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A STUDY OF THE VIEWS OF WILLIAM CLAYTON BOWER
WITH THE PURPOSE OF
DETERMINING THE BASIC ISSUES INVOLVED
IN MODERN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

By

MARY LOUISE CRESWELL

A. B., San Diego State College

A Thesis

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement and Significance of the Problem

"During no period in its history has the educational work of the church undergone more fundamental and significant changes than during the four decades of the present century."¹ Since the beginning of this century due to developments in science, psychology, and sociology, there have been fundamental and significant changes in American culture. These influenced education in such a way that conflict has arisen among religious leaders.

Were modern religious education merely a more effective method for bringing the message of the church to people, there would be no conflict. However, because it represents a different approach from that of the historic church and challenges the theological foundations upon which the church rests, serious problems have developed. The issues arising out of this conflict are not superficial ones as to whether one method is more effective than another, but they concern important questions in the philosophy of religious education.

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1. William Clayton Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 7.

The two opposing streams of influence are the historic practices of the church and modern religious education. The church has had a theological approach to program and methodology. Modern religious education has centered attention upon empirical data and educational insights, rather than theological conceptions as the controlling factors.

The efforts to adjust and integrate these two influences have caused serious difficulties because they disagree in regard to basic tenets and also the approach to solving the difficulties. The recent consideration of religious educators in relation to the church's historical formulations and the attack upon religious education as a menace to the church and evidence of secularization have caused these issues to become acute.

The result in the churches has been confusion due to lack of insight into these issues. As religious education is considered by many to be the most important function of the church today, Christian leaders should have an intelligent approach to the modern viewpoints in this field and the issues involved.

The problem of this thesis is twofold. First it is to gain an understanding of the views of William Clayton Bower, an outstanding leader and recognized

authority in religious education.¹ After stating clearly Bower's major views, as representative of modern attitudes, the purpose will be to understand the basic underlying assumptions. As already mentioned, due to differences in theology and in educational philosophy there is a conflict among religious educators concerning both theory and practice. Since these differences arise out of certain basic issues, the second objective of this study is to determine the issues in which center the problems which the church is facing in religious education.

B. Delimitation of the Subject

To cover every aspect of religious education would be too large a task and unnecessary for the purpose of this study. It is with the major aspects of the field--aim, content, and method--that this thesis will be concerned. Bower's views of the underlying concept of religious education and the curriculum, which includes both method and content, will be analyzed. This study will involve an investigation of only his published books.

C. Method of Procedure

The first step will be to analyze the books written by William Clayton Bower to discover his contributions. Then the material will be presented in relation to the

.

1. Cf. Appendix for brief biography of William Clayton Bower.

problem of this study. The first consideration in any field is to find its purpose for existence. Thus chapter two will present the underlying concept of religious education according to Bower.

Since every change in the nature and end of education affects the curriculum more than any other factor, the third chapter will present Bower's view of curriculum in light of the background which he gives.

While the curriculum includes both method and content, there has been so much discussion as to the place of the Bible that a separate chapter will be devoted to its place in the curriculum. This chapter will show Bower's view of the origin and use of the Bible.

These three chapters include the areas where the drastic changes have been and are taking place. After understanding these modern viewpoints, the basic issues will be determined by noting the assumptions underlying Bower's views and the questions to which these lead. The fifth chapter will mention these assumptions and then describe the issues which are the cause of conflict.

D. Sources of Data

Besides many books, William Clayton Bower has written several articles, some of which have appeared in the Christian Century, Religion in Life, Religion in the Making, The International Journal of Religious Education,

and Religious Education. This study will be limited to the books he has written, which are listed in the bibliography. They cover a period of time from 1919 to 1944.

CHAPTER II
THE UNDERLYING CONCEPT OF
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CHAPTER II

THE UNDERLYING CONCEPT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A. Introduction

In the study of the human body there is that which deals with the knowledge of the structure of the body involving such as the bones, blood, and muscles. On the other hand, there is the knowledge of the function of these parts, their purpose and uses. In the field of religious education Bower emphasizes the difference between these two aspects--the structure and the function. It is with the latter that this chapter will deal, to discover Bower's ideas concerning the relative place of religious education in our society and that which it hopes to accomplish. First it will be discussed in its relation to the church. Then the past aims of religious education will be mentioned as background for Bower's present objectives. The last part of the chapter will present Bower's views concerning religious education in relation to public education.

B. Religious Education in Relation to the Church

The church has carried full responsibility for religious education since the time it was taken out of the public schools. Even as educationalists and social statesmen in their respective fields have come to feel that

future progress is dependent upon education, Bower believes that religious educators should feel their chief dependence for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God upon religious education.¹ "In the light of both its commission and of the demands of the modern world, the fundamental function of the church is that of Christian education."²

The reasons for which Bower attaches such great importance to the educational work of the church are the place of teaching in the ministry of Christ, the Great Commission, teaching in the historic church, and the effectiveness of religious education as an instrument for the Kingdom of God.³

In looking ahead the church needs a new creative-⁴ness equal in quality to that of the first century and the Reformation. Bower does not confine the task of the church to conserving values, but believes it should be initiating change and that this change must be a continual readjustment rather than spasmodic and radical. Thus the church has a social responsibility of reconstruction and if it

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1. Cf. Bower: A Survey of Religious Education in the Local Church, pp. 11-12.
2. Bower: The Educational Task of the Local Church, p. 12. Bower uses the term, "religious education," in his books almost exclusively. In only one of his books, Christ and Christian Education, does he use the term, "Christian education." The basis for his distinction is found below, p. 44.
3. Cf. Bower: Religious Education in the Modern Church, pp. 5-7.
4. Cf. Bower: The Church at Work in the Modern World, pp. 266-269.

fails in this due to lack of educational efficiency, "to that degree is the life of society impoverished and its future jeopardized."¹

While religious education was developing, leaders were possibly content to know they were "doing good" without any specific idea of what that might mean, just so their efforts were in the right direction and some results were visible.² Bower says this was probably due to the fact that churchmen were not aware of the great possibilities of religious education. Now that modern psychology, sociology, and other sciences have opened up new insights, education is looked upon as a means of social control and of producing changes. Bower believes that in the same way, religious educators should look upon religious education as their³ means of control of the future.

Due to its increasing importance religious education has been organized with a definite purpose and objectives have been set up. In order to understand these better, a brief review of past aims will be stated.

C. The Aims of Religious Education in the Past

Our modern religious education is considered to

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1. Bower: A Survey of Religious Education in the Local Church, p. 65.
2. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. xi-xii.
3. Cf. Bower: The Educational Task of the Local Church, pp. 125-127.

have begun in the eighteenth century. Since that time aims¹ have had three outstanding emphases. Bower sums these up by relating them to the Sunday school where the emphasis was on individual salvation, the Bible school where knowledge of the Bible was most important, and the Church school³ where personality development was stressed.

D. Present Aims in Religious Education

Bower states that aims are needed as a basis for working out the curriculum, to offer standards for measure-²ment, and to give an incentive to the task. He has set up four main objectives for religious education. However, before presenting these, his idea of the nature of goals and his qualifications for aims will be discussed in order to understand them better.

1. The Nature of Goals

Concerning the nature of goals, Bower sets forth three ideas. First he explains that there are general and specific objectives. He calls the work of the religious educator spiritual engineering. Just as an engineer studies conditions and possibilities by which he can carry out his project, the religious educator must study in detail conditions and resources and then make specific objectives in

.

1. Cf. Bower: The Educational Task of the Local Church, pp. 21-24.
2. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

concrete terms. These specific objectives cannot be made apart from the situation, but there are general objectives that will be valid for all situations.¹ These latter goals will be presented later on in this section.

Secondly, Bower says that goals of any type are always moving. Since the culture of a people determines aims, the goals must change when the culture changes. In light of this fact,

"...objectives must always be held tentatively and in a flexible form so that they may be reset in terms of the ever-changing conditions of a dynamic life. It is only with this qualification that we may speak of 'ultimate' goals. In the strict sense there is no such thing as an 'ultimate goal.'"²

Thirdly, Bower does not believe there are any absolute standards relative to goals. For example, when the goal of living is referred to as the attainment of the good life, it must be understood that the conception of conscience for discerning right and wrong to interpret this good life has changed. Also, the criteria for judging character varies within different groups. Conscience, according to Bower, is built up within changing social experience. "It represents a social judgment concerning types of ethical behavior."³ It is no longer believed that truth is divinely founded. Neither is conscience believed to be

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1. Cf. Bower: Religious Education in the Modern Church, p. 29.
2. Ibid., p. 31.
3. Bower: Religion and the Good Life, p. 28.

in man's original nature as a guide to absolute standards of right and wrong. Conscience is the product of social¹ experience and thus changes.

Bower goes on further to explain the development of modern ethics in three stages. First he mentions the mores which were the accepted standards of behavior in a group. Then these mores became morals when they were analyzed and selected. At this second stage they were thought of as external, the voice of God revealing absolute right and wrong. At the third stage of development, which is in the present, something is considered right or wrong because of the consequences for the individual and society. Thus the judgment is within the experience itself, not pre-determined nor given by external authority.² Because of this development, Bower states that

"Absolutes of every sort have been swept away by the dynamic currents of an evolving world and an evolving culture. They have gone with the 'supernatural' world that once stood in radical and irreconcilable opposition to a 'natural' world in a dualistic dichotomy."³

and also that

"Authority has migrated from the remote distances of a supermundane realm inaccessible to empirical experience and has taken up its residence where the creative forces of reality are under way, continuously creating meanings and values that carry within themselves their own validation."⁴

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1. Cf. Bower: Religion and the Good Life, pp. 24-30.
2. Cf. *ibid.*
3. Bower: Religion and the Good Life, p. 31.
4. *Ibid.*

2. Qualifications for Aims

In reviewing the aims of religious education in the past, Bower showed that each in itself was inadequate. He has set up certain qualifications¹ that goals must have in order to be adequate for the needs of this changing world. These have a threefold aspect.

a. Individual. Emphasis upon the individual is derived from the last of the historic aims--the development of a religious personality. The secular education which the child receives is not complete without his spiritual adjustment to the world, and it is this that Bower says religious education must help him to do. While secular education helps him to develop a physical, intellectual, emotional, social aesthetic, and moral personality, religious education develops the spiritual personality.

b. Institutional. Religious education should include training of the young for membership in the church. Also it must discover and train leadership within the church. The church of tomorrow is dependent upon the church of today, and it is the responsibility of educators now to create the desired type of church for the future. As Bower expresses it:

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1. Cf. Bower: The Educational Task of the Local Church, pp. 25, 128-132.

