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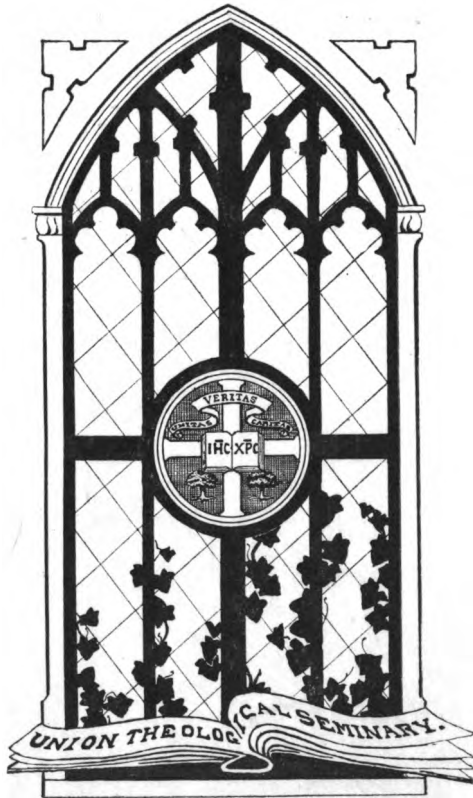
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Christian home.

*The* CHRISTIAN  
HOME

WILLIAM WALLACE FARIS, D. D.

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# *The* CHRISTIAN HOME



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## INTRODUCTION

Our times are notable for educational efforts, processes, and machinery designed to prepare people for effective living. Yet, after sharing these advantages, multitudes merely scramble through life to a disappointed, unraveled, old age, while not a few end earlier in tragic failure. In their preparation the core or organic human existence on this planet has been left untouched: they have not learned the central and the highest art of all—home-making.

No man comes to his true self alone. Stark individualism is a fanatic dream. Its prevalence as a cult portends, and its practice brings a blight on the garden of God. Conditions have been so shaped for us that everyone imperatively and fundamentally needs the nurture and discipline of a well-ordered home. The mutualities of such a home are appointed to serve as channels for vitalizing character by making us "partakers of the divine nature," and working this into the fiber of a personality surcharged with God—and enlarged to the true stature of "a fullgrown man." Moreover, love is the law of life, and only in the well-ordered home, rich in intimate mutualities, has love its due arena and opportunity.

The well-ordered home is not born overnight. No art is mastered without laborious and specific training, least of all this highest of all arts. Youth is the period for all initial training. It is not that children seriously weigh great vital problems; they naturally take life for granted, and leave bothersome details to their elders. Yet through the years they absorb the ideas and acquire the habits which—subject to due modifications—will stand them in stead when they have gone out into the world "on their own." As adolescence comes on things begin to seem different to them. A nascent sense of responsibility and of widening opportunity flushes the soul, stirs the mind, and prompts inquiry. Life's prongs stick their barbs into the heart and will not be gainsaid: love, marriage, home, vocation, society, service of the public weal, more and more crowd in on thought and feeling—at first in a sort of chaos, only later in clarified order. It is at this juncture that

young people need guidance for systematic thinking and definite resolve. Hitherto truth has been filtered down to their immature minds through the ways and words of their parents, and instilled into their souls unconsciously by the daily routine of the parental home. Now they need to sort out the chaos of early impressions, and begin to learn for themselves what home means, and how home life is to be inspired and ordered.

Particularly are those here had in mind who are approaching or have reached marriageable age. The duty of establishing a home needs to be urged on some who for selfish reasons seek to evade it. The abnormality of avoidable "single blessedness" in mature years involves a treason to humanity and to the Kingdom which should not go unscathed. No pains should be spared to head off any tendency in this vicious direction.

Probably, however, more poignant interest in what is here set forth may be expected of those who have begun to look forward definitely to homes of their own. Lively expectancy warms the heart and makes it plastic to apt suggestion. At the marriage altar I habitually adjure bride and groom to make Christ the first and constant Guest in their home, and the Bible the law of the home, since Christ is the only perfect exemplification of true love that earth has ever known, and since the Bible sets him forth as both our Law and our Friend, so that harmony in the home depends on its absorption of Christ, with the Bible in hand to aid the process. I can usually tell whether bride and groom have been well reared by the way they receive this. To some it evidently comes as a surprise; and when it is an unwelcome surprise this fact forecasts failure in that home, a forecast only too often verified.

