

THOMAS E. SHIELDS: A PROGRESSIVE CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR (1862-1921)

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In writing research a paper on Catholics in the Religious Education Association I came across the name of Father Thomas Edward Shields, professor of education at the Catholic University of America in the early part of this century. A number of Catholic contributors to the journal *Religious Education* referred to the Shields Method of teaching religion in Catholic schools and noted that though the texts were widely used, they were considered controversial. (Elias 2004). Fr. Shields was not a member of the Religious Education Association nor did ever publish in its journal.

Historical reviews of the catechetical movement in the United States Catholic Church give scant attention to the work of Shields, the first catechetical writer of the twentieth century, and his collaborators at Catholic University of America. The origins of the modern catechetical movement are traced to the introduction of European thought into this country, especially the work of Josef Jungmann, Johannes Hofinger, and educators at Lumen Vitae, Belgium. Shields and his collaborators get a brief mention in Gerard Sloyan's (1967) article on catechetics in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Harold Buetow (1970) described him as “the great Catholic educational psychologist... the first who, while giving religion a central place, successfully utilized in his readers the best to be taken from the new psychologies prevalent in is time.” (196). Mary Charles Bryce (1978) presented a brief treatment of his work as one of the progressive pioneers in Catholic religious education.

The purpose of this paper is to retrieve Thomas Shield's philosophy of education, especially as this relates to religious education or catechetics. Knowledge of his successes and failures might provide some important perspectives on religious education today. Though none of his works are in print today, the work of this early pioneer contains the earliest attempt by a Catholic educator to deal with the influential ideas of psychologists and progressive educators that were prevalent in the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. Steeped in the knowledge of biology and psychology Shields developed an approach to Catholic education that was educationally progressive educationally, yet theologically orthodox. Though little known today, his scholarly and administrative achievements were considerable. In his time he was the Catholic educator closest in spirit to John Dewey.

Father Thomas Shields came to Catholic university in 1902 after receiving a Ph. D. in biology at Johns Hopkins and after having taught biological sciences at the diocesan seminary in Minnesota. Through teaching biology and psychology, he became increasingly interested in the field of education and especially the preparation of teachers

for Catholic schools. Eventually he convinced the president and trustees of Catholic University to establish a school of education, over which he became the director. His special interest was the preparation of Roman Catholic sisters for teaching in parochial schools. Shields' accomplishments in this area are extensive. He conducted teachers' institutes, pioneered correspondence courses for sisters, established a summer school for teaching sisters, and eventually founded a separate Sisters College, since women at that time were not permitted to enroll as students at Catholic University. Furthermore, with Edward A. Pace, an early collaborator at Catholic University, he established in 1904 *The Catholic Educational Review*, which was published until the 1970's.

Shields writings were extensive. He contributed numerous articles on education to the *Catholic University Bulletin* and later the *Catholic Educational Review*. His published books include *The Psychology of Education* (1906), *The Education of our Girls* (1907), *The Teaching of Religion* (1908), an autobiography *The Making and Unmaking of a Dullard* (1909), and *Philosophy of Education* (1917). In addition he published religion textbooks and school readers for the first four grades of elementary school.

The one biography of Shields, published in 1947 by Justine Ward, a collaborator, is *Thomas Shields: Biologist, Psychologist, Educator*. Biology and psychology, his doctoral specialties and first teaching disciplines, greatly determined his approach to philosophy of education. Shields can be situated with the first phase of progressive education, the scientific and child centered phase, which was greatly dependent on the psychology of Granville Hall and others. Other elements of progressivism such as social reconstruction are less prominent in his writings. Three dissertations have been done on Shields, notably John F. Murphy's *Thomas Edward Shields: Religious Educator* (1971), which critically examined his life and work as well as speculated on reasons his ideas did not take "root with the Catholic community" (21).

SHIELDS ' PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Shields *Philosophy of Education* treats the entire curriculum of the school not just the teaching of religion. As will be seen in the next section religion is the integrating principle of the entire curriculum since all subjects are related to religion through the important principle of correlation or integration.

Though Shields' *Philosophy of Education* was published in 1917 the work is based on lectures that he gave at various colleges and teachers institutes between the years 1895 and 1910. Several chapters in the book were published in the *Catholic Educational Review* in 1916. Thus there is little direct engagement with John Dewey, whose classic *Democracy of Education* was published in 1916. Only one direct quote from *Democracy and Education* is found, a favorable comment on of Dewey's assessment that school curriculum and practices have not sufficiently been influenced by the advance of pedagogical science (1917, 408). (References in this section, unless otherwise noted will be from Shields' *Philosophy of Education*.)

