

TH
W 85

THE PLACE OF A VITAL CHRISTIAN FAITH
IN THE SOLUTION OF ADOLESCENT PERSONALITY PROBLEMS
ARISING OUT OF HOME CONFLICTS

By

Mary Hope Wood

A. B., Wheaton College

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
The Degree of Master of Religious Education
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, New York
April 1941

17744

BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
HATFIELD, PA.

To my parents
who established a truly Christian home
which made easy for me the adolescent years
and who led me by their consecration to experience
the reality of Christ in my own life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
A. Subject Stated and Defined	2
B. Plan of Procedure	3
C. Value of Study	4A
 CHAPTER I -- ATTITUDE OF THE PARENTS TOWARD THEIR RESPONSIBILITY	 6
A. In The Home	7
1. Weaknesses of the Home	9
2. Cause of Weaknesses	10
3. Relationship to Each Other	13
4. Relationship to Adolescent	16
a. Parent-centered	16
b. Over-indulgence	18
c. Negligence	19
d. Special Problems	21
e. Emotional Elements of Affection	22
f. Control	25
B. To Standards	28
C. To Christianity	31
D. Summary	35
 CHAPTER II -- STUDY OF THE ADOLESCENT IN RELATION TO HOME CONFLICTS	 37
A. Features of Adolescent Development	39
1. Physical Awakening	39
2. Mental Awakening	48
a. Self-consciousness	48
b. Self-expression	51
c. Self-direction	52
3. Spiritual Awakening	56
B. Adolescent Needs	63
C. Summary	67

of author

Gift

Jan 7, 1943

22726

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER III -- A VITAL FAITH IN CHRIST THE SOLUTION TO ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT IN THE HOME . . .	70
A. Need for Integration of Personality	71
B. Relationship Between Integration and a Vital Faith in Christ	75
C. Contribution of a Vital Faith Toward Adolescent Adjustment in the Home	80
D. Summary	86
 CHAPTER IV -- GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION . . .	 88
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 95

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. SUBJECT STATED AND DEFINED

The period of transition known as adolescence is a critical time in the development of the child because it is now that his personality and character are taking permanent form. For this reason, it is absolutely essential to his future happiness that right attitudes, habits, and modes of conduct be established, but above all, that the integration of his personality be preserved through these years of change and stress. In the minds of some adults, the term "adolescence" is practically synonymous with the word "problem," but this is an unfair stigma to attach to it inasmuch as the cause of the difficulties of this period often originate with the parents. During such a time of rapid growth and development, it is only natural that the young person needs a helpful environment, understanding, and guidance, yet many homes fail to make such adequate provision. The result is that conflicts arise which may have disastrous effects upon the personality of the adolescent and make his future adjustment to society most difficult.

This period has no well-defined beginning or

ending, but in so far as it is possible to draw distinctions, this study will be confined to the middle period, of approximately high school age. Because the complete scope of even this one group is far too extensive to be treated in a limited space, particular attention will be directed to the physical, mental, and spiritual awakenings which take place and their effect upon the growing adult. Although the implications of these changes influence all relationships and are influenced by all outside contacts within every area of life, they will be considered here only as they have special reference to the home life. The problem of this thesis, then, is to discover what value for the adolescent a vital Christian faith can have in solving personality problems and in retaining a normal personality within an inadequate home environment.

B. PLAN OF PROCEDURE

In approaching this study, weaknesses apparent in the modern home and their causes will be presented first, in order to establish a general background of the family life of today. Existing conditions have completely altered the traditional spirit and activities of the family unit as it was a few years ago. Besides these universal changes that have appeared, there is a further

weakening in a large number of individual homes because of a reluctance or inability on the part of parents to assume their responsibilities in regard to the home itself and the family, to moral standards, and finally, to religious values. A study will be made of the attitudes of the parents toward each other with special attention given to those which may cause friction and conflict; and then of their attitudes toward the child, noting those which are unwholesome and abnormal. The purpose will be to find what forms of personality problems are created for the adolescent living in such inadequate environment, and what the dangers are to his mental health.

The second chapter will deal more specifically with the adolescent himself, studying the features of his development, the adjustments necessary for the establishment of normal independence, and the needs which arise from these changes. The attention here, too, will be directed to a discovery of further problems which arise as a result of the failure on the part of parents to offer sympathetic understanding and guidance in order to aid in the guiding of wholesome attitudes and behavior patterns.

From an analysis of these personality problems

created by conflicts within the home, it will be shown that their solution is found in the integration of the personality around a dynamic purpose. A study of the characteristics of a vital faith in Christ will bring out its relationship to an integrated life, and the potential values to the adolescent in maintaining a healthy and well-rounded personality.

C. VALUE OF STUDY

One cannot fail to recognize the pertinency of this study to the present day when he is confronted in almost every newspaper and magazine with accounts of young people who have failed to achieve adequate adjustment to society. It is revealed that, to a large extent, the cause of this failure lies in the fact that they have not had the proper home environment and training. Particularly noticeable has been the total lack of a vital Christian influence in preserving a wholesome personality and attitude toward life.

This study will lead to a knowledge of conditions within the home which are responsible for the breakdown of the adolescent and will suggest the one method of preserving an integrated personality in spite of such environment as causes conflict.

CHAPTER ONE

ATTITUDE OF THE PARENTS TOWARD THEIR RESPONSIBILITY

CHAPTER ONE

ATTITUDE OF THE PARENTS TOWARD THEIR RESPONSIBILITY

"Beyond all question, the most powerful factor in the shaping and molding of the adolescent individual is the home in which he has grown up from infancy into youth."¹ Fundamentally the particular type of home which exists is dependent upon the attitude of the parents toward their responsibilities which they have undertaken in becoming husband and wife. The success or failure of the home rests with them. In this chapter then the reasons for the failure on the part of the parents to provide for their children an adequate preparation for life and the consequent adolescent personality problems resulting from such home situations will be considered.

A. IN THE HOME

Throughout all ages the home has been the place for the nurturing and training of the next generation. In a survey made by the Institute of Social and Religious

.

1. Averill, L. A.: Adolescence, p. 73.

Research of the student bodies of twenty-three collegiate institutions of the United States, there was the constant emphasis upon the influence of the home in determining the college student's reactions and attitudes.

"The family background of a man has a great deal to do with his attitude here.'

'Our problems go back mainly to the home situation and the high schools.'

'The moral standards men bring to college are likely to stay by them, and if they haven't had the right kind of home training they have nothing to stabilize them when they get into temptation.'"¹

Yet along with this realization of the importance of the home there is also the realization that the modern American home is no longer fulfilling its responsibility adequately.

"The adequate home is a home where there exists a harmonious and sympathetic understanding between parent and parent, and between parents and child; where, after the economic stability of the family has been provided for, the role of guidance of the young is the supreme role of the adult members; where a happy mean is maintained between freedom and repression; where love and protection of the child are invariable and unailing, without becoming obstacles to his complete individualization; and where there is a wholesome community of interest, purpose, and spirit among the members."²

.

1. Edwards, Artman, Fisher: Undergraduates, pp. 2, 3.
2. Averill, op. cit., p. 75.

1. Weaknesses of the Home

Before dealing specifically with conflicts arising within the home a brief glance will be taken of the weaknesses found in the family life of today and the general causes for the breakdown of home life. One of the most noticeable conditions is the small amount of time that the family is together. "The home is simply that item in the economic machinery which will best furnish us storage for our sleeping bodies and our clothes."¹ There is no longer a common economic activity uniting the members into a single group with common interests and related endeavors. The dominant trend towards highly organized commercial life gives the impression of separate families being placed in a pigeonhole in a huge, heated filing-case where privacy is almost gone and comfort almost unknown. As a direct result of this city life with its hotels, apartments, and flats is the failure to provide social life in the home for the young people. In yesterday's homes moral standards and spiritual ideals were professed at least and in the main supported, but today religion has practically no place in the family life, and there has been a general lowering

.

1. Cope, H. F.: Religious Education in the Family,
p. 21.

and laxity of standards. Such homes have become decentralized, centrifugal, lacking unity and coherence. Obviously the life of such families is no longer home-centered.¹

2. Cause of Weaknesses

Some of the reasons for these weaknesses are found in the modern specialization and industrialization of society. Often both parents are away all day, leaving them too weary in the evening to properly discharge their responsibilities as parents. Although there is no question that the industrial revolution has brought many advantages, yet also it has presented new conditions which must be met. Work which used to center in the home is now taken to the factory or office and is subject to varying conditions of labor. This has a tendency to foster a feeling of insecurity as well as a dullness from the monotony of a specialized task. The ease and facility of transportation makes it infinitely easier for the members of the family to spend more time

.

1. Cf., Cope, H. F.: op. cit., pp. 11, 12.
Cf., Vanderslice, A. E.: Religious Education in the Family, a thesis in the library of the Biblical Seminary in New York, pp. 6-8.
Cf., Fiske, G. W.: The Changing Family, p. 59.

away from home either for business or social reasons. As the natural concomitant to the growth of industry has come the equally rapid growth of the city.¹ In general the new status of women means progress and happier and finer homes with the development of a better educated and prepared womanhood, yet there is a serious problem in trying to harmonize marriage and motherhood with a career. It makes possible a more complete comradeship by placing the wife on an equal plane with the husband but immediately endangers it by the diversity of independent interests and separate activities which threaten the family unity. By making the woman economically independent it also tends to increase divorce and separations.²

With the increase of leisure there should be an increase of home-centered activities. Instead of the home being a place selfishly limited to adult interests, it should be a place where the young people enjoy themselves and feel free to invite their friends. Opportunities should be made for amusement in the home rather than forcing the youth to spend their time at commercialized entertainments which may have harmful

.

1. Cf., Vanderslice, A. E.: op. cit., p. 11.
2. Cf., Fiske, G. W.: op. cit., p. 103.

influences.¹ The discipline problem becomes more acute as there is a general slump in authority and a craze for independence and self-expression.² Certainly one of the most deep-rooted causes of the weakness in the modern family is the lack of a vital religious life. In many cases the parents are totally indifferent to Christianity or else openly hostile toward it.

The family must regain its necessary function. The parents must again face their share of responsibility for the social, educational, moral, and religious welfare of their children in spite of the difficulties involved. The one supreme function of the home must be retained or regained -- that of the formation of character.³ These same influences which have contributed to the general weakening of the family life have also, by making new adaptations necessary to the changed situations, brought about new conflicts within the home itself. Primarily the parents are responsible for the kind of home it shall be -- whether it shall be maintained with the welfare of the children as the supreme purpose or whether it shall exist mainly for their own selfish interests. Professor Arthur J. Todd says that the family

.

1. Cf., Fiske, G. W., op. cit., p. 72.
2. Cf., Ibid, p. 61.
3. Cf., Ibid, p. 76.
4. Cf., Ibid, p. 46.

causes the home to be. The family is the basis of marriage, rather than marriage the cause of the family.¹ The family did not create the children but the children created the family.² Often it is the mystical experience of parenthood which deepens the shallow nature of a young couple and it is a realization of the infinite worthwhileness of the child which anchors the home to its foundations.³

3. Relationship to Each Other

In the beginning the attitude of the parents toward their responsibility is determined by their own relationship. "The essential home of the child lies in the attitude of the parents toward each other."⁴ Marriage is the mutual integration of two personalities united by love, sympathy, and a common purpose.⁵ The young couple must realize that marriage is a process of developing together and their joy will come as it remains creative and growing through their cooperation

.