"The church is the community of men and women of like faith, ideals, and purposes to which Christ committed the work which he began and to which he gave his life. Upon the church, therefore, rests the responsibility of perpetuating itself as the institution for the interpretation and promotion of the Christian cause in the world."¹

c. Social. Every institution exists because it makes some contribution to society. The fact that the church has an important function and responsibility socially involves a social conception of salvation. In regard to this Bower states that

"It [social salvation] found repeated and impressive expression in his [Jesus] teaching concerning the kingdom of God by which he meant a spiritualized and redeemed society."²

Bower believes that modern society looks to religion for the securing of social unity because its fundamental teachings center in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Progressing society must depend upon religion also for drive, the motivation of progress. Science gives the technique and ethics the moral criticism, but, as Bower puts it, history and psychology both agree that it is religion that undergirds our moral ideals with spiritual power.

From the following statement it can be seen that Bower's emphasis is upon the social aspect:

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1. Bower: The Educational Task of the Local Church, p. 25.
2. Ibid., p. 27.

"Whatever other functions it may possess, the primary function of religious education is to build a new world order symbolized by the phrase that was central in the message of Jesus--'the kingdom of God,' in which he had in mind a regenerated social order composed of spiritualized men and women living and working together in spiritual relations dominated by Christian ideals."¹

3. The Four General Objectives

Bower's conviction is that the ideals and purposes of Christ must be brought into a functional relation to the "...experience of growing persons and of the Christian community."² The church is not only to pass on a great religious heritage but must also face and solve the issues in contemporary culture.³ From Bower's functional approach:

"Christian education seeks to accomplish under the conditions of contemporary life what it believes Christ sought to accomplish under the conditions of his world --to bring living persons into a vital experience of the Christian values of life."⁴

His test of Christian education is "...whether growing persons and groups have been helped to achieve loyalty to Christ and a Christian quality of life."⁵ In his book, Religious Education in the Modern Church, written in 1929 Bower presents the same four objectives as in his later book, Christ and Christian Education, written in 1943.

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1. Bower: Religion and the Good Life, p. 31.
2. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 37.
3. Cf. Bower: The Church at Work in the Modern World, p. 17.
4. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 37.
5. Ibid., p. 38.

a. Personal Life

"Help growing persons, through the orientation of the whole self in thought, in attitude, and in motive, to achieve a Christlike personality."¹

2

In the achievement of a Christlike personality Bower says it is necessary to come into a vital and personal relationship with that other Person. By letting His ideals and purposes dominate the life, a Christian personality results. It will be the relating of religion to the whole range of experience day by day. According to Bower, personality must be thought of in terms of a becoming, as undergoing continual change and redirection. By this concept evangelism is not taken out, but broadened. It becomes a process involving commitments rather than a decision at one time. Thus it is a continuous growth that must be directed.

b. Society

"To bring the relations and processes that constitute society under the searching criticism and reconstruction of the ideals and purposes of Christ in the progressive realization of the Kingdom of God on earth."³

The task of religion is no longer merely to save the individual from a perishing world, but the world itself must be spiritualized. The center of civilization must be changed from the material to the spiritual. Society

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1. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 38.
2. Cf. Bower: Religious Education in the Modern Church, pp. 37-42.
3. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 38.

needs unification of all its specializations which are causing it to fall to pieces, and it also needs a motivation¹ for reconstruction.

c. Knowledge

"Make available to growing persons and groups who are seeking to become Christian persons in a Christian society the funded experience of the Christian past as a resource for interpreting, judging, and resolving the issues which they face in their interaction with their real and present world."²

People facing problems today need to be acquainted with the past experience of the race as a help for judging³ issues of the present. Christian tradition used in this way as a resource can be of great value, but it must not⁴ be used as an end in itself.

d. Christian Institution

"Build a sustained and sustaining fellowship which is the church, in which are available means for the continued reorientation of one's life, for self-criticism, for rectification of values, and for wholehearted commitment to Christ and the causes of the Kingdom of God."⁵

The church is an organization but must be thought of primarily in terms of its function. Bower describes it "... as a specialized institution for the interpretation and promotion of the Christian way of life and the Christian

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1. Cf. Bower: Religious Education in the Modern Church, pp. 51-52.
2. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, pp. 38-39.
3. Cf. Bower: Religious Education in the Modern Church, p. 42.
4. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 38.
5. Ibid., p. 39.

purpose in personal and social experience."¹

E. Religious Education in Relation to Public Education

Bower has recently written a book on the problem of religion in education. In it he begins by stating that this² problem is one of great significance today in American culture and one that must be faced and solved now in the interests of children, young people, and the nation. He blames the sectarian nature of religion for its exclusion from public education in the past. However, since sectarianism is an anachronism in the religious life of America today, he believes it is possible to put religion back into the public school. He bases his solution to the problem on the assumption that

"Since the beginning of the century the trend has been to identify religion specifically as the revaluation of all values--intellectual, economic, social, political, aesthetic and moral--into a total meaning and worth of life."³

As background for his ideas concerning the right relationship between religion and public education, Bower presents first the cultural change in America and the development of education. Then he explains the assumptions upon which his views rest pertaining to the nature and ends of education, the nature and function of religion, and the

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1. Bower: Religious Education in the Modern Church, p. 46.
2. Cf. Bower: Church and State in Education, pp. 1-10.
3. Ibid., p. 10.

relation of church and state. This background that Bower gives will be summarized in order to understand the constructive solution that he offers, which will follow.

1. Cultural Change in America

First, Bower points out that America has changed¹ from thirteen disunited colonies to one national community. In a century and a half, "The nation has become a vast community of common interests and closely interrelated² functions."

Secondly, he describes America as once a self-sufficient social unit protected by two oceans, but now³ part of the international community where she must bear responsibility. Bower also believes she must take her share of the blame for the present catastrophe due to her isolationist policy.

The third change Bower mentions is in the concept⁴ of democracy. The emphasis has been on freedom of the individual. It was thought that the best government was the one that governed the least, but now it is seen that corporateness, co-operation and responsibility are necessary. Liberty and unity must go together.

Besides the great social changes there has been

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1. Cf. Bower: Church and State in Education, pp. 11-15.
2. Ibid., p. 15.
3. Cf. ibid., pp. 16-17.
4. Cf. ibid., pp. 15-16.

progress in science, technology, and the production of material goods, but a lag in art, morals, and religion. Bower believes these results appear in the secularization of life. By such a specialization in unrelated fields with no unifying factor, society is falling apart.¹ He goes on to point out that the times of unity in culture have been times of great religious faith and that the recent interest in religion grows out of dissatisfaction with life at present which has lost its unity. Bower says it is for this reason H. G. Wells predicted that the next great epoch in western culture would be one of synthesis and, therefore, be essentially religious.

2. Educational Background of America

Most of the early education in America was religious and remained so for nearly a century. Among the many contributing factors to the exclusion of religion from public education Bower believes the most effective was the sectarianism of religion. This exclusion was a process that was complete in 1875 with the separation of the church and state.

The state then took over the cultural, scientific, civic, and technological education of youth, leaving religion to the church. Bower believes that this was the only solution

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1. Cf. Bower: Church and State in Education, pp.17-19.
2. Cf. ibid., pp. 22-35.

for those days and that it left the school free to go ahead and develop one of the most effective programs of education in the world. But he adds that this is not a permanent nor satisfactory solution because the intention was to exclude sectarianism, not religion.

By this exclusion the child has suffered. Not only has the cultural inheritance become distorted without religion, but also the greatest need of the child is left unmet, a religious outlook on life. The school exerts a negative influence on religion by its silence and neglect.

Less than one half of the children five to seventeen years old receive any systematic religious training whether Protestant, Catholic, or Jew. Bower thinks it evident that the character training in some schools does not take care of the rest. History and psychology both raise questions as to whether secular ethics is enough for moral stability under the stress of life today. Religion must come back into education.

3. Fundamental Assumptions

Bower's solution to the problem in question will be understood more clearly after a brief review of the ¹three assumptions upon which his ideas rest. These are relative to education, religion, and the functional relation between church and state.

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1. Cf. Bower: Church and State in Education, pp. 41-56.

a. The Nature and Ends of Education. First, Bower describes the three principle developments of education up to the twentieth century to show what it should not be. The oldest concept of education was social discipline "...in terms of repression of the spontaneous behavior of the young and the molding of them into the going thought-forms, institutions, and habits of society." ¹ The next development was education as the transmission of knowledge. The last came as a result of G. Stanley Hall's influence. It was education as recapitulation. This grew out of the doctrine of evolution and was based on the assumption that the child before birth went through the biological history of the human race and after birth repeated the cultural epochs of man. This was an improvement in that the attention was focused upon the person and growth.

These three ideas of education, according to Bower, had been accepted without much analysis. However, when John Dewey came on the scene at the beginning of the century, he pointed out the inconsistencies philosophically, psychologically, and socially in American education. He showed the social responsibility of education to be not transmitting knowledge, not molding to thought-forms, not the unfolding of innate characteristics, but:

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1. Bower: Church and State in Education, p. 43.

"...to assist the young in dealing intelligently and effectively with the issues of contemporary life with the aid of the resources of the funded experience of the past as that experience is recorded in the great traditions. Equally it is the function of education in a democracy to assist its future citizens in acquiring those methods of thought and those attitudes of cooperation and self-discipline upon which responsible participation in a democracy rests. Education for a democracy must develop initiative, competence in dealing with the issues of the common life through critical analysis of factors and outcomes, and ability to make decisions and carry them through into action."¹

Thus the emphasis in education has come to be upon experience.

The learner becomes active in inquiry, research, and commitment. The boundaries of education become extended to the community--any place where experience is being carried on. For this reason Bower urges all the agencies of the community to get together, discuss the child and his needs, and do something about it.

b. The Nature and Function of Religion. Religion in the past has been understood in terms of theology, ceremonial, and ecclesiastical institution, but, according to Bower, a new approach to understanding religion is now taking form. This is in considering it a part of a people's total culture. Bower states that

"Religion is a phase of a people's total interaction with the objective world of nature, organized society, and the accumulated traditions of the historic past...It is an orientation towards life as a whole...values are

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1. Bower: Church and State in Education, p. 45.

fused into a total meaning and worth in life...While religion has profound personal implications, it is essentially a socially shared experience."¹

In light of this, religion has a twofold functional relation to the total experience of a people. It is an integrating factor in that it brings together all other values in relation to ultimate reality, and it is revaluational in that it reacts upon other activities and interests as a factor of reconstruction. In seeking the reconstruction of social processes, its aim is the Kingdom of God.

To Bower it is of significance to note the difference between the function of religion just stated and its expression in theology, ritual and ecclesiastical institutions. The function remains constant, but the expression or structure changes with the culture. This difference must be kept in mind. Religion operating at the center is vital and creative; but when institutional structure gets to the center--ritual and theological formulas,--then religion loses its religious quality, that is, social sensitiveness. As such, Bower says it could never enter the public school. It is backward looking only. Religion must be taught on a functional and non-sectarian basis.

c. The Relation of Church and State. Bower is of the opinion that the church and state should be separate

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1. Bower: Church and State in Education, p. 49.

institutionally but not functionally. Government and religion both are related to the community and both are serving it. The state is the structure for government and the church for religion. Structurally they are in conflict, but functionally they complement and support each other while serving the needs of the community. Each owes constructive criticism. Each serves needs that are interrelated. Food, shelter, justice, and physical security are necessary, but also there is need of an orientation to reality--spiritual values and commitments to ends that unite a people in destiny in keeping with the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It is here in the functional relationships that the answer to the problem is to be sought.

