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TEACHING YOUTH
THE
GENERAL EPISTLES

BY

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

TEACHING YOUTH
THE
GENERAL EPISTLES

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

An analysis of the work of many Christian churches with their teen age people reveals the fact that the only reason the churches have looked to youth was for their own perpetuation. The churches must provide a plan whereby youth have the opportunity of reaching their best development.¹

One of the defects of so much of Christian education has been the adult-centered attitude which has characterized the church through its long history. Much of the program has been conceived in terms of adults.² In fact, since adolescents were differentiated from children, they were classed as adults and treated as such, although the entire development of their physical, mental, emotional and religious nature needs a different treatment than that given adults or children. In the past young people have been regarded only as a means to an end; they have been tolerated because they were necessary for the

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1. H. C. Mayer: The Church's Program for Young People, p. 22.
2. H. C. Harner: The Educational Work of the Church, p. 158.

recruitments of future church members and future officials. Church buildings were built to meet the needs of adult life with complete disregard for the youth of the church.

Again churches have committed two grave mistakes in their education of adolescents. There have been those who have endeavored to instruct youth in morality, ethics and religion without the use of the Bible. Many liberal religious youth leaders are coming to the conviction that religious education needs theology, that it needs the Bible as a motivating source of power.

On the other hand, there are large groups of Christians who have not been guilty of neglecting the use of the Bible with their youth, but they have fallen into another pit. They did not handle the Scriptures in a manner required to meet adolescent needs. They ignored the findings of modern psychology as it applies to adolescent development and the psychology of teaching and thus while the Scriptures were used, they did not help the adolescents receive the aid essential.

In this thesis, therefore, a study will be made of the General or Catholic Epistles (James, I and II Peter, I - III John, and Jude) with the purpose of investigating the possibilities of teaching them to young people.

B. Importance of the Study

One of the more recent books in the field of adoles-

cent psychology has the suggestive and striking title: "The Challenge of Adolescence".¹ Too few parents, educators, and religious leaders realize the great challenge the age of adolescence presents to those who are required to deal with this age group.

There are a number of reasons why the church ought seriously to be concerned with those of its membership who fall in the age group of 12 to 24. It is in these restless years when the danger of loss to the church is the greatest. If the adolescents survive these years in the bosom of the church, it is likely they will remain in the church unto the end. Dr. Harner asserts concerning this:

"Youth then is the Golden Age for leaving the church and its auxiliaries. If this seems too strong a statement, consider a few statistics. A certain denomination reported recently at the end of a year that there were 36,196 Juniors (ages 9-11) in its church schools. At the same time it reported only 32,518 Intermediates (ages 12-14). There should by all logic be as many Intermediates as Juniors in the church schools of a denomination. But the end is not yet! There were at this time 26,576 Seniors (ages 15-17) and there were only 32,042 Young People (ages 18-23). If all Juniors of some years back had been kept, there would have been 72,000 instead of 32,000 in the Young People's Department. Where were the other 40,000? Some of them, perhaps, were away at college and thus lost temporarily - or is it permanently? - to the church school, but not 40,000. Some probably had outgrown church school and were affiliated now with the church proper, but scarcely 40,000 of them! Where were the rest? And what do figures such as these mean for the future of the denomination?"²

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1. S. Wile: The Challenge of Adolescence.
2. Harner, op. cit., pp. 152-3.

All Protestant denominations have this problem and are forced to admit they are having serious losses of youth from their respective churches. Dr. Homrighausen, in a current magazine asserts: "Within the last ten years the major denominations have been losing up to twenty per cent of their young people."¹ Does this situation not constitute a mighty and serious challenge to the communions comprising the Protestant branch of Christianity?

The Protestant churches have always been missionary-minded. They support missions and expend millions of dollars in bringing the Gospel to those yet in darkness. But we have the paradox of Christian churches desiring to save those outside their own hemisphere and neglecting a large portion of the population of the United States. Of the one hundred and thirty odd millions who comprise the population of America, twenty-five million are young people. Here is a great, fruitful field for church members and workers. Surely this large group ought to challenge the churches!

If the churches of our land are convinced that democracy is the best form of government for our country under which men can enjoy those inalienable rights given by the Creator to all men, and under which the church can work with the greatest amount of freedom, then these millions of un-

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1. Theology Today, Vol. II, Nr. 4, p. 549.

churched youth constitute a tremendous challenge for the church. Many are convinced of the necessity of faith in a living God as the only means of nourishing and maintaining democracy.

"No conceivable amount of bombers and tanks will be able to guarantee the future for a democracy whose citizens have lost that which alone gives worth to every human being - namely, the belief that each man is a child of God."¹

The Christian churches further ought to be concerned about the adolescent members of their parishes because of the critical nature of the years 12-24; the time when a child is preparing to be an adult. It is the "becoming" period of life. Many maladjustments in adult life can be traced definitely to a lack of help in the adolescent period of life. An individual enters the period a grown child and emerges an adult. Entering it without a vocation, he emerges with a life's work. Three great choices are made during these critical years: a lifework, a lifemate and a life philosophy. The church cannot afford to ignore the meaning and importance of these years for a goodly number of its membership and should endeavor in every way possible to help young men and women in coming through successfully to adulthood inasmuch as the church has a great source of help at its disposal - the resources of religion.

Youth itself is confronting the churches by its so-

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1. H. C. Harner: Youth Work in the Church, pp. 11-12.

called "Youth for Christ" movements which during the last few years have attracted widespread attention. It is claimed by leaders of these movements that six hundred and fifty Saturday night services are held each week in various places of the world and these gatherings are drawing about 500,000 young people. Some of the outstanding leaders of the movement are the Reverend Torrey Johnson,¹ pastor of the Midwest Bible Church, Jack Wyrzten of New York, Roger Malsbary of Indianapolis, and Glenn Wagner in Washington, D. C..²

Here we have youth movements not sponsored by any of the larger Christian denominations, but rather by the dynamic leaders and originators of the movement, supported in part by an independent group of Christian business men. While attempts have been made to have converts affiliate themselves with some denomination of Christendom, these have not been brought into the fold of the various Christian churches.

Dr. Homrighausen asserts that:

"--critics of this movement are suspicious of its theology, its attitudes toward ministers and churches, its 'reactionary' supporters, its legal conception of sin, its lack of church consciousness, its emphasis upon decision to the neglect of spiritual growth, its 'blend of religion and patriotism', its mass appeal, and its ephemeral nature."³

A writer in the periodical, "The King's Business", while re-

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1. cf. T. Johnson: Reaching Youth for Christ.
2. cf. "Reaching Youth for Christ", Religious Digest, Vol. XI, February, 1945, pp. 68-70.
3. "Youth, Christ and the Church", Theology Today, Vol. II, p. 549.

cognizing these youth rallies as one of the great evangelistic possibilities of the age, points out certain grave dangers connected with the movement.¹

A survey made by the American Youth Commission of the American Council of Education makes the following judgment against the church:

"The lack of interest in church work now observed among young people is due more to an absence of vitality in organized religion than to the attitudes of youth."²

In the light of all of these challenges and of the great losses of potential adult members, it behooves the churches to examine their curriculum for youth and reconsider the problem of the religious education of the adolescent youth entrusted them.

C. Delimitation of Field

In order to understand the group of young people which is to be helped with the General Epistles, it is necessary to know something of the meaning of "adolescence". In its Latin derivation it means "to grow to maturity". Dr.

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1. "Today's Youth Evangelism - Is it Shallow?", King's Business, July, 1945, reprinted in Religious Digest, Vol. XVIII, pp. 89-90.
2. H. P. Rainey: How Face American Youth?, p. 167.

Douglas Thom defines adolescence as follows: "Beginning with puberty, adolescence is usually considered arbitrarily and purely for convenience as including the years from 12 to 20."¹ God takes approximately the first eleven years of human existence to grow the body, mind, heart and soul of a child; then He takes the next twelve-year period to turn body, mind, heart, and soul of the child into an adult who functions with all capacities of adulthood. Cynthia Maus asserts:

"Youth is an epoch of life. Young people are not adults in thought, in dreams, in their developed loyalty to greater work of the church until they reach approximately twenty-four years of age."²

Most psychologists divide adolescence into the following subdivisions:

Early Adolescence	-	13 to 15	years
Middle	"	- 16 to 18	"
Late	"	- 19 to 21	" 3

In the school system these divisions correspond as follows: early adolescence to junior high school; middle adolescence to senior high school and late adolescence to college - for those who continue that far. Cutten has classified these three stages as "the early or ferment stage, the

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1. D. Thom: Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems, p. 2.
2. C. P. Maus: Youth Organized for Religious Education, p. 16.
3. L. Cole: Psychology of Adolescence, p. 6.

middle or crisis stage, and the later or reconstruction stage."¹

Conklin defines it as follows:

"Adolescence may thus be thought of as primarily a period in which the personality is differentiated and molded into that which is to be characteristic of the individual in the years of adult life."²

Each of the three divisions of adolescence has its own problems, a solution of which is necessary if the adolescent is going on without a handicap into the next. Still the harmonious development within the entire period of adolescence must not be overlooked, for neither early, nor middle nor late adolescence can be understood except in their relationship one to the other.

The present study of the teaching values of the General Epistles, is being limited to the late phase of this age span of life, the years 18-24.

The last years of adolescence are important ones because of their critical nature. Young people in this age group are in the midst of making important adjustments to the world in which they live. They are entering college, beginning employment, falling in love, confronting numerous complex problems of a rapidly changing world, economic, industrial, racial, and international.

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1. G. B. Cutten: The Psychology of Christianity, p. 275.
2. E. S. Conklin: Principles of Adolescent Psychology, p. 3.

By the end of late adolescence young people should be prepared for the needs of adult life, which is a far longer period than childhood and adolescence combined. The proverb says: "As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined." The periods preceding adulthood are of vital importance not in themselves, but because of their influence upon later life.¹ In the establishment of a happy, normal adult life, the church and its leadership can render significant aid. In this process effective Bible study may play a vital part.

D. Method of Approach

The present study will begin with a study of the findings of adolescent psychology as regards the problems confronting the later adolescent. On the basis of them it will be possible to state what the objectives of Christian education of the church should be for its young people. Chapter III will consist of an analysis of the General Epistles to show what material is suited to the needs and interests of young people. In chapter four an analysis of the General Epistles will be made from the viewpoint of principles and methods as they apply to the teaching of youth.

Finally, suggestions will be offered as to methods of approach to the General Epistles. The book method, the

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1. L. Cole, op. citl, p. 646.

chapter method, and the word study method will be outlined. This will be followed by a general summary and conclusion of the entire study.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A. Introduction

It is a well established fact today that those who would teach and lead youth must have an adequate understanding of the problems and needs confronting young people. By general agreement youth is the happiest period of life. Yet this statement is not completely true. While youth does have the capacities for enjoyment, many of them are unhappy because they cannot meet the conditions of life which is becoming more complex, and because young people are being called upon to make certain adjustments which they have not had to make in preceding stages of their growth.

Workers with youth will be saved many heartaches if they understand the expressions of the physical, intellectual, social, and religious natures of the teen age. It is necessary not only to understand each individual but to have a knowledge of young people as a group as well. Concerning this Alfred Murray writes:

"The Christian teacher does not need a specialized acquaintance with any one division of psychology or psychological fact-findings, though each division of psychology offers valuable information. What he does need is a condensed knowledge of those general findings of psychology which will enable him to render a more effective service to mankind. He wants

to know what psychology can tell him about man, and man's response and reactions to stimuli, so that he can better present to that man the One who taketh away the sins (social, domestic, economical and political) of the world."¹

A knowledge of the individual and of the general characteristics of the group to which he belongs is essential for any teacher of youth in formulating his objectives of teaching and in determining the goals he hopes to achieve in working with adolescents. Dr. Howse asserts:

"Without the pupil there would be no need for the teacher. Of course, both are necessary in the process of teaching as are the curriculum and teaching methods; yet, the needs and problems of the pupils constitute the chief demand of adequate instruction and guidance."²

In this chapter, we shall discuss the problems of later adolescence as they result in the light of the development of this stage of life and thus determine the specific needs and interests of youth, 18-24 years of age. The standard books in the field of general adolescent psychology as well as the religious books dealing with the same age group will be used.

B. Problems Confronting Young People

The problems of adolescence may be grouped into eight areas³ of human interest and activity. These will be

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1. A. L. Murray: Psychology for Christian Teachers, p. 15.
2. W. L. Howse: Teaching Young People in Sunday School, p. 15.
3. L. Cole: op. cit., p. 8.

considered in turn.

1. The Problem of the Establishment of Heterosexual Interests.

At no other period in life, psychologists contend, are the psychological reactions of the individual so under the domination of the physical changes occurring within the body as they are in adolescence. The most important physical development of adolescence is sexual maturity.¹ Boys mature somewhat later than girls, but there is a wide range of differences in both sexes.²

The achievement of sexual maturity is of great importance to every young person. Sexual force has to do with all of life. It is the source for the manly and strong physique of the man and the power which gives woman her striking loveliness after puberty. "Sexual created energies properly controlled and focused make for a compelling magnetism."³ No normal and healthy life can be had without the proper functioning of the sexual mechanism. It manifests itself in professional skill, in teaching ability, in powers of profound research, in wide-awake salesmanship, in art, in practical homemaking, in patience under test, in endurance and otherwise. During the days of sexual powers the memory is at its best and the mind very keen. "Sex is strength." it can

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1. I. S. Wile: The Challenge of Adolescence, p. 32.
2. C. B. Zachry: Emotion and Conduct in Adolescence, p. 128.
3. D. F. Derstine: Manual of Sex Education, p. 114.

be either a source for dynamic living or it can be wasted.¹

After the pubertal changes have occurred there is a mutual interest on the part of the sexes in each other.² By the end of adolescence this general interest in members of the opposite sex is changed into an interest centering on one particular member. "The adolescent has, then, to develop first an acute interest in possible future mates and then to recover from the incidental effects of acute interest."³ After getting into more or less acute difficulties by which very often a normal development of the adolescent is fostered, the youth finally concentrates on one particular member of the other sex to the exclusion of all others.

2. The Problem of the Emancipation from Home.

Children are greatly affected by their homes. Psychological studies have revealed interesting differences in the personalities of children coming from the homes where the parents dominate their children or where children dominate their parents.⁴ The effects of home life and training are not only to be found in the high school but even in the college environment.⁵ Broken homes, caused by death or divorce, leave their effect upon young people. McKinney has shown how pupils

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1. C. M. Roan: Home, Church, and Sex, p. 163.
2. Wile, op. cit., p. 77.
3. Cole, op. cit., p. 9.
4. cf. P. M. Symonds: The Psychology of Parent-Child Relationship.
5. S. H. Jameson: "Adjustment Problems of University Girls Because of Parental Patterns", Sociology and Research, 24, pp. 262-271.

from homes of a low social-economic level are not only handicapped with poorer health than those of the average, but suffer from feelings of inferiority in addition to having fewer friends.

According to Luella Cole a healthy home should do four things for a child: a) furnish nourishment and shelter, b) give security against emotional disturbances, c) supervise the behavior of the child, and d) educate the child in "acceptable modes of response to social situations".¹

Till the time of adolescence the home has occupied a very important place in the life of a child. Here the environment was furnished for the most impressionable years of life. Benson describes its influence as follows:

"Children are molded by the sentiments, opinions and moral standards which prevail where they live and eat The home is the hothouse in which the tender plant is to be shielded and shaped during its most susceptible years."²

A child spends nine-tenths of the first ten years of its time in the home.

However, upon the arrival of the adolescent period a change in the relationship between parent and child must be effected.³ By the close of the period the adolescent must have developed into an individual who is no longer dependent upon the security which he constantly received during early

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1. Cole, op. cit., p. 288.
2. C. H. Benson: An Introduction to Child Study, p. 50.
3. Zachry, op. cit., p. 345.

and later childhood, but rather must cultivate reliance upon the security he can give himself. During the years 12 to 20 the youth must substitute independence for the former childish relationships.¹

Concerning the realization of this objective of independence, Sadler writes:

"In its accomplishment, which should be brought about gradually, parents as well as children must be reckoned with; in fact, every member of the family is concerned, the solution of the problem often being influenced by grand-parents, cousins and even uncles and aunts."²

Adolescence is the period of preparation for adulthood and no child will ever grow into a responsible adult while the parents continue to make the decisions for the adolescent. There are various ways by which the necessary freedom from parental attachments can be achieved.³ As children approach this critical period they should be allowed to handle money. With each year a greater sum should be given until at the eighteenth year the youth receives a sum which will supply all his or her needs. When adolescent sons and daughters are not treated in the way suggested, the failure to do so is liable to precipitate a revolt against the parents.

Another way in which this freedom can be realized is by permitting the adolescent to choose his own friends. If

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1. M. B. Leavell: Building a Christian Home, p. 116.
2. W. S. Sadler: Piloting Modern Youth, p. 172.
3. B. Carrier: Church Education for Family Life, p. 176.

