christian Education of Children.
Cf. Rosser, op. cit., p. 11.
3. I. C. R. E.: Objectives for the Christian Education of Children.

to Him with love, loyalty and a growing consciousness of His will and help in everyday life. He should come to follow the examples of Christ, his Hero, and seek the help of Christ, his Friend.

3. The Junior's Acquaintance with the Bible¹

The Junior's reading ability and chronological and historical sense should be used to lead him into a new knowledge of the continuity of the Bible content and new appreciation for Bible characters. He should be led into a growing appreciation for the Bible itself as the Word and Revelation of God, and the guide for his own life. He should be trained in skill in handling the Bible and should be led to establish the habit of daily Bible reading and of storing many valuable passages in his memory. The Junior should also be introduced to extra-Biblical material that will help him to appreciate and use the Bible. Bible knowledge should not be made an end in itself, but a means of knowing God and His will for one's life and for the world.

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1. Cf. I. C. R. E.: Christian Religion in Growing Life, op. cit., p. 223.
 Cf. I. C. R. E.: Objectives for the Christian Education of Children.
 Cf. Rosser, op. cit., p. 13.

4. The Junior's Growth in Christian Character¹

"Christian education seeks to foster in growing persons a progressive and continuous development of Christ-like character."² The Holy Spirit is the means for the fulfillment of this and other objectives. He is necessary for regeneration of spiritual life. He is necessary in the nurture of spiritual life: "There never was a teacher who was more fully led by the Holy Spirit than was our Lord Jesus Christ and yet none ever obeyed the laws of teaching more consistently."³ As the Holy Spirit worked through Christ's teaching, so He can work through sound Christian teaching today. Finally, the Holy Spirit is necessary to give victory in the growth of one's Christian life.

"To be able to do what is right and good in the light of the teachings of Jesus is the essence of Christian character."⁴ The Junior's Christian teaching and experience should effect in his life a developing Christian

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1. Cf. Eavey, Charles Benton: Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers, p. 19.
Cf. Holy Bible: Galatians 5:16-24, John 3:6, 7.
Cf. I. C. R. E.: Goals for the Christian Education of Children, p. 16.
Cf. I. C. R. E.: Christian Religion in Growing Life, op. cit., p. 215.
Cf. I. C. R. E.: Objectives for the Christian Education of Children.
Cf. Rosser, op. cit., pp. 16, 17.
2. Rosser, op. cit., p. 16.
3. Eavey, op. cit., p. 19.
4. I. C. R. E.: Objectives for the Christian Education of Children.

character that manifests such virtues as self control, clean speech and thought, cooperation, unselfishness, obedience, helpfulness, honesty, courtesy, fairness, and good physical and moral habits. "We may expect Juniors to develop a wholesome self-respect that will lead them to be interested in discovering and making the best use of their abilities."¹ The commendable traits and actions of the Bible heroes, especially of Christ, will be examples for their own right living. They will pray and seek Christ's help in choosing and standing for the right. When they fail and sin they should seek forgiveness. The Junior should be led in actual experiences in Christian living through guided participation in life situations.

5. The Junior's Relationships to the Local Community²

The Juniors should be led to respect and appreciate the rights and personalities of others, and to be free of racial and class prejudice. He should be taught to assume his own home, school and community responsibilities, including doing his part in alleviating social and economic injustices. The Junior should be guided to live as a Christian before and with others, and seek to win them to Christ.

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1. Ibid.

2. Cf. I. C. R. E.: Christian Religion in Growing Life, op. cit., p. 217.

Cf. I. C. R. E.: Goals for the Christian Education of Children, p. 22.

6. The Junior's Participation in the Work of World Missions¹

The Junior's broadening horizons should be extended to include a realization of the world-wide need of complete salvation in Christ and of the alleviation of dark physical and social conditions in foreign lands. He should be led to assume his responsibility to give and to pray for foreign missionary enterprises. He should have a growing realization of his own opportunities for foreign missionary service that one day may result in serving as a national or foreign missionary.

7. The Junior's Place in the Church²

Upon confession of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, the Junior should be led to join the church intelligently and joyously, and to assume his privileges and responsibilities as a member thereof. The habit of intelligent stewardship should be established. He should be led to understand and appreciate the history and modern significances of the church. He should be given a concept of his church as a part of the whole church of Christ.

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1. Cf. I. C. R. E.: Objectives for the Christian Education of Children.
Cf. Rosser, op. cit., p. 19.
2. Cf. I. C. R. E.: Christian Religion in Growing Life,
op. cit., pp. 220, 221.
Cf. I. C. R. E.: Objectives for the Christian Education of Children.
Cf. Rosser, op. cit., p. 15.

8. The Junior's Philosophy of Life¹

The Junior's Christian training should effect in him a strong faith in God's purposes for man and for the universe, and in their ultimate complete triumph in the second coming of Christ. He is developing "...an appreciation of that part of God's plan which provides for our continuing life with Him here and hereafter."² The Junior should be convinced that Christ and His way demands his allegiance, though the wrong may seem temporarily victorious.

Thus in Christian education:

"The child is asked to become what it is natural for him to be as a follower of Jesus Christ. He is to be asked to do what is within his power to do. He is to be asked to learn what will benefit him most at his age, and prove to be a foundation for future religious education."³

D. Summary

The teaching values for Juniors found in Amos will be those which help to meet true objectives for the religious education of Juniors. These objectives are determined by the nature and needs of Juniors in relation to God, self, society and the church.

The whole child must be considered by the Christian

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1. Cf. I. C. R. E.: Christian Religion in Growing Life, op cit., p. 222.
Cf. Rosser, op. cit., p. 17.
2. Rosser, op. cit., p. 17.
3. Powell, op. cit., pp. 18, 19.

educator who would teach him effectively. Because of the large place a child's home plays in his life, he needs guidance in what he can do toward establishing a more Christian home.

It is natural for Juniors to play. They need training to help them realize and apply standards of play that are consistent for Christian boys and girls.

The Juniors' developing abilities which have been demonstrated at school need to find their highest expression in Christian learning and activities. Their new love for reading needs to be directed toward personal habitual Bible reading, and an acquaintance with fine Christian literature that contains elements that appeal to Juniors. Their new geographical and historical knowledge needs to be expanded to include Biblical and church history and geography. Their hero worship should find expression in acquaintance with fine heroes of the Bible and of church history. Their excellent memories should be stored with vital selections from scripture and literature.

The Juniors' vivid imaginations and their love for factual knowledge should be met with vivid details from the Bible, and should be utilized in the creative expression of their Christian teachings. Because they are concrete-minded and have weak reasoning power, they need teaching that is simple and direct.

Children need spiritual nurture just as they need

physical, mental and social nurture.

Juniors need an enlarged concept of God and relationship to Him as Father and Friend to Whom they owe worship, love, dependence and obedience. They need training in and experiences of worship that will give them a sense of closeness to God and motivation to do His will. They need training in group and private prayer: its meaning and practice.

Juniors need to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, to follow Him as their Hero and to trust Him as their Friend and Helper. They need to realize and meet the responsibilities which are involved in their being children of God.

Juniors need the development of Christian character through Christian training and the regenerating and renewing power of the Holy Spirit. This should result in such qualities as moral courage, self-control, ability to choose and do the right and positive physical and moral habits.

In order to have a growing experience with God through Christ and to know and do His will for their lives, Juniors need a working knowledge of the Bible: its characters, content and values for today.

The objectives for the Christian education of Juniors are to lead them into:

1. A personal relationship to God that will involve love,

obedience, reverence, trust and service to Him. They should worship and pray to Him, and be conscious of Him and His will for them.

2. A personal relationship to Christ Jesus, their Savior, Lord, Friend, Hero and Example. They should have a growing knowledge and appreciation of His life and work.
3. A working knowledge and appreciation of the Bible, and memorization of fine passages.
4. Growing Christian character that demonstrates ability to choose and do the right in the light of Christ's teachings.
5. Growing appreciation of the personalities and needs and rights of other people, the assumption of responsibilities at home, school, church and all parts of the community, which responsibilities include living as a Christian and seeking to win others to Christ.
6. Growing realization of the world-wide need of complete salvation in Jesus Christ, and establishment of habits of prayer and stewardship to meet that need.
7. Church membership upon confession of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; knowledge and appreciation of church history and functions; enjoying privileges and meeting responsibilities such as membership involves.

The teaching values of Amos which contribute to meeting these objectives are those which are suitable for Juniors. Our next step is to determine what Amos offers to help realize these objectives.

CHAPTER III

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A. Introduction

Amos was a shepherd of Tekoa who lived during the reign of Uzziah of Judah. In obedience to the call of God he journeyed northward to Israel to warn her of the judgment that she was bringing upon herself because of her manifold transgressions, to show her how she might even yet return to God, and to give a brief picture of the blessing that would come to the remnant who would return. In spite of opposition and the apparent irreceptivity of his audience, Amos steadfastly continued to declare the Word of the Lord.