There are many similarities with Dewey's thought since both were drawing in part on the new biology and psychology and both did their doctorate at Johns Hopkins, Shields in biology and Dewey in philosophy. Shields' main criticism of Dewey was in

the latter's perceived atheism and argument that religion should be removed from the public school curriculum.

Shields divided his philosophy of education into three sections: the nature of educational processes, educational aims, and educative agencies such as the home, school, and church. For him philosophy of education is a branch of applied science whose "business is to apply the truths and principles established by pure philosophy to the practical conduct of the educative process" (23). True philosophy for Shields draws from the principles of Catholic philosophy recognizing "the existence of God and the continuance of personal consciousness beyond the grave" (24). His treatise is directly opposed to those naturalistic and materialistic philosophies of education which reject religious principles and have no place for religion in education. He sets himself especially in opposition to educators who reduce religious truths to psychological processes. Shield's philosophy of education, however, draws on many principles of biology and psychology. He contends that those

Who have learned to think in terms of biology, no matter how widely they may differ in their religious beliefs or in their fundamental philosophy of life, have learned to look upon education as a process by which society seeks to perpetuate its institutions and its life and to adjust each generation of children to the environments which they must enter at the close of the school period. (31-32)

Shields thus draws extensively on the sciences of his time but always completes it with the religious truths of his Catholic faith.

Educational Processes

Part One of *Philosophy of Education* is a treatise on educative processes drawn largely from the biology and psychology of the time. Incorporated into his treatment are important elements of Christian thought. In drawing pedagogical principles for Catholic educators Shields often uses the example of Jesus' teaching in the Gospel and the liturgical rites of the church.

An important educative process is the transmission to the child of the physical and social heredity of the human race. This inheritance includes literature, science, art, institutions, and religion. Education's aim is primarily a social one since this heritage is transmitted so that "the individual may become a more efficient member of society. To benefit the individual is secondary, as far as society is concerned, and it must always remain so" (39). For Shields education completes individuals by preparing them to live a life in service for others as well as for themselves. Religion provides not only the belief that individuals are children of God but also affords the strongest motivation for individuals to seek the common good above their own individual interests. He also notes that the church is the institution that through the centuries has made this heritage available through its teachings and liturgy.

Shield's philosophy of education is committed to an organic and evolutionary view of the world, which he believes demands a reformulation of the functions of all educational agencies. His view is that "didactic methods are yielding to organic methods in the structure of textbooks no less than in the work of the teacher" (49). This evolutionary view affects all branches of science, linguistics, humanities and even religion and philosophy, leading to a fundamental change from a static to a dynamic

world view. The evolutionary view is especially valuable in understanding the developmental stages through which individuals pass. Embracing an evolutionary view in his *Psychology of Education* (1906)) he had commented that:

The attitude of man's mind towards the problems of nature has undergone many important changes in modern times, one of the most remarkable of which is the shifting of his center of interest from the static to the dynamic. Formerly man studied all objects in nature as if they had come to him unchanged from the hands of the Creator; today the processes through which these objects have come to be what they are hold the chief interest of all students of nature. (41)

An understanding of the developing child and the choice of methods of instruction benefits from this dynamic view of nature, human institutions, and education.

The evolutionary view of human nature contends that humans, especially in the years of childhood, have a plasticity that educators can use to adjust individuals to a changing environment. This plasticity is necessary for the survival both of the race and the individual. On first reading one gets the view that Shields sees education as adjusting individual to their environment since he contends that children's plasticity enables the teacher to educate children "to deal effectively with the new and rapidly changing social and economic conditions under which they must live" (66). But Shields goes further to assert that plasticity includes "the ability to change environment in many ways so as to make it meet the needs of self" (66). For Shields:

It is the business of education to help the child so to modify himself and so to modify his environment that the one may be properly adjusted to the other. It is the business of education so to strengthen the will, so to clarify the intelligence, and so to preserve the plasticity of the individual, that he may conquer his environment and permanently conquer himself. (67)

Shields further states that Christianity has historically been involved in the process of conquering the environment and controlling the self. The church has adjusted itself to live in many environments and many forms of government. Thus human plasticity enables the Christian educator to help individuals to transform the inner person through a redeeming process. Education's spiritual task is both to conserve what is good in the past and "to help individuals meet new conditions and new environments with new adjustments" (77).