4. The Solution in the School

Bower describes six ways in which religion can be included as a phase of culture in education. These are based upon the assumptions just discussed. He also mentions¹ three practical difficulties that will have to be considered.

a. Religion Included as a Part of Public Education.

1) Dealt with objectively and thus included with history, literature, social science, music, art, and philosophy.

2) Treated as a field of knowledge comparable with fields of literature, natural science, history, social

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1. Cf. Bower: Church and State in Education, pp. 57-77.

science, and the arts. Religious behavior can be observed, described, analyzed, and appraised. It also has rich subject matter. The student in advanced study should be allowed to specialize in it like any other field.

3) By giving persons actual experiences of the higher spiritual values involved in the relationships of the school community. Because these relations of person-to-person, person-to-group, and group-to-group involve values, adjustment, appreciations, and commitments, they offer an opportunity for forming religious attitudes and motives.

4) By using the ceremonials and celebrations of the various religious faiths. In this there should be no compromising to the elements agreed upon by all faiths, but each should understand the other person's religion in full.

5) Used as a principle of integration of education and culture. Religion in this sense could be used to help the defect of over-specialization and compartmentalization.

6) Used in personal counseling.

b. Practical Difficulties.

1) The Teacher. There is the problem as to whether the teacher could approach religion without identifying it with theology.

2) Method. Religion must be taught, not as subject matter, but in terms of life and values. There is the question as to whether religion could be dealt with objectively. So much emotion is sometimes aroused that possibly powerful religious groups in a small community would try to control the teachers and the teaching of religion to the disadvantage of the minority groups.

3) Minority Groups. There is the presence of minority groups who do not want their children exposed to any religion at all, and also those who think their own narrow views are sufficient and do not wish the school to make any additions.

However, these difficulties are not enough to keep leaders from going ahead and trying to solve this problem. Political theory is in the school. In order to be citizens students need to know not only how government runs, but also both sides of the issues that confront the nation. Religion could be taught objectively as is government.

5. The Solution in the Church

Bower believes that there are certain functions of religious nurture which no other institution can perform as well as the church.¹ For the expression of religious

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1. Cf. Bower: Church and State in Education, pp. 78-95.

life in these functions, society looks to the church universal, not the sectarian church. Thus he lists six:

a. Make explicit, clarify and bring to the fullness of meaning religious values. Theology needs to be consistent with modern scientific discoveries. The church can re-examine the basic assumptions concerning the nature of God, of reality, and of man.

b. Set life in its universal context, thus seeing the relationship of time and eternity.

c. Give a feeling of at-homeness in the universe. Science has shown the vastness and complexity of the universe and its laws which set it up as cold and impersonal. This at-homeness gives poise and inner peace for the conflicts of life.

d. Provide a sustained and sustaining fellowship that satisfies the four wishes--desire for new experience, recognition, intimacy, and security.

e. Provide a stimulating environment for the nurture of religious life. The fellowship of the church provides means for "self-examination, repentance, and re-dedication through confessional, prayer, worship, and the celebration of the eucharist."¹

f. Provide causes for loyalty and commitment. This is necessary for the integration of the whole self and

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1. Bower: Church and State in Education, p. 87.

release of the personality. The church has a redemptive mission in society which requires social action in order that the Kingdom of God may be realized. This is the cause within which lie problems of economic justice, race relations, rights of minority groups, war and peace, and building a new world order. However, the commitment must be more than to a cause. It must be to a Person:

"As a historical figure, Jesus gathers up into himself as their supreme embodiment the ideals, the attitudes, and the motives that through the centuries have been cherished by the Christian community as the highest expression of the religious way of life. In him as a living Person these ideals, attitudes, and motives appear not as abstract virtues but as living flesh and blood. This, in its deepest and most dynamic sense, is the meaning of the Incarnation."¹

In conclusion Bower says that parents, churchmen, and educators need to work together in meeting the needs of children and youth. In regard to this he states that

"...education in all its forms, including that having to do with religious nurture, is an affair of the community and not of any single institution. The responsibility for inducting the young into their cultural heritage, including their religious heritage, and for cultivating religious attitudes and motives is first and last a social responsibility."²

and also that

"...there is great hope that a way will be found within the American tradition of a free church in a free society whereby no children or young people will continue to be 'outside the reach of religious influences,'

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1. Bower: Church and State in Education, p. 90.
2. Ibid., p. 94.

or 'denied help in attaining faith in an ordered universe and in the fatherhood of God.'¹

F. Summary

William Clayton Bower considers religious education the most important function of the church because it is the means by which the Kingdom of God may be realized in human relations. According to him the aims of religious education in the past are not adequate for the task that must be performed today.

It was found that aims must have an individual, a social, and an institutional aspect to meet the needs in the changing culture of America. It was also discovered that because goals are determined by this changing culture, they also are constantly changing. There is no such thing as an "ultimate" goal. Neither are there any absolute standards according to Bower.

Specific objectives should be set up, but this can only be done in face of a definite situation. However, there are general goals which apply for all situations. The four Bower presents have to do with developing ^①a Christ-like personality, ^②the reconstruction of society, ^③knowledge of past racial experience, and ^④fellowship in the Christian church.

The last part of the chapter discussed one of

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1. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 128.

the outstanding problems in America today, the relation of religion to public education. This was studied in light of the cultural change in America, the development of education, the nature and ends of education, the function of religion, and the relation of church and state.

In the process of becoming a national and international community, America had great progress scientifically but not religiously. Due to specialization, society is now falling apart. Bower believes religion can serve society as a factor of integration and of reconstruction.

The educational foundations of America were religious, but due to sectarianism the church and state separated and religion was excluded from the school. Bower strongly believes that religion can re-enter public education but not on a sectarian basis. There needs to be a distinction made between the structure and the function of religion. The structure involves ritual, theology, and an institution, while the function of religion is in terms of values. It is the structural aspect that causes sectarianism. Religion in its function can and must enter the public school.

Bower feels that the church and state should remain separate as institutions; but as both are serving the needs of the community, it would be advantageous for them to work together on a functional basis and thereby meet the total needs of growing persons. The constructive solution that Bower offers for both church and school was presented.

CHAPTER III

THE CURRICULUM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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A. Introduction

After the goals of religious education have been set up, there is the problem of reaching them. This attainment is the purpose of the curriculum. In order to present his idea of the best means by which the goals pertaining to the Kingdom of God may be realized, Bower has given a summary of curriculum as it has been in the past as a basis for understanding his present view. In his book, Christ and Christian Education, Bower presents the teaching of Jesus, the Founder of the Kingdom, as the standard for curriculum today. This chapter will give Bower's attitude towards the curriculum of education in the past, his concept of the teaching of Jesus, and finally, his idea of curriculum today.

B. Curriculum of Education in the Past

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Bower describes the three historical theories since the Renaissance which are the curriculum as discipline, as knowledge, and as recapitulation. He believes none of these to be adequate for reaching the objectives of religious

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1. Cf. Bower: The Curriculum of Religious Education, pp. 1-34.

education today but that through them there has been a definite movement from the external, traditional, and formal in the direction of the experience of the learner. The center has shifted from the process to materials and from materials to human nature. In reference to this Bower states that

"History has prepared the way for modern education to think of the curriculum in terms of the human person who, together with his social group, is seeking for a fuller, more meaningful, and more satisfying life."¹

Before considering curriculum in its latest development, the teaching of Jesus will be presented to see its significance in the problem of curriculum in relation to the concepts just mentioned and the present conception.

C. The Teaching of Jesus

Since Christian education had its beginning in the teaching ministry of Jesus, it is here, Bower claims, that modern religious educators should look for their method and content.² Jesus has been called the Great Teacher, and there have been none before nor after to rise above Him.

When one studies Christ's educational ministry, he is immediately impressed with the sharp contrast between this and traditional Christian education. In Bower's words:

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1. Bower: The Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 34.
2. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, pp. 18-42.

"It is as though one had stepped out of one world into another. Leaving the formal classroom, texts, lectures, lesson plans, syllabi, schedules, and examinations, one finds oneself in a simple, natural, outdoor world of people, nature, interests vital to living, and the ebb and flow of commonplace activities...one is in the midst of life."¹

If this be true, then there is a need for examining Jesus' teaching as a foundation for modern technique. In doing this, Bower reminds one to keep in mind the Jewish background from which Jesus received His religious heritage and which influenced His ideas and attitudes.

1. Characteristics of the Teaching of Jesus

Bower has chosen what he considers the four outstanding characteristics of Jesus' teaching that have bearing upon the concept of curriculum today.

a. Experience-centered. Jesus began with people where they were, not formulated beliefs, subject matter, nor the Scripture. Modern scholars believe that His teachings were only disconnected sayings and that the discourses and groups of parables found in the records were put together by His followers. These sayings of Jesus were taken from everyday experiences such as "...a farmer sowing grain, a housewife baking bread, a builder laying a foundation...a shepherd's search for a strayed sheep."² Although

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1. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 21.

Jesus was thoroughly familiar with His Bible, the Old Testament, He did not start with it, but rather with the experience of living people. From the experience He turned to the Scripture for further illumination, but the order was always the experience first and then the Scripture.

b. Religion Applying to All of Life. The word religious is not used at all in the Gospels. This is typical of the Jewish mind as there was no such division as "religious" and "secular" to them. All of life was thought of in terms of human values and of divine-human relationships. Jesus thought of religion as a "...quality of life diffused throughout every phass of the living person's interests and activities."¹ It was important that everyday experiences be interpreted in terms of one's relation to God. Jesus summed up the law and the prophets in two commandments, to love God and to love your neighbor.

c. Responsibility of the Learner. Jesus always threw people back upon their own resources rather than give any ready made or authoritative solutions. This is seen in the case of the rich young ruler, of the expert in Law, and of the Pharisees. Other teachings possibly seem more didactic than these mentioned, but it is really impossible to get back to the original words of Jesus because the use of them

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1. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 23.

for preaching and teaching in the first century had an effect upon their form. This would account for the apparent didactic form which was probably not the true method of Jesus in dealing with people.

d. Action Expected. Jesus placed the emphasis on action. "It is not everyone who says to me 'Lord! Lord!' who will get into the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven."¹

The teaching of Jesus was in striking contrast to that of the other teachers of his day who appealed to tradition and authority.

2. Change in Christian Education

However, looking back at the history of Christian education, it can clearly be seen that the followers of Christ down through the years did not keep to His method and spirit of teaching. Bower gives several reasons for this that can be easily traced.