What is there in Amos' situation, person or message that is suitable for teaching Junior boys and girls? How can the study of this book of the Bible help fulfill the objectives for their Christian Education? It is the purpose of this chapter to answer these questions.

B. The Teaching Values Which Fulfill Each Objective

1. The Junior's Relationship to God

The book of Amos contains material which can enlarge a child's concept of God. The child who has known

God only as a loving Heavenly Father may find here a God who is righteous and just and who, therefore, abhors evil and punishes the evil doer: ". . . Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof . . ." (2:6).¹ The Junior may then realize God's claims on his own life for righteousness and obedience which is just as imperative as it was for the dishonest and unjust merchants and judges of Israel.

A child will also find from Amos that God is omniscient: "Who declareth unto man what is his thought." (4:13). God is aware of everything about a Junior, even what he thinks.

God is omnipotent. He who created the universe and has power to sustain it also has power to judge the wicked and should be sought:

". . . Him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Jehovah is his name); that bringeth sudden destruction upon the strong, so that destruction cometh upon the fortress." (5:8, 9).

By learning of God's omnipotence the Junior may be motivated to seek Him and righteousness that he might be blessed rather than judged, and to trust Him who has power to supply all of his needs.

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1. All quotations will be taken from the American Standard Version, except quotations of passages suggested for memorization.

Jehovah is a God of authority. Amos reiterates the sureness of his message with the words, "Thus saith Jehovah." Juniors respect worthy authority. They can respond to the call of Amos to recognize and obey God as the authority of their lives.

God is eternal. He was the God of the children of Israel when He delivered them out of Egyptian bondage about 1448 B. C. (3:1). He was the God of Israel at Amos' time about 748 B. C.¹ He was still to be their God after the return from captivity many years hence. (9:15). Juniors can appreciate their oneness with the Israelites of twenty-six hundred years ago as they worship the same God, and their faith can be deepened as they worship One who is lasting and Eternal.

Even in this book which shows the Lord as a God of righteousness and judgment, His mercy and lovingkindness is revealed in the mention of Israel's past, present and future history. He had delivered them out of the bondage of Egypt, had led them forty years through the wilderness, and had finally destroyed the Amorites before them that they might possess the land. (2:9-12) In spite of all Israel's sin that would bring her certain judgment, she could yet find forgiveness and life by turning aside from

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1. International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol. I, pp. 640, 641.

her sin and seeking the Lord. (5:4). If she would hate the evil and love the good, God might even yet be gracious unto a remnant of Joseph. (5:14, 15). God promised to reveal His mercy in the future by restoring and blessing them on their land. (9:11-15). The Junior may be brought to appreciate God's loving-kindness, and further, to realize that it is because of His loving-kindness that we are all the more responsible to show obedience to Him.

The fact that God showed his sovereignty over the foreign nations (1:3-2:3), and that other nations were just as responsible to Him for their sin as was Israel, shows that God was the universal God, not just the national God of Israel. From this the Junior may realize that he and his nation are equal with all other nations and races in the sight of God.

Amos is suitable for experiences and training in Junior worship. A Junior's instruction and activities based on Amos may never be applied in his life unless they are given dynamic through worship. Worship can help a Junior to appreciate the attributes of God which Amos reveals. He can be motivated to express his relationship to God through allegiance, trust, dependence and obedience, and through serving Him who pleads, "Seek ye me." (5:4). The Junior can realize his responsibility to God to choose and do what is right in every part of his life, just as God expected Israel to live righteously in the market, in court, in

recreation and at home. He can be made aware of the needs of mankind as he compares the spiritual barrenness, perverted values and oppression of Israel with the similar conditions of his world today. He can dedicate himself to the service of God to meet these needs. Through worship the child can realize a sense of companionship with God as he seeks good, for then is God with him. (5:14). Finally, in worship the Junior can be convinced that God and the right will triumph as it was to triumph for the remnant of Israel that would return unto the Lord.

On the other hand Juniors can be made to realize the sin of "going through the motions" of worship irreverently, insincerely or inconsistently. A self-righteous child who attends church regularly and observes the Lord's Day religiously, but gets "A" in his Monday examinations by cheating may be convicted by considering the merchants of Israel who waited impatiently for the end of the Sabbath that they might sell their wheat ". . . dealing falsely with balances of deceit." (8:5). These same merchants may have come to the great religious feast at Bethel with free-will offerings (4:13), but to God this religiosity was a transgression because their heart was far from Him. Juniors, like the Israelites of old, need to realize that singing songs and saying prayers are no guarantee that these are accepted by the Lord, or that they will be spared judgment for sin.

Appropriate scripture reading and memory passages from Amos,¹ and hymns that express pertinent themes of Amos will be valuable media of expression for their worship.

The very story of Amos himself is suitable for these young hero-worshippers who may well follow his example of courageously living and speaking for the Lord in the face of strong opposition.

The Juniors' need of definite training in prayer can partially be met by the teaching of Amos. The most direct way to seek the Lord as He pleads in chapter five, verse four, is to speak to Him in prayer. A prayer derived from the context of Amos would include worship of the Lord, the righteous and just One who is Creator and Ruler of the universe, repentance from sin and allegiance to God. Amos' prayer that God forgive and spare Israel from the impending judgments of locusts and fire is a fine example of intercessory prayer. It was reverent, natural and meaningful. Here Amos knew God and really talked to Him. God heard his prayer which availed for Israel; He repented concerning the judgments and said, "It shall not be." (7:6). The fact that Amos did not pray that the certain judgment described in the plumbline vision be averted shows that he did not beg the Lord against His will, but recognized God's sovereignty and wisdom concerning what was best for Israel. Through

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1. Cf. Suggested memory passages, Post, pp. 43-45.

Amos' example Juniors can learn the value and use of intercessory prayer. They can be assured that God hears and answers prayer. These learnings can contribute toward a growing realization that "prayer is communion with our Heavenly Father, which communion includes more than asking, and which is answered by a wise Father who knows what is best for His children."¹

It has been mentioned already that Juniors may come to appreciate God as Creator and Sustainer of the universe through their study of Amos. Special mention is made of it here because of Amos' outstanding use of nature, and Juniors' love for nature study. Amos used nature in factual statements of God's workings. He also used it in imagery to express more vividly the desired morality and coming judgment. From Amos Juniors may be given an appreciation of nature itself as the Creation of God, and as a means of God dealing with man. They can also think through simple problems such as what Amos meant when he said that the Day of Jehovah was "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him." (5:19). A Junior's vivid imagination should readily comprehend that God warned Israel by letting caterpillars ruin many gardens, vineyards, fig trees and olive trees (4:9); that Amos

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1. Ante, p. 16.

prophesied that the land would tremble (8:8) two years before a great earthquake (1:1); and that God created the Pleiades and Orion (5:8).

By developing the Junior's concept of God, training him in worship and prayer, and increasing his appreciation of nature as the creation of God through the study of the book of Amos, the Junior is being brought toward or strengthened in a vital personal relationship to God.

2. The Junior's Relationship to Jesus Christ

The prophecy of Amos is of indirect value in leading a child to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord, and in guiding him to meet the challenge of serving Christ.

A child may realize his need of a Savior as he is convicted of the basic sins which he has in common with the Israelites. He, too, has failed to keep the statutes of the Lord. (2:4). Like Israel, he may have worshipped hypocritically at church, yet may have been greedy and unkind to his acquaintances. Though he may not have worshipped idols, he has neglected allegiance to the Lord and has not given Him the rulership of his life. Further specific sins will be treated in the sections of this chapter on the Junior's growth in Christian character, and on his relationship to the local community.

The loyalty of Amos to the Lord and his courage to serve Him by speaking His message in the face of opposition

may inspire the Junior to show this same loyalty and courage for Christ, although he may be laughed at for speaking and living for Him, and for taking his stand against common low ethical and recreational standards of his day. As a Junior compares the needs of Amos' world with those of his own, he may be challenged to serve Christ by doing his part to meet those needs.

A Junior must realize the responsibilities and obligations involved in being a child of God through Jesus Christ. It was because Jehovah had known Israel best that she was most responsible for her sins and was to be punished for all her iniquities: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." (3:2). Similarly, the Junior who has come into a vital relationship with God must be taught to meet his individual responsibilities toward God and man for Christian faith and living. He may grasp this truth better by learning the couplet:

"Light obeyed increaseth light;
Light rejected bringeth night."¹

Upon consideration of the message of God in Amos and the New Testament message of Christ, the Junior can sense increasingly the unity that there is between God the Father and God the Son, and the unity in their expectations

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1. Source Unknown.

of faith and obedience from their followers.