Parents insist on selecting the companions for their sons and daughters, which would be a childish treatment, it eventually may drive them to rebel or crush initiative.¹ When young people choose unwise friends, parents should use such an incident for education in judgment of character. "As in the case of spending money, a shifting of control from parent to child cannot take place overnight; but take place it must, sooner or later."²

While adolescents are in great need of information concerning vocational guidance, they should not be dominated by their parents in their selection of a life's vocation. As a rule young people will welcome information and suggestions from their elders, but will revolt against being dictated to with regard to their work.³

The same procedure would also apply in the late years of adolescence as pertains to the choosing of a life mate. It is most unwise for parents to attempt to choose their future son or daughter-in-law. The choice of a marriage companion must ultimately rest with the young people themselves. How many unhappy marriages and broken homes could be avoided if parents had not sought to impose their choice upon their sons and daughters.

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1. Averill: Adolescence, p. 241.
2. Cole, op. cit., p. 297.
3. R. A. Burkhart; Youth and the Way of Jesus, p. 190.

3. The Problem of Emotional Maturity.

A concomitant of physical growth and especially of the maturation of the sex life and also of the expansion of the intellectual life of the adolescent is a noticeable development of their emotional nature. One of the greatest problems facing the adolescent is the need to control the emotions. Those acquainted with adolescence have come to the conviction that this age is being, emotionally speaking, a most unstable age. Dr. Ligon writes pertaining this matter:

"So many new interests come suddenly into the focus of activity that the youth necessarily over-emphasizes their importance and indulges in many emotional excesses. Many a girl cries her heart out and feels that life is not worth living because she has not received an invitation to an important dance. Many a boy is quite ready to end it all because of his failure to win the affection of some particular girl."¹

Despite the instability of the emotional life, the adolescent craves emotional experience almost as much as food and drink. Another writer in this field has described the emotional development in adolescence as follows:

"Adolescence gradually restricts and controls the outward expressions of feeling, but through early and middle youth the feeling activities are growing deeper and stronger, moods and sentiments are being developed, and in later adolescence the life of feeling is at its flood."²

Fear and anger are always significant factors in personality. They have far-reaching and violent physical reactions in the body itself. The digestive processes, the se-

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1. E. Ligon: Their Future is Now, p. 266.
2. Tracy: Psychology of Adolescence, p. 75.

cretion of the endocrine glands, and the flow of blood so necessary to a healthy body are greatly endangered by excessive fear and anger.¹ Children have little power to inhibit their emotional responses, but while the adolescent makes some progress in self-control, there is always the tendency for youth to permit their emotions to run away. Children have many worries which the adolescent must learn to outgrow.

The causes of emotional outbursts change. In the pre-school years a little child gives violent expressions to its feelings when things are taken away. During the first years of school life, real or imaginary injustice will provoke a child to anger while during adolescence injured vanity is the chief cause for irritation. In infancy children are afraid of noises; later they acquire the fear of snakes, water, dogs, and at a still later time it is fear of failure in school and inferiority, and in adolescence it is ridicule and sarcasm that are greatly feared.

The need for control over the emotions² is recognized both by those dealing with adolescents as well as by young persons themselves. Psychologists have by means of questionnaires devised tests designed for measuring emotional maturity and for helping adolescents to obtain the degree of

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1. W. B. Cannon: Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear, and Rage.
2. F. W. Stewart: A Study of Adolescent Development, p. 109.

control necessary for a sane emotional life. In the opinion of Dr. Sadler, parents and teachers share the greater responsibility in helping those in their teens to make the necessary adjustments in the control of their emotional life. Control may be secured by two methods, a positive and a negative. On the positive side this is accomplished by:

"...the possession of health and of normal habits of living, both physical and mental; and on the negative side, the avoidance of demoralizing influences, of too much excitement, of too many experiences that are injurious in an emotional state."¹

The importance of the development of the emotional life can be seen from the fact that when failure to do so occurs, it leads to various types of abnormal behavior. Neurasthenia, hysteria, fanaticism, feelings of inferiority, obsessions and phobias, moodiness, a psychopathic personality, are some of the "emotional deviates" which make natural and normal living a great strain or an impossibility.²

Since emotions are such a powerful factor, they should have been brought under control by the end of the adolescent period. For a successful adulthood, the emotional life must run strong and full and yet be completely under control.³

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1. Sadler, op. cit., p. 343.
2. Stewart, op. cit., p. 74.
3. Cole, op. cit., pp. 162-214.

4. The Problem of Social Maturity.

The gang which means so much to the social life of children reaches the peak of its prominence in the thirteenth year and then declines. However, this does not mean that youth are becoming less social, but that new interests and instincts are shaping their social life. Their sexual development results in such characteristics as altruism and self-sacrifice. There also arises a desire for public approbation that is strongly tempered by a feeling of shyness. In early adolescence there is the sex-repulsion that characterized later childhood prevailing with, however, a complete change of attitude in the middle years of adolescence; then sex-attraction replaces sex-repulsion.

Social contacts established at school are second in importance only to those of the home.¹ This is the time for the development of chums and when friendship on the part of young men often ripens into business partnerships and if this particular friend is of the opposite sex, it results in marriage. So adolescence

"...is notably a time of great social development and of acute interest in social matters. Until adolescents establish themselves securely in their social milieu, they have little attention for other problems."²

One of the achievements of a successful adolescent

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1. N. E. Richardson: The Religious Education of Adolescence, p. 71.
2. Cole, op. cit., p. 10.

is his ability to make adjustment to the social groups with which he must come into contact. A very decided adolescent characteristic is the blind loyalty to one's friends coupled with blind prejudice against those who differ. By the end of adolescence this attitude should change to one of tolerance, based on knowledge and understanding.¹

Another purpose that should be realized as regards the social development is the replacement of the feeling of insecurity which characterized youth at first in social relationships by a type of behavior where it will be easy for a youth to adjust himself easily and naturally to a new life situation. If a grown person experiences embarrassment in meeting people under normal situations, this reveals he has not yet, socially speaking, reached adulthood.

Finally, social maturity is realized in the development of tolerance toward other nationalities, races, or social groups.² Uncompromising ethical standards, bigoted religious beliefs, deep-set racial prejudices are typical of adolescence; but gradually as adulthood approaches, the attitudes toward other nationalities, races, and religious groups should change to one of tolerance and liberalism.³

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1. Cole, op. cit., p. 11.
2. N. E. Richardson: *The Teaching Evangelist*, Study Unit IX, p. 13.
3. J. V. Thompson: *Handbook for Workers with Young People*, p. 29.

5. The Problem of Economic Independence.

One of the major set of problems facing growing youth is preparation for earning a living.

"An adult's chief business in life is to work and some of his chief joys come from successes in the world of practical accomplishment, whether his achievements consist in selling real estate, composing operas, laying sewers, or designing hats. Because success on the job is so important in adult life, it is a terrible blow to fail, either actually or in relation to one's expectation."¹

Thus the selection of a vocation is an outstanding problem for youth.

Dr. Watters, the former president of Georgetown College claims that:

"...writers generally have estimated that from sixty to seventy-five per cent of the people in America are vocational misfits. One of the most prominent writers puts the percentage at eighty. This would mean that only one in five has found his right track."²

Many high school and college students today have not yet made any decision as to a life occupation.³ M. J. Neuberg asserted the following concerning an investigation of college students:

"Of 609 students in North Carolina State College, 211, or 34.6 per cent, were undecided about their future occupation. In Leland Stanford University it was found that 36 per cent of the senior class had not chosen their vocations by March, a few weeks before graduation. Of the freshmen entering the University of Chicago, 29.5 per cent

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1. Cole, op. cit., p. 556.
2. H. E. Watters: Youth Makes the Choice, p. 30.
3. Ibid., p. 30.

were uncertain about their vocations. For four consecutive years in Wittenberg College, 29 to 31 per cent of the freshmen were undecided as to their vocations."¹

Youth consequently are greatly in need of vocational guidance. Efficiency requires that one's production shall approximate the maximum of ability. For a young person later to be happy in his choice of a vocation, it is necessary that he be fitted by nature and training for his work.

It is vital to the prosperity and progress of America that the people should be happily settled in their vocations.² There are more than fifty million workers in the United States. If it is true, as has been stated, that seventy-five per cent are in the wrong profession, then we have thirty-six million misfits.

"If these were shifted into their right places", asserts Dr. Watters, "thereby increasing their efficiency and earning power only ten per cent, it would add more than five billion dollars a year to their productive power which would add one hundred and fifty billion dollars to America's wealth in a working generation of thirty years. But such a shift would no doubt more or nearly double the efficiency of the workers; hence the results are amazing to contemplate."³

In order to prevent maladjustments and help our youth to be happy, it is imperative and advisable that vocational guidance be given them by school and church.⁴ Some of the things which would fall into this category would include

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1. M. J. Neuberg: A Course in Vocational Guidance.
2. E. Harris: Twenty-One, p. 35.
3. Watters, op. cit., p. 32.
4. R. A. Burkhart: Guiding Individual Growth, p. 84.

helping adolescents to have a reasonably accurate estimate of their abilities. Vocational tests given by experts as well as interviews with vocational counsellors will help in determining one's abilities. Then information must be given on the various types of vocations as well as information on personal traits and aptitudes necessary for certain types of work.

In vocational guidance there are four fundamental processes which need to be followed: a) gathering and classifying the information on the occupations in which one is interested; b) a thorough study and analysis of self; c) a proper course of reasoning with regard to the information and self-analysis; and d) the best possible counsel and guidance, both human and divine.¹

6. The Problem of Intellectual Maturity.

Mentally speaking, adolescence is the most critical period in the entire life of the individual.² In childhood things are accepted in faith, but with the dawn of early youth religious teachings are questioned and criticized. Youth comes into a consciousness of the possession of the ability to solve problems. According to Burr:

"Not only does the boy assert his own ideas with great freedom, but he challenges those of others. To some anxious adults he seems to have no respect for God or man.

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1. Ibid., p. 84.

2. Thompson, op. cit., p. 28.

He is ready to take a shot with his critical popgun at time-honored creeds or well established social customs."¹

It, however, is in the last year of adolescence that the intellect comes into its rightful rule; now the reasoning faculties attain supremacy which was not the case in early adolescence; then, even though the senses were keen, the emotions were always apt to affect the reasoning process. In later adolescence reason has sufficiently matured to be in complete control of the situation. "The essential thing about the mature mind as distinguished from the immature mind," says Tracy, "is the power to grasp ideas in their relation to each other in a totality or system."²

In earlier adolescence the tendency was to criticism; in the later period this is changed into judgment, which asserts itself with a firmness that invites no alteration. The mind of later youth has the ability to discern the relevant from the irrelevant. One essential requirement in all intellectual progress and development is judgment.

This later phase in many ways is a most fruitful period of life. Youth now receives his birthright of power. In order that this power be fully utilized, it is necessary to realize that a fullness of intellectual power is dependent upon certain attainments. Youth needs knowledge. Failures of

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1. H. M. Burr: Adolescent Boyhood as quoted by Benson, op. cit., p. 178.
2. Tracy, op. cit., p. 92.

of young people are not due to lack of conviction but to lack of knowledge. Of the 15,433 American celebrities in Prof. John K. Leonard's book, "Who's Who in America", seventy per cent are college men. In 1942 Mr. Benson wrote:

"Only one of one hundred of our Americans are college graduates, yet one-half of our Congressmen, twenty out of twenty-nine presidents, nine-tenths of the writers, and one-half of our millionaires are college trained."¹

In early adolescence many interests arise, too many for all to continue. There must be a narrowing of interests.² Knowledge must be controlled. The acquisition of knowledge itself does not guarantee success. The latter can only be had by hard and honest toil. Education must result not in the quest but in the conquest of knowledge. A young person's training is only then a success when there has been brought about the conquest of body and mind.

Youth must pass through this trying period between parental authority and self-control, but only in so far as he has acquired disciplinary habits of work and study may he assume the responsibility of self-management without danger. Self-control is not difficult where self-denial has been practised. And in the furthering of self-denial, religion becomes an important factor in the control of adolescence.

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1. Benson, op. cit., p. 207.
2. Cole, op cit., p. 12.

7. The Problem of the Use of Leisure Time.

Watters asserts, "Modern industrialism has really done three things for society; increased the need for recreation, increased the time for it, and made possible the means for enjoying it."¹ In our modern world youth have more time for leisure at their disposal than their parents and grandparents. "It is only recently that educators have realized how necessary it is for an adolescent to learn how to make wise use of his leisure time."²

Avocations are of great importance, for youth as well as adults need frequent relaxation. Neither the body nor the mind can bear up long under constant strain. One's avocation should give stimulation and relaxation. It serves both as rest and as a tonic to the body and mind.³ Herein lies the value of sports, games and pastimes of all kinds.

Hobbies are valuable for the growing adolescent. Usually one throws himself into a hobby with enthusiasm. They are conducive in stimulating and quickening many emotional elements. Different hobbies stimulate different personality qualities. Reading is one of the commonest sources of enjoyment and pleasure. Sports and games contribute greatly to the enjoyment of life.

Membership in clubs and organizations is another

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1. Watters, op. cit., p. 275.
2. Cole, op. cit., p. 12.
3. V. W. West: Psychology for Religious and Social Workers, p. 410.

source of relaxation and enjoyment. Watters asserts that "the possibilities in religious hobbies, both for personal development and for service to be rendered to others have been generally overlooked."¹

8. The Problem of Developing a Philosophy of Life.

Finally, an adolescent should begin to develop a view concerning the world about him. "Later adolescence," says Mudge, "is a time for developing and harmonizing all the elements in a life philosophy."² One of the most important mental developments which comes during late adolescence is a capacity for philosophical reasoning.

Religion plays an important part in the philosophy of life of youth. Schwab and Veeder have said:

"There is nothing in the adolescent personality, with the exception of sex, that strikes so deeply into the primary levels of his structure as the answer to the enigma of his own existence."³

In later adolescence youth are faced with baffling problems. They ask: "Is there a God? Have I a soul? What of sin and moral sanctions?"⁴

It is the conviction of Ligon that youth need theology.

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1. Watters, op. cit., p. 278.
2. Mudge, E. L.: Varieties of Adolescent Experience, p. 14.
3. Schwab and Veeder: The Adolescent: His Conflicts and Escapes, p. 159.
4. Sadler, op. cit., p. 321.

"Those who have had the privilege of a theological education and who then listen to high school and college young people discuss all these same philosophical problems in their naive uninformed groups, realize how enthusiastically these same young people would receive training in a theology especially prepared for them."¹

Theology furnishes a concept of the universe, and its major problems include the nature of the universe itself, the being and nature of God, immortality, sin and evil, the problem of suffering and other similar problems. "The great contribution of any religion is its concept of the universe. Christianity is no exception to this, and youth ought to know its fundamental tenets."²

Religion is all the more important for the later adolescence because during this period religious interest fluctuates. In the later teens and early twenties, most young people pass through a period of doubt.³ Benson asserts:

"Where no provision has been made to ground youth in the infallible evidences of the Bible, he will be sure to question the basis of its authority. The working boy is apt to be influenced by the popular writers in newspapers and magazines whose conceptions of science are often superficial and imaginary. Agnostic, prejudiced writers seeking to please a popular fancy, may prove dangerous leaders of youth in sowing seeds of doubt and negation."⁴

In addition to external factors, young people are moved to doubt from within. Reason has come to the throne and refuses

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1. Ligon, op. cit., p. 269.
2. Ligon, op. cit., p. 269.
3. K. C. Garrison: *The Psychology of Adolescence*, p. 179.
4. Benson, op. cit., p. 215.

to believe what cannot be understood. Weigle avers: "Youth acknowledges no mysteries. He turns to doubt."¹ The trouble is that youth lacks the experience of later life with which to evaluate and dispel doubt. Generally doubt does its work and results in stronger convictions.²

Worldliness is another hindrance to the obtaining of a sound religious and spiritual view of life. In later adolescence the material things loom large and spiritual needs are not nearly so much appreciated. Fame and fortune tempt youth. A greedy world tempts him by offering vast material gain and when there is no moral force in life, or spiritual vision, the former appeal will be powerful.

A great aid to young people in their groping for a fundamental synthesized understanding of the whole realm of experience is a vital personal religion. In youth's struggle to solve the many problems of life, nothing is so strengthening as a vital experience with Christ. Youth must be led to know that religion is exceedingly practical.

"When one links his life with Christ," avers Dr. Howse, "he is linking himself with the greatest power in the universe. No longer must he face insurmountable obstacles alone. For every problem there will be sufficient strength for solution. 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' (2 Cor. 12:9) 'But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.' (1 Cor. 10:13) This experience with Christ should be

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1. L. A. Weigle: The Pupil and the Teacher, p. 61.
2. G. S. Rudisill: The Intimate Problems of Youth, p. 27.

continuous. Life will take on new meaning when every day is lived under the guidance of Christ. He should be recognized as Master as well as Savior of one's life."¹

In order to know Christ and to have the power which comes to an individual who centers his life around Christ, youth needs the Bible, "the power of God unto salvation."

C. Implications for Christian Education

The study of those problems which adolescence presents for young people and which to them are very significant is pertinent to the problem of the church's program for youth. Such a study is very important in view of the widespread criticism made against the church in recent years, that it has failed to make contact with the realities of life.² If the church is to appeal to young people, it must take into consideration those activities of their daily life with which they have most to do. Since youth are faced with numerous problems in various areas of life, it is evident that young people are not interested in the old assumptions that are accepted without regard for the realities of life; nor are they bound by former standards of morality. They want a way of life that will lead to results for the greatest social good.