Young married people may seize opportunity to supply any deficiencies, and to develop sound principles acquired in their rearing as to matters of cardinal moment, by joining earnestly in these studies.

To sum up: appeal is here made to all who want to see their own or others' home life made radiant with the spirit of the Master, rich in high satisfactions and crowned with a usefulness reaching down to remotest generations and up to God's eternity. These pages are written out of a fixed and passionate conviction that no other institution, human or divine, is of such vital moment to humanity and to the Kingdom of God as the Christian home.

A VETERAN PASTOR.

# THE CHRISTIAN HOME

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## I

### THE MODERN HOME AND ITS PERPLEXITIES

#### BIBLE READINGS

Acts 10: 1-8, 30-33. "Now there was a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side. And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household-servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa. . . . And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood by me in bright apparel, and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side. Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast done well that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord."

Cornelius had disciplined his household to habits of devoutness and generosity, but found himself perplexed by new conditions confronting him. God graciously came to his relief and armed him to meet these new conditions. This longest chapter in The Acts is a landmark. The facts it narrates open the door for every man who wants the best in his home, suggesting ways and means. Always there is some Peter to be sent for; when he comes, listen to him, and follow his counsels. Memorize v. 33.

This distinguished pagan, a man of aristocratic lineage running back to Rome's early days of sincere though unschooled



piety, when his military duties seated him in Palestine found himself embosomed among a people of religious customs strange to him. With open mind he absorbed the essence of Judaism at its best, and loyally wrought its superior teachings into the fiber of his life and the ordering of his household. Still he was not satisfied. Taught by the indwelling Spirit, he yearned for the best. He felt the pressure of changed and changing conditions. Doubtless he had heard of Jesus, and felt the upheaval of Judaism caused by him. Cornelius' longings found vent in his secret and family prayers. There came a crisis: he felt that he could go no farther without more light—from some source. His perplexity was God's opportunity. His prayer was heard, and Peter was brought within his range as a guide. Cornelius had carefully calculated the time of Peter's arrival with his comrades, and "was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and near friends." V. 24. Peter recited his own dovetailing experiences, and said, "I ask therefore with what intent ye sent for me." Vs. 25-29. Cornelius' conduct in all this, and his reply to Peter, present to us a shining instance of parental fidelity, management, and devout waiting on God for light. Homes ordered like this are ready to meet any change of conditions and any strenuousness of new times; and they are sure to be enriched by lavish blessing from the heavenly Father.

Phil. 2: 5-11. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"Have this mind in you"—or your home cannot develop as it was meant to do. "Christ in the home" means, first of all, Christ filling the parents' hearts. Following him, the father and mother, each take "the form of a servant," living for and in their offspring, and leading them, in due time and by due process, to "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." It is the spirit of Christ in the home, before

and far more than the law of God parentally imposed on the home, that makes the home godly and happy. Too many homes have been spoiled, and the character of too many children permanently warped, by a stern, religious rule not tempered by a Christly spirit. Go deep, or you will not go far. The home needs a warm and tender, spiritual life rather than severe and mechanical, religious regulation. Loving hearts control better than a strong hand. Only parents saturated and dominated by the spirit of Christ can bring up children right.

James 1: 5-8. "But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways."

"Ask wisdom"—how father and mother need it! But God understands. He does not upbraid, in presence of our shortcomings, and of our ignorance. He gives "liberally," too. Every hour parents need to ask of God, "What shall I do?" Every child is a new problem. In home life every hour presents new problems. Rules will not cover the need. God inspires parental ingenuity to meet puzzling emergencies; he loves to do this. The honest, loving, unselfish, praying father is never left in the lurch. Raising children is a joint task of God and the earthly parents, and when called on God sees us through.

Thus parents may confidently expect divine guidance and help. Let them ask boldly, "in faith, nothing doubting," expecting adequate answer, and resolved to act on the wisdom which God shall supply.