It is the child's personal relationship to Christ that is his dynamic for carrying out God's will, which is revealed to a considerable extent in the prophecy of Amos.

3. The Junior's Acquaintance with the Bible

Amos contains several teaching values which can be used to enrich a child's acquaintance with the Bible. First is the value of the story itself.¹ A story well written and well told will grip Juniors and will arouse their interest for further study of the book. It will carry lessons for their own life without moralizing, and it will make Amos one of their heroes.

A study of Amos will be one answer to the Junior need of acquaintance with wholesome vital literature that contains elements that attract Juniors. They like elements of the supernatural such as "Jehovah will roar from Zion" (1:2), the visions which the Lord showed Amos, and the action of God in nature and in the nations. The factual element of Amos will answer satisfactorily the Juniors' perpetual question, "Is it true?" They will admire Amos' heroism shown in his resistance and defeat of Amaziah before a vast opposing audience. They will like the wide variety of figures Amos used, as when he showed the certainty of judgment by

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1. cf. Story, post, p. 68.

picturing a swift runner unable to run, a strong man become weak, a horse-back rider not being able to deliver himself and a courageous man who has fled for fear. (2:13-16).

Their vivid imaginations will eagerly follow his references to lions, bears and snakes; to Amorites as tall as cedars and as strong as oaks; to wind and rain, thunderings and earthquakes; to rivers and mountains, land and sea; to pastures and wilderness; to city and country; to lazy rich men being devoured as a lamb is devoured by a lion; to war, fire, prisoners and captivity. Such vividness will also furnish ample suggestions for the Junior's creative expression of his learning. They may be amused at the thought of a man running from a lion, whereupon he meets a bear; he reaches his house just in time to escape the bear and, panting and puffing, leans his hand against the wall only to be bitten by a serpent!

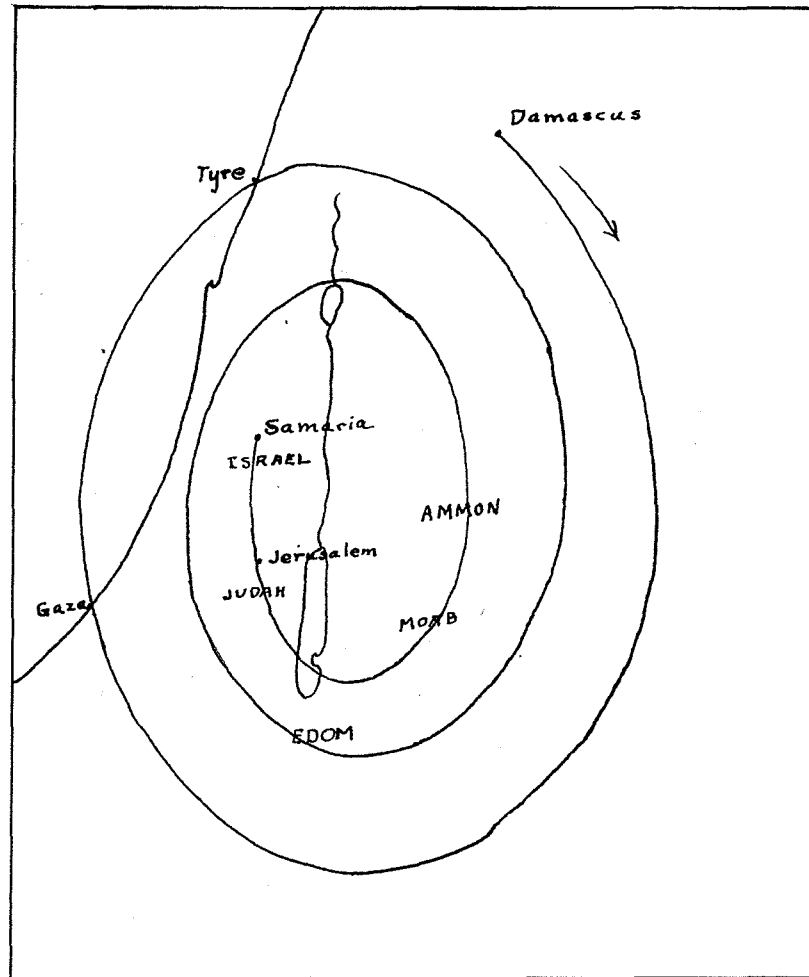
The Junior's liking for history will enable him to enjoy the historical elements in Amos. A Junior who knows something of Israel's history will like Amos' references to God's dealings with Israel in the exodus, wanderings, and in the conquest of Canaan. A study of the historical background in II Kings 14:16-29 would help a Junior to better appreciate and understand Amos. For example, the knowledge that Jeroboam I set up centers of worship with calves of gold and special religious feasts at Bethel and Dan will enable him to understand why Amos said, "Come to

Bethel and transgress; to Gilgal and multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning and your tithes every three days." (4:4). A study of Israel's history following Amos' time would testify to the fulfillment of the prophecies. In spite of the people's apparent security under Jeroboam II, less than thirty-five years later their nation and capital were completely conquered and they were carried into captivity to Assyria "beyond Damascus." (5:27).¹

The geographical elements of Amos would also appeal to Juniors. They would enjoy travelling with Amos in their imagination, and becoming acquainted with Tekoa, Jerusalem, Samaria, Bethel and Gilgal. They can grasp Amos' method of indicting and pronouncing God's judgment upon Israel's neighboring countries who were her enemies in order to sharpen the consciences of his audience so that they would be "ripe" for their own indictment and would have no answer for it. They would be interested in following a spiral diagram such as the one on the following page which shows how Amos came closer and closer to Israel in these indictments:¹

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1. Adapted from White, Wilbert Webster: Inductive Studies in the Twelve Minor Prophets, p. 24, chart XVI.



Amos contains valuable memory passages for Juniors. The following vivid descriptions of God will enlarge his concept and increase his reverence for the Lord, and will be of excellent use in Junior worship services:¹

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1. All passages suggested for memorization will be quoted from the King James Version.

"For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The Lord, The God of hosts, is his name." (4:13).

"Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name." (5:8).

The great respect for the word of the Lord and its urgent need for proclamation is encased in terms that a Junior can learn, understand and enjoy:

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is set for him? Shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all? Shall a trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (3:3-8).

That the Junior might know that the fear of the Lord is the most important thing in life, he should be taught: "For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me and ye shall live." (5:4). That Juniors might realize that one is not whole-heartedly seeking the Lord unless he demonstrates it by ethical living he may learn:

"Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph." (5:14, 15).

"But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." (5:24).

To deepen his faith that Jehovah will ultimately triumph over the forces of evil he may learn:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." (9:13-15).

A study of Amos' plea for a religion that is expressed in ethical living should answer many Juniors' problems concerning right and wrong practices of their own day. Specific practices will be studied in the next two sections of this chapter.

Through these studies the Junior may become increasingly aware of the timelessness of Amos' message which is pertinent today as it was in the eighth century before Christ. As a child of God in a sinful world he can feel at one with Amos, a man of God whose divinely inspired message to a sinful generation has made him immortal.

The study of Amos will require Juniors' own use of the Bible, which practice will give them increasing familiarity with the Bible and facility in using it. This may encourage them to use their Bibles independently at home for their own private devotions.

The fulfillment of the objective for the Junior's acquaintance with the Bible through the study of Amos will simultaneously fulfill other objectives, because from Amos one can learn the means of coming into vital relationship with God and of realizing a Christian character. From it one gains light on his relationship to his local community and his church, and on the need and message for world missions. The fulfillment of this objective would also contribute to a Junior's basic philosophy of life.

4. The Junior's Growth in Christian Character

The heart of the objective for a Junior's growth in Christian character is a keynote of Amos' plea to Israel, "Hate the evil and love the good . ." (5:15a). Following are some specific evils to be hated and some good qualities to be loved by a Junior.

Amos denounced the dishonesty and cheating of the sinful merchants of the time. He called Israel's enemies to behold the robbery of Samaria. (3:9, 10). A Junior should be shown from this the equal seriousness of lying, of not returning the right change after doing an errand for his mother, or of any other form of cheating, robbery or dishonesty, and he can be motivated to be honest and trustworthy.

Amos' prophecy that a whole nation would afflict Israel because she claimed to have conquered the "horns" of Karnaim near Damascus in her own strength (6:13) rather

than acknowledging the help of the Lord ¹ can help a Junior to recognize his own natural tendency toward pride and independence, and to acknowledge his dependence upon God and His help in his life.

Many offenses which Amos names, such as swallowing up the needy (8:4) for the sake of personal gain, may be resolved to the basic sin of greed. Greediness and selfishness are common sins of Juniors. Seeing the results of this basic sin when magnified should help them to think twice before grabbing the biggest piece of cake on the plate, demanding the best pair of scissors in the box, insisting on being first up to bat, or always wanting to carry the flags in the worship service.