1. Cf., Cope, H. F., op. cit., p. 21.
2. Cf., Popenoe, P.: Conservation of the Family, p. 35.
3. Cf., Fiske, G. W., op. cit., p. 55.
4. Cf., Van Waters, M.: Youth in Conflict, p. XIV Intro.
5. Cf., Taylor, K. W.: Do Adolescents Need Parents?, p. 336.

towards a common goal. For parents to live in conflict with each other is disastrous not only to their own happiness but far more for the welfare of the children growing up in the home. Disharmony in the family life gives the infant a background which it can never outgrow. It starts him with an equipment of fundamental antagonisms and feelings of inferiority which color his whole future emotional life.¹ Dr. W. A. White expressed this same idea by saying that the child in the home

"picks up the emotional flavor of the environment as effectively as a glass of milk in the ice-chest acquires the flavor of the onions that might be lying near by."²

Yet inter-parental conflicts range all the way from disturbing undercurrents of suspicion and intolerance to extreme maladjustment which eventually lead to separations or divorce. Children are the quickest to discern tension or friction between the parents and although the lack of harmony may not be apparent to those outside, the personalities of the children may be permanently injured. Difficulties may have arisen through an inadequate knowledge of marriage and parenthood. It is not enough that they should be well-meaning; they should also have sufficient preparation. Certain hopes or

.

1. Cf., Popenoe, P., op. cit., p. 41.
2. Van Waters, M., op. cit., p. X Intro.

desires placed in the other person may not have materialized and the resulting disillusionment is allowed to warp the whole personality. Self-indulgent children, accustomed always to make "a good time" their chief end, make self-indulgent wives and husbands. They shy away from taking their share of responsibility or in doing anything that will hinder their own selfish pleasure.¹ Some adults never outgrow their childish attitudes but allow these infantilisms and individualisms to separate them farther and farther from their mate and family until they have developed a completely changed personality centering around self-pity. Any mental conflict that is permitted to go unheeded may soon be the cause of serious maladjustment between the parents. Even such common things as fatigue or ill health may be the cause of tension and an unwholesome environment for the child. If parents manage their relation to each other, there will be a minimum of difficulty.²

"The child, during growth deserves to be nested securely; he should not know anxiety caused by strife, disharmony or unsatisfied longings of either parent. His parents should be genuinely interested in family life, throughout infancy, childhood, and youth, the child should have the same two love-united parents."³

.

1. Cf., Fiske, G. W., op. cit., p. 54.
2. Cf., Burger, W. H.: Growing Up With Our Children, p. 9.
3. Van Waters, M., op. cit., p. 86.

4. Relationship to Adolescent

a. Parent-centered

Just as the physical condition of the adolescent is directly dependent upon the care he has received from his birth up through childhood so his personality, attitudes, and psychological make-up are the result of his environment up to that time. Therefore this age cannot be studied without considering the parental attitudes and affections which have influenced his development thus far. The welfare and development of the child must always be central and the perfect unfolding of his personality the constant concern. Of necessity the role of the parent will change with the child's development, yet the underlying elements of understanding and sympathy will remain the same.

Homes that are parent-centered rather than child-centered are in danger of undermining the very personality of the off-spring and thereby jeopardizing his future as well as present happiness. In such cases which usually directly involve the mother, she so dominates or centers the child's attentions or affections on herself that the adolescent either becomes engulfed in the parental individuality or else openly rebels.¹

.

1. Cf., Averill, L. A., op. cit., p. 223.
Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 26.

Apart from her relations with her children the mother may be a neurotic with an immature character, extremely selfish and self-centered. Or if she has been disillusioned in her own life, she sets all her hopes and control over the life of her child in trying to identify herself with this new life so as to realize her dreams in this one. The active fixation of the child's affections solely upon herself removes any chance for normal development for the child. Often from the same root comes chronic fault-finding and annoyance at the husband whether it is justified or not, and her anger at him she vents upon the child. Besides being responsible for strained relations in the home the wholesome attitude of the child, especially if a daughter, toward marriage and a family may be perverted even permanently thus inhibiting her from ever enjoying those relationships as they should be normally. The husband may not be without fault in that through his conduct, preoccupation, or his own infantilisms he is partly responsible for driving his wife to find her satisfaction exclusively in herself and in her children. Caught between these two forces the adolescent has little chance of developing a normal personality free from the infantilisms that have been disastrous in his own home situation.¹

.

1. Cf., Averill, L. A., op. cit., p. 251.

b. Over-indulgence

Somewhat akin to this situation is that in which the parents are over-indulgent and do not love their children wisely. Unwisely directed love produces both the "spoiled child" and the child with a "mother or father complex". So solicitous are they of the child's welfare that he has no freedom or chance to develop normally into an independent adult. Not only does the child become selfish, self-centered, and maladjusted to society, but he will find himself permanently unable to detach himself from parental authority or else faced with rebelling outright.

Some mothers and fathers have sacrificed everything that their children might have every advantage with the result that they have grown up dissatisfied with their lot and expecting their whims and conveniences will be indulged and petted as a matter of course.¹ People do not learn to be considerate and unselfish by merely watching others; but by means of practice. Or in the parents' desire to give their children advantages they themselves had not had, there is the danger of lack of discretion that will not give them a sensible view of life. In a suburban district near New York City several

.

1. Cf., Gruenberg, S. M.: Sons and Daughters, p. 17.

forms of vice were found entrenched in the high school. The boys were said to be gambling with large sums of money and both boys and girls were engaging in vice. The trouble lay in the fact that these children from wealthy homes had been so surfeited that they ceased to find adventure in normal forms of self-expression but rather had found it in anti-social and vicious behaviour. There are four kinds of children that are particularly in danger of exploitation because of the self-assertive cravings of parents: the wealthy child, the only child, the sick child, and the favorite child.¹

c. Negligence

Another source of conflict arises from almost the opposite extreme when parents are too busy with their own business or social affairs to be concerned over the welfare of the children. They are parents in name only. The interests and problems of the children receive scarcely any attention. Loose conduct, bad habits, and rowdyism are not only tolerated but apparently not even noticed, so absorbed are the parents in their own affairs.² That home where the interests of childhood are

.

1. Cf., Groves, E. R.: Personality and Social Adjustment, pp. 178, 182.
2. Cf., Averill, L. A., op. cit., p. 94.

secondary to those of business, pleasure or personal ambition, is potentially a delinquent-producing home.¹ Neglect may also have its roots in a morbid incompatibility with the adolescent generation, within the family circle and without.² Whatever the cause may be, such an attitude produces a conflict between the interests of the parents and the interests of the child which will eventually lead to delinquency of some sort. Still other parents shun the responsibility of leadership and supervision of the young people because of a feeling of inadequacy and defeatism. They rarely realize that the difficulty in training lies with themselves in side-stepping and withdrawing from the real issues.

Lack of love and understanding on the part of the parents toward the adolescent has perhaps the most devastating effect upon the development of the personalities and character of youth of any single factor. For the adolescent who is not understood and whose impulses and drives are misinterpreted and misjudged, life holds little appeal and may even become unbearable or unlivable. Without a sympathetic identification of the parent with the youth throughout the whole range of his social

.

1. Cf., Van Waters, M., op. cit., p. 67.
2. Cf., Averill, L. A., op. cit., pp. 263, 258.

experience, a normal and well-integrated adolescent personality becomes an impossibility.¹

d. Special Problems

One of the most difficult readjustments for a child comes in the case of a separation or divorce. When the situation is met honestly and courageously, the effects are minimized, yet it is almost impossible for a child living with one parent not to harbor some resentment and animosity toward the other parent which will strike deep into his personality. However, given the choice of leaving the child under the influence of two conflicting attitudes or of only one of the combatting parents, the latter is no doubt less harmful in producing a breakdown in health, sanity, or morals.² But no matter what disposition is made of him by the court, there is lost the sense of security, home loyalty, and guiding companionship which are essential to happiness and peace of mind. It may lead to cynicism, laziness, an extravaganza of inner conflict, or even delinquency.³

Another situation which is presenting more and

.

1. Cf., Averill, L. A., op. cit., p. 237.
2. Cf., Van Waters, M., op. cit., p. 74.
3. Cf., Averill, L. A., op. cit., p. 278.
Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., pp. 62, 63.

more of a problem is that of the migrant population. The work is seasonal in nature, with low wages -- no minimum wage fixed and therefore no security for the families. The children as well as the grownups spend long hours in the fields and canneries and live in crowded, unsanitary, and immoral conditions. Often the parents are young and uneducated having no knowledge of proper health conditions or child care. No kind of family life can be carried on when the whole population is huddled together in tents, or trailers, or crowded into a large single house with only partitions to separate one family from another. Although conditions have been considerably improved through government regulation and mission work, maladjusted adolescents are bound to come out of home situations such as these.¹

e. Emotional Elements of Affection

It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of parental affection either in the wholesome development of the child or in maintaining a fine parent-child friendship. Devoted love and the interest that grows out of it are the parents' supreme gift to the

.

1. Cf., Fisher, A.: A Study of the Migrant Situation in the U. S. A., a thesis in the library of the Biblical Seminary in New York, pp. 19-43.

child, the one for which there is no substitute. Only as he knows he is loved and accepted for himself does he have the assurance for daring to go ahead alone.¹ A study of America's fourteen hundred orphan asylums demonstrates the fact that no institution, no matter how fine it is, can make up to the child that parental love which is absolutely essential for his well-developed personality.² One of the most effective ways of giving assurance of this love is by demonstrations of affection. Even in adolescence there is no danger of its softening the adolescent or binding him too closely so long as he is given freedom to make his own choices and have his own experiences. There is a high positive correlation between demonstrated affection and a close, confidential relationship with parents and also between deep affection for parents and marital happiness. However, an outward manifestation of affection does not necessarily prove one way or another that there is genuine love and understanding for the children; the emotional urge may be expressed in some other way or it may be purely superficial.³

Some of the conflicts arising out of unwisely

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 162.
2. Cf., Popenoe, P., op. cit., p. 42.
3. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 101.

directed love have already been suggested. A parent who suffocates the adolescent and unconsciously thinks of the child as an extension of his own personality hinders the normal development of the adolescent as well as injuring their mutual relationship. This possessiveness on the part of the parent necessitates the choice for the adolescent between giving in and losing his own identity by remaining emotionally immature or else being considered rebellious and ungrateful.¹ In the face of defiance, the parents may try to coerce respect and thereby only increase the tenseness of the situation. Or others may entirely reject them emotionally and though the children are under the same roof they are psychologically disowned and without any warmth of affection or interest.² Parents must accept the fact that emotional weaning must take place during adolescence and if they are wise they will prepare themselves and the children for it rather than making it more difficult. The mother who centers her entire affection in a daughter and expects it to be reciprocated in kind, or the one who makes a lover of her son so neither child is free to make the proper adjustments to society, is storing up disappointment

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 28.
2. Cf., Ibid, p. 33.

for herself or even more important creating disastrous emotional conflicts for the adolescent.¹ The parent should direct the relationship of love and dependence more by intellectual forces than emotional, or at least govern his own emotional display according to the child's response.

f. Control

"Our aim in the discipline of children is to lead them to live and will the best," says Edward Howard Griggs.² It is to enable the child to become master of himself. Effective parental control should have as its goal to establish within the growing young person inner control and self-direction and as this develops the parents must withdraw gradually their authority. Principles which should be kept in mind from the first are mutual respect for personality or the recognition of the child as an individual; obedience which does not crush individuality but rather develops character by allowing for reasonable explanations; and the child's inherent right to be trusted more and more as he proves himself capable of taking responsibility. If this democratic

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., pp. 43-44.
Cf., Burger, W. H., op. cit., p. 3.
2. Cf., Forbush, W. B.: The Boy Problem in the Home, p. VII Intro.

spirit prevails, it will make stern discipline unnecessary and prevent hidden or open conflicts which are created by domineering and tyrannical parents.¹

Adolescence is the time when the young person is beginning to develop a mature life of his own and awakening to the possibilities of his own independence. This, of all times, is when parents must display the utmost wisdom and discretion in the matter of control. It is not a time for standardization; each case must be treated on its own merits. Bossing, unnecessary correction, or blaming a child for his failures is most destructive to the self-assurance that is necessary to a wholesome development or to the parent-child relationship.² For parents to be too strict and to apply the brakes unreasonably completely suppresses spontaneous impulses which often leads to secret disobedience. Overly indulgent parents or those with whom control is only spasmodic either foster within the child a complete lack of regard for authority of all kinds or at least a lack of respect for parental control. On the other hand those parents who pretend to be infallible evoke a

.