## NOVELTIES AND PERPLEXITIES

### I. ECONOMIC PRESSURE

1. "The Christian home is not what it once was." Why should it be? How could it be? Nothing mundane is the same as it used to be. Conditions change. Would you have it otherwise? Do you resent growth and development? God's plans unfold through the ages. Would you go back to candlelight and ox teams, and to Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" with its horrifying pictures and distressing narrations as the chief religious pabulum for your children alongside the Bible?

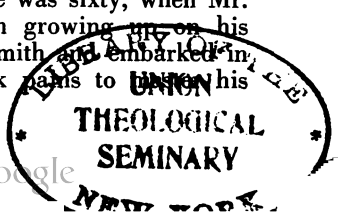
2. All growth and all development involve trying changes. No wise father treats his adolescent boy as when he was a babe—and the task of rearing him grows harder as the years advance, unless you stifle his individuality and warp his personality by confining him in a straight jacket of regulations at best suitable only to a little child. Also, each new generation demands new regimen. We simply cannot reproduce unchanged the methods of our fathers. No hard and fixed routine will do in God's work. Those who try it inevitably tend to create an oppressive Pharisaism which crushes out life. Then follows an explosion—such as came when God sent his Son to dynamite rabbinic Judaism. God keeps us alert. Systems and rules are excellent for the moment, but must unfold or else be discarded. The best home life of a hundred years ago would be intolerable to-day, not to say impossible. The necessary changes are wholesome. But they do involve perplexities.

3. The economic pressure of our times is as severe as it is unescapable. This is often allowed to force religious nurture into a corner, sometimes to force it out altogether. Less than seventy years ago the family of William S—, an artisan residing in a western city of seven thousand population and of much culture, with wife and six children, subsisted more years than one on less than two hundred dollars each year in cash—supplemented by garden products, the fruit of the loom, the poultry yard, cow stable, and pigpen; yet devout frugality made this sufficient for comfort and decency, for keeping an inspiring religious weekly on the table, and for supplying a tithe for church expenses and charities, so that the members of the family were healthy, happy, and respected, with easy provision for ample physical exercise, and for the nurture of a devout, robust, and intelligent personality on the part of each of the six children. No factories, labor unions, clubs, apartment houses, car fares, costly fabrics, and knick-knacks, daily papers, nightly shows, automobiles, and expensive social demands, to eat up cash, forbid leisure, debauch Sunday quiet, distract the mind from sober thought, and consume energy in a whirl of manifold excitements! We could not go back to those simple days if we would—and wise men would not if they could. Our business is to absorb inevitable novelties without being swamped by them; to use them, not let them use us. And this can be done—is done.

4. It is done by those who resolve to do it. The changed times demand of us a more stalwart purpose, a sturdier piety, an enlarged wisdom, a firmer grasp on the great realities of life, and an augmented alertness of spirit and openness of mind. Let no man "sleep at the switch"—no matter how switches multiply to tax our attention. We need a fertility of resource not exacted of our forefathers. Many do achieve this. Will you achieve it? It is merely a matter of high and fixed resolve in the fear of God; of waiting on God for guidance; of devotion to high ends—involving dominant desire for the enthronement of Christ, the nurture of personality, and the redemption of ourselves and others through Christ. Dominant desire! The age we live in exacts of us all an intensity of consecration and of purpose not commonly so necessary in a simpler age. Are we rising to this? In a word, are we fit to live in our enlightened and bustling times—where God has placed us? Well, we have to be—or go under.

5. How would you translate the achievements of William S—— into their different times? No two homes can do this in just the same way. In days not yet remote Mrs. M——, a minister's widow with slender means and six young children, had her way and succeeded in it, first in village life, then residing in a city with good schools and a near-by college which they attended. The warm mutualities of that home were a delightful surprise to every guest—the children taking part under her firm and kind hand in family worship, in household tasks, in remunerative labor, in personal and domestic frugalities, in church and social life and in family recreations: everything shared and the family means actually increasing with the years! A wise financier? Certainly: what parent has any right to be anything less? Her financial skill was developed as needed after she was left a widow. Yours can be, if you will; it is all a matter of dominant desire, fixed purpose, and devout dependence on Him who "giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not."