Moab's sin of burning the bones of the king of Edom (2:1) was basically one of disrespect and meanness. Juniors can be shown from this the sin of disrespect toward the Lincoln Memorial; and the need for respect and courtesy for their parents, teacher and pastor; and for referring respectfully to a keepsake; or walking carefully near a grave that is dear to someone, though it may have little meaning for him.

The Israelites abhorred the one who spoke up-rightly.(5:10). Many Juniors likewise resent one in their

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1. Cf. Smith, George Adam: The Book of the Twelve Prophets Commonly Called the Minor, p. 176.

midst who is especially obedient or who objects to one who is doing wrong, and may hastily label him "Teacher's Pet" or "Sissy." They can be shown from Amos that their resentment has prompted them to do this against the innocent one who by contrast has made them feel guilty.

The wealthy Israelites were guilty of luxury and idleness at which times they drank excessively and engaged in foolish music and revelry: "They lie upon beds of ivory... sing idle songs to the sound of the viol...drink wine in bowls." (6:4-6).

Many modern Juniors have easily-earned money in their pockets and time on their hands when they hardly know what to do for amusement or recreation. On such occasions there is danger of their falling into mischief and trying to smoke, drink, gamble, or spend their leisure time in cheap commercial places of amusement. Through the study of Amos Juniors could be warned that idleness and bad company lead to these evil practices. In contrast they must be trained in self-control and good habits, and they should be given positive standards for wholesome recreation that is consistent with a Christian testimony.

The laziness of these Israelites who played and enjoyed food and fine houses which were produced by the hard work of others can be used to make Juniors see the need of their shouldering individual responsibilities and work, rather than continually modelling airplanes and then leaving

the mess for Mother to clean up, or playing baseball while Father mows the lawn.

Like the unjust judges who turned aside the way of the meek (2:7), Juniors may unjustly make the timid child always be the out fielder but seldom get up to bat, or always turn the jump rope but never be able to jump. But their strong sense of justice and desire for fairness will respond when it is appealed to upon consideration of the sins Amos described.

Like the cruelty of Damascus to Gilead by threshing her with threshing instruments of iron (1:3), even Juniors may enjoy seeing living creatures suffer. Their age old tricks such as pinning live butterflies to the wall may cease to be funny when they think of this in terms of suffering rather than of amusement.

Many Israelites had no shame about breaking their promises to return at sundown the garments of the needy who had offered them as a pledge to pay their debts. (2:8). A Junior with his sense of honor would rebel against such a practice, and would see its similarity to promising Mother that he will feed and care for his rabbits if she will let him have some, then not doing it after he has had them a week. He could, therefore, be brought to resolve to keep his promises, to be a child whose word is sure and who can be trusted by God and by man.

The sin of hypocrisy has already been

treated.¹ The sins of unconcern, enjoying luxury at the expense of others, and injustice will be mentioned in the next section.

Perhaps the most effective means of developing Junior character through the study of Amos is by making the hero, Amos, so vivid that the Juniors will unconsciously imitate him and desire to be like him.

What positive suggestions did Amos make to the children of Israel that could be followed by Juniors? Amos' positive exhortations are in five verses of chapter five. Two of these are to seek the Lord and live. (5:4, 8). This was the ultimate basis for the children of Israel to realize a good character, and it is the basis for a Junior today. Other positive exhortations follow:

"Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate . ." (5:14, 15a).

Two specific qualities of good are later mentioned: "But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." (5:24). Amos was general in his positive exhortations. It was up to his audience to make their own specific applications. It was obvious that the Lord wanted Israel to turn and do the opposite of the sins which they had been committing. But in the general statements there

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1. Ante, pp. 35, 36.

is a secret that gives a means of realizing this righteousness. To seek and love good and to hate evil is "half the battle." If a teacher can help a Junior to establish the attitude that he wants to do right, that he loves what is good and hates what is evil, she will have little trouble helping him to see specific applications of righteousness.

Through such a study of Amos many Junior life problems of an ethical nature should be met, and the Junior should be given discernment and desire to choose and do what is right.

5. The Junior's Relationship to the Local Community

The effects of the teachings of Amos on the child's character will also help to fulfill the other objectives, and may be particularly manifested in his relationship to his local community. There are some particular ways in which this relationship may be strengthened through the teaching values of Amos.

It was stated in the preceding chapter that the Junior needs standards and helps for making his home more Christian.¹ The Junior can realize the wrong of lazy, intemperate mothers who, like the "kine of Bashan," say unto their husbands, "Bring, and let us drink." (4:1b). When a Junior learns of the wealthy Israelites who luxuriously ate choice meats and drank whole bowlfuls of wine,

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1. Ante, p. 8.

and were unconcerned that they were doing this at the expense of many needy people who had little to eat (6:4-6), he can realize the sin of undue luxury in his own home. He can understand the wrong of enjoying black market hams which are therefore kept from those who can barely pay standard prices. He will not be unconcerned about other children of the world who are starving while he continues to enjoy an abundance of delicacies, though his government has requested that his nation eat less so that the starvation of thousands in Europe might be prevented.

Upon realization that the wealthier ones are those to be judged in vengeance for the treatment of the poor, they should have increasing respect for servants in the home and do away with any class feeling of superiority. Though the Junior is not the head of his home, he may have influence by speaking uprightly and not keeping silent about such evils.

A study of Amos may be used to help Juniors to live as a Christian in other areas of community life. They have been helped to see that all problems are basically caused by sin and are alleviated by seeking God and loving good. They should therefore be able to make valuable contributions to school discussions on social, national and international problems. They should be more willing to mix with classmates of other races and classes. They will work more diligently and give more intelligently for service

projects to meet the needs of others.

The teaching that Israel was just as subject to judgment as foreign nations should give the child the understanding that God is no respecter of persons or nations. God's question: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel?" (9:7a) shows the equality in God's sight of the negroes with the people of Israel. The fact that God had treated the Gentile Philistines and Syrians as He treated Israel: ". . . Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?" (9:7b) will contribute to the teaching that no race or nation is superior in God's sight, but that each is blessed or judged according to his righteousness or sin.

The Junior's sense of justice may be exerted toward objecting to unjust discrimination against certain races, classes or individuals in his community. Like the abhorred reprovener "in the gate" (5:10) who protested the unjust treatment of minorities and of the meek in Amos' time, the child may show real courage in taking his stand with the lame child whom the children call "Limp-leg," or with Imoru who is always last to be chosen on a team simply because he is Japanese. His own desire to "belong" can arouse in him a sympathy for one who is not a part of a group, and help him to become one.

The height of a child's service to his community

would be to follow Amos himself in his efforts to win others to the Lord and away from sin and judgment. A Junior can be challenged to live and speak for the Lord and definitely seek to win his friends in this way.

Many Juniors have a generous amount of money which has either been given them or which they have earned by delivering groceries, selling papers, etc. They may be shown from Amos their responsibility to use it wisely rather than to spend it lavishly and selfishly on sweets, toys, or idle and harmful amusements. A Junior may see that though this money is his, it is his responsibility to use it for others who need physical and spiritual help.

Therefore, if these teachings from Amos are emphasized, the child's right relationship to others at home, school, on the playground and other areas of his local community will be strengthened.

6. The Junior's Participation in the Work of World Missions

Amos was a foreign missionary. He left his own home, friends and occupation and went to another nation to proclaim the word of the Lord. He was called of God by a simple command: "Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." (7:14b). He was not favored with professional training for the work, for he had been neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. (7:14). Yet God had trained him for He used his experiences and observations as a shepherd to impress him with the sin

of a nation and its need for repentance and turning to God. His contact with nature gave him vivid illustrations for his sermons. The time he had as a shepherd gave him time to think and meditate and to be alone with God. His outdoor life gave him ruggedness of body and temperament that prepared him to endure hardness in Israel. His contact with people as he sold his wool impressed him with their sin and the certain judgment that they were bringing upon themselves. It was his passion for their salvation from judgment and for the honor of the Lord that made him such a strong preacher of judgment. It was his faith and faithfulness that kept him going in the face of discouraging opposition.

Therefore, from the study of Amos Juniors can be challenged to serve God as a missionary. They are not too young to hear His call and to respond with a dedication of their lives to serve Him in this way:

"Ninety percent of all missionaries heard the call to the mission field before they were twelve. This should be a challenge to teachers of Juniors."¹

Juniors can be inspired to be faithful in their tasks now, realizing that all this is a training for future service. The elements of the missionary message can be impressed upon them: the seriousness of sin and the certain judgment which it brings; the call to return unto the Lord "that ye may

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1. Mears, Henrietta C.: Stories of the Prophets, Great Heroes of the Old Testament Series, Vol. III, Pt. II: Junior Teachers Textbook, p. 86.

live" (5:14); and the heart attitude of seeking good and hating evil that is imperative for a Christian. They can see that true missionary work will result in alleviating dark physical and social conditions of a community.