Mental growth and development get special attention from Shields. He distinguishes between mental *growth* which is a quantitative increase and mental *development* which implies qualitative increase. His interest is primarily in mental development, that is, "in changes from simplicity to complexity, from homogeneity to heterogeneity, from latency to epiphany" (99). Since Shields recognizes the importance that environment, both physical and social, plays in both growth and development, he stresses that educators should provide an environment "which will permit of the fullest realization of each individual life" (108). A mindless memorization of facts and even the truths of the catechism do not constitute real mental growth for Shields. A healthy pedagogy recognizes that growth and development come from within the person, not thorough accretion of information. It is for this reason that Shields favored organic methods over didactic ones. Committed to methods that stress process, he asserts that the quantity of truth given to the child in the beginning of the educative process is a supremely negligible factor.

Shields recognized stages of mental development though he does not clearly differentiate them. Stages are linked together in a rigid causal sequence in which each previous stage is an adequate preparation for the next stage as well as its cause. Thus each stage is reached through a reconstruction of the previous stage in which that which was latent is brought forth and made functional. Each stage is connected with an adjustment to the environment. The stages of development are described in general terms: "human consciousness passes from the instinctive phase of infancy through the imitative phase of childhood and youth to freedom and self-determination in adult life" (124). Connections with the cognitive development theory of Jean Piaget are apparent. It is Shields view that knowledge of stages of mental development is important for educators. For him, as for Piaget, mental development precedes mental growth and thus "the pupil's growth in knowledge should not be advanced beyond the point where such growth is necessary or helpful to mental development" (131).

The upshot of Shield's discussion of educative processes according to the new scientific understanding of the person is that the role of the teacher should change greatly. Teachers are no longer purveyors of facts but rather must "minister to the growing mind, ... guide the complex processes of development that are taking place in the minds and hearts of pupils" (145). This is so because since education is a process that takes place in the mind of the student and is governed by the laws of the mind, teachers can influence education only if they know the laws of life and mind that govern these processes.

Like the educational progressives of his era Shields assigned great importance to the function of experience in the educative process. For him experience is the most important factor in education. New experiences serve "to modify inherited or previously acquired adjustment since education is far more extensively occupied with modifying previous habits than with modifying the meager inheritance of the child's instincts" (143). Thus Shields assigns two roles to personal experience: modifying and improving adjustments to the environment and perfecting children's use of the experiences of others and the wisdom and experience of the race. He was also realistic about experience in education for while it may be the best teacher it is at the same time "the slowest of teachers and the most expensive" (152). For him the task of teachers is to guide children in the acquisition of personal experiences by selecting those experiences that will enable children to learn from present conditions and keep them open to future developments and prevent exposure to experiences that might arrest or be harmful to mental development. Like Dewey in his *Experience and Education* (1938) Shields recognized that experience could function efficiently in the wrong direction. Disagreeable experiences might build up inhibitions towards future activities or even arrest mental development. He warned against poor experiences in the learning of religion such as "the practice of compelling children, under threats of punishment, to memorize catechetical formulas which are unintelligible to them" (153). Shields adds that the power of experience is so strong that it would be highly imprudent to expose the child to haphazard experiences until such time as their mental development allowed them to prudently select experiences from which they might learn.

Educational Aims

A large part of Shield's treatise on philosophy of education is devoted to aims and purposes of education. As other progressives Shields broadened the discussion of aims to go beyond the transmission of liberal culture to include political, economic, and social

aims. His discussion aims seem to be in line with the progressive Cardinal Principles of Education, which dominated educational debate for a number of years in this country (Spring 1986, 202-204).

Shields makes it clear where his educational priorities are since he begins his discussion of aims with a chapter entitled *The Ultimate Aim of Christian Education*, which for him must deal with the individual's intellectual, spiritual and ethical nature to which all other considerations, though important, are subordinate. For determining the ultimate aim of Christian education Shields turns to the Gospels and the guidance of the church to arrive at this formulation:

The unchanging aim of Christian education is, and always has been, to put the pupil into possession of a body of truth derived from nature and from divine revelation, from the concrete world of man's hand, and from the content of human speech, in order to bring his conduct into conformity with Christian ideals and with the standards of the civilization of his day. (171)

This definition raises a number of questions. One is struck with the apparent contradictions it contains when compared to previous and subsequent discussions in the book. In this definition Shields reverts to a transmissive and didactic approach that he otherwise rejects. Though a progressive in many ways he is not only far distant in this definition from John Dewey but also from liberal Protestant religious educators such as George Coe and Sophia Fahs. None of these could have said as Shields did that "dogmas must be accepted without change or modification by all those who enter into her [the church's] fold" (300). Shields religious views remain dogmatic though his understanding of persons and the educational process are scientific and progressive. Yet Shields did not view revelation as hampering human freedom but as imparting "security, greater keenness and a wider range to human vision" (172). Revelation does not supplant human intelligence but presupposes it, removing limitations as well as defects from human understanding. Knowledge in itself is not the ultimate aim of Christian education for Shields but rather knowledge that leads to an adjustment of the pupil to Christian ideals of life and the standards of civilization.

