A very able man. All is grist that comes to his mill. Hard working, fertile minded, rarely misses anything which he can subsequently use. He will probably become a big strong man among his people. Inclined at times to “put on the [rousers?],” but I pray that that will not hinder him any in the field he is likely to serve.

AFmS. CRO-NRCR.

Book Review of A Functional Approach to Religious Education by Ernest J. Chave

[12 September–22 November 1950] [Chester, Pa.]

King took Davis’s course the Religious Development of Personality during the first term of his final year at Crozer. Davis required his students to review five books and offer their “critical reaction to them”; he advised the students: “Do not give back the content of the books.” King chose books on the early stages of personality development, reflecting the course’s concentration on the development of religious experience in children. In this first review, he agrees with the author, Ernest Chave, on the importance of a religion informed by scientific insight and discipline, echoing previous comments King had made in other Crozer and Morehouse papers. He finds fault, however, with Chave’s implicit humanism, realizing that “I guess I am a little more conservative theologically than I thought I was. Somehow I cannot stop with nature, [for] Christianity to me is a revelation of the nature of nature.” Although Davis did not grade the book reviews, he remarked: “This is a good review and the type I believe helpful to the reviewer as well as the reader.” He suggested that “for your future use, you should give complete bibliographical details in listing date, author, etc.”

Baron Friedrich Von Hugel. the Roman Catholic interpreter of religion, always said everything he could in praise of a book he was reviewing be-
fore he went on to indicate the errors or inadequacies in the volume.\textsuperscript{2} We may well follow his example in our consideration of a most interesting book by Dr. Ernest J. Chave entitled, \textit{A Functional Approach to Religious Education}.

First I think Dr. Chave is quite right in insisting that if religious education is to be meaningful to the modern world it must keep pace with the deepening insights of world thought and keep abreast with the problems of a changing culture. It is at this point that much of our religious education has failed miserably. We to often attempt to indoctrinate young people with outmoulded and unscientific ideas. The young person who goes to school today is taught to be analytical, objective, and scientific; he is taught not to swallow the apple whole, but to chew and digest. In the words of Bacon, he is taught "to weigh and consider." Such modern minds will find it quite difficult to reconcile the unscientific tenets of general education. If religion is to be meaningful to modern man it must be scientifically tenable and intellectually respectable.

Again Dr. Chave strikes a significant note when he speaks of religious education as "the total comprehensive plan by which leaders in all realms of life co-operate to farther the growth of personal-social values and attainments."\textsuperscript{3} No one can hardly disagree with the fact that religious education is more than a Sunday affair.\textsuperscript{4} It is foolish to think that an hour of teaching, or preaching, once a week can release the latent spiritual capacities in one's being.\textsuperscript{5} Chave is quite emphatic at this point and any well thinking will agree with him.

I was also quite interested in the ten experiences which Chave listed as basic in religious growth.\textsuperscript{6} As I read them I could not help from applying them to my own religious development. Certainly educators of all shades of opinion will be in debt to Chave for this analysis of religious development and growth.

Up to this point I have {found) myself in perfect agreement with our author, but this is not the whole story. I find myself parting company with Chave in many instances. I cannot quite accept his extreme naturalistic point of view.\textsuperscript{7} I guess I am a little more conservative theologically than I thought I was. Somehow I cannot stop with nature, far Christianity to me is a revelation of the nature of nature. However I am quite sure that Chave found it quite easy to set forth his naturalistic point of view after being in the company of Henry Nelson Wieman for a number of years.

\textsuperscript{2} Davis wrote in the margin, "Good idea! Not only in book reviewing!"

\textsuperscript{3} Chave's text uses "farther," not "farther" (Ernest J. Chave, \textit{A Functional Approach to Religious Education} [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947], p. 6).

\textsuperscript{4} Davis wrote in the margin, "True."

\textsuperscript{5} Chave, \textit{Functional Approach}, p. 6: "It is foolish to think that an hour of teaching, or preaching, once a week can transform human nature or release divine powers."

\textsuperscript{6} Chave's ten experiences are sense of worth, social sensitivity, appreciation of the universe, discrimination in values, responsibility and accountability, cooperative fellowship, quest for truth and realization of values, integration of experiences into a working philosophy of life, appreciation of historical continuity, and participation in group celebrations (Chave, \textit{Functional Approach}, p. 22).

\textsuperscript{7} Davis commented in the margin, "As far as I am concerned, I agree!"
Does not the functional approach in this book almost border on the lines of humanism? I think it does. It is not an explicit humanism, but certainly it is implicit. And here again I must part company with Chave. Children must be taught that when they pray they are not merely talking to themselves to bring about a psychological change within, but that they are praying to a being that has objective validity. If religious education is to really be functional it must teach the child that he is dependent on a power greater than himself, which in religious terms is God.

Again it seems that Chave is so absorbed in the general phase of his functional approach that he forgets the particulars on which religious education is grounded. Theologically speaking he fails to see the necessity of delving into the depths of the Christian tradition. This, he would argue, leads to indoctrination. (Of course he fails to see that the functional approach can also lead to indoctrination) Chave talks so much of an approach to religious education that will transcend dogmas, creeds and religions that he forgets the distinctive elements of the Christian religion, viz., a Book and a Man.

Nevertheless, I must confess that Chave has taken a great venture in setting forth this functional approach to religious education. He writes with enthusiasm and zeal. Even though I parted company with him on many points, I was kept spellbound throughout the book.

THD. MLKP-MBU: Box 113, folder 30.

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8. Davis wrote in the margin, "You are correct."
9. Chave anticipated this criticism: "[I indict] any attempt to classify this functional approach as either humanistic or theistic; for these terms are too vague to make a meaningful dilemma" (Chave, Functional Approach, p. v).
10. Davis wrote in the margin, "Good!"
11. Davis wrote in the margin and on the reverse, "He would disagree. He'd point out historical continuity. Chave prides himself on being able to preach his message with unvarnished, as it were, to people of all theological complexions. Chave would chafe (terrible pun, isn't it?) under your criticism."
12. Davis wrote in the margin, "True."
13. Davis circled "spellbound" and noted, "Isn't this a bit strong?"