But the value of Amos in contributing toward the Junior's part in world missions is not only for the Junior's future. He may be taught of others who followed the example of Amos through history, and so appreciate the work of missionaries today. He may realize the similarity of the needs of the world today with those set forth by Amos concerning his world. As Amos prayed for God's mercy upon Israel, so the Junior may pray for God's mercy upon modern nations. He may shoulder the responsibilities of habitual prayer and giving offerings for the work of world missions.

7. The Junior's Place in the Church

Amos' message was largely to those who already had religious habits and who regularly attended religious meetings, but whose religiosity was not confirmed by a real seeking after God or by a consistent life. The resulting message to them was:

"I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream."
(5:21-24).

A Junior may be led to see from this that churchiness to-day is meaningless unless the child really wants to find God and to do right. He should feel his responsibility to show by his life that he is a Christian. Then only will his religious habits of church attendance, offerings, prayer, Bible reading and singing be acceptable to God.

8. The Junior's Philosophy of Life

To a Junior evil may seem to prosper today as it did for the sinful revellers of Amos' day. Yet through his study of Amos he can have a growing conviction that seeking God and His good way is the right way--the way of life and blessing. Amos prophesied that God might be gracious to the remnant that would seek Him. The prophecy also promised return from captivity, raising of the fallen tabernacle and definite blessing in the land from which they would not again be plucked up.(9:11-15). As some of this prophecy for Israel is still future, there is also for the Junior both near and future reward for his righteousness.

On the other hand, Amos showed that evil doers would receive certain severe judgment. Such judgment for Israel was to include conquest and captivity by a foreign nation (5:29; 6:14), and a famine of the Word of the Lord. (8:11, 12). There would also be a dreadful day of Jehovah that would involve astronomical disturbances:

"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will cause the sun

to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." (8:9).

There would be great sorrow and mourning such as that for an only son. (8:10). Juniors can therefore have a growing conviction that sin brings certain judgment.

God had a definite purpose for Israel. The Israelites were to possess the land of Canaan and to observe the law of God and keep His statutes (2:4, 5, 10), but as a nation they failed. This purpose for Israel is an example of the fact that God has a purpose for nations today. Likewise, God's purpose for Amos to be prophet of Israel is an example of the fact that He has a purpose for all individuals. A Junior may appreciate the fact of God's definite purposes for the world and for himself, and he can pledge himself to take his responsibilities toward fulfilling God's will.

Therefore, through the study of Amos a Junior may be led into a growing allegiance to God and His righteousness.

C. Summary

Amos contains many teaching values that will contribute toward fulfilling the objectives of Christian education for Juniors.

The Junior's concept of God may be strengthened by learning from Amos that He is righteous, merciful, omniscient, omnipotent, eternal and universal. The worship

values of Amos for Juniors will give dynamic to the instruction they have received in their study. On the other hand, Juniors may be made to see the sin of hypocritical worship. The story and memory passages of Amos are very usable in the worship periods. The content and examples of Amos will offer Juniors training in the meaning and use of prayer. Amos' many figures from nature will give Juniors a new appreciation of God as Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of the universe.

The prophecy of Amos can contribute indirectly to leading a child to know Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Through his study a child may experience a conviction of sin that will show him his need of a Savior. Amos' loyalty to the Lord can inspire the Junior to be equally loyal as a servant of Jesus Christ in spite of any opposition from his acquaintances. It is the child's relationship to Christ that is his dynamic for obeying the will of God.

There are many teaching values in Amos which can be used to enrich his acquaintance with the Bible. The fine story of Amos well told will arouse his interest and motivate him for further study of this book. Amos contains literary elements that children love and that can therefore serve to acquaint them with wholesome literature that can be made attractive to them. Some of these elements are heroism, the supernatural, vivid details, history and

geography. Amos contains memory passages that will be attractive and vital for Juniors to memorize. The timelessness of Amos' message can help the children to feel at one with this heroic man of God.

The study of Amos, with his plea to hate the evil and love the good can contribute to the Junior's growth in Christian character. This basic attitude of loving good will help a Junior to understand Amos' specific lessons of honesty, humility, unselfishness, respect, moral courage, diligence, thrift, justice, kindness, trustworthiness and concern for the needs of others. The example of the hero, Amos, in his loyalty and obedience to God can be one of the best influences toward improving the child's Christian character. Amos' exhortation to seek the Lord and live suggests the basis for Juniors to realize Christian character.

The Junior can be encouraged through Amos' message to live and speak for God in all of his community relationships. Amos' voice against idleness, undue luxury and intemperance as well as all evils give Juniors standards for a Christian home. At school the Junior can show his allegiance to God in discussions, deportment and on the playground. Amos' teaching of the universality of God and of God's vindication of the oppressed poor should result in the Junior's freedom from race and class prejudice. His increased awareness for the needs of others should result in taking responsibility to help them. A Junior may render

very high service to his community by striving to win his acquaintances to the Lord.

Juniors may follow the example of Amos, the foreign missionary, and dedicate their lives to service in one of God's mission fields. The elements of Amos' message can become a part of their missionary message. As children they may form the habit of giving and praying for the work of missions as they see the spiritual needs of nations today which are not unlike the needs of Amos' time.

Through Amos' charge against the people who had religious habits but who were nevertheless very sinful, the Junior may realize the need of sincere worship that is only acceptable to God as it is confirmed by a consistent Christian life.

Amos' demonstration of the dire results of sin contrasted with the blessed results of righteousness can deepen a child's faith that God and His way of life are worthy of his allegiance, trusting that God and righteousness will triumph over the rampant evil of the world, and will bring blessing to God's people, but severe judgment to sinners. The Junior may dedicate himself to fulfill God's purpose for himself and to do his part in fulfilling God's purpose for the world.

Therefore, the book of Amos contains a message and reflects a messenger that can help Juniors to know God, to realize His help in their lives and to fulfill His will by being a blessing to others.

CHAPTER IV

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING AMOS TO JUNIORS

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The teaching values of Amos which help fulfill the objectives of Christian education for Juniors were enumerated in the previous chapter. But this study cannot be concluded without some further considerations: first, as to how Amos is limited in its teaching values for Juniors and second, some specific recommendations for teaching.

A. Limitations of Amos for Juniors

The most obvious limitation of Amos for Juniors is its lack of teaching values that would bring a child into a knowledge of Christ. Amos contains no messianic prophecies. The only intimation of the second person of the trinity that could be cited is the indirect reference to Christ's final reign when Israel would be restored to his land and would no more be plucked up out of it. (9:15). Therefore, from the teachings of Amos alone a Junior could not learn of Christ's life, nor could he be led to accept Him as his Lord and Savior, nor experience Him in his life as Friend.

The context of Amos contains no teachings of immortality. All of the future judgment and blessing proclaimed by Amos pertains to the present life. The Junior

could not gain from Amos the concept of eternal life with God here and hereafter.

One difficulty in teaching Amos to Juniors is caused by the small amount of narrative in contrast to the large amount of hortatory material. There are few specific characters and there is little connected plot. But this difficulty can be overcome by constructing the story which is implied, though not explicitly stated in the book of Amos. A suggested story of Amos is included in this chapter. Further suggestions as to how to overcome the difficulties involved in teaching Amos to Juniors are presented in the teaching techniques discussed below.

B. Recommendations for Teaching Amos to Juniors

1. Suggested Methods and Activities

In a study of Amos, Juniors could make individual notebooks or workbooks,¹ or class albums. They may make maps of the geography of Amos. Writing a dictionary of unfamiliar terms would be helpful.² They could have discussions or write on such topics as, "What would Amos say if he lived in the United States today?" They may compare Amos with its historical background in II Kings 13:1-16:2.

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1. Cf. Peery, Agnes Junkin and Werner, Emily Julie: *The Child and the Book: Book 2: The Bible*, pp. 73, 74.
2. Cf. McPherson, Imogene M. and Taylor, Florence M.: *The Story the Bible Tells, Part I, Unit 2: The Voice of God: Stories of the Prophets, Pupil's Manual*, p. 48.

They would also find interesting a comparison of the elements of Amos' message with similar teachings of Jesus;¹ for example, Amos' scorn at worshippers proclaiming their free will offerings (4:4, 5) compared with Jesus' instructions against giving alms to be seen of men (Matt. 6:2-4). They could put some specific messages of Amos into their own words that would be pertinent today.²

Some further expressional activities may include: a frieze of creative drawings of scenes from Amos; making a panel on which is printed chosen key quotations;³ writing and producing a play of Amos' life, especially of the scene with Amaziah;⁴ studying nature in the book of Amos, and perhaps taking a nature hike to find actual examples of Amos' imagery; and making scenes from Amos with clay.