It is clear that Shields considers the issue of authority as most important in Christian education. He invokes the axiom of Augustine, *credo ut intelligam*, in contending that faith and authority are necessary at the beginning of learning. He believes, however, that truths should eventually be accepted by the intellect for their own sake. Thus dependence comes before independence in both the physical and intellectual sphere. For Shields the task of the teacher of religion is "to establish vital continuity between the powers of the natural man and the supernatural virtues which he [the teacher] would inculcate through divine authority" (177). It is the teacher's task to channel the child's natural instincts into higher values for the conduct of adult life. In concluding his chapter on the ultimate aim of Christian education Shields writes of education as transforming natural instincts while preserving and enlarging their power, bringing the flesh under the control of the spirit, and drawing on the experience of the human race, divine revelation and grace to bring the individual into conformity with Christian ideas and the standards of civilization of the day. The whole person is to be developed by transforming egoism into altruism, a social development that would lead to a regard for all persons.

Philosophy of Education treats a number of secondary aims of education that Shields considers means for attaining the ultimate aim and which give direction to the efforts of the teacher. Physical education, concerned with the preservation of health and the development of the organism, entails an understanding of the laws of health. Both home and school are involved in this education, which proceeds through the formation of good health habits and includes outdoor play for children. He warns that children should not be permitted to follow their own impulses without restraint and without any guidance from authority. Physical health is important because it is the basis for mental development. This Catholic progressive concludes this section with these wise words:

In all that is done for the child, consideration must be given both to his mental and moral nature as well as to his physical life. The preserving of the proper balance is not the least difficult task which are so lightly assigned to the teacher" (193).

A healthy balance between physical and mental development is a dominant theme in Shields philosophy. Accepting the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas on the unity between body and soul, Shields calls bids teachers to respect the growing development of the child. His axiom is that teachers should give children "only that which is necessary and helpful to the phase of development" (202) through which they are passing. Limitations of the children's minds demands that truths and ideas be cast in an appropriate manner, a principle that Shields applies in his religion series. Teachers are directed to avoid giving to the child an adult point of view, since teaching should proceed by awakening children's interests and developing their powers to internalize their social inheritance. Specialized learning should be introduced only in secondary and higher education.

Education for economic efficiency is another secondary aim of education, which for Shields means to train the eye and hand that they may in due time be able to achieve the means of support: food, shelter, physical comfort and well being (213). This aim is important for it will engender in children self-respect and an integrated personality. The school should build on this form of education, which begins in the home. Economic efficiency serves not only individual needs but is also greatly desirable for societal growth. Like Dewey, Shields points out that people do not live in isolation and that the growing complexity of economic systems demands an education comparable to the demands of the marketplace. Many forms of cooperation are needed in the new industrial society of the turn of the century. For Shields,

the more complex our civilization becomes and the more completely we pass from a tool to a machine civilization, the more necessary does it become for man to learn to cooperate efficiently with his fellow-man in order to sustain life and to attain to the well-being and happiness that his nature demands. (221-222)

Like progressive educators but unlike other Catholic educators who favored a strictly liberal and non-utilitarian curriculum, Shields was a strong advocate of industrial education in the schools as well as separate industrial schools. While considering industrial education a public and governmental matter, he did not advocate this education primarily for the good of employers. Though he rejected the rigid educational system in Germany where at an early age certain youth were channeled into industrial schools, he may have come closer than he wanted to this system when he contended that "it is the business of education to fit the children of each generation to take their places effectively

under the conditions of the economic world which they will meet on reaching adult years" (227).

This aim of economic efficiency must be balanced by education for individual culture, which serves both individuals and society. Shields is consistent in making it clear that education for individual culture does not consist primarily in the transmission of a culture, though a wide range of knowledge is required of the cultured person, but in "the development of the student's powers and faculties and his mastery of the art of study and of the utilization of knowledge" (243). Content is valued not in itself but as food and direction for a growing and developing life. For Shields culture:

Consists not in the knowledge of any one subject nor in the ability to do any one thing, however valuable such knowledge and ability may be, but in the power to understand the thought and to sympathize with the work of all who labor for the upbuilding of mankind. (246)

Culture also demands development of the aesthetic faculty and normal development and control of the emotions. However, for Shields, culture is not a mere addition to life or an embellishment but rather a quality affecting the whole of life permeating the depths of character and leading to the completion of persons inspiring them to the service of God and humankind. In summary, culture for Shields includes a reasonably wide knowledge, a thoroughly coordinated knowledge, a ready and easy control of the knowledge possessed, the habitual use of knowledge and mental power to meet the demands of an ever-changing world, an aesthetic sensibility, and control over emotions.