Over against the problem faced by young people today,

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1. Howse, op. cit., p. 38.
2. G. Stewart: The Church Challenges Youth. Schwab and Veeder, op. cit., p. 185.

it is generally agreed that the church must assume a vital relationship with the Word of God. If the church is failing to make contact with the realities of life, it is because of its lack of vitality and effectiveness. Too often, the church has not brought forward its most effective instrument, the Bible, the book that tells of a higher loyalty and which will lead to that redemptive change so badly needed in the world today.

The importance of the Bible for solving their problems was stressed by Christian youth itself at the World Conference at Amsterdam in 1939. Bible study formed an important part of the conference program. A number of the delegates had felt Bible study was abstract and unrelated to the stern realities and problems of life. The results of the conference are interesting. The report reads:

"During the last two days, those who had been the most eager to study 'life problems' rather than the Gospels were forced back to the Biblical message as the one answer to their manifold quests. On the other hand, those who spoke of the Word of God in a dogmatic and abstract way were helped to see that the Bible becomes the Word of God to us only when through it God speaks to our concrete situations and thus leads us to a real change of heart and mind, to a new relationship with our neighbors. This relevance of the Biblical message to our own personal life and to the problems of our day will remain one of the main discoveries at Amsterdam...We have come to realize more clearly here what immense importance the Bible has for our age and for our life."¹

Why does the Bible have such an appeal for young people as it did at Amsterdam? Dr. Barackman answered this question in

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1. Report of World Conference of Christian Youth, Amsterdam, 1939, p. 36.

his Founders' Day Address at Biblical Seminary in 1940 when he said: "It is the Word of God that brings men and women, and the youth of the church, face to face with the claims of Christ upon life."¹ Without Jesus Christ youth will never be able to solve satisfactorily its problems. Jesus alone has a challenge for youth which will satisfy its craving for action, for achievement, for the full, rich life. The history of the Christian church in all its power has behind it the testimony of individuals who have been transformed by a personal experience with Christ. It is Jesus who throughout the ages has given men and women, young and old a new vision, a new grasp on life and a new purpose for living. Any program of Christian education for youth by the church must be built upon sound principles and beliefs founded upon Christ which in turn must become part of life itself.

The problems and needs of young people as they have been determined by the findings of modern psychology in this chapter may be classified under two headings; namely, problems pertaining to a philosophy of life and problems relating to fields of adjustment. The problems concerning social adjustment can only be satisfactorily solved when youth have found and thought out for themselves a sound Christian philosophy of life.

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1. P. T. Barackman; The Place of the Bible in the Light of the Church, p. 16.

The General Epistles will be found valuable for youth because they contain so much material useful for young people in their formulation of a Christian philosophy of life. In addition, they will also be discovered to be of great aid in helping youth meet those problems connected with developing a pleasing personality, with the selection of a vocation, with the establishment of a Christian home, with achieving a satisfactory type of church life and with being a good citizen, and with having a genuine interest in national and international problems.

D. Summary

In this chapter attention was directed toward those problems which the physical, emotional, social and mental development of late adolescence presented to youth. Eight areas of human interest and activity were considered together with the problems arising from them. They were: the problem of establishing heterosexual interest, the problem of emancipation from home, the problem of emotional maturity, the problem of attaining social maturity, the problem of economic independence, the problem of intellectual maturity, the problem of the use of leisure time, and the problem of developing a philosophy of life.

The chapter concluded with a statement of the implications for the Christian education of youth. The importance

and necessity of Bible study for solving youth's problems was stressed.

In the following chapter the seven General Epistles will be analyzed to determine which portions are suitable as the basis for teaching materials in meeting the needs of youth which in turn will be utilized in the fifth chapter when sample lessons based on the Seven Epistles will be presented.

CHAPTER III

THE VALUES OF THE GENERAL EPISTLES
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THE VALUES OF THE GENERAL EPISTLES AS TEACHING MATERIAL SUITED TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

A. Introduction

The seven Epistles written by James, Peter, John and Jude have been known as the Catholic Epistles at least as far back as the time of Origen.¹ The term "catholic" or universal was employed by the early Church to distinguish them from the Pauline group of epistles. However, the Second and Third Epistles of John seem to be an exception to this rule, but says Thiessen, "they were, no doubt, included among the Catholic Epistles as properly belonging to I John and as of value to the general reader."² Origen and Eusebius referred to this whole group with the exception of I Peter and I John as the antilegomena. Some writers in the field of New Testament Isagogics include Hebrews in the group of the General or Catholic Epistles.³ However, this study will not consider the Epistle to the Hebrews. The General Epistles were probably written over a period of some forty years. The grouping of these seven together is mechanical. Concerning this matter A.

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1. P. J. Gloag: Introduction to the Catholic Epistles, p. 1.
2. H. C. Thiessen; Introduction to the New Testament, p. 271.
3. Ibid., p. 297.
S. A. Cartledge: A Conservative Introduction to the New Testament, p. 131.

F. Robertson asserts:

"James is probably the very earliest of the New Testament books, while the Epistles of John seem to belong to the period after the destruction of Jerusalem. Besides the situation that is met in the Epistle of James is very different from that found in the other Catholic Epistles. The Epistles of Peter and Jude likewise outline a different condition from that set forth in the Johannine Epistles. The grouping is, therefore, mechanical and of very little value to the student of the New Testament."¹

In a general way it may be said that James and I Peter are predominantly ethical; II Peter and Jude, eschatological; and the Epistles of John, Christological and ethical.

Concerning James, Hayes says:

"If we eliminate two or three passages containing references to Christ, the whole epistle might find its place just as properly in the Canon of the Old Testament as in that of the New Testament, as far as its substance of doctrine and contents is concerned. That could not be said of any other book in the New Testament."²

Thiessen asserts:

"The Christianity of the Epistle is seen, not so much in its subject-matter, as in its spirit. It is an interesting interpretation of the Old Testament law and the Sermon on the Mount in the light of the Christian Gospel."³

The First Epistle of Peter is a letter of hope in the midst of a world of suffering. The Epistle is predominantly practical and not doctrinal. While the emphasis in I Peter is on suffering, in II Peter false teachings are the burden of the letter. Jude, like II Peter, deals primarily with false teachers which had crept in among the believers.

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1. A. T. Robertson: Studies in the New Testament, pp. 231-232.
2. "The Epistle of James" in the I.S.B.E., p. 1562.
3. Thiessen, op. cit., p. 272.

I John is chiefly didactic and controversial, although the personal note is not absent. The writer deals with the errors which he combats from the high standpoint of a personal relationship to and fellowship with God, and not from that of a theoretical polemicist. Ironside says of it:

"The writings of the Apostle John have always had a peculiar charm for the people of the Lord, and I suppose, if for no other reason, for this, that they are particularly addressed to the family of God as such."¹

II and III John are short and of a private nature. The Second Epistle was written to "the elect lady and her children". This phrase has been interpreted variously. Cartledge lists the following interpretations:

"Some think that refers to some particular Christian woman and her children; if so, no one knows who she was. Some think that John used that way of speaking of some particular church and its members; if so, no one knows where the church was, except that it was probably in Asia Minor. Some think that the Greek word translated 'lady' should be capitalized and read as a proper name - 'To the elect Cyria and her children'; if so, we know nothing further about Cyria. Some would make the two words read, 'the lady Eklekte."²

In this study the letter will be regarded as having been addressed to a Christian woman and her children.

All questions as to date, authorship, validity, authenticity and interdependence (Jude and II Peter) will not be considered. The study will be confined to the content of epistles as they stand.

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1. Thiessen, op. cit., Addresses on the Epistles of John, in quotation, p. 306.
2. Cartledge, op. cit., p. 169.

Although the grouping of the General Epistles may be only a mechanical one, it will be discovered that they make a splendid unit for study for young people's groups and classes because of the areas they touch which are of great concern to youth. Emmet asserts: "The Letters are of great practical value to us today, and also are of value as giving aspects of the life and thought of the Early Christian Community."¹ In the following the materials of these seven epistles will be grouped and it will be shown how and which portions have value for young people as teaching materials.

B. An Analysis of the Contents of the General Epistles and their Relevance to the Needs of Youth

1. The Christian Philosophy of Life.²

Burkhart asserts:

"We cannot go very far in helping the individual solve any problems of conduct constructively without touching on this area (namely of faith and philosophy). What one believes and the fundamental rules by which he tries to live are basic to all other experiences."³

Philosophy deals with three great questions: Whence? Why? and Whither?

a. Whence? (Origin of the world and of man)

Concerning the origin of the earth Peter writes:

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1. The Teacher's Commentary, p. 376.
2. ante, pp. 32-35.
3. R. A. Burkhart: Guiding Individual Growth, p. 87.

"For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation. They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished."
(II Peter 3:5-6)

The same apostle speaks of God as "a faithful creator" (I Peter 4:19) and of Christ, whose precious blood was to effect the salvation of mankind, being destined before the foundation of the world for his work. (I Peter 1:19) James warns against cursing men, who are made after the image of God. (James 3:10) Both of these writers agree with the Jewish conception of the origin of the universe and of man as contained in Genesis,
Chapter One.

b. Why? (The Purpose of Life)

To the question, what is life?, James answers: "For you are a mist that appears for a little time and vanishes."
(James 4:14) Peter describes it in the words of Isaiah 40:6-9:
"All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord abides forever." (I Peter 1:24-25)¹

Despite the brevity and uncertainty of human life, men are so "to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer by human passions but by the will of God." (I Peter 4:2)
"Be holy in all your conduct." (I Peter 1:15) Christians are

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1. Cf. James 1:10-11 for a similar thought.

to look upon life as a stewardship, to be used in the service of other people. (I Peter 4:10) Man's earthly sojourning is to be in the fear of God (I Peter 1:17) knowing that God will bring all men to account and pronounce judgment on their lives. "Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil." (I Peter 2:16) Christ's followers are urged to give diligence that they may be found in peace, without blemish in His sight. (II Peter 3:14)

The chief purpose in life is to "receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (I Peter 1:9 according to the Standard American Version)

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians have been born anew to a living hope, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for those who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (I Peter 1:3-5) In Peter the idea of salvation as the goal of life is prominent. (I Peter 2:2; II Peter 1:11)

Christian husbands and wives are to realize that they are joint heirs of the grace of life (I Peter 3:7), for through Christ they may become partakers of the divine nature. (II Peter 1:4) It is God's will for His children that they should walk in the truth (II John 4) and after His commandments. (II John 7) They are not to love the world, nor the things in the world. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father

but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."
(I John 2:15-17)

Christians are also to consider themselves as God's chosen people, who are to declare to those still in darkness the wonderful deeds of God, and especially of Christ, the Savior of men (I Peter 2:9)

Jude encourages his readers to "keep yourselves in the love of God". (v. 21) As a motivation for the living of a life centered in Christ and His Father, Jude reminds the Christians that they are called of God and kept for Jesus Christ.

Because of this great goal and objective, the apostle asserts : "Wherefore, brethren, make your calling and election sure." (II Peter 1:10)

c. Whither? (The Destiny of Life)

What is going to be the end of the world? Will there be a life after death? These are great questions in which youth are vitally interested. The answer to these questions will also help determine the views of youth with regard to their prupose for living.

As to the end of this present world¹ Peter writes:
"But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have

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1. Cf. W. M. Smith: The Atomic Bomb and the Word of God,

been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." (II Peter 3:7) "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up." (II Peter 3:10) "By reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." (II Peter 3:12) John speaks of the "world passing away and the lust thereof, but the man that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (I John 2:17)

The end of the world will result for the Christians in their "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (II Peter 1:11) Then the promise given to the heirs of the kingdom who are rich in faith will become a reality. (James 2:5) The day of judgment will usher in a glorious era for the Christians for when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory. (I Peter 5:4) The day of judgment is referred to under the terms of the "day of visitation" (I Peter 2:12), "the day of the Lord" (II Peter 3:10), "the day of eternity" (II Peter 3:18), "the coming day of the God" (II Peter 3:12), the "coming of the Lord" (James 5:7). Those who have abided in God and in His Son will have "eternal life" (I John 2:25; 3:15; 5:11; 5:13; 5:20). In view of the glory to be revealed to the Christians,

Jude exhorts his readers: "Keep yourself in the love of God; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (v. 21) While this "day of the Lord" will be an occasion for joy for the Christians who know that "when He appears they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is," (I John 3:3), to the evil angels (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6) and ungodly it will be a day of destruction (II Peter 3:7) for God will "execute judgment on all", and "convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness which they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude 15) Because of the coming of the day of the Lord, Peter exhorts the Christians to look upon their existence as a pilgrimage, while they are on earth they are to consider themselves "alien and exiles". (I Peter 2:11)

The first earth and heavens according to God's promise will be replaced by "a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells". (II Peter 3:13)

d. The Concept of God.¹

Youth needs a correct conception of God. Dr. Howse avers: "Young people with inaccurate ideas of God can never achieve fully developed Christian personalities."²

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1. Ante, pp. 32-35.
2. Howse, op. cit., p. 52.

The General Epistles are helpful and complete in the material they contain with regard to the doctrine of God.¹

Unity of God.

James writes to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: "You believe that God is one; you do well." (James 2:19)

Trinity of God.

Jude advises his hearers: "Pray in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude-20-21)

John has the following passage depicting the work of the three persons of the Holy Trinity: "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His own Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son as the Savior of the world." (I John 3:13-15) Peter writes a letter to the exiles chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ. (I Peter 1:2)

Attributes of God and the Father:

Father of Lights is unchangeable (James 1:17)

God is righteous (James 1:20; II Peter 1:2)

Lord is compassionate and merciful (James 5:11)

God and Father is gracious (I Peter 1:3)

Lord is kind (I Peter 2:3)

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1. This section would be appropriate especially for young people who are studying philosophy and religion in college.

God is holy (I Peter 2:16)

God is patient (I Peter 3:20)

Lord is not subject to time (II Peter 3:8)

Lord is forbearing (II Peter 3:9)

God is Light (I John 1:5)

God is faithful and just (I John 1:9)

God is forgiving (I John 1:9)

God is love (I John 4:8)

Attributes of Christ:

Christ righteous (II Peter 2:2)

Holy (I Peter 1:22)

Attributes of Spirit:

Holy Spirit is the truth (I John 5:7)

The Names of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

The Lord (James 1:8)

The Father of lights (James 1:17)

God and the Father (James 1:27; I Peter 1:2)

Lord and Father (James 3:9)

Lawgiver (James 4:12; 5:9)

Lord of hosts (James 4:15)

Faithful Creator (I Peter 4:19)

God, our Savior (Jude 25)

Lord Jesus Christ (James 1:1; 2:1)

Sen of God (I John 5:5)

Lamb of God (I Peter 1:19)

Living Stone (I Peter 2:4)
A Rock of Offense (I Peter 1:8)
Guardian of souls. (I Peter 2:25)
Precious Corner Stone (I Peter 2:25)
Lord of Glory (James 2:1)
Chief Shepherd (I Peter 5:4)
Savior Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:1)
The Majestic Glory (II Peter 1:17)
God and Savior Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:1)
My Beloved Son (II Peter 1:17)
Master (II Peter 2:1)
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18)
Jesus His Son (I John 1:8)
The Advocate (I John 2:1)
The Life (I John 5:12)
True God and Eternal Life (I John 5:20)
Jesus Christ the Father's Son (II John 3)
Our Only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ (Jude 4)
Spirit of Jesus (I Peter 1:11)
Holy Spirit (I Peter 4:14)
Spirit of truth (I John 4:6)
Spirit of God (I Peter 4:14)

The Inter-relationship and Association of the Persons of
the Trinity:

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:3)
Spirit of Christ (I Peter 1:11)

God may be glorified through Jesus Christ (I Peter 4:11)
Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you (I Peter 4:14)
God has called you to His eternal glory (I Peter 5:10)
God the Father said: This is my beloved Son (II Peter 1:17)
The eternal life which was with the Father (I John 1:2)
To have fellowship with the Father and with His Son
Jesus Christ (I John 1:3)

He who confesses the Son has the Father also (I John 2:23)
He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us
(I John 3:24)

The Spirit of God (I John 4:2)

God has sent His only Son into the World (I John 4:9, 13)
He (God) hath given us of His own Spirit (I John 4:13)
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from
Jesus Christ the Father's Son (II John 3)

He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the
Father and the Son (II John 10)

Beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ (Jude 1)

- e. The Activities of the Triune God and Youth's Relationship to Him.

The Activities of God and the Father:

God gives wisdom to those who ask for it. (James 1:5)

God has promised to give the crown of life to those who
love Him. (James 1:12)

God tempts no one to evil. (James 1:13)

The Father of Lights hath brought us forth by the word
of truth. (James 1:18)

God hath chosen the poor to be rich in faith and heirs of
the kingdom. (James 2:5)

God has promised the kingdom to those who love Him.
(James 2:5)

God draws near to those who draw near to Him. (James 4:8)

God saves or destroys. (James 4:12)

The Lord will raise up the sick man. (James 5:15)

God the Father chooses and destines the Christian.

(I Peter 1:2)

By the mercy of God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Christians have been born anew. (I Peter 1:3)

Christians are kept by God's power through faith for sal-
vation to be revealed in the last time. (I Peter 1:5)

Father judges each one impartially. (I Peter 1:17)

God judges justly. (I Peter 1:23)

God supplies strength to those who render service. (I Peter
4:11)

God spared not the angels that sinned. (II Peter 2:4)

God's divine power grants to Christians all things per-
taining to life and godliness. (II Peter 1:3)

The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial. (II Peter
2:9)

The Lord keeps the unrighteous under punishment until the
day of judgment. (II Peter 2:9)

God forgives sin and cleanses from unrighteousness.