6. The case of Mr. and Mrs. O—— is still more recent and is equally striking. Handicapped by infirm health and a malady which carried him off before he was sixty, when Mr. O—— found a family of ten children growing up on his hands he abandoned his trade as blacksmith and embarked in merchandizing with limited means, took pains to



new business, and to train at least seven of his children to it under his hands, making all ten the intimate associates of their father and mother and of one another. He made them content and happy, had the satisfaction of seeing all of them members of the church of his adoption, and grown up in the respect of the community, and left to their productive hands the largest mercantile establishment in the county where they lived. He achieved this because his life was governed by dominating purpose to do it in the fear of God. A wise and strong man? Yes, he grew to be all that. So can you—if you will. Once when questioned as to the secret of his financial skill, Mr. O—— said in substance, “There is no mystery about successful finance; all you have to do is to spend less than you make”—and he might have added “invest savings wisely, and nurse your investment.” He did just that. So can you—if you will.

7. A dozen years ago or so Mr. P—— was a farmer of straitened means with six children, living nine miles from church, yet attending with much regularity. To-day he and his family of ten reside in a city. One by one his daughters go to college and later assist in his business—now a factory in which his sons are partners. They have good homes (four homes now), a car, a common church life, and social interests in common. They enjoy modern advantages, but are not swamped by them. He is a ruling elder in the church, his two sons are deacons, the adolescent daughters are church members, and the entire family motor to church and Sunday school, with the two youngest in the Primary Department. They all seem contented and happy and on occasion take outdoor recreation together. Of course they are respected and influential. The struggles of this family have been severe. Their united success is exceptional—largely because most people resent struggle instead of devoutly welcoming it.

## II. COMPETITION OF COMMERCIALIZED AMUSEMENTS

This is merely one of many modern distractions which threaten to derange home life, and to disturb the quiet essential to true nurture; but he who can meet this can meet all. How, for example, to absorb the moving pictures without enervation? This can be done—is done with advantage. The moving picture is not always bad. Some afternoon or evening you can

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accompany your children to a good one—and talk with them about it afterwards. They are interested and want to go. They ought to want to go. They ought to go. You ought to go with them. If disabled, you surely can secure a fit substitute; but nothing less than absolute disability should thus set up domestic divorce. The solidarity of home life must be preserved. Parents must live with their children, in active sympathy with their needs. A tax? All good costs—the highest costs most. We have no right to have children unless we thus fully live with them. No one has a right to a home unless he lavish himself on his home. The things we want most we are willing to work hardest for and pay most for. Do you want a real home? Do you want well-nurtured children? What is your dominant desire? Everything hinges on this. There are other things than the moving pictures to be dealt with, but the principle remains the same; as for the method, that is for parental love and ingenuity to device, under that sure guidance of God which no one need fail of. Suppose it is the affair of owning or hiring a motor car; or of joining the crowds at a bathing or other resort. In any case do only what means and time justly allow; but see to it that this is done—and that the whole thing is made a family matter. In no case allow the family to be seized up in the whirl of life and flung into dis-severed fragments, like an exploding emery wheel.

### III. CHANGING CONCEPTIONS

1. There is a modern tendency to scout parental authority, but this will not harm any wise and devoted father and mother, or the children of such a father and mother. True, arbitrary authority has waned. It is a good thing that this is so. God is leading us into the better way. Have you so won your child by close and sympathetic comradeship that he responds to your touch? There is the touchstone of effective authority, divine or human. Firm control is possible thus, not wholesomely otherwise. Every child needs to be won and held by heart-strings. A level head is necessary in the parent, but it must not be a hard head. Love breeds sagacity. A sympathetic understanding of one's child is imperative. This takes time, and requires thought, companionship, and much prayer. Every father and mother needs to apply to their home life the words of the

wise old men to Rehoboam, I Kings 12: 7: "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever." Note the words "this people," "this day": not some ideal people, but those God has given you, just as they are; not according to the customs of some other time, but as things fall out "to-day": "answer"—getting into responsive touch with their present feelings, even when these are biased, inflamed, or exaggerated; "speak good words"—kind, touching, sympathetic, sagacious words: all very specific, quite modern, divinely tender and timely—a warning to parents not to be high-handed as Rehoboam proved in the teeth of this sage counsel, lest like him they lose control, and so work mischief to those subject to them. Do you mind your children, and they will mind you.