The final secondary aim of education in Shields' philosophy is education for citizenship. After reviewing various political philosophies of the state and education from Plato to Bismarck, Shields proposes an education for democracy that would fit citizens for the discharge of their duties towards the state. He holds the Jeffersonian view that a democratic state demands some kind of inequality in the education of its members. While some persons are to be educated for leadership, others should be trained for the ordinary tasks of dedicated citizens and judicious voters. Democracy demands universal education of a general nature so that children may be able to determine their vocation in life and thus the state will benefit from talent wherever it is found.

Citizenship education should strive to inculcate six chief moral qualities. First, citizens need *faith* in their fellow citizens and in their leaders, courts of justice, merchants, and teachers. Citizens require the moral quality of *hope* for a stable social order. A healthy democracy requires *love* towards one's fellow citizens. This manifests itself in respect, cooperation, and solidarity and should extend beyond the boundaries of national interest to include other nations. This spirit of love, based on Christian principles, must combat excessive competition, selfishness and greed as well as inspire citizens to work for the common good. The good citizen should consider the *public good* before any private advantage and manifest willingness to sacrifice for others even on the battle front. Education should inculcate *respect for the law*, which entails involvement in enacting just and wise legislation, cooperating with the legal and judicial system, and obeying the law. The final quality in citizenship education is *self-government* over one's desires and passions. It is Shield's view that while public schools inculcate these virtues, religious schools can bring a stronger basis for motivating students for education for citizenship, which is essentially moral education.

Educative Agencies

Education in one sense consists in adjusting children to various environments in which they will spend their adult years. The chief environments that children need to be adjusted to are the institutions of home, state and the church.

The family is the chief environment for shaping the life of individuals. Within families parents have "complete control over the rearing and the education of the children, subject only to such state supervision as is needed to prevent neglect of the children's welfare" (281). Shields recognized that with the coming of industrialization, the school, state, and church took over some of the educational responsibilities that families exercised in the past. Freed from some of its industrial tasks, the family could more effectively seek a higher development of mental and moral life. Children's attendance at school does not remove all educational responsibility from parents, since the family is still the most formative institution in the education of children. In Shields' view both the state and the church should seek ways in which they might help families in their educational mission. What is needed is a new type of family life in which families can adjust to the new economic and social conditions of the world. For Shields the home of the future should develop high ideals in children, become a gathering place of love in the evening, a sanctuary of life and dwelling place of love where the mind can grow in truth and beauty.

Shields view of the family is what we might expect from a man of his time, father at work, mother in the home. He repeats many ideas from *The Education of our Girls* (1907) about how the girls of the then new age were to be educated. As women are freed from many home chores they should spend time "in the adornment of the home, in the pursuit of literature and art, and in the wider intellectual and moral interests that are shaping the course of advancing civilization" (290). Since women's chief function rests in the procreation and education, they need to possess a keen knowledge of the society in which these children will eventually live as adults. Women who work before marriage have the advantage of first hand experiences of these conditions. The education given to women should be directed first of all towards her role as mother and educator of children and secondarily toward preparing her for work in the world. Shields was very much in favor of the then contemporary movement for preparing parents to be effective educators in the home, especially for children that need special care. He also urged the Catholic public to become involved in the progressive movement for "improving the conditions of home life, by proper housing, adequate measures for sanitation, proper diet and artistic embellishment of the home" (297).

Shields described the role of the *church* through the centuries in providing surety in exercising an infallible teaching office. The church unlike the school teaches all persons and adapts its message to all people in all situations. The Catholic Church exercises a teaching function through Councils, definition of dogmas, the example of its members, and through liturgical expressions.

