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Ideas of Religion as Reflected in the Confirmation Manuals
and Catechisms used by American Jews. 1936.

IDEAS OF RELIGION

AS REFLECTED IN THE CONFIRMATION MANUALS AND CATECHISMS

USED BY AMERICAN JEWS

by

Roland B. Gittelsohn

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Rabbi.

Hebrew Union College

March, 1936

DEDICATION

Whatever of value there may be in
this study is humbly dedicated-

TO MY PARENTS

WHOSE TEACHINGS AND
EXAMPLE GAVE ME MY INTEREST
IN JEWISH STUDIES

TO MY WIFE

WHOSE LOVE HAS BEEN
AN INSPIRATION IN KEEPING
THAT INTEREST ALIVE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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My sincere appreciation is also due the staff of the Hebrew Union College Library for giving me access to many volumes not ordinarily available for circulation among the students.

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CHAPTER I: THE WHY, WHEREFORE AND HOW

Why spend eight or nine months of intensive work studying Confirmation manuals? Why read and compare fourteen volumes, most of them dull, and at least five or six of which will not, by any stretch of even the wildest imagination, be used again? In short, why make a study of this sort to fulfill a requirement which might more easily and more quickly be met?

The answer is to be found in the present state of our Jewish religious life. It is almost axiomatic by now to state that we live in an age of religious disease. The words most characteristic of our religious life are perhaps ignorance, indifference and disintegration. Citadels of religious strength which have stood for centuries now seem to be crumbling. Walls builded by the hands of many generations are now breaking. And the most discouraging part of the whole picture is that no other walls and no other strength seem to be substituted. We could, after all, charge some amount of change to the account of progress if we saw that men were replacing the worn-out old with the worth-while new. But what we see so widely now is not only a breakdown in religious life, but with it an appalling lack of concern on the part of those who should care. Nor is this state of affairs restricted to our own Reform group. Although it may be more obvious there, even a passing glance will show that our Conservative and Orthodox brethren suffer from the same disease.

Men have attributed this sad state to all sorts of causes. Ineffective leadership, a cynical age, a spirit of iconoclasm,-- these

and many others have been blamed, and not without reason. But has not at least one significant cause sometimes been overlooked? If we suffer from "religious rickets," is it not logical to suppose that our diet is at least partly to blame? It was with this thought in mind that the present study was undertaken. These Confirmation manuals represent in large measure the diet on which several generations of Jews have been raised as far as religion is concerned. What sort of diet has it been? Has it been the kind that builds strong bones or flabby flesh? Has it been one leading to health or to religious malnutrition? And finally, to what extent may we blame our existing state of religious chaos and indifference on these courses of training? These are some of the questions which we shall try to answer.

WHAT MANUALS WERE INCLUDED?

The Hebrew Union College Library alone houses more than eighty volumes which are either Confirmation manuals or textbooks on religion for children. Obviously, then, it would be utterly impossible to cover all of them. We have therefore chosen fourteen of them to form the basis of this study. They include the following:

1. I.M. Wise: The Essence of Judaism (1861)
2. S. Adler: Guide to Instruction in the Israelitish
Religion (1864)
3. K. Kohler: Guide for Instruction in Judaism (1898)
4. H. Enelow: The Faith of Israel (1917)
5. M. Harris: Judaism and the Jew (1925)
6. B. Cohon: Introduction to Judaism (1929)
7. Feuer and Glazer: The Jew and His Religion (1931)

8. J. Greenstone: The Religion of Israel (1902)
9. H. Homberg: ~~NEW~~ ~~החדש~~ (1816) — 1st ed. 1802
10. M. Friedlander: Textbook of the Jewish Religion (1890)
11. De Solla: Confirmation Manual (1890)
12. Z. Jabez: ~~החדש~~ ~~החדש~~ (1891)
13. S. Hurwitz: ~~החדש~~ ~~החדש~~ (1919)
14. S. Bogaisky: ~~החדש~~ ~~החדש~~ (1928)

Now on what basis were these fourteen chosen, and how do we know that they are in any way representative of the others? They were chosen to illustrate various types. Though it appears on the surface that we are examining here only fourteen volumes, actually we are doing more than that. The eighty-odd books in the Hebrew Union College Library can easily be placed in some four or five classes, and within each class very little difference will be found.(1) So that if these chosen few are truly representative of the various types, we are, at least to some extent, examining them all. It remains to show, then, how the list given above actually does cover a number of different groups.

The first seven listed are written from the Reform point of view, and they in turn may be divided into two subdivisions. The first three, which are representative of nineteenth century Reform, we shall, for the sake of brevity, call "Old Reform;" the others, written after the turn of the century, we shall refer to as "New Reform." Both the division and the terminology are of course arbitrary, but we accept them as practical measures to show the differences between the two Reform groups. Greenstone's volume is the only representative of the Conservative group. All the others uphold an Orthodox point of view, yet they really illustrate five somewhat different approaches.

Homberg's is a rationalistic Orthodoxy; Friedlander represents English Orthodoxy; De Solla illustrates Portuguese Orthodoxy; Jabez writes from a Mizrachi Orthodox approach; and the last two, Hurwitz and Bogaisky, may be called representatives of modern Orthodoxy, since their books are used even now in Orthodox schools. So we see that there are three major groups and eight distinct types covered by these fourteen manuals.

It may appear from the foregoing that the writer is satisfied that everything of possible importance has been included. Despite possible appearances, however, such is not the case. We wish that other manuals might have been included. We wish, for example, that a number of the German volumes were not excluded by limitations of language and time. Their inclusion certainly would have added to the completeness of the study, yet we do not feel that without them our conclusions will be invalid. The older Reform manuals in English follow the German closely, in some cases so closely that very little difference would be noted. And so we feel that while our material might certainly have been more complete, we have none the less touched upon a wide enough selection so that our conclusions will have at least a measure of validity.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

To begin with, all the manuals were carefully read and outlined. These outlines were made according to the following scheme:

1. Organization, Method and Aim
2. Outline of Content
3. Language and Concepts

4. Doubtful Doctrines

5. Remarks

The next step was to re-examine the manuals, together with the outlines mentioned above, and make a chart indicating the proportions of space devoted to various subjects by the several authors. Although this chart will be analyzed in detail in our second chapter, we give here the subject-divisions into which the content of the volumes was divided:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| I. Ceremonial and Ritual | II. Ethics |
| III. History | IV. Creed |
| V. Bible | VI. Post-Biblical Literature |
| VII. Material on Confirmation | |

After this chart had been analyzed and the conclusions of Chapter II reached, the manuals and notes were examined a third time, as a result of which the subsequent chapters were written. After all, a mere comparison on the basis of space devoted to the various subjects, important though it be, is not the only necessary procedure. It is at least as important to examine the manner in which the subjects are treated as it is to see how much treatment they receive. To accomplish this end, then, the various divisions of the Space Proportion Chart were taken individually and re-examined.

Following all this will be found a necessary chapter on the psychological approach of the volumes studied, and then additional miscellaneous remarks about the individual books. It was felt that through this type of procedure, the essential elements of the manuals both as individual books and as representatives of types could be adequately covered.

DIFFICULTIES AND CAUTIONS

A few words of caution should be spoken before we turn to the actual study itself. The first should be almost obvious. Inasmuch as the number of manuals studied had to be limited and the writer's approach to them is necessarily subjective, despite all efforts to preserve a scientific view, whatever results we reach must be looked upon as probable trends rather than positive conclusions.

A major difficulty in criticizing these manuals is that we have no way of knowing what instruction in ceremonies, ethics, creed, etc., has preceded the use of these materials. It may very well be that some deficiency we note in the manuals may have been provided for in an earlier year of the school curriculum. In many, if not most cases, however, it is probably safe to assume that there has been little or no effective instruction before the Confirmation year. Especially with the older manuals, and to some extent even with the newer ones, we cannot escape the suspicion that this is the rabbi's last chance to "get" the children and that he certainly intends doing so with a vengeance. All past failures, both his and theirs, are to be atoned for in this one year. And the Confirmation course is to be a last desperate stab, a hodgepodge of all the information he thinks the children should have before they escape his clutches. We shall therefore criticize these books of instruction for what they in themselves are, without assuming that any of their defects have been rectified in other parts of the curriculum.

At least one more word of warning should be uttered. It should be remembered, in all fairness, that we are criticizing in 1936 volumes which were written as early as 1816. Certainly in the

case of the older manuals at least, there is an element of unfairness in this, but it is an element which cannot be avoided.

The observant reader may already have concluded that our criticisms promise to be harsh. If they are, we would at least have the reason understood. If we consistently condemn the way in which some rabbis have attempted to transmit the Jewish heritage from generation to generation, it is because we are firmly and completely convinced that there is something of genuine meaning and worth in that heritage for children, and furthermore, that this meaning and worth can be transmitted in a way which will be at once pleasurable and profitable to children. If it were otherwise, our failure would be less tragic. If the great body of Jewish tradition were something necessarily foreign to modern children, then our failure would be less miserable. It is only because we are confident that this is not so, only because we are sure that a good job can be done, that we are impatient in the face of a poor one.

PURPOSES AND AIMS

It is obvious that our judgment with regard to the work of these authors will depend at least partly on what their purposes and aims were in the first place. The following is a complete list of aims, as expressed in the various volumes. The figure following each indicates the number of times it was given:

1. To provide knowledge concerning the fundamentals of the Jewish religion. (5)
2. To arouse love and loyalty for the Jewish people and the Jewish religion. (5)

3. To awaken religious conviction and fervor. (2)
4. To stimulate the pupil to further study. (1)
5. To prepare for intelligent participation in Jewish life. (1)
6. To stimulate thought. (1)
7. To secure a proper knowledge of the Bible. (1)

It would be wise to keep these aims in mind throughout the study.

While two of the authors indicate no aims at all, five mention more than one aim. As expressed in their manuals, these aims are extremely vague and far from concrete, making it difficult to see the exact purpose or purposes of each. This being the case, it is not surprising to note that there seems to be no difference in aims between the Reform and Orthodox groups. In the expression of vague, general objectives all can agree. It is only when we come to more concrete goals and specific techniques that a difference will be manifest.

It is not our purpose in a study of this kind to pass judgment on these aims. Some we would accept as legitimate goals of the Confirmation course, and others we would reject. But our only proper function here is to list them, as we have done, and then to see, as we go on, whether the professed aims are followed.

CHAPTER II: WHAT DO THE MANUALS INCLUDE?

What are the essentials of a Confirmation manual, judging by the actual content of those studied? What subjects appear in all or most of them, and how much space is devoted to these subjects?

We have already indicated the subject-divisions used in charting the contents of the manuals, and with that as a basis, we are ready to answer some of the questions heading this chapter.

There are only two major subjects which appear in all fourteen volumes. They are ceremonial and ritual, and ethics. The first was divided into three subdivisions: liturgy, the calendar, and holidays; only the first of these was included in all the manuals. But not even on these two major subjects included by all is there any real agreement. For the percentage of space devoted to the general subject of ceremonial and ritual varies from 3% to 52%. Table 1 shows the number of volumes in which the other subjects are included, and the amount of disagreement on the space given them. Besides the subject divisions already given, the Ten Commandments are also included for consideration here.

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE RANGE</u>
Creed	13	3.50 - 45
Calendar	10	.50 - 5
Bible	10	.75 - 20
Post-Biblical Literature	9	1.00 - 12
Liturgy	9	1.00 - 10
Ten Commandments	8	1.00 - 45
History	5	5.00 - 35
Confirmation	4	11.00 - 64

Table 1 -- FREQUENCY OF CONTENT

The conclusions to be drawn from such a table are fairly obvious. There is a wide variety of subject-matter included in the manuals examined, yet we note at least some agreement on what the more important elements are. The differences seem to be not so much on what these important elements are, as on how important they are. Thus, even with regard to those subjects which are included in ten or more of the books, the percentages of space devoted to them vary widely. We would probably be safe in concluding that the most important subjects are ceremonials, ethics and creed, with many other subjects of lesser importance, and with very little agreement on the proportion of space due each.

More interesting than this, however, is the question of whether the various groups show any difference from each other with regard to the content included and the amount of space devoted to each subject. A few words of explanation may be necessary in order that the reader may understand the tables to follow, which attempt to answer this question. These tables present the average percentage of the total space devoted to particular subjects. We have already indicated what we mean by "Old Reform" and "New Reform," but there may be some confusion about the two Orthodox groups listed. The duplication is caused by the fact that De Solla's manual is in many ways different from the others. Whereas all the others are intended as textbooks for the preparation of the class, this one is more a manual guiding the actual ceremony of Confirmation itself. To be sure, the catechisms it includes would probably be used for preparation as well as for the "show" itself, yet the great amount of space devoted to the Confirmation ceremony means a distortion of emphasis uncommon to the other Orthodox

manuals. We have therefore listed the average of the entire Orthodox group and also that of the "Limited Orthodox" section, which means the whole group minus De Solla. This is done only where the inclusion of the De Solla data would change the group average enough to make it misleading.

CEREMONIAL AND RITUAL

With this in mind, then, we are ready to consider Table 2, which summarizes our information on the subject of ceremonial and ritual. It will be noticed that besides the total for the group, the averages for each subdivision are given too.

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>CEREMONIAL TOTAL SPACE</u>	<u>HOLIDAYS</u>	<u>LITURGY</u>	<u>CALENDAR</u>
Old Reform	25.00	16.00	.97	1.33
New Reform	20.60	11.37	2.62	1.94
Total Reform	22.64	13.35	1.91	1.68
Conservative	31.00	20.00	4.50	1.00
Total Orthodox	43.67	35.67	4.16	1.71
Limited Orthodox	51.80	42.20	5.00	2.05

Table 2 -- PERCENTAGE OF SPACE GIVEN TO CEREMONIAL AND RITUAL

At least one explanatory remark should be made before we draw any conclusions from the evidence here presented. In the "New Reform" group, Beryl Cohon devotes more than twice as much space as his closest associate to the subject at hand. If we should exclude his manual from consideration for a moment, the total average for the "New Reform" group would then be 13.5%, while that of the "Total Reform" group would be reduced to 19.4%. It will be seen later that this would make even more marked a tendency apparent from this evidence. In the table

above, however, we have not excluded the Cohen manual from consideration, lest we be accused of unduly prejudicing the conclusion.

Even without rejecting any manual, however, we find a very definite trend toward the use of more ceremonial content as we move from Reform to Orthodox. So much so that the total Orthodox average is at least twice that of the Reform.(2) We need not dwell longer on this conclusion, since it is merely a verification of something we might well have expected to find.

We should note before proceeding, however, that the usual danger of accepting averages is perhaps even greater here. Despite the very clear-cut tendency toward more ceremonial material in the Orthodox manuals and less in the Reform, there are great individual differences within each group. The averages of the individual Reform manuals vary from 7.5% to 42%, while those of the Orthodox group range from 23% to 87%. This amount of discrepancy within groups will be evident in some of the tables to follow as well, and must be kept in mind.

Not much comment is needed with regard to the subdivisions of the general subject summarized in Table 2. It will be noted that the subject of holidays follows the trend indicated above rather closely, that liturgy follows it somewhat too, though with less certainty, and that our conclusions do not hold at all with regard to the subject of the calendar.

ETHICS

We are ready now for Table 3, which summarizes similar information on the subject of ethics. For the sake of convenience, we

have included the Ten Commandments here too.

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>ETHICS</u>	<u>TEN COMMANDMENTS</u>
Old Reform	20.30	26.67
New Reform	6.37	1.75
Total Reform	12.36	12.43
Conservative	19.00	
Total Orthodox	14.83	3.25
Limited Orthodox	17.20	

Table 3 -- PERCENTAGE OF SPACE GIVEN TO ETHICS AND TEN COMMANDMENTS

It immediately becomes apparent that we shall find no such obvious group differences here as we found in the case of Table 2. As a matter of fact, there seems to be no difference large enough to be significant, except, perhaps, the fact that the "New Reform" group devotes much less space to a discussion of ethics than do any of the other groups.

A slight difference between the Reform and Orthodox groups will become apparent if we omit one of the Orthodox manuals from consideration. Herz Homberg's volume, in devoting 52% of its total content to ethics, more than triples the percentage of its nearest rival in the Orthodox group. If we eliminate it, the average of the "Limited Orthodox" group is reduced to 7.4%, which would tend to show less space devoted to ethics in this group than in the Reform. There is a question, however, as to whether we have the right to exclude a manual from consideration merely because it fails to show the type-pattern of its group. Furthermore, even if we did, there would still be difficulty in explaining the position of the one Conservative manual; and the difference between the Orthodox and the Reform, while it would be worthy of note, would not be conclusive.

It seems, then, that we cannot posit any far-reaching differences as between groups when it comes to the subject of ethics. What differences there are seem to be individual. Thus within the Old Reform section the percentage of space devoted to ethics varies from 5% to 29%, while among the Orthodox, it ranges from 3% to Homberg's 52%. Only among the New Reform writers, where the percentages are within the range of 5 to 8.5, is there any consistent agreement.

Just a word now about the Ten Commandments, included here because of their close relationship to the subject of ethics. It is interesting to note that the one Conservative manual at hand does not mention or discuss the Ten Commandments at all, and the only group to make great use of the Decalogue is the Old Reform group. Otherwise, there seems to be little difference on this score between the groups studied. This use of the Decalogue, incidentally, is one of the greatest differences to be noted between the two Reform groups.

HISTORY

We turn now to the subject of history, which is included here even though it appears in only five of the manuals examined. Fortunately, of these five, three are Reform and two Orthodox, so that we have at least a narrow basis for comparison, even though no definite conclusions or tendencies can be noted.

All that can be safely concluded from Table 4 is that what little evidence we have tends to show less use of history materials by the Orthodox group, but the cases are so limited and the difference so slight that we cannot state even that as a conclusion of any certainty at all. It is worthy of note, however, that a

majority of the rabbis involved seem to be agreed on the placing of

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>HISTORY TOTAL</u>
Old Reform	
New Reform	12.50
Total Reform	7.14
Conservative	
Total Orthodox	4.50
Limited Orthodox	2.00

Table 4 -- PERCENTAGE OF SPACE ON HISTORY

history somewhere else than in the Confirmation course.

CREED

We are ready now to consider the subject of creed, which was included, in one form or another, in all but one of our manuals.

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>CREED TOTAL</u>
Old Reform	40.67
New Reform	15.50
Total Reform	26.30
Conservative	23.00
Total Orthodox	8.82

Table 5 -- PERCENTAGE OF SPACE GIVEN TO CREED

Several points of interest should be noted here before we state any conclusions. First of all, the manual by Feuer and Glazer includes several chapters on the general subject of religion which we have not included in the totals given here. If the content of these chapters be considered as material on creed, though not on specifically Jewish creed at all, then the total for New Reform will be raised to

17%, while that of the combined Reform groups will be 28.1%. The differences are not tremendous, but should be noted. Another factor to be considered is that even part of the low percentage listed for the Orthodox group is doubtful. There were some pages the placement of which was in doubt, and these are included in the count on creed.

The obvious and definite conclusion of Table 5 represents a phenomenon probably impossible in the orthodox branch of any other faith. Almost by definition, it would seem, those who style themselves "orthodox" hold fast to the old creed more than do the liberal or progressive forces within a faith. In Judaism the opposite is true, and while this conclusion may seem strange, if not impossible, to a non-Jewish observer, still to the Jew who knows his people, this too is merely a verification of what he already suspected or knew. This does not mean that the Orthodox Jew has no creed; l'havdil! It simply means that he takes it more for granted. He assumes God behind all the ritual and law of his daily life, and feels no need to argue the pros and cons of God. The early Reformers, perhaps following the lead of non-Jewish religious thinkers, devoted more of their attention to the formal discussion of creed. And so it is not at all surprising to find here a definite indication that the Conservative and especially the Orthodox manuals contain considerably less on creed than do the Reform. A significant trend, however, is contained in the fact that the New Reform, in contradistinction to their predecessors, have come closer to the Orthodox proportion on creed.

It should be mentioned in connection with creed that only four of our authors make use of the Thirteen Articles of Faith

in presenting their discussions, and only two of these devote any significant proportion of space to them. These two are both representatives of the Orthodox group.(3)

BIBLE

Our next consideration is the use of the Bible. It should be understood from the start that in this entire section we are not referring to the use of Bible quotations, which are found quite generally throughout the manuals. What we mean here is a separate section devoted to a discussion of the Bible, of its importance, development, individual books, etc. For the sake of brevity, we include the percentages for post-Biblical literature on the same table.

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>BIBLE</u>	<u>P.B.L.</u>
Old Reform	.67	.67
New Reform	9.12	5.37
Total Reform	5.50	3.35
Conservative	12.00	5.50
Total Orthodox	1.54	1.00

Table 6 -- PERCENTAGE OF SPACE ON BIBLE & POST-BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The only conclusion we can draw here is that our Conservative manual devotes much more space to the Bible than do either the Orthodox or Reform. But even this must be stated cautiously, for it must be remembered that we have only one specimen of the Conservative group. It would probably be safer and more correct to say that the differences here tend to be more on an individual basis, and disclose little or nothing of group differences. It is interesting, though, to see that the New Reform group seems to be closer to the Conservative proportion.