2. But what of the modern status of woman? There is something good here—some fat grain even if also much chaff. The wife and mother is happily less a slave than oftentimes formerly. She has, say, her own purse, her vote, her clubs, sometimes opinions of her own. There is nothing here for either piety or domesticity to be alarmed over, but much for both to find advantage in. Many of the very best wives and mothers in our day are of vigorous initiative and independent quality. This has been so since the days of the wife of Jonathan Edwards, since the days of Timothy's mother and grandmother, II Tim. 1: 5, even of the typical woman depicted in Prov. 31: 10-31. Nothing radically new here! The elevation of womanhood is a gain. Enfranchisement, intelligence, culture, independence, only heighten the charm and intensify the wholesome influence of the devout wife, the sensible and devoted mother. Mothers, what is your dominant passion? Does this focus on your Saviour, your husband, your children, your home? Men have no business to marry women not capable and likely to develop thus; and no right to spare pains in helping them to this development. Real piety has nothing to fear and everything to hope from the enfranchisement of womanhood.

3. As to family religion: new ideas, and new ways may change old methods; may cut down the length and abate the stiffness and formalism once frequent in family prayers; but good sense and pious purpose will turn this to advantage.

Blessing at table can still be usefully managed in any home. And back of all this the atmosphere of a genial and sane piety, with reverent and intelligent use of the Bible, will fit into—and are needed in—every home. Formal religion may need to readjust its methods and revitalize its manners, but real religion need never go into the discard—nor will it, unless by reason of undue preoccupation, or of shameful mental indolence. Simplicity, sincerity, pervasiveness, and winsomeness of piety and method, will make religion the chief charm of any home, however “modern.”

#### IV. MODERN COMPENSATIONS

Modern life affords the home advantages of rare moment unknown to our ancestors. There is a wealth of good literature for children and youth, and for parental guidance in rearing their young, which wise parents will not fail to use discriminately—sometimes also lavishly. The stimulus of modern school life, far surpassing that of even fifty years ago, can be made exceedingly helpful—though not by parents who neglect to keep in touch with their children’s studies, associations, and school experiences, and informed as to specific conditions, month by month, even week by week. Modern Sunday schools offer much help, if only parents will be comrades of their young in this, also—studying lessons with them, keeping watch over social developments involved, and perhaps attending the Sunday school with them: why not? many from our very busiest parents do—parents with eight and ten children and no servants: it is all a matter of dominant resolve. The Boy Scout movement conceals marked values which our homes should avail themselves of. Girls’ clubs and girls’ camps may be used effectively, and often are so used. These times teem with opportunities. If only parents will grasp these! Weed out minor claims on time and money as may be necessary. Concentrate on the best things—on things most needful for the children as their years advance. Plenty of fun, but no empty frivolity. Less fuss and feathers, so as to make room for solid values. The fact is that a new and brighter day for the Christian home is dawning, if only we will have it so. It is merely a matter of dominant desire and intelligent, resolute devotion.



## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

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### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Are "changing conditions and conceptions" in life to be resented or welcomed? Should they be met with sheer resignation, or with sympathetic effort to adjust ourselves to them? Do they spring chiefly from decay, or from abundant life—from below, or from above?

2. What commercialized amusements can be made useful?

3. In leading or governing others which comes first—sympathy or intelligence?

4. How can right desire be made dominant in ourselves? What do we grow by? How can desire be fed?

5. What books and what magazines would you recommend for choice home uses, for children under twelve? for youth? Many books, or a few carefully read by all the household and discussed in the family circle?

6. Should guests be allowed in the home all the time? much of the time? or only occasionally? Should the home life be fed mostly from within, or from without? Should fixed home customs be relaxed when there are guests? When guests appear, or announce that they are coming, about church time on the Lord's Day, what should be done with them?

### II

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

### BIBLE READINGS

Eph. 5: 22-26. "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word."