(I John 1:9)

God has promised eternal life. (I John 2:25)

God manifested His love in the sending of His Son.

(I John 4:9,10)

Father sent His Son as Savior of the world. (I John 4:14)

God has given us of His Own Spirit. (I John 4:13)

God abides in those who love. (I John 4:15)

God is in the world (Immanence of God). (I John 4:17)

God has given us eternal life in His Son. (I John 5:11)

God will hear us when we ask according to His will.

(I John 5:14)

God, our Savior, can keep Christians from falling. (Jude 24)

The Relationship of Youth toward God and the Father:

Should love God. (James 1:12)

Should bless Lord and Father. (James 3:9)

Be friends of God. (James 4:4)

Submit to God. (James 4:7)

Draw near to God. (James 4:8)

Future to be viewed in light of God. (James 4:15)

Be patient in waiting for the coming of the Lord. (James 5:7)

Spiritual sacrifices to be offered up acceptable to God.

(I Peter 2:5)

Faith and confidence to be in God. (I Peter 1:31)

Be subject to human institutions for the Lord's sake.

(I Peter 2:13)

Live as servants of God. (I Peter 2:16)
Fear God. (I Peter 2:17)
Be mindful of God. (I Peter 2:19)
Hope in God. (I Peter 3:5)
Live in God-like spirit. (I Peter 4:6)
Glorify God. (I Peter 4:6)
Obey Gospel of God. (I Peter 4:17)
Tend the flock of God. (I Peter 5:2)
Entrust one's soul to a faithful Creator. (I Peter 4:19)
Stand fast in the true grace of God. (I Peter 5:12)
Have fellowship with the Father. (I John 1:3)
Know the Father. (I John 2:12)
Know God. (I John 4:7)
Do the will of God. (I John 2:17)
Keep God's commandments. (I John 3:22 and 5:2,3)
Love God = to love the brethren. (I John 4:21)
Abide in God. (I John 4:16)
Know and believe the love of God. (I John 4:16)
Should not pervert the grace of God into licentiousness.
(Jude 4)
Keep self in love of God. (Jude 21)

The Life and Work of Jesus Christ:

Deity of Christ:

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father. (II John 3:2)

Our Lord Jesus Christ. (III John 18)

This is the true God and eternal life. (I John 5:20)

Humanity of Christ:

Jesus Christ came in the flesh. (I John 4:2)

Purpose of Christ's Coming:

To undo the work of the devil. (I John 3:8)

Christ's Suffering: (I Peter 1:11)

Suffering of Christ. (I Peter 4:1)

Vicarious Suffering of Christ: (I Peter 2:21 and 3:18)

He bore our sins in His body. (I Peter 2:24)

Redemption through the blood of Christ. (I Peter 1:19)

Blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. (I John 1:9)

Descent into Hades: (I Peter 3:18)

Resurrection of Christ: (I Peter 1:3 and 3:21)

Ascension of Christ: (I Peter 3:22)

Session at the Right Hand: (I Peter 3:22)

Power and Coming: (II Peter 1:16 and I Peter 1:7)

Relationship of Youth to Christ:

Love Him. (I Peter 1:7)

Trust in Him. (I Peter 1:8)

Set your hope fully on the grace that is coming at the
revelation of Jesus Christ. (I Peter 1:13)

Offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ. (I Peter
2:6)

Reverence Christ as Lord. (I Peter 3:15)

Advance toward a full knowledge of Lord Jesus Christ.

(II Peter 1:5)

Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (II Peter 3:18)

Not disobeying Christ's commandments. (I John 2:4)

Keep His Word. (I John 2:5)

Walk in same way as Christ walked. (I John 2:6)

Abide in Him. (I John 2:28)

Believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. (I John 3:23)

Believe in the name of the Son of God. (I John 5:13)

Hold teaching of Christ. (II John 9)

Wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 21)

The Activity and Work of the Holy Spirit:

Work of sanctification. (I Peter 1:2)

Spirit of Christ worked and spoke through the Old Testament prophets. (I Peter 1:10-12)

Gospel sent down from heaven by the Holy Spirit. (I Peter 1:12)

The Holy Spirit bears witness concerning Christ. (I Peter 5:7)

The Spirit of God helps people to confess that Jesus Christ came into the flesh. (I John 4:2)

Relationship of Youth to the Holy Spirit:

Should pray in the Holy Spirit. (Jude 20)

Not be devoid of the Spirit. (Jude 19)

f. Sin and Human Suffering.¹

The presence of sin and of evil are two problems in which youth are interested and concerning which they are in need of instruction.² An analysis of the Catholic Epistles will reveal an abundance of material dealing with these two matters.

Definition of Sin.

James has this definition: "Sin is the transgression of the Law", (Ch. 2:11) or as "wandering from the truth", (Ch. 5:20) or a "stumbling and falling", (Ch. 3:2). Still another is: "Whosoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." (Ch. 4:17) Sin is the equivalent of enmity to God. (Ch. 4:4) The Apostle Peter defines sin as "forsaking the right way". (II Peter 2:15) Other synonyms are: unrighteousness (I Peter 2:16), transgression (I Peter 2:16), living in error (II Peter 2:19), evil, corruption (II Peter 2:19), pollution (II Peter 2:20).

John describes sin as: the opposite of truth (I John 2:21), wrongdoing (I John 5:17), darkness (I John 2:8), and unrighteousness (I John 1:9).

Origin of Sin.

He who commits sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning (I John 3:8). Because the devil tempts people to sin, James says: "Resist the devil." (James 4:7)

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1. ante, pp. 32-35.

2. Ligon, op. cit., p. 267; cf. A. C. Wickendern, Youth Looks at Religion, ch. 8.

History of a Sin.

James graphically gives us the history of a sin:

"Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived, gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death." (James 1:14, 15) It is important to resist temptation. (I Peter 2:11) Passions lead to gross sins. "Do not live by human passions." In the General Epistles there are many different kinds of sins as well as sinners described. Approximately enough, James speaks of "covering up a multitude of sins". The following is a catalogue of the different kinds of sins and sinners:

Types of Sinners:

- Murderer (I Peter 4:15)
- Thief (I Peter 4:15)
- Wrongdoer (I Peter 4:15)
- Mischief-maker (I Peter 4:15)
- Impious (I Peter 4:18)
- False teachers (II Peter 2:1)
- Unrighteous (II Peter 2:9)
- Scoffers (II Peter 3:3)
- Lawless men (II Peter 3:17)
- Liar (I John 1:10)
- Ungodly (Jude 15)
- Boasters (Jude 16)
- Grumblers (Jude 16)
- Malcontents (Jude 16)

Types of Sins:

Sins against God:

- Denying the Master that bought them (II Peter 2:1)
- Reviling the way of the truth (II Peter 2:2)
- Disobedience to commandments (I John 2:4)
- Support of false prophets (II John 10)
- Converting grace of God into licentiousness (Jude 4)
- Blaspheming honorable name (James 2:7)
- Denying Christ (Jude 5)
- Denying sin (I John 1:8,10)

Sins against Fellowmen:

- Fraud (James 5:4)
- Slander (I Peter 2:1)
- Threatening (I Peter 2:23)
- Reviling (I Peter 2:23)
- Returning evil for evil (I Peter 3:10)
- Speaking guile (I Peter 3:10)
- Abuse (I Peter 4:4)
- Dishonoring poor (James 2:6)
- Oppression (James 2:6)
- Cursing men (James 3:9)
- Speaking evil of other people (James 4:11)
- Judging of neighbor (James 4:12)
- Enticing unsteady souls (II Peter 2:13)

Personal Sins:

Useless swearing (James 5:12)
Malice (I Peter 2:1)
Guile (I Peter 2:1,22)
Insincerity (I Peter 2:1)
Using freedom as a pretext of evil (I Peter 2:16)
Wild profligacy (I Peter 4:4)
Licentiousness (II Peter 2:2)
Idleness and unfruitfulness (II Peter 1:8)
Passions (I Peter 4:3)
Drunkenness (I Peter 4:3)
Reveling (I Peter 4:3 and II Peter 2:13)
Carousing (I Peter 4:3 and II Peter 2:13)
Lawless idolatry (I Peter 4:3)
Anger (James 1:19)
Failure to bridle tongue (James 1:26)
Adultery (James 2:11 and II Peter 2:14)
Bitter jealousy (James 3:14)
Selfish ambition (James 3:14)
Coveting (James 4:2)
Double-mindedness (James 4:11)
Arrogance (James 4:16)
Boasting (James 4:16)
Indulging in lust (II Peter 2:10)
Wilfulness (II Peter 2:10)

Training in greed (II Peter 2:14)
Following one's passion (II Peter 3:3)
Hatred (I John 3:15)
Lack of love (I John 3:10,14)
Prating with evil words (III John 10)
Imitating evil (III John 11)
Acting immorally (Jude 7)
Flattering for sake of gain (Jude 16)

Punishment of Sin and Sinners.

The punishment and destruction of those who are guilty of sinning against God and His commandments and who do not repent or confess their sins are vividly set forth in the General Epistles. The Second Epistle of Peter and the Book of Jude show clearly what the end will be of those disobedient to the commandments of God. Peter and Jude illustrate this fact particularly from the history of the Old Testament. James depicts the end of the sinner as being serious for he closes his epistle with the words: "Let him know that whosoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." (James 5:20) Jude urges his readers "to convince some, who doubt, save some, by snatching them out of fire; oh some have mercy with fear, hating even the spotted garment of the flesh." (Jude 22-23)

The Removal of Sin.¹

Young people are very often troubled by their sins

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1. ante, pp. 32-35.

and wrongdoings. They need to know that sin can be forgiven. The value of the General Epistles will become apparent when a solution to the problem of sin is sought in them.

Although judgment is pronounced upon sin, God does not desire that any should perish because of their sin. "The Lord is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." (II Peter 3:9) In order that youth should not perish because of their sins, Peter assures them that "Christ died for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous." (I Peter 3:18)

The Epistles of John are especially helpful. In the first epistle we have the following statements: "Christ is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:3) "You know that He (i.e. Christ) appeared to take away sins." (I John 3:5) "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his sake." (I John 2:12) "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sins." (I John 1:8) "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9) When Christian youth do sin, they may come to Jesus Christ, who is their Advocate with the Father. (I John 1:2)

The Problem of Suffering.¹

In many different ways youth are confronted by the

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1. ante, pp. 32-35.

problems of human suffering, especially on the part of Christians. That is the only aspect discussed in the General Epistles. Youth are brought face to face with suffering in their own lives, or in that of their parents, relatives, and friends. It is, indeed, a puzzling one for them. James and Peter's writings can be helpful because the problem of suffering was one of the great problems confronting the early Christians. How to explain suffering? How to use it for good? These are questions to which youth want an answer and two of the General Epistles will not disappoint them.

The worldly count it blessed to be spared all adversity. James, however, does not pronounce those blessed who have no trials. "Blessed is the man who endures trials, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life." (James 1:12) Young people are encouraged to rejoice and "count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness, and let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:2-4) When suffering tribulation they are to exercise patience and emulate the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. (James 5:10-11) Prayer is helpful in suffering. (James 5:13)

The First Epistle of Peter which was written to Christians suffering persecution deals specifically with the problem. The following is a grouping of Peter's statements on suffering and trials:

"In this rejoice, though now a little while you may have to suffer various trials so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (I Peter 1:6-7)

"For what credit is it, if when you do wrong and are beaten for it, you take it patiently? But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps." (I Peter 2:20-21)

"For it is better to suffer for doing right, if that should be God's will, than for doing wrong." (I Peter 3:17)

"Since, therefore, Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought, for whoever hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." (I Peter 4:1)

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's suffering, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed." (I Peter 4:12-13)

"Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will do right and entrust their souls to a faithful creator." (I Peter 4:19)

"Knowing that the same experience of suffering is re-

quired of your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who hath called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will restore, establish and strengthen you." (I Peter 5:9-10)

Peter solved the great problems of suffering by lifting them from the present to the future. He urged the Christians to live the present in the light of the future. He avoided all sympathy and self-pity. He compared their present problems with the great blessings that were going to be theirs. He urged them to look upon trials and sufferings as a means to a better, stronger Christian faith which would finally result in their eternal salvation. Peter motivates and challenges them with the great example of Christ. They were not to permit their suffering to go to a lower level than that on which Christ suffered. Suffering patiently in imitation of Christ would show that they had completely broken with the past.

g. The Bible and Prayer.

Cranford asserts that:

"There are some things into which our lives too, need to gear if we are to experience real power and progress in the Christian life. How important it is, to begin with that our aims shall join in such an enmeshed relationship with the great, eternal aims of 'the kingdom of God and His righteousness.'" 1

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1. Devotional Life of Young People, pp. 11-12.

Each youth needs a vital program for personal religious growth.¹ The use of prayer and of the Scriptures are vital factors as an aid in fostering growth in the devotional life. The General Epistles are valuable in the contribution they make. James has the following teachings on prayer:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God who gives to all men, generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting."

(James 1:5-6)

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passion." (James 4:3)

In case of sickness, James gives the advice:

"Is there any one among you suffering? Let him pray."

"Therefore, confess your sins for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous man has great power in its effects." (James 5:16)

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

(James 4:8)

God does hear prayer, for as James says: "The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts."

(James 5:4)

When married people do not live together sanely, it hinders their prayers. (I Peter 3:7)

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1. ante, pp. 32-35.

Another important rule to be followed in prayer is:

"Keep sane and sober for your prayers." (I Peter 4:7) To put it in other words,

"A calm and collected spirit is conducive to the act of praying. It results in prayer. The Christian who is always on a tear, whose mind is crowded with fear and worries, who is never at rest in his heart, does not do much praying."¹

The Apostle John has this encouragement for prayer:

"This is the confidence which we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." (I John 5:14-15)

"We receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His commandment and do what He pleases." (I John 4:22)

Our prayers should concern the total person, body and soul. (III John 2) We should pray in the spirit. (Jude 20)

Dr. Cranford is correct when he asserts: "We must develop the practice of prayer, and learn to rely more fully on what it can do for us."²

Young people need the power of God as it is contained in Scriptures. "The more clearly we come to understand its messages, the more directly are we in touch with His holy will."³

A study of the General Epistles will be helpful likewise in establishing the attitude which youth ought to take over

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1. K. S. Wuest: First Peter in the Greek Testament for the English Reader, p. 115.
2. Cranford, op. cit., p. 16.
3. Ibid., p. 32.

against the Scriptures. James, Peter and Jude are deeply steeped in the Old Testament Scriptures. Often when they wish to prove a statement, they simply refer to the Old Testament Scripture. Such expressions are used as: "According to the scripture" (James 2:8), "It stands in scripture" (I Peter 2:6), (I Peter 1:16) "It is written". The following is a list of direct quotations, historical allusions in the General Epistles. An analysis will show thirteen different books were used.

Direct Quotations and Allusions:

James 1:10-11	Isaiah 40:6-7 (Phraseology Used)
2:8	Leviticus 19:18 (Quotation)
2:11 -	Exodus 20:13-14; Deuteronomy 5:17-18 (Quotation)
2:21	Genesis 22:1-14 (Allusion)
2:23	Genesis 15:6 (Quotation)
2:25	Joshua 2:1-21 (Allusion)
4:6	Proverbs 3:34 (Quotation)
5:11	Job 1:21-22; 2:10 (Allusion)
5:17	I Kings 17:1 (Historical Allusion)
5:18	I Kings 18:42 (Historical Allusion)
I Peter 1:16	Leviticus 11:44-45 (Quotation)
1:24-25	Isaiah 40:6-9 (Quotation)
2:6	Isaiah 28:16 (Quotation)
2:7	Psalms 118:22 (Quotation)
2:8	Isaiah 8:14-15 (Quotation)
2:9	Exodus 23:22 (Use of Phraseology)

I Peter 2:10	Hosea 2:23 (Use of Phraseology)
2:24	Isaiah 53:12 (Quotation according to LXX)
2:24-25	Isaiah 53:5-6 (Use of Phraseology)
3:10-12	Psalms 24:12-16 (Quotation)
3:14-15	Isaiah 8:12-13 (Use of Phraseology)
3:20	Genesis 6-8 (Historical Allusion)
4:14	Isaiah 11:2 (Use of Phraseology)
4:18	Proverbs 11:31 (Quotation according to LXX)
5:5	Proverbs 3:34 (Quotation)
5:7	Psalms 55:22 (Quotation)
II Peter 2:5	Genesis 18:18 (Historical Allusion)
2:6	Genesis 19:24 (Historical Allusion)
2:7	Genesis 19:16-29 (Historical Allusion)
2:15	Numbers 22:57 (Historical Allusion)
2:16	Numbers 22:21, 23, 28, 30-31 (Historical Allusion)
2:22	Proverbs 26:11 (Quotation)
3:5-6	Genesis 1:6-8; 7:11 (Historical Allusion)
3:12	Isaiah 34:4 (Phraseology)
3:13	Isaiah 65:17; 66:22 (Phraseology)
Jude verse 7	Genesis 19 (Historical Allusion)
9	Zechariah 3:2 (Use of a Phrase)
11	Genesis 4:3-8; Numbers 22-24 (Historical Allusion)

The Old Testament is important; it is a lamp shining in a dark place for as Peter asserts: "No prophecy of Scripture is a

matter of one's own interpretation because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (I Peter 1:20-21)

In the General Epistles the Old Testament Scripture is linked up with the words and writings of the apostles and evangelists. Both Testaments have one common theme. Pertaining to this Peter wrote the congregations in Asia Minor: "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things in which angels long to look." (I Peter 1:10-12)

In his second epistle Peter refers to the letters of Paul, which he wrote "according to the wisdom given him" as being on a par with other Scriptures. (II Peter 3:15-16)

The value of the Scriptures for young people is described by James and Peter as having the ability to save the souls of men (James 1:21) and as the means, the spiritual milk whereby Christians grow up to salvation. (I Peter 2:2) Also it is described as being "living and abiding forever," (I Peter 1:25) through which people are born again. (I Peter 1:23)

The manner in which the Word of God is to be received is indicated by James: "Receive with meekness the implanted

word (1:21) and the word must not only be heard but also put into practise (1:22).

h. The Nature of True Religion.¹

In their quest for religious truth, young people are often confronted by all manner of religions and systems of religious thought. Naturalism, humanism, social determinism, fatalism, communism, and the cults are some of the systems of religious thinking with which our youth are brought into contact as a result of their reading, or of what they have heard in the high school or college lecture rooms or over the radio. They need a touchstone by which they will be enabled to distinguish the true from the false, the Christian from the anti-Christian. In fact, as Dr. Wyckoff has suggested, it behooves those responsible for adolescents to use preventive measures so that youth will not fall victims to acute unbelief by injecting them with the serums which will aid them in resisting false beliefs.