The early church felt an inward compulsion to go preach the death and resurrection of Jesus. This conviction was expressed in the evangelistic efforts of the disciples and Paul and later in written form. This evangelistic passion was responsible for the earliest writings of the New Testament, those of Paul. His message was

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1. Matthew 7:21.

simple and urgent. The evangelistic efforts of the disciples later produced the Gospels which were preaching materials addressed to audiences of the Greco-Roman world to win them to Christ. This purpose is clearly stated in John 20:30, 31.

The conflicts of Christianity with Judaism and the mystery religions of the pagan world made a definition and elaboration of the Christian faith necessary. Also, the church felt a need of an authentic tradition by which heretical tendencies might be judged. It was out of this that the New Testament canon grew. By the fourth century the books as they now appear were generally accepted.

Necessary as this was at the time, the development of the canon has had an effect upon historic Christianity that unless properly understood will be a great hindrance. First, there resulted a selection of one interpretation of the Christian faith. Secondly, after the canon was chosen, it was looked upon as authoritative, having a supernatural inspiration. This authority, then, was external to experience. Thirdly, this selection of one tradition with an authoritative Scripture excluded any later additions. It not only fixed the pattern of thought, but also discouraged any attempt "...to reinterpret Christian thought in the light of cultural change and the scientific discoveries of

the modern world."¹ God's revelation became static, formal and confined to the past.

Bower points out the fact that the effects upon Christian education have been negative in many respects. Christ placed the emphasis upon the present where God is at work. The historic church placed emphasis on the past with its tradition and then upon the future with this life only a preparation for eternal life. Christ trusted experience as valid in itself, but the historic church has depended upon an authority outside experience. Christ was concerned with decisions in the present in relation to common life while the church has chiefly been concerned with transmitting a heritage.

These tendencies of the historic church are not to be condemned, but rather to be understood. The church has done much, and it is to its credit now that it realizes the changed condition of the present and is eager to re-examine its educational program to meet the demands of the time. It must keep up to the cultural changes, be continually learning, and remember that

"However sincere and eager our efforts may be to make Christian education more Christian, there is no doubt that those who follow us will conceive their task differently, discarding many ideas and procedures that seem valid and important to us."²

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1. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 32.
2. Ibid., p. 35.

3. Conclusion

Jesus faced the same problem in His time dealing with religion which had become dominated by tradition. In speaking to the scribes and Pharisees He said, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."¹ Historic creeds, liturgies, or even literature of the Bible are not the places to find the living God. They, "Like the smoldering ashes of the campfires of Evangeline's lover,"² mark the places where God has been.

"But if we would find the living God, we must look for him where Jesus found him--in the living experience of living men confronted with the realities of the present world, where men hope and fear, where they strive and suffer, where the creative forces of life are as much at work as in any historic period, and where history is in the making."³

It is this attempt to make Christianity function in present experience that lies back of the idea of an experience-centered curriculum. Persons and groups become what they are through experiences. Thus Christian tradition becomes alive in this process as a resource, rather than as an end. Training and instruction were appropriate methods when Christian education was thought of in terms of transmitting tradition; but in its functional concept, as it is seen today, a creative method is needed. Learning must be through life situations where there is inquiry, search, ✓

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1. Matthew 15:6.
2. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 36.
3. Ibid.

achievement, sensitivity to issues, reflective thinking, weighing outcomes, making decisions, and carrying into action. Education must take the person beyond verbalization. Commitment is necessary in this process.

D. The Curriculum as Experience

Bower's conclusion then is that the curriculum must be conceived of as experience if religion is to be brought into a functional relation to the experience of living persons. Religion cannot be taught apart from the actual situation in which one must live religiously.¹ In discussing the curriculum as experience the nature of experience will be mentioned first, then the method for enriching and controlling experience, the place of knowledge in this process, and lastly, the criteria for choosing experience.

1. The Nature of Experience

In order to understand the technique for its use, it is first necessary to know the origin and structure of experience.² Bower has presented his ideas of this in his books, The Curriculum of Religious Education and Christ and Christian Education.

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1. Cf. Bower: The Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 55.
2. Cf. ibid., pp. 72-91; also Bower: Christ and Christian Education, pp. 52-58.

a. Origin. Experience, according to Bower, is the outgrowth of the "...interaction of the living person with his objective world."¹ This involved two factors that are both in the process of becoming -- a dynamic person and a dynamic world. The person comes in contact with events and when these events have meaning and significance, they become experience. Meaning and significance are determined by values which relate to desires.

Man brings into this world desires which reach out for satisfaction. These give value to objects in the world. Thus, "Desire exists in man; it is subjective. Value attaches to objects; it is objective."² Because of these desires and values, persons reach out to control their world.

It is in the organization of these desires, which are rational, that persons becomes self-realizing. Therefore, the highest level of self-realization is "...³ when persons desire to have certain kinds of desire."

In the world to which persons respond there are things, other selves, and the social heritage of the race such as thoughts, ideals, techniques, and customs. Man unconsciously assimilates his ideas, ways of living and

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1. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 52.
2. Bower: The Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 88.
3. Ibid., p. 75.

values. In this response there can be seen two aspects of experience. Man adapts the environment to himself and himself to the environment. Experience, then, is active and passive, controlling and submissive.

Bower's idea is that if this interaction is brought under the control of intelligence and purpose, it becomes creative. If it is integrated towards values of the worth and meaning of life, it becomes religious. If this integration is in relation to Christ and His ideals, it becomes Christian. It is in this interaction that men have found God, not in tradition.

b. Structure. In this pattern of experience by which persons reach out and adjust to their world Bower points out the three factors. The first is the situation which provides the stimuli. This may be simple or complex, physical or social.

The second factor is the response which the person makes to the situation. This response may be merely a reflex, as in the closing of an eye when irritated by a dust particle, or it may be on the instinctive level, as in the case of food, sex, and defense activities. The highest type of response is that which involves critical judgment, intelligent choice, ideals, and evaluated purposes. At this level it becomes conduct.

The third factor is the bond which unites the

situation and the response making it a unit of behavior. The nature of this bond determines educational possibilities. The mechanistic bond is definite and is useful only for training. The purposive-reflective bond gives great possibilities for religious education because it demands choice.

2. Method for Enriching and Controlling Experience

After understanding what experience is, the next¹ problem has to do with procedure, how persons can be helped² to "...resolve their situations into Christian outcomes." The following steps are suggested by Bower in dealing with situations creatively and religiously:

- a. Help persons to be aware of their situations in all areas of life.
- b. Clarify the issues involved as a prerequisite to clear thinking.
- c. Analyze the situation for its factors and possible outcomes.
- d. Use available sources of knowledge as a means of interpretation and control.
- e. Weigh every outcome in the light of Christian values and choose the ones that most nearly conform.
- f. Try out the decision.
- g. Integrate each particular choice into the whole

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1. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, pp. 58-62.
2. Ibid., p. 58.

personality.

3. The Place of Knowledge

Since the curriculum is concerned with knowledge¹ to a large degree, its place needs to be understood. The problem here must be viewed in the light of the origin of knowledge and its contribution to experience. From this, Bower sets up criteria for choosing subject matter.

Knowledge itself rises out of experience. Whether in the case of the large historical setting of society or in the case of the individual, "...the roots of knowledge² lie embedded deep in the fertile soil of experience." It can be seen from this that knowledge is essentially active. It is impossible for one to tell another anything unless there has been a shared experience upon which meaning rests. Not understanding this has been one of the great mistakes of educators. It was thought that the learner could be "told" something; and if he repeated it back verbally, he had learned it. "Only in the degree that there is overlapping of experience on the part of the teacher and the learner can there be communication."³

Knowledge is not only active but also experimental. It arises out of experience as meaning and re-enters it as

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1. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, pp. 62-73. Also, cf. Bower: The Curriculum of Religious Education, pp. 120-133.
2. Bower: The Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 121.
3. Ibid., p. 123.

an instrument of control. As a factor of control it
"...enables the learner to capitalize the experience of the
past and to begin where others have left off."¹

Thus Bower says that knowledge arises out of
experience, re-enters it, and also is validated by it.
Truth today is coming to be thought of as tentative working
conclusions subject to verification by fresh experience.

"Once they [working conclusions] fail to give a rational
explanation of experience, or prove ineffective in
affecting the course of experience, we re-examine them
and revise them to suit the new facts, or, if they are
hopelessly unresponsive to the demands of experience, dis-
card them altogether."²

The assumption that the world is flat did not work in
experience, so it was discarded. It has been this way
with the ideas of God which have had to be abandoned
because the experience of the race had gone beyond them.³

With the concept of an experience-centered cur-
riculum in mind and also the above discussion concerning
knowledge, criteria for choosing knowledge that is of the
most worth can be set up. Concerning this, Bower states
that

"...if the curriculum is thought of in terms of an
enriched controlled experience, then the knowledge that
is of the most worth is that which furthers present
experience by throwing light upon it and enabling the
learner to direct it towards consciously selected ends."⁴

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1. Bower: The Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 127.
2. Ibid., p. 128.
3. Cf. ibid., p. 43.
4. Ibid., p. 130.

Knowledge, then, should be chosen because of its relevancy to present experience and because of its relevancy to the expected future of individuals and groups. Needs in the present should be provided for and some unforeseen needs of the future.

The functional order of subject matter reverses¹ the order of the traditional. Instead of beginning with tradition and looking for the application now and in the future, the functional order begins with the person confronting a situation and then goes to historical experience for enlightenment. Thus Christian education in dealing with tradition looks backwards to its functional origin and forward to its functional use. Every experience of the past was once a present situation that had to be faced and decisions made. This is how the Bible came to be. The great doctrines grew out of conflicting situations. The symbols and ceremonies also came out of a developing Christian community. It is because of this functional origin that Christian tradition has a functional use today. The deepest needs and yearnings of humans have not changed fundamentally even though experience is different.

"By such a functional use of the resources of our Christian past, tradition is subordinated to a living experience of God. It becomes an instrument of growth into Christlike personality. By such we find ourselves seeking to do what Christ did--to bring ourselves face

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1. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, pp. 69-73.

to face with the realities of living...to have a fresh and vivid experience of God through the mediation of the common life...and thus to commit ourselves to Christ and his cause."¹

The fundamental worth, therefore, of knowledge² is that it is a means to an end.

4. Criteria for Choosing Experiences

Since all experiences are not of equal value nor³ educational resourcefulness, there need to be principles by which a body of experiences may be chosen for a particular curriculum. Bower sets up the following:

- a. The experiences should be real.
- b. The experiences should be typical of life and the Christian community.
- c. Experiences should present alternatives and involve choices.
- d. Experiences should be continuous.
- e. Experiences should be selected, other things being equal, that present opportunity for absorbing the largest amount of knowledge.
- f. Experiences should be capable of indefinite expansion.
- g. Experiences should be selected that are social and shared.