We have not included the subject of Confirmation itself in these tables because only four manuals devote any space to it at all. For the same reason, it will not be included in the succeeding chapters, wherein most of these subjects are discussed in detail.

CONCLUSIONS

Before proceeding to the question of dating, it would be well to pause for a moment and summarize briefly the findings of Tables 2 through 6. They have shown us that the Reform writers definitely devote much less space to ceremonial and much more to creed. They also give more attention to history, though the evidence here is not so conclusive. By inference, then, the Orthodox rabbis seem to give less attention to history and creed, and much more to ceremonial. Where there are definite group differences apparent, the Conservative position usually seems to be exactly where we would expect it to be:-- somewhere between the Orthodox and Reform. And finally, on the subjects of ethics, Bible, and post-Biblical literature, we are able to draw no definite conclusions from the evidence at hand, other than to say that there are noticeable individual differences.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

Now let us forget the differences we have noted between groups, and make a different kind of comparison. The manuals at hand cover a period ranging from 1816 to 1931, more than a century. Now then, has there been any noticeable change in that time, or do the

manuals of today follow pretty well in the path set by the earlier writers of each group?

In order to investigate these questions, we have divided our material into nineteenth and twentieth century manuals, and now seek the averages for each group. The division is unquestionably arbitrary, but seems to be the only available method of procedure and should indicate whatever trends there are. Fortunately, our different groups are well distributed in both centuries. Thus in the nineteenth century we find three Orthodox and three Reform manuals, while in the present century we have four Reform, one Conservative and two Orthodox. We have taken the liberty of excluding De Solla from this analysis, since the very nature of his work makes it impossible to make a fair comparison. We are also leaving out of consideration the subjects of history, post-Biblical literature, and Confirmation, none of which was treated in enough manuals to make its inclusion of worth. What, then, do we find with regard to any changes wrought by time?

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>AVERAGE %</u> <u>19th CENTURY</u>	<u>AVERAGE %</u> <u>20th CENTURY</u>
Ceremonial and Ritual	30.00	38.30
Ethics	22.70	8.20
Creed	27.90	12.60
Bible	1.75	7.03

Table 7 -- CHANGES OF EMPHASIS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY

It should be remarked that the ethics figure for the nineteenth century includes Homberg's 52% already referred to(4), while the twentieth century figure on creed does not include the information on religion in general given by Feuer and Glazer.(5)

The implications of Table 7 are such that only a few words of comment should be necessary. With the passing of time, the tendency seems to be toward a greater use of the Bible, more space devoted to ceremonial and ritual, less emphasis on ethics, and less space given to creed. Whether the same tendencies would be apparent if a larger number of manuals could be examined is, of course, purely a matter for speculation. And whether the changes noted here are considered progress or regression is a matter of personal opinion and, as such, outside the scope of this study.

CONCLUSION

We have seen, then, what the essential elements are, how frequently they appear, what differences there are between the several groups studied, and what changes of emphasis and content have come with time.

Now we must leave the subject of space allotments and deal in greater detail with each of the subjects treated in a majority of our manuals.

We proceed to that task now.

CHAPTER III: CEREMONIAL AND RITUAL

In an age which deals mostly in quantities and percentages, our treatment thus far may be considered by some as complete. To others who wish to be more thorough, however, it will immediately be obvious that we have only started our task. We do not wish to imply, of course, that our comparison of emphases and proportions of space given to various subjects is not important. It is important. But we do not feel that by itself it is enough. What do our writers do in the space they devote to each subject? How do they treat various topics, and what prejudices or biases do they disclose? It is possible, after all, to treat a subject inadequately in a dozen pages, yet do it greater justice in a single paragraph. It is, then, to a more detailed analysis of the treatment given the various subjects that we must turn now.

Perhaps a word of explanation is needed here with regard to the number of quotations the reader will find in the pages to follow. Many of them are used as necessary short-cuts. Surely it is wiser by far to illustrate by means of actual samples than to indulge in much longer but less accurate circumlocutions. And so we have not hesitated, for the sake of accuracy, to include many quotations which we might have omitted for the sake of interest. At the same time, we have tried not to weary the reader with a super-abundance of evidence. Wherever possible, one or two quotations will be considered sufficient to indicate a tendency.

We have already seen that the three subjects to which

all or practically all of our manuals devote considerable space are: ceremonial and ritual, ethics, and creed.(6) Let us, then, turn to these first.

Are there any differences, other than those of space, in the treatment of ceremonial and ritual by the Orthodox and Reform manuals?(7) The soundest method of answering this question will be to observe the characteristics of each group's treatment.

REFORM

Evident among the Reform writers is a natural tendency to regard the spirit as more important than the letter when it comes to ceremonial observance. The motions we go through and the words we speak are regarded as secondary to the moral or religious ideas behind the forms of our ceremonial life. Thus we find that Isaac M. Wise himself insists that the letter of Israel's statutes and laws must sometimes be changed in accordance with their spirit, that where the two are in conflict, an adjustment must be made of the letter to the spirit.(8)

We who identify ourselves with the Reform of our own day find no difficulty at all in accepting such a view. But we are taken somewhat aback when we realize the extreme to which Wise later carries this attitude toward ceremonial forms. Instead of merely holding, as he does above, that the letter must express the spirit, he almost seems to do away with the letter completely. "Symbolic actions," he says, "are required to convey ideas or sentiments to gross or weak minds;... words and songs are sufficient to instruct and edify the intelligent and express every sentiment or thought."(9)

This extreme view can hardly be called typical of Reform. But the emphasis on spirit rather than form is expressive of Reform's deep-rooted conviction that the forms of our religious life not only can be but must be changed from time to time if the spirit is to live.

What about the language of prayer? Wise gives bold and direct expression to a sentiment which is just as clear, even if only by implication and assumption, in the other Reform manuals, when he writes: "Instruction, Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers should be cited in the language we understand best." (10) So much for that. We turn now to the holidays themselves, because it is our intention to examine all phases of the Reform attitude toward ceremonial and ritual before making any comparisons with the Orthodox treatment.

There are a certain few specific holidays in our calendar which almost seem to invite a difference of opinion between Orthodoxy and Reform. Foremost among these is Tisha B'Ab, a day accepted as important by both wings, yet interpreted differently by each. To the Reformers, especially those of the earlier days, the ninth day of Ab is no occasion for removing one's shoes or baring one's heartstrings. Adler makes this clear, even though he states it with a certain amount of restraint. "The ninth of Ab," he writes, "the day of the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple, on which Israel ceased, for all times, to exist as a nation, and, amidst unspeakable sufferings, entered upon his priestly mission amongst the nations, constitutes the most important turning point, both in his history and his life's destination ... " (11) With Kohler, however, there is no such restraint. We almost feel that he looks upon the Destruction with evident glee as we read his remarks on Tisha B'Ab:

"In numerous congregations of the present time, however, the Ninth of Ab is celebrated as a day of solemn thanksgiving and praise. The loss of the Temple, and the dispersion of Israel among the nations of the earth, are no longer looked upon as woeful calamities, but rather as beneficial dispensations of a benign Providence ... "(12)

The second day of holiday observance is another subject on which the attitude of Reform is of interest. Suffice it to say here that where the subject is treated at all, it is given from an historical point of view. That is to say, the reasons are given for the observance of a second day by our ancestors, but there is no doubt left in the mind of the child that its observance today is only a vestigial remain, hardly of more than academic interest to us. Mention is made of this here, because we shall be interested in comparing this to the Orthodox view.

There are several other remarks about the Reform attitude to be made, however, before we attempt any comparison. It will be noticed that, with the possible exception of Wise's extreme view on symbols, there is nothing in the examples given so far which might be suspected as a conscious effort to discredit Orthodoxy. Of course, there is definite disagreement, and to the extent that disagreement is necessarily offensive to any orthodoxy, there is also offense. But on the whole we may agree that the writers representing Reform have sought to give positive and appealing expression to their own view without doing violence to Orthodox conviction.

Unfortunately, however, there is at least one exception to this rule. And surprisingly enough, it does not come from the ranks of the older Reformers, from whom we might think it more natural.

It comes from one of the more recent exponents of Reform, Maurice Harris. Throughout his treatment of such subjects as rationalism, the messiah and national restoration, woman, and ceremonialism, there is every effort made to elevate the position of Reform to the disadvantage of Orthodoxy.(13) Nor is there evident a real attempt to understand either Orthodoxy or the conditions out of which it grew or the meaning and worth it still has for great masses of Jews. Although this tendency is noticeable throughout the whole section, it is particularly clear in the sentences which follow: "A variant term for Orthodoxy is Conservatism. It is explanatory of its spirit, i.e., reluctance for sentimental reasons to change existing customs even when the causes that gave rise to them no longer apply."(14) Surely this is not the last word on Orthodoxy.

We need not look very far to see that it is possible to defend Reform with vigor and at the same time dignity, to defend and uphold it without at the same time implying that Orthodoxy is something inferior. Beryl Cohen uses this less extreme and more desirable form of Reform polemics in his exposition of the Reform point of view toward a strict observance of the Sabbath: "But we have found," he says, "that we cannot lay down one set of rigid rules for the conduct of different people. Everybody must be honest with himself and decide for himself to honor the day as best he can."(15) The difference between the two methods of promoting the Reform view is too obvious for any further comment to be needed.

One more remark should be made parenthetically before we turn our gaze from the Reform to the Orthodox manuals. Almost without exception the authors of these little books indicate their lack

of time and space. All of them complain that both the subjects they cover and their method of treatment necessarily suffer from this inadequacy. And yet we find so recent a manual even as that by Feuer and Glazer devoting space to subjects which are of doubtful value in a Reform Confirmation course. Thus, for example, these rabbis devote two pages to a discussion of the historical development of the prayerbook, starting with the first and proceeding by degrees to our own Union Prayerbook. One would be blind to maintain that the subject is not one of importance, but how important or vital is it to members of our Confirmation classes? Is it something they need, or something they are apt to remember? Would it not suffice merely to give them a recognition of the fact that our present prayerbook evolved gradually and naturally out of earlier ones, rather than to bore them with names and dates they will never remember? There is a similar defect in the same manual, in the course of its discussion about the holidays. After telling the children that Reform Jews no longer keep the five minor fast days because the original reasons for them no longer hold true, the authors then make the following request at the end of the chapter: "Name the five Jewish fast days." Why? If these days are no longer observed by Reform, why insist that Reform children memorize dates which they will promptly forget? It should be enough merely to have them know why such fasts have existed and are still kept by many Jews.

This, however, is a matter of minor concern, and we are ready now to see how the Orthodox treatment of ceremonial and ritual differs from that which we have just considered.

ORTHODOX

We have already seen that the Reformers have a definite attitude toward the observance of Tisha B'Ab, and we should be greatly surprised to find that our Orthodox writers do not definitely disagree. Our expectations are more than met, however, when we find a brief and clear-cut statement like the following from Greenstone, expressing what is beyond all doubt the stand of the Orthodox writers too. With reference to the ninth day of Ab, Greenstone says: "On the annual recurrence of that day we are reminded of our former condition and pray to God to restore us to our ancient glory, and to re-establish our national centre in Jerusalem, where all Israel may again be united in the worship of one God." (16) To the Orthodox school, then, this day remains one of deepest sorrow and blackest mourning, far from a day of "beneficial dispensations."

This is just what we would expect, because the whole outlook of Orthodoxy upon the Destruction and Dispersion differs diametrically from that of early Reformers like Kohler. We see this throughout our study, but perhaps clearest of all in Herz Homberg's detailed and lengthy discussion of the ancient Temple and its liturgy and service. In the thirty-odd pages he devotes to the subject, we see a constant pining after the Temple and its sacrificial system. (17) The events commemorated on Tisha B'Ab, then, could not be less than a major tragedy in the eyes of these men. Perhaps nowhere is the difference between the Orthodox and Reform treatments of this subject more vivid than here.

But there are other evident differences. The second day

of holiday observance, for example, may be looked upon as an historical relic by the writers of Reform, but the representatives of Orthodoxy treat it with something almost akin to taboo. Even Greenstone, who in some respects is much less severe than the writers of strictly Orthodox conviction, writes this concerning the second day: "It is an institution that was sanctioned by the free will of the whole nation, and is therefore binding on us, until the whole nation, or a representative body of the nation, sees fit to abolish it." (18) In his discussion of Rosh Hashonah and the Hebrew calendar, Friedlander expresses almost the same thought in these words: "The institution, founded on piety, willingly accepted by all the congregations, and preserved intact throughout periods of trouble and misery, cannot be abolished except by the will of the whole nation, and with the sanction of a Sanhedrin, recognised by all Jews as the chief authority in religious matters." (19)

At least Greenstone and Friedlander seem to anticipate a remote possibility that some day this custom which they now fervently defend may be changed. But Hurwitz excludes even this remote possibility when he insists that we must continue to observe the second day merely in order not to abolish a traditional custom. (20) That is a reason which not even a visionary future Sanhedrin could change.

We have already noted that the Orthodox manuals in general devote much more space to the subject of ceremonial and ritual than do those of the Reform wing. (21) It might almost be assumed from this observation that one reason for the greater amount of space is that the Conservative or Orthodox liturgy is being described in

greater or lesser detail. But we need not merely assume this. We are able to note, for example, that Greenstone devotes three pages to a discussion of the prayer service and another three to a consideration of Kashruth, both subjects which occupy at the most a paragraph or two in most of the Reform manuals. The mezuzah and other ritualistic objects which are either neglected in the Reform volumes or treated with a certain amount of curiosity or even disdain, are presented by these writers as objects still very much worth our consideration and use.

We were not surprised to find that among the Reform writers there was a tendency to regard both the language and content of prayers as something changeable. Nor shall we be surprised now to find that among our representatives of Orthodoxy the opposite is true. Thus Homberg declares that it is our definite duty and obligation to recite our prayers in the exact form given them by the Men of the Great Synagogue.(22) Nor is this limited only to the public liturgy alone. All of the blessings which ornament the daily life of the observant Jew, both those which he says in private and those he recites in public,-- all of these too were instituted by Ezra and his followers. Hence, according to Homberg, we are permitted neither to change them, nor to add to them, nor to detract from their present substance and form.(23)

Furthermore, to say with Isaac Wise that prayer should be in the language we understand best would hardly meet the requirements of these Orthodox rabbis, whose point of view is ably and typically expressed by Bogaisky. Our congregational prayers, he says, have always been recited in Hebrew; throughout all the generations since the

Dispersion the language of our prayers has been Hebrew, and the unifying effect of this on a scattered Israel must not now be disregarded. (24) Here, then, is another significant difference between the Orthodox and Reform treatment of ceremonial and ritual.

There are many other examples of such differences. Thus, for example, the Reform manuals without exception point to Shavuoth as the day of Confirmation, while the Orthodox texts give no recognition at all to the whole ceremony or its place on Shavuoth. But we need not concern ourselves further with other minor clues of similar nature. They are, after all, things which all of us would expect to find, and we have already seen enough to assure us that there are very definite differences between the two ways of treating the same subject.

Perhaps the Reform reader has already concluded that an outstanding deficiency in the Orthodox treatment is its apparent lack of contact with modern life and its clinging to the customs and ways of an age forever passed. In a certain sense, of course, the criticism is not fair. For the Orthodox Jew will never admit that modern life must necessarily put an end to Orthodox Jewish life, or that his customs belong to the irretrievable past. He is preparing his child to live a very definite type of life, and these customs are a necessary part of that life. If his instruction includes ceremonies and symbols which we have discarded, that is because he is not training his children to live our kind of Jewish life.

And yet occasionally there is something in the Orthodox discussions of ceremonial and ritual which seems to be out of touch even with modern Orthodox life. We refer especially to Hurwitz, who

gives detailed explanations of such customs as the setting aside of a priestly portion from each loaf of bread, or the setting of limits beyond which one dare not walk on Shabbos. Even the masses of the Orthodox are being forced to change or discard some of these habits and customs. To discuss them at great length and close the eyes to the fact that they will never be observed by the very children to whom they are being taught, is certainly a blindness to the inevitable conditions of modern life.

It would not be fair to point this out as a defect without at the same time making note of another attitude which is amazingly modern and liberal for an Orthodox writer. Herz Homberg, in his discussions on prayer in general, makes the remark several times that the value of prayer is first of all to the individual who prays and secondly, to those who hear him.(25) Even though Homberg is a rationalist as well as an Orthodox Jew, still we are surprised to find this early "preview" of later theories on the psychology of prayer.

A COMMON DEFECT

Far more important than any of the criticisms made thus far is one which must be blamed on both Orthodox and Reform writers. In the main, their presentations of the holidays are as academic and dull as a scholarly encyclopedia. The paragraphs devoted to the stories and observances of our festivals, for example, read like the monotonous lines of a reference work. Surely that does not fit the purpose of our Confirmation manuals. If it is necessary to discuss the holidays at all in the Confirmation course, if the rabbi and

school have been so negligent that children are permitted to reach their fifteenth year without knowing why we observe our holidays and how we observe them, then surely a very dull discussion is not the thing to atone for previous neglect.

Let us take Purim as an example. Surely there is no day in our whole calendar which is more inherently attractive to youth. We may have difficulty in accustoming our children and young people to a proper observance of other days in the Jewish year. But if there is a single one which fits the native interests of youth and can be attractively presented to young people, it is Purim. Now let us see how Adler, for instance, makes use of this genuine opportunity: "This Feast is celebrated on the fourteenth, and in some places of the Orient on the fifteenth day of the twelfth month, (Adar) in a leap year, on the same days of the thirteenth month, (Adar the Second) in commemoration of the divine help and deliverance vouchsafed to the Jews in the Ancient Persian Empire, through the medium of Mordecai and Esther, against Haman's plans of destruction." (26) Picture any normal child ever wanting to hear of Purim again after being subjected to that!

We would not create the false impression that it is only certain of the Reform writers who are guilty of this neglect. Among the Orthodox representatives, Jabez, whose brevity and elimination of detail is otherwise a genuine virtue, somehow strips the Purim story naked, and leaves only a bare, academic outline. And though these two are extreme examples, to be sure, not a single one of the fourteen manuals studied treats all the holidays in a manner which could possibly be appealing to children. We begin to wonder if

we have not found one of the chief causes for that neglect of ceremonial observance which is plaguing Jewish life and stripping it of warmth and beauty to this very day.

One reason for this lack of appeal in the presentation of our holidays is the rather obvious fact that none of the writers really has room for the subject. They seem to sense, perhaps only subconsciously, that this is one of the many things which should have been adequately covered before the Confirmation year, yet they are reluctant to let the children slip out of their grasp without making at least one more attempt. The result is that De Solla's questions and answers on the Sabbath, Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles are all squeezed into one small page!(27) And Enelow treats the entire subject of all our holidays and special occasions in less than four pages!(28) With instruction like this in ceremonial and ritual, the wonder is that our whole holiday life did not become even more diluted than it is.

INCIDENTAL NOTES

There are other incidental remarks on the subject of ceremonial and ritual which should be made here, even though they are mostly of minor importance.

The first is with reference to Cohon's treatment of the subject. As a matter of personal reaction, the writer is somewhat disposed to doubt the wisdom of asking children to memorize certain prayers. Although this is a procedure common to most of the writers being considered, we mention it in this place because it seems all the more questionable by the side of Cohon's excellent suggestion

that the children write their own prayers.(29) Our purpose, after all, is to create an understanding and appreciation for prayer, to educate a generation which will look upon prayer as a vital part of its life. It would seem that the way to accomplish this purpose is not to demand memorization, which usually leads to boredom and dislike of the thing being memorized, but rather to induce a prayerful attitude on the part of the children themselves, and, after acquainting them with certain examples of prayer, to encourage their own efforts along the same line. Even though the result may at times be a certain crudity of expression, we shall have started along the path which leads to an appreciation of prayer.

And as a final remark it might be pointed out that we have, in Friedlander's treatment of ceremonial, an example of how an attempt at rationalization or reinterpretation may sometimes lead to twists as curious as the following paragraph on the custom of "tashlich." Friedlander writes: "In some congregations there is a custom to walk in the afternoon of New-Year along the banks of a river or the shore of the sea, in order to reflect on the purifying effect which water has on the body, and to be reminded of the necessity of seeking the means of purifying our soul ... " This may be good midrash, but it is certainly doubtful ceremonials.

CONCLUSION

To prolong our discussion further or even to indulge now in a lengthy conclusion is unnecessary. We have seen enough to know that the differences we observed in the amount of space given by Orthodox and Reform writers respectively to the subject of ceremonial

are carried into their manner of treatment too. There are definite differences in the attitudes they take, but they are, for the most part, differences which we might well expect.

More important than this is the fact that the writers of both groups are guilty of gross neglect in their brief and uninteresting discussions of a subject which should be a major front in our campaign to build loyalty in our youth. That they have not succeeded is evident both from the nature of their discussions and from the nature of our present Jewish world.