1. Cf., Fiske, G. W., op. cit., p. 197.
2. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 29.
Cf., Intelligent Parenthood: Proceedings of the Midwest Conference on Parent Education, March 4, 5, and 6, 1926, William H. Burnham, p. 192.

stiffness and inadaptability in children which is fostered by their conception of parental dignity and authority and leaves them maladjusted to society as a whole.¹

There are two problems related to this matter of control, that of securing effective and desirable responses and preventing or eliminating ineffective or undesirable ones. One of the most important elements in determining this is the method of punishment which is used -- whether merely inhibitory or that which substitutes the desirable behavior for the undesirable. The type of punishment is very indicative of the true concern of the parent for the child's welfare.² Some parents value more highly the smile of the passing moment than they do the stable character of the future. The pernicious doctrine that youth should develop in its own way, unhampered and unrestrained, has spread its roots deep and in all directions. The tendency to extreme individualism and glorification of self has developed in conjunction with the loss of discipline. Even in the home the plastic minds of the young people too often receive no counter-acting influence to these prevalent

.

1. Cf., Coe, C. A.: Psychology of Religion, p. 212.
2. Cf., Brooks, F. D.: The Psychology of Adolescence, p. 595.

ideas, good to a degree but very harmful when carried to the extreme.¹ The adolescent then never learns that his freedom is limited by the rights of others -- this which is the underlying principle of all human relationships. The matter of control must rest on a constructive relationship between parent and adolescent in which they stand side by side searching together for the best path to take in this changing world.²

B. TO STANDARDS

"After five years' study of the youth movement the wisest syndics say that parental delinquencies account for most of our current troubles over youthful rebellions and loss of ideals."³

Granted that the homes of the past fell short of perfection in many ways, yet there were certain indispensable values which are now being lost. So many of the functions which used to reside in the parents have been taken over by outside influences so that the family no longer controls the child's ideals, social standards, moral responsibilities and religious loyalties. Nevertheless, because of the intimacy and close relationships in the

.

1. Cf., Stearns, A. E.: The Challenge of Youth, pp. 62, 63.
2. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 39.
3. Cf., Fiske, G. W., op. cit., p. 5.

home, it can never cease to have a profound effect either for good or bad. It should be borne in mind that the parents are responsible for passing on the important spiritual possessions of the race in the arts, science, philosophy, and ethics, and also for building up within the young people a personal sense of values by which to determine their future goal as well as present decisions.¹

The normal family is dynamic; its standards are constantly enlarging to meet the requirements of the changing world, and the parents by vigor and clarity of thought must furnish their children with a guiding-line. This idea of a healthy parental attitude is not modern but was expressed in the Talmud, "Limit not thy children to thine own idea. They were born in a different time."² In too many homes today this conception has been carried to the extreme and instead of parents' taking the responsibility of guiding the ethical and moral growth, they seem to take for granted that it will develop automatically with no supervision from the outside, and the result is that they awaken only too late to find their young people with practically no morals left. The difficulty in many cases rises out of the fact that the

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 198.
2. Van Waters, M., op. cit., pp. 75-76.

parents no longer hold any fixed standards themselves and in that case how are they able to direct their young people? It is therefore essential that parents take new and vigorous hold on the true principles of ethical living that they may, through their own behavior, make them vital and^a/satisfying part of their young people's lives. Many of the present problems arise because ethical standards remain mere abstractions instead of living principles of conduct.¹

Another harmful attitude is manifested when a parent adopts hysterical tactics and resorts to violent emotional outbursts of criticism or constant fretting and "nagging" rather than a calm consideration of the problem in question. The former method leads the child either to secret or open rebellion. If the family ideal is not in harmony with reality, if it is outworn or has become hypocritical, the effect it produces on the young person may be disastrous.²

The most significant shift in these days from authoritarianism has been in reference to morals. Formerly most parents taught the child what was right or wrong on the authority of the Bible, church, or custom.

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 212.
2. Cf., Averill, L. A., op. cit., p. 261.
Cf., Van Waters, M., op. cit., p. 78.

Whether obedience was enforced or not, the standard was admitted. But now the old fundamental tendency to accept external authority has been questioned by adults and naturally this attitude is reflected by the young people. The tendency is to shift from external to internal control, but this is impossible until there is the inner motivation.¹

C. TO CHRISTIANITY

Throughout this study the strong influence which the home environment plays on the developing of the child's personality has been evident. The positive and negative factors combine to mold the character of the young person growing into adult life. One very vital phase which has not been touched as yet is the attitude of the parents toward Christianity, and its effect upon the other lives in the family. In the divine order of things God has placed in the hands of teachers and parents

"the reins of the chariot of God. In the nature of things, the kingdom of God must grow chiefly by securing control of young life. The religious impulse must be fed and it must be led on to realize

.

1. Cf., Kilpatrick, W. H., op. cit., pp. 33-37.

its full manhood through voluntary obedience to Christ."¹

Parents are either promoting or holding back the triumph of the kingdom of God according to their faithfulness to the task of supplying food for the spiritual growth. The young lives with which they come in constant contact are plastic and take the shape of that with which they come in contact. Will it be a revelation of God or not?

Very few of the old-time homes which claimed to be religious confined their religion to mere formalism, but rather the religion was sincere and genuine, leaving a positive stamp upon the children. Christianity was neither an elective nor a luxury but a prime necessity. Faith in God and in prayer was very real. The church was the first loyalty outside the home and family prayers proved the reality of the father's faith. Religion in the home was the supreme interest in life.² Today whether some people want to admit it or not, religion still remains an important element in the environment and consequently in the adjustment of the young people. In an appalling number of homes there has been a complete rejection on the part of the parents

.

1. Coe, G. A.: Education in Religion and Morals, p. 39.
2. Cf., Fiske, G. W., op. cit., pp. 39, 40.

of any formalized religion or religious connections, yet its influences are evident on all sides. In general, parents fall into two categories in regard to religion: those who fear their adolescents have too little and those who are concerned lest they have too much.¹ The feelings range from open antagonism through indifference and a devitalized formalism to a living, dynamic faith in Christ. Of course, the attitude of the parents in the first group will have a definitely negative influence and a tendency to foster a feeling of cynicism and scorn in the minds of the young people in their homes. Those who are indifferent or merely ritualistic will have no appeal at all to the wide-awake, vigorous youth of today who are interested only in vital and active forces. The supreme first test of a faith is always at home. If a parent cannot show his Christianity in daily living, he does not hold the answer the adolescent is seeking.

Some parents who, in every other sphere of the child's life, see the necessity for giving helpful guidance and counselling, for some reason feel that the religious nature is different and the child will just grow in the right direction without any assistance from

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 215.

them even though there are scores of influences to distort and misguide him in his development. However, there are also parents who do realize the importance of the central place of Christianity in the home. The key to the situation of a genuinely vital Christian home is in the fact that the personal religion of the parents themselves shall be genuine, more intelligent, and more vital. To be helpful at all, religion must have a vital contact with God. There must be a vivifying relationship.¹

Wherever the children and parents share their life together, the participation of the children in the religion of the parents is free and spontaneous. Nor can religion thrive in a separate compartment any more than can any other phase of life. In too many homes the entire religious education is left up to the church yet the family shares all its other activities together. Children have a right to question the value of church or Sunday School when they are sent and their parents have little else to do with it. The religion of the parents must be visible and audible to the children. A merely internal religion will have no educative value.

.

1. Cf., Fiske, G. W., op. cit., pp. 227-228.

"Therefore, if God is to become a living power in the consciousness and the conduct of children, parents must habitually speak of him as an actual present reality in their own lives."¹

The manifestation of the power of prayer working in their lives will make the strongest appeal for its reality. As the Scriptures are used effectively to challenge the easy, superficial skepticism of the adolescent, he will be led to an acceptance of it as the authoritative word of God. Yet neither the example of the parents nor an intellectual faith based on their teachings is sufficient; the young person himself must experience in his own life the transforming power of Christ.

D. SUMMARY

The home background and environment of the adolescent are the most powerful factors in determining his development. Many changes brought about by the highly organized commercial life have caused a weakness of the family ties and a decentralizing of the home life. This creates problems which must be met adequately in order to avoid maladjustment within the family group.

The attitude of the parents toward each other

.

1. Coe, G. A., op. cit., p. 276.

and their family is of prime importance. An unwholesome environment of conflict no matter from what cause it arises produces personality maladjustments in the adolescent ranging from slight abnormalities to open delinquency. Inadequate preparation for marriage, immature emotional development, or selfishness on the part of a parent in being unwilling to carry his share of the responsibility of the family is a cause of tension and friction between the two and produces a bad home situation. Any home where other interests are put ahead of the interests of childhood is potentially a delinquent-producing home. Typical situations are those in which the life is parent-centered, or in the two extremes of parent-child relationships, that of over-indulgence or neglect. Lack of love and understanding on the part of the parent for the adolescent has perhaps the most devastating effect upon the development of the personalities and character of youth of any single factor. Unwise expression of affection or inadequate understanding of the problem of discipline are common causes of maladjustment.

Basically, the loss of standards and faith among young people is the fault of the parents who have failed to manifest the importance of high moral integrity or of a vital Christian faith in their own lives.