The distinctive feature that Shields adds to an understanding of the teaching role of the church is his psychological analysis of how this role operates. He finds in the teaching church the embodiment of all the psychological principles that had been recently been discovered. The church reaches the entire person, intellect, will, emotions, senses, imagination, aesthetic sensibilities, muscles and powers of expression. The very structure

of church buildings and the liturgical rites touch many aspects of peoples' lives. While Shields finds in these structures and rites sensory motor training, appeals to emotions and to individual and group memory, it is especially the emotional nature of this teaching method that appeals to Shields. Liturgical expressions appeal to the emotions, which psychologists consider most important in learning. In his analysis of the sacraments of the church he shows how emotional elements are paramount in liturgical celebrations. Thus in his view the church manifests the organic methods of teaching that the schools should make use of:

The Church, through all the forms of her organic teaching, aims at cultivating feeling, but she does not allow her teaching activity to culminate in feeling, which she values as a means to an end; she employs it to move to action and to form character and she never leaves it with the stamp and the guidance of intellect. As the feelings glow to incandescence, she imparts to them definite direction and animates them with a purpose which, after the emotions and the feelings subside, remains as a guiding principle of conduct. (314)

The church appeals not only to basic instincts but also to the desire of its members, especially children, to imitate powerful models. She stresses the following of Christ and holds before members the example of many holy men and women.

Because of changes in society and its needs the *school* originated as an institution to supplement the work of the home, the church and the state. Schools came into existence to prepare children to take their place in society and its various institutions, though they remain subordinate to the institutions that established it. Though Shields deplored the emergence of the secular school in the United States where religious teaching is not permitted, he did applaud efforts to introduce moral teaching into the school. He did not think, however, that such teaching would be effective, disconnected as it is from religious moorings. For him

When religion is properly taught, it fixed in the mind certain beliefs that steady it in the midst of doubt and certain principles of conduct which guide and protect it in the midst of temptation. The adaptation to environment which religion inculcates is not a weak yielding to every influence, but rather the power of discriminating good from evil and holding fast to that which is good. (346)

Shields recognized changes in the purposes of schools once they became under the control of the state and moved away from the control of church and home. Character building, the formation of social habits, and instilling of patriotism became more important than the development of intellectual culture. The purpose of state schools became the preparation of children for worthy citizenship and proper adjustment of the individuals to institutional life. The curriculum shifted from an emphasis on formal knowledge to technical skills, history, economics and literature. The emerging social sciences also influenced changes in schools with their recognition that feelings are powerful motivations for knowledge and action, that education should develop moral qualities that enable individuals to control social actions, that education has as its task the assimilation of each generation to the given social life, and that it is through the school that society achieves its progress through needed change. .

Shields was not totally happy with these educational developments since they included the removal of religion from the schools and came close to replacing the home and the church in the sphere of education. Deploring the German influence on United

States schools with their introduction of vocational schools, Shields appeared to be in favor of efforts to reinstate the aim of developing the culture of individuals. He was uneasy with vocational schools "whose explicit aim is the increase of individual efficiency and increased power of the individual to enlarge his learning capacity" (370).

Because of its stress on religion and moral education and the integration of all subjects around religion Catholic schools remained the main focus of Shield's concern, though he did advise Catholics to work for better public schools. His philosophy of education is for the most part a philosophy of Catholic schools. The religion which Catholic schools were to teach was not a thing apart from life.

SIELDS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It is clear that Shields' main educational concern was religious education. His first educational writings were on the teaching of religion. In this section his views on teaching religion will get greater attention even though some of these ideas have already been touched upon in his general philosophy of education.

Shields first addressed the teaching of religion in *The Psychology of Education* (1906) in which he tried to close the gap between pedagogical science and the principles of Catholic education. In this work he drew on the work of the progressives William James, William Kilpatrick, and others in enunciating important principles designed to move from a subject centered curriculum to a child-centered one. Shields saw a consonance between the methods of Jesus and the methods of the new pedagogical science. He did not, however, ignore the content of education, as many progressives were thought to do. For him children were entitled to a scientific, literary, aesthetic, institutional and religious inheritance without which they could not be educated persons. For him the purpose of religious education was

To put the pupil into possession of a body of truth derived from those four sources [revelation, nature, human thought and action, language] and to bring his conduct into conformity with Christian ideals and with the standards of the civilization of his day. (Shields 1906, 38)

Shields gave even more explicit attention to religion in *The Teaching of Religion* (1908a) where he centered teaching in the child's experiences, feelings, needs, and potential. The teaching of religion was also to be correlated with all subjects in the curriculum:

To teach religion effectively it must, of course, be taught in connection with history and philosophy, with the growth of languages, the development of human institutions, and the works of God which meet us at every turn along the pathways of natural science. (1908a, 18)

Shields devoted attention to the teacher of religion, distinguishing between the role of theologian who propounded theology and the teacher of religion who was concerned primarily with the formation of character and not with conveying theological knowledge, not with increasing "the store of theological knowledge about God, about man or about subjects deemed important in the world of adults" but with shedding "light on every truth that claims admittance to the mind" (1908, 34). Shields' concern for children and teachers of religion inspired him to develop texts for teaching religion that abandoned the methods of the catechism.