CHAPTER IV: ETHICS

We need not be at all surprised that ethics is the other of the two subjects treated in all the manuals under consideration. Certainly the good life and the godly life have never been far removed one from the other, so that training in ethics is a thoroughly legitimate part of any course in religion. But we can scarcely be satisfied merely to know that every one of our manuals devotes more or less attention to this subject; nor is it enough to know what the differences are in the amounts of space given it by the various writers. Here, as in the previous chapter, we must inquire also into the methods of treatment used, and especially into their deficiencies.

But we discovered in Chapter II that there are no significant differences between groups in the teaching of ethics. There are differences, to be sure, but for the most part they distinguish individual writers, regardless of the groups they represent. It is, therefore, with individuals rather than groups that we shall be dealing in this chapter.

It should perhaps be stated at the start that we shall have but little to say with regard to the content of the ethical sections. There can be, after all, but little doubt as to whether the time-tested ethical principles of Israel are valid, and it is, for the most part, these very principles which are taught in our manuals. There is practically no room for doubt, then, as to what should be taught in ethics; there is tremendous room for difference, however, on the subject of how it should be taught. We must necessarily

concern ourselves, then, much more with method than with content.

HOW ARE WE TEACHING?

The first thing to be noticed and emphatically condemned is that there is much preaching but almost no teaching on the subject at hand. There is a great deal of prattling about vague ethical principles, but almost no concrete teaching of ethical actions. A number of quotations should make this clear. Picture, for our initial example, what effect the following paragraph from Kohler would have in shaping the ethical lives of adolescent boys and girls: "The acquired habit of acting and living in accordance with the dictates of the conscience is virtue; the habit of acting wickedly is vice. By constant exercise of virtue we acquire a good character, a life built upon firm principles of righteous conduct." (30) "What does this mean?" we can almost hear young voices asking in despair. "It talks of conscience, virtue and vice, but what does it mean?" And indeed, we too must wonder what it means and how it could in any way aid us in our effort to teach young boys and girls how to live what we think is a good life.

But it would be unfair to suppose for a moment that Kohler stands alone in this respect. He has at least the doubtful consolation of much distinguished company. Thus, for example, we note with sorrow bordering on pain a paragraph like the following from Enelow. It refers to man's duties and obligations as the master of all creation: "He is expected to live a life more beautiful, noble, and pure than any other being on earth. He is expected to live in accordance with the light of his mind, his spirit, his soul. He is

"expected to take care of his soul, which is the most precious part of him." (31) Now these are high-sounding and eloquent words, and the intention behind them is noble, but what earthly good are they in the teaching of ethics? What is the life that is "beautiful, noble, and pure?" Does it have anything to do with my cheating on an examination paper or my father's refusal to pay his employees well? And what am I supposed to do in order to take care of this soul, which you say is the most precious part of me? .. These are some of the questions which an intelligent, questioning youth might well have addressed to Dr. Enelow.

The same criticisms directed against Enelow's way of teaching the good life are true also of his remarks about the good Jewish life. In the paragraph which follows, he is urging the class members to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities as members of the Chosen Race. He tells them: "To be a true child of Israel means not only to be born of Jewish parents, but also to try to live in accord with the noble history and the great task of the Jew." Now to us, who have had enough experience and picked up at least a smattering of knowledge, words like these carry a certain amount of meaning. But what value have they for our boys and girls? They lack the concrete experience -- real or vicarious -- to fill in the skeleton of vague generalities with concrete meaning. What possible meaning can there be for them in a phrase like "to live in accord with the noble history and the great task of the Jew?" Nor does Enelow give them many hints to help them. All that he says in order to show them how one lives such a Jewish life is contained in the following fragments: "... prove that he knows the meaning of the

"choice of Israel," and " .. live a life so pure, and honest and true as one has a right to expect of one belonging to a holy people."

Let there be no misunderstanding. We have no quarrel at all to find with Enelow or with any of the other writers we quote with regard to ideas like these which they seek to teach. We accept them wholeheartedly. We too believe that men must live a life more beautiful than any other form of life we know, and we too are convinced that Jews can prove themselves a Chosen People only by living as a Holy People. But we definitely do not believe that mere preaching of vague, general principles is the proper way of teaching these truths. Paragraphs like those we have just quoted surely have meaning for us, but not for the children whom we teach.

Much the same sort of thing is evident in De Solla's manual too. There the whole moral life is summarized in two principles, namely, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (33) Now we have no quarrel with those principles. In fact, if we must teach ethics in this way, they are undoubtedly better than any other two principles we might find anywhere. But our objection is one directed against the whole method, not against any specific principles. Two sentences, even if they contain the loftiest truths of the universe, are not definite enough, concrete enough, specific enough, to give children an idea of the right thing to do.

There is one more example at hand which should make our contention even clearer. It consists of a question which is included in one of De Solla's catechisms for use in the Confirmation ceremony. And of course there is the inevitable answer, to be

properly memorized and dutifully recited by the children.

Q. "How should we feel and act towards persons who have injured or offended us?"

A. "We should forgive others, as well as we wish our sins and offenses to be forgiven. It is very sinful to be unforgiving and revengeful, for it says in the Scriptures, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart,' and further, 'Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people.'" (34)

Where is the point of contact between these words and the actual lives behind the lips which recite them? Where is the meaning -- vital meaning -- of this passage to children? Here, after all, is an ethical point where we are fortunate enough to be dealing with something real to the children. Young people hurt each other and quarrel and feel resentment; they have need for an attitude of forgiveness in their own present lives. Then why not deal with actual situations, such as they really face? Why not try to show them that forgiveness is a necessary virtue right now to them? But instead, we have them memorize some vague words which make the whole matter seem more remote than real.

Again we must guard against possible misunderstanding. Our remarks so far in this chapter have been harsh, not because of any malicious intent or scorn, but because we are tempted to cry aloud unto heaven when we see golden opportunities for the teaching of right living go astray. But it should be said at this point that we do not relegate all ethical principles to a position of uselessness in the teaching of ethics. Far from it! We feel very definitely that there must be principles to guide. We are training children

to live in a changing world, and not even the genius among us could possibly foresee all the ethical problems and situations which will face our charges in the days and years to come. Therefore we must leave them with certain signs, pointing the general direction of the good life. And these direction signs are nothing more nor less than ethical principles.

Then why have we inveighed so against the ethical principles found in these manuals? Because they are something meaningless and useless if they are merely handed to the children as gifts. The way to teach ethics is not to tell about ethics, but to give children an opportunity to solve definite ethical problems of their own. And only when principles are arrived at out of a great mass of real and vicarious situations which the children have discussed, only when principles are structures built with the bricks of real or imagined situations, only then are those principles apt to be permanent signposts, pointing the proper way along life's trail. It is for this reason that we have opposed the sort of vague ethical teaching found in these Confirmation manuals.

We oppose also the basis of appeal which is frequently used. Most of our writers are quite correct in sensing that some motivation is needed. Children of Confirmation age are prone to ask questions, and the most popular of their questions is "why." "Why should we live what you call an ethical life?" is the question which almost all of our writers seem to assume. But the answers some of them give are far from satisfactory. Thus, both Kohler and Homberg are conspicuous in appealing to fear as the basis for right conduct. Kohler writes: "Fear of God will prevent us from haughty pride."

"Dread of His displeasure will keep us from doing wrong." (35) To begin with, we must wonder whether this fear and dread will really suffice to keep our present world from doing wrong, and then we are tempted to suspect that even if it were enough, we would prefer seeing humanity base its conduct on a more manly basis than that of fear.

The same sort of thing is done in the following paragraph, which is a translation from Homberg: "Understand this, my children! That the Holy One searches out the inward parts and heart of each of you; He sees all the hidden chambers of the spirit, whether they are filled with truths or falsehoods; and it will do you no good to deal falsely with your fellows, for He knows whether you are truthful or not." (36) It seems to the writer that this is almost tantamount to saying: "It would be all right to be deceitful if there were any chance of getting away with it, but God is sure to find out. It is better to be good than to be caught." Needless to say, this is hardly the basis for an ethical appeal.

Another basis of appeal, used by Homberg and Greenstone, is equally unsatisfactory even if less viscious. It is an unreasoning appeal to the binding character of the Torah, and seems especially strange coming from the rationalist, Homberg. Speaking of the Torah, he writes: "There are in it many commandments and prohibitions which man's intellect cannot justify and for which his knowledge is unable to find reasons. Notwithstanding all this, it is our duty to keep and to do them." (37)

Very similar in tone and intent is the following from Greenstone with regard to the Torah's moral laws: "Therefore, although

"as may often happen, we are not able to see and feel the truth and righteousness of these laws, we must observe them, not merely because we understand them to be right, but for this all-sufficing reason, that God so commanded us." (38) Even if it were still possible in our present-day world to appeal successfully on the basis of sheer authority -- and we doubt it -- we should still believe that there is a more wholesome and more effective way of appealing for our ethical teachings than that.

There is yet another basis of appeal which we must thoroughly disapprove. It is that of Friedlander, who invokes the vision of a Future Life to teach ethics in this one. Writing of life in the hereafter, he offers the following for consumption by children: "There the righteous receive the true reward, and the wicked the true punishment; and what a terrible punishment it must be to be excluded from the presence of the Divine glory even for a moment! Such a moment of agony is not compensated for by all the pleasures of the earth!" (39) There are only two brief comments necessary with regard to a passage like this. First, most modern children of Confirmation age would laugh at it if they understood it. Secondly, if they did understand it and did not laugh at it, it would still be a miserable basis on which to ask them for right conduct. No, we cannot tell our children to live good lives because of either fear or authority or future punishment and reward; surely there are good and sane grounds right here in our own earthly life.

WHAT ARE WE TEACHING?

We have already stated that our chief quarrel is with

the methods used to teach ethics rather than with the content itself. And yet there are a few cases where the very ideas themselves which are being taught will bear careful scrutiny. It should be remembered, however, that these are exceptional cases, and that in the main, the ideas themselves are satisfactory.

First of all, there is at least one case of a definitely puritanical approach which is neither inherently Jewish nor effective in our day and age. It can be understood, however, since it comes from a time when puritanical morals were somewhat more in vogue than they are now. We refer to the following paragraph from Kohler, which unfortunately expresses a true and worthy sentiment in language which recalls some stern moralist: "God has implanted the sense of shame in our soul. We blush at unbecoming sights, words, acts and thoughts. We should do nothing, say nothing, read nothing that would make us ashamed of ourselves. We must shut eyes and ears to anything degrading and vulgar, shun bad company that corrupts our sense of modesty and decency, and seek only associations that ennoble and elevate our character, nay, show modesty and decorum also in our dress and appearance." (40) Perhaps it is just the wording used which gives us the unsavory flavor of Puritanism, but the flavor is there none the less.

The second type of idea to be criticized represents, frankly, a more or less subjective reaction with which not all observers will agree. The writer is an extreme pacifist, and would have preferred finding that these Confirmation manuals were teaching a more thoroughgoing attitude on the subject of war and peace. To be sure, all of them stress Israel's historic stand for peace, but they also

leave the usual "patriotic" loopholes for war. Thus, with regard to love of country, Kohler writes: " .. we must live and strive for her welfare and glory, and, whenever called upon, be ready to defend with our very life her honor and liberty." (41) Needless to say, "honor and liberty" are rather tenuous things for which to sacrifice one's life, especially in a world which makes investments and loans stand for "honor and liberty."

Elsewhere, with regard to the sixth commandment, Kohler states the following: "War, which is bloodshed on a large scale, is a crime when undertaken for conquest or material gain, but in defense of country or in order to exterminate crime and oppression, it may become an imperative necessity." (42) The writer holds that war is always a crime and never "an imperative necessity." Therefore he must reject teachings like these.

If Kohler was chosen for a first example, it is neither because he is the only one to express such doctrines nor because we hold any case against him. He is merely typical of many others. Thus Greenstone, in writing of the state's claims upon the individual, says: "When it wishes to purify its own institutions, to establish justice or purer morality, or when it is compelled to resist an attack of a malicious enemy, it is the duty of every citizen to support it, even at the sacrifice of property and life." (43) Now even those who are not so extreme in their pacifism must admit that to "purify its own institutions" is a somewhat vague and elastic excuse for war, and that we can be fooled into thinking that any war is "to establish justice or purer morality." Somehow these beautiful phrases remind one of 1917.

Lest it be thought for a moment that the Orthodox group of manuals furnished no target for this same criticism, we hasten to translate a passage from Homberg, as follows: "Therefore it is the duty of every citizen of the state to gird a sword and fight against the enemy's forces and stand in the thick of battle, even though it is very likely that he will fall by the enemy's sword." (44) We have already said enough to indicate beyond doubt our reaction to such a passage.

But the piece de resistance is to be found in another paragraph from Homberg. It speaks for itself: "Therefore it is necessary to have stalwarts of the army in every state, firm men, learned in war, who can rise up against the enemy to fight him ... and who will strengthen themselves to smite him and pursue him and capture booty from him... And it is essential that there shall be weapons of war, chariots, horses and horsemen, equipped and ready at all times, for the enemy may come suddenly and will not wait for us to prepare. All this is necessary for war." (45) If Vickers or Winchester or Krupp ever establish branches in Eretz Yisroel, God forbid, they need hardly do more than touch up the original of that paragraph with the names of a few modern weapons, and they will at once have their catalogue ready. One need not be extreme at all to frown upon stuff like this being taught to children. And yet we realize that our views even on a passage like this will not be universally shared.

It would be grossly unfair to treat at some length the foregoing passages and not at the same time make mention of one which does show a more consistent attitude on the subject. We refer now to the following sentences from Harris: "We should be prepared to

"accept war's abrogation as an unwritten doctrine of our religion, and be ready to face the consequences of this stand even though our motives be impugned. We must have the courage of our convictions." (46) We wish that Harris had been more specific and had interpreted this sentiment in terms more concrete and meaningful to young people, but there is no gainsaying the fact that this is the most acceptable passage, to us at least, of all those examined. So much for our discussion of the actual ideas being taught as a part of the instruction in ethics.

FAVORABLE NOTES

By now we can almost hear the reader exclaiming: "Does nothing merit approval? Is there nothing at all satisfactory in the ethical instruction of these rabbis?" And indeed the harsh nature of our criticisms, especially in this chapter, gives a measure of justification to such a reaction. Therefore we would not close this discussion without pointing to a few additional passages which indicate at least a healthy tendency or inclination.

One of our chief criticisms has been that there is not enough of specific, concrete application to the child's own life in these ethical teachings. But there are a number of writers who do show a leaning toward such application, who indicate the direction we should take. Thus Kohler, whom we have criticized severely, is one of the few who tries to interpret the Ten Commandments in a light more visible to his students. With regard to that part of the second commandment which is sometimes so hard for children to understand,

he writes: "Children of wicked parents inherit their bad name and evil inclinations and are easily influenced by their bad example. So an evil-doer brings punishment upon his children and children's children. But all the greater is the merit of those children who overcome all these bad tendencies and influences, and become good and virtuous men." (47) This is still vague and too general, but at least it is a commendable effort to re-interpret, to make the thing more meaningful to children. And the same tendency is evident in his treatment of the fifth commandment, and to a considerable extent, for that matter, throughout his treatment of the Decalogue.

Even more commendable is a similar example from Greenstone. It occurs in his discussion of those Jewish laws pertaining to the giving of alms. (48) Not satisfied with the mere statement that our tradition bids us give freely to the stranger within our gates, Greenstone makes specific application of that general principle by stating that we have a real opportunity to apply this law in our own day by aiding those immigrants who come in such great numbers to our shores. Now at that time the problem of immigration to America was a vital one. Further, it was a problem in which children of Confirmation age might reasonably be expected to be interested. Many of them had relatives of their own newly arrived in this land. All of them had seen such new arrivals and were interested one way or another. And so, capitalizing on a problem of immediate interest to his class, Greenstone gives them specific application of a general ethical principle in terms compatible with their own lives. The fact that the problem he chose is no longer as vital as it was then, is of no great importance. Today we would have to choose other

problems and examples, but the application and concreteness we need is precisely the same.

Perhaps the finest example of this is to be found in the manual by Feuer and Glazer. They have gone farther than any of the others in giving the concrete implications of Israel's ethical teachings. Our time-honored belief in the brotherhood of man, for example, means this to them: "The sincere Jew should therefore be opposed to all types of social, political and economic oppression and unfairness. He should labor through precept and example for the elimination of poverty, crime and war... For example, he should uphold the hands of those who are seeking to eliminate child labor in industry, to provide pensions for the aged who are no longer able to work, to protect the workingman against compulsory unemployment." (49) This is the sort of thing we want in our teaching of ethics. What we need now is to extend this procedure more widely, and wherever we can to give the children themselves an opportunity to make concrete applications to modern life before we add to their efforts.

In justice to Homberg, another frequent target of criticism, several favorable remarks should be made with regard to his treatment of ethics. Although we found fault more than once with the basis on which he appeals for righteous conduct, in at least one part of his book he relies on a valid and refreshing approach. Especially in Chapters X and XII of Book II, he takes pains to show that the moral injunctions of the Bible would be necessary even if they had not been stated in Holy Writ, that indeed, without these moral supports society would fall and the individual be sorely hurt. Here, then, is a natural and healthy way of urging proper conduct and

obedience of moral law on the part of our children, by showing them that these very laws we ask them to observe have been found necessary in man's experience, and are the only means of assuring a rich life on the part of all. Surely such an attitude will increase, rather than decrease the amount of respect children will have for the Bible.

And finally, we must note that Homberg presents an unusually fine and modern view of motives in connection with ethics. This occurs during his discussion of God's perfect justice compared with man's necessarily imperfect administration of it. We note that he takes pains to point out that even the best human judge is bound to err because he cannot always determine the motives which prompted a criminal act. The wisest human judge is frequently unable to distinguish between the man who steals because of want, in order to satisfy his hunger and thirst, and the man who steals because of greed, to satisfy his craving for riches. Therefore we humans often punish the one as the other. Not so with God; because His justice is perfect, He is able to consider the motive as well as the overt act. The important thing here is a recognition of the fact that there are degrees of right and wrong, and that there are certain circumstances which sometimes make it hard for us to know where right ends and wrong begins.

CONCLUSION

This concludes, then, our discussion of those chapters which deal with the subject of ethics. We have seen once more that there are no significant group differences here, that our basis for

comparison must be an individual one.

Unfortunately we have found a preponderance of vague ethical preaching and a paucity of genuinely concrete teaching on a level suitable for adolescent boys and girls. We have also discovered that too often an ineffective or even a viscious appeal is made for the good life, that there is a slight tendency in at least one manual toward puritanical language, and that the point of view expressed with regard to militarism and war is not as far-reaching and consistent as some of us would like to have it be.

And yet, with all these faults, and with all the harshness of our criticisms, it is significant that we have been able to find a number of passages within the manuals themselves to illustrate the direction which should be taken. Sometimes, strangely enough, the passages which please us most are in the same volumes as those which offend most. This would indicate that with all their shortcomings as teachers, at least some of our authors foresaw a part of their own failing and made some effort to correct it. Needless to say, this is a hopeful sign. It will remain for the rabbis of the future to carry on the wholesome tendencies, a spark of which is visible in the manuals of the past.

CHAPTER V: CREED

A study of this sort in the field of Christian theology or religious education would probably start with a discussion of creed, and then devote the major part of its total content to that subject. This is because in so many Christian sects, religion is creed. Or perhaps we should state the truth in its opposite form: creed is religion, in fact, the whole of religion. With Judaism, this is not so. We have already seen(50) that there is even less of creed in our Orthodox than in our Reform manuals, and that there are even one or two of these volumes which give no space at all to the subject.(51) And so it need not surprise us to see now that this section occupies only one section, and not the entire study.

What is surprising, however, is that there need be initial words of apology even for a chapter of this length. The word "creed" has of late come into dire disrepute among Jews. In a legitimate effort to emphasize certain religious differences between others and ourselves, to show how much more Judaism is concerned with earthly life and how much less it stresses the minutiae of belief,-- in such an effort the pendulum was bound to swing too far, so that all creed was discredited. But the fact remains that even with us there is such a thing as creed or belief. Certainly the writers of our Confirmation manuals assume so, for indeed all but one of them devotes at least some amount of space to it. And having examined already the two subjects on which there is universal agreement, we turn now to the third in our triumvirate of the most important subjects

treated in these books of instruction.

The first thing we wish to dispose of is a group of what we have called, perhaps for want of a better name, "doubtful doctrines."

There are certain things being taught to the prospective confirmands which we believe should not be taught, things to which we openly take exception. Most of these matters are treated by our authors in their discussions of creed. We have eliminated many possible items from this list, because it is obvious that it would be too easy to include beliefs or statements objectionable to this person or that from a purely subjective point of view. It has been our intention to suggest here only those things which many of us might agree on as constituting matters we definitely ought not to teach children.

First, there are one or two examples of teaching an acceptance of miracles. Let us take, for instance, this sentence from the volume by Greenstone. Speaking of the omnipotence of God, he says: "At His will nature may change its regular course and miracles or occurrences that are not in harmony with our experience may happen." (52) Do we really want to teach that to our children,-- any of us? We doubt it. We doubt, first of all, whether we still could teach it even if we wanted to, and secondly, whether it would be wise to do so. After all, teachings like this will merely weaken our own position when the child comes under the influence of courses in science. We seek to help the child interpret reality, not becloud it.