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1. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 73.
2. Cf. Bower: The Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 131.
3. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 164-171.

h. Experiences should be selected that require discipline of the will.

E. Summary

The conceptions of curriculum as discipline, knowledge, or recapitulation are not adequate for reaching the objectives of religious education today. Bower believes that Christian educators need to go back to the teaching of Christ for both method and content. It was found that His teaching was experience-centered. He dealt with persons where they were, applied religion to all of life, left the responsibility of decision with the learner, and expected action.

However, down through the centuries, the Christian church has departed from this. Due to the evangelistic efforts of the disciples and Paul, the conflicts of Christianity with Judaism and the pagan mystery religions, and heretical tendencies within the church, a definition and elaboration of the Christian faith developed. Since that time Christian education has been mainly a transmission of the religious heritage of the past. When knowledge took the place of experience, education was taken out of life.

In order to understand better how to use an experience-centered curriculum the origin and structure of experience were discussed. Experience grows out of the

interaction of a living person and his objective world. If this interaction is integrated in relation to Christ and His ideals, it becomes Christian. The curriculum must help persons in situations to resolve their experiences into Christian outcomes. The seven steps suggested for doing this were to make people aware of their situations, analyze these situations, use sources of knowledge as an aid for interpretation, weigh outcomes in the light of Christian values, try out the decision, and integrate each decision into the whole personality.

Knowledge, which is an important factor in the curriculum, is of most value when used as a resource. In relation to experience, it was found that knowledge originates in experience, serves as a factor of control, and is validated by experience. Knowledge should be chosen for use in the curriculum because of its relevancy to present experience and also to expected experiences of the future.

According to Bower, experiences which constitute the curriculum should be chosen because they are real, typical, continuous, capable of absorbing much knowledge, capable of expansion, social, and require discipline of the will.

CHAPTER IV
THE BIBLE IN THE CURRICULUM OF
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A. Introduction

During the last half of the nineteenth century the Bible was practically the sole content of Christian¹ education. However, in recent years there has been an argument as to the proper place of the Bible in the curriculum. This chapter will present first, Bower's attitude towards the traditional view of the Bible as supernatural authority and secondly, his ideas concerning the functional use of the Bible.

B. The Traditional View of the Bible

In reaction against the Catholic idea of the church as authority, Protestants have made the Bible their² source of authority. It is looked upon as a supernatural revelation from God and thus a basis of authority for³ both faith and conduct for all times. Bower does not agree with this authoritative view of the Bible and believes the outgrowths of it have been a hindrance to the progress of Christianity.

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1. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 75.
2. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 1.
3. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 75.

I. Outgrowths of the Traditional View

In his book, The Living Bible, written in 1936¹ Bower states six of the factors resulting from the traditional view. First there came a reverence for the Bible as being different from other books. Secondly, the attitude grew up that all passages were of equal validity and therefore, one had to believe the Bible from "cover to cover." If any part were questioned, the whole had to be rejected. Thirdly, ministers felt they had to use the Bible in preaching and always have either a definite text or give an exposition of some passage of Scripture. In the fourth place, among the unlearned the Bible became a fetish. In a crisis it was thought one could pray and then open his Bible to any place and interpret the message found for personal help. In the fifth place, there came the proof-text method of arriving at truth or finding support for a belief already held. From this came the technique of the catechism. Finally, there came the reading of the Bible, irrespective of content or relevancy, for the imparting of some spiritual quality or power that was described as "doing them good." There was supposedly a magical power from the Word to help in trials and temptations.

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1. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, pp. 2-4.

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In his later writing¹ on the same subject Bower points out the fact that the canonization of the Bible was the cause of the authoritative view out of which have come four weaknesses. First, the genetic order of the Bible was disrupted as seen by the placement of the Law before the Prophets and the Gospels before the letters of Paul. Secondly, the living literature became dissociated from present experience making it formal, external, and unreal. Thirdly, the Bible became an official book in which the letter dominated the spirit. Fourthly, it became an end product of past experience to be taught as an end in itself. Because of this Bower states that

"By 'exalting' the Bible the church has unintentionally devitalized it, and has sometimes unwittingly come dangerously near to substituting literature and history for a vital Christian experience."²

Today the Bible is being read less and less by educated people and children are growing up knowing little or nothing about it.³ Bower thinks it is too bad that people either look upon the Bible as supernatural or neglect it altogether.⁴ As already stated, Bower believes the supernatural view to be a result of the canonization. He also gives reasons for the present day neglect.

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1. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, pp. 78-81.
2. Ibid., p. 81.
3. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 5.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 10.

2. Reasons for the Change of Attitude towards the Bible

It has already been mentioned that the Bible was almost the sole content of Christian education in the last half of the nineteenth century, but that in recent years it has been falling into disuse. Bower gives an explanation¹ for this. First have been the results of the critical and historical study of scholars to correct false ideas of the Bible. Second has been the conflict with science concerning the picture given of the nature of the world and man. For example, Bower does not believe the static and supernatural concepts in Genesis can ever be reconciled with modern science. In the third place, there is the obvious irrelevancy of much of the Bible to modern life.

Bower think it strange that people had not recognized this sooner. In agriculture the ox-drawn wooden plough is no longer used, the physician does not use leeches in treating disease, nor does the philosopher use myth in seeking reality. Because of this Bower believes that

was relevant then they understand through these anyway

"In a similar way concepts of God which belong to a primitive and narrowly circumscribed tribal culture do not appear relevant to modern modes of thought set in the context of a highly developed civilization and conditioned by the findings and methods of science."²

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Later on Bower gives the three reasons for the

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1. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, pp. 5-9.
2. Ibid., p. 9.
3. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 76.

disuse of the Bible as the historical and critical study by the scholars, the numerous books in other fields of interest, and the secularization of modern life. He leaves out the conflict with science.

Bower's criticism of the authoritative view is strong, but he offers a constructive and what he considers the most worthwhile use of the Bible. Due to what is now known about the nature and origin of the Bible, he believes a greater and more fruitful use¹ of it can be made. This² is the functional approach to the Bible as a resource for Christian living. *Is that all you can credit?*

C. The Functional View of the Bible

The functional view of the Bible according to Bower centers in the concept of it as a resource rather than an end in itself.³ In this section a further statement concerning Bower's meaning of the Bible as a resource will be given first. Then the origin of the Bible will be briefly presented as a basis for his principles for its functional use. This view which Bower holds in common with most liberal scholars is referred to as the functional origin.

1. The Bible As a Resource

The task of the modern religious person or group,

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1. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 77.
2. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 81.
3. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 43.

according to Bower, is to achieve a religious adjustment to the present world, not to recover and reproduce past forms of religious experience, nor to fashion the achievements of men into molds of thought and institutions. In summing up this idea he says:

"It is rather, to assist growing persons to achieve a religious quality of life by facing creatively the issues of their own personal and social experience in the present scene through utilization of such incalculably valuable resources as historical religious experience affords."²

Of these valuable resources Bower considers the Bible one of the most priceless because of its religious insight, enduring religious values, religious achievements, and its creative religious personalities. Concerning the basis for using the Bible as a resource in life as opposed to the authoritative use, Bower states:

"The utilization of the Bible as a resource grows directly out of its origin and nature as a record of past religious experience. It also rests upon the true and creative function of historical experience in the interpretation, appraisal and reconstruction of current religious experience. The authoritative and normative use of the Bible rests upon later theological dogmas that were foreign to the known origin and early character of the literature that constitutes the Old and New Testaments. These dogmas, later imposed upon the Bible, have distorted its true character and betrayed us into a misinterpretation and misuse of it."⁴

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1. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, p.28.
2. Ibid., p. 28.
3. Cf. ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 53-54.

The Bible becomes the Living Word when brought into a functional relation to present experience. The next problem is how the Bible is to be brought into functional relation to present experience. For this there must be an understanding of the nature and structure of experience and the nature and origin of the Bible.¹ Experience has already been discussed in the last chapter² and the school of thought Bower follows concerning the origin of the Bible will be presented next.

2. The Functional Origin of the Bible

The functional origin of the Bible³ is important in this study because upon this Bower bases its usefulness for today. By functional origin he means that the literature of the Bible grew out of real situations of what was then present life. These deposits of religious experience that are found in the Bible are not history but the sources which the historian uses in reconstructing the religious movement of the Hebrews.⁴ The reconstructed history that results is a "...very different thing from what we have in our Bible."⁵ Bower compares looking into the Bible to

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1. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 89.
2. Cf. above, pp. 42-45.
3. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, pp. 81-88.
4. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 47.
5. Ibidl, p. 47.

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descending into the Grand Canyon among the strata where one sees the remains of evolving pre-human life. Each strata has embedded in it deposits of once-living organisms. These deposits are not history but are the sources which the geologist uses in writing the history of pre-human life. In reference to the Bible he says:

"In precisely the same manner, when one threads his way through the long centuries of the evolving religious life that has left its deposits in the Bible, he sees massive cultural strata. In these several strata he finds the literary deposits within those culture media --myth, folklore, fragments of old war songs...the gospels, apocalypses. By examining these deposits and comparing them with other data of comparative religion, the historian is able to reconstruct a dependable history of the Hebrew-Christian religious movement. But these remains that have been preserved in biblical literature are not history; they are the deposits of a past religious life. It is as impossible to understand or appraise these deposits except in the light of the culture media of which they were precipitates as it is to interpret the fossil remains except in the light of the geological strata in which they were laid down."²

Therefore, in order to understand the development of the Old and New Testaments, which will be discussed next, the cultural development of the Hebrews and the development of the Christian movement with which Bower agrees must be considered.

a. The Development of the Old Testament. Bower explains his view ³ by giving a general summary of the cultural

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1. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, pp. 47-48.
2. Ibid., p. 48.
3. Cf. ibid., pp. 55-95.

development of the Hebrews and how the Old Testament grew out of this. For references concerning the Hebrew culture he uses the Scripture, God and the Social Process by Louis Wallis, Culture and Conscience by W. C. Graham and H. G. May, The Prophets and Israel's Culture by W. C. Graham, and Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament by S. R. Driver.

There were two great racial and cultural streams in the land now called Palestine that influenced the culture and religion¹ of the Hebrews. The society of one was tribal and primitive while the other was civilized.

The group of primitive desert clansmen lived to the southeast of Canaan. It is generally considered that this group was animistic, polytheistic, and worshipped idols. Examples of this religion, according to this view, are Jacob, Rachel, and Micah in the time of the judges. Their religion of Jahweh, which originally came from the Kenites, according to this view, came to be identified with the Hebrew culture as a result of these clansmen invading Canaan. The religion of Jahweh was based on "mishpat" meaning justice. Later this concept developed under Hebrew influence into the wider meaning of social justice based upon brotherhood. The Jahwist Hebrews had a code of honor among themselves based on justice, but did seize other lands

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1. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, pp. 55-74.

and make slaves of the people. Thus a two-class society resulted--those of Hebrew descent and the non-Hebrew slaves.

