

their limitations of ability and experience." (p. ix)

Although it was inevitable that the question of readiness for learning and reacting should finally spread to the field of religion, it was, nevertheless, a long time coming. There seemed to be a surmise that religion, unlike other areas of learning, was "protected," as it were, from developmental rhythms and could be moved into with total trust in the child's power to grasp things religious at even the most tender age.

The present work shows that the child's ability, here as elsewhere, calls for a developmental education. Goldman states that religion must be learned as a frame of reference, a cohesive principle, covering the whole of life, where material must be graded in an ascending order of difficulty. Research has shown that we must look for an approach which offers a realistic alternative to the study of dogmas seemingly unrelated to life. This suggests a content which more closely approximates the real world of children, using their experiences and their natural development rather than imposing adult forms of religious ideas and language upon them.

Following his introduction, the author offers a rather thorough study of the psychology of child development related to religious education. Whereas "child development" enjoys a rather extensive literature, "religious growth" is a relatively new study. Nevertheless, Goldman, in five well organized chapters, surveys this subject from a basis of general developmental patterns to the phenomenon of readiness for religion, with the fifth chapter touching upon the sensitive area of the place of the *Bible* in religious education.

It is stated that a clear distinction must be made between "teaching the *Bible*" and "teaching from the *Bible*." Goldman argues that we must try to help children encounter, at suitable stages of their de-

velopment, the experiences of which the *Bible* speaks. If life themes are couched initially in terms of the children's experiences, biblical material can then be used to illustrate them, since they are then seen in a life context. This use of the *Bible* may well shock fundamentalists but would be seen by the "readiness" pedagogue as thoroughly consonant with the reality of child religious development. Further, in the final chapter of Part II the author presents Jesus as a life-theme teacher: ears of corn, coins, sick people, foxes . . . just to name a few. An appeal to experience was central to His teaching.

This book is seen as a much needed pioneer effort carried out with scholarship and precision. An excellent index is provided. The bibliography is adequate, but more precise and complete reporting of the author's experimentation would have helped the scientific researcher.

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C. Morton Shipley et al.
A SYNTHESIS OF
TEACHING METHODS.
Toronto:
McGraw-Hill Ryerson,
Third ed., 1972.
383 pp. \$6.50.

The third edition of this elementary methods textbook is a good example of how not to revise a book. Although the textbook includes many practical and valuable suggestions for teaching, the original contradiction between its philosophy and procedures remains, to the continuing confusion of readers.

Revision, for this book, means merely addition. Very little has been omitted from the first edition (1964), and nothing I could find has been changed within the

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text of the original book. Recent photographs and a cartoon on the cover are effective, and the organization of the contents has been changed from straight numbering to a listing of chapters grouped under two major headings: 1) "The Teacher's Procedures" and 2) "The Instructional Instruments." In the chapter on the use of audio-visual aids, all of the sections on such traditional aids as chalkboards and duplicated materials are left intact, but a section on computer-assisted instruction has been added.

What has resulted from the addition of a third more pages is as inconsistent as the first edition. Although the authors espouse a synthesis of the traditional and progressive philosophies of education, their dependence on such activities as "drill" and their emphasis on the inculcation of "high morals" and "citizenship" belie their progressive posturing. In a radio unit used as an example, the teacher tells the grade 8 class: "This program is yours. I shall give you as much assistance as possible, but I want you to decide what the programs will be." Later, when students suggest "A Wild West Show!" and "A Trip to Mars!" the authors note that, "These ideas called for teacher intervention." Why not allow a Wild West Show with appropriate music, commentary, history, and sound effects or a science fiction trip to Mars which would feature as much scientific information as the students could assimilate?

Those beginning teachers, secondary as well as elementary, who want methods specifically explained will find what they are looking for in this book. However, they should be advised to make sure that these methods correlate with their philosophies better than they do with the articulated philosophy of the authors.

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**AN INTRODUCTION:
BRITISH PRIMARY
SCHOOLS TODAY.**

Toronto:
Macmillan, 1972.
62 pp. \$1.25.

An Introduction is a brief, clearly enunciated account of the British primary school system. It is the first of a series of 23 booklets dealing with themes such as science, art, music, evaluation, and rural school experience. The preparation of the series was inspired by the publication, in 1967, of the *Plowden Report*. This was a document of the Central Advisory Council on Education which called attention to the important changes going on in the primary schools, usually considered the "Cinderellas" of British educational systems. (The primary school in Britain refers to the 3-12 year age groups and includes the Infant and Junior Schools.) The work under review is a descriptive survey of the organizational and curricular changes now being carried out in the best of the 23,000 British primary schools. The only statistics provided indicate, that of this group of schools, 109 are performing outstanding work, 10% are doing "superb work" in a particular area and about 13 are performing good work along informal lines. (p. 13)

Effective change towards educational informality is initiated early in the school experience. Young children are encouraged to move freely and talk among themselves. Curriculum and timetables are not fixed. Nonetheless, the teacher's role does not become less central than in a formal classroom; rather there is a change of emphasis, with more effort being placed on setting the pace, offering advice, introducing ideas and materials, and acting as a catalyst and organizer.