Some activities may directly contribute to worship services linked with the study of Amos. Verses which have been memorized may be used in worship. A prayer which has been previously worded could be used in the service.⁵ It would be worthwhile to study hymns which would be apropos to a unit on Amos. Two of these are "Dare to Be Brave, Dare to Be True" and "Marching with the Heroes." A picture study

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1. Ibid., p. 45.

2. Cf. Tibbals, Elizabeth F., Bible Study Guide for Juniors, Third Year, Course VI, Part 3, Pupil's Manual, p. 40.

3. Cf. Tibbals, op. cit., Teacher's Book, p. 85.

4. Ibid., pp. 95, 96.

5. Ibid., p. 101.



WILDE'S BIBLE PICTURES 756.

Boston Public Library.

AMOS. (From Sargent's Prophets.)

By Permission Foster Bros.

of "Amos"¹ from Sargent's "Frieze of the Prophets" would be profitable. The children may make a worship screen containing a picture of the prophet and favorite quotations,² and use it in their worship services.

Two further suggestions are noteworthy. It would be impossible for a teacher of Juniors to cover the whole book of Amos in a few lessons. To try to do this would result in either giving a mass of material which could not be comprehended, or in resorting to vague summaries and generalities. Therefore, the teacher must choose for a lesson a few outstanding specific messages. The writer found that a discussion of Amos' meaning in two or three figures of speech was sufficient for a lesson. Therefore, two practices are urged: select just a few teachings from many possibilities, and be specific: avoid generalities.

Some of the above suggestions have been applied in the following story, lesson plan and worship service.

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1. Secured from W. A. Wilde Co., 131 Clarendon St., Boston, Mass.
2. Cf. Tibbals, op. cit., Resource Sheet No. 9.

2. Story of Amos for Juniors

The Lion Hath Roared

A lion roared. The sheep that had been quietly grazing on the hill near Tekoa bleated and ran toward their shepherd, Amos, for protection. That is, all but one ran toward him, for the lion had crept out from the wilderness and, roaring with satisfaction, had suddenly snatched a small lamb that had wandered away from the rest of the flock. With a sure aim Amos quickly slung a stone at the lion and, shouting and waving his club, he frightened it away. Then he ran to rescue what the lion had left. But it was too late. Only two legs and a piece of the lamb's ear remained. Silently Amos walked back to his flock.

That night Amos could not sleep. He had been sorry to lose his lamb, but there was a greater reason than that. He wondered if God would not have to treat Israel and the other wicked countries just the way the lion had treated that lamb. Amos' eyes were shut, but he could see in his imagination many scenes that he had recently beheld on his trip to Israel.

Just a few weeks before, Amos had found another shepherd to take care of his fig trees and to tend his sheep. Then he had left for the markets of Samaria to sell his wool. As he walked along the highway that was travelled by merchants from Judah, Tyre and Israel he had noticed men doing some wicked things.

There had been the caravan from Tyre that was driving many slaves southward to sell them to Edom. Amos could still hear the crying of the little children and the groaning of the mothers as the cruel soldiers made them walk on and on toward Edom.

There had been the fine estate Amos had noticed. First he had passed its great vineyard where many people were working. He noticed that their clothes were very shabby, and many looked thin and hungry. When one stopped to rest, an angry overseer had struck him and made him go back to the vine he had been trimming. Behind the vineyard were the poor uncomfortable shacks in which the workers lived. Then Amos had come to the end of the great vineyard and had seen the house in which its owner lived. It was a large beautiful house of hewn stone. From within Amos had heard coarse laughter as of someone who was drunk. There were viols and other musical instruments playing, and people were singing vulgar songs. Amos had been indignant to think how lazy, cruel and sinful this owner

was to make his servants work so hard while he ate the finest meats and drank wine by the bowlfuls.

Then Amos had come to Bethel, the city where people worshipped the golden calf. It had now become the royal sanctuary where King Jeroboam II worshipped. One morning as Amos approached the city he could see smoke rising from many sacrifices that were being offered, and as he came nearer he had heard the priests announcing the free-will offerings that the people were giving. Amos watched silently. He was sure there was something wrong. These people seemed to be giving offerings just so other people would know it. They brought their sacrifices, but they were very irreverent. They were not really worshipping God. Amos realized that these people were hypocrites.

Finally Amos had reached Samaria. As he had entered the city gate the city elders or judges were hearing a complainant give his case. Amos had stopped to listen. A poor worker had paid a high price to a dishonest merchant for a bushel of wheat, but when he had examined it at home he had discovered that he had received less than a bushel and that the grain at the bottom of the basket was not good wheat but useless, rotten kernels. Amos was surprised when the judges of the gate refused to make the guilty merchant make right his customer's loss. But suddenly he realized the reason. The dishonest merchant had paid the judges a bribe so they would let him go without any fine. One of Amos' fellow-onlookers shouted a protest but the judges demanded that he be still. Amos walked away dejectedly thinking, "They even hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly."

Amos sold his wool in the markets and returned to Tekoa in his own country of Judah. All the way home he was thinking deeply. How could God overlook these great sins of Tyre and Edom? Of Israel? And even of Judah where the people had rejected the laws of God and were worshipping idols? Surely the Lord must punish all of these countries if they would not repent.

Ever since Amos had arrived home he had not been able to forget the sinfulness of these countries. So now today when the lion had devoured the lamb, Amos had realized that Israel would no more escape God's judgment than the lamb had escaped the lion.

Soon afterward the Lord spoke to Amos: "Go, prophesy unto my people Israel!"

Amos must have been surprised that God told him, just a shepherd of Judah, to go to the country of Israel and prophesy there. What would the people of

Israel say when he preached against their sins? What would they do to him? But Amos was as brave toward Israel as he had been with the lion. He obeyed the Lord and went to Israel, willing to say what God wanted him to say.

When he arrived in the large city of Samaria, he went to a crowded street, stood on a high place, and cried, "The Lord will roar from Zion!"

Those who heard him were startled, and came closer to see what he would say next.

Amos continued, "Thus saith the Lord, 'For three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof because they delivered up many people as slaves to Edom. But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyre and it shall devour the palaces thereof!'"

Amos' Israelite hearers were pleased. Some of them called to others, "Come and listen. He's telling how our enemies will be destroyed. This is surely a prophet of the Lord!"

Amos continued, mentioning Israel's other enemies: Damascus, Philistia, Edom. But the people became a little uncomfortable because every new country he mentioned was a little closer to home, until he even talked about Judah.

But when Amos spoke of Israel's sins the people became very indignant: "Thus saith the Lord, 'For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes. Therefore, because ye trample upon the poor, ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof. For I know how manifold are your transgressions, ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right.'"

A man in the crowd angrily shouted, "What right have you to talk that way about Israel?"

Amos answered, "God has spoken this message to me. How can I help but prophesy?"

Another man asked, "But what should we do?"

Amos pleaded, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Seek ye me and ye shall live.' Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out in rain upon the earth. The Lord is his name. Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you."

After Amos had preached in Samaria for a while he went down to Bethel. The people were gathered

near the calf proclaiming their free-will offerings. Amaziah, the priest, was offering their sacrifices. Amaziah in his elegant priestly robes looked very different than Amos in his simple shepherd garment.

With scorn in his voice Amos called, "Come to Bethel and transgress, and bring your sacrifices every morning, and proclaim free-will offerings and publish them, for this pleaseth you, O ye children of Israel!"

Those that were singing and shouting stopped to listen as Amos continued, "But your sacrifices and offerings do not please the Lord, for He says, 'I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings, I will not accept them. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.' God has warned you to return unto Him but ye would not. Therefore, Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel!"

One man boasted, "I'm not afraid of God's punishment. If it does come, I can flee!"

But Amos replied, "The Lord said, 'There shall not one of them flee away, and there shall not one of them escape. Though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down; and though they hide themselves in the top of Mount Carmel, I will search and take them out thence.' Behold, the day of the Lord will be as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him."

There came a taunting voice, "How would God punish Israel?"

Amos answered, "Thus saith the Lord, 'I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, and they shall make war on you and conquer you with the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land.'"

When Amaziah, the priest, heard these words he became very angry, and sent word to King Jeroboam II saying, "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel. He says, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land.'"

Then Amaziah threatened Amos: "O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there. But prophesy not again any more at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary!"

Amos summoned all his courage against Amaziah and said, "I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock,

and said unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.' Now, therefore, hear thou the word of the Lord. Thou sayest, 'Prophecy not against Israel.' Therefore, thus saith the Lord, 'Thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thou thyself shalt die in a land that is unclean, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land!'"