The other influence was from the civilized group called the Amorites, a sedentary people, who occupied the central part of Canaan. They were a people of agriculture and commerce. In this culture there were three classes--the wealthy land owners who were called baals, the slaves and a middle class of small land owners. The wealthy built elaborate houses with luxurious furnishings such as the descriptions found in some of the prophets' writings. Their religion arose from the practical interests and activities of the people. Basically it was an agricultural religion. The gods, called "Baalim" were concerned with planting, cultivating, and harvesting of crops. This Baal religion did not merge with the Hebrew Jawhistic religion.

These two cultures, the Hebrew Jawhistic and the Amorite Baalistic, clashed and, according to the liberal view, the Hebrew religion was the outgrowth of the conflict. The southern tribes of the Hebrews remained closer to desert culture than those who settled in the highlands of the Amorites. These northern tribes were much more exposed to and influenced by the Baalistic culture. However, there was union of the northern and southern tribes until the time of Rehoboam. After 930 B. C. the Hebrews were divided "...economically, socially, and religiously into two

national groups--Ephraim to the north and Judah to the south."¹

It was with the group of exiles that the final development of the Hebrew religion came. They had a Utopian outlook upon the future which was shown in three forms. First was the idea of the Suffering Servant and the Messianic hope--the hope that Jahweh's Anointed would appear and set up an ideal theocracy.

Second was the attempt to recover the ancient past of the Hebrew people and an "...idealization of it in terms of their defeated hopes which they had by now projected into the future."² Because of this there has been handed down the collection and editing of the folk-lore and scattered literary fragments that had survived the ancient past. There was the Judaic collection known by critics as J, the Ephramite collection known as E, the Deuteronomic collection of the closing days of Judah known as D, and the materials brought together by the priests of the exile known as P. Each of these groups had set the earlier material into the frame of their own material. The combined form of JEDP has come down to the present time in the books of the Old Testament that comprise Genesis to Kings.

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1. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 67.
2. Ibid. p. 73.

The third form was apocalypticism in which the writings took refuge in symbolism. This result is shown in such books as Zephaniah, Daniel, and Ezekiel.

Thus the post exilic period of national defeat produced the Bible. These writings were collected and canonized by the end of the last century B. C. or the beginning of the first century A. D. Bower concludes this discussion by saying:

"The writings that had been deposited in the course of many long and tragic centuries by the experience of a people whose passionate quest was for social justice and whose great spiritual achievement was the discovery of a spiritual, a universal and a holy God, became Scripture and passed into subsequent centuries as a divine revelation of truth and justice."¹

In the light of the Hebrew background just discussed Bower says it is easy to see how the Old Testament literature developed.² First, the prophetic messages grew out of the conflict of Jahwistic and Baalistic culture and out of specific and concrete social situations.

Secondly, the Genesis to Kings record came from a mass of folk-lore and written fragments that preserved the legends of the beginnings of the Hebrew people. The Song of Deborah was probably the earliest. These were used to reconstruct the past in terms of values and interests

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1. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 74.
2. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 75-95.

of the time in which they were compiled, which was during the fifth century. According to Bower:

"This is the nature of all folk-lore. It represents the efforts of the folk psychology to explain how conditions came to be as they are, and also to justify the group's present courses of action."¹

Bower gives two illustrations of this. One is the Jacob-Esau stories which explain the condition in which the Hebrews found themselves in relation to their neighbors. The other is the story of Joseph blessing his two sons, giving Ephraim the younger the precedence over Manasseh, to explain the relation within the Hebrew community. Thus the folk-lore throws light on the conditions which they rationalize.

The priests in exile in Babylon had the compilations of the Judaic and Ephraimite collections as they had been reset by the Deuteronomic writers, and from these they set about interpreting and reconstructing the nation's past in terms of their present interests. Bower states that

"When the priests of the Exile had incorporated the earlier narrative sources and the codes of the Deuteronomists into their own material and edited them in keeping with their interests and their ideas of history, the great body of the Old Testament which we have in books from Genesis to Kings was complete."²

The third category of writings is the Hagiographa including such books as the Song of Songs, Job, Proverbs,

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1. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 86.
2. Ibid., p. 91.

Ecclesiastes, and the Psalms. The Song of Songs was the merging of religious and secular interests, Job deals with the problem of suffering, Proverbs shows a quality of life, Ecclesiastes is an expression of unrelieved pessimism, and the Psalms well up out of common human experience.

In concluding his survey of the literature of the Old Testament Bower says:

"It requires no support of external authority. Its reality is the reality of a continuing human group in interaction with a continuing world of reality. In that continuing life we participate as the representatives of the living generation of man. That continuing world is our world--a changed world indeed, but still the same world that has nourished upon its ample bosom the succeeding generations of living human beings who cherish the enduring needs, the enduring hopes and the enduring aspirations of those who have set out upon the quest of a more abundant life."¹

b. The Development of the New Testament. The New Testament literature arose out of the concrete experience of the early Christian community. In order to understand the ideas and attitudes of the early Christians, it is just as important to reconstruct their cultural situation as it was to reconstruct the cultural history of the Hebrews in order to understand their literature.²

The earliest parts of the New Testament grew out of the adjustments of Christians to the pagan world. Bower

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1. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 95.
2. Cr. *ibid.*, p. 96.

believes that "It was by an accident of history, one might say, that the writings were preserved for the church of the centuries."¹

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The cultural aspects according to Bower were twofold, the external and the internal. The external influences upon Christianity were the religious quality from the Jews, the intellectual and cultural temper of the Greeks, and the utilitarian, legal, and administrative characteristics of the Romans.

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The internal influence was the strongest as found in the Apostle Paul. From his life it is seen that the ideology of early Christianity "...took its initial form on Graeco-Roman soil and under the influence of such an original and powerful leader whose ideas and attitudes were so largely conditioned by the intellectual, social, and spiritual interests of that world."⁴

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Bower holds the common view that the letters of Paul which were concerned with immediate and specific situations were the first Christian writings. They deal with problems in the churches and the churches' relation to the surrounding pagan world except for the letter to the Romans which was in contemplation of a journey to Rome.

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1. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 96.
2. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 96-109.
3. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 110-123.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
5. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-128.

These letters grew out of Paul's missionary passion.

With the writing of Acts, legend was reduced to history, and such attention was given to Paul that his letters were collected and published and well on the way to become at a later time inspired and authoritative¹ Scripture.

To the time of Paul's death the sayings and deeds² of Jesus existed, perhaps entirely in oral tradition. However, with the passing of those who remembered and repeated what they personally knew of Jesus, it was natural that there arose the conviction to put this into writing. These materials as they are found in the Gospels were preaching materials and their presentation varies according to the group that was addressed whether Jewish, Greek, or Roman. Thus the Gospels do not present a formal history of the life and teachings of Jesus, but the figure of Jesus "...as it was interpreted and colored by the growing experience of his early disciples."³

It can be seen that the rest of the New Testament⁴ grew out of experience also. During the persecution under Domitian the Book of Revelation was written to hearten Christians. At the end of the first century the first

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1. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, pp. 134-135.
2. Cf. ibid., pp. 131-132.
3. Ibid., p. 135.
4. Cf. ibid., pp. 136-139.

generation Christians had died. The next generation was taking the faith for granted and were less fervid. There was a general temper of apathy and indifference throughout the church. Hebrews was written to inspire fresh appreciation by showing the superiority of Christianity to Judaism. The Book of James was a sermon that had been preserved.

Bower believes the author of the Fourth Gospel¹ and the three letters that bear his name was a Greek Christian living in Ephesus. The fusing of Greek philosophy and the Christian faith gave to "...his gospel a theological texture,"² thus making the Fourth Gospel the earliest expression of a theological literature.

Going further into the second century Christianity became a movement to be developed and attention was paid to organization.³ Out of this phase came the "pastoral epistles," written by an unknown Greek writing in the name of Paul to Timothy and Titus.

As seen by the foregoing discussion Bower holds the developmental idea of the New Testament. In conclusion he says:

"To trace the origin of this literature to its source ...is by no means to eliminate God from the process. In the deepest and truest sense, it is the word of God speaking through the experience of living human beings face to face with the realities of a world in which the

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1. Cf. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 139.
2. Ibid., p. 139.
3. Cf. ibid., p. 140.

deepest religious conviction has consistently affirmed that the central and activating principle is the Living God."¹

3. Principles for the Functional Use of the Bible

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The principles Bower sets up for utilization of the Bible are based upon his view of the nature and origin of the Bible and the nature and structure of experience. In his book, The Living Bible, he goes into detail about each principle. In Christ and Christian Education he presents the same five principles briefly.

a. Begin in Present Experience. The fathers in the faith began with the issues of present life and this is what should be done now, rather than beginning with the canonized Bible. Religion must be a vital experience not a mere repetition of tradition. In an experience, which has been shown rises out of the interaction of the individual and his world, there is decision and action involved. In order for the response to the situation to be Christian, the Bible serves as a resource for insight, knowledge, technique, and standards.

b. Reverse Order. Rearrange the Bible according to genetic origin and then reconstruct the historical cultural

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1. Bower: The Living Bible, p. 141.
2. Cf. ibid., pp. 142-214; also cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, pp. 88-99.

and social situations out of which they grew. This guards against allegorizing and reading ideas into the Bible.

c. Relevancy. Because much in the Bible is not relevant to modern life, Bower advocates a selective use of its material. He says we would not try to understand the nature of the physical universe by thought forms of primitive Hebrews who considered the earth flat and created in six ^{periods} days, neither would modern science go back to the ancient sanitary laws of the Jews. Jesus Himself made a distinction between that which was of present value and that¹ to be left in the past.

Much that is relevant is the teaching of the eighth century prophets concerning social justice based on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, the universal point of view of Jonah, and love as the method of fulfilling human-divine relationships. The fifty-first Psalm is still the confessional of sinning men today seeking forgiveness. Bower's idea is that

"...whether we are conscious of it or not, each one of us by selection makes his own living Bible. Some parts of one's Bible are as unsoiled by use as when they came from the printer. Other parts, like the Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospels, and the letters of Paul, are worn, underlined, and wet with tears. These portions have been baptized in the font of our hopes, our fears, our aspirations, and our defeats, where life has been faced in its immediate and stark reality."²

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1. Cf. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 92.
2. Ibid., p. 94.

d. Historical Perspective. There is the need to see the literature of the Bible and experience which it records in historical perspective. There should be an understanding of the ancient Hebrew and early Christian community in terms of a "...process in which continuity and change are inseparably united--a process that is still creatively going forward."¹ According to Bower, seeing the growing movement as a whole is very important.

e. Recover Values of the Bible. The enduring values of the Bible should be extracted from their concrete historical setting to use for the enrichment and guidance in present experience under changed historical conditions. Bower compares the releasing of enduring values from the Bible to the process of refining gold for use. When thus released, they can meet human need. He goes on further to say:

"While it may be impossible for the modern Christian to accept the prescientific concept of the nature of the universe and creation by fiat, to him it remains as the deepest conviction that back of the natural world and history is the creative purpose of the living God...The fact that Paul held views regarding women that are rejected by the modern churches does not detract from the pure flame of his spirit and his unconquerable devotion to Christ and Christianity."²

Because the Bible contains imperishable elements

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1. Bower: Christ and Christian Education, p. 95.
- 2. Ibid., p. 98.

of an undying faith, when the dated concomitants--circumstances, intellectual thought forms, cultural framework--fall away, Bower concludes that the Bible is the most precious legacy of the Christian heritage and is today as at its point of origin the Living Word.