The apostle is here laying the foundations for a home whose order is the product of sacrificial love. On these terms no marital oppression is possible; and on no other terms is the husband entitled to rule. No one ever charged Christ with being "bossy," and the head of the house holds his place only on condition of being Christly; he has rightful power only in so far as he is Christly. It sometimes happily happens that the wife is the actual head of the home; and in the apostle's words there is room for tolerance of this eccentric state of things—whenever and so far as the wife is of sturdier fiber than her husband, and duly pays the sacrificial price of her usurped and perhaps inevitable headship: if the status conceals dangers these are neutralized by genuine, Christly, self-sacrificing love. No matter what "obey" is injected into the marriage service, the actual status of domestic headship will normally adjust itself. Husbands have no right to be so weak, willful, impulsive, or so obdurate, headstrong, and self-centered, as either to force abdication of their domestic headship, or otherwise to provoke domestic broils. Christ had no broils with his Church. The husband who gives "himself up" for his home, and only that husband, merits headship, and need fear no loss of it. "That he might sanctify it." Is the husband animated and dominated by this Christly aim in behalf of his home? Does he imbibe the Master's wisdom and spirit for the performance? Is he patient, gentle, forbearing, as Christ was? Does he bear in his own pierced heart, without complaint, all the burdens of his home? Does he bury his toils and sorrows there, beyond resurrection, as Christ habitually did? Does he wait for due recog-

dition of his headship, and win it at last by sheer force of loving service, superior wisdom, and affluent godliness, as Christ did? On such terms as these the headship and order of the home adjust themselves without serious friction, and with no injustice either to wife or to children. The business of being a husband and father is the weightiest and costliest task and privilege known in the created universe; and unless the husband pays a cost greater than even the unspeakable cost of the wife and mother, any exercise of marital authority on his part is sheer usurpation for which some day there will be a reckoning—possibly beginning in this world with a wrecked home.

As Christ absorbed the sins and sorrows of humanity in his own person, so does the true husband and father with wife and children—guiding and saving them ever by the sacrifice of himself, not by sheer assertion of himself and crass assumption of arbitrary rule. A home with such a head is a nest of redemption and a foretaste of heaven; and any other kind of home is an abortion, and becomes the arena of agonies and a breeding place of destruction. Only the infinite mercy of God, by his overruling providence and his restoring grace, makes such homes as we do have, at their best, anything less calamitous than this; but for husbands and wives who never lose sight of the Christly ideal, nor touch with the redeeming Spirit, there is an operative ransom of amazing grace which makes the home a gateway to heaven.

Eph. 6:1-4. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord."

Obey both parents, you children! "In the Lord" involves parental Christliness, as indicated above. Parents have a "right" to obedience only so far as they are Christly. Obedience, whether conjugal or filial, if merely exacted and enforced, tends to shrivel character and debauch the home. Only the utmost intimacy with Jesus will avail here—an intimacy sedulously maintained by parents in secret, projected into the home through the family altar, and generated into the very atmosphere of the home life until children feel and welcome the constant presence of the unseen Guest. Under these conditions

filial obedience becomes habitual, even natural. The duty of obeying is almost never irksome.

Eph. 6: 5-9. "Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him."

Note the words "do the same things," indicating the Spirit of Christ as the real authority throughout the home, pervading all inmates, infecting and affecting even guests—a rule common to all; the head of the home acting as God's steward in ordering its affairs. No change of economic status as to servants can vitally affect this.

### I. THE HOME A DIVINE INSTITUTION

1. The home is historically man's first and most vital institution. It antedates, and it ever underlies, the Church, the State, society, true education, stable industry, and all human progress. John Fiske has shown that the prolongation of infancy, forcing and inspiring home life and the public protection of the home, marks the deep and wide gulf which separates brutes from man. Life on this planet is thus so ordered that, inherently and inviolably, the very existence of humanity, as distinguished from that of the brutes, centers and depends on homes where women and babes are protected, and where children are nurtured and reared. Hence whatever tends to weaken, pervert, or destroy the home, or to reduce the sanctions of home life, is fundamental treason to humanity and a bid for return to the age of mastodons and other monsters in whose presence man cannot exist. But this earth was made for man; and humanity fundamentally needs homes.