CHAPTER TWO

STUDY OF THE ADOLESCENT
IN RELATION TO HOME CONFLICTS

CHAPTER TWO

STUDY OF THE ADOLESCENT IN RELATION TO HOME CONFLICTS

In the preceding chapter, it was discovered that certain personality problems are created for the adolescent because of inadequate home environment. The primary cause of difficult situations was found to lie with parents who were unfit or unwilling to discharge satisfactorily their responsibilities to the home and family. The task of adjustment becomes further complicated for the adolescent by the rapid growth and development taking place within himself. In this chapter, there will be an attempt to discover what these changes are which appear during this period of transition, and how the physical, mental, and spiritual awakenings affect the total personality of the individual when there is not understanding and sympathy in the home. After becoming aware of the adolescent personality problems which do exist and their causes, the following chapter will discuss the satisfactory and adequate provision for an integrated personality.

The main sources for this research were standard

adolescent psychology books which give particular attention to various phases of adolescent development and its needs. In regard to the spiritual awakening, special references were used which dealt more thoroughly with the religious nature and its characteristics. The facts were chosen on the basis of their being possible causes of maladjustment because of conflict and misunderstanding.

A. FEATURES OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

1. Physical Awakening

In thinking of the adolescent period, one of the first things that comes to mind is that it is a time of rapid growth and change. The skeleton enlarges, glands develop, internal organs grow, the brain becomes more complex; there is scarcely a structure in the body that remains entirely unaltered between the beginning and the end of adolescence. The fact that the growth rate of the various structures proceeds unevenly results in a lack of balance among bones, muscles, glands, heart, lungs, brain, and viscera which is the basis for much of the misery often accompanying growth throughout this period.¹ Furthermore, the various phases of physical,

.

1. Cf., Cole, L.: op. cit., pp 17.

mental, and emotional growth are not parallel or evenly timed in their development either. They may go by spurts and one may be temporarily dormant while another catches up or forges ahead. Thus certain organs may be under particular strain at various times.¹ On the basis of the outward appearance of development, certain expectations may be made for which the mental powers or internal organs may not be fully prepared. The importance of growth is seen by the fact that it furnishes the physical basis for emotional, social, and future economic maturity. If a child's body, organs, and brain did not increase sufficiently to meet the requirements of adulthood, he would never be able to achieve adult ideas and attitudes, nor support himself economically, nor take his normal place in society.²

During early adolescence, the physical changes command the most attention. The young person is in the grip of relatively unknown forces and consequently he is bewildered, awkward, and self-conscious. Changes are taking place so rapidly that he cannot coordinate or make the necessary adjustments. He does not know how to use the enlarging muscles, lengthening bones, changing physical

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 75.
2. Cf., Cole, L., op. cit., p. 17.

impulses, new feelings and motives, and new ideas that accompany these other changes. There is a great gain in weight and height, internal developments are taking place, the heart, lungs, and arteries undergo considerable increase, but the most outstanding physiological development is in the maturing of the reproductive organs and the accompanying secondary sex characteristics. There is a close relation between bodily growth and sex maturity. It must be remembered that the girl usually reaches maturity a year or two before the boy and also allowance must be made for the wide individual differences.¹ In general, bodily growth begun earlier and continuing over a longer period of time is less upsetting than that which is more sudden.

The physical changes continue during middle adolescence but to these are added a more noticeable social awakening. The young person is beginning to get used to the newer life forces. The longer fundamental muscles are under better control so that coordination in the finer muscles is now developing. This results in a quickness and accuracy of muscular response which was not possible before. The body is becoming more

.

Cf.,

- 1./Rudisill, E. S.: The Intimate Problems of Youth, p. 19.
2. Cf., Mudge, E. L.: The Psychology of Early Adolescence, p. 22.

symmetrical and less angular. Awkwardness is giving way to more graceful movements with physical refinements and mental balance.¹

Throughout this period, the physical changes are the cause of storm and stress creating special problems for the adolescent to meet. The facts of the physical development are not important here in themselves, but they are in their effect upon the personality of the individual. The floodtide of physical vitality increases sensitivity to all kinds of external stimuli. The senses are almost overwhelmed with the bombardment of stimuli with the total result that the world is a constant emotional stimulus. The organism as a whole with all its interacting parts might be thought of as a mechanism to enable the individual to adjust himself efficiently to his environment. To get along satisfactorily, it must respond to changes in environment and also be able to produce effects upon it which inevitably affect the developing personality.² However, it is rarely that the physical conditions cause behavior deviations directly in themselves but rather by coloring the child's experiences. Usually in cases where personality problems

.

1. Cf., Mudge, E. L., op. cit., p. 23.

2. Cf., Moxcey, M. E., op. cit., pp. 25-26.

seem to be related to physical handicaps or differences, the attitude taken toward the situation by those associated with the individual and the attitude of the individual himself are the crucial elements in the case.¹ In general, adolescents with superior or average physical development reveal more wholesome personal attitudes while the group inferior physically show tendencies toward a feeling of difference, criticism of others, superiority (compensatory), and self-criticism.² However, even within the large normal range, extreme variations are a source of increased self-consciousness and should be handled with wisdom and understanding to avoid serious problems. The failure to realize that various difficulties directly related to the growth process are no cause for shame or embarrassment has been a cause of real concern. Ridicule only intensifies the feeling of self-consciousness arising from his awkwardness, homeliness, or physical disturbance and may develop an inferiority complex which will persist long after the difficulties themselves have disappeared.³ In general, a great deal of the apparent laziness, listlessness,

.

1. Cf., Dimock, H. S.: Rediscovering the Adolescent, p. 82.
2. Cf., Ibid, pp. 84-87.
3. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 83.

irritability, unstable tempers, and nervous breakdowns of the middle teens are due directly to

"want of food, drink, or oxygen; exhaustion due to exposure to cold or wet; want of sleep; a period of excessive muscular or mental work; a prolonged emotional strain, worry, or anxiety; a lack of defense against chronic infection; and a failure to eliminate waste products."¹

As was mentioned, one of the most striking of all phenomena at this time is the sexual development, and nothing in the adolescent period is more important for the permanent well-being and happiness of the young person than the growth of wholesome attitudes toward sex love. Many of the problems which exist might be avoided if the basic information is given unemotionally and at the right time. Biological information is intensely personal, charged with potential nutriment for the future emotional life of the child. To ignore his warm emotional education, to let him learn the facts of life in cold objectivity from unreliable sources, is to risk immeasurable confusion. As the new sex organs mature, the child should be prepared for the new sensations and emotions which arise. Without this, the vague impulses are not understood and he becomes a puzzle to himself.² Furthermore, there is the danger of a severe shock

.

1. Moxcey, M. E., op. cit., p. 154.
2. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 82.

taking place when certain normal developments appear for which he was quite unprepared. This may result in a temporary sex perversion or some sort of permanent prejudice against marriage which will be impossible to break.¹

Alternating periods of despondency and exaltation may arouse worry and concern. The newly matured sex interests are sources of powerful emotion, and therefore, the responsive mechanism is likely to be in unstable equilibrium. Along with the awakening of sex proper is an enhancing in vigor and sensitiveness of all the other emotional factors by the new forces of the sex-life. There is an intense satisfyingness in all emotional thrills. Boys and girls of this age not only make emotional responses to numerous situations but actively seek emotional situations.² The arousing of this new "driving force" in its intensity requires that effective methods of control be called into action to avoid the unwise use of this power.³ The body will demand satisfaction of the newly awakened desire, but the mental awakening, bringing a new interpretation of sex in so

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 82.
2. Cf., Moxcey, M. E., op. cit., p. 66.
3. Cf., Rudisáll, E. S., op. cit., p. 61.

far as information is possessed, will demand a right relation between sex expression and social ideals. The demands of the body and soul are not always strictly in harmony, but for adequate adjustment they must be brought into harmony. While sex is a human good, inherently and potentially, yet if it becomes a negative feature of life it is worse than many others in that it involves more than one person, and breaks down barriers the maintenance of which is a requisite for a sane society and for a sound individual life.¹

Without question, one of the hardest problems facing youth today is in regard to this matter. There is an alarming amount of sex delinquency among high school and college students. The physical consequences of injudicious intimacies may have been over-emphasized, but of the serious detriment to the emotional and social nature there is no doubt. To allow an increasing emotional and sensual appetite to develop will interfere and damage one's best aspirations, interests, steadiness, and character.² Where there has not been proper sex instruction to develop an understanding of its sacred function, a flippant attitude may arise which will

.

1. Cf., Rudisill, E. S., op. cit., p. 124.
2. Cf., Moxcey, M. E., op. cit., p. 66.

view it merely as a means of obtaining a thrill. Young people from "good" homes are guilty of sexual familiarity and promiscuity because of such loose thinking.¹ There is a definite lack in society as a whole in regard to the sanctity of marriage and its accompaniments. It is little wonder that young people cease to realize the seriousness of the relationship when it is not stressed at home and companionate marriage, divorce, and immorality are so flagrantly presented and condoned in the newspapers, magazines, books, and theaters. It has come to the place where it is almost a prerequisite for the success of a story or play to contain something of an immoral character. How can we blame the young people for an unwholesome attitude toward sex when they are confronted continually with such influences?

Both attitudes, that of the individual who considers sex as something wrong per se and an impulse to be completely repressed or one who practices unbridled promiscuity, will deny any permanent happiness in a normal sexual relationship. However, even before the maladjustment from such repression or over-indulgence has become permanent, there is the personality problem

.

1. Cf., Van Waters, M., op. cit., pp. 43-46.

created by the conflict between the standards and ideals of the family and the adolescent in regard to this important subject.

2. Mental Awakening

a. Self-consciousness

With the beginning of the adolescent period, the mind which has been expanding throughout childhood now expands more rapidly. The intellect is on the alert for larger fields of conquest. The emotional nature, as it was mentioned, becomes endowed with a finer sensitiveness to subtle shades of the beautiful and sublime. The will seems to awake to a new realization of its power and, therefore, to attempt things which before did not appear even as possibilities.¹ Reason comes to maturity and materials of experience can now be used more advantageously than before. The two act upon each other. Without the well-developed reasoning power, the perplexing problems which confront youth at this time could not be adequately faced.² Independence of thought, critical judgment, ability to deal with abstract relations and generalizations, the broad grasp of complex situations,

.

1. Cf., Tacy, F., op. cit., p. 43.

2. Cf., Rudisill, E. S., op. cit., p. 20.

and similar traits probably show more marked growth than memory, perception, and simple learning ability. The adolescent's whole outlook is toward the future and all his forces are leading up to maturity.

Often at this time he is baffled by the conflicting desires within himself, and in his attempt to reconcile the two attitudes by himself he may either give up in hopeless despair or else revolt from all accepted behavior patterns. There is the desire to be recognized as a responsible adult over against the desire to be protected by the family group; adventure over against security; to be free from all conventional social restriction and yet to be accepted within the adult social pattern; to express his own individuality and yet to keep an integral relationship with his group whose standards may vary; for absolute freedom of thought over against the desire for affiliation with an organized group.¹ An understanding of the causes of these internal conflicts and an appreciation of the fact that they are frequent accompaniments to the normal development of adolescence is essential to a wholesome adjustment. Youth normally tends to introspection, yet undue concentration upon his inner feelings, moods, conflicts, and fancies tends to their exaggeration, to the paralysis of spontaneous volition, and to a blinding of the

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 72.

natural social instincts.¹

The adolescent's individuality comes out as never before, and there is an awakening to new values in life. This realization of himself and what life means grows in richness as experience increases. He is building a distinct and independent selfhood. He is confronted with the problem of crystallizing his own individuality out of a variety of conflicting pressures within and without.² The complete self asserts itself, and a personal entity makes itself felt in the consciousness of the adolescent. Past impressions, ideas, experiences, vague formulations of all sorts of notions, fears, doubts, phantasies, and dreams have to be organized about and within this new figure.³ He is now an individual within a social group with a definite relation to other beings like himself. He is much more acutely aware of the attitudes of his own age group. He feels more keenly what others think of him and is desirous of social approbation from his particular set. The conflict between inner desire and this social approval is a cause

.