After Amos had said this, neither Amaziah nor anyone else tried again to stop him as he went on prophesying for the Lord.

Now Amos was ready to comfort those few who did trust in God and did try to obey Him. His voice rang out, "Hate the evil and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto you. 'Behold, the days come,' saith the Lord, 'that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the mountains shall drop sweet wine. I will bring back my people Israel from captivity, and they shall build again their cities and live in them. I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them.'"

And what of the people who heard Amos' words of judgment and then of hope?

Some laughed.

Some said, "We'll take a chance."

But some, the few who loved and obeyed God, though they knew they would have to go into captivity with the rest of Israel, were not afraid as they happily remembered Amos' words from the Lord, "I will plant them upon their land and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them."

3. Lesson Plan for a One Hour Launching Session of a Junior Study Unit on Amos

AIMS: To create interest and motivate pupils for a unit study of Amos;
 To give them an introductory acquaintance with the book and the man;
 To inspire them to be courageous for God.

ROOM: Have posted pictures of Sargent's "Amos," shepherds and shepherd life, oak and cedar trees, trumpet, war-torn cities, lions, bears, serpents, horses, locusts or grasshoppers, basket of fruit, and Millet's "Sower." Also have map of Palestine and surrounding countries.

PROCEDURE:

Worship period (15 minutes)

Hymn: "Dare to be Brave, Dare to be True"

Story: "The Lion Hath Roared"

Prayer

"Sword Drill" of Amos (10 minutes)

"Did you like the story? Let's find out more of what Amos said. On the picture rail are pictures of things Amos mentioned. As I call a reference, you find it and read it silently, then look for a picture of something Amos mentioned in the verse. Then we will speak of it together:"

1:2 --pastures

2:9 --oaks and cedars

3:6 --trumpet

4:11--overthrown cities

5:19--lion, bear, serpent

6:12--horses running

7:2 --locusts

8:1 --basket of fruit

9:13--sower

Who Was Amos? (20 minutes)

By recall from story or by reference to Bible, answer following questions:

"What kind of work did Amos do before he was a prophet?"

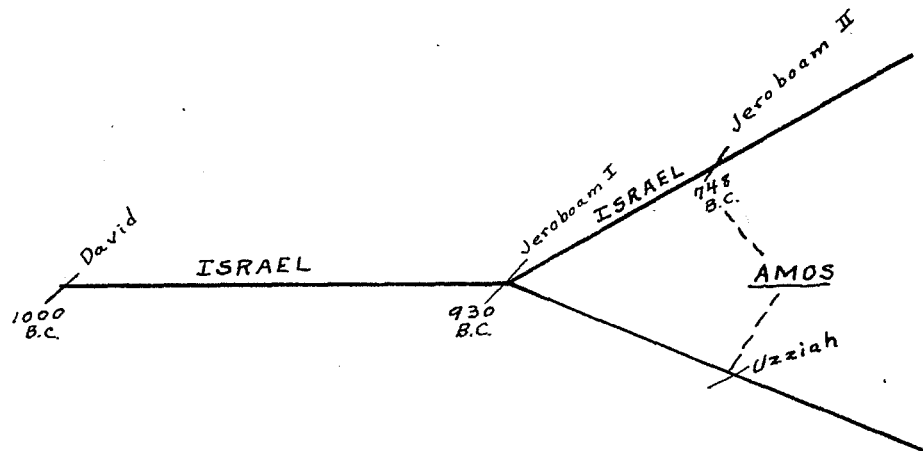
(1:1; 7:14).

Briefly discuss: "What is a prophet? Can you name other prophets?"

"When did Amos live?" (1:1).

"How did there happen to be two kingdoms and two kings?"

Explain briefly, using diagram:



"What is your home town?" "What was Amos' home town?" (1:1). (Refer to map for this and following geography.)

"What country is just north of yours? Amos went to the country just north of his own to prophesy. What was it?" (7:15).

"What other wicked country was mentioned in our story?" (1:9).

Unit Planning Period (15 minutes)

Plan activity. Assign specific duties to each pupil.

Suggested activity: Class album: AMOS, about 20"x30".

May include:

Drawings of scenes from Amos' life

Map

Dictionary page

Nature section (pictures and references)

Favorite quotations

Clippings, etc., which children have brought from outside.

Dismissal

4. Worship Service

THEME: Honesty

CALL: (two children): Amos 5:4, 8 adapted:

1st: "Seek ye the Lord."

2nd: "Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion,
that maketh the day dark with night;
that calleth for the waters of the sea and
poureth them out upon the face of the earth."

Both: "The Lord is His name."

HYMN: "True-Hearted, Whole-Hearted"

SCRIPTURE: "Listen to these verses from Proverbs as the
children read them. What particular character trait
is mentioned in each of them?"

Proverbs 12:17; 6:16-19; 12:22; 11:1.

"Amos showed how the Israelites were dishonest in
certain false practices. What false things were
they using that are mentioned in these verses?"

2:4--False gods.

8:5--False balances.

"What was false in what they did in 4:4, 5?" False
worship. (Briefly discuss and explain.)DISCUSSION: "What are some temptations to do something
false that we have today?"

Temptations to lie, cheat, steal, etc.

"How may we keep from doing these things?"

Prayer, courage, resolutions.

STORY: "Circus Pencils"¹ (following page)

HYMN: "I Would Be True"

PRAYER

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1. Original story by Alice Rose Farmer, student of
the Biblical Seminary in New York.

Circus Pencils

"Oh Ned-d-d," called Raymond unsuccessfully. "Wh--," he whistled in a second attempt to contact his friend, Ned, as he dashed down the steps of the school house after him.

It was lunch hour at Mountain View grade school. The students had finished eating lunch and were now wasting no time to find a place on the swings and turning bars on the playground.

"Want to go up town with me?" Raymond asked Ned as he finally caught up with him by the Jumbo slide.

"Can't. I don't have any note," answered Ned.

"Aw, lots of us go up town without a note from home asking the teacher's permission to leave the school ground."

"It's against the rules though," defended Ned.

"I have to get some paper. I don't even have a sheet left to do my arithmetic lesson on this afternoon. Please, come on Ned," begged Raymond. "But we'll have to hurry," he added.

"Well, it won't hurt to go this once," Ned reasoned to himself. Without further argument the two boys raced down the sidewalk together.

Noon hour was a busy time in the stores but Raymond pushed his way up to the counter and purchased the paper. On the way out of the store Ned stopped short as his eye spotted the new red-blue-green circus pencils.

"Wait a second," Ned called and Raymond came back to share the thrill and joy of looking at the dozens of red-blue-green pencils on display. Pencils, no matter whether they were white or of every color of the rainbow, with clips or without clips, with black lead or red lead, were as interesting and fascinating to Ned and Raymond as cheese is to a mouse.

"Those are really great!" exclaimed Ned who started to move away from the counter with a longing eye still fixed on the novelty circus pencils.

"Look," whispered Raymond as he poked Ned's arm and pointed to his pocket. Immediately Ned spied the tip of a red-blue-green object sticking out of Raymond's pocket.

"Hurry up and take one," Raymond half whispered and half motioned. Ned felt like his stomach had suddenly turned to stone and his heart was beating as if he had just run a three-mile race. The picture of one of the circus pencils lying beside the other bright ones in the pencil box in his desk at school flashed temptingly through his mind. Before he had time to think further Raymond had started out of the store.

Ned raised his hand up to the counter and slipped a pencil quickly into his pocket as he scurried out to the street.

The last bell was ringing as Ned and Raymond entered the school ground. The afternoon's lessons were a special joy and delight to Ned as he watched the red-blue-green pencil moving back and forth across his paper with an admiring eye.

After school, however, Ned did not feel like playing softball with the other boys and went into the house to work on his airplanes. He was restless waiting for his mother to call the family to dinner. After dinner he couldn't settle down at any one thing. Even the favorite radio programs did not interest him.

At last, he could not contain himself any longer. He walked over to the davenport where Mrs. Winters was mending. "Mother--," he said and then swallowed very hard. There was an awkward pause; then Ned took a deep breath and in one long sentence connected by many "ands" explained the unhappy event of that day.

If the stolen pencil was the cause of deep unrest in Ned's heart, it was the cause of deeper concern and sorrow in his mother's. "Is the stolen pencil the only wrong doing?" she asked in an understanding tone.

Ned thought a minute and replied, "I guess it all started when I broke the rules and went up town without permission."

Then Mother asked, "Shall we talk to God about it?" Ned nodded his head in assent and Mother and son dropped to their knees by the sofa. Ned prayed:

"Dear God, Forgive me for taking the pencil and for disobeying the school rules in the first place. Please show me what to do now to make it right about the pencil. In Jesus' name, Amen."