"For the college student, the serum of previous information concerning the essentials of the new scientific and Biblical knowledge so far as it is related to religious belief, should be injected into the minds of the boys and girls while they are still under the influence of parents and home; before the time when ideas per se become too absorbing."²

The General Epistles can aid youth because II Peter, Jude and the Epistles of John were written on account of the pre-

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1. ante, pp. 32-35.

2. A. C. Wyckoff: Acute and Chronic Unbelief, p. 36.

valence of Gnosticism and the challenge it presented to the Christian Church during the first Christian century. The opening sentence of the Epistle of Jude is still necessary today: "I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) or the warning of John: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are of God for many false prophets have gone out into the world." (I John 4:1)

In the Epistles of John there is the warning against those who reject the humanity of Christ and emphasize the superior "knowledge" of the Gnostic heresy. A system of religious thought denying "the doctrine of Christ" (III John 9) is false. Included in the "doctrine of Christ" is the belief in the deity of Christ. "Whosoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." (I John 4:15) "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know Him who is true, and we are in Him, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." (I John 5:20)

A denial of sin and licentiousness in living also characterized the false teachers in the days of Peter, John, and Jude. Faith without works is another type of false religion condemned in the Epistle of James and in I John. "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." (James 1:26-27) "Faith by itself, if it has no works is dead." (James 2:17) "For as the body apart

from the spirit is dead so faith apart from works is dead."

(James 2:26)

The marks of true religion are sound doctrine and Christian living. Dr. Cranford wrote concerning the relationship of doctrine and life:

"True piety depends, in part, upon sound doctrine, upon what a man believes. We fool ourselves when we say it makes little difference what a man believes so long as he lives right. The point is, he lives by what he believes. And it is being more and more emphasized in our day that when men cease to live in accordance with great beliefs about a righteous and moral God, they soon begin to live - as one writer frankly says - 'like the devil'." Again: "It is tremendously important what a person believes for beliefs are the source-spring of his actions. For the Christian who does not have his life securely anchored to great beliefs, which he holds to be eternally true, is ill-prepared to face the doubts and distractions of this our time."¹

2. Fields of Adjustment.

a. Problems of Personal Adjustment.²

"Evaluating oneself correctly is one of life's most difficult problems. In many cases pride and ambition cause one to overestimate himself."³ For a happy home, social and religious life certain character qualities and habits are necessary. A great many of the perplexities and difficulties in youth's growing adjustments come out of the simple question of getting along with other people. The matter is of primary social importance for to be most influential one must be accepted and understood at least

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1. C. W. Cranford: The Devotional Life of Young People, pp. 70,71.

2. ante, pp. 24-25.

3. Howse, Teaching Young People in Sunday School, p. 26.

by his fellow beings.

On the subject of getting along with other people, the Bible presents its readers with a multitude of helps. Axioms, proverbs, exhortations, commandments, inferences and illustrations crowd the pages of Scripture. The General Epistles will be found valuable in helping youth achieve the type of personality which will aid them in their social contacts.

Undesirable Attitudes and Character Traits to be Avoided:

Double-mindedness or being unstable in one's way (James 1)

Being partial (James 2:1)

Jealousy and selfish ambition (James 3:14)

Boastfulness (James 3:14; 4:16)

Pride (James 4:6)

Boldness (II Peter 2:10)

Wilfulness (II Peter 2:14)

Greed (II Peter 2:14)

Following ungodly passions (Jude 15)

Imitation of evil (III John 11)

Desirable Attitudes and Character Traits to be Developed:

Steadfastness (James 1:4; II Peter 1:7)

Striving after wisdom (James 1:5)

Self-control (James 1:19)

Submission before God (James 4:7)

Humility (James 4:6)

Patience (James 5:7)

Soberness (I Peter 1:13)

Holiness (I Peter 1:17)

Having love (I Peter 2:17)

Having knowledge (II Peter 1:17)

Possessing self-control (II Peter 1:7)

Godliness with brotherly affection (II Peter 1:7)

Fruitfulness in the knowledge of Jesus (II Peter 2:10)

Following the truth (III John 4)

Imitation of the truth (III John 11)

Relationship to Others:

Showing no partiality to fellowmen (James 2:1,9)

Not despising the poor (James 2:5-7)

Loving your neighbor (James 2:8); loving his brother
(I John 2:9); (4:21); loving one another (I John 3:11;
3:23; II John 5)

Should not curse fellowmen (James 2:9)

Should not covet what others possess (James 4:2)

Should not speak evil against one another (James 4:11)

Should not judge a brother (James 4:11)

Should not condemn the righteous man (James 5:6)

Should not kill the righteous man (James 5:6)

Should not grumble against one another (James 5:7)

Ought to pray for the sick (James 5:14)

Confess sins one to another (James 5:16)

Endeavor to bring sinners back from the error of their
ways (James 5:20)

Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles (I Peter 2:12)

Honor all men (I Peter 2:17)

Love the brotherhood (I Peter 2:17)

Should not return evil for evil (I Peter 3:9)

Should hold unfailing your love one for another (I Peter 4:8)

Practice hospitality (I Peter 4:9)

Clothe yourself with humility one to another (I Peter 5:5)

Help brother in need (I John 3:17)

Should pray for a brother not having committed a mortal sin (I John 5:16)

Should support God's workers (III John 8)

Render service to strangers (III John 5)

Should convince the doubting (Jude 23)

Endeavor to save those perishing (Jude 23)

b. Problems Centering around Choice of a Vocation.¹

In the preceding chapter the importance of the choice of a vocation by youth has been already indicated. "If an individual is a failure in his vocational life, all the rest of his experiences are out of true perspective."² Among the four suggestions on vocational guidance Dr. Burkhart gives as his fourth: "To help each person find a spiritual purpose in life which will become the source of his supreme devotion and the

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1. ante, pp. 26-28.

2. Burkhart, Guiding Individual Growth, p. 80.

goal of all his work."¹

While the General Epistles do not contain many suggestions as to vocational guidance, yet there can be obtained from I Peter the great principle which ought to govern the attitude of a young person in the work he chooses or which through force of circumstance he must accept as his medium for earning a livelihood. "As each has received a gift, employ it for another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." (I Peter 4:10) Such a conception as this can give dignity to every person's work and profession. The teaching that each person is to use his talents not selfishly, but in the service of his fellowmen, because he is a steward accountable to God,- such teaching can take the drudgery out of work and ennoble the most common type of labor. The manner in which youth deport themselves in their vocation can also be distinct contribution to Christ's cause and have the result that others "see their good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." (I Peter 4:12)

Three types of religious profession are mentioned in the General Epistles. They are that of being teacher, pastor and travelling missionary. Peter makes the following suggestion regarding the deportment of young pastors: "Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in

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1. Ibid., p. 84.

your charge but being an example to the flock...Likewise you that are younger be subject to the elders." (I Peter 5:15)

It is John, who in his III Epistle speaks highly of the traveling missionaries: "You will do well to send them on their journey as befits God's service...So ought we support such men, that we may be fellow-workers in the truth." (III John 6,8)

Another type of religious profession which youth might select is that of being a teacher. James has this advice for them: "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness." (James 3:1) Teachers need to guard their tongues and have wisdom and understanding. II Peter and Jude devote a number of chapters to a description of false teachers and their ultimate doom and thus show what God demands of the teachers of His word.

c. Social Problems.

1. Citizenship.

Young people receive courses in civics and political science, both in high school and college. However, as Dr. Ligon points out: "In the very nature of the case these cannot include the basic principle of the Christian philosophy, and thus make it possible to distinguish between the Christian theory of political and other theories."¹ The attitude young

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1. Ligon, op. cit., p. 301.

people are to take over against government is expressed by Peter as follows: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right." (I Peter 2:13,14) Since human government, whether it be the democratic or monarchical form, is of God, youth will be interested in their government and will at all times obey its laws.

2. Home Adjustments.¹

One of the adjustments the normal adolescent has to make is the establishment of complete independence from home authority.² This holds true, especially when youth decides to establish a home of its own.

First Peter is the only one of the General Epistles which treats of the subject of the relationship of man and woman to each other in the bonds of matrimony. In Chapter 3:1-7 Peter touches the center and heart of the home life, and, therefore, the center and heart of all civil and spiritual interests. He calls upon wives to be in subjection to their own husbands, encouraging even those Christian women married to heathen husbands to trust their Christian walk and conversation as the highest means of leading those whom they love into the light of salvation.

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1. ante, pp. 17-20.

2. R. Ray: Marriage is a Serious Business, p. 82.

Presenting Christian chivalry as man's true attitude to his wife, the husbands are reminded that they are not to consider themselves sole-heirs but "joint-heirs of the grace of life." Husbands are not to exhibit a harsh and hurtful attitude in the home and towards the wife, declaring that such a heart and such conduct will hinder their prayers.

II John contains a picture of a successful Christian mother with high ideals, who had been teaching her children to walk in truth and love, and who also was to warn her children against the religious dangers confronting them as they went forth into the world.

3. Church Work.¹

Youth need to be trained for positions of leadership in the church. They need to understand their relationship to each other in the congregation and the duties which church membership involves.

III John is interesting because of the light it sheds on church administration.² This short epistle emphasizes the importance of supporting the missionary enterprise. In John's day Christians were to accord itinerant missionaries hospitality whenever these happened to come into a community where Christians were to be found. Youth today must be encouraged to support the

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1. ante, pp. 32-35.

2. H. Martin: The Teacher's Commentary, p. 381.

missionary endeavors of the church. A study of Diotrephes will reveal the manner in which youth are not to deport themselves in the church, while the statements in the epistle concerning Gaius and Demetrius will be helpful in showing them what constitutes a God-pleasing manner of conduct in the church and what the proper relationship should be of church members to each other.

4. Racial and National Problems.¹

In recent years the Protestant churches of our land have endeavored to correct the deep-seated prejudices held by many church and non-church members against different races and nationalities. At this time the attention of the world is constantly being focused on this problem.

From James it is clear that partiality and discrimination have no place whatever in the Christian system of thought. Favoring the rich at the expense of the poor is clearly forbidden. (James 2:1-7) James, the brother of Jesus, gives Christian youth the great eternal principles by which all racial and national problems can be solved: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (James 2:8)

At present the question of capital and labor is a burning issue in the United States. It is a problem in which youth are vitally concerned both as spectators and actors. James has a stinging rebuke for the rich who amass a fortune at the

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1. ante, pp. 24-25.

expense of the poor. "Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." (James 5:4) The first part of Chapter 5 of James contains valuable principles pertaining to the relationship between capital and labor. Capital has no right to become rich on the sweat and labor of labor. Capital owes labor a decent living wage.

One of the great problems with which our country and others are grappling is the establishment of permanent peace. Youth are vitally interested in it for it is they who must pay the cost and penalty of war. James tells them what the source for all wars is: "What causes war? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have; so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war. You do not have, because you do not ask." (James 4:1-2)

The Epistles of Peter, James and John contain the solution for any problem which arises in a nation or between nations by their emphasis on love. "Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins." (I Peter 4:8-9) "And now I beg you, lady, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we had from the beginning, that we love one another." (II John 5)

C. Summary

In this chapter an analysis was made to see what portions of the General Epistles would be useful in meeting the problems and needs of young people. Although the grouping of James, I and II Peter, I, II, III John and Jude into one group was found to be artificial, it nevertheless was realized that it constituted an excellent unit of study for the late adolescent period.

The analysis of the seven epistles was grouped around two major divisions, namely, that of the Christian philosophy of life, and that of fields of adjustment. Under the first caption the following elements basic to a Christian philosophy of life were discussed: the origin, purpose and destiny of life. Thereafter, the personality of God and the relationship of God to youth and youth's relationship to God were described. This was followed by a presentation of the nature of true religion, the problem of sin and suffering and the use of the Bible and prayer in the development of youth's devotional life. Since the formulation of a Christian philosophy of life is one of the major problems confronting youth, the value of the General Epistles as teaching material becomes obvious.

The fields of adjustment were then discussed with reference to the problems of personal adjustment, problems centering around the choice of a vocation and social problems. Under

the last the following subjects received attention: Christian citizenship, home adjustments with special reference to a Christian home, church work and racial and national problems. While the material pertaining to the fields of adjustment was not so extensive as that relating to a Christian philosophy of life, still in some cases it was seen that the General Epistles enunciated the great foundational principles upon which leaders could build and from which they could launch further discussion on such subjects as marriage, sex, home, citizenship, racial and national problems.

The above findings indicate that the content of the General Epistles is valuable as teaching material from which lessons can be built which will meet the needs of youth.

In the next chapter an analysis will be made of the contents of the General Epistles with the purpose of ascertaining the educational principles and methods valuable for the teaching of youth.

CHAPTER IV

THE VALUE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND
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A. Introduction

In the previous chapter the value of the General Epistles as subject matter suited to meet many of the problems which confronted youth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four was demonstrated.

Teaching is a complex undertaking. It is an art based on definite principles, presupposing three basic factors:¹ the pupil, an immature, undeveloped being; the subject matter or content taught, by which the nature of the pupil is to be changed; and the teacher who is to stimulate and guide the experiences of the pupil as the latter appropriates the subject-matter presented by the teacher. The efficient teacher desires to effect changes in the lives of his pupils.

There can be no good teaching without the use of some kind of method. Eavey asserts:

"Good method in teaching implies the use of material in an orderly and effective way to produce certain desired growth and development in the life of the pupils as a consequence of his being stimulated and guided in the making of proper responses."²

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1. C. B. Eavey: Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers, p. 234.
2. Ibid., p. 231.

Christian teaching follows very definite principles. The laws of the mind are fixed and an individual in his spiritual growth is dependent upon the same mental processes as those that characterize secular education. "Christian truth like all other teaching, must be based upon the same principles and laws as are operative in all the mental processes of human beings."¹

Technique is important in any field. One may be in possession of a splendid body of truth but lack a suitable vehicle in which to convey it to others; therefore, it is important to consider teaching methods² and the principles that underlie learning on the part of the pupil. Methods are vital for the teaching process. They are to the teacher what the plane and hammer are to the carpenter. "If we use these tools of our trade well, youth will be won and held to the church and the kingdom. If we use them poorly, youth will be lost to both Church and Kingdom."³

The General Epistles, upon closer examination, will be found to rest upon certain foundation principles. Peter, James, Jude and John may not have studied philosophy and psychology, but the inspired writings they left as a part of our present New Testament, will be found in harmony with the best psychological and educational methods of our day. An analysis of the General Epistles as to the methods contained in them will be of great

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1. Ibid., p. 234.
2. Howse, op. cit., p. 84.
3. N. C. Harner: Youth Work in the Church, p. 139.

value to teachers of youth.

B. Teaching Methods and Principles

1. Aims of Education.

Dr. Kuist asserts that in Christian education the following should be the aims for Christian teachers: moral, social, intellectual, spiritual, volitional, and emotional.¹ The following are the educational aims as found in the General Epistles:

Moral: (This aims at character)

The following elements of character are aimed at in the General Epistles:

Joy (James 1:2; I Peter 1:8)

Patience (James 1:3; I Peter 5:7,8,11)

Perfection (James 1:3)

Firmness (James 1:8)

Gentleness (I Peter 3:15)

Humility (James 1:9; 4:6; I Peter 3:9; 5:5-6)

Meekness (James 1:21; 2:13)

Kindness (James 1:27)

Mercy (James 3:17; II Peter 1:2)

Purity (James 3:17)

Prayerfulness (James 5:13; I Peter 4:7)

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1. H. T. Kuist: The Pedagogy of St. Paul, p. 63.

