

**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
RELIGIOUS SECTS:
COMPARISON OF TYPES**

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The Psychology of Religious Sects: Comparison of Types by Henry C. McComas

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HENRY C. MCCOMAS

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A Comparison of Types

BY

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MY FATHER AND MOTHER

WHOSE DEVOTION MADE THIS
LITTLE VOLUME POSSIBLE

PREFACE

THIS little volume is an outgrowth of two very different kinds of experience,—a number of years in church work and a number of years in a psychological laboratory. The church work covered very dissimilar fields: slums on the east side of New York, a fashionable church on the west side, home-mission churches, churches north, south and west. In this religious work practical success depended upon the ability to interpret human nature. A working basis for classifying different religious types grew up unconsciously. Some people must be reached in one way, some in another. A successful worker bases his efforts upon a successful classification of religious types.

A few years in the psychological laboratory brought out a supplementary truth. No two persons are exactly alike in their intellectual and emotional natures. The laboratory has many ways of measuring individual differences. One of the most fruitful branches of Psychology to-day is the study of Individual Differences. These are found in Attention, Association, Memory, Imagination, and, indeed, in every factor entering into human nature. The grouping of these differences into types has not yet been accomplished but promises to be one of the achievements of the future.

The connection between religious types and these fundamental differences in human nature is so obvious that no one can come into contact with both sets of facts

without becoming convinced that they are bound up together. That is, the differences which appear in the religious life of different denominations have their only justification in the differences of human dispositions and not in any divine preferences. Nothing is more necessary to-day than the proclamation of this fact, for the heart of sectarianism is the belief that each sect is peculiarly a divine favorite. When all religious people freely acknowledge that their differences are matters of individual tastes and temperaments the real barriers to church unity will be brushed away.

H. C. Mc.