Isaac M. Wise, while he does not state the possibility

of miracles quite so baldly as Greenstone, still implies almost the same thing in a paragraph like the following: "Sacred Scripture also informs us that our obedience to God's laws influences the physical forces in our favor, and our disobedience to God's laws subjects us to the violence of the physical forces; for they are the executors of God's will." (53) This too sounds to us more like an outworn relic than like an honest attempt to reinterpret religion in terms vital to modern life.

A second group of "doubtful doctrines" are certain ones associated with the belief in immortality. We have already objected to Friedlander's use of the hereafter to motivate proper conduct in the here. Of a similar objectionable nature is Greenstone's assertion that this world of ours is nothing more nor less than a place of preparation for another world. He writes: "This world is merely a place where we are to prepare ourselves for the next." (54) We are aware that there is good precedent for a statement of this kind in Jewish tradition, that, indeed, Greenstone's expression is almost a paraphrase of Pirke Abot, and yet we venture to doubt whether it is the most wholesome doctrine to be taught children, or, for that matter, adults. Is it not better to teach that this world is a place where we are to live the fullest, richest, most godlike life we can, and that, if there be another world waiting for us, proper living here is our best kind of preparation? Surely we do not wish our children or ourselves to live this life always with one eye on the next. It is enough if we live this one as best we can, knowing full well that the kind of God Judaism teaches could ask of us nothing more.

This is why we object not only to the statement from Greenstone, but also to this similar one from Kohler: "The thought of the immortal nature of our soul must prompt us to use this earthly life and all it offers us only as a preparation for the higher life of godliness and righteousness, which lasts forever..."(55) It is significant that these are the only two expressions of this kind noted in the fourteen volumes studied.

It is worth noting, incidentally, that Greenstone, whose views were taken to task a moment ago, gives us an example of the most conservative view we have on the subject of immortality. Indeed, on more than one occasion Greenstone seems to be a more consistent spokesman of Orthodoxy than some of the Orthodox writers themselves. Here, for example, he pleads for an acceptance of the belief in immortality, but he is not satisfied with an immortality of the soul, such as pleases all the Reform writers. In connection with the eternal life of the soul, he mentions also the assertion that at some future time there will be a resurrection of the body and that body and soul will be reunited in life everlasting. "It was an old belief in Israel," he continues, "and found expression in many passages of the Bible, and we should not be hasty in rejecting it."(56) Surely this goes the limit in conservatism. The type of reasoning it proposes would make all progress in the evolution of creed most difficult, if not impossible.

Then there is a third and final group of these "doubtful doctrines," a group for which we have found some difficulty in choosing a name. Perhaps we should call them "Panglossian precepts," or some other such name indicating that they are the sugar-coated

sort of belief which constitutes essentially an "all's-well-with-the-world" philosophy. They represent the sort of thing all of us would like to believe; whether they correspond at all with reality is another matter.

There is, for example, Adler's notion that there is no real evil in the world. He writes as follows: "The world is wisely and well arranged. Nothing evil can proceed from the hand of the Perfect One. There is no evil in nature. All defects and evil in nature only appear as such to shortsighted man..." (57) Now we are not altogether unaware that there are schools of philosophy which set out to prove doctrines similar to this about the non-existence of evil. And we would not presume to argue with the philosophers. But we question whether it is wise to teach a doctrine of contentment like this to our children. After all, there is evil in nature and there are wrongs in the world. Why not teach this frankly, and encourage the men and women of tomorrow to overcome such evils rather than deny their existence?

A much less objectionable form of this same doctrine is found in Kohler, who writes: "As God, the Creator and Ruler of the world, is both Goodness and Wisdom, so does all that occurs in the world serve a good and wise purpose. Every evil in life, whether physical or moral, must, therefore, lead to some good in the end." (58) Obviously, this differs considerably from the foregoing. It does not deny the existence of evil; it merely affirms that the evil which exists necessarily leads to good. But does not this imply an automatic process, a mechanical transition from evil to good, without any role for man in the process? How much better it would be to

affirm that one of man's most sacred tasks on earth is so to live that evil necessarily becomes good by his own actions. In other words, that in our world the change from evil to good is potential; man must, by his life, make it actual. This changes a statement of doubtful truth into a challenge, and removes a doctrine which contains much of worth from the category of the objectionable.

But there is another type of "doubtful doctrine" within this third and final group. It is the type which teaches as a certainty that the good will always be rewarded and the wicked correspondingly punished. Now so long as this is held out as a promise to be fulfilled after death, it is a traditional tenet of our faith with which one cannot argue. One may accept or reject it, perhaps, but it does not fall within the realm of "doubtful" in the sense that it runs counter to what we know about reality. But as soon as there is even an implication that the reward of the good and the punishment of the bad is a phenomenon certain to occur in this earthly life, then the teaching becomes one of doubtful value. And there certainly are such implications in the material at hand. There is, for example, the paragraph in Isaac M. Wise's manual which reads as follows: "The satisfaction and peace of the soul depend on the consciousness of having obeyed the laws of God. The righteous are happy, however humble and poor they may appear to us, for theirs is the peace of the soul; and the wicked are unhappy, however prosperous they may seem, for 'There is no peace to the wicked saith my God.'" (59) Now such a thought is comforting, especially to those of us who will probably never be sated with worldly goods, and we would not for a moment deny that there is a "peace of the soul" which

cannot be bought. Yet we humbly doubt the wisdom of affirming as fact that "the righteous are happy," no matter what the circumstance seems to be, and that "the wicked are unhappy." It would be difficult to explain the many exceptions to this rule which fall within the scope of even a single individual's experience. There are certainly some righteous who are definitely not happy, just as there are some wicked who are happy. We cannot substitute our standards of happiness for their own. And what are we to do when we have taught a doctrine like this, and later some child faces the problem of the righteous who suffer while the wicked prosper? Are we not preparing the ground for a break with religion?

Let it be clearly understood that we have no quarrel at all with those who find comfort in the conviction that the injustices of this world will be adjusted in the next. That single belief has probably rescued more souls from the slough of despair than any other. But to deny the existence of earthly injustices altogether is another story, and, we think, an objectionable one at that.

Is this instance from Wise an exceptional one? Not at all. Much the same sort of thing is found in this selection from Kohler's manual: "Sin leads to misery, ruin and death of body and soul. Righteous conduct leads to peace, happiness and life immortal." (60) And later in the same volume we find this: "But we do know that eternal happiness is the reward of doing good, and that every bad action brings everlasting misery." (61) Are we not violating a prime principle or pedagogy here by teaching things which later must be definitely unlearned? Why teach children now what they must later

discover for themselves is not true, and thereby run the danger that they will assume all our teachings to be false, and throw them all overboard? Insofar as life on this earth is concerned, we certainly cannot affirm beyond doubt that the righteous are happy and successful while the wicked invariably suffer. Yet this is the implication of passages like those we have just quoted. It is also the implication of a single but positive sentence from Enelow, who writes: "... the reward of a religious life is health and happiness." (62)

To summarize, then, we object to statements of this kind from two points of view. To begin with, if they refer to our earthly life, our experience tends to show that they are not entirely true, and that which is not true should not be taught to children. And secondly, if they refer to some type of after-life, that should be made definitely clear, and then there should be no attempt to influence conduct using such a belief as motivation. (63)

One more word is necessary before we leave the subject of "doubtful doctrines." The observant reader may already have noticed that all but one of the writers criticized in this section are representatives of the Reform group. The easiest and quickest conclusion to accept, then, is that the Reform rabbis are much more guilty in the matter of questionable teachings. But a closer examination will show that this easy conclusion is not entirely fair.

For we must remember that the Reform group greatly surpasses the Orthodox in the total amount of space devoted to the subject of creed. While there is one Orthodox manual which excludes the subject entirely, and two others which devote less than 4% of their total space to it, every representative of the Reform group devotes somewhere

between 7% and 45% of its total space to the subject. The average amount of space given to creed by the total Orthodox group amounts to 8.82%; that given by the Reform writers is 26.3%. This changes the complexion of our conclusion above. For if the Reform group devotes fully three times as much space to creed, it is not^{at} all surprising to find that most of the "doubtful doctrines" come from the writers of that group.

Another point worth a moment's attention is the dating of the manuals to which we have objected here. The newest of them is Enelow's, written in 1917, and the only other one dating from the present century in its original form is Greenstone's, first published in 1902. The others were all written in some part of the last century. This we propose as a hopeful sign. In the three manuals written since Enelow's -- all of them in the Reform group and hence devoting some space to creed -- there has not been a single doctrine disclosed as doubtful or objectionable. If we have succeeded in getting a fair and representative sampling at the start, this would tend to show that most or all of what we have called objectionable in the presentation of creed is a thing of the past.(64)

TEACHING THE ABSTRACT

Suppose we note, for a moment, the subjects in which most of the doctrines mentioned above occur. They are all related to the problems of immortality, death, evil, pain and suffering. Now is there not something truly significant in the fact that these are the subjects which have apparently given our writers most of their trouble? They are the subjects which give us -- all of us --

most of the trouble we experience too, are they not? For they are by nature abstract, and even adults have difficulty in understanding the abstract. Most of us, if we are really honest with ourselves, will probably admit that we too sometimes wonder just where we stand on fundamental issues like these. Our perception and understanding of these "great imponderables" is like the view we get of some distant mountain. There are clear days when every detail can be seen and we are conscious of no doubts. But there are other days, when, through the fog and mist, we are barely able to envisage the crude outlines of that which yesterday we saw so bodily. And there are still other times when the clouds are low, and we see nothing at all, and we know that the mountain is there only because yesterday we thought we saw it, and we have faith that it is still there and we shall be able to see it yet again. These things are hard for us to understand ourselves; how much harder must they be, then, to explain for children!

For this reason the criticisms we have made thus far in the chapter must be taken with the proper understanding. Because we so blithely bombard a half dozen or so writers for what we think are mistakes, it should not be assumed that we are not conscious at all of their difficulties. We are. It is comparatively easy to teach where the answers are definite and clear. But when the matter being taught is abstract and intangible, when the teacher too is not always sure, then our difficulties in teaching seem to overwhelm us. And so we might have expected from the very beginning to find that the greatest difficulty would be experienced in just these intangible subjects.

We would not leave this part of our discussion, however, without pointing to what we consider to be the best presentation we have on these difficult subjects. We do not say that it is the best possible, but of all those examined, we propose that Cohon's treatment of the abstract elements of creed is the most acceptable.

Since we cannot possibly include all his material on creed, let us look into his presentation of three subjects, the soul, eternity, and the problem of suffering and pain. Using these three as examples, why have we suggested that his treatment is better than the others?

In his presentation of the soul, Cohon observes one of the prime rules of good teaching, a principle so abused throughout these manuals that it is a delight to find it observed at least once. We refer to the indisputable fact that the teacher must always start with the known, with that which is already a part of the learner's experience, and proceed thence to the unknown, to that which is being taught. But is it possible to follow such a rule in the teaching of an abstract concept like that of the soul, where it would seem that there is no "known" with which to start? The answer to that doubt is to be found in the fact that here we have a writer who actually does follow the rule. Therefore we need no longer concern ourselves over whether it can be done; it has been done. Cohon begins his discussion of the soul by asking his students to answer this question: "What am I?" In the course of attempting an answer, the individual boy or girl necessarily comes to the conclusion that he is a conglomerate of bones, blood, flesh and a dozen other substances, but that he is something else too, that there is some element of "plus" which

accounts for his mental and emotional life and which distinguishes him from the animal and from other humans.(65) It is only after leading the class inductively from certain known or observable facts about themselves to this logical conclusion that he introduces the term "soul" to explain all this in a single word. This is one of the very few examples we shall find of a real attempt to reason with the students, to lead them from the known to the unknown without making them cross bridges of thought which are ours, not their own.

Another concept difficult to teach children is that of eternity. This too Cohon does well.(66) He tries to explain the whole concept of eternal time in connection with his discussion of Rosh Hashonah and its meaning. But instead of speaking in philosophical terms, in language far beyond the comprehension of any adolescent, he speaks to them in imagery common to their powers of perception. He asks them to think of an enormous mountain, from the top of which some bird is carrying sand away, one grain at a time. Then they are urged to think for a moment of a human being, born at the very moment when the bird first starts its task. How long would it take the bird to complete its task? And how much smaller would the mountain be by the time that the child had grown and lived its whole life?... The reader must forgive us for explaining in such great length and detail the procedure which Cohon follows. We do so only because his ability to explain these abstract concepts in concrete terms is unusual, and indicates something of the direction which must be taken with increasing frequency in our religious education.

We quote just one more such example. We have already seen in this chapter that many of our authors fail miserably in

3 their efforts to discuss the problem of suffering and pain. Not so with Cohon. He does not deny the existence of evil and suffering; neither does he insist that the righteous are always the ones to be happy. But he does attempt to show that this pain and suffering, which does exist, and which we sometimes are unable to explain, does at least lead to certain values, to a broadened sympathy, to mercy, to love, and that therefore perhaps pain too serves a legitimate purpose in life.(67) In other words, what he does is to present a realistic point of view, without at the same time giving up all hope. And above all, he expresses his point of view in language which is concrete enough to be meaningful.

And so we see that despite the difficulties and despite the many mistakes we have noted, here we have at least one manual which points the way. We do not think that the task has been completed or that we need no further work in this field of endeavor, but rather that the sort of thing we need has been hinted.

GOD

The reader may already have wondered why, in a chapter on creed, we have not yet treated the subject of God. The omission thus far has been intentional. We wanted to show, first, how extremely difficult it is to teach any of the abstract concepts and doctrines of creed. It then becomes clear by implication that the difficulties are magnified many times in the teaching of God. For here we are dealing not only with a concept hard to present to children, but with one that is the very essence or center of religion. Which means that as the difficulty increases, the necessity also

becomes greater. And of course that complicates our task very much. Let us not minimize the difficulty of teaching God to children by thinking in terms of comparisons clear to us as adults. What we need for children are comparisons and terms clear and meaningful to them, yet teaching them the truths we believe about God. The task is challenging. Even men who have spent years studying religion and theology are often taken aback by a child's simple question: "What is God?" And so, in making the following critical comments about the way in which our authors teach the subject, we are at all times conscious of our own limitations were we to attempt the same task.

We should like, first of all, to call attention to the vagueness of the teachings we find on the subject of God. Now we know full well that God cannot be taught with the precision and certainty of a geometric calculation, but neither should He be taught in a way so vague that the learner is left with nothing. Although this vagueness is a fault quite generally true of all the manuals examined, it is particularly apparent in the discussion by Feuer and Glazer. Following a few very general and very brief remarks about God, this sentence appears: "If we had the time we might study some of the very interesting ideas of God which religions have held in the past and hold at the present time." (68) How many sins are excused by that phrase, -- "if we had the time." But here is a case where we need the time, where we must have the time if we are to succeed. Surely this is at least as important as many other things included in this particular manual. And this thing which was omitted because of insufficient time is the very thing we need so badly. The trouble with us has been that after we are all through preaching

and teaching, our children still have no clear idea of what the term "God" means. Perhaps this is because, like Feuer and Glazer, we speak to them only in vague, general terms about God, and then, when we are ready for the more difficult task of showing them what "God" means to different groups of people, both past and present, then we fall down for one reason or another and leave them with nothing. In the teaching of an abstract idea, we must at least be as specific as it is within our power to be.

If the mistake of these two rabbis was that they stopped just at the crucial point, the error made by Harris is that he tried to cover everything in a single sentence. The following statement is all he has to say about the nature of God: "God is one, perfect, spiritual, eternal; the omnipresent Creator of all that is; the omniscient Ruler of the Universe; the wise and loving Father of mankind." (69) It would be interesting to submit that sentence to a group of average adolescents and ask them to write out in their own words what it means. The answers would probably be as many as the answerers. And the reason is evident. Because it attempts to say everything, that sentence comes perilously close to saying nothing. Yet these two passages just exhibited are merely examples of the widespread sort of diet on which we have tried to raise a generation of religious Jews.

The basic trouble, it seems to the writer, is that all of our authors have discussed God and His attributes merely as intellectual abstractions and logical exercises. And even if they are accepted by the children, they still mean little in actual life. Perhaps there is no way to overcome this difficulty. Perhaps until

children have themselves experienced more of the depths and heights of life we cannot in any way teach them of God as a living idea, having much to do with life itself. But at least the effort should be made, and if we must necessarily fail, let it be on the basis of a sincere struggle to accomplish all that we can. Let us at least try our best to make the idea of God a meaningful, functional concept in the lives of our confirmands.

There is one note of favorable comment to be made before we leave the teaching of God, and again it is given us by Cohon. We especially like the liberalism of his attitude toward the subject of God. Perhaps it impresses us all the more in contrast to the spirit of intense dogmatism which characterizes most of the other treatments. Outside of Cohon, not a one of our writers seems to experience any doubt but what the final and ultimate truth about God has been known since Bible times and will be the same throughout all ages to come. But we admire the progressive spirit of a religionist like Cohon who can write: "Perhaps sometime in the future we will come to a clearer understanding of Him than we have now, and then our present views of Him will be supplanted by more accurate ones." (70) Something more of this spirit, plus an effort toward much greater concreteness, seems to be our greatest need in the teaching of God.

MISSION OF ISRAEL

The subject to be treated now might also be considered in our section on history, in the sense that one's view of the mission of Israel depends very largely on his interpretation of the Dispersion,

which is a major event in the historical life of our people. And yet we have chosen to place our brief remarks on the subject here, because those who hold that Israel indeed has a mission to perform usually speak of it as the duty of teaching God to all mankind. Such a belief, where it is held, is thus really part of our creed, and should be considered here.

We shall not deal here with those who either reject or ignore the idea of a mission for Israel. There are two types of what we may call "mission idea" expressed in the manuals we are considering. One is the traditional attitude of Reform, expressed by Kaufman Kohler in the following way: "In order to accomplish this great end of human history, Israel has been entrusted with the mission of leading all nations to know God and to worship Him in truth and in justice. For this reason he was separated from the rest of the nations as a priestly nation and scattered among all the people on earth, in order that he, as God's chosen one, may at the end of all times unite them all in the glorification of God and the love of man." (71)

There is a somewhat shorter expression of the same thought in Harris. He writes: "The Reformer treats the dispersion not as a temporary exile, but as a part of the divine plan, whereby Israel, God's witness, might carry His message to the people of the earth." (72) These two we recognize at once as typical expressions of official Reform sentiment.

But what is more interesting by far is to see how Greenstone, a Conservative and a nationalist, takes this Reform and anti-nationalist point of view, and after giving it a peculiar twist

which changes the whole implication, accepts it fully. After describing the mission idea we have just presented, Greenstone proceeds as follows: "Much can be done toward the fulfilment of this mission, even while Israel is dispersed among the nations. But we can expect to realize all our hopes only when, through the help of God, we shall again be established in our old home -- Zion -- whence life and light shall go forth to the whole world -- a nation governed by the principles of purity and righteousness, according to the ideals of the Bible." (73) He then refers formally to the Zionist movement as one which "may do very much toward hastening this glorious period." This is especially interesting as an example of how groups differing widely in their philosophies of Jewish life can accept the selfsame doctrine, each with its own interpretation.

SOURCES

There is one more subject which must occupy our attention before we turn to a discussion of the methods used in teaching creed. We must try to discover the sources on which our writers depend for the religious ideas they express and teach. Perhaps a word of explanation or apology is needed here. We realize that this particular subject is as important as it is interesting, and wish that more time could be given it. Our studies of the sources involved are not complete. We know this, and yet there is little to be done; our analysis of sources is one of the most difficult tasks of the present study. For anyone who, like the writer, is only a novice in theological studies, there are only two possible ways of knowing the sources upon which any given writer has depended. One way is to

read in the manual an open statement by the writer that he has followed the views of a certain thinker or has depended on such and such books in the formulation of his own system of thought. But few, if any, writers make such open declarations. The other possibility is to recognize the presentation or organization of the material as resembling that of some previous Jewish scholar with whose work we happen to be familiar. Now then, since the first of these possibilities is so narrowly limited, we must depend largely upon the second. But the second is valuable only in direct proportion to the number of past Jewish thinkers the observer knows well. Which means, in effect, that one with a decidedly limited knowledge of these things can do only a partial job of tracing sources. But there are a few things we have been able to discover. What are they?

To begin with, there are two sources more widely used than any others: (a) Albo and (b) the Thirteen Articles of Faith arranged by Maimonides. It is not always easy to discover which of these two has served a particular writer. For Albo, in dividing Judaism into beliefs about God, about revelation, and about reward and punishment, has in reality followed a form of organization similar to that which Maimonides gives in greater detail. True, in Albo there is not that emphasis upon the Messiah and Messianic belief which we find in the Thirteen Articles. But Albo's three divisions seem none the less to be something like a summary of the earlier articles formulated by Maimonides; that is to say, they follow a similar order or pattern of thought. When we are confronted by the two together, there is of course no difficulty at all in distinguishing one from the other. But when we are trying to trace their indirect

influence on any writer, and must depend in part on what we are able to infer, it is sometimes difficult to tell which of the two is serving as a source.