D. Summary

This chapter has presented Bower's criticism of the traditional view of the Bible and his ideas concerning the functional view of it.

It was found that he believes the traditional view to be an hindrance to Christianity and that it has weaknesses of which he named four, the disruption of the genetic order of the Bible, the Bible becoming external to experience, authority of the Scripture, and the Bible becoming an end in itself. According to Bower, people today either accept the authoritative view of the Bible or neglect it altogether. He gives reasons for the neglect and then offers a constructive use of the Bible for today.

The functional use, that is, using the Bible as a resource, is considered by Bower to be the most valuable. People who are trying to achieve a religious adjustment to their world will find the Bible an incomparable resource.

Bower holds the view of the origin of the Old and New Testaments in common with most liberal scholars. It is upon this view, called the functional origin, that he bases his principles for its functional use.

He has five principles for the utilization of the Bible. They were found to be first, begin in present experience, secondly, the principle of reverse order, thirdly, the principle of relevancy, fourthly, the principle of historical perspective, and finally, to recover the values of the Bible for use in present life.

Bower's idea is that the Bible becomes the Living Word when it is seen in its functional origin and then brought into a functional relation to the present experience of living persons.

CHAPTER V

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DETERMINED FROM A STUDY OF THE VIEWS
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A. Introduction

Due to the changes that have been and are taking place in religious education, there are differences of opinion concerning the objectives and the curriculum. The basic issues involved in these differences are made evident in a study of leaders in Christian education. The views of William Clayton Bower, as representative of modern attitudes, have been studied with this in mind. The method of clarifying these basic issues will be first, to look at the trends in modern religious education according to Bower, and, secondly, to notice where the conflicts lie.

B. Trends in Modern Religious Education

In 1935 Bower edited The Church at Work in the Modern World in which he wrote the concluding chapter, "Facing the Future." He listed ten significant trends of the modern religious attitude.¹ It will be seen that these have a direct relation to the trends in religious education

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1. Cf. Bower, ed.: The Church at Work in the Modern World, pp. 270-288.

as indicated by the footnotes referring to Bower's views.

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1. New Conception of Religion. Religion is coming to be thought of as a potential quality of every phase of man's interaction with his objective world, rather than a
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unique and isolated experience.

2. The Church a Social Institution. Bower says:

"Instead of a supernatural and authoritative organization whose fixed details were set forth in a divinely revealed pattern, the church appears as an association of like-minded persons who are drawn together by common beliefs and attitudes towards life and by cherished values.."³

3. A Unified Parish. Groups and activities are becoming integrated.

4. An Appeal to a Wider Range of Interests.

5. Towards a Greater Corporateness. Protestants
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are cooperating on things in which they agree.

6. Social Outlook of the Church. The church sees that it must take responsibility for participating in the
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process of social reconstruction. There has been a reaction from the gospel of the inner life to the social gospel.

7. Church's Relation to Other Social Institutions.

The church is coming to be thought of not as a supernatural

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1. Cf. above, pp. 24-25.
2. Cf. above, p. 37.
3. Bower: The Church at Work in the Modern World, p.272. Also cf. above, pp. 14-15.
4. Cf. above, pp. 19, 26-27.
5. Cf. above, pp. 16-17.

institution with predetermined action, but a social institution functioning with changes in culture. Thus it is one among other social institutions. As such, Bower believes¹ it should remain separate from the state.

8. A New Emphasis upon Work with Individuals. Work with individuals is coming to be thought of in terms of² personal adjustment.

9. A New Attitude towards Other Religions. The line of division between the true and false is tending to disappear. Religions are coming to be judged by the contribution they make to spiritual adjustment to life.

10. Towards a More Adequate Symbolism. New symbols are needed to give expression to new values in religion.

These trends just listed have to do with the individual, institutional, and social aims of religious education, the nature and function of religion, the relationship of church and state, and the nature of experience. Trends not brought out by the afore mentioned and which are included in Bower's views have to do with an experience-centered curriculum,³ concepts of authority and absolutes,⁴ and attitude towards the Bible.⁵

These trends have met with opposition from religious

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1. Cf. above, pp. 25-26.
2. Cf. above, pp. 14,17.
3. Cf. above, pp. 36, 37, 42-50.
4. Cf. above, pp. 13, 53-55.
5. Cf. above, pp. 53-73.

educators who are giving consideration to the historic formulations of the church and who believe that greater reliance should be placed upon revelation than upon scientific research. Thus conflict and confusion have resulted.

C. Points of Tension

In 1939 Bower set forth eight propositions which he considered the points of tension between modern religious education and current theological and social trends.¹ In the May 1944 issue of The Journal of Bible and Religion George M. Gibson, who holds views opposing to Bower's, has briefly discussed what he considers the crucial points between religious education and historic Christian tradition.² They deal with the same problems as Bower's points of tension but are presented in a different way. A consideration of both Bower's and Gibson's ideas will be an aid to a clearer understanding of the issues involved.

1. According to Bower

Since the implications of Bower's points of tension are interrelated, some ideas may be presented under more than one proposition.

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1. Cf. Bower: "Points of Tension between Modern Religious Education and Current Theological and Social Trends", Religious Education. April-June, 1939, pp. 70-73.
2. Cf. Gibson: "Have the Specialists Failed the Pastor?", The Journal of Bible and Religion. May, 1944, p. 94.

a. "The intellectual orientation, the basic assumptions, and the methods of procedure of modern religious education are those of liberalism." The problem here is that modern religious education has based its philosophy and technique upon the functional view of the origin and nature of religion and thus places its reliance upon scientific research. It is a quest for truth on the part of man. From a study of Bower's views, it can be seen that he holds this position.

b. "The present tensions in which modern religious education is involved arise out of the current theological and social reactions from liberal modes of thought and democratic forms of social organization." All that Bower would include in his term, "liberal," is not stated, but the assumption can be made that he refers to the general stream of liberal thought. In his book, Faith and Nurture,¹ H. Shelton Smith refers to four historic tendencies of liberalism that have emerged in modern religious education. The first of these is divine immanence. The second is the idea of growth of religion in the individual, growth of religion in the race, and growth as a mode of achieving individual and social change. The third is the goodness of man and the fourth the historical Jesus. It is evident that Bower agrees with the liberal modes of thought.

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1. Cf. H. Shelton Smith: Faith and Nurture, pp. 4-26.

c. "To the degree that a supernatural view of religion is held, religious education as a creative process becomes impossible." This statement has implications for method in religious education. Are there final truths that have been revealed or is truth relative and yet to be discovered by man through the creative process? Bower makes no place for the supernatural and maintains that there are no absolutes nor ultimate truths. Experience is validated within itself and is continually growing and changing. Man learns all he knows through his experience with the objective world and there is no such thing as divine intervention of crisis in this process. Character is gained by creative experience.

The above proposition also has bearing on the view of the Bible. Bower believes the Bible to be a record of man's religious experience which was the normal outgrowth of man and his environment.

d. "On the basis of an empirical and experimental philosophy, it is not the primary function of religious education to recover and to transmit the content of the historical Christian tradition, but to assist growing persons to achieve a religious quality of experience in terms of their real and present world." There is no conflict regarding the latter part of this statement as all religious educators are concerned about present religious experience. The problem here has to do with the attitude

taken towards the historical Christian tradition. Bower is strongly opposed to the necessity of accepting a theological formula for membership in the Christian church. He believes tradition, especially the Bible, is of value when looked upon as past experience that can be used as a resource for present experience. Further than this, it becomes a hindrance to progress.

e. "Within limits, modern religious education cannot share the distrust of the secularization of Western culture which is bitterly opposed by conservatives." The liberal view brought out by this proposition is to make the sacred and secular all one. This tendency also brings out the fact that the presuppositions and methodology of modern religious education are drawn from psychology and sociology rather than theology.

f. "Modern religious education is as much concerned with the reconstruction of society as it is with the development of the inner spiritual life." This statement concerns the social gospel. The difference of opinion centers in the means by which this social reconstruction is to take place and also the relationship of the individual and social gospel in the function of the church. Bower states his view in his concept of the nature and function of religion. Religion serves as an integrating factor of society in terms of values. Then these values re-enter society for reconstruction. He believes the one important aim is a redeemed

society, the Kingdom of God on earth, formed by men committed to the teachings of the historical Jesus.

g. "Modern religious education is irreconcilable with totalitarianism in any form." Here again Bower believes that authority cuts out creativity. By giving only one interpretation to the Scriptures, as was done at the ecumenical councils and in the canonization of the Bible, the church has been hindered. Thus he does not hold to any "theological formulas" derived from it as truths to be transmitted for authority. His only authority is value intrinsic within experience, which value is continually changing. He believes the Hebrews' ideas of God to be primitive and not usable today.

h. "Modern religious education shares some of the limitations and weaknesses of liberalism as an extreme mode of thought and may well profit by current reactions in making certain rectifications." Bower here expresses the desire for some things his concepts lack, which he sees in conservative views--a deeper sense of the beyondness, an explanation of the tragedy of human experience, greater use of history and tradition, and greater unity--but he does not go back to traditional Christianity with its absolutes for the answer.

2. According to Gibson

The five crucial points Gibson brings out are

also interrelated and dependent upon each other. These will be presented showing the relationship to Bower's views.

a. Epistemology. In finding truth there are basically two approaches. These two, the empirical and the revelatory, are the cause of disagreement which fact, Gibson says, is of crucial importance because it involves other such matters as faith, prayer, spiritual disciplines, and commitments.

The revelatory approach includes a supernatural view of the Bible which is believed to contain ultimate truth and absolutes. Thus, those holding this viewpoint accept certain concepts as true rather than examine these "truths" to see if they are true.

This viewpoint is also related to man's present experience with God. The emphasis is upon God's search for man and revelation to him. Man still learns through experience but there is an External One who enters into that experience.

This problem of epistemology is brought out in Bower's views of the nature of experience, the origin of the Bible, and his concept of authority. In one of his propositions, Bower gives the idea that the concept of the supernatural cuts out the creative process.

b. Doctrine of Man. Gibson does not believe that "A

child comes to be religious by sharing in the common life."¹
He makes a distinction between a socializing process by which individuals are adjusted to a group and the redemptive process that reconciles a man to God. Gibson believes sin to be a reality in human life not merely a maladjustment or retardation of the normal process of growth.