Hope (I Peter 1:3)
Chastity (I Peter 3:2)
Obedience (James 1:22) (Weymouth)
Sincerity (James 3:17)
Reverence (I Peter 3:15)
Zeal (II Peter 3:14)
Zeal for right (I Peter 3:13)
Sympathy (I Peter 3:8)
Grace (II Peter 1:2)
Godliness (II Peter 1:3,6)
Self-control (II Peter 1:6)
Steadfastness (II Peter 1:6)
Confidence (I John 2:28)
Truth (II John; III John 3:4)
Hospitality (III John 5)

Social Aims:

Good citizenship (I Peter 2:13-17)
Good ethics (James 2:11-12)
No class distinction (James 2:1-5)
Neighborliness (James 2:8)
Respect for the rights of others (James 4:11)
Good conduct among Gentiles (I Peter 2:12)
Brotherly affection (II Peter 1:7)
Relationship of masters and servants (I Peter 2:18-20)
Hospitality (III John 5)

Intellectual Aims:

James, Peter, John, and Jude aimed to inform the mind, awaken the understanding, stir the reason, and quicken the judgment. The following words and expressions are used to describe the appeal to the intellect: know (James 1:9); (I Peter 1:18), gird up your minds (I Peter 1:13), beseech you (I Peter 2:11), arm yourselves with the thought (I Peter 4:1), exhort (I Peter 5:1), proclaim to you (I John 1:2,3), remind you (II Peter 1:12), to arouse you by way of reminder (II Peter 1:13), to recall these things (II Peter 1:15), do well to pay attention (II Peter 1:19), must understand (II Peter 1:20), do not ignore (II Peter 3:8), desire to remind you (Jude 5), remember (Jude 17), convince (Jude 22).

The authors of the General Epistles directed the minds of their readers to ennobling thoughts, they warned them against wrong speculation and false religious views. They sought to make the addressees independent in their religious thinking.

Spiritual Aim:

The spiritual aim is naturally predominant in these seven epistles. All sought to spiritualize the life of the congregations and the individuals to whom their letters were sent. One of the main objectives of each writer was to bring his readers into fellowship with God by faith in Jesus Christ. Fellowship with the Father and the Son occupies a prominent place in I John. In building up the spiritual life of man, Peter, John and Jude

stress growth in the knowledge of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Volitional Aim:

All four authors of the General Epistles sought to move their readers to action. The frequent use of the imperative is enough to be convinced of this. Peter, Jude and John endeavored to help their congregations take a definite stand over against the various types of Gnosticism troubling them. Stability of purpose may be said to have been one of the major objectives they hoped to realize through their Letters. John endeavored to educate individuals to follow the truth. This was to be achieved by the imitation of that which is good.

(III John 11)

Emotional Aim:

In addition to trying to stir men to right action, Peter, James, John and Jude also sought to move their readers emotionally. The following are some of the emotions they tried to arouse:

Joy (James 1:2; I Peter 4:13, 5:13)

Love (James 3:8; I John 3:11,18; 4:7,11; II John 1;
I Peter 3:8)

Sympathy (I Peter 3:8)

Tenderheartedness (I Peter 3:8)

Mercy (James 3:17)

Hope (I Peter 1:3,13,21)

Confidence (I Peter 1:21)

Reverence (I Peter 3:15)

Physical Aim:

John writes Gaius: "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may keep well." (III John 2) Both Peter and Jude warn against defilement and pollution of the body. Among the sins listed in Chapter 3 there are a number which concern the welfare of the body. The warning against adultery also would apply to this aim. What Dr. Kuist asserted about the aims of St. Paul might also very appropriately be quoted as a concluding statement for this section on the educational aims of the General Epistles:

"Our study reveals that St. Paul's aims as a teacher touched every side of man's nature, and all of them focussed in one unique, central aim, an aim which united religion and education toward the realization of complete manhood in this life (and as his teachings further show, in the world to come), the perfect standard and dynamic of which is Christ."¹

2. Manner of Securing Attention.

Before any teacher can begin to teach, he needs to secure the attention of the group to be taught.

"The need of winning attention and of keeping it is felt, not only by the teacher before his class, but by the preacher before his congregation, the lecturer before his audience, the lawyer before his jury, the salesman before his purchaser, and the writer and the advertiser, though only the printed page is before his readers."²

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1. Kuist, op. cit., p. 74.
2. H. H. Horne: Jesus, the Master Teacher, p. 9.

A teacher may secure attention by the magnetism of his personality. This, undoubtedly, was the case with the four authors of the General Epistles. When James, Peter, John and Jude penned their writings to the congregations or to individuals, these would manifest an interest in them because of the pre-eminence of their authors.

Another method by which these same writers secured attention was by directly addressing different groups and appealing to their intellects. Of this type the following may be given:

James:

"My brethren" (1:2, 2:1; 2:14; 3:1; 5:12; 5:19)

"My beloved brethren" (1:16; 1:19)

"Listen, my beloved brethren" (2:5)

"Come, now you rich men" (5:1)

I Peter:

"Beloved" (2:11; 4:12)

"Servants" (2:18)

"Married women" (3:1)

"Husbands" (3:7)

"I exhort the elders among you" (5:1)

"Young men" (5:5)

II Peter:

"Brethren" (1:10)

"Beloved" (3:1,14,17)

I John:

"My dear children" (2:1; 4:4)

"Beloved" (2:7; 4:7; 4:11)

"Dear children" (2:12; 2:18; 3:7,28; 5:21)

"Father" (2:13; 3:14)

"Young men" (3:13)

"Children" (2:14)

"Brethren" (3:13)

"Ye who believe in the name of the son of God" (5:13)

II John:

"Dearly loved one" (2,11)

"Beloved" (5)

Jude:

"Beloved ones" (3)

"Beloved" (17,20)

The writers of the General Epistles were also able to secure the attention of their readers by virtue of the compelling nature of the subject matter which they presented. James dealt with the matter of temptation and the sins of lust, anger, partiality, false leaders and factions, all of which were troubling the Jews in the Diaspora. His forthright style and the use of literary devices such as epigrams, paradoxes, figures of speech and dialogue would attract the attention of his readers. The authoritarian tone, indicated among other things by the presence of some sixty imperatives in the five chapters comprising the book, would also tend to make them want to listen.

The readers of the I and II Peter, the congregations in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, would be challenged and manifest an interest in these missives because they dealt with real life situations in the midst of which they found themselves. The readers of the first Epistle would welcome the apostle's advice as to conduct in time of persecution, while the readers of the second Epistle would eagerly read Peter's directives concerning the false teachers and the method of overcoming them.

The readers of John's epistles surely would be happy to receive help in meeting their false teachers, the Gnostics, and to be strengthened in the certainty that John could give them. The affectionate manner of his approach would also contribute to securing the reader's attention for John.

The readers of Jude's epistle would be interested immediately when reading verse 3: "Beloved, being very eager to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." This change of purpose in writing could not but help make his readers take notice of what Jude wrote.

3. The Creative and Transmissive Method.

In educational circles the creative method has been pitted over against the transmissive method. Dr. Richardson asserts:

"In a program that emphasizes, unduly, the historic continuity of the faith, originality, genuineness, and vitality of experience is apt to be made subordinate. To preserve and continue a tradition is contrasted with the engendering of a new life."¹

Creativity emphasizes that teaching must be pupil-centered and arise out of life-situations.² With many educators this means that if the material of a lesson is not of interest and of obvious and immediate value, it should have no place in the curriculum. Learning should be guided by spontaneity and naturalness.

A study of the General Epistles with the purpose of ascertaining the light they shed on this problem will reveal the fact that the sacred writers employed both the creative and transmissive methods of instruction.

It should be noted that all seven Letters grew out of life-situations. They are life-centered, dealing with problems faced by the readers. What these problems were have already been indicated in a previous part of this chapter.

In meeting the problems of persecution, of the relationship of the Christians to the state, the problems of social relationship, of false teachers, of hypocrisy and formalism, Peter, James, John and Jude resort to the transmissive method. They use Old Testament Scriptures, the teachings of the apostles

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1. N. E. Richardson: The Teaching Evangelist - Study Unit No. 1, p. 12.
2. R. S. Smith: New Trails for the Christian Teacher, p. 22.

as well as their own inspired letters as a means by which they expect their readers to meet the various situations. They enunciate definite teachings which are to be obeyed. James has sixty imperatives in his Epistle. One cannot but feel the authoritarian tone of his writing. Yet they present their teachings and injunctions creatively.

Those who essay to teach youth need to present a definite body of truth and that part of the method is transmissive. Still this should and can be done in a creative way. Dr. Richardson agrees with this position when he writes:

"The ten commandments can be taught creatively. The restrictions that are inherent in true discipleship can be taught for the pupil's good...The fact that the gospel appeared in human history two thousand years ago does not, thereby make it inappropriate to meet today's needs. It is timeless, It is eternally true and always life-giving."¹

4. The Use of Problems.

There are different kinds of problems faced by youth and they may be classified as either practical or theoretical.

Dr. Horne defines these in this manner:

"There are problems whose solutions affect the conduct of life, these are practical; there are problems whose solutions do not affect the conduct, these are theoretical; and there are problems, like free will, whose solutions are theoretical but whose applications are practical."²

Dewey says:

"The need of clearing up confusion, of straightening out an ambiguity, of overcoming an obstacle, of covering the gap

1. Richardson, *The Teaching Evangelist*, op. cit., p. 13.
2. Horne, op. cit., p. 31.

between things as they are and as they may be when transformed, is, in germ, a problem."¹

Good teaching endeavors to meet the problems as they arise in the lives of students.

The General Epistles were occasioned by specific problems which arose in the lives of congregations or of individuals. James wrote his letter to encourage those who were suffering for the sake of the Lord. It was also penned to deal with the problems of grave disorders which had come to light.² The most dangerous of these errors was the misuse of the doctrine of salvation by grace alone through faith.

First Peter was written because of the persecutions which the Christians of Asia Minor had to endure.³ It meant the loss of reputation, property, and even life to be a Christian. For Peter the problem was to comfort them and keep them steadfast. In the second Epistle still another problem confronted the same congregations. In addition to trials caused by persecution, the Christians were exposed to danger which had assumed the form of false doctrines.⁴

John was confronted in Asia Minor with the Gnostics who denied the humanity of Christ and who put forth the claim of their having a superior knowledge.⁵ He met this problem by emphasizing the great truth that Christ is the revelation of God as light and

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1. Article, "Problem", in Monroe's Encyclopedia of Education, p. 47.
2. F. W. Farrar: The Messages of the Books, p. 410. Vol. V.
3. M. C. Alleman: New Testament Commentary, p. 650.
4. Ibid., p. 658.
5. A. H. Strong: Popular Lectures on the Books of the New Testament, p. 361.

love and urging Christians to live spiritual lives in the strength of fellowship with Him. Second John also deals with the attitude toward false teachers. Third John was written in response to a problem existing in a certain congregation, where one man was showing hospitality to Christian missionaries and another refused to receive God's messenger. Jude is written to meet the problem of apostasy and urges the readers "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" and to walk in harmony with their Christian profession.

Youth have many problems to face. Their physical, mental, emotional, and moral development, as seen in Chapter two, brings many problems with it for the late adolescent. The leaders and teachers of youth should help them to solve their problems and meet young people where they are.

5. The Use of Questions.

One of the methods used in the teaching of youth is that of the question-and-answer.

"Good questioning stimulates thought, brings out new meanings, and leads the mind to right conclusions. Poor questioning leaves the thought unawakened, fails to arouse interest and attention, and results in poor mastery and faulty understanding."¹

"In the main," says Betts, "questions should be planned to teach instead of to test. They should suggest new problems, lead to new ideas, show the need for further information."²

1. C. H. Betts: How to Teach Religion, p. 206.
2. C. H. Betts: Teaching Religion Today, p. 117.

In James, I and II Peter and in I John the educator will find the question and answer method employed. The book of James has twenty, I Peter four, II Peter one and I John three questions. The following is a list of the passages containing questions: James 2:4,5,6,7,14,16,20,21,22,25; 3:11,12,13; 4:1,4,5,12,14; 5:13,14. I Peter 2:20; 3:13; 4:17,18. II Peter 3:4. I John 3:12,22; 5:5. In most cases it is the rhetorical question which is utilized.

An analysis of the questions of these four epistles will reveal them to be original, practical, stimulating, definite, searching, adapted to the individual, clear, thought-provoking, and silencing.

The purpose of the questions was to make the readers think, to express an emotion, to enforce the argumentation, to awaken the conscience and to clarify the situation.

The manner in which these questions were put might be said to have been earnest, sympathetic and reproving.

6. The Use of Scripture.

Three of the four authors of the General Epistles quote from and allude to the Old Testament: James, Peter and Jude. As noted before,¹ in four books we have no less than forty quotations, historical allusions and references. In their epistles they call upon the Old Testament either to prove, to

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1. ante, pp. 71-72.

amplify the point they are making, or to apply it to the situation at hand.

It is evident that these men must have held the Old Testament books in high esteem and employed them for the growth of their own souls. The liberal use made of the Old Testament implied also a familiarity on the part of the readers of these Letters.

In addition to references from the Old Testament, it is found that Peter refers to the Epistles of Paul as well as to the sayings of the apostles.

For the Christian teacher of youth these references to Scriptures of both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant ought to show the necessity of a familiarity with other portions of the Bible beside the General Epistles. Constantly the teacher who knows his Bible will be able to use it to advantage in his work with youth.

"The teacher should know the Bible as a complete book, Many of the misconceptions of the Bible are due to the lack of a proper conception of its unity. It is not enough to be able to name the books of the Bible or know its divisions of history, prophecy, and poetry; for its climax is in the revealed Son of God in the New Testament."¹

In Jude there are quotations probably taken from several apocryphal books. It is believed that at verse nine the writer quotes from the Assumption of Moses² and at 14 from the Book of

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1. Howse, op. cit., p. 61.
2. The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter, p. 35.

Enoch.¹ The apostle used this material because it was in harmony with the truth as God revealed it to him. In order to illustrate and enforce their lesson materials, Christian teachers may also use extra-Biblical material, as long as it does not contradict any of the Scriptures.

7. The Use of Occasion.

Good teaching makes use of natural occasions as they arise. Teaching which uses an immediate situation will satisfy a felt need. As Horne puts it: "All this means that education must be in immediate contact with actual living, and so not formal, not academic, not for its own sake."²

The General Epistles all grew out of life-situations. When Peter, James, John, and Jude found that the occasion required immediate action, they sat down and penned their respective writings. There is nothing formal or academic about the General Epistles.

The teacher of youth will often have the experience that at certain times new problems arise, whose discussion will prove more fruitful and beneficial than the matter under consideration.

However, Christian teachers may on the basis of experience also anticipate the occasion and make preparations to meet the

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1. Ibid., p. 44.
2. Horne, op. cit., p. 107.

needs of youth. That is where experience on the part of the teacher and a knowledge of adolescent development play an important role. In Chapter two of his first Epistle, John anticipated a situation when he wrote: "But if anyone does sin, he has an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (v.1) The wise teacher of youth will do likewise.

8. The Use of Contrast.

In teaching, the use of contrast is a great aid and ought to be utilized by teachers of youth. The principle of contrast is one form of the association of ideas. It is natural and easy to have associations of this kind. Dr. Horne emphasized its great value when he wrote:

"Placing opposites over against each other reveals differences between members of a single group, exhibits the dissimilar qualities in the things compared, emphasizes their antagonism, has a pictorial quality and so appeals to the imagination, and is likewise an aid to attention and memory."¹

An analysis of James, I Peter, and I John will reveal how these apostolic writers employed the principle of contrast. How effective a teaching device this is further will be realized from a study of those passages containing the contrasts. In James we have the following:

trials - joy (1:2)

doubting - faith (1:5)

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1. Horne, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

lowly - exalted (1:9)
poor - rich (2:1-2)
mercy - judgment (2:13)
works - faith (2:14)
cursing - blessing (3:10)
earthly - heavenly (3:16-17)
war - peace (3:18; 4:1)
proud - humble (4:6)
sinner - righteous (4:8)
dejection - joy (4:9)
mourning - laughter (4:9)
to humble - to exalt (4:9)

Peter in his first Epistle has these contrasts:

man perishable - God imperishable (1:24)
Christ rejected of men - chosen by God (2:4)
darkness - light (2:9)
no people - God's people (2:10)
bad deeds - good deeds (2:12)
reviling - blessing (3:9)
evil - right (3:10)
human passions - living according to will of God (4:3)
proud - humble (5:3)

John in his first Epistle has the following contrasts:

darkness - light (1:6)
unrighteousness - righteousness (1:10)
liar - truth (2:4)

anti-christ - confessor of Christ (2:22,23)

death - life (3:14)

spirit of anti-christ - spirit of God (4:3)

of the world - of God (4:4)

spirit of error - spirit of truth (4:6)

hatred - love (4:11)

eternal death - eternal life (5:1)

9. The Use of Apperception.

In educational theory the term "apperception" is applied to the learning of the new in terms of the old. When learning occurs in a pupil's mind, past experiences give rise to new ones, or conversely stated, new experiences have their roots in old or previous ones. Dr. Thorndike asserts:

"As nine-tenths of human life and learning illustrate the general law of association, so nine-tenths of teaching illustrates the use or abuse of the law of apperception... The past is everywhere the key to the present."¹

A study of the General Epistles will reveal to teachers of youth that all four writers use the apperceptive basis in teaching. Constantly they interpret the new in terms of the old or familiar. James frequently uses the facts from everyday life or from nature to illustrate and interpret new truths. (cf. 1:6, 10,11; 2:1,21,25; 3:4,6,11,12; 4:14; 5:17) Peter and Jude interpret new truths to their readers by placing them against the background of Old Testament history. John in his epistles refers a

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1. E. L. Thorndike: The Principles of Teaching Based on Psychology, p. 43.

number of times to truths which he had already given those whom he was addressing in I and II John on a former occasion. References to history, Scripture, Old Testament ritual, nature, to Christ and His apostles are nothing but examples of the use of apperception where the familiar is employed to explain or teach new concepts and truths.