After a few minutes of silence and deep thought Ned spoke. "I can't return the pencil because I've used it."

"You might explain the happening to the manager and then pay for the pencil," suggested Mother.

Ned knew that was the proper thing to do but what about Raymond. He would have to explain that there were the two of them, and he did not want to tell on Raymond. Raymond would surely think he was a double-crosser.

Ned lived in the country five miles from the school. The next morning he tried to work out a solution to the problem as he rode along in the bus. Before school began that day Raymond and Ned were

playing marbles. In the middle of the game Ned suddenly spoke, "Raymond, I'm going to pay for the pencil I took at Kline's yesterday. I won't mention you unless he asks." Neither boy said more.

Again that noon Raymond went down town. This time he was alone. His pencil had not been sharpened so the solution to his problem had been simple. Amidst the crowd in the store he slipped the pencil back on the counter with the dozens of other red-blue-green pencils. Without speaking to anyone he slipped unnoticed out of the store.

When Raymond told Ned that he had returned the pencil in the same way he had taken it, Ned was a bit confused. That looked like an easy way out.

Mrs. Winters was doing her shopping in Mountain View that day so Ned did not go home on the bus after school. With hesitant steps Ned entered Kline's store and asked for the manager. "He is out of town today," the clerk replied. Ned thought for a minute. He could easily pick up two other pencils and showing the three to the clerk give her the dime and everything would be settled.

"To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The verse of last Sunday's Sunday school lesson flashed across Ned's mind.

"I won't take the coward's way out. I'll see the manager tomorrow," Ned resolved and walked out of the store.

The next morning Ned wished he could stay in bed all day. The gloom of that day's confession hovered over him as if it would smother him. At school the morning dragged by. Each minute was like an hour. Before the bell rang to announce the noon period, Miss Yager, the teacher, spoke saying, "Some of you have been going to town without permission slips from home. This is a rule that has been made for your protection and safety. You had better remember to obey it."

A vivid picture of Raymond and himself so recently running from the school yard without permission flashed through Ned's mind and he could not forget it during the lunch hour. Somehow he couldn't swallow his food. Oh, how the misery of this experience was causing him to determine never to have such a thing take place in his life again. Finally the lunch period was over. As Ned walked over to his teacher he decided, "I have a note to give her today so it won't matter anymore that I didn't get permission day before yesterday." Hastily he handed the note to Miss Yager and turned to leave, but suddenly stopped short, for he knew there was something that he must tell the teacher. Facing Miss Yager again, Ned told her that he had gone to

town without permission Tuesday noon. Ordinarily Miss Yager would have not given him permission to go to town then for one week, but there was an honesty in his face and an urgency in his eyes which caused her to believe it was important that he go up town that noon.

Outside of the schoolhouse, Ned prayed silently for courage to face the manager and proceeded on his way to the store. At the store Ned asked for Mr. Jayne and was directed to an office on the second floor of the store. A cold, gruff appearing man motioned for Ned to enter the office. Hanging his head and with his eyes glued to the floor, Ned began, "Mr. Jayne, I took a pencil from the counter the other noon when I was in the store. I was asked to do it by another person but I'm sorry. Here is the money and I'll never do anything like that again. Honest, I won't."

"I'm surprised," spoke Mr. Jayne in a coarse, unsympathetic voice. "But as long as you have confessed so honestly we'll drop the matter here."

Ned felt as though a thousand-pound weight had dropped from his shoulders and joy and peace flooded his heart as he realized he was now right before God and man.

C. Summary

Amos is limited in teaching values in that it could not be used to lead a child to accept Christ as his Savior because of its lack of any direct or prophetic mention of Christ. Neither could a child gain from Amos the concept of eternal life with God, because the book contains no teachings of immortality.

Because there is little narrative in Amos, it seems difficult to teach to children. But a wise selection of teaching methods and pupil activities will help to overcome this difficulty. Some suggested methods and activities are: making individual and class books, and discussing or writing on such topics as "What would Amos say if he lived in the United States today?" Children might enjoy making a frieze of quotations and of creative drawings of scenes from Amos. They could write and dramatize parts of the story. They would like to study nature in the book. Worship services linked with the study of Amos may include the use of memory passages, prayers, hymns and picture studies apropos to the message of the book.

The teacher will find it best to select a few outstanding details from the many possibilities for teaching contained in Amos, and to teach these well, rather than to teach in generalities or to present too much material.

An original story of Amos has been included in this chapter. Following this is a lesson plan for a one

hour launching session of a Junior study unit on Amos. The last suggestion is a worship service based on Amos which is built on the theme of honesty.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Summary

The teaching values of Amos are those which help to meet the objectives for the Christian education of Juniors. These objectives are based on the experiences, nature and needs of Juniors in relation to God, self, society and the church.

Because the Junior's home has such a strong influence upon him, he needs guidance toward realizing Christian standards at home. Likewise, he needs training that will help him to strive toward consistent Christian behavior in his play life.

Juniors' abilities demonstrated at school should find their highest expression in Christian learning and activities. The Bible should have a place in their reading. They need to become acquainted with great heroes of the Bible. They need to learn Bible geography and to memorize choice passages of scripture. Their vivid imaginations should be met with vivid details from the Bible. Their concrete-mindedness requires simple direct Bible teaching.

Juniors need an enlarged concept of God and a vital relationship to Him. They also need training and experience in group and individual worship and prayer. They need to be led to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Their Christian training should find expression in growing Christian character. In order to better know God and to do His will, they need an increasing acquaintance with the Bible.

The objectives for the Christian education of Juniors are to lead them into a personal vital relationship to God and to Jesus Christ, a working knowledge of the Bible, growing Christian character, harmonious living with and service to their local community, intelligent missionary endeavor, meaningful church membership and a Christian philosophy of life. The teaching values of Amos that fulfill these objectives are those that are suitable for Juniors.

The Junior's need for a broadened concept of God may be answered by Amos' message that shows God to be righteous, powerful, merciful and universal. Amos' worship values can be used to train Juniors in sincere reverent worship and prayer. Amos' wide use of nature will give Juniors a deeper appreciation of God as the Creator and Sustainer of of the universe.

By bringing conviction of sin and the challenge of loyalty to God, the prophecy of Amos can contribute indirectly to leading a child to accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

The child's acquaintance with the Bible may be enriched through the story of Amos, through attractive literary elements such as heroism, vivid details and

history and geography, and through memorizing fine passages.

Amos' own example of heroism, his plea to hate the evil and love the good and his indictments against specific sins of the Israelites can contribute toward the Junior's growth in Christian character.

Through Amos' message the Junior can be encouraged to live and speak for God in all of his community relationships: at home, school, play and elsewhere. He may be influenced by Amos' voice against idleness, luxury and intemperance, and his implications of class and race equality.

Amos' example as a foreign missionary and the elements of his missionary message will contribute toward the Junior's missionary education and motivation.

Amos' charge against those with insincere religious habits can impress the child with the need of sincere worship confirmed by consistent Christian living.

The Junior's faith in the ultimate triumph of God and righteousness contrasted with the judgment of sinners may be strengthened by Amos' declaration of the dire results of sin and the blessed results of righteousness.

Thus the message contained and the messenger reflected in the book of Amos can help a child to know, trust and obey God.

The main limitation in the teaching values of Amos is that a child could not be led to Christ from this

book alone because of its lack of either specific Messianic prophecies or of direct mentions of Christ. Also, a child could not be given the concept of eternal life from this book, because there are no teachings of immortality in it.

The difficulty for teaching Amos to children that is caused by the scarcity of narrative material in the book can be overcome by wise selection of teaching methods and activities such as making class albums, discussing what Amos would say if he lived in the United States today and dramatizing parts of the story. Familiar and memorized passages can be used in worship services, along with other materials suitable to the message of the book. A teacher will find it helpful to select specific figures and passages in her teaching rather than to try to teach too much and thus be forced to resort to generalities.

An original story of Amos, a suggested lesson plan for a launching session and a worship service based on Amos have been included in the previous chapter.

B. Conclusion

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (II Timothy 3:16).

The book of Amos is one vital part of Holy

Scripture. Its author is a man of God. His message is encased in terms that are vivid. His reiterations, "Thus saith the Lord," are divinely authoritative. His denunciations of sin are convicting. His warnings of judgment are inescapable. His appeal to seek the Lord is challenging. His plea to hate the evil and love the good is inspiring.

Juniors are teachable. They are sensitive to sin and responsive to appeals for goodness. They have vivid imaginations and they like truths expressed concretely.

Juniors would enjoy the book of Amos. It has been given for their learning. It is profitable for their instruction in righteousness. It can be adapted to meet their needs.

Therefore, the book of Amos deserves a place in the Junior's curriculum.

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