

adapted to the religious interests and needs of various groups, from the little tots of the Beginners and Primary Departments to those who have become men and women,—what bit of work could be more attractive to one with a passion for helping to develop in growing human souls the likeness of the perfect man, the Son of God?

The first part of the book,—that which indicates to the teacher what he is to look for in the Gospels—does not, of course, attempt what the limits of space alone would forbid, to give an exhaustive account of what the four evangelists tell. The writer contents himself with sketching, in broad outline, the life of Christ, the distinguishing features of each Gospel, the qualities of Jesus' teaching and the personality of Jesus. Of this part it is sufficient to say that a difficult task has been accomplished with rare skill and completeness.

It is in the second part of the book that its distinctive character appears. The purpose of it was not merely to help the teacher to a little fuller and more accurate knowledge of Christ and the Gospels, but to show him how he might bring that knowledge to bear on the hearts and lives of his scholars. Accordingly, five chapters are given to pointing out what material in the Gospels is suitable for teaching purposes in classes respectively of little ones, Juniors, Intermediates, Young People and Adults.

Dr. Barclay's book may be confidently recommended to teachers, who, holding firmly that only the Holy Spirit can effect the transformation needed in every human life, of child or adult, believe at the same time that the religious life has its stages of development and that materials of instruction should be selected with a view to these various stages.

## Children not Little Men and Women

By REV. WM. SCOTT, B.D.

There is just one incident in the gospel story about Jesus' friendship for children, but it is sufficient to show us what was the master's conception of the normal religious life of children. When he said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God," he gave us for all time an insight into the possibilities of child religion.

Our churches all recognize with more or less clearness, that the child is capable of a distinct religious life of his own. The child is neither merely a little animal nor a little man or woman; and it is equally futile to deal with him as though he could not grasp a religious thought and to try to fit grown up ideas unto him, which, it is argued, may be profitable to him in later life. The child has religious needs as a child. He is an individual, having relations with other individuals, larger and smaller than himself; he is keenly aware of his place in a mysterious world, asking countless questions about what he sees around him; he has many opposing impulses leading to inward struggles. He is on his way to achieving a character or personality. He is trying to find his place in the general scheme. He makes various responses to his environment. He needs the help of the Christian church to make right choices.

"To such belongeth the kingdom." If Jesus said that, the church should gladly receive the children and teach them how they may find God. By right, the children belong to the Father's kingdom.

The religious needs of children may be met as they arise. They may, under the wise and loving guidance of Christian adults, be helped

to realize their right relationship, as children, to God and their neighbor.

The fundamental error in religious teaching is to suppose that teaching is a preparation for the future. In fact, there should never be religious teaching without adequate provision for religious training as well. Christian education is not a preparation merely, but a practice of religion now, and that is the best preparation for the future there can be. It is practically useless to seek to convey to the child ideas which are beyond his comprehension, supposing that he will understand them some day. The practice is pernicious because it leads the child to believe that there is no connection between religion and his present enterprises, and later to a hypocritical attitude toward religion, though its forms may be retained.

The question we must face is, what will best accomplish our purpose of forming Christian character. We must link up our religious training with what the child knows and can do. His Christian character will be the outcome of responses he makes in various relationships, seen and unseen.

The sphere for Christian growth is the social sphere, including God and men. The child's present response is important in itself, and also because it largely determines what his next response will be. He is religiously educable. He is developing in every way,—physically, mentally and morally. We must recognize the principle of growth that is in him, and seek to make sure that his religious growth, now slow, now fast, like that of his body, is carefully nurtured at every point.

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