Bower's idea of the goodness of man is shown in his general objectives of religious education and his approach to religious experience.

c. Doctrine of God. The problem concerning the doctrine of God has to do with His being transcendent and immanent. In reaction against the supernatural the liberal tendency was to put the emphasis upon an immanent God. According to Christian tradition God is immanent but in His being is an objective reality and cannot be reduced to mere subjective human idealism. Gibson says that God has been looked upon as head of a democracy rather than Creator² without Whom man is incapable of helping himself.

In Bower's second and seventh points of tension pertaining to liberal thought and totalitarianism, his concept of an immanent God is seen.

d. Christology. There is discussion regarding the

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1. Quoted by Gibson, op. cit., p. 94.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 95.

purpose of Jesus' life on earth which also brings up the question relative to His divinity and humanity. Gibson states that the modern conception of man minimized the need for a Christology. Man was self-sufficient and looked to Jesus as an example, but had no need of Him as Savior or Deliverer, doing for man what he could not do for himself. Jesus as the Incarnation of God was put aside in favor of the historical Jesus.

The implications of this in regard to the individual and social gospel have already been mentioned in Bower's sixth point relative to the reconstruction of society. Also Bower's concept of the historical Jesus and the commitments involved are included in his first and second general objectives and the development of the literature of the New Testament.

e. Sacred-secular. In liberal thought there is a blurred distinction between the sacred and the secular. Gibson believes that the liberal tendency to pronounce all of life sacred caused it to lose the sense that anything is particularly so. Instead of the sacred taking over the secular, the secular overcame the sacred. Religion became dominated by education and religious education is now¹ "...simply education in a Prince Albert coat."

Bower's concepts of the natural and supernatural

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1. Gibson, op. cit., p. 97.

are involved in this problem. Also his views regarding the nature and function of religion, the characteristics of Jesus' teaching, and the relation of church and state show his attitude pertaining to the sacred and the secular.

E. Summary

In order to determine the basic issues involved, the trends in modern religious education were referred to. This reference was based upon the trends of the modern religious attitude as set forth by Bower.

These trends have met with opposition and the result has been a conflict. The next part of the chapter discussed the points of tension caused by the conflict in religious education. In this section the eight propositions of Bower and the five crucial points of Gibson were used as a basis for clarifying the basic issues. Bower's propositions included points relative to liberal modes of thought, the supernatural view of religion, the function of religious education, secularism in religion, social reconstruction, and authority. Gibson's points included the same aspects as Bower's but were presented according to epistemology, doctrine of man, doctrine of God, Christology, and the sacred-secular.

CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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A. Restatement of the Problem

Since 1900 there have been significant changes in the field of religious education relative to the objectives and the curriculum. These developments have come as a result of educational insight on the part of leaders and the use of empirical data. This has been a drastic change from the religious education in the past which began with theological conceptions, and the result has been conflict.

Were modern religious education merely a more effective method there would be no conflict, but the theological foundations upon which the church rests have been challenged. Due to lack of understanding the basic issues involved in the different approaches, leaders in religious education have been confused.

It has been the purpose of this thesis to make a study of the views of William Clayton Bower, as representative of the modern attitudes, and thus determine the basic issues involved in modern religious education.

B. Summary

The views of William Clayton Bower were discovered by an analysis of the books he has written. This material was presented in chapters two, three, and four relative to

the underlying concept of religious education, the curriculum, and the Bible in the curriculum. The fifth chapter stated the basic issues as determined by the study of Bower's views.

Concerning the underlying concept, Bower considers religious education to be the most important function of the church. However, the aims of the past are not adequate for the task that must be performed today. It was found that aims must have an individual, a social, and an institutional aspect according to Bower. Before stating his general objectives his idea of the nature of goals as constantly changing with the flux in culture was given. He believes there are no absolute standards nor "ultimate" goals. His four general aims have to do with developing a Christlike personality, reconstructing society, knowledge of past racial experience, and fellowship in the Christian church.

As background for Bower's idea of the relation of religious education to public education, the cultural change of America, the development of education, the nature and ends of education, the function of religion, and the relation of church and state were studied. It was found that America had progressed scientifically but not religiously. The foundations of America were religious but due to its sectarian nature, religion was excluded from public education. From this the child has suffered. Education

includes all aspects of the child's adjustment to his external world except the spiritual adjustment which is the most important. Bower believes religion can and must re-enter the school on a functional basis. However, he would have the church and state as institutions remain separate. The constructive solution Bower offers for both church and state was presented.

In the next chapter Bower's concept of the curriculum was given. He believes that Christian educators must go back to the teaching of Jesus for both content and method. It was found that His teaching was experience-centered; but that down through the centuries the church has departed from this, and Christian education has been merely a transmission of the religious heritage of the past.

In order to understand better Bower's idea of an experience-centered curriculum the origin and structure of experience were discussed. Experience was found to grow out of the interaction of man and his objective world. When that interaction is related to Christ and His ideals, it becomes Christian. Thus Bower says that the curriculum must help persons in situations to resolve their experiences into Christian outcomes. Seven steps for this were suggested which were for people to be made aware of their situations, analyze them, use sources of knowledge as an aid for interpretation, weigh outcomes in the light of

Christian values, try out the decision, and integrate each decision into the whole personality. In the discussion of the place of knowledge in relation to experience Bower's conclusion was that knowledge originates in experience, serves as a factor of control, and is validated by experience.

According to Bower experiences which constitute the curriculum should be chosen because they are real, typical, continuous, capable of absorbing much knowledge, capable of expansion, social, and require discipline of the will.

The chapter dealing with the Bible in the curriculum presented first Bower's criticism of the traditional view which he considers an hindrance to Christianity. He thinks it too bad that people today either accept the authoritative view of the Bible or neglect it altogether.

His suggestion for the constructive use of the Bible Bower calls the functional view. This is based upon his idea of the origin of the literature of the Old and New Testaments which is the view held in common by most liberal scholars. His five principles for the utilization of the Bible were found to be first, begin in present experience, secondly, the principle of reverse order, thirdly, the principle of relevancy, fourthly, the principle of historical perspective, and finally, to recover the values of the Bible.

To sum up Bower's concept of the Bible is to say that the Scripture becomes the Living Word when it is seen

in its functional origin and then used as a resource in its relation to the present experience of living persons.

The last chapter presented the basic issues as determined from a study of Bower's views. The trends in modern religious education were referred to first. Then the points of tension which these trends have caused were given in order to clarify the issues. The eight propositions of Bower which pertained to liberal modes of thought, the supernatural view of religion, the function of religious education, secularism in religion, social reconstruction, and authority were presented first. Then the five crucial points of Gibson, who represents views opposing Bower's, were used. His points were in relation to epistemology, the doctrine of man, the doctrine of God, Christology, and the sacred-secular.

C. Conclusions

From this study of the views of William Clayton Bower and the basic issues involved some conclusion are apparent.

1. It can be seen that much of Bower's criticism of the traditional view has been just and Christian educators need to give consideration and thought to their educational philosophy. The impact of liberal views is valuable in that it serves to keep conservatives from becoming static.

2. On some points of the issues there is a middle position one can hold but on others there is no middle

ground. For example, there has been a false cleavage set up between the traditional and functional concepts regarding the Bible. Revealed truths in the Bible can be transmitted so that they function in the experience of the learner, thus combining the authoritative traditional view and the functional approach.

3. The development of the modern attitudes in religious education have been the result of dissatisfaction with traditional views. However, modern religious educators rather than make use of the strong points in the traditional view, tend to put it all aside because of its weaknesses. Due to the fact that they have not carefully analyzed and given fair consideration to the strong points, there are serious weaknesses and gaps in their own views.

4. The main weakness in liberal thought is the tendency to take an extreme position as in the concept of God, exclusive immanence, in the concept of Christ, exclusive humanity, concerning epistemology, the empirical method only, and in method, the creative process only.

5. Modern religious educators stress objectivity, yet in their concept of God subjectivity is foremost.

6. When Christian educators think their way through the basic issues and formulate their positions, objectives can be set up and curriculum planned without confusion.

7. Ministers and religious educators working together need to understand each other's position in regard to these

issues.

8. From this study it is evident that the field of Christian education cannot be separated from theology.

From a study of Bower's views, the basic issues involved in modern religious education, and the conclusions as presented in this thesis, it can be seen that religious educators need to analyze and evaluate carefully all viewpoints in their field in order that they do not go too far in one direction or the other, but maintain an intelligent and practical philosophy of religious education.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM CLAYTON BOWER

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William Clayton Bower, known today as clergyman and religious educator, was born in Wolcottville, Indiana on February 6, 1876. He is now sixty-nine years old and residing at 658 N. Broadway, Lexington, Kentucky.

The following are the schools attended by Dr. Bower and the degrees he received:

Tri-State College, Angola, Indiana, 1898: A. B.
Butler College: 1899-1900.
Columbia, 1910: A. M.
Further study at Columbia four summers.
Transylvania College, Lexington, Kentucky, 1935: LL. D.
Meadville Theological School, 1943: D. D.

On December 22, 1900 Bower married Ann Troas Henry. They had two children, Philip Graydon and Clayton Henry.

Dr. Bower was pastor of churches in Indiana, New York, and California until 1912. After that his career was as follows:

Head of the Department of Education at Transylvania College, 1912-1921.
Dean and Professor of Religious Education at the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky, 1921-1925.
Ordained to the ministry by the Disciples of Christ Church, 1923.
Dean at Transylvania College and the College of the Bible, 1925-1926.
Professor of Religious Education at University of Chicago, 1926-1943.
Professor Emeritus, 1943.

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1. Cf. Albert N. Marquis, ed.: Who's Who in America, p. 208.

The following are organizations to which Bower has belonged and in which he is now active:

Member of the Board of Education, Lexington, Kentucky, 1918-1926.
Chairman of the Chicago Council of Religious Education, 1928-1937.
Member of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, 1939-1940.
Member of the American Association of University Professors.
Member of the A. A. A. S., Religious Education Association.
Member of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.
Member of National Geographic Society.
Member of Pi Kappa Alpha.
Member of Pi Gamma Mu.
Member of the Disciples of Christ Commission to study their mission field in the Far East.
Member of the Educational Commission and Executive Committee of the International Council of Religious Education.
Honorary Chairman of the Curriculum Committee for the Disciples of Christ Church.

Bower has written nine books, edited one in which he wrote three chapters, written one in collaboration with Roy G. Ross, contributed to several volumes, and written many articles. His nine books were written as follows:

1919 A Survey of Religious Education in the Local Church.
1921 The Educational Task of the Local Church.
1925 The Curriculum of Religious Education.
1929 Religious Education in the Modern Church.
1930 Character Through Creative Experience.
1933 Religion and the Good Life.
1936 The Living Bible.
1943 Christ and Christian Education.
1944 Church and State in Education.

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