Of the fourteen manuals examined for this study, one contains nothing at all on the subject of creed, and another has so small a section devoted to it that for present purposes we must include it in the same class.(74) This leaves us twelve. Of these, three give evidence of having used Albo, three seem quite definitely to have relied on the Thirteen Articles, two mention only the Ten Commandments as the source of their discussion of religion, one uses a form of organization initiated by the Besht, and three others offer us no clue at all. Suppose we look into the matter further.

The three who seem to have relied on the Thirteen Articles are Homberg, Friedland^x and Wise, the latter somewhat doubtfully. The reason we include Wise at all is that the order of presentation and general organization of his material on creed remind one of the formulation by Maimonides. But we are not willing to state this connection as a definite fact because, as a theory, it breaks down when examined more minutely. Thus Wise changes many of the Maimonian doctrines which would be incompatible with his own views on Judaism. He omits the declaration that the Torah has not undergone change and leaves out the beliefs in the Messiah and Resurrection, though there is some mention of a future Messianic era. And so perhaps the best we can say with regard to Wise is that we do not know, but that there are some reasons to suspect that he might have followed a type of organization similar to that of Maimonides.

With Homberg and Friedlander, however, there is no such

doubt. Both are obviously patterned after the Thirteen Articles, both present them as such, with proper explanations, and indeed, both devote a significant part of their total space to them. With Homberg the proportion is ten percent, while with Friedlander it reaches seventeen percent. Our task would be considerably easier as well as more accurate if the other manuals were as clear as these two regarding their sources.

The three writers who seem to be following Albo, at least in his three-fold division of Judaism, are Enelow, De Solla, and perhaps Greenstone. While there is no evidence whatsoever that Enelow had Maimonides in mind, we are able to follow the three steps of Albo. With Greenstone, we may say with a reasonable degree of certainty that he is following either Maimonides or Albo, but this is a specific case where it is difficult to determine which. At one glance, it seems as if he had followed the three-fold division of Albo, and then added sections on the Soul and the Messiah. In the next glance, it appears that he was following the Thirteen Articles, although they are not specifically stated as such, and although it is difficult to trace the individual doctrines throughout his discussion. So this is another case where we cannot be sure.

With De Solla it can be definitely shown that he is following Albo, although his manner of presentation does not make this conclusion obvious. It has been pointed out before that De Solla's manual is really a volume to be used for the Confirmation service itself. Included in it are two catechisms for testing knowledge in religion and history respectively. An examination of the following questions (certain intervening ones omitted) will show

the tendency toward Albo.

1. How do we know that there is a God?
2. Which are the chief attributes of God that exhibit themselves to us?
3. What does the Jewish religion teach particularly in regard to the existence of God?
4. What reason have we for believing that there can be but One God?
5. What does the Jewish religion teach in regard to revelation?
6. What reason have we to believe that God made known His will by special revelations?
7. What doctrine do we hold in regard to future reward and punishment?

Now it can be seen at a glance that the first four questions fall clearly under Albo's first division, namely, God, while questions five and six are concerned with revelation, and the final question deals with reward and punishment. Thus the influence of Albo is unmistakable.

Another three-fold division is that followed by Cohon, who divides Judaism into God, Israel and Torah. Although this division is by now quite common and well-known, it is one of the most difficult to trace back. Cohon adapted it from Professor Samuel S. Cohon of the Hebrew Union College, who, in turn, has succeeded in tracing it back as far as Israel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidism.

Unfortunately, this represents about all the knowledge of sources we are able to garner. The two manuals referred to a

moment ago as giving only the Ten Commandments by way of source are Adler's and Kohler's. Of course the Decalogue can hardly be considered a source in the sense in which we have here used that term. For practically all the manuals acknowledge the Ten Commandments as the prime source of all religions, not just our own. But we have used the word "source" in a post-Biblical rather than a Biblical sense. In that sense, then, we know little more about these two than we do about Harris, Jabez, and Feuer and Glazer, who give us no source clues at all.

METHOD OF TEACHING RELIGION

It is not always easy to differentiate method from the matter being taught; especially does this seem to be true in the case of religious and moral instruction. And yet there are certain pedagogic principles which hold true in all types of education, and we are concerned here with their application to the teaching of creed. How far can they be applied to this particular type of teaching, and how far have they been applied?

The first thing we are moved to state as a positive principle is that in the teaching of religion to youth we definitely need more reasoning and less indoctrination. Now we are aware that as soon as the word "indoctrination" is used, the flood-gates of controversy have automatically been opened. Unfortunately, the sound principle which we here uphold has been so abused in the recent past that even a reasonable interpretation of it may result in raised eyebrows. Therefore it behoves us to explain what we mean by our

terms, and why we state the two alternatives as mutually exclusive opposites. First, what is meant here by indoctrination? We mean by that term the attitude that religion, in particular our own religion, has stood for such and such beliefs, and that A and B and C, if they wish to be considered fit members of the religious group, must embrace precisely these beliefs just because someone in authority says so. That is the usual form. "Theirs not to reason why," is the implication. This thing must be believed just because it must, just because it has been in the past: this we call indoctrination.

What, then, is reasoning? It is a method founded on the conviction that these things we are asking young people to believe are reasonable things, that our fathers believed them because they were led by a process of experience and thought to accept them, and that the only sound way to insure their adoption by the youth of today is to provide for some experience and thought similar to that which first produced these beliefs. Perhaps our meaning will become increasingly clear as we proceed, and deal with specific issues.

But first of all it should be known that at least one of our manuals is directly conscious of this need for reasoning in our teaching of the more formal aspects of religion. Indeed, all that has just been said is summed up very briefly and adequately in a single sentence, found in the Introduction to the volume by Feuer and Glazer. It reads as follows: "We begin with the assumption that the boys and girls can and do think for themselves, and that they ought to be reasoned with rather than indoctrinated." (75)

Obviously there could be no better way of discovering whether our manuals meet this requirement of reasoning than to examine

the one which, above all others, clearly recognizes and states the need. If the men who gave such concise statement to the philosophy we uphold do not themselves follow it in practice, then surely there is little to hope for from the others. On the other hand, if Feuer and Glazer follow their own principle throughout the pages they write, then we may hopefully turn to some of the other writers to see if they too have imbibed of the same spirit.

Here, alas, we are doomed to dismal disappointment. For despite the commendable intent given above, even Feuer and Glazer are guilty of attempted indoctrination, often without resort to reason. Perhaps the guilt is an unconscious one which the authors would rush to deny, but the impartial eye finds it none the less. Nowhere is this more evident than in the type of questions which are asked at the end of each chapter, and which are intended as a basis for class discussion. It should go without saying here that two types of questions may be asked, questions of fact and thought questions, and that of the two, the second kind is much more fruitful in the stimulation of reasoning and thinking. It follows, then, that if our authors are primarily interested in thought, their questions too must be largely the kind that leads to thought. But the opposite is true. In a later chapter we shall have occasion to discuss these two types of questions at greater length. Suffice it here to remark that there is a woeful lack of thought questions even in Feuer and Glazer. Only rarely, and then, it seems, almost by accident, does a question stimulating any thought at all somehow creep in unawares. Almost all the questions asked are the type which merely requires that some authoritative statement made by the authors

be remembered and handed back. The question which stimulates reasoning or thought on the part of the children themselves is an exception. Of course the proper type of thought question is not at all easy to formulate, so that there may be good reasons for this lack, but it obviously exists none the less.

We might give a different kind of example from the same book to show how there is sometimes a spirit of preaching to the children rather than reasoning with them. In the course of a discussion about the Sabbath the following sentence appears: "Children who are attending religious school and who have the opportunity of participating in the Sabbath Service should do so willingly." (76) What possible good can come from preaching of that type? It isn't that we disagree on the subject of participation in the Sabbath Service. But it seems rather obvious that if we have not succeeded, before the Confirmation year, in building up a favorable attitude toward the Sabbath and its observance, then mere words and preaching are futile. On the other hand, if we have succeeded, then they are unnecessary. In either case a process of long-time training, of reasoning with the older children and of pleasant experiences with the younger ones, will do us much more good than an attempt like this to indoctrinate an attitude, to preach to them a loyalty which has no basis in their own experience and thought.

It goes without saying that Feuer and Glazer are far from the worst offenders in this respect. What is evident in the others is more obvious with them, perhaps just because they seem to be conscious of the need for something different. And the inescapable result of all this is that there is no effort at all to stimulate

sincere religious thought on the part of the class. We cannot emphasize this enough. There is no effort at all to stimulate thought. A further example, this time from Kohler, will show how the child is assumed to be merely a passive receptacle, into which we pour at will our great wisdom. The following is all that Kohler has to say on the subject of God's justice: "God is all just. He treats individuals and nations, according to their doings; He punishes evil and rewards the good." (77) Why should this mere statement of the fact be enough for a thinking child? And indeed, it seldom is enough, even though we may fool ourselves into thinking that it is. The writer is thinking in particular of an intelligent adolescent who asked him in the course of the past summer if he would mind discussing God. When assured that anything he wanted to ask or say would be most welcome, he promptly asked: "What I have wanted to know for a long time is this: how do I know there is a God? I have never seen Him. They say there is a God, but how do I know?" That boy had received a religious education on the whole considerably better than that of the average Reform Jewish child. But apparently no one had tried to make him a partner in an adventure of religious thinking. No one had made an effort to reason with him, to help him move toward certain conclusions himself rather than have them forced upon him. In short, indoctrination took the place of reason.

The same thing is true of Jabez and others of the Orthodox group too. All of them give us the impression that they are either not able or not willing to help the children think. But children of adolescent age are going to think whether we like it or not. The only question is whether we shall make a sincere effort to guide

their thought. We have been insisting that they walk on crutches, so to speak, without realizing that if we do not train them to walk freely, they will fall as soon as the crutches are removed. True, we must ever guide their steps, and that is not easy. But it is the only way to correct the evils we have noted.

It would be bad enough if the ideas we expected these children to accept merely on our authority were sufficient to meet their emotional and religious needs. But they are not, and that makes the situation even worse. Look, for example, at the following sentence from Harris: "Pain, struggle, and sorrow are divine educators, developing the noblest capacities of the soul." (78) That is all, but other examples of a similar nature could be given too. Now what can a single, dogmatic sentence like this mean to a developing adolescent who is just becoming aware of the "great mysteries," who has perhaps just lost a parent or friend to death, or who sees someone he admires suffering untold suffering and pain? How dare we answer his doubt with but a single, smug statement? Yet that is what most of our writers have tried to do. They have given neat little answers which unquestionably satisfy them, instead of seeking to lead the child, through his own thinking, to an answer which will satisfy him.

Perhaps this is the place to suggest quite humbly what seems to be a defect underlying a good part of the trouble we have found in the methods our writers employ for the teaching of religion and especially of creed. We do not believe that any of them has gone far enough on the road of making belief a functioning element in the lives of adolescent children. In all fairness to Enelow it must be

admitted that at least he recognized this as a definite need. For he writes: "No religion is worth anything that does not show itself in one way or another in actual life." (79) Unfortunately this is another instance where the best of intentions was not fulfilled, for after stating this profound truth, he does nothing about it. This we believe to be the crux of the whole problem. We have not sought to make religion a vital, functioning factor in actual everyday life. And until we find some way to do that, our efforts will be doomed to the same sort of failure as that we have consistently noted throughout this chapter.

MISCELLANEOUS

There remain just one or two miscellaneous remarks before we leave the subject of creed, which we have considered at such great length. The manual of Herz Homberg is especially interesting because it comes from the pen of a man who was attempting to reconcile what we today would call Orthodox Judaism with a rationalist point of view. The rationalistic view of Homberg might, at least in part, be treated in this chapter on creed, but in order that it may be discussed as a whole rather than be broken into bits, we shall delay our consideration of it until a later chapter. Suffice it to say here that in his presentation of creed, Homberg naturally betrays his rationalist leanings.

It is also worthy of brief note, though hardly meriting a lengthy discussion, that here and there we find a trace of polemics even in these books intended for adolescent children. It is notice-

able in at least two respects, in an emphasis upon the unity of God, with hinted allusions to the notion of Trinity, and in a defense of the Old Testament as against the New. By way of brief examples, it should be noticed that Homberg discredits the New Testament, saying that there is nothing new before God, and that there would therefore be no reason for him to reject the Bible he had once given man in favor of another or superier one.(80) And Friedlander, besides emphasizing our doctrine of Unity as opposed to the Christian Trinity, takes pains to remark that the Messiah will be "a descendant of the house of David, a human being, and not any more of Divine descent than any other man."(81) But this polemical note is no more than we would properly expect, and so we need concern ourselves with it no longer.

We proceed, then, to a very brief consideration of the Bible and Jewish history as they appear in our manuals.

CHAPTER VI: BIBLE AND HISTORY

We include these two subjects in a single chapter because, as far as our manuals are concerned, they may be considered minor subjects, especially in comparison to those which have occupied our attention in the last three chapters. We shall therefore devote but a few pages to the two of them. It should be remembered, first of all, that our analysis in Chapter II showed us why these two are subjects of minor importance in this study. Bible is treated, in one way or another, by ten of the fourteen manuals, while history is included by only five of our writers. With but a few exceptions, no significant amount of space is devoted to either. (82)

BIBLE

We would naturally expect to see some difference in the attitude taken by the various writers toward the Bible, especially since their manuals cover a span of some hundred and fifteen years and include representatives of many different opinions. But the line of demarcation here differs somewhat from that which we have found in regard to other subjects. For here we find Reform, Conservative and Orthodox writers in close agreement. Outside of an individual exception like Kohler, the one group which may be said to differ as a group from the others is what we have called the New Reform group. It is the only one which consistently takes a modern or scientific attitude toward the Bible. But this is another of the many

conclusions which do not surprise us at all.

An example from each group should suffice to illustrate the conservative attitude which a majority of our writers take toward the Bible. We turn first to Friedlander, whose point of view is precisely what we would expect from a representative of Orthodoxy: with regard to the Pentateuch he has this to say: "The Torah has not undergone any change... Even in periods of corruption and idolatry, there were men who remained faithful to the Law, knew it thoroughly, and would have easily detected any alteration, if any person had dared to tamper with the Holy Treasure." (83) The extremely close agreement between this and the Conservative point of view is shown by the following quotation from Greenstone, who not only holds the same view, but even employs the same reasoning: "Too many people knew it, there were too many copies to allow any mistaken version to exist long. It is therefore our firm belief that the Torah, as it is now found in our scrolls, is the same as written by Moses." And even more conservative, if possible, is the following, taken from the same page: "The Torah is a divine work, directly communicated by God to Moses, and is, therefore, permanent and binding upon all generations. We cannot say that a certain law should be abolished because the reason for its existence has ceased. The Divine mind might have had many different reasons for that law, which we cannot at all conjecture. The laws of the Torah must stand forever." (84) Here is a point of view which is unequivocal. There can be no doubt about its meaning or intent.

A similarly conservative inference may be drawn from the manual of Isaac M. Wise, though it is mentioned only incidentally

in the course of a discussion on prayer, and is certainly not couched in the extreme language of Greenstone. In seeking to prove that prayer can be directly answered by God, Wise writes as follows: "The same Bible which teaches us, God is immutable and governs the universe by fixed laws, also informs us that the best and wisest men prayed in hours of affliction and God heard and granted their petition, and there can be no contradiction in Sacred Scripture." (85) So we see that whether by inference or direct statement, whether in terms moderate or extreme, the three groups are in essential agreement with regard to their conservative view of the Torah.

But we are able also to catch a faint glimpse of a newer attitude, to see what we may call the early beginnings of a more modern or scientific view. True, there seems to be nothing at all of this in the Orthodox group, but we should hardly expect to find it there. Indeed, it is surprising to find even a slight hint of it in Greenstone, whose conservative attitude we noticed but a moment ago. It would be gross misrepresentation to say that Greenstone yields in any way to Biblical criticism. But it is significant to note that his extreme conservatism regarding the Torah, which he extends in several places to the Prophets too, apparently does not hold good when it comes to the Hagiographa. At least we have definite evidence to show that it does not apply to the Psalms, when we notice what Greenstone has to say about their authorship: "Only a portion of the Psalms was really composed by King David," he writes, "although they are usually known as the 'Psalms of David.'" (86)

But with Kaufman Kohler we find what we may definitely call the genesis at least of a scientific attitude toward the entire

Bible. The following three quotations from his manual will disclose his attitude toward all of Scripture. First, with regard to one of the prophetic books: "Isaiah, containing the addresses of Isaiah, with several late prophecies [^]interwoven. The last twenty-six chapters were written by unknown prophets of and after the Exile." (87) With regard to the Proverbs of Solomon, part of the Hagiographa, he writes as follows: "The first ten chapters and the last one were added at a later time." (88) And finally, with regard to the canonization of the entire Bible he shows quite clearly that he has broken with old, traditional views. He writes: "But the work of composition and arrangement, the collection and admission of the books as the standard scriptures of the synagogue, was a work of gradual growth and development." (89) We need hardly add any further comment to indicate that there is a significant difference between this and the opinions of Greenstone, Friedlander and Wise. In his point of view regarding the Bible Kohler almost seems to belong to the New Reform group.

For these later representatives of the Reform school are all quite naturally agreed in presenting a thoroughly scientific stand. Although none of them goes into the details of Biblical criticism, all discuss the Bible as a slowly-developed collection of books, written at different times by different men, and finally gathered into one sacred whole. It is interesting to see that none of the Orthodox manuals, not even the most recent, takes any notice at all of this modern view.

One further matter of interest before we leave our discussion of the Bible is the use to which Scripture is put by the various authors. Although, ^{as} we have said, only ten of our fourteen

volumes devote any amount of space to the Bible as such, there is not a single one which does not include at least certain quotations from the Bible. In this sense, then, it is a subject of major importance, and we wish to know in what different ways the Bible is used.

First of all, it is worthy of note that, considering the amount of space he could devote to the subject, Greenstone gives an adequate description of the entire Bible and its contents. He avoids the mistake of other writers with limited space, namely, a mere catalogue of books which bears no meaning for the class. In connection with each of the Bible's books, Greenstone gives a brief, simple, and satisfactory description of what that book contains.

But there are other uses made of the Bible besides a mere description of its nature and content. With one of these uses we must now take issue, fully aware of the fact that our stand is not one in full favor with everyone. The wisdom of demanding that certain passages and parts of the Bible be memorized is a point on which there has been and will continue to be much disagreement. In this the writer takes the same stand as he has already done in regard to the memorization of prayers. In other words, he opposes it.

Memorization, however, is quite generally expected in our authors' treatment of the Bible. Thus Enelow asks his students to memorize not only the names of the books in proper order, but also various passages specified by him.(90) And Cohen instructs his readers to memorize two prophetic passages and quote them from memory.(91) The writer definitely differs from those authors who make such requirements, perhaps because the necessity of Bible memorization is

still fresh in his own mind. Our aim, it will be agreed, is to build in our children favorable attitudes and attachments to the Bible. We want our Sacred Writ to mean something more than a dull volume bound in black covers. Now to the average child memorization is a task of sheer perseverance, nothing more. It is doubtful whether anything has contributed so much to the general dislike for good literature of all kinds as has the dull memorization required in our schools. Furthermore, if it be the firm conviction of any teacher or rabbi that memorization is an absolute necessity, then perhaps it would be better to give the individual child some amount of choice regarding the passage to be learned. By presenting a number of the more appealing sections, and then allowing the individual to choose that which he wishes to memorize, we are at least coupling with a dull task some training in literary appreciation and discrimination. In any event, there is at least some room for doubt as to whether the procedure so commonly followed with regard to Bible memorization is the wisest possible.

An effective and altogether proper use of the Bible is made by Enelow, who sometimes sends the members of his class to the Bible for small pieces of research. They are asked to find something in the Bible, are told in general where to look for it, and are given a set of guide questions to aid them in their search. As a means of acquainting them with the Bible, and as a way of building up an appreciation and love for the Bible, this impresses us as being ever so much wiser than the methods criticized above. Enelow, as far as we are able to ascertain, is the only one of our writers to make conspicuous use of the Bible in this way.

In a somewhat different direction Greenstone too makes intelligent use of the Bible. Almost without exception our Orthodox and even older Reform writers use Biblical passages as conclusive proof for whatever idea they are presenting. Scripture is quite naturally their piece de resistance, in the sense that it is a final proof for anything and everything. Just as it served our fathers when they wrote the Talmud and Midrash and other rabbinic literature, so for these nineteenth and twentieth century writers too only a Biblical passage or phrase is needed to prove an opinion beyond doubt. Whether consciously or not, Greenstone seems to depart somewhat from that procedure. Not that he fails to quote the Bible. But the whole spirit of his quotations seems to differ. Wherever there is a quotation which is effective for illustrative purposes, he uses it. In other words, his use of the Bible is more like that of the modern sermon than the ancient one. The Bible, as the record of our people's past, becomes a deep well of illustrations rather than an infallible oracle. This, we feel, is a definite step forward.