2. The history of the human race makes this plain. Note the particular races that endure. The only race traceable for four thousand years and enduring still is the Jewish people, the descendants of Abraham, branded deep with the distinctive traits of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Rebekah, of Jacob

and Rachel. To this day the Jewish home is the center of the people's life. Only the choicest Christian homes surpass or even rival the average Jewish home in mutual and generous devotion, in warm affection, in firmness and tenacity of domestic fiber, in inculcating the fear of God, and in transmitting desirable characteristics to posterity. As a natural consequence, the fifteen millions of Jews now on earth wield much more than their share of influence and power, financially and otherwise; that is, taking the five hundred millions of nominally Christian peoples who control most of the world, the ten millions of Jews scattered among these carry much more than one fiftieth of the weight in financial and other leadership. All this is a fruit that could not have been secured but for their remarkable home life, crippled as this has been by defective grasp of divine truth, and by ages of relentless persecution.

3. Only one other race even approaches this record of stability, endurance, and world power. This is the Chinese people, traceable in history, fixed in abode, and sturdy in maintenance of their brand of civilization for some twenty-five hundred years—four hundred million of people in whose habits and ideals no assault from without has made a perceptible dent, until of late Christian missions among them, after one hundred years of operation, begin to create wholesome and widespread changes. But the Chinese are distinguished above all else and beneath all else by their stubborn and unstinted devotion to their inferior though far from valueless species of home life. Their ancestral worship is merely a grotesque and mischievous exaggeration of what is required of us by our Fifth Commandment, and this is the heart of religion among the Chinese, while honor paid to parents is the core of China's social structure.

4. Where lies the secret of that resourcefulness and compacted power of endurance under pressure on the part of the French people which in the late war baffled all Germany's astute calculations? In the intense concentration of French social law expended in maintenance of home life and family interests.

5. No race surpasses the people of Scotland in projecting individuals as creative forces far and wide into frontier communities, and into the enterprises which mark humanity's advance. Would you know why? Read Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night." After touchingly describing scenes in the home

life, and the conduct of family prayers, in a humble Scottish home, Burns flames at us with this:

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,  
Which makes her loved at home, revered abroad.

6. All nations and peoples may be infallibly graded thus. Gypsy life, without any fixed home though not without family relationship—see how this holds down that people in impotence and semidegradation. Compare Turks with Scandinavians; Malays with Greeks; Arabians with Italians; Kurds with Armenians.

7. There is reason for all this. The fixed home gives motive for strenuous endeavor aimed at distant results, and puts restraint on the squandering of energy. It tends to develop tenderness of feeling, warmth of mutual attachment, and all the finer traits which mark noble living.

8. Hence hotel life, excessive travel, and such absorption in business or in the social whirl as rob the home of leisurely and intimate companionship, are a public bane and a personal calamity.

## II. THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF THE HOME

Love and mutual service knit souls together in the bonds of Christ. No other community of interest can do this. Ambition for social advancement, or for wealth; love of pleasure; even devotion to intellectual nurture and pursuits—all these must give way and be held in strict subordination to the demands of loving intimacy and mutual ministries in the home. Compare the home of Mary and Martha with that of Herod Antipas, and note results; the home of Joseph and Mary with that of Pilate; the homes of the Hapsburgs and the Hohenzollerns with those of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Pick out the noted statesmen and financiers whose homes have produced men and women held in honor and respect, and observe how seldom this happens to fathers and mothers so absorbed in outside interests as to lead them to neglect of the home. Does this boon ever visit such homes? Observe what an enormous disproportion of our valued public leaders come from obscure homes where domestic leisure, warm piety, persistent kindness of manner, and intimate, mutual services prevail. Note Abraham's

ways as instanced in his treatment of his nephew, Lot; and especially his close and fertile companionship with his son Isaac. Here also note the lasting mischief wrought to human peace and quiet by the necessity for his casting off the misbegotten Ishmael (how this did wring his heart! and how it does forever brand the sin of false parentage!)—to whom we are indebted for the Arabian people, and ultimately for that firebrand among world religions, Mohammedanism. From this and other instances see what woe to society comes from “the neglected child.” Inquire where most of our criminals come from. If all our homes could be made godly and loving, where would our lawbreakers and mischief-makers come from? If society is ever to be redeemed, is there any way of doing it that does not involve the productions of such homes?