10. The Use of Concrete.

Religion and morals deal with abstract truths. Every teacher of youth will find himself face to face with the problem as to how abstract truth is to be brought down to the level of the student's intelligence. One method which all great teachers of religion have found helpful is the employment of the concrete to help convey the meaning of that which is abstract.

If the General Epistles are analyzed from this viewpoint, it will be discovered that James, Peter, John and Jude resort to various ways of making the abstract understandable to the minds of their readers. The following will illustrate how they use the concrete to teach the abstract:

Concrete		Abstract
	James	
Wave of sea (1:6)		Doubting
Flower of grass (1:10)		Brevity of life
Man looking in mirror (1:23)		Doing the word
Bits in the mouths of horses (3:3)		Control of tongue
Mist (4:4)		Shortness of life

Concrete	Abstract
James	
Farmer waiting for previous fruits of earth (5:7)	Patience
I Peter	
New-born babes (2:2)	Spiritual growth
Example of Sarah (3:6)	Obedience
Ark (3:18)	Patience
Water (3:18)	Salvation
II Peter	
Angels that sinned (2:4)	Judgment
Noah and Lot (2:5,7)	Righteous not forsaken
Sodom and Gomorrah (2:6)	Punishment of ungodly
Balaam (2:15)	Love of gain at expense of right
Jude	
Angels (v.6), Sodom and Gomorrah (v.7), Cain (v.11), Balaam (v.11), Korah (v.11)	Punishment of wicked

All teachers of youth will find that the presentation of spiritual abstract truths will be easier to grasp for youth if given to them in a concrete manner.

11. The Use of Motivation.

Every teacher needs to have an understanding of the forces that act upon life and produce activity, since all learning results from the activity of the learner. Dr. Havey asserts:

"Adequate and proper motivation is the key to effective learning. The obtaining of this is perhaps the teacher's most difficult problem and, it naturally follows, the teacher's greatest opportunity."¹

Teachers of youth cannot obtain action from their pupils without first awakening motives.

A study of the methods employed by Peter, James, John, and Jude in obtaining motivation should be instructive for teachers of youth. They use various methods. James endeavors to build up the faith of his hearers by using many illustrations, by the employment of dialogue, by setting down definite principles. He uses many imperatives and thereby challenges the will of his hearers. His five chapters are full of life situations. His employment of the rhetorical question is most effective in motivating his readers to adopt the suggestions he makes.

Peter in his first Epistle resorts to the positive with the view to stimulating them to action. He refers to past history as well as to great promises to challenge his readers to meet the problems confronting them. As a good psychologist he does not permit them to indulge in self-pity even though they are suffering tribulation. He lists the privileges which should

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1. Havey, op. cit., p. 184.

serve as an incentive to withstand trials. "Gird up the loins of your mind," he urges them. One of the finest types of motivation which he uses is that of Christ's example. His suffering should make them willing to suffer for when the latter is the case they will know for certain that they are truly Christ's disciples.

In his second Epistle, where a different type of situation obtains, the apostle endeavors to motivate them by positive advice, especially by supplying them with those virtues which will be helpful to them in resisting all false teachers. He quotes the Old Testament and the example of people who fell under evil because they followed false teachers and teachings. The note of certainty which pervades the letter also helped the readers in meeting their problems.

Jude uses a type of motivation similar to that employed by Peter in his second Epistle. He quotes examples from Old Testament history as well as the statements of the apostles of Jesus Christ to challenge them "to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." (v.3) He also gives them positive advice and thus gives them a motivation for desiring to fight false teachers, for Jude assures them that God through Jesus will keep them from falling.

John in his three epistles utilizes the motive of cause and effect. The example to follow Christ is presented with great power. The fact that the writer was speaking out of his own personal experience would be a strong incentive to John's readers to

follow his suggestions. The affectionate note, so strong in John's writings, would also contribute to make the hearers desirous of imitating Christ and following Him.

12. The Qualifications of Teachers.

The General Epistles are valuable for the suggestions they contain regarding the qualifications of a Christian teacher.

First, the statements in the various epistles concerning teachers will be considered. James urges this as an important qualification: "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness. For we all make mistakes, and if anyone makes no mistakes in what he says he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also." A Christian teacher of youth must learn to guard his tongue and watch his language.

Second, Peter and Jude speak especially of false prophets or false teachers and show the seriousness of teaching destructive heresies and of misleading people. Christian teachers must be well-grounded in the truth. They must be certain that they are teaching God's doctrines and not become guilty of presenting "cleverly devised myths."

The elect lady is praised by John for having raised her children in the truth. Love of the truth must characterize any Christian teacher of youth, whether it be in the church, school, or home.

James, Peter, John, and Jude were teachers. What

qualifications necessary for a Christian teacher of youth can we learn from them? Of all four we may say that they were men who had a living faith in Christ, which might be called necessary for any Christian teacher.

From a study of the seven Epistles, these four apostolic teachers may be said to have had the following personality traits vital for a teaching personality: patience, peace, purpose, practicalness, endurance, enthusiasm, respect, responsiveness, reverence, sense, service, spirituality, sympathy, optimism, knowledge, adaptability, leadership, love, loyalty, ideas, ideals, imagination, impartiality, insight, interest, tact, tenderness, and truthfulness.

C. Summary

In this chapter it was shown that the authors of the General Epistles instinctively used those methods and principles which are in harmony with the findings of modern psychology and pedagogics.

James, Peter, John, and Jude aimed at the moral, social, intellectual, spiritual, volitional, emotional and physical development of their readers. As teachers they were found to represent the highest types of teaching personalities. The suggestions they made regarding teachers were also found to be sound and excellent.

It also became apparent that as teachers they must have been successful in securing the attention of those to whom their letters were addressed. In their teaching they combined both the transmissive and creative methods. The use of problems, questions, occasions, Scripture, the concrete, and contrasts was employed by them to motivate their congregations to believe and do those things they believed true and beneficial for them.

Because they embody sound teaching principles in their presentation of basic Christian truths these Epistles without question can greatly aid teachers of youth in the effective presentation of the teachings of the General Epistles to late adolescents.

In the chapter which is to follow, some practical suggestions will be made for various possible methods of approach to the General Epistles for young people.

CHAPTER V

SUGGESTED METHODS OF APPROACH TO THE
GENERAL EPISTLES

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A. Introduction

In chapter three of this study the contents of the General Epistles were analyzed with a view to establishing their general suitability for teaching material to meet the problems and needs of young people.

The question naturally follows as to how this material can be taught and how it can be presented to youth so that they will find something in the General Epistles which speaks to them. In this chapter suggestions will be made as to various ways in which the material of the General Epistles can be presented to youth today.

B. Possible Methods of Approach

There are a number of different methods possible in presenting the General Epistles to youth, such as the book, the chapter and the word study methods. These will be considered briefly and by way of illustration several samples using the book method will be given. They will also contain suggestions for the teacher including the psychological background of the lesson, teaching objectives, teaching methods, possible assignments for class discussion and illustrated procedures which are to

serve as a guide for the teacher and as source material for the student.

1. The Book Method.

The best method of study of any organism is that which gives due prominence to the structure of that organism. The Bible is a living organism of truth; it has in it the life of the living God and is able, as no other book is, to impart spiritual truth to the soul of man since the Bible was made. bookwise - one book at a time, according as the need arose for the truth, historical, prophetic, or ethical, as set forth therein, it would seem reasonable, says Dr. Evans, "to assume that the Book-Method of Bible Study should yield the best results from time and labor spent in an endeavor to 'search the Scriptures!'"¹ While Dr. Wilbur Smith does not recommend the book method of Bible study for private devotional use, still he says concerning the book method: "It is granted that this is a wonderful way of studying the Word of God. Its results are exceedingly rich."² Youth need to learn the great value of the book method of Bible study. Julian Love asserts:

"Wherever it is possible, it is desirable to read at a sitting those books of the Bible which are in themselves units of thought. In this way the flow of a single idea is not interrupted but oft times sweeps in upon the heart, where otherwise it would get dammed up and forgotten."³

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1. W. Evans: The Book Method of Bible Study, p. 7.
2. W.M. Smith: Profitable Bible Study, p. 27.
3. J. L. Love: How to Read the Bible, p. 16.

More than half of the sixty-six books of the Bible can be read in an average of about twenty minutes, no one requiring as much as an hour. Love gives the reading time in minutes as follows for the General Epistles: James - 25 minutes, I Peter - 30 minutes, I John - 30 minutes, II John - 5 minutes, III John - 5 minutes, and Jude - 5 minutes. The General Epistles can all be taught to youth by the book method. A direct study of James, I Peter, II Peter and I John would be most rewarding. In these four major epistles of the General Epistles the chapters link together and development is traced more easily from chapter to chapter.

2. The Chapter Method.

Frequently it is impossible to study an entire book of the Bible and it is only feasible to study a single chapter in a meeting or a study group. Teachers of youth will find the chapter method useful in which they concentrate on the contents of one chapter, always however, in relation to the whole.

3. The Word Study Method.

The vocabulary of the General Epistles provides an interesting approach. Concerning this type of study, Dr. Wilbur Smith asserts:

"Of course every word in the Bible will not yield a great spiritual truth, or refresh our hearts, and yet there are hundreds of words in either Testament which, if really

studied, will amazingly deepen, and strengthen, and enrich our spiritual experiences."¹

In James the words "faith" and "works"; in I Peter "suffering"; in II Peter "knowledge"; in the Johannine epistles "love" and "truth" are worthy of study and it would be possible to organize the messages of these books around these words. This would also include a study of the contrasts as we have them in James, I Peter, and I John.

C. Suggested Sample Lessons Using the Book Method

The General Epistles can be used as a unit of study for young people's groups or classes. The unit might be called: "Help from the First Century for Twentieth Century Problems of Youth."

The Unit Outlined.

- James - The Church in an unfriendly environment.
- I Peter - The use of suffering.
- II Peter - Voices against Christianity.
- I John - How loving and living are related.
- Jude - The Christian's attitude toward false teachers.
- II John - What it means to be a Christian mother.
- III John - Christian hospitality.

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1. Smith, op. cit., p. 41.

1. James.

a. The Psychological Background for the Teacher.

One of the problems faced by youth is that of worldliness. In the buoyancy of good health and high spirits, life offers much pleasure and profit, while death seems far away. Material things loom large upon the horizon and spiritual needs are little appreciated. A greedy world tempts youth by offers of material gain. In later adolescence many forsake Christ by Christless living and by neglect of their spiritual life. Youth need to be helped with this problem.

b. Teaching Aims.

(1). To discover with youth whether or not their church faces the same problems and difficulties that the church faced in the first century.

(2). To find out with which problems the epistle of James deals and the solutions the author suggests.

(3). To see whether or not any of the suggestions of James would help solve problems in the youth's local church.

c. Assignment for Class Discussion.

(1). Read the letter of James at one sitting.

(2). To whom did James write the letter? Why did he write it?

(3). Make a list of the problems this early church faced.

(4). Group the statements in the book pertaining to wisdom,

doing, and speech.

(5). Read carefully 3:13-18 and think of your life especially in terms of 3:17. What help can these verses give in deciding how important the church should be in your life?

(6). What place does "doing" have in a Christian's life? Can you mention an instance where doing could be substituted for saying in your church? In your life?

(7). Read chapter 3:1-12, the famous passage about "the tongue". Can you think of any instances when hasty speech caused you trouble? Or caused trouble in your young people's group? Is there any suggestion what to do about it?

(8). What factors in your community make it difficult for the church to grow as it should?

(9). Write down the problems that face your community. Does James give you a solution? If the Epistle does not, can you give a solution?

d. Suggested Teaching Methods.

(1). One pupil might give the historical introduction to the Epistle of James, pointing out the problems the church faced.

(2). The use of the blackboard. The teacher together with the class can work out an outline of James.

(3). The use of the story method to bring the class to grips with some of the problems of the book. It can be used as introduction or also to illustrate the content of James.

(4). Lecture method used at times by the teacher in the course of the presentation.

(5). The use of the question-and-answer method.

e. Illustration of Procedure.

A Possible Introduction: A New Year's Eve Party.

"I'm tired of doing things in this church. You work and work and no one comes. Their excuse is that they can't have any fun when they come to church."

The speaker was the chairman of the social committee. The weary social committee was on its way home from the New Year's Eve Party. While there had been a few people at the party, most of the young people had chosen the theatre or other places to watch the old year pass.

"There were only eight at our last business meeting because it came on the same night as the basketball game at Madison Square Garden", said the president of the Young People's Society.

"Yes, it's a fact; there is little time for church when you go to work and go out a few times a week", said Frank.

"Say, when I have gone to school all day and studied for my classes there isn't much time left", remarked Bill.

One of the elders who had been standing in the church doorway with a group of older people shook his head and sighed, "Not much like the good old days."

"Don't be too hard on my young people's group", replied the youth leader. "The young people are tired and discouraged now because their plans for tonight did not work out very well, but they'll be back Sunday full of energy, ready to make new plans."

"Of course they will", said their pastor. "Besides, the good old days were not so very different when you know what really happened then. The church always has had problems and always will. What we leaders must do is to help the young people to discover and solve the problems as they arise."

Several problems faced by the church are suggested

by this story. Many young people lack interest in the church program. Between what they think is fun and what they feel is religion, there is a conflict in their mind. Other interests are crowding out the church.

What are behind these conditions? Do these conflicts of interest and time arise because the young people in the community do not really think of the church as important or vital to life?

In the early days when the church had begun, a similar situation arose. The Christians, comparatively few in number, were scattered throughout the communities of the Roman world so that no one considered them. Other interests were considered larger than the Christian.

James for one thing wrote this letter to say that religion was important and needed cultivation.

At first the Christians, or "followers of the Way" as they were called in Jerusalem, were Jews either by birth or conversion. They worshipped in the temple, studied in the synagogues on the Sabbath, and met in small groups for worship. When any problems arose, the leaders could easily be consulted.

But this was all changed when bitter persecutions arose. The Jewish Christians were scattered and some of their leaders who remained at Jerusalem were perplexed and fearful for the scattered church. It needed help. Lost within a hostile Jewish and Gentile world, these small Christian communities were losing ground. Their interests were divided.

James, probably the brother of Jesus, the head of the Jerusalem church, sat down and wrote to these scattered people a letter which became known as the Epistle of James. Many scholars consider it the oldest book in the New Testament. The letter shows that the writer was still thinking of the people as one church, and as an offspring of Judaism.

The letter is not organized around a theme, but a great purpose is clear throughout.

Studying Some Problems of this Early Church.

To study all the problems with which James deals will not be possible. Read the letter and endeavor to discover them for yourself. We shall consider only three that should be of great interest to you.

Wisdom.

Wisdom may be defined as the ability to use with discretion what you know. The scattered Jewish Christians knew a great many facts about Christ, about truth and life. But James was not certain that they knew how to use this knowledge. In the first chapter he brings up this matter of wisdom and tells them where they can find it. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. (1:5)

Read carefully in Ch. 3:13-18 what James says about wisdom. As you read, think of people whom you know, and ask yourself whether they are "pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity." (v. 17)

What help do these verses give in deciding how important the church should be in your life? Where can you find this wisdom that James considers so important? Is there any relationship between this wisdom and that which you obtain in school? As far as you are responsible for the affairs of the church, are they conducted in peace and gentleness, and without any deceit or quarreling? Have you the wisdom from above?

Doing.

Jesus spoke much of doing. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and do it." James talked much about the importance of doing, (1:19-27). You are all familiar with verse 22: "Be doers of the word" While many people listen to sermons, to teaching, to the Word, they do nothing about it and thus deceive themselves.

Read carefully Ch. 2:14-26. Read especially verse 17: "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." Think about your own church. How many times have you heard some one say, "Of course, I know what should be done, but - !" Can you mention an instance where doing could be substituted for saying?

Speaking.

While James wanted the church to realize that doing was important, he also wanted its members to be careful about what they said. He says: "Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." (1:19) Then in Ch. 3:1-12 James has his famous passage on "tongues".

The early Christians loved Jesus and were full of zeal for His cause. They were glad and willing to testify for him. James warns them not to love teaching merely for the sake of the fame of it. It is a serious thing to be a teacher and every word spoken by a teacher's tongue must be guarded. Note the figures of speech in James' description of the tongue.

Can you think of any instances when hasty speech has caused trouble in your church, or in your young people's meeting?

James and Your Church.

As you read the book, did you see how real the problems of the church were in James' day? Now think of your church. What are its problems? What factors in your community make it hard for the church to live and grow as it should? Write down the problems as they occur to you. As you find each problem, try also to find a solution.

2. I Peter.

a. Psychological Background for the Teacher.

One of the problems implicit in the formulation of a Christian philosophy of life is that which deals with the problem of human suffering, a perplexing one for youth. They cannot reconcile suffering with the Biblical teaching of the love of God.

b. Teaching Aims:

- (1). To determine why Peter wrote about suffering as he did.
- (2). To show the values suffering has for the Christian.
- (3). To show what causes are worth suffering for.
- (4). To develop courage to face suffering in choosing the right.

c. Assignment for Class Discussion.