This brings us to our final thought about the Bible. We have already stated that this use of the Bible as the ultimate bit of proof is very widespread in the material we have examined, and that all of our manuals quote the Bible more or less frequently. But not a single one of them has attempted to teach the Bible as literature. After all, we who no longer look upon Scripture as a sacrosanct whole delivered by God to Moses and preserved in perfect form, have come to think of it rather as the world's greatest piece of literary writing, as a record of progress covering centuries of time, as a mirror reflecting the whole gamut of human emotions and

thoughts, from the lowest to the highest. It is as such, then, that we must teach the Bible and build an appreciation for it. To the extent that our writers try in some small measure to do this, they have succeeded in their presentation of Bible.

HISTORY

And now for the second of the two subjects to be considered in this chapter. There are only two of our authors who deemed history of sufficient importance in a Confirmation course to give it a whole section, totaling more than a tenth of their total space. They are Harris, who gives it 35%, and De Solla, with some 17% given to history. Although there are two others who give close to a tenth of their space to the subject, still they treat it more as an incidental feature than as one worthy of complete separate treatment. (92) How, then, do Harris and De Solla present the subject of history?

Perhaps the whole story with regard to Harris may be told in the revealing statement that he encompasses the whole of Jewish history in forty-four small pages. It goes without saying that he has attempted an impossible task, and is doomed to failure. His treatment of history, to put the matter briefly and bluntly, is dull, inadequate, futile, confusing and uninteresting. A brief glance at his material will support even so sweeping a condemnation as this. One cannot escape feeling that if any sort of history at all has been taught before the Confirmation year, these remarks by Harris would be totally unnecessary. And if, on the other hand,

no history has been taught before, as we might well suspect from the manual itself, then surely this is much too late to atone, in a few pages, for so grievous an omission. The material here is inadequate even as an outline.

It must be admitted, however, that the language is well chosen and simple. But the inevitable effect of such a kaleidoscopic presentation is boredom. Especially in those sections which seek to trace the story of spiritual and religious growth in Israel, there is an alarming confusion. So much so, indeed, that it is almost impossible to place one's finger on the outstanding notion or thought of any paragraph or section. This is particularly noticeable in the closing parts of Harris's first chapter.

An inevitable result of crowding so much into so small a space is to eliminate those very details which are of greatest interest to young people. Thus, for example, the story of Jehanan ben Zakkai's ruse for the purpose of preserving his school, a tale which is as significant as it is interesting, is nowhere even mentioned. And even when similar stories do find their way into the text, they are boiled down so that everything interesting escapes in steam. Thus the following sentence is all that appears concerning the fascinating story of the Ghazars and their acceptance of Judaism: "The story of the Ghazars adopting Judaism from among the current creeds was chosen by Halevi as an opportunity to compare advantageously the principles of Judaism with those of the Church, the Mosque and the philosophic schools." (93) Enough, then, to show that it were better not to have attempted any discussion of history at all than to have condensed it beyond all interest and life.

De Solla, in covering the span of Jewish life in a twenty-page catechism, falls prey to the same dangers. All the events from Samuel through Solomon are described in seven lines! And everything important in the period of the Second Temple, including the events connected with Haman, Ezra, the Maccabees, the Mishnah and Talmud, the rise of Christianity, and the destruction of 70 C.E. are treated in no more than twenty lines! Not only is there this impossible brevity, but we note also an amazing and almost unbelievable lack of proportion. One example should suffice to make our meaning clear. Although only twenty lines were given to the whole era of the Second Temple, and the entire period of American Jewish history from 1654 to the date of writing is contained in twenty-five lines, there are no less than thirteen lines devoted to the Mortara case alone. Now we would not for a moment deny either the importance or the interest of this nineteenth century story, but to give it almost as much space as whole movements and periods is, to say the least, symptomatic of an unbalanced perspective.

Along with this lack of proportion there is also a very poor sense of organization. The section on history is a confusing, awkward collection of historical data gathered in spots, rather than organized periods. We must conclude, then, that neither of the two manuals which chose to treat history at length has done a good job. The fault is not entirely the authors', except insofar as they attempted an impossible task, for it is doubtful whether anyone else could have done a really good job in so limited an amount of space.

Although Jabez also devotes considerable space to remarks on history, we can scarcely speak of him as we do of the two

men discussed above, because his remarks on history are simply dragged in here and there, presumably to break the monotony of whatever he has been discussing. While he succeeds admirably in breaking his material into bits small enough to prevent his students from being bored, he does this too well. The result is a scatter-brain type of organization which makes of his material on history little more than an isolated paragraph here and there.

As for the others, where they treat history at all, it is merely in an incidental way. Two in particular succeed in doing this well. Among the Reform writers, Cohen makes frequent and good use of events from the Jewish past to illustrate some point he has made or wishes to make. And among the Orthodox representatives, Bogaisky presents historical material very effectively in connection with the holidays. In his treatment of Lag B'Omer, for example, he tells the story of Bar Cochba vividly and well. Similarly when he treats the holidays of Chanukah and Purim, the historical background is presented in an unusually fine fashion. It seems, then, that these men have followed a wiser course than have those who would attempt a full and separate treatment of history in the Confirmation course. Not that either they or we minimize the importance of studies in Jewish history. But the proper place for them would seem to be elsewhere in the religious school curriculum.

There is one further item which we shall consider here, frankly, because there seems to be no other place where it belongs. We have already noted, in our discussion of Israel's mission, that there are different ways of viewing the Destruction and Dispersion. In a certain sense, this has a place in our discussion of history,

although we included it as belonging more properly to the subject of creed.

We pause now, however, to note, along similar lines, that there is also a tremendous difference, obvious in at least two cases, in our authors' opinions concerning Palestine as it is connected with the Jewish past and future. One extreme is that of Isaac M. Wise, who expresses almost a contemptible view of Palestine in the following statement: "But it is now defiled by barbarism and impiety, it is the holy land no more. The habitable earth must become one holy land; this is the object of the Law." (94)

Exactly the opposite extreme is upheld by Jabez, who, as a Mizrachist, naturally looks upon Palestine with different eyes. Written in the same century but thirty years later than Wise's, his manual speaks of Palestine with affection and devotion. His remarks on that land may be translated as follows: "The number of Jews in the world today is about ten million, scattered to all corners of the earth. But every one of them fervently hopes that the day will come when God will return His people to the good land which He promised to our fathers ... " (95) Later he writes as follows: "Every people which has been exiled from its land has, after two or three generations, forgotten it and become estranged from it. Not so with the Jews; they remain true to the great vow which their fathers swore by the rivers of Babylon ... " And again, on the same page: "And not only in lip service have the Jews kept faith with the land of their fathers. For they have sacrificed their lives to go up to that sacred land, and they have paid no attention to the misfortunes

"which met them on the way or to the deficiencies which met them in the midst of the land ... "(96) It is obvious that we have, in these two opinions, the two uttermost extremes, between which all the other opinions must fall.

So much, then, for our discussion of Bible and history.

CHAPTER VII: PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

It was inevitable that in the course of our discussions thus far we should have been concerned at times with the methods employed for the teaching of various ideas. This is because method and content are never so neatly separated into private compartments that it is possible to sever the one from the other. And so, even though our prime concern thus far has been with the ideas of religion, we could not help but notice, at times, the way in which those ideas were taught.

By now, however, the time has come when we must devote an entire chapter to that which we considered only in an incidental manner before. Its importance is such that we cannot possibly be thorough while neglecting it. For the effectiveness of all the ideas we have studied is directly dependent upon the effectiveness of the means used to teach them. This should be obvious enough to make further explanation unnecessary.

One fact central to any modern philosophy of education must be briefly stated here. That is the notion, developed out of the pioneering work of Dewey, that the child himself must be considered the center of every educative experience. Most people at one time considered the subject matter as the center, and whatever content they wanted to teach was divided into more or less digestible bits and fed to the child in doses. Stated somewhat differently, the child had to be adapted to the subject matter. We no longer think in such terms. Now we like to think rather that the child is our

starting point, that his native capacities and interests must ever be in our minds, and that the subject matter must be adapted to him, rather than vice versa.

The reader must forgive this short digression into the paths of pedagogy, but it is absolutely essential for our further discussion. Before we can judge the psychological approach of our writers, we must be agreed on the standard we shall use. And for our present purposes, we make that standard the child himself. What we seek to know in this chapter is the extent to which our authors have kept the Confirmation child in mind while writing their manuals. In this connection a remark made at the very outset of our study will bear repetition. We are here judging many men by criteria which did not even exist, or at least were not known, during their lifetimes. We admit that from one point of view that is hardly fair. But we are concerned with something more important than fairness to individual writers; we are concerned with the causes of religion's weakness today. And from that point of view we must be critical according to the standards we now have.

Turning, then, to these standards, we first pause to disagree with a statement made by two of our authors. In their Introduction, Feuer and Glazer are overly considerate of their predecessors when they write as follows: "The older manuals were adequate in their day, but at the present time they are two or three years below the mental age of most Confirmation students. It has been our experience that the boys and girls soon become dissatisfied with the oversimplification and the dogmatic manner of approach which characterized the older manuals." (97) Now we are more than willing to agree on

the "dogmatic manner of approach," to which we have already devoted considerable space. But we have failed utterly in our search to find anything even remotely resembling "over-simplification." Indeed, it is our definite impression that the opposite is closer to the truth, that the psychological nature and needs of both thirteen and fifteen year olds have been neglected in the approach characteristic of the manuals as a whole.

We believe that this is true even if we judge from the standard of a fifteen year old class. How much truer, then, when we remember that most of these manuals were prepared with a Confirmation age of thirteen in mind.

THREE QUESTIONS

There are at least three important questions to be answered in any analysis of psychological approach. They are: (1) How many of our manuals indicate the method or methods of teaching to be used? (2) How many of them have apparently considered the child in their arrangement and order of material? And finally, (3) do our authors ask guiding questions for purposes of discussion and comprehension in reading? A consideration of these three queries will cover a large part of the psychological approach to our subject.

First with regard to an indication of the teaching methods. It might not appear at first that this is essential. "If a rabbi succeeds in arranging and publishing good material," it may be asked, "why need he bother to give the teacher blue-print instructions for the use of that material? Is the teacher not to be trusted at all?" Unfortunately the answer in most cases must be a negative

one. Even today, with teachers as a whole much better trained than they were fifty years ago, even today the best of materials must be given to the teacher with specific instructions for their use. Too much depends on the ability and inclination of the individual teacher to overlook that factor. The best of materials can be ruined, and the poorest taught passably well. And the writers of textbooks must try to reduce the element of chance by indicating the proper way to use their materials.

How many of our authors do this? Almost none. As a matter of fact, not a single one actually gives this information as such. And only Jabez and Homberg give anything which could be considered in this light at all. Jabez, to begin with, gives several commendable pedagogical principles in his Introduction. Translated, one of them reads as follows: "Little children according to their ability; young people according to theirs." (98) Later he informs us more concretely what he means, by applying the general principle to certain specific cases. "It is no longer considered necessary to make a child, whose memory is undeveloped, remember names and dates; it is enough if he perceives just the general tone of each period." (99)

What is our aim, according to Jabez, in the teaching of very young children? "To rejoice the heart of the little child with stories, and to make the heritage of his fathers dear to him when his heart is still tender and pure." (100) Now of course a suggestion like this last one is not of immediate interest to us, because it deals with children much below the Confirmation age. Jabez's volume is not, strictly speaking, a Confirmation manual, any more than the other Orthodox volumes are or could be. It is a text-

book on religion, and as such is intended for children younger than adolescent age.

But the following suggestion, perhaps the wisest he makes, is important more directly for us. It supports some of the conclusions we have already reached, and in a sense is a forerunner of educational advances made a quarter of a century or more after Jabez lived. This writer thoroughly opposes forced memorization, and gives his reason as follows: "Memorization tires the child and he grows impatient with it... For a man does not really learn anything unless he uses it in some work." (101) This is one of the most interesting passages we have met. It surprises us greatly to find that even in the field of modern education we had Jewish thinkers who foresaw much that is supposed to be the latest thing. We believe that an acceptance of Jabez's advice would eliminate many of the deficiencies we have been noting in our consideration of these manuals.

But we must judge each author not alone by what he says, but also by how he follows his own advice. We have found more than one case where the two did not necessarily coincide. With Jabez there is much to be praised and some to be damned. In the beginning of his manual there is a decided attempt to practice what he preaches. The language is simple, a story type of presentation is frequently employed, and the material is arranged to eliminate monotony and provide the variety and interest so necessary but so seldom found in study material for children. Later we shall see that this introduction of variety also has one distinct disadvantage, but from our present point of view it is a commendable effort. Unfortunately, however, as the manual proceeds, there seems to be less and less of the approach

just described. One gains the impression that as Jabez became more and more immersed in his material, he thought less and less about the best manner in which to present it. And although something of the spirit with which he began is followed through, there is a noticeable let-down as far as his psychological approach is concerned.

We turn now to the second of the two manuals giving some measure of useful pedagogical information, namely, Herz Homberg's. Here we find suggestions very similar to those of Jabez, expressed, perhaps, in more definite form. We may translate one passage from the book as follows: "It is not desirable to fill their heads with mere words and names, or with sayings that have no use, for out of all this they will not acquire understanding... Nor is it proper for the teacher to scold his pupils too much, and he should never anger... And he should not weary of answering their questions, even if they ask him about one thing a hundred times, for things will become much clearer to them through questions and answers." (102) It seems almost unbelievable to find such advanced instructions in a volume published in 1816.

But Homberg's manual contains other sound advice too, again similar to that expressed by Jabez. Pleading for a public observance of ceremonial duties, Homberg gives the following by way of reason: "Because the most precious learnings soon fly away from the hearts of the weak-minded, and are not engraven in their memories except through actual use, through which one remembers what he learns, therefore the duties of the God-fearing wise person should be performed in public, in the synagogue." (103) Here again is the suggest-

that by seeing and doing concrete things children tend to learn most.

Unfortunately Homberg carries his own preaching into practice less than Jabez does. Still in the use of concrete illustrations and simple language he clearly surpasses many of the later manuals. One fact worthy of note is that at the start of each new chapter or section there is a good review of the preceding lesson. This is the only manual which provides directly for such review, without leaving it to the teacher's discretion.

We must notice two further facts before going on to the second of our three questions. First of all, none of the foregoing advice deals specifically with the use of a particular manual. Even those excellent bits of advice we have been able to find in this chapter deal with general principles of teaching, and not even Homberg and Jabez give specific instructions for the use of their own particular books. But where there is so pitifully little, we must be grateful for what we do find.

The second fact is an interesting commentary on the above. Only two out of fourteen manuals have been found praiseworthy in the matter of hints to teachers. It is interesting to see that both are from the Orthodox group and both were written in the nineteenth century. Indeed, one of them is the oldest manual of all, having been written in 1816. Here, just where we would least expect to find valuable pedagogic hints to the teacher, we find them most. None of the later Reform manuals can equal these two in this respect. In other ways, of course, the newer ones surpass these two, but with regard to this one point we are surprised to find two nineteenth century Orthodox manuals leading the rest. So much, then, for our

first question.

The second query to be answered is: "How many of the books have apparently considered the child in their arrangements and order of material?" In other words, how many present their discussions in a psychological rather than a logical order? Now first we must determine what the best psychological order is. It will probably be agreed by all that where we have both concrete and abstract material to offer children, it is best that the concrete be given first. Applying this as a general rule, the implication for us is that the lessons on ceremonials should precede those on ethics and creed. Or we might even stretch a point and admit that the subject of Confirmation itself, although not necessarily concrete, is close enough and vital enough to the children's interests to serve as effective motivation. But even if we do this, we find that only five out of all these manuals commence with either Ceremonies or Confirmation as their first lesson. Greenstone, Hurwitz and Bogaisky, a Conservative and two Orthodox writers, are the only ones to start with ceremonies, while Confirmation itself is the starting point for both De Solla and Enelow. Perhaps it would be worth-while to quote Greenstone's own reason for his order, to show that what he had in mind was something similar to the reasons given above. This is what he says: "I began with the ceremonies, not because I considered this phase of our religion the most important, but because I thought that the children would be able to understand first the more concrete, and, as they grew older, would by degrees grasp the abstract principles of ethics and religion." (104) Of course where we are using a manual for a single year's instruction the differentiation by ages is not

so binding, yet even within that one year it is sound to begin with the concrete. Hurwitz and Bogaisky do that without any comment.

Outside of the five mentioned above, however, the others all start with abstract material. Five or six begin with the most abstract material of all, namely, creed. They are Wise, Adler, Kohler, Homberg, and Jabez, while Feuer and Glazer begin with a discussion of religion in general, also abstract. The remaining three commence their presentations with material not nearly so abstract as creed, yet more so than ceremonies. These three, Friedlander, Harris and Cohon are somewhere between the two extremes.

Now for the third of our questions: "Do our authors ask guiding questions for purposes of discussion and reading help?" Here the answer is more or less obvious, and we need spend but little time in stating it. Only four manuals ask such questions consistently at the end of each chapter or section, while a fifth includes them only at certain times. The four are Encelow, Cohen, Feuer and Glazer, and Hurwitz, while Jabez is the one who asks such questions occasionally. Here we note the opposite of a previous conclusion, for here it is the more recent volumes which excel. Some questions are also asked by De Solla, but only in the two chapters he devotes to catechisms, to be used as part of the Confirmation ceremony itself.

This leads us quite naturally to a consideration of the type of question asked. Earlier in this study we found occasion to point out the difference between fact questions and thought questions. Now we must devote more attention to that difference, with special reference to the guide questions our authors ask. We can dispose of Hurwitz with one sentence. The questions he asks are

entirely and without exception fact questions, calling for no judgment or evaluation or thought at all on the part of the children. From what has already been said, it will easily be seen that the writer would disapprove such questions.

With regard to Feuer and Glazer the answer is similar, but our explanation and discussion of it will take a bit longer. Here too there is an over-abundance of fact questions and a deplorable dearth of thought questions. Not only is there this lack of questions stimulating thought, but there is at least one vivid case where a question with excellent possibilities has been deliberately ruined. Perhaps pausing to describe it will at the same time clarify what we mean by this distinction between the two types of questions. In the second chapter of their book Feuer and Glazer discuss the essentials of religion, naming five of them in all. At the conclusion of that chapter the following question is asked: "What is the most important of the Essentials of Religion?" (105) Now that in itself is an excellent question. To answer it, the children must first of all know and understand the five essentials of religion, and then must think about them, exercise a certain critical faculty, and give reasons for their choice. There could be few better examples of a good thought question. There is only one thing wrong with this particular specimen. It has already been answered for the children. Instead of describing the five essentials and then asking that the children think about their importance for themselves, the most important in the authors' minds was pointed out in the text before the question was even asked. So it becomes not a thought question, but a question of fact, not a question seeking the child's own opinion,

but one asking that the teacher's opinion be remembered. Let there be no misunderstanding. We would not for a moment be so extreme as to say that the teacher has no right in a case like this to express an opinion, lest the class be unduly influenced. After all, the teachers and authors are certainly better qualified by far to answer the question than the children can be. But by handing out the answer on a silver platter they are doing nothing to help develop the thinking power of the children. Let the children rather be given an opportunity first to do their own thinking, mistakes and all, and then let the teacher point out where the mistakes were made and why some of the thinking done was wrong. In the course of time a procedure like this will result in fewer and fewer mistakes and better thinking by far.

Before we leave the manual by Feuer and Glazer, there is another mistake in the asking of questions, found rather widely in the manuals but illustrated unmistakably here. It is the error of asking a question calling for certain facts which are not given in the text, and not indicating where or how the information may be found. Thus, after discussing some of the problems of peace, the authors ask this question: "What agencies have been organized working toward the establishment of World Peace and how does each of them carry on its work?" (106) Now a question like that could well form the basis for a valuable piece of research by the children if they were given directions telling where the information could be found, and were then asked to bring back reports to the class. But as it appears in this form, it is useless.

With Enelow we see for the first time a noticeable

effort toward the asking of thought questions. There is one example at the end of the chapter called "The Story of Confirmation." The children are asked to consult the Jewish Encyclopedia for the life of Israel Jacobson and then to indicate what connection they think it has with Confirmation. Here is a case where the children are not only told where to find certain facts for themselves, but must do something to evaluate those facts too. An example from the chapter on God is even clearer. After the author has briefly traced the development of the God idea through several of its stages, he then asks: "What made some people serve idols?"(107) Nowhere in the text is the answer specifically stated. But enough information is given so that, with a reasonable amount of thought, the children should be able to answer. This is the sort of question which is valuable. It must be admitted, though, that examples like these are few and far between in Enelow, so that we have little more than just the beginning of a good thing. We shall find more of it in another manual, but first must notice several incidental features of Enelow's questions.

Some of his questions are "leading," in the sense that there can be only one answer. This is true of the following question, asked about the sources of our religion: "Is the Bible the only source of Jewish knowledge? If not, why not?"(108) Now while it is true that the second part of that question asks for information not covered in the first part, it also answers the first question beyond doubt. Any child of average intelligence could tell at a glance that only a negative answer could be given to the question first asked. In popular parlance, then, it is a "give-away."

And finally, we find the same sort of thing here as in the previous manual, namely, a question asking for information but not indicating specifically where it can be found. The children are told: "Find some famous prayers of the Bible." (109) How in the world could children who know little or nothing about the Bible search its many books for "famous prayers?"