1. Cf., Rudisáll, E. S., op. cit., p. 54.
2. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., pp. 112, 121.
3. Cf., Schwab and Veeder: *The Adolescent, His Conflicts and Escapes*, p. 65.

of many worries, anxieties, and breakdowns.¹ He is still sensitive to his parents' values, but he is beginning to question them. He begins to feel the problems of the adult world and to become conscious of his own powers in relation to that world.²

b. Self-expression

As a result of this awakened self-consciousness, there is a strong desire and tendency to self-expression. The young person feels the urge to express his will, to maintain this new position, and to protect his reputation in the presence of others. It is the individual standing against the social background. Group-life gives self-assertion its possibility of expression.³ The adolescent has enthusiasm for the newest in everything and loves to explore the unknown fields opened up to him. His desire to gain recognition by attracting attention may lead him beyond the bounds of conventionality unless there is some restraining influence. There is a particular need during this period for some creative activity as a satisfactory emotional

.

1. Cf., Moxcey, M. E., op. cit., p. 161.
2. Cf., Brooks, F. D.: *The Psychology of Adolescence*, p. 379.
3. Cf., Groves, E. R., op. cit., p. 152.

outlet. Emotions which find expression in some such way are less likely to cause paralyzing conflicts and tensions. As his abilities develop and his body matures and craves an outlet in adult tasks, substitute satisfactions must provide a safety valve for the adult functions which cannot be directly satisfied until later. Self-expression through vital interests, developed skills, and the knowledge that one can get on alone, besides furnishing a necessary outlet, also provides a feeling of adequacy and self-assurance essential to a wholesome personality.

c. Self-direction

The central characteristics of adult life are independence and self-direction,¹ and it is the adequate transition from childhood dependence to adult independence which is necessary to a satisfactory adjustment to life. To the adolescent, the adult world presents a bewildering mass of experiences and requirements alien to him, and the process of becoming accustomed to his new status is a gradual undertaking which may prove confusing to all concerned.

.

1. Cf., Dimock, H. S., op. cit., p. 30.

It is through the continual adjustment of himself to the real world about him that his permanent personality is being developed. It may be strong, wholesome and capable, or weak, fragmentary, and warped, but it is during the adolescent years that it gets its final "set" and its limitations for the whole lifetime.¹ Occasionally there are those to whom the sternness of reality seems too much to face, with the consequence that they withdraw into an easy-going dream world of their own. Rather than confront an unpleasant situation with the determination to gain the desired end in spite of it, they resort to the infantile method of running away from it or making a fuss until the unpleasant element is removed. There is an unwillingness to make decisions and take the consequences; to acknowledge mistakes and profit by them without morbidly dwelling upon them; to accept just criticism or blame without building up a defense of self-pity. This type of individual is definitely ego-centric and easily hurt.

"Disintegration of character and, finally, of personality arises fundamentally from an effort to evade that part of reality which is unpleasant or annoying."²

For the adolescent to really find himself, he

.

1. Cf., Moxcey, M. E., op. cit., p. 132.
2. Ibid, p. 135.

will, no doubt, experiment with various ways of behaving until he discovers the mode of conduct he wants. The role of the parent in this procedure is of the utmost importance since nothing is of much more value to the achievement of an independent selfhood than being respected as an individual with rights to thoughts and aspirations and decisions entirely one's own. From the various ideals and models to which the young person is exposed, he must be free to assimilate what he feels is essentially his own.¹ This necessitates a wise relinquishing of the strict control necessary for children and the wise development of adequate self-control in the adolescent himself.² The measure of freedom should increase as the inner control and ability of self-direction increase. Until an individual learns the secret of self-discipline, he remains defeated. The complete achievement of self-subjugation is a life-long process, but it is at this period that inner motivation takes on new significance.³ There is the temptation to throw over all adult authority before adequate self-control has been established, and it is over this point that some of the most serious conflicts in the home arise.

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 123.
2. Cf., Cole, L., op. cit., p. 388.
3. Cf., Rudisill, E. S., op. cit., p. 66.

Yet in spite of his desire to be completely independent, the young person finds himself facing problems which he cannot handle alone, and hence he is forced to seek advice and guidance elsewhere. One of the most perplexing of these problems is that of a choice of vocation. A significant task suited to his powers is essential to the happiness and self-respect of every mature individual. Because of the basic importance of this choice for a wholesome adjustment to life, it is frequently a most difficult one to make. It is a temptation to parents to exert undue pressure on their children either directly or indirectly by the very intensity of their own desires and force them into fields for which they are not qualified nor interested. One of the greatest services they can render is to help them evaluate the genuineness of their interests and abilities.

"Parents who understand the issues involved but do not seek to voice the final choice can help them develop insight and gather data necessary for good choices."¹

Before the youth lie vast new horizons with new frontiers to conquer, but what will be the best way for him to take advantage of the opportunities? What is

.

1. Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 247.

his goal in life? What will be his standards? These questions become very pertinent to the adolescent and for the solution of them, which is necessary to a happily adjusted life, he seeks sympathetic guidance and understanding.

3. Spiritual Awakening

From a survey made by Miss Edna Frudiger of the twelve psychology text books used most extensively throughout American colleges, there was a wide variation in opinion among the leading adolescent psychologists concerning the prominence and importance of religion in the life of the adolescent; yet, in three-fourths of the books surveyed, the religious phase is presented as being the center of the adolescent's life, playing a very important part. The religious development is closely linked with all other phases of growth.¹ It is parallel to the changes that take place in his physical, social, intellectual and emotional being, and is partially dependent upon these changes. In fact, religious experience involves the three elements, intellect, emotion,

.

1. Cf., Frudiger, E.: The Religious Nature of Adolescence As Indicated By Outstanding Adolescent Psychology Textbooks, a Thesis in the library of the Biblical Seminary in New York, p. 46.

and will, but in addition there is another quality indefinable yet without doubt present, a religious consciousness.¹ Some of the elements of this religious consciousness are the

"realization of personal dependence and need; acknowledgment of personal obligation to God and of religious duties owing to Him; participation in religious exercises, such as prayer and praise; the observance of the sacraments and ordinances of the church; aspirations and strivings after holiness of life and character."²

In general, during early adolescence youth is interested primarily in a religious life full of activity; during middle adolescence religious experience affects the emotions; while during the later period the interest is in beliefs, doctrines, and theological creeds, and their meaning to man.³ A deeper religious life than in childhood results from the expanding mental and emotional horizons. There is a greater freedom; freedom from the formality of the child's religion which is immaturity and from the formality of the adult's religion which is the formality of decadence. The youth's faith is vital, practical, and spiritual; taking hold on all the springs of his being, or else it is in danger

.

1. Cf., Tracy, F., op. cit., p. 182.
2. Ibid, p. 130.
3. Cf., Richardson, N. E.; The Religious Education of Adolescents, p. 81.

of being cast aside entirely as being childish. Religious practices and observances which have grown habitual take on new life with an enriched content and significance, or else are discontinued for lack of meaning. Religion now makes a definite personal appeal and becomes a value personally realized.¹

The young adult is faced with the responsibility for interpreting the moral law himself. He is making the transition from the outer control of childhood to the inner self-direction of adulthood. He is taking upon himself the responsibility for right or wrong moral decision. He becomes aware of his need for a standard and ideal by which to guide his actions, and this should be found in his religion which should be the highest and most sacred element in his life.² This developing system of religious ideals must be so permeated with strong religious emotion that it becomes a controlling factor in his conduct and a vital part of his life.

During this time, he is seeking to establish his own convictions and beliefs out of teaching he has

.

1. Cf., Tracy, F., op. cit., p. 190.

2. Cf., Brooks, F. D., op. cit., p. 340.

Cf., Coe, G. A., op. cit., p. 249.

2. Cf., Richardson, N. E., op. cit., pp. 78-79.

received as a child. A healthy questioning attitude extends to every other phase of his life, and so it is natural that it should touch the religious and moral sphere as well. If provision has been made for the development of his ideas/^{along}with his deeper and broader experiences, the difficulties will be considerably lessened. Often this trouble is augmented by the fact that faulty instruction was given during the years of childhood which he cannot believe in his teens.¹ Narrow and dogmatic instruction which cannot be reconciled with his increasing knowledge of science and the world may be the cause of an unnecessary and serious period of skepticism. However, this problem is generally distinctly psychological but the intellectual difficulties which the progress of modern science and Biblical criticism have created furnish a most convenient excuse for rejecting the authority of religion.² Frequently youth comes to doubt because of the un-Christlike conduct of supposedly Christian adults.³ The bitter disillusionment that comes with the failure of loved and trusted persons produces an emotional attitude cutting him off from the most

.

1. Cf., Brooks, F. D., op. cit., p. 237.
2. Cf., Wycoff, A. C.: Acute and Chronic Unbelief, p. 16.
3. Cf., Pechstein and MacGregor: Psychology of the Junior High School Pupil, p. 156.

vital sources of nurture and growth.

The forms of expression during this time are often quite different from the preceding and following periods. The mental ability to grasp larger wholes gives a different content to the emotional responses. The feelings are easily aroused and there is an emotional warmth to their expression. The growth of the adolescent personality reveals unknown depths for reverence and worship. The longing for personal fellowship with God intensifies the conscious communion with God in prayer which becomes more mystical and practical. The religion of these years is one of loyalty, and the object must be one which it cannot outgrow. Some types of activity is essential as an outlet for the emotional energy and the enthusiasm that has come with the new realization of the personal and living relationship between himself and God. Occasionally a misguided adolescent finds this exercise of his emotional nature in an exaggeration of the requirements of religious beliefs, but this over-emphasis of a creed to the exclusion of actual Christian living reveals that something was omitted in his finding true religion.¹ Often accompanying this rigidity to a conventional religious structure

.

1. Cf., Schwab and Veeder, op. cit., p. 163.

is a distinctly intolerant attitude which may have far-reaching effects in his ways of thinking and in the formation of attitudes toward important environmental factors in his future life.

Conversion, whether of normal growth or of a spectacular change, usually occurs during the period of early or middle adolescence. Strong religious convictions, deep religious feelings, and pronounced religious decisions are most likely to occur at this time.¹ If the child has had good religious education and a wholesome Christian background, this conversion experience may develop so gradually that a definite time of crisis will not be apparent. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that even such a young person should be confronted with the necessity of making definite decisions and personal acceptance of the faith which up to this time has been taken more or less for granted upon the word of his elders. The widening horizons and expanding world force him to determine the center to which all the experiences of his enriched life will have the proper relation.

"Even to boys and girls who have given inner consent to the Christian ideals of their early training, there comes a very real sense of the distinction between the life lived for those ideals or for self-realization untrammelled by their high demands. Hence, there

.