(1). Read the Epistle at one sitting.

(2). Why did Peter write the Epistle? To whom was it addressed? Make a map of Asia Minor locating the addressees of the letter.

(3). Why were the Christians suffering?

(4). Do you think Peter was qualified to write to these people about suffering? Can you give any examples from Acts where Peter suffered? Which chapters reflect Peter's experience?

(5). How did Peter classify suffering? Do people often suffer because of their own wrongdoings or mistakes? Can you give any examples from present world situations? From your own experience?

(6). Does Peter satisfy you as to the necessity of suffering in the world? How?

(7). What suggestions does Peter make for meeting suffering? How would you put them to use today?

(8). Write a paragraph of about one hundred words on the subject: "The Use of Suffering".

d. Suggested Teaching Methods.

(1). The Assignment-Research Method.

One pupil can also be privately assigned the project of consulting one of the standard Bible dictionaries or books dealing with New Testament introduction and give a report in

the class on the historical background. The element of surprise would thus be utilized and would help give variety to the class session.

(2). The use of maps and blackboard.

(3). The use of story as the conclusion of the presentation.

(4). The use of the question-and-answer method combined at times with the lecture method.

(5). Have one or two students read their paragraph on "The Use of Suffering".

e. Illustration of Procedure.

Introduction: Suffering in the World Today.

At present in Europe and Asia millions of people are suffering. Many are dying from lack of food, clothing, medicine, and shelter. Innocent children are dying or if they manage to live, are growing up undernourished and will be unable later to resist diseases and possibly die prematurely. In many countries of Europe Christians are also being persecuted because of their religious faith. Why, young and old people are asking, does God permit all this suffering? Is God just for permitting people to suffer? What use is there in suffering?

Peter's Letter about Suffering.

The First Epistle of Peter is almost entirely about suffering. In the First Epistle of Peter suffering is considered a sacrifice made for a person or a great cause. Read Chapter 5:10: "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, establish, and strengthen you."

Take a map of the Roman world of Peter's day and locate the regions in which were located the churches to which the Epistle is addressed.

These churches were enduring a great deal of hardship. They were being persecuted for the sake of Christ. When Peter decided to write to these churches they were wondering what was the use of all their suffering? Was it worth while? Would it really do them any good?

Anxiously Peter watched these congregations of Asia Minor. He himself had endured suffering. Not only had he suffered, but he had had wrong ideas about suffering and had learned right ideas at a severe cost.

This letter can only be understood against the background of Peter's own experience. Many of the paragraphs reflect Peter's experiences. Can you recall some of the instances when Peter suffered because of his experiences? There was the time when he started so bravely to go to Jesus over the water, and lost faith and sank; then, there was the time, just after his confession of the power and might of Jesus, when he begged the Master to stay away from Jerusalem and avoid the cross; or when in the Garden of Gethsemane Peter slept while Jesus prayed; or the tragic time when he denied his Lord with cursing in the court of the high priest's house. How Peter had suffered on these occasions. As he thinks back over his life he does not call that suffering for the Lord. He feels that rather all this was suffering that his own wrongdoing had deserved, and so he writes: "For what credit is it, if when you do wrong and are beaten for it, you take it patiently? But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval." (2:20)

In the years that have elapsed since his Master left the earth, Peter time and again as an earnest teacher and preacher of the Master's flock had suffered for the Gospel's sake. In the book of Acts we read how he was scourged, imprisoned, threatened, condemned to die. Peter felt that this suffering had been for the Lord. Read Ch. 3:14: "But even if you do suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed."

Often Peter had found it hard to do right. His tongue was too ready; some times he acted impulsively. He was conscious of the fact that he was ever in danger of sinning. So he writes to the churches concerning being on guard and being willing to suffer for righteousness' sake. Read Ch. 4:12-19. Are all people suffering unjustly in Europe? Can you think of any situation in your life when you suffered because of your own fault or shortcoming? How did you take it?

What Christ's Suffering Had Taught Peter.

Peter is putting on paper a part of his own experience calculated to help the Christians in times of trouble and testing. Try to see him as one who passionately is in earnest and feeling what he writes.

Peter sees a world in which there is pain, sorrow, and

trouble. He does not try to say why these things are in the world or where they come from. To help Christians meet suffering the Apostle goes back to the life of Jesus Christ. Read Ch. 2:21-23: "For to this you had been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. He committed no sin; no guile was found on His lips. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten; but he trusted to Him who judges justly."

That Jesus of Nazareth should have chosen to suffer seems to Peter to be wonderful and this example all Christians should follow.

Peter wants Christians to be like Christ, to belong to His family, and to follow Him. And these things imply suffering. One cannot be a part of God's family without sharing Christ's suffering. Suffering is a joy to Christians because it makes them like Christ. The real work of Christians cannot be done except at the price of suffering or hardship, for suffering is the business or vocation of Christians. Suffering is the responsibility of Christians, especially of those who would be leaders in the church, as it proves them close to Christ and fit to lead.

What Do You Think About These Incidents?

The Members of the board of a certain church in Chicago were wont to eat their lunch in a little restaurant near the place of employment. It was the only really sanitary place to eat within a mile or two. One day a Negro who worked on their board went with them to lunch. The owner of the restaurant refused to serve the Negro. The other members walked out, and have been eating cold lunches since that time. You may think, that is not much persecution? Probably not, and yet it revealed their willingness to be inconvenienced for the right that belonged to another Christian.

Before the last war a certain minister issued the statement that if another war occurred, he would not support it from his pulpit or in any other way. When the second world war came, he lost his church and is having difficulty getting another one. He is despised as a pacifist.

Can you find similar cases in your experience? You as an individual, or your church as a church, will be called upon to choose definitely between keeping still or taking a stand that will get you into trouble. If you in the trials of today and tomorrow will stand firm as Peter and the Christians of the first

century, then you will know that you are a true servant of Christ and through suffering belong to the glorious family of God.

3. I John.

a. Psychological Background for the Teacher.

Youth need a religion that is personal and Christianity must supply this need for a personal religion if it would attract and hold youth. Sadler says: "Adolescents worship heroes; they early adopt other persons as models; and if religion is to become the hub of integrating moral life of a youth, it must provide a personal God." ¹ Adolescents will answer the call of some outstanding leader. They have high ideals and aspirations and look for leadership at its best; where the claims of such leaders seem worthy youth will give of their devotion, service, and sacrifice.

Dr. Howse asserts:

"In youth's struggle to solve the many problems of life, nothing is as strengthening as a vital experience with Christ. Youth must be led to know that religion is exceedingly practical. Where one links himself with Christ, he is linking himself with the greatest power in the universe." ²

b. Teaching Aims.

(1). To show why a strong belief in God whom Jesus revealed makes for better relationships among people.

(2). To show what love is and what it does.

(3). To show what kind of person lives the best life.

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1. Sadler, op. cit., p. 321.

2. Howse, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

c. Assignment for Class Discussion.

- (1). Read I John at one sitting.
- (2). Record your observations and impressions.
- (3). Consult a Bible dictionary or a book of introduction to the New Testament and see what you can learn about the people and teachers John condemns.
- (4). Can you think of any incidents in the Gospels which show John's interest in right living?
- (5). How did the wrong views of the Docetists affect their way of living? Of what does John accuse them in 1:5-10? How does "walking in the light" make for real living?
- (6). Read Ch. 3:1-10 and show how faith in God makes for ethical living.
- (7). How does John in 3:11-18 show the practical nature of love? What relationship is there between love and living?
- (8). What is the place of Jesus in loving and living according to John 4:1-6?
- (9). Compare I Corinthians 13, "Paul's ode of love", with John's ode in 4:7-21. How does love for God make for helpful living? Evaluate yourself in the light of 4:7-21. Your church.
- (10). Write a short paragraph in which you state how Christian beliefs affect a person's way of living.

d. Suggested Teaching Methods.

- (1). Story method to introduce the problem.
- (2). Lecture method combined with the question-and-answer

method in the presentation of the lesson.

(3). Research-assignment method in having pupils make preparation for the class session.

(4). Blackboard on which an outline of I John could be worked out by the pupils and teacher together.

e. Illustration of Procedure.

Introduction: Trusting God and Trusting Men.

A young immigrant from Denmark by the name of Jacob Riis found many discouragements in the crowded districts of New York City while trying to obtain work and keep to it. As a result of his experiences, he determined to help people who had to face similar experiences as he had as a young immigrant. When he became a newspaper man he embarked upon a crusade against vice and used the columns of the newspaper to fight for the rights of the poor. This brought Riis much enmity and hatred. Life would have been much easier for him, if he had not chosen to fight for the rights of the poor. At no time did Jacob Riis lose courage. In his book, "The Making of an American", he states that the two greatest factors in making his dream come true were "faith in God to make all things possible that are right; faith in man to get them done." It was because of this faith he succeeded. History has records of other individuals who started out in life just as eager to be of service as he and lost their desire to be helpful because they did not know Jesus Christ and through Him did not know God who can make all things possible. They did not believe in men, nor feel that their brothers could be brought to work for the common good.

Such people existed in the first century in the churches Paul had established in Asia Minor. They proclaimed a teaching which nearly ruined the church. They had never seen Jesus nor had fellowship with Him. While they admitted that Jesus had taught about God as a God of love and who is good to men, yet they asserted people really did not need Jesus. And so their faith in Christ's God began to slip away. These people were known as "Gnostics". In the first century they had spread all over Asia Minor and parts of Europe. One group was known as "Docetists" which means the "seemists", for they asserted that most things in life only seemed so. Jesus only "seemed" to be the Son of God. Men only "seemed" to sin. It really did not matter what men did. Those who "knew" what life was did not need to worry about suffering, for men only "seemed" to suffer. There was no need for helping people or in loving them.

How John Met the Situation.

After the death of Paul, John had worked in Asia Minor and gradually had won the hearts of the people and became their pastor and real friend.

John was well qualified to meet the challenge of the "seemists". As a fisherman he had been raised in Galilee where he had met and learned to know Jews and Gentiles. He had lived with Jesus for three years, and knew He was a real person.

John always was interested in right living. Several times he called the attention of Jesus to people who were not living the right way. Little wonder that Jesus gave him the surname "son of thunder". Yet he lived close to Jesus and learned what it meant to love. In his belief John combined to faith and love a practical helpfulness toward other individuals. John was the right man by temperament as well as experience to meet the "Docetists" in Asia Minor.

The story of how John met these "seemists" is preserved in the First Epistle of John, which was most likely addressed to the congregations of Asia Minor. John met these heretics by showing them that loving and living are related. Read I John 1:5-10.

Walking in the Light.

John is a true reformer; he believes in bringing everything into the light, where it can be seen. He asserts that God Himself is Light. Notice how John exposes the "Docetists" in this paragraph. They are denounced for their hypocrisy of refusing to admit their sins. He wants people to be real and face life as it is.

Do you close your eyes to things in your life? To things in your home? In your church? Do you think things are all right as long as they are hidden? Turn on the light; don't be afraid of the truth even though it hurts.

Plain Talk About Christian Living. Chapter 3:1-10

When people live in the light they are the "children of God". The "Docetists" do not believe that because they won't recognize men who live that way since they do not recognize Jesus Christ who lived in the light.

John asserts in verse one that being like God and the hope of being like Him gives men stamina to keep pure. In verse

three he plainly asserts that committing sin or not committing sin depends not on the kind of knowledge that the "seemists" pride themselves on, but in really knowing Jesus as God's Son. All other kinds of living belong to the devil, whom Jesus came to destroy. To be born of God, that is, God's child, means to give up sin and love instead. (vs.9,10)

What Practical Love Means.

John then proceeds to show the connection between giving up sin and loving people. Christian love is eminently practical and results in helping other people. It is a love based on loving faithfulness to God and on the conviction that men need help. Love is the opposite of hatred. Cain murdered his own brother because he was jealous of his brother's more sincere life. (vs.11,12) John insists that no one can really know what love is in all its fullness except by looking at the sample of God's love in Jesus. (v.16) In other words love is giving of life always, and that our love to men ought to be just as great as the love of Jesus when He gave His life.

Those words of John were not merely theoretical, but they were coming out of the life of a person who was meeting the real needs of young and old in Asia Minor. It is the real practise of the daily lives of countless men and women like Jacob Riis and others less well known. Love is exceedingly practical; it is closely related to life. You can live that way if you are willing to pay the price. When Christian people see people in need they do not just give them good wishes, but do something for the needy. "Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth." (3:18)

How to Tell Truth from Error.

Chapter 4:1-6

John then continues to show that people who love are the people who have a real belief in Jesus and so can tell true living from the wrong kind and can do so quickly and accurately. A Christian must not become a victim of every man who comes along with a new idea. (v.1) The true spirit is held by those who confess Jesus as the Christ incarnate; it is realizing that only such persons have the right spirit in living before their fellows. Anyone who does not have this spirit of faith in Christ is an "anti-christ" and John says many of the men of Asia Minor who had gone out from the Christian churches had been like that.

Loving God and Loving People. Chapter 4:7-21

This brings John to the great paragraph in which he sums up all the relationships of living and loving. While Paul's statement on love in I Corinthians 13 is well known, I John 4:7-21 although not so well known, is just as great. It is beautiful in its simplicity. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God." (v.7) If the Gnostics want to learn to know God, let them learn to love, for only a person who loves can know God, since "God is love". (v.8) We can learn to love only from God who first loved us (v.19), by sending His Son to give His life for us. (vs.11-14) This love alone can save us from the judgment we had deserved by our sins (v.17), and from fear and dread in life. (v.18) The apostle is certain that the person who claims to love God and does not love his brother is a liar, for he who does not love his brother, whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen ...And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God, should love his brother also." (vs.20-21) Read this paragraph a number of times. How much evidence do you give God of your love to Him? Can a true Christian ignore the pleas for help from Europe to feed and clothe the masses of needy people there and in China and India?

D. Conclusion

In this chapter a number of different possible approaches to the General Epistles were presented. The methods suggested were: the book study, the chapter, and the word study methods. This was followed by sample lessons using the book method of the three major Epistles of this group; namely, James, I Peter, and I John.

CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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In the introduction the necessity of re-examining the educational program was seen to be imperative for many churches. Their non-use of the Bible, or their failure to present the Bible in harmony with the findings of modern educational psychology has produced many impotent and ineffective churches.

With these criticisms in mind it was the purpose of this study to determine the teaching values of the General Epistles for youth between the ages of eighteen to twenty-four.

In order to do this, it was found necessary first to ascertain the problems and needs with which later adolescence forces youth to grapple. By consulting experts in the field of psychology it became clear that they were confronted by the following problems of importance especially to them; namely, the problem of the establishment of heterosexual interests, the problem of emancipation from home influence, the problems of the attainment of emotional, social and intellectual maturity, the problem of the use of leisure time, and above all the problem of developing a philosophy of life. The resulting implications for Christian education were noted.

This was followed by an analysis of the General Epistles made to determine which portions had value as teaching

material to meet the needs of late adolescence. It was discovered that the contents of the Catholic Epistles were primarily concerned with a Christian philosophy of life. The following subjects were discussed under this caption: The origin, purpose, and destiny of life, the concept of God, the activities of the Triune God, and youth's relationship to Him, sin and human suffering, the Bible and prayer, and the nature of true religion. They further contained material dealing with the following problems in the fields of adjustment: the problem of personal adjustment, the problems centering around a choice of a vocation, and social problems. The latter category included citizenship, home adjustments, church work, and racial and national problems. The next point in the procedure was to show how the General Epistles were valuable for teachers of youth as they contained educational principles and methods worthy of imitation and use by those privileged to teach youth. The authors of the Catholic Epistles were found to aim at the moral, social, intellectual, spiritual, volitional, emotional and physical development of their readers. As teachers it was seen they used the transmissive and creative methods of teaching. To motivate their readers it was found that they resorted to the use of problems, questions, occasions, Scripture, the concrete, and contrasts.

This was followed by suggested methods of approach together with sample lessons of the book method of three of the

General Epistles.

Of the problems facing young people who are standing on the threshold of adulthood, that of developing a philosophy of life was found to be the most important and necessary. Each human individual must of necessity have a philosophy of life. By means of it he, either successfully or unsuccessfully, endeavors to solve the many problems of life. Each person's philosophy must have some **organic** center around which it can orientate itself.

Since this is the major problem facing youth, the Bible is of inestimable value because it does not merely contain religion as a set of beliefs, as so many think, but sets forth a way of life unequalled in the religious literature of the world. The philosophy of the Bible is orientated around Jesus Christ. There is nothing so strengthening as a vital experience with Christ. When youth attach themselves to Christ they will find themselves linked to the greatest power in the world. No problem dealing with social adjustments will prove impossible to surmount.

The General Epistles dealing as they do to such a large extent with the problems implicit in a formulation of a Christian philosophy of life are consequently valuable for youth classes and groups. With a sound life philosophy as a basis, Christian youth will be in a position to meet the problems of social adjustment on which the General Epistles

also shed valuable light. They will aid youth in being acceptable members of human society, good home builders, loyal and honest citizens in their community, faithful church workers and interested world citizens. It is the conviction of the writer that those youth who master the contents of the General Epistles will be prepared to meet life successfully and through the Christ portrayed in them will find satisfaction for this life as well as for the life to come.

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