

**SPIRITUAL VALUES IN
ADULT EDUCATION**

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SPIRITUAL VALUES IN ADULT EDUCATION

A Study of a Neglected Aspect

BY

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PREFACE

A SMALL girl whom I once knew had a passion which I fear was never gratified. She wanted a baby elephant as a pet. It is amusing to reflect upon what might have happened if some good fairy had granted her request. For she lived in a small house with a negligible garden. Evidently she did not foresee "whereto this thing might grow." I was in like case when, five years ago, I began the enquiry which has ended in the writing of this book.

My baby elephant grew tail first. In the course of some twelve years devoted to the service of adult education one has been privileged to make contact with most of the varied types of work now in progress in England. Several surveys of the Movement have been made during that period. But it is noticeable that none of them deals fully, if at all, with the activities of the Churches and kindred organisations. I began to get together such material as I could for a study of that aspect of the question. But no section of adult education can profitably be treated by itself. The relation of this work to the rest, the history of the Movement as a whole, and the philosophy of adult as distinguished from other stages of education all challenged thought. Thus the first four parts of the book came about. The fifth is really the original attempt to put together information which apparently no one else had thought it worth while to assemble, because in detail it was often so unimpressive. But I am advised to print it as fully as space will allow because it does endeavour to describe things as they are, and

this cannot be done without setting down much that in itself may seem trivial. Moreover, without that evidence some generalisations in the earlier parts of the book might appear unwarranted. Actually the fifth part has had to be compressed in order to bring it into some reasonable proportion to the other four.

I have quoted unblushingly. But the choice lay between profuse quotation and sheer plagiarism. For the first part of Volume I. it was essential to draw upon fields of study which I have had no opportunity of exploring widely. At the risk of overloading my own pages I have incorporated specially relevant passages from contemporary writers, in text or footnotes, as this appeared likely to prove more convenient for my readers than the citation of sections from books at the end of my chapters would have been. Of the historical sources for the second part of this volume many are now out of print, and mere reference would have been pointless. And in the first parts of both this and the second volume it seemed desirable, in the interests of scrupulous fairness towards diverse points of view, frequently to give people's own account of themselves.

The present volume deals with general principles and with the development of adult education during the nineteenth century. The second volume takes up the story of adult education in our own times, attempts some constructive suggestions, and contains also a survey of the adult educational activities of the Churches and kindred bodies.

Prefaces are often a last despairing attempt of the writers to state their theses in a form approximately satisfactory. I resist the temptation with the greater cheerfulness because I have the best of reasons for knowing that such a statement demands far abler pens than mine, animated by a scholarship, a sense of historical perspective, and a power of synthesis to which I can lay no claim. But if these pages bring the need to the attention of those who can satisfy it,

the purpose of publishing the book will in large part be fulfilled. The chief result for which one ventures to hope, however, is a little added stimulus to men and women to search out together the whole truth.

It would take five years more to write any one of the dozen books which the many aspects of the subject suggest. Perhaps with each year one's fear of giving publicity to an immature piece of work would increase. But, though still woefully inadequate and incomplete, the present book is at least not hasty. Already it has been delayed for nearly two years by illness, by the claims of that practical daily work which is more important than are the books written about work, and by other circumstances. But I have tried to bring the facts up to date wherever the lapse of time has made any appreciable difference to the situation.

To all those workers in this field who have so generously answered one's questions and illumined one's mind I desire to express sincere gratitude. My indebtedness will be evident on every page. Membership of various Committees has given me a share in valuable information, of which I have endeavoured to acknowledge the sources in detail. Not least am I in the debt of Miss E. Dunkerley and Miss E. M. Brewer, without whose aid the manuscript could never have been reduced to printable order.

"Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." Therein lies the ultimate truth about education, as I have learned above all from those to whom from first to last this book owes most—my Father and Mother and my Wife.

BASIL A. YEAXLEE.

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