

Or the Christian, receiving, accepting Jesus Christ's conception of God, taking His view of God and His view of man's relationship to God, has the Christian religion—a conception of God which is Christian; not merely theistic, not merely deistic, but Christian. Jesus Christ's conception of who God is, of what man's relationship to God is, is the essence of the Christian religion. We want to give religious instruction. What does it mean? Does it mean to tell out certain things? Does it mean to herald certain things? Does it mean to say certain things about God? Is that religious instruction? It may be preaching, it may be heralding, it may be many other things; but it is not instruction, for the preacher and the teacher are not the same, and preaching is not teaching, nor is teaching preaching, although much that is called teaching, is preaching—of a bad kind; and much that is called preaching, is teaching—of a worse kind. What is teaching? Teaching is that reciprocal relationship of at least two minds by which the conception of one passes into the other, by which one mind receives some impression, some thought, some truth from the other mind. Most of the teaching in the Public Schools probably is good and true, but it does not give any truth, any conception, any clear idea to another mind. It is saying things, it is asking questions, but it is not teaching. In religious instruction there must be not only truth said, but truth received and understood, before there is any real teaching. So the making of another to know a man's conception of his relationship to God is religious instruction; and instruction in the Christian religion is making the young to know the Christian view of God and of man's relation to God; not the view of this or that philosophy, not the view of this or that school or great thinker, but Christ's conception of God, and Christ's conception of man's relation to God. History is not religion, and the making of the children to know the history of Israel, or the biography of Abraham, or certain facts in Bible history, is not necessarily religious instruction. This is a thing well worth remembering, for it is quite possible for us to teach our children many facts in Bible history, and for them to be able to mention the books of the Bible without an error, to tell the numbers of the chapters and of the verses, to tell about the central verse and all the rest of it, without being religiously instructed; for unless they receive Christ's conception of God they are not being instructed in the Christian religion, and it is time for the Church and the Sabbath School to lay more emphasis on Christ's view of things. We are Christians, not theists; we are Christians more than all things else, and what we need is not so much the philosopher's conception of Christianity as Christ's conception, Christ's view of man, Christ's view of God, Christ's view of the world. How important religious instruction is if it is giving children a conception of God! for is there any one thing more needed in this day in society, in the Church, than a sense of God? Is it not being crowded out?