Attack on the Baltimore Catechism

Though Shields had already written on the teaching of religion his ideas received greater attention when he addressed the Catholic Educational Association at their annual meeting in 1908. At this meeting he made use of progressive educational principles to attack the question-and-answer approach to religion used in the time honored catechisms of the church, notably the Baltimore Catechism, which was almost exclusively in use in Catholic elementary schools. The Baltimore Catechism was the most widely used tool for teaching religion since 1885 to the 1960's. It has been noted that

The large majority of religion teachers and textbook writers almost totally ignored advances made by professions in the sector of public school education. Perhaps the question-answer mold of the catechism genre had become so set that any departures from it, if accepted at all, were tolerated as a kind of fad that, if sufficiently disregarded, would surely go away. (Bryce 1970, 143)

An exception to this was the work of Shields. In his 1908 talk he presented theories of learning, the need to adapt religion to the child's psychological development, the necessity of a new method to replace the question and answer method of the catechism, and the need for new textbooks that would incorporate modern psychological findings.

Shields' ideas were challenged by Fr. Peter Yorke, a respected social activist and Catholic educator who had published religion textbooks and was an officer of the Catholic Educational Association. Yorke did not address Shields' dependence on psychological principles but appealed to his pastoral experience in arguing that there was no danger in overloading the child's memory but rather a danger in not cultivating the power of memory. Calling Shields system of teaching religion no less than revolutionary, he saw no need to go outside the Catholic system "to give scientific justification for the principles and methods which are the noblest gifts your holy founders gave you brothers and sisters of the Catholic schools." (In Shields, 1908b, 235-236) An unsigned editorial *Catechetics* in the *American Ecclesiastical Review* (1908) called for a thorough review of catechetical methods in light of Shields' criticism. The review also praised the religion textbooks authored by Shields. Though called for by Shields this revision did not happen until the 1960's. Shields efforts to replace the Baltimore Catechism did not succeed but he stands at the beginning of an approach to teaching religion that would eventually undermine its approach and dominance. His pedagogical approach would eventually win the day, except among traditionalist Catholics. Yet Shields receives little credit among historians of Catholic religious education, perhaps because of his early death, lack of colleagues to continue his work, and his manner of going it alone (Murphy 1971, 128).

The Teaching of Religion

Shields further explained his theory of teaching religion in the *Catholic University Bulletin* in 1909. This bulletin was founded in 1895 by Patrick Shahan, Rector of the University, to bring the newest educational ideas to professors and students at the university. In one article Shields (1909a) sought to bring "the teaching of religion into conformity with the fundamental principles of education which have been firmly established through the advance of pedagogical science" (65). Decrying ultra-conservatism in methods of teaching religion he appealed for organic methods based on

the principles of genetic or developmental psychology and on modern psychological studies on memory, mental assimilation, feeling's role in learning, imitation, and the principle of correlation or the integration of all learning.

It is Shields' contention that these principles are all found in the way that Jesus taught and the way in which the church has taught its members throughout the centuries, principally through its liturgy. Jesus taught in a direct and simple manner. He taught people not "truths to be accepted in set phrases and stored in the memory, but as the bread of life that was to enter into the depths of their being and transform all their thinking and their acting" (1909a, 69). He taught truths that were to take root in intelligence and bear fruit in conduct. Thus teachers of religion should not rest content with verbal memorization of truths but attempt to make sublime truths intelligible to learners.

According to Shields there were four phases in Jesus' method of teaching. First, he appealed to listeners' observations of familiar phenomena in the vegetable and animal world, such as birds, trees, sowing of seed. Secondly, he drew on human feelings and emotions, such as a shepherd's love for his sheep, a father's forgiveness of a wayward son, and the anger of a king. Thirdly, he led listeners to contemplate the state of children of the kingdom in comparison to dwellers in lower stages. Finally, he pointed out the obligation for children of the kingdom to "bring their conduct into conformity with their high estate as children of God." (1909a, 71) Jesus taught by proceeding "from the known to the unknown; from the tangible and concrete to the abstract and spiritual, from the natural to the supernatural. (72). At times he made use of object lessons as when he cursed the fig tree or commended the one leper who returned to give him thanks. He used his miracles to drive home truths about the Eucharist by multiplying bread and fishes. Through all of these ways he led them to understanding sublime spiritual truths.