1. Cf., Tracy, F., op. cit., p. 200.

is a very real need of 'evangelism' for Christian boys and girls that they may be unconfined to the limits of self and free to reach 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.'"¹

Unfortunately, however, this is not always the decision which is made. The young person may feel that his parents have forced their faith upon him, and he will assert his independence by throwing it over. Coercion or pleading merely serves to widen the breach between the parents and the child. Or the young person, who has been sent to Sunday School during childhood but whose parents took no active interest in religion, will gradually drift away from any Christian influence as his time is taken with other interests. This, of course, does not create conflict as the former case does, yet it is a definite rejection of the faith preceded by a period of increasing doubt and uncertainty.

To the adolescent who has not had the advantages of Christian training, the conversion experience will be more of a crisis since it becomes necessary for him to reorganize and reorient his whole life from the selfish and self-centered viewpoint to a life lived for God. Of course, the problem here may arise because of open antagonism on the part of the parents toward Christianity

.

1. Moxcey, M. E., op. cit., pp. 83-84.

or at least a scornful attitude toward spiritual things. Therefore, whether the adolescent comes by way of a gradual growth into the Christian life or through a distinct crisis experience, he now pledges his supreme loyalty to Christ as his Master. The impact of the idea of one regarding one's life, not as his own but as belonging to Christ, will do more to give reality and depth to the religious life than any other idea.¹

B. ADOLESCENT NEEDS

From the brief review of the adolescent, it is apparent that his life presents a most complex and varied picture. In order that the young people do not prove to be as baffling to their parents as to themselves, it is important that the parents familiarize themselves with the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual development of adolescence. Without this knowledge and understanding of the changes taking place within the child, they will be unable to assist in analyzing his problems and meeting them intelligently. It is difficult to say what needs of the adolescent are the most important, but certainly the two basic and fundamental ones are:

.

1. Cf., Mott, J. R.: Five Decades and a Forward View, p. 15.

the need for sympathetic understanding and helpful guidance. Young people crave companionship and an intimate relationship with their parents,¹ and parents, too, long for the friendship and confidence of their children. Yet too often this universal desire for affection and understanding on both sides is not satisfied. Intimacy must be cherished throughout the whole life and cannot be created in a particular time of crisis no matter how intensely it is sought. The time comes when it is too late for parents to win back the confidence which might have been theirs but which is now placed in someone else. Only as the adolescent receives the assurance coming from interested love does he dare go ahead, confident of his place in the adult world.²

Parents who are aware of the physical changes and the emotional accompaniments going on in their adolescents will not be worried by their upheaval but patiently bear with them. Only as the parent grows with his child can he adapt himself to his varying levels of maturation. As the young person develops, it is easy to begin to measure him by adult standards and thereby be inconsiderate in the demands made upon him. Unless the adolescent's

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 19.
2. Cf., Ibid, p. 97.

inconsistencies are met with sympathy, and he is led to an understanding of the causes of the struggles of which he is conscious within himself, the difficulties will be immeasurably increased. The responsibility of the parents in laying the foundation for a wholesome attitude toward sex has already been mentioned but often in cases where this much is done, yet there is a lack of appreciation of the importance of the first love affairs. These experiences of "puppy" love are natural and loom big in the eyes of the youthful lovers. There is an intense longing to confide in some older person who will sympathize and understand. These are the most promising opportunities to lead the young people on to a fuller and deeper appreciation of true love. Rigid opposition or ridicule on the part of the parents will only serve to throw up a permanent wall of estrangement between themselves and the young people and also make the two lovers more dependent on each other or those of their own group.

Parents and elders who can still see through the eyes of youth are the ones to whom the young people look with expectation and hope as they are striving to adjust themselves in all the areas of life.¹ Parents

.

1. Cf., Rudisill, E. S., op. cit., p. 63.

who fail to realize that the awakening consciousness of self and the desire to build one's own individuality are not a result of any antagonism against them but rather are perfectly normal reactions, are storing up heartaches for themselves and increasing the problem of adjustment for the young person. The flood of new experiences rushing upon him are bewildering, and he needs someone to aid him in finding what life really means, what values he will hold, and what part he can play in the world of which he is becoming an independent member. Unless some older person is aware of the creative energies crying for expression, they may be dissipated or wasted instead of being directed into worthwhile channels. How much wise guidance is needed for the development of adequate self-control and self-direction? Until the adolescent is wise enough to understand fully all the elements involved in his choices and to guide his behavior accordingly, he will need the help of those wiser and more experienced than he. Even the most independent young adults admit they want some guidance and are not ready to accept the full responsibility for their own decisions.¹

Parents who refuse to have anything to do with

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 34.

the molding of the religious beliefs of their children, preferring rather that they should be entirely free to choose for themselves, fail to realize that in no other area of the child's life do they expect or allow the child to develop without supervision or care. Youth needs and desires here the same understanding and guidance in his search for reality and the true values of life. Of particular importance is this, since he is in a period of idealism and is strongly influenced by the examples set by those whom he admires.

Guidance can truly be understood as one keeps clearly in mind the ultimate goal of adolescence, the goal of self-directing maturity. Parents' great opportunity as guides lies in helping them to learn the proper uses of their abilities and powers, and to evaluate and interpret their experiences.¹ An indispensable part of the parental role is that their minds and hearts be opened to all the child's experiences and be ready at all times to furnish this intelligent understanding and guidance.

C. SUMMARY

The rapid physical development and change during

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 36.

the adolescent period is one of the most obvious characteristics of this age, yet it is also a cause of storm and stress. Failure to make the necessary adjustment and coordination of the new powers may lead to feelings of bewilderment, inferiority, over self-consciousness, extreme sensitiveness, irritability, instability, or cynicism. A lack of understanding of sexual functioning or appreciation of its sacred nature may result in promiscuity, damaging the higher aspirations, interests, and character, or in some permanent sex perversion.

Parallel to the physical development is the mental awakening which takes place at this time. Failure to attain an independent self-hood or one adjusted to conventional society results in worry, anxiety, morbid introversion, ego-centricity, an effort to evade reality with a consequent disintegration of the personality, or the engendering of a spirit of anarchism with a disregard for all external authority and no attempt for inner control.

The religious development is closely linked to and dependent upon the physical and mental changes which take place. The youth's faith takes on new meaning, vitality, practicality, and spirituality. This is the period for the formation of some set of moral standards

and values and often a time of crisis known as conversion. Because of these many changes and developments in the adolescent years, the two great needs are sympathetic understanding and guidance.

CHAPTER THREE

A VITAL FAITH IN CHRIST THE SOLUTION
TO ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT IN THE HOME

CHAPTER THREE

A VITAL FAITH IN CHRIST THE SOLUTION TO ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT IN THE HOME

The sources of conflict resulting in adolescent personality problems were found to be legion. Because this age is primarily a time of transition, it is of the utmost importance to the individual's future happiness that satisfactory adjustment to life be made while his attitudes and behavior patterns are still plastic. The following chapter will investigate the elements basic to mental health and to integrated personality and then discover what provision is made for the supplying of these needs by a vital faith in Christ. It will discuss particularly the relation of this faith in solving the problems of adjustment which face the adolescent in the home. The main sources used were those dealing with the development of personality and with the characteristics of Christian faith and its contribution to mental health.

A. NEED FOR INTEGRATION OF PERSONALITY

In the light of the two preceding chapters,

which presented abnormal tendencies in the development of the adolescent personality and ^{the} problems which were created for him by conflict with the home environment, it would be well to clarify the concept of an integrated personality, essential to the wholesome adjustment of an individual to life. An accurate and concise definition is difficult, yet certain characteristics are readily and easily recognized. The personality is more intimately related to the life of the soul than any other part of man.¹ Rosanoff says that in normal personality are found a power of inhibition, a rational balance, an emotional control or stability, and a superior durability.² A healthy-minded personality exhibits a mastery over and a harmony of instincts; the control over any negative influence in the environment; a self-mastery that makes a positive and free maximum use of reason and will; and all this carried by a joyful, positive stream of existential feeling.³ Or it may be said to be the total of all traits woven into a pattern, acting and reacting individually and collectively.⁴ Whatever terms may be used

.

1. Cf., Ligon, E. M.: The Psychology of Christian Personality, p. 10.
2. Cf., Brooks, F. D., op. cit., p. 350.
3. Cf., Norborg, S.: Varieties of Christian Experience, p. 131.
4. Cf., Messick, J. D.: Personality and Character Development, p. 21.

to describe personality, it involves the total individual reacting to his environment in a distinct and individual way which gives to him a certain elusive "flavor" differentiating him from anyone else. However, the necessity of integrating these qualities is generally recognized as fundamental to any healthy life.

The word "integration" itself suggests wholeness or completeness.

"It is the condition of a personality in which all of the emotional attitudes are harmonious and mutually helpful, thus permitting all of one's natural energy to be directed toward one end. Thus, integrated action is coordinated action in an organism or machine. Each part contributes its portion to the whole, and all the parts are mutually interdependent upon one another."¹

It is the organizing of one's emotional attitudes in such harmony with one another that all urges and appetites can be directed about one central purpose which is always the focus of interest and attention. In other words, perfect integration insures the peak of efficiency and success. The personality problems created for the adolescent were seen to be the result of a failure in regard to this very thing. His desire for achievement is never satisfied because the conflicts within himself and with others are constantly pulling in opposite directions. No common purpose unites his energies to

.

1. Ligon, Ed.M.: Their Future Is Now, p. 15.

move in one direction. This, then, is the most universally recognized source of integration and, therefore, of mental health, a dominant purpose in life. This purpose must be in the service of mankind; it must be in line with his capacities so that it utilizes all his natural abilities without requiring those he does not possess; and it must have formed about it a certain group of healthy attitudes.¹ It should be the strongest motive in his behavior and his source of greatest pleasure. As Burnham outlines the characteristics and modes of reaction necessary for mental health, he expresses the same idea.

"Emphasis will be placed on freedom for the child in the doing of his own task; the preservation at all costs of the integration of the personality which already exists in childhood; and the giving of opportunity for worthwhile tasks and legitimate self-assertion at the period of adolescence, again to give freedom for reintegration of the individual personality."²

If this be true, the type and strength of personality that an individual possesses would depend upon what he believes and how firmly he believes it. This belief must be intense enough to produce motives that are effective as drives to produce consistent action. It is by means of this purpose that the socially desirable habits

.

1. Cf., Ligon, E. M., op. cit., pp. 15-17.
2. Burnham, W. H.: The Normal Mind, pp. 680-681.

of conduct are formed. An individual's ideals and conduct must consistently be in harmony for integrity of character, and it is the purpose which binds the consecutive choices together. Obviously, the fact that choice is possible means that what one wills ultimately determines what he becomes; therefore, it is of supreme importance that the will be wholly committed to the single aim. Thus, character consists of the characteristic forms of reaction of the personality.¹ The dynamics of character are found in the fundamental attitudes which govern the way an individual's abilities and powers express themselves and the way he faces his environment. The strength of his character is dependent upon the extent to which he can bring all the powers of his personality to bear upon his purpose, and upon his undeviating loyalty to it. This continual guiding of his thoughts, desires, and actions toward one goal results in a unified personality and character.

B. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTEGRATION
AND A VITAL FAITH IN CHRIST

During the previous discussion of the qualities

.

1. Cf., Ligon, E. M., op. cit., p. 4.

and characteristics of the adolescent religious nature, it was found that the young adult is not interested in a cold, objective belief or philosophy of life but is in search of a faith which is practical and useable. Life is a reality; his faith must be the same. If Christianity is to answer the needs of the adolescent, it must be dynamic in its influence upon his entire life. There is a vast difference between a belief in and an adherence to a series of statements, commands, and formulations, a mere acceptance of the truth of God's Word, or even an acknowledgment that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Saviour of men; and a personal living trust in Christ as Saviour.¹ The Jesus of history can give an ethic tinged with emotion but not a crusading faith, a philosophy of religion but not a religion.² A living, religious experience is always personal, springing from a living personality and expressing itself in a personal conviction. The great element is a personal attachment to a personal Redeemer.³ Such a faith in its essence is the complete surrender of one's will to God. Faith

.

1. Cf., Schwab and Veeder, op. cit., p. 170.
Cf., Stump, J.: The Christian Life, p. 109.
2. Cf., The Christian Message for the World Today: A Joint Statement of the World-Wide Mission of the Christian Church, p. 103.
3. Cf., Tracy, F., op. cit., p. 80.
Cf., Norborg, S.: Varieties of Christian Experience, p. 41.

immediately becomes a receptive and an operative activity. As receptive, it accepts and appropriates what the grace of God offers in Christ; as operative, it is the vital principle of a new life expressed in love to God and man.¹ This faith abides, even where and when the Christian experience itself seems to break down because it is built upon an extra-subjective, non-psychological basis, Jesus/Christ.²

In Christ, the love of God meets men not ~~only~~ as a conception/^{only}but as the all-overpowering Reality.³ It is the awareness of the imminence of God that distinguishes religion from a philosophy of life. It is this vitalizing concept which fires men's hearts and wings their aspirations. Religion is only effective when it is integrated into the entire acting equipment of an individual; when it affects every thought, impulse, and desire. True faith is vital and involves a new attitude toward everything.

"God becomes the supreme object of one's affection and devotion; self is made subordinate to God; and his fellow men have been placed on the same plane of love with himself."⁴

Innumerable thoughts, words, and deeds must be brought

.

1. Cf., Stump, J., op. cit., p. 110.
2. Cf., Norborg, S., op. cit., pp. 12, 19.
3. Cf., Ibid, p. 273.
4. Stump, J., op. cit., p. 109.

into unison with the inner principle until gradually all areas of the individual's life are brought under its control.¹ In his faith, the person has made the supreme choice; in his life, it is his constant task to bring all subordinate choices into harmony with this one. The really significant thing about the Christian is that he has a Master and his life is to serve that One to whom he has given his undivided allegiance. His life has become Christocentric. Christ is the unseen drawing power. He is the inherent force which causes the Christian always to revert to his resting place in Christ no matter how his life may have been forced out of position. The Christian is like the magnetic needle which of necessity returns to its pole.² His life is not characterized by the many things but by the one: that he may be well-pleasing to God.

This dynamic purpose found in Christ further provides a goal which challenges youth's craving for action, adventure, achievement, and happiness. He first is aware of his new relationship to God and then of his responsibility to his fellowmen. The barriers are down

.

1. Cf., Taylor, K. W., op. cit., p. 223.
Cf., Richardson, N. E., op. cit., p. 80.
Cf., Rudisill, E. S., op. cit., p. 204
2. Cf., Norborg, S.: What Is Christianity?, p. 135.

between himself and God. Idealism would tell him to follow Jesus in order to attain union with God, but true Christianity would urge him to believe on Christ and in Him immediately to be one with God. The Christian's task then is not becoming what he should be but becoming effectively what he really is in Christ.¹ This, of course, is a gradual process, but even to the young person the reality of this truth is clear. To follow the "Jesus way" is only possible as it is the outward expression of the presence of Christ within. As the stream can never rise higher than its source, so an individual can never rise above his human limitations without the Divine power. The goal he sees ever before him is to "grow into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" into a perfect man. (Eph. 4:13) This means that his mind and conduct are being more and more conformed to the mind and conduct of Christ. Thus, knowing himself the abundant life which Christ offers and the ideal for human society based on the principle of love laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, the youth is faced with the necessity of sharing this knowledge with others in whatever way he can. His life is under the direction of his Master

.

1. Cf., The Christian Message for the World Today, p. 118.

in the service of mankind and this complete life offers incentive and opportunity to use every ability and to employ every ounce of emotional energy in him.¹

"Young men and women want to give themselves to a cause. They are looking for a master amid the confusion and dissonance of our time. They want to believe utterly in something, in someone; they want to be thirled to a cause worth living and dying for!"²

These needs are met in Jesus Christ. He is their Master, and His is the cause, the bringing in of the Kingdom of God by the spread of the Gospel.

C. CONTRIBUTION OF A VITAL FAITH TOWARD ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT IN THE HOME

Without question, the most important thing in any individual's life is his relationship to God, but to the adolescent living in an environment of home conflicts, his personal acceptance of Christ may be the determining factor in the development of a strong and well-rounded personality. The problems created range from slight abnormalities to open delinquency, and include such things as failure to achieve independent self-hood, failure to face reality, failure to unify desires, failure to formulate acceptable moral standards and religious

.

1. Cf., Moxcey, M. E., op. cit., p. 174.
2. The Christian Message for the World Today, p. 125.

values, and the building up of tendencies to inferiority, extreme self-consciousness, emotional instability, irresponsibility, introversion, and ego-centricity. The value of faith and love in human personality in overcoming the enemies to a strong personality has long been recognized by psychology, but the resources from which to provide this faith have been lacking. It is now realized that Christianity supplies this indispensable element.¹ This is consistent with the findings of present-day psychologists, one of whom says,

"Modern personality-analysis does not only sustain the truth of the statement that where one destroys a sanctuary, one will have to build a mental clinic, it even permits the conclusion that modern psychiatry regards personal faith as a blessing and a necessity in human life, keeping it healthy and helping to maintain that balance which we call harmony and peace."²

An historical approach to this subject also proves that,

"religion is able to marshal all of the resources of personality, moral, physical, psychological and intellectual, and to command these in service, as no other power at the disposal of personality. For this very reason it possesses unique powers for assisting the individual and society in solving all physical, social, moral, psychological and intellectual problems."³

Besides furnishing the dynamic for an integrated personality, a vital faith in Christ further aids

.

1. Cf., Ligon, E. M.; The Psychology of Christian Personality, p. 294.
2. Norborg, S.: Varieties of Christian Experience, p. 256.
3. Wycoff, A.: Acute and Chronic Unbelief, p. 18.

the adolescent in adjusting himself to his home situation by supplying the deficiencies which enable him to adapt himself in the face of conflict. It has been said that a Christian is one to whom something tremendous has happened, something so tremendous that nothing else matters. Of course, very few ever completely attain this height, and yet it holds true to some degree in each one who has felt the transforming power of Christ.

The sense of security which is necessary to the development of an independent adulthood, but which some parents fail to provide, can be found by the adolescent in the assurance of a loving Heavenly Father and in the possibility of personal communion with Him in prayer. Though parents may be incompatible, emotionally unstable, and selfish in their interests, the knowledge that there is One who never changes, who cares and is interested in him, will give him the reassurance about himself which he must have. The feelings of inferiority, fear, selfishness, self-consciousness, and inadequacy, no matter from what cause they arise, can be overcome as the young person is encouraged to face life as it comes, not alone but with the knowledge that he can succeed with the help of God. Parents without this faith themselves are unable to offer it as a source of strength and confidence to the adolescent who shrinks from the realities

of life. As he gets a picture of the complete social structure and appreciates the importance of each part to the whole, he will recognize the value of his own contribution no matter how small, and place his ambition within the limits of his power of achievement.¹ Parents often fail to direct youth to worthwhile accomplishment within their capacities.

Certainly one of the distinguishing marks of a Christian is reverence for personality; Christ exalted the individual. This is of utmost importance to the adolescent in his regard for his own well-being as well as for the rights of others. Self-centeredness is almost certain to result in unhappiness because when one looks with too great constancy at himself, his inferiorities become too prominent, with the result that social fears and compensations set in.² As the young person becomes sensitive to the needs of others and takes his eyes off himself, he will find his own happiness increasing. Unselfishness, consideration, and thoughtfulness will characterize his relationships first of all with those of his own family and then with those on the outside.³ He will see more clearly his responsibility to society in

.

1. Cf., Ligon, E. M.: *Their Future Is Now*, p. 273.
2. Cf., *Ibid*, p. 283.
3. Cf., Fiske, G. W., *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208.

building a strong personality within himself that he may be better able to serve, as well as in conducting himself in conformity with the accepted standards. The appreciation of this responsibility will reduce the conflict with his parents in regard to the matter of control and behavior as he is willing to accept their authority and word until he has achieved an adequate inner control and formulated his own acceptable modes of conduct.

His ethics and sense of values will now find their bases in the character of God himself. The highest ideals, motivated by his personal devotion to Christ, will be his standard of conduct.¹ The enlightened Christian conscience must be his guide in all matters of behavior. In regard to the difficult problem of sex, the knowledge that a Christian position will not seek to destroy or pervert nature but to assist and direct its highest and best realization will provide a wholesome attitude toward it. It is impossible for parents to lay down strict rules for practice, but rather the conduct must be determined by the feeling of self-respect, the regard for the object of one's love, the sanctions of common sense, the consideration of the unreliability of the emotions, the realization of the delicacy and seriousness of the

.

1. Cf., loc. cit.

relations of the sexes, and the Christian standard of personal purity.¹ Furthermore, the discovery that sex is strength and that the conservation of this energy is a source of power will prove to be a far more effective motive for moral integrity than fear. Parents fail to realize that for virtue to be appealing it must be recognized as a positive and active force rather than negative and passive.

However, high ideals in themselves are of relatively little value unless there is some possibility of attaining them, and just that provision is made by a strong faith in Christ. It aids in achieving the self-control and self-discipline which characterize strong personality and in supplying worthwhile outlets for the emotional energies.² These activities of service offer opportunities for self-expression with a consequent sense of adequacy in useful endeavors rather than in unconventional or anti-social behavior. Spiritual realities and values furnish anchorage for youth and afford stabilization throughout life. They satisfy the groping for a fundamental, synthesized understanding of the whole realm of experience. Praise, prayer, and other elements of

.

1. Cf., Rudisill, E. S., op. cit., pp. 128, 117.
2. Cf., Brooks, F. D., op. cit., p. 342.

worship enrich and deepen the life, and add much to its wholesomeness and happiness.¹

The two fundamental needs which parents fail to supply are sympathetic understanding and helpful guidance, but the adolescent finds ^{these} in Jesus, his Divine Companion and Friend. He fills this intense longing in the young heart; he satisfies the craving for someone who knows him completely. At times, when the adolescent feels that he must confide the secrets of his inmost soul to someone, he can turn with perfect freedom to this One for release; or when his mind is confused by the rush of bewildering changes, this One gives peace; or when problems and decisions need to be faced, He gives guidance; or when strength is needed for the daily task, He is ready to supply it. As the adolescent learns to submit every detail of his life to the will of God, he experiences the joy of abiding fellowship and the security that comes from complete trust in the Divine Redeemer.