The only other author who includes guide questions for discussion is Cohon. With him we shall find the type of thought question we have favored used more extensively than by any of the others. Our chief criticism of Cohon in this respect would be that he does not ask enough thought questions, but most of those he asks are excellent, and there is no doubt that he asks many more than do the writers already considered. Of course in criticizing the proportion of questions which stimulate thought we cannot, in all fairness, forget that it is no easy task to compose good thought questions. It is much easier to ask questions of fact, and it may well be that even the severest critic could not increase the proportion of thought questions himself.

A few examples from his Introduction will suffice to show the kind of thought question which Cohon asks. After pointing out that an essential difference between Judaism and some other religions is that some faiths were promulgated chiefly by one mind, while ours grew from many, he asks: "Which is better, for a religion to be promulgated by one person or by many persons? Why?" Here is an excellent example of a question which asks the children to take certain information given them and to go beyond it, to reason and think about it. Then, in the event that this question is not specific

enough or fails to elicit response, there are the following more detailed queries just after it: "If a religion is given to the world by one person and later people find that he was mistaken in some of his teachings, what is likely to happen to that religion? If a religion is the creation of many teachers and later people find that one or the other of these teachers were wrong in their teachings, what is likely to happen to that religion?"(110) And so we might go on to give other examples too, but this should suffice. It appears that in the latter parts of Cohon's book there are fewer of these excellent thought questions than in the earlier pages. Whether this is due to the difference in subject matter or to some other factor we do not know. But the fact remains that Cohon excels the others both with regard to the quantity and quality of thought questions asked as guides for reading and discussion.

LANGUAGE

There is one more item to be considered in our discussion of psychological approach. The kind of language used, whether it is too easy or too hard for children, is certainly a factor of tremendous importance. It might almost be considered the most important factor of all, for if the finest sentiment in the world be obscured by language which is confusing, it might better have been left unwritten. And so we must turn our attention to the language used.

Here we behold one of the saddest spectacles of all. Perhaps nowhere else is there more tragic and widespread failure. For somehow many of our writers have no feeling at all for the needs and abilities of children. The writer himself found difficulty on

more than one occasion in ferreting out the meaning of this passage or that. At times it appears that these rabbis were writing for learned assemblies of German philosophers rather than for children. Indeed, we might easily fill the pages of a whole chapter with examples of atrocious and ridiculous language. Sorely as we may be tempted to do that very thing, we shall limit ourselves to a minimum number of examples which will prove even to the most doubtful reader that we have, if anything, understated the case.

Consider, for example, the following masterpiece from the manual by Isaac M. Wise: "It is unsafe to judge the nature of a large object by the manifestations of one of its minute parts... It is unsafe to judge of God's wisdom by the knowledge we may have of one leaf or crystal, although in them as in the universe God's wisdom is revealed. It is safest to observe God's wisdom in the grand total of the universe, the simple causes, grand effects, and the harmony of its heterogeneous parts; although we know not whether from the sun to the mote, the earth to a particle, or from the elephant to the infusorium there is one step beyond the center of creatures. In like manner it is unsafe to judge of God's Providence and justice by the fate of one man or by one category of instances, although the justice of Providence is visible in every man's life. It is safest to learn the justice of Providence from the history of mankind, although history is but a meager record of the fate, experience and transactions of the human family."(111) Pity the children subjected to such stuff! And pity the religion which hoped to preserve itself through such instruction!

Sometimes the profoundest truths are violated by being

expressed in language similar to the above. The following is a clear example from Adler: "All other creatures on earth are, by their whole being, but of a sensual nature; whereas man possesses a twofold nature, a sensual and a supersensual one. His soul is not merely vitality, but an independent, spiritual being... This twofold nature of man is the source of his twofold propensity for and susceptibility of higher and lower aspirations..."(112) Even if this were not German written in English, it would still be so dull and dry as to cast doubt on the normality of any child who happened to understand it.

Merely to avoid the accusation of playing favorites, suppose we look at one or two examples from the Orthodox group too. Here the questionable honors go to Friedlander, who is guilty of the following in his explanation (!) of Maimonides' first article of faith: "It is true that we perceive the action of certain natural forces and laws, and connect them with the phenomena noticed by us... Or when we notice things, individuals, or species produced and developed according to the law of evolution, this law is dependent on the Divine Will."(113)

But why spend more time multiplying examples like these? If the result were not a foregone certainty, it would be amusing to give a half dozen passages like these to groups of average adolescent children and ask them to write beneath each passage its meaning to them. We would undoubtedly discover that they meant nothing at all. If these were only isolated examples, chosen to amuse the reader, it would not be so tragic to find them. But they

are neither isolated nor amusing. They represent the sort of thing one finds in almost all the older manuals. As for the newer ones, outside of Cohen, Feuer and Glazer, and Greenstone, none of the volumes can escape criticism completely on this score.

It should be said, incidentally, that we found it almost impossible to judge the language used in the Hebrew manuals. For one thing, the writer himself does not feel sufficiently expert in Hebrew to judge what would be too difficult for children who had studied Hebrew since they were old enough to speak. For this reason, the Hebrew manuals are omitted from this consideration of language.

Perhaps this is the place to remark that often the manuals suggest references for the children which are actually far above their powers of comprehension. Even Cohen, who is one of the best in his entire psychological approach, includes as references "meant for the student" Joseph's Judaism as Creed and Life, parts of Moore's Judaism, a part of Kohler's Jewish Theology, and KAAusner's Jesus of Nazareth, all of which are quite definitely above the heads of adolescent youth between the ages of fifteen and sixteen. True, this is not specifically a matter of language, but it does come properly in a discussion of the proper psychological approach.

We have already remarked that Cohen, Feuer and Glazer, and Greenstone are superior to the others as far as language is concerned. But Homberg, Jabez, Cohen and Hurwitz are better than the others in a different respect, that is, in the concreteness of their expression. Where some of the other writers mention the Talmud and Midrash with nothing more than academic interest, removing them

entirely from the child's sphere of interest, Cohen tells several stories from rabbinic literature by way of illustrating its nature, and incidentally, making it attractive to children. Jabez and Hurwitz are likewise rich in rabbinic allusion. But more about this later.

In Homberg we note an especially fine use of concrete comparison. Almost at every turn, and especially where there is something abstract to be explained, he resorts to comparisons with every-day things in a successful effort to make things clear. Thus the difference between medicine and wine is pointed out to show how our first impression or taste of a thing is no fair criterion of whether it is good or bad for us, and other such examples are used in great number. (114) Homberg's frequent reliance on stories and comparisons has its drawbacks, of course, in making of his book a very bulky thing, but it also results in better instruction. Had the language been a bit more simple, more of the benefits to be expected from this concreteness would probably have resulted.

This concludes, then, our consideration of the psychological approach found in these manuals. Unfortunately we have discovered an alarming disregard for the child and for his interests and abilities in the discussions of our authors.

CHAPTER VIII: INDIVIDUAL REMARKS

With this, the most essential part of our study has been completed. We have surveyed the field as a whole, studied both group and individual differences between manuals, and discussed each of the subjects covered in detail. And finally, we have inquired into the psychological basis and approach which the authors use.

But there remain certain incidental or miscellaneous notes to be made with regard to some of the individual volumes. They are incidental only in the sense that they do not properly fit any of the categories already discussed, and not in the sense that they are unimportant. After all, in a study of this nature there were bound to be many valuable observations which do not belong to any of the specific issues we covered. They are byproducts of our main study, but may be of equal importance.

The amount of space to be given in this chapter will by no means be equal in the case of every manual. With some, a sentence or two may suffice; with others, there will be lengthy discussions covering several pages. Nor will there be any necessary coherence between our remarks about one manual as compared to the others. That is because we are not covering any one specific subject in this chapter, as we have tried to do before this, nor are we addressing ourselves to any set series of issues or questions. We are merely attempting to add whatever additional observations there may be about each manual, and wherever possible, to tie up some of the loose ends in order to present more of a unified critical evaluation.

WISE

It hardly needs to be said at this late point that there is little of value for present day religious education in this manual by the founder of American Reform. It is one of the worst we have examined from the point of view of language and concepts, and the sample of language given in the preceding chapter could have been multiplied many-fold if we had wanted to give the subject more space and time. The ideas Wise expresses are archaic and obscure, while the form of expression is beyond possibility. The views expressed are of the essence of early, enthusiastic Reform, which means completely and utterly anti-nationalistic, and the approach is a stilted, theological one. There is no need, however, of making further comments, because there is not the slightest danger of any one who has even seen the book using it.

ADLER

Just about the same thing may be said of Adler. We have already seen that in the type of language used he is a fit companion of Wise. There is very little in either volume that the average adolescent could even hope to understand. Here, as in Wise, we have a theological approach plus a certain smugness in the face of suffering and pain, a smugness entirely out of tune with our age, though it may not have been so incongruous when the manuals were written. There is a dryness and lack of vitality which makes it difficult even for the adult student to read more than a few pages

at a single sitting.

KOHLER

With Kohler we have a definite improvement in the type of language used, though it is still far from being either vivid or imaginative or interesting. But at least it is not as impossibly poor as that of Adler and Wise, and it is a little closer to the child's level.

Perhaps the poorest part of Kohler's manual is the chapter on ritual and ceremonies, where our customs are presented so briefly that they are bound to appear quite unattractive. (114)

Here too we have a definitely theological approach, with the same smugness and self-certainty found before. In the sections on ethics there is a touch of Puritanism, a poor basis of appeal, and an utter lack of concrete detail. At the same time there is a commendable effort to reinterpret some of the ethical ideals of the Ten Commandments in terms understandable to children.

And finally, this, like the preceding two manuals, is distinctly Reform both in its attitude toward ceremonies and its thorough opposition to anything which smacks of nationalism.

ENELOW

Beginning with Enelow, our comments will be of more practical value, because we are dealing now with those manuals of the Reform school which are still enjoying some degree of use.

Enelow is one of the few to recognize the proper limi-

tations of a Confirmation manual or course. It is obvious, from the information given in Chapter II, that many of our rabbis try to include everything they possibly can in their manuals. We have noted more than a few times that inadequate treatment is given to subjects which could be covered properly only in some other part of the school curriculum. Now not only does ~~---~~ Enelow show, by his choice of subject-matter and scope of material, that he knows there are certain limitations, but he specifically states that knowledge as follows: "It is not the object of this work to serve as a text-book of the Jewish religion or of Jewish history." (115) Having recognized and set for himself certain limitations at the start, and having realized that he could cover only a very limited field, he proceeds to do a better job than some of the others, who try to include everything and succeed in teaching nothing.

Enelow stands alone in that he is the only one to make effective use of the children's main interest for motivation. Here is a group of students gathered for a specific, known purpose: to prepare themselves for the ceremony of Confirmation. They know it, and he knows it. Therefore he begins by discussing Confirmation itself, and attempting to show how the matters to be studied are linked up with the ceremony. In this way Enelow succeeds in working from the known to the unknown, a perfectly sound principle of teaching.

He also uses a number of homely examples taken from the child's own experience to make things clear. All this together gives one the impression that he feels himself considerably closer to his class than some of the other teachers do.

We would not create the impression that for these

reasons Enelow has written a thoroughly satisfactory manual, beyond which we need not look for improvement. That is not at all true. These things we have stopped to mention are simply the respects in which Enelow represents a definite advance over the limitations of earlier writers, and it is not to be inferred from them that his manual is usable now.

One definite defect, beyond those we have already detailed, is that Enelow is not willing or able to follow through his own procedure to its logical end. He obviously tries to keep the child in mind. He begins with a matter known and interesting to the child, and in proceeding to the unknown seeks to speak in language meaningful to the child. But he does not permit the child to think. Wherever there are problems Enelow's own answer is immediately given. His manual would have been considerably improved had he made room for some concrete, honest thought on the part of the children, for an attempted solution on their part before his own answer was given.

HARRIS

Thus far in this chapter we have followed a progressive date line and seen improvement in more or less direct proportion to recency. Lest the reader deduce that a set rule may be deduced from this, we hasten to offer Harris as an example of the fact that later manuals can be poorer than earlier ones. For here is a book published some eight years after Enelow's, but definitely below the standard the latter set.

Harris wrote a poor book; there can be little doubt

about that. At least with regard to the manuals written more than twenty-five years ago we can be charitable and say that they were not as bad in their day as they seem to us now. But Harris does not even deserve this charitable judgment. Written in 1925, his manual is none the less definitely poor. More than that, it is the example par excellence of an attempt to cover everything within a single volume and a single course. In addition to the usual material on religion, he includes a section on Jewish history, another on Confirmation, including a suggested plan for the ceremony, and an entire section of readings from the Bible. The result is that not a single one of the four major parts is at all adequately covered.

This text does not even have the virtue of clarity, for the language used is almost as bad as that of the nineteenth century manuals we have criticized on that score. Such terms as "Idumean," "abstemious habits," and "evanescent" are used with no attempt to explain their meaning.

These remarks, added to those of earlier chapters, should indicate the writer's view of Harris beyond all doubt. Outside of a more attractive binding and appearance the book makes no significant advance beyond those written in the previous century.

It should be remarked, incidentally, that were Harris's suggestions for the Confirmation service itself followed, the result would be the driest, dullest ceremony possible.

CEHON

In pointing out the following defects in Cehon, we do

not mean to imply that he is to be classed by any means with Harris. To the contrary, our remarks in previous chapters have already indicated that in many respects his is the best of the manuals examined. But there are certain critical notes yet to be made.

One is that here and there certain terms or names are given without adequate explanation of what they mean. Thus, with regard to the sources of Judaism in Part I he lists such names as Saadia Gaon, Bachya, Solomon ibn Gabirol and Judah Halevi, with a sentence devoted to each and no adequate explanation of their identity. Merely to catalogue them in this way is futile. Either they should be entirely omitted or else included with proper explanations.

Particularly surprising in Cohen's manual is the absence of all Hebrew. Wherever prayers or blessings are given, they appear in English only. Perhaps there was some technical difficulty preventing the use of Hebrew type, but it is odd, even in a Reform manual, to find no Hebrew at all.

Withal, Cohen's is one of the most usable of our fourteen manuals. But its advantages, it seems to the writer, are more potential than actual. There are, within its pages, many of the tendencies we need, in what may be called embryonic form. There are examples of the sort of thing we want, but these examples are fewer than we should have liked. What is needed now is still further opportunity for pupil participation, discussion and thought. It may very well be that Cohen himself provides such opportunities in his own teaching; that we cannot know. But in any event, they ought to be incorporated into the manual itself.

FEUER AND GLAZER

Not much need be said here. If we have quoted but little from this manual and make but a brier remark or two here, it is because there is little to be said either for or against the volume. Of course it is much better than the average manual, yet there seems to be something lacking, something we are not always able to identify. The language and style of presentation, like Cohen's, are simple enough and should be understood by the children. But there is even less opportunity for the stimulation of thought here than in Cohen. Perhaps the greatest advantage of this manual over the others is in the pages on ethics, where the authors have done a good job of making concrete application to present conditions of the ethical ideals Judaism teaches.

It is also interesting to note that the order here is a direct opposite of Enelow's. The latter, we have noted, begins with the idea of Confirmation itself, and uses it as motivation for his entire course of study. Feuer and Glazer have done just the opposite. They begin with a study of Judaism and arrange all their material to build up to the idea of Confirmation. Their logic is that the purpose of all this studying is to preserve Judaism, and that in the effort to preserve Judaism we find our reason for Confirmation. We hesitate to judge which of the approaches is better, but it would seem that psychologically Enelow has made use of the sounder order. The two would have to be compared in actual practice, however, to pass final judgment.

This concludes, then, our miscellaneous remarks on the Reform manuals, and we proceed now to the one Conservative and six

Orthodox volumes.

GREENSTONE

We should notice at the outset that here, for the first time in this chapter, we have a volume which is nowhere referred to by its author as a Confirmation manual. The reason is easy to see. Confirmation is a ceremony introduced by Reform, and while it has spread by now to many Conservative congregations, at the turn of the century when Greenstone wrote this text, it was as unheard of among the Conservatives as among the Orthodox. It can easily be inferred, then, that none of the books remaining for consideration are, strictly speaking, Confirmation manuals, though we shall find one exception to this rule. But in the Orthodox group these volumes serve the purpose which Confirmation books do in the Reform. In other words, they are textbooks on the Jewish religion, written for the instruction of the young. As such, they have a proper place in this study.

Though we shall probably be accused of thinking that "the grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence," still it seems to us that large parts of Greenstone are more interestingly written than are the Reform manuals. This is certainly true of the portions on ritual and ceremonies, and perhaps of other sections too. Greenstone's picture of a typical Shabbos observance, for example, is really delightful, and is certainly within the child's understanding and experience.(116) Somehow there seems to be a certain warmth here with regard to ceremonies that is lacking in both the Reform and Orthodox texts.

Greenstone's book is the opposite of Harris's in the sense that one is fairly complete while the other is a skeleton. Again and again is it clear that by not attempting to crowd more than is possible into a single small book, and by a willingness to give more space where it is needed, Greenstone has succeeded in producing an interest which is altogether lacking in some of the more sketchy presentations. As a contrast to some of the kaleidoscopic presentations of the holidays, for example, it is refreshing to see this author devote four interesting pages to a discussion of Pesach alone.

There is a remark made by Greenstone which is apt to be confusing to his classes. The writer singles it out because he recalls a similar statement made in the Confirmation manual he himself used. This is the statement: "This belief that God is one, not composed of parts, and that there is no other besides Him, no one to compare with Him, distinguishes Judaism from all other creeds .."(117) We do not think it either necessary or wise to teach children a thing like this, which is untrue. Enough to tell them that ours was the first religion to preach the unity of God, that it has taught it to the whole world, and that it has clung to this belief in its purest form for many centuries. Why tell them that we are the only group believing this, when we are not? But this is, in the light of our conclusions thus far, a matter of minor concern, and we proceed to a consideration of the Orthodox group of manuals.

HOMBERG

There are a number of interesting items to note with

regard to Homberg's manual. For one thing, in the second part of his book, which is devoted to discussions of morals and ethics, he covers a great many things which we would no longer consider under those headings, matters of modern economic or sociologic interest. As an example we may note in particular that in one place he shows an almost prophetic insight into the future by warning against too many Jewish merchants.(118) Elsewhere he gives minute instructions with regard to diet and sanitation, especially urging his readers to wash their faces every day and their bodies once a week if possible, but at least once a month! (It should not be forgotten that this was written in 1816.) Nor is washing alone enough; one must be careful to change clothes several times a week too.(119) It is worth pausing another moment to translate one further sentence of this manual, a sentence which sounds more like it was taken from a 1936 advertisement against "body-odor" than an excerpt from an 1816 textbook on religion. In the best spirit of modern antiseptics, Homberg writes: "The evil odor which emanates from him (the man who fails to bathe) warns everyone to flee from his company, with the result that he sits desolate and alone."(120) Which is the nineteenth century Hebrew way of saying: "Even your best friend won't tell you." It has already been stated that occasionally there is an apologetic or polemic note in these manuals, evidence of the fact that sometimes the writers wrote with one eye focused on the Gentile world.

We note that especially in the case of Homberg, although it is not an obvious or direct type of apologetics. An exceptionally liberal attitude toward those of other religious faiths is so often repeated that we begin to feel as though "the lady doth protest too

"much." Although we might quote many examples of this, perhaps the most obvious is in his insistence that the humane obligations imposed by the Ten Commandments must be observed toward non-Jews as well as Jews. (121) Of course there is nothing wrong in that; it is good, liberal doctrine with which all can agree. But the way in which it is presented, and the frequency with which it is repeated, lead to some slight suspicion that he is writing for a censor or at least for a public wider than his fellow-Jews.

Before we turn to a consideration of Homberg as a rationalist, there is one minor matter of more interest than importance. We mention it here not because it has any bearing on our study as such, but purely because it is an amusing part of this particular manual. One of the quaintest, and perhaps even charmingly egotistical passages encountered in the whole study was the following, in which Homberg offers himself as a convincing example. As his piece de resistance in urging a careful choice between good and evil, he writes: "I was once a lad too, and I gained wisdom from all my teachers: I did nothing by myself, without first asking my teacher whether it was good or bad; and I never relied on my own understanding... And after I planted precious learning in my heart, I began to do good and right things, which are the fruits of understanding." (122) Here is a testimonial worthy of an evangelist or a high-pressure advertiser.

But now for the more serious and important business of considering Homberg as a rationalist. That he is very definitely a rationalist there can be no doubt. But we shall discover some interesting things about the kind and extent of his rationalism. First of

all, a few passages which establish beyond any doubt his claim to that title. As a means of securing knowledge of God, for example, he exalts reason above all else in a passage like this: "But the existence and unity of God reach us only through the power of reason alone." (123) Or another statement of the same idea occurs two pages later. After pointing out that we are led to knowledge of corporeal things through our senses, he draws the following distinction: "Not so with God; it is impossible to grasp the idea of His existence except through reason." (124) Not only is reason thus viewed as the only proper or possible path to God, but indeed it is the raison d'etat of creation itself. For our author declares without any hesitancy at all: "The creation of the world had no other purpose than the perfection of the soul of the rational person." (125)

It is not at all surprising, then, to find this author seeking to explain away some of the Bible's anthropomorphisms through the application of reason. One example should suffice. Apparently the thought of God's writing events in a book and then wiping the sinner's name from His book altogether bothered this exponent of reason not a little. But he resolves it, at least to his own satisfaction, as follows: "This is just by way of comparison to a man who writes the names of all his friends in a book, and if one of them becomes an enemy, he wipes him out of the book." (126) It may be said, perhaps with some justice, that Homberg is too easily satisfied with his own solution, but it cannot be denied that he reaches that solution by playing the role of rationalist.