It is noted by Shields that Jesus' method of teaching was continued by his followers. His Apostles instructed the first Christians in spiritual truths. Little by little the fundamental truths of Christianity made up the Christian Scriptures and eventually found their way into clear definitions in creeds and later catechisms. But in a special way these truths were kept alive before the people through the sacraments of the church and the liturgy. The liturgy with its poetry and music lent beauty and eloquence, while paintings, sculpture and architecture in the great churches and cathedrals spoke eloquently to the hearts and minds of believers. The teacher of religion to be faithful to Jesus' model of teaching

Must take into account natural phenomena, human emotions and passions, the figures and prophecies of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in the New. He must seek to make the Saviour live in the imagination and in the heart and he must call to his assistance every resource of art" (1909a, 75).

This is the method that influenced the series of religion texts which Shields published for children.

In a second article on the teaching of religion Shields (Shields 1909b) described the philosophy behind his religion textbooks and readers. He noted how improvements had been made in arithmetic and science textbooks for elementary schools according to psychological and pedagogical principles. He then launched into a criticism of the catechism of Christian doctrine which was widely used in Catholic schools. He considered it for the most part

Cast in the driest of didactic forms and completely isolated from all the other subjects of the curriculum. The thought is abstract in the extreme and it is couched in language for which the child had no preparation either proximate or remote. There is no attempt made to build up in the child-mind vigorous masses capable of aiding in the assimilation of religious truth. The book seems designed solely for production of a verbal memory product as if there were a consciousness somewhere that this was the only end possible of attainment. The whole stress is laid on the form of question and answer which will facilitate a test of the capacity of the pupils' memory.... Back of this method there seems to be an incredible belief in the power of memorized formulae to translate themselves at a later period into vital elements in the conduct of the adult. (Shields, 1909b, 159)

The philosophy behind his textbook series, which included textbooks for the first four grades plus readers, was based on a correlated or integrated curriculum utilizing the most recent developments in genetic psychology and cognate branches. This philosophy can be illustrated by an examination of *Religion, First Book* (Shields, 1908c). The book presents the Lord's Prayer, a large portion of the Apostles Creed, and the birth of Jesus. At the same time the book is the child's first reader, first nature study book, and a description of institutions that affect the child. It lays the foundation for aesthetic development along the three distinct lines of form, color, and rhythm. Religion is thus integrated into a book containing nature studies, domestic scenes, and songs all adapted to the child's mental capacity. It speaks not of doctrinal definitions but of the child's home, and familiar objects of the environments. Use is made of songs and pictures. The book contains the five essential elements of Catholic Education: Science-an exploration of the child's physical environment; Letters-human achievements transmitted through oral and written language; Aesthetics-recognizing beauty in all its forms; Institutions-knowledge of the home, church, and state; and Religion-a basic knowledge of Christian truths. Each part of the book begins with nature study and ends with two songs. The five parts of the book deal with fundamental instincts which determined the child's attitude towards parents; love of parents. A story about a family of robins presents all the elements of healthy family living.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

When one examines the career and writings of Thomas E. Shields one wonders why he has not found a more prominent place in the history of Catholic religious education in the United States. He was the first person to bring a scholarly approach to the teaching of religion by introducing principles from biology, psychology, and pedagogy into the teaching of religion. He attended not only to the content of religious education but also to sound methods. His passion for the education of teachers for Catholic schools has few peers. His works on psychology of education and philosophy of education provided a basis for the entire enterprise of Catholic education. He initiated a journal dedicated to Catholic education which lasted for almost seventy years.

Besides his scholarly contributions Shields made contributed to Catholic education in many other ways. The school of education at the Catholic University of American which he lobbied for still thrives. The department of Religious Education within that university owes much to his initiatives. His tireless efforts in behalf of

preparation of teachers for Catholic schools through institutes, a summer school, and a separate college should receive greater recognition.

Possible reasons for Shields' lack of recognition are at the heart of Murphy's dissertation (1971). An early death from heart failure left a number of his tasks uncompleted. Shields' style of work did not include close collaboration with others at Catholic University nor did he leave disciples at Catholic University to continue his work. Perhaps he tried to do too many things while carrying a heavy teaching schedule both at Catholic University and Trinity College, Washington. Also, most of his books were published by a press which he established, thus limiting their circulation. Murphy also speculates about limitations in his personality development.

The times in which Shields lived were not right for a full appreciation of his abilities. He was a progressive at a time when the Church was in combat with modern thought, loosely called modernism. Shields would have benefited greatly from association with members of the recently established Religious Education Association. There is no evidence that he participated at any of its meetings nor was he ever published in its journal, though his work receives a number of favorable comments by both Catholics and Protestants.

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