D. SUMMARY

A dominating purpose uniting all one's attitudes and energies is the source of integration and,

.

1. Cf., loc. cit.
Cf., Rudisill, E. S., op. cit., p. 42.

therefore, of mental health. The type and strength of personality is determined by what one believes and how firmly he believes it. It must be effective in producing conduct consistent with one's ideals. A personal, living faith in Christ as Saviour provides this dynamic for life; in essence, it is the complete surrender of one's will to God. The youth's craving for action, adventure, achievement, and happiness is found as he strives to grow into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ in the service of mankind. Besides furnishing the dynamic for an integrated personality, Christ offers the love, security, vision, ideals, inner control, understanding, and guidance which are necessary to the adequate adjustment of the adolescent to his home.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The problem of this thesis was to analyze the conflicts within the home which were the determining factors in the break-down of the adolescent personality, and then to find an adequate method of overcoming these disintegrating influences. This problem was approached by a study of homes in which conflict exists. This was followed by a consideration of the development of the adolescent within these homes and the influence on him of such unwholesome environment. The final chapter was an attempt to discover the value of a vital Christian faith for the adolescent in solving his personality problems.

While the potential effect of the home in the molding of the adolescent is recognized as being without question very great, its strength has been weakened by the failures of the modern home life, and this, in turn, has created problems for the child growing into adulthood in such an environment. It was found that the decentralization and lack of unity within the family group have been caused by the industrialization of society, the

growth of city life, the loss of home-centered activities, the general urge for independence and disregard for authority, and the lack of a vital religious life. Furthermore, the primary responsibility for the type of home which exists rests with the parents. First of all, it depends upon a harmonious relationship between the mother and father and then upon their attitude toward the family. Any home in which other interests are placed ahead of the best interests of childhood is inadequate for the development of a well-adjusted adolescent. Selfishness or persisting infantilisms, irresponsibility or indifference, unwisely directed love, or the lack of love and understanding on the part of parents were found to produce disintegrating effects upon the adolescent personality, ranging from mild abnormalities to serious mental disease.

Following this investigation, a study of the young person himself was made, and another source of conflict was found to exist within the adolescent himself in his attempt to adapt his new self to his home environment. His development was seen to be divided into three phases: the physical awakening, the mental awakening, and the spiritual awakening. This proves to be a trying time because the rapid changes taking place in him require his constant readjustment to them.

Physical growth has a marked influence upon his psychological make-up, and any slight deviation from the normal may be responsible for feelings of inferiority, self-consciousness, instability, criticism, or other undesirable traits. Because of the particular prominence of the sexual development, an understanding and appreciation of its potential power was found necessary for a wholesome attitude toward it in order to avoid the devastating effects of promiscuity or perversion.

This study revealed further that the special importance of the mental awakening is the building of a distinct and independent self-hood. The adolescent is faced with the task of harmonizing his own desires, ambitions, moral standards, sense of values, behavior patterns, and modes of expression with those of his home while at the same time developing adequate inner control and self-direction. His failure to achieve this independence or to adjust himself to society were shown to result in worry, anxiety, morbid introversion, extreme inferiority, self-consciousness, ego-centricity, or else in radical individualism and anarchism. The religious development which parallels the other two phases of growth creates the necessity for the adolescent to re-think the beliefs he has unconsciously accepted as a child and either decide to make this faith

personal, vital, and practical, or else to reject the formality of it completely. The problems, doubts, uncertainties, and attitudes of skepticism are immeasurably increased as the young person comes into conflict with his parents' beliefs and practices.

Bewildered by the multiplicity of changes, problems, and adjustments to be made, the adolescent yearns for someone with an understanding heart and a firm hand to lead him through the confusion of these years into a worthwhile and abundant life. Many parents are unwilling or unable to take the time to fill this need.

These findings lead to the conclusion that the failure to achieve an integrated personality is the basis for the problems created in the adolescent by the home conflicts. This integrated personality is one in which all of the emotional attitudes are harmonious and mutually helpful in providing for the coordination of all his natural energies. The most universally recognized source of integration, it was found, is a dominant purpose in life in the service of mankind, in line with one's capacities, and in the center of a group of healthy attitudes. This purpose is the determiner of one's ideals, the motive for one's behavior, and one's greatest source of pleasure; it is the underlying condition of mental health. It was found that a vital, living faith in Christ provides

this centrality and dynamic. It further supplies reassurance, stability, inner control, courage to face reality, a supreme sense of values, and a worthwhile outlet for all of one's energies and ambitions. The solution, then, to the adolescent's personality problems was found in this faith. It is his personal trust in Christ as Saviour and a complete surrender of his will to God. His life is characterized by his one supreme goal: to be well-pleasing to God. His life becomes Christocentric. He finds in this dynamic for an integrated personality the resources by which to overcome the disintegrating influences of personality and by which to establish a well-adjusted life. Christ embodies the faith, love, security, vision, ideals, and wisdom which fill his needs. The conflicts themselves, which to a large extent are the fault of the parents or had at least their beginnings in parental failure, cannot be entirely remedied by any change in the adolescent. However, this vital faith in Christ does enable him to preserve the integration of his personality in spite of them and to make adjustments which will lessen the tension within the home situation. And, finally, this faith will be the means to the necessary qualities for the fullest life which finds its expression in

"a natural supernaturalism and a grateful sense of

life's values. A clearness of thought, with visionary hope against hope. A consideration of factual realities in the world and in one's fellowmen, in a spirit of sound judgment and friendliness. A sober control of emotions, placing deeds of love above romantic or pious words. A stability of will that springs from a surrendered life under God's benediction. A free and balanced expression of thoughts and feelings, not absolute in its statements, still clear in its convictions. An openminded interest in life and lives, based upon a self-forgetting, unseen love, taken as a matter of fact, not demonstrated to be seen by men, but hidden in God. A humility that is neither sick nor sour, a joy that is neither ecstatic nor fading, a confidence in God that is not shaken by the tempests of sorrow or affliction. One who knows and lives and rejoices in only one Reality: God."¹

.

1. Norborg, S., op. cit., p. 275.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ames, E. S.: Psychology of Religious Experience, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1910
- Averill, L. A.: Adolescence, Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, 1936
- Brightman, E. S.: Personality and Religion, Abingdon Press, New York, 1934
- Brooks, F. D.: Psychology of Adolescence, Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, 1929
- Burger, W. H.: Growing Up With Our Children, Association Press, New York, 1932
- Burnham, W. H.: The Normal Mind, D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1929
- Buckham, J. W.: Personality and Psychology, George H. Doran Co., New York, 1924
- Burkhart, R. A.: Guiding Individual Growth, Abingdon Press, New York, 1935
- Christian Message for the World Today: A Joint Statement of the World-Wide Mission of the Christian Church, Round Table Press, Inc., New York, 1934
- Clark, E. T.: Psychology of Religious Awakening, Macmillan Co., New York, 1929
- Coe, G. A.: Education in Religion and Morals, Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1904
- Coe, G. A.: Psychology of Religion, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1916

- Coe, G. A.: A Social Theory of Religious Education, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1924
- Cole, L.: Psychology of Adolescence, Farrar and Rinehart, New York, 1936
- Conklin, E. S.: Psychology of Religious Adjustment, Macmillan Co., 1929
- Cope, H. F.: Religious Education in the Family, Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1915
- Dimock, H. S.: Rediscovering the Adolescent, Association Press, New York, 1937
- Fisher, A.: A Study of the Migrant Situation in the U. S. A. With Special Reference to Christian Education, A Thesis in the Biblical Seminary in New York, 1936
- Edward, Artman, Fisher: Undergraduates, Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York, 1928
- Fiske, G. W.: The Changing Family, Harpers and Brothers, New York, 1928
- Forbush, W. B.: The Boy Problem in the Home, Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1915
- Freudiger, E. E.: The Religious Nature of Adolescence as Indicated by Outstanding Adolescent Psychology Textbooks, A Thesis in the Library of the Biblical Seminary in New York, 1931
- Groves, E. R.: Personality and Social Adjustment, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1925.
- Gruenberg, S. M.: Sons and Daughters, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1916

- Hall, G. S.: Adolescence, D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1904
- Hollingworth, L. A. S.: Psychology of Adolescence, D. Appleton Co., New York, 1928
- Intelligent Parenthood: Proceedings of the Mid-West Conference on Parent Education, March 4, 5, 6, 1926, Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1926
- Jones, O. M.: Inspired Children, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1933
- Jung, C. G.: The Integration of the Personality, Farrar and Rinehart, New York, 1939
- Kilpatrick, W. H.: Education for a Changing Civilization, Macmillan Co., New York, 1928
- Kupky, O.: Religious Development of Adolescence Based upon Their Literary Productions, Macmillan Co., New York, 1936
- Ligon, E. M.: The Psychology of Christian Personality, Macmillan Co., New York, 1936
- Ligon, E. M.: Their Future Is Now, Macmillan Co., New York, 1939
- Lindsay and Evans: The Revolt of Modern Youth, Boni and Liveright, New York, 1925
- Lyman, E. W.: The Experience of God in Modern Life, Scribners, 1918
- Messick, J. D.: The Personality and Character Development, Revell, 1939
- Mott, J. R.: Five Decades and a Forward View, Harpers, New York, 1939

- Moxcey, M. E.: Psychology of Middle Adolescence, Caxton Press, New York, 1925
- Mudge, E. L.: Psychology of Early Adolescence, Caxton Press, New York, 1922
- Mudge, E. L.: Psychology of Later Adolescence, Caxton Press, New York, 1922
- Norborg, S.: Varieties of Christian Experience, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1937
- Norborg, S.: What Is Christianity; Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1936
- Pechstein & McGregor: Psychology of the Junior High School Pupil, Houghton Mifflin, 1924
- Popenoe, P.: Conservation of the Family, The Williams & Williams Co., Baltimore, 1926
- Powell, W. E.: Growth of Christian Personality, Bethany Press, St. Louis, 1929
- Richardson, N. E.: The Religious Education of Adolescents, Abingdon Press, New York, 1913
- Rudisill, E. S.: Intimate Problems of Youth, Macmillan Co., New York, 1929
- Schwab and Veeder: The Adolescent, D. Appleton, 1929
- Stearns, A. E.: The Challenge of Youth, W. A. Wilde Co., Boston, 1923
- Stuart, G.: Achievement of Personality, Macmillan Co., New York, 1938

- Stump, J.: The Christian Life, Macmillan Co., New York, 1930
- Taylor, K. W.: Do Adolescents Need Parents? D. Appleton - Century, 1938
- Thom, D. A.: Normal Youth in Everyday Problems, D. Appleton, 1932
- Tracy, F.: Psychology of Adolescence, Macmillan Co., New York, 1928
- Van Waters, M.: Youth in Conflict, Republic Publishing Co., New York, 1926
- Williams, F. E.: Adolescence, Studies in Mental Hygiene, Farrar and Rinehart, 1930
- Wyckoff, A. C.: Acute and Chronic Unbelief, Revell, 1924
- Vanderslice, A. E.: Religious Education in the Family, A Thesis in the Library of the Biblical Seminary in New York, 1930