Strange as it may at first seem, however, that role is not always so definite and clear. There is only one object which Homberg hesitates to place beneath the microscope of reason. That

object is the Torah. Somehow the Orthodox Jew shows himself even beneath the mantle of the rationalist. Thus the miracles of the Torah are upheld as such, something which could hardly be the case if his rationalism were complete and consistent.(127) It would probably be fair to say, therefore, that Homberg's rationalism means the exaltation of reason as a way of knowing God, but that it is not to be treasured as an approach to the Torah. It may be hard for us today to reconcile the two views, but we must remember that for all his departures from the beaten path of Jewish life and thought, Homberg lived at a time when not even an iconoclast dared to break all the idols he saw. Of course it should be understood that we have not based this conclusion about the limited extent of his rationalism just on the one passage quoted. There are other places too where he holds the Torah even above reason.(128)

So much for Homberg.

FRIEDLANDER

We shall have less to say about Friedlander. From a superficial first glance it may appear that we have a distinct pedagogical advance here in the division of material into proper "standards," which seem to correspond roughly to our American grades. Friedlander indicates clearly what he considers to be the right standard for each chapter, and even covers some material in several different ways for the different standards. Thus far, then, he seems to be in agreement with our best modern practice.

But when we look into the matter more fully the compliment to Friedlander must be withdrawn. For he shows no understanding

at all or the order or arrangement most suitable for children. He begins with a presentation of the Ten Commandments, parts of which are certainly too abstract either to interest or profit children of kindergarten age. Throughout both the so-called infant standard and Standard I this is all the children are to have. It is only later that concrete material about the festivals is finally introduced along with the Commandments.

DE SOLLA

The first specific thing to note here is that this volume differs from all the others. It is not like the others because, as we have already seen, it is more a service for Confirmation than a textbook or book of preparatory instruction. History and ethics and creed are introduced only in the two lengthy catechisms which are intended for use in a public examination which is part of the suggested Confirmation ceremony. Besides these there are also many specimen speeches, for rabbi as well as children. Were we to pause for all the nonsense included in these speeches, there would be no end to our study.

Although our concern throughout has been with the preparation for Confirmation rather than with the ceremony itself, a glance at some of these speeches is proper here because they indicate an attitude toward Confirmation as a whole. Such an attitude will necessarily reflect itself in the type of preparation too. With this in mind, we offer the following example. It is from the rabbi's address to his confirmands: "Remember, dear children, you are standing this day before God with all the charms and beauties of health and

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"youth, with a heaven of innocence in your guileless hearts, your life gleaming with joy and hope like the beautiful morning of a spring day." (129) This leaves us simply breathless!

There are so many such examples that we find it hard to choose between them. But the one just given should be enough to indicate what is meant. And since this is really but a bypath off our main interest, that should suffice.

There is one matter, however, to which we must devote more attention. There is a feigned liberalism about De Solla which results in something suspiciously akin to intellectual dishonesty. That is a harsh accusation, but the facts warrant it. The feigned liberalism occurs in the opening address for the rabbi. In it he says: "I shall not take advantage of the influence of the present occasion to ask from you vows which are apt to be violated... It has been my constant endeavor during the time that you have been under my instruction to enlighten your minds, not to chain it down to any creed. I have never said to you, you must believe this or that." (130) Now we may doubt whether De Solla really could mean exactly what he says in this passage. After all, we are interested in the transmission of certain facts and beliefs or we would not be bothering with Confirmation instruction in the first place. So perhaps a part of what is so glibly said above is impossible or fulfillment. But there is something commendable in the determination not to exact meaningless oaths or the old Bar Mitzvah type.

Then where is the dishonesty mentioned a moment ago? It lies in the fact that this worthy intention is not followed. The only one to express himself in this manner, De Solla is also the only

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one who actually emphasizes the oath or pledge to the extent that it irks the reader. If there is to be no attempt at forcing any pledge, then why should the rabbi, in his summary following the catechism on religion, ask: "Do you sincerely and honestly intend to follow the dictates of your religion as it has been taught to you... And will you always remember your high vocation and dignity as Israelites; always act in accordance with the truths and principles of our holy religion..." (131) There is nothing really wrong with this request, except that it does not follow the intention originally declared, so that one or the other should be omitted.

Worse even than the foregoing is the rather lengthy Profession of Faith which the children are to repeat during the ceremony. One wonders how it never occurred to De Solla that the mere idea of a Profession of Faith does not tally with his declaration that no vows were to be made. Would he have confirmed any child who refused to repeat the Profession, part of which reads: "To this creed we intend to adhere all the days of our life"? (132) We doubt it. Then where is the lavish liberalism of his former statement? Nor can it be argued that in all this the author was not directly conscious of the fact that he was actually exacting the very oaths which he himself disavowed. For in his final blessing of the children he acknowledges all the pledges they have taken: "You have openly and solemnly declared before God and this audience to believe with a firm faith in the doctrines of the Jewish religion and pledged yourselves to the observance of its duties..." (133)

It can easily be seen from all this why we have made the accusation of intellectual dishonesty, and why we decry it. We decry it because of our firm conviction that children will not be

taken in by pious but broken intentions, and that even if they were, it would be morally wrong for us to take advantage of that fact. It may be thought that we have made too much ado over a single manifestation of this phenomenon, but we think it important to warn against anything of this sort creeping into the Confirmation idea.

Before leaving De Solla there is one more observation of interest to be made. This is the only manual which is an exception to the rule that the Orthodox volumes are not specifically intended for Confirmation use as such. We know that this was written from a Portuguese Orthodox point of view, and we have seen that it is certainly intended for a Confirmation ceremony of some sort. Just why there should be this exception to the rule we do not know.

JABEZ

There was enough said in the previous chapter to indicate that Jabez is above the average of our manuals in his psychological approach and understanding of what would appeal to children. Unfortunately the compliment must be taken with a grain of salt even here. The beginning of his book, for example, is not ideal, especially since he starts right out by speaking of God, without any concrete introduction. But the level of his approach is, with certain exceptions like these, worthy of praise.

For one thing, he employs, as a framework for much of his discussion, a story form in which children play a part and to which other children would therefore be attracted. In addition, the language used is usually quite close to the child's level of understanding. We can state this as true notwithstanding the difficulty

we have already mentioned of judging the language of the Hebrew manuals.

And then a further compliment must be paid Jabez for his inclusion of a section of children's poetry at the end of his manual. Much of it could well be used as illustrative material for the discussions preceding it. Unfortunately it seems that a good tendency runs away with its author, for the last half dozen or so of the poems have nothing to do with the text itself, and it is difficult to discover just why they were included.

The organization of Jabez is poor, perhaps as poor as any of the others. We have already indicated that this may be because of his efforts to avoid monotony by breaking his material into bits small enough for the digestive ability of a child's mind. The intent is worthy and the result is achieved, but often at the price of haphazard organization.

One respect in which the Orthodox books as a group are superior, and in which Jabez is one of the best, is in the amount of rabbinic literature, especially stories and midrashim, introduced. We frequently mourn the loss of prestige and understanding which our Jewish literary past has suffered at the hands of the Jewish masses. Well, here is a type of Jewish literature, rich in both matter and form, which can easily be included in our textbooks for children, which naturally appeals to them, which illustrates many of the points we wish to make clear, and which would help build up an attitude of attachment to our past. Yet so few of our rabbis make use of it. Jabez does, and this represents a definite superiority over most of the others. Especially does he vitalize his descrip-

tions of our holidays by including rabbinic comment about them and mentioning some of the events which tradition ascribes to them.(134) His manual is therefore rich in rabbinic allusions.

One more word and we shall have finished with Jabez. Very few of the writers included in this study have made use of catechisms, and those who have, have disclosed all the method's weaknesses. As a way of teaching, of course, the catechism is fortunately passé. The thing worthy of comment about Jabez's use of the catechism, however, is not that he offers another example of its defects, but that he uses it probably as well as it can be used. For one thing he does not depend upon it exclusively or even at length. He uses it sparingly, only a little now and then, and his series of questions are always brief. Sometimes they are used as introductions to new sections, more or less supplementing the discussion questions at the end of the sections. In that way they almost serve the purpose of guide questions for help in reading the material. Let it not be thought even for a moment that there is hope for the catechism as a method, or that we ought to imitate Jabez in this respect. Such counsel would be far indeed from our purpose. All that we mean to indicate is that Jabez has taken a method which is inherently bad, which should not be and is not used now by people who know better, and has used it in a passably fair way, at least a better way than any of the others we have seen.

HURWITZ

Our remarks about the remaining two manuals, both of which are recent contributions from members of the Orthodox group,

will be very brief indeed.

What was said a moment ago about the rabbinic allusions in Jabez is true also of Hurwitz, who bases his entire approach on the Shulchan Aruch. In the back of his text there are many fine Agodoth given, fine especially because they are about matters previously discussed in the lessons themselves. Our only adverse comment is that more Agodoth, dealing with more phases of the text, should have been included. What there is of this material is so fine that we cannot help wishing for more of it.

Another compliment must be paid Hurwitz with regard to the language he uses. More than once we have referred to the difficulty of judging the language in the Hebrew manuals. Hurwitz, however, is the one case where there is neither difficulty nor doubt. The whole thing is obviously written for children even younger than Bar Mitzvah age and is obviously suited to them in vocabulary. Not only are simple words used, but there are also detailed explanations of strange words and phrases at the end of each chapter.

Granting the original premise or bias on which this volume is based, it is a good piece of work. In other words, if one be an Orthodox Jew, seeking to train his children for life governed by the Shulchan Aruch, and interested more in the details of observance than in belief or creed, this is probably as good a text as there exists. As Reform Jews, of course, our appreciation of the book must be from a distance.

BOGAISKY

The comments just made would apply only to a slightly

lesser degree in the case of Bogaisky. He too is concrete and introduces many interesting and effective legends, especially with regard to the holidays. Not only this, but he also begins his discussions with concrete subjects likely to appeal and keep the children's attention.

It is interesting to observe that very little space is given by Bogaisky to the subject of ethics. As a matter of fact, the amount is less than 5%, and all the remaining space is given to ceremonies. Furthermore, what treatment there is of ethics is unusual in that it consists almost wholly of various maxims and precepts like those taken from Abeth.

Both of these last two manuals are good if we grant the validity of their premise, but since that is not likely in our case and since their use by American Jews is apt to decrease steadily, we need concern ourselves with them no longer.

CHAPTER IX: IN CONCLUSION

And so we come to the end of our lengthy study.

Our work is not at all complete. Despite both length and detail, the discerning reader will be able to find many loose ends. There is much that we were not able to cover and much that we could only glimpse for a moment in passing. And yet, within the necessary limits of time and space available, the writer feels satisfied that the original purpose of the study has been achieved. It will be remembered that we started with a hypothesis. That hypothesis proposed that a substantial part of our present religious troubles might reasonably be attributed to the sort of textbooks on which children's minds and souls have been fed.

In order, then, to test that hypothesis we chose fourteen manuals, representing every important shade of opinion or thought within the Jewish fold. These we subjected to close scrutiny and careful examination. We studied and observed them both as individual phenomena and as representatives of various groups. We dissected their treatment of every subject and inquired not only into the nature of their content, but also into their way of teaching that content. And we discovered a number of things which lead us to believe now that our original hypothesis was valid.

We found, to begin with, a great variety in the fields of content covered and in the degree of emphasis placed upon each. So much so that there are only two major fields upon which we can place our fingers and say: "Here, these are the essentials." To

this great divergence and the effort to crowd everything into the manuals may be attributed some part of the confusion in our moral and religious instruction.

Turning from the mere analysis or space allotment to a more detailed consideration of the presentations themselves, we found a number of major deficiencies, chief among which were the following: In the matter of ceremonial and ritual a majority of our writers are guilty or neglect in that they make of this vital and interesting subject a dry, academic discussion. In the matter of ethical instruction we have disagreed with the basis of appeal frequently made, and with the vague, general type of teaching which is all too common. The ineffectiveness of our past efforts along these lines may be traced quite largely to this lack of concrete instruction. In the matter of creed we uncovered a number of doctrines which are either doubtful or downright objectionable, but our chief criticism has been that no real attempt is made to reason with the children, and thus to make belief a functioning element in their lives. In the matter of Bible and history, both minor subjects if we judge by the frequency of their occurrence in our manuals, we noted a number of individual differences between the various treatments, and concluded, at least by inference, that both subjects must be placed in some other part of the Religious School curriculum for full and proper instruction. In the matter of psychological approach and method, we were grieved to discover an alarming and almost universal disregard for the child's nature and makeup, plus the frequent use of meaningless language. And finally we remarked on a number of interesting things which, though important, are more in the nature of bypaths off our main study.

It goes almost without saying that, as a result of these many deficiencies, the original aims proposed by our authors are not accomplished. It will be remembered from Chapter I that the three aims mentioned most frequently were:

1. To provide knowledge concerning the fundamentals of the Jewish religion.
2. To arouse love and loyalty for the Jewish people and the Jewish religion.
3. To awaken religious conviction and fervor.

A mere listing of these aims again in the light of our complete study and without any further comment will show at once that they have been left by the wayside.

There are exceptions to all of these generalized criticisms. The important thing, however, is that these exceptions are well distributed and scattered, so that all the manuals are guilty in some respects. This leads us to what may be one of the most significant conclusions of our work. There is not a single one of the fourteen manuals studied which we can consider thoroughly suitable for use today. When we remember that these are choice specimens and that they probably represent the best of the various types, the seriousness of this charge becomes all the more evident. Judged from our own point of view -- that of Reform -- there is no doubt at all but what Cohon and Feuer and Glazer are the two manuals much superior in most respects to all the others. But we have seen enough to know that not even they are such as to warrant anything even resembling complete satisfaction. They are the best we have now; but we need far better.

If a study of this kind will do nothing more than point to that great need, and perhaps eventually stimulate the writer or someone else to fill it, our efforts will have been of service to the next generation of Jews.

NOTES

- (1) Although, as we shall see later, even within classes there are sometimes wide differences in the proportion of space assigned to various subjects, still the basic approach and ideology do not differ greatly within each group.
- (2) More than twice, if we agree to exclude De Solla as unrepresentative and accept only the average of the "Limited Orthodox" group.
- (3) Homberg -- 10%; Friedlander -- 17%.
- (4) See page 16
- (5) See page 18
- (6) See pages 12 and 13
- (7) Frequently in this and succeeding chapters we shall include Greenstone's manual under the general term "Orthodox." This is done not only because it is the only example of the Conservative type, but also because its treatment of most subjects fits well with that of the Orthodox manuals.
- (8) I.M.Wise: The Essence of Judaism, p.49
- (9) Ibid, p.61
- (10) Ibid, p.60
- (11) S. Adler: Guide to Instruction in the Israelitish Religion, p.64
- (12) K. Kohler: Guide for Instruction in Judaism, p.126
- (13) M. Harris: Judaism and the Jew, p.69--72
- (14) Ibid, p.71
- (15) B. Cohon: Introduction to Judaism, p.101
- (16) Greenstone: The Religion of Israel, p.19 & 20
- (17) Homberg: ~~THE JEW~~ , p.186--222
- (18) Greenstone: ~~ibid~~, p.5

- (19) M. Friedlander: Text-Book of the Jewish Religion, p.18
- (20) S. Hurwitz: שלחן ערוך להלכות , p.45
- (21) See page 14
- (22) Homberg: ibid, p.215
- (23) Ibid, p.221
- (24) Bogaisky: ארץ ישראל , p.12
- (25) See especially Homberg: ibid, p.221--23
- (26) Adler: ibid, p.62
- (27) De Solla: Confirmation Manual, p.23
- (28) Enelow: The Faith of Israel, p.67 ff.
- (29) Cohon: ibid, p.95
- (30) K. Kohler: ibid, p.33 & 34
- (31) Enelow: ibid, p.40
- (32) Ibid, p.46
- (33) De Solla: ibid, p.27
- (34) Ibid, p.30
- (35) Kohler: ibid, p.52
- (36) Homberg: ibid, p.66
- (37) Ibid, p.99
- (38) Greenstone: ibid, p.28
- (39) Friedlander: ibid, p.51
- (40) Kohler: ibid, p.86
- (41) Ibid, p.77
- (42) Ibid, p.82
- (43) Greenstone: ibid, p.42
- (44) Homberg: ibid, Book II, p.94

- (45) Ibid, Book II, p.196 & 197
- (46) Harris: ibid, p.104
- (47) Kohler: ibid, p.58
- (48) Greenstone: ibid, p.37
- (49) Feuer and Glazer: The Jew and His Religion, p.60 & 61
- (50) See page 18
- (51) See page 18
- (52) Greenstone: ibid, p.54
- (53) Wise: ibid, p.22
- (54) Greenstone: ibid, p.63
- (55) Kohler: ibid, p.37
- (56) Greenstone: ibid, p.64
- (57) Adler: ibid, p.28
- (58) Kohler: ibid, p.29
- (59) Wise: ibid, p.22
- (60) Kohler: ibid, p.34 & 35
- (61) Ibid, p.37
- (62) Enelow: ibid, p.79
- (63) See page 44
- (64) This refers only to the content or subject-matter,
and not to the method of presentation, about which
we shall have more to say later.
- (65) Cohon: ibid, p.38 ff.
- (66) Ibid, p.103 & 104
- (67) Ibid, p.151
- (68) Feuer and Glazer: ibid, p.15
- (69) Harris: ibid, p.72
- (70) Cohon: ibid, p.69

- (71) Kohler: *ibid*, p.40
- (72) Harris: *ibid*, p.70
- (73) Greenstone: *ibid*, p.66 & 67
- (74) We refer here to Hurwitz and Bogaisky respectively.
- (75) Feuer and Glazer: *ibid*, p.vii
- (76) *Ibid*, p.79
- (77) Kohler: *ibid*, p.39
- (78) Harris: *ibid*, p.72
- (79) Enelow: *ibid*, p.48
- (80) Homberg: *ibid*, p.64
- (81) Friedlander: *ibid*, p.48
- (82) The exceptions are Harris, Cohon and Greenstone in the case of Bible. In history they are Feuer and Glazer, Harris, De Solla and Jabez.
- (83) Friedlander: *ibid*, p.45
- (84) Greenstone: *ibid*, p.57
- (85) Wise: *ibid*, p.60
- (86) Greenstone: *ibid*, p.77
- (87) Kohler: *ibid*, p.18
- (88) *Ibid*, p.19
- (89) *Ibid*, p.21
- (90) Enelow: *ibid*, pp.23, 47, 58, & 66
- (91) Cohon: *ibid*, p.70
- (92) Jabez and Feuer and Glazer
- (93) Harris: *ibid*, p.45
- (94) Wise: *ibid*, p.58
- (95) Jabez: *ibid*, p.8

- (96) Ibid, p.23
- (97) Feuer and Glazer: ibid, p.vii
- (98) Jabez: ibid, p.iii
- (99) Jabez: ibid, p.iv
- (100) Same
- (101) Jabez: ibid, p.vi
- (102) Homberg: ibid, Book II, p.150
- (103) Ibid, Book I, p.125 & 126
- (104) Greenstone: ibid, p.iii & iv
- (105) Feuer and Glazer: ibid, p.20
- (106) Ibid, p.38
- (107) Enelow: ibid, p.33
- (108) Ibid, p.28
- (109) Ibid, p.51
- (110) Cohen: ibid, p.4
- (111) Wise: ibid, p.22 & 23
- (112) Adler: ibid, p.32
- (113) Friedlander: ibid, p.38 & 39
- (114) Kohler: ibid, chp.IV
- (115) Enelow: ibid, p.iii
- (116) Greenstone: ibid, p.2 & 3
- (117) Ibid, p.53
- (118) Homberg: ibid, Book II, p.34 ff.
- (119) Ibid, Book II, p.60
- (120) Ibid, Book II, p.61
- (121) Ibid, Book I, p.233 & 234. See also p.236 and chp.XII of Book II.

- (122) Ibid, Book I, p.11 & 12
- (123) Ibid, p.22
- (124) Ibid, p.24
- (125) Ibid, p.47
- (126) Ibid, p.68
- (127) Ibid, p.17 & 18
- (128) Ibid, p.50
- (129) De Solla: ibid, p.9
- (130) Ibid, p.6
- (131) Ibid, p.54 & 55
- (132) Ibid, p.58
- (133) Ibid, p.65
- (134) See Jabez: ibid, p.38 for Yom Kippur
p.36 for Rosh Hashonah
p.48 for Tisha B'Ab