### III. THE VALUE OF THE CHILD TO THE PARENT

1. Under God, children unwittingly educate their parents. They are appointed to do this. The sense of parental responsibility drives many to God. A new light shines in the mother's face when she presses her firstborn to her breast. Many a careless lad has become a thoughtful man when he realized that he had become a father. Rough men often grow tender when handling a helpless babe. Careless living receives a shock when confronted with parental responsibility. The birth of one's child brings a crisis of grave moment and high opportunity in the development of character.

2. As the child grows—and perhaps other children come—even the formerly careless parent, for the child's sake, tends to become thrifty, judicious, careful of his habits, interested in Sunday school and church. This is an observed fact; and it has its roots in the nature of things, set there by our heavenly Father. God has so ordered human life, and so constructed human nature, that some tendency in this direction of moral health and spiritual quickening is inevitable. By divine ordering, home life predisposes to piety and stimulates the nurture and the compacting of character on the part of parents. Happy the father and mother who warmly and resolutely respond to opportunity in this. And happy their children—yes, and their grandchildren—even descendants to remote generations. Parenthood strongly favors the creation of a stream of tendency

destined to broaden in substantial good to humanity adown the future. The case of Abraham strikingly testifies to this.

3. In China the value of a son is chiefly made to hinge on the support and honor to be expected from filial loyalty. Even among us it often happens that in old age children are the solace and support of their parents. It is a lonely old age that has no children to cheer it. And during intervening years the companionship of one's children goes far to keep one young in feeling and genially interested in life. Childless folk are apt to shrivel and harden. A mellow character and sweetness of disposition are nourished by the care and comradeship of children and grandchildren.

#### IV. THE VALUE OF THE PARENT TO THE CHILD

1. Children are not apt to think of this. They take parents and parental ministries for granted, as perquisites of life. Only later is gratitude born. Only later—as a rule only years after they have been flung out into life “on their own” and been rudely buffeted—do children even begin to realize what they owe to their parents. The ingratitude of children is a commonplace, but even so it is often a bitter trial to their parents. Rebellious, willful, wayward children and youth little realize what values they thus hold lightly, ready to throw them away for a bauble. Later they make the discovery. Read Luke 15: 11-24 for a shining instance. Sometimes they make the discovery too late for any repentance or recompense: the parents are dead, and their own lives are hopelessly wrecked.

2. At what fearful cost to his mother his life was purchased should be judiciously made known to each child, progressively through the years. Concealments and dull silence about the mystery of generation and birth are costly errors on the part of parents. The demand for due sex instruction at the hands of parents is happily becoming insistent. The wonders, the beauty, and the divine significance of generation can be so disclosed as to awaken in the child a deep and wholesome reverence for the mother, for the father, and for the home, and for God. The duty of seeing that this is done, and wisely done, is imperative, and is momentous for all concerned.

3. The child should be led to know that the powers and im-



pulses he rejoices in have been handed down to him as the products of parental (and ancestral) toil and nurture. No child should be kept in ignorance of what he owes to heredity. In familiar conversation, often casually, and by other means, enough should be shown him, at least by the time he is twelve years old, to set him thinking and inquiring, so that by the time the stormy period of adolescence has arrived he will have "an anchor cast to windward."

4. If family life be well ordered, with tasks, recreations, reading, and prayer habits all shared, few children will reach the age of twelve without a sobering sense of parental toils, thoughtfulness, judicious foresight, practical sense, and weight of character; and of deep personal obligation because of this. Well-reared children, partly by means of close companionship with parents and with one another in the home, come to have an overmastering sense of shared life, of common interests, of wholesome dependence on parental guidance. To such a child its parents and its home become assets too rich and rare to be trifled with.

### V. MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS

1. There results a deep and tender sense of obligation. The child needs to be shown that obligations are inherently mutual. This involves assiduous teamwork in the family. The gang spirit among boys means nurture in teamwork, but in a very crude way. It is a sad home that leaves the lad to acquire from such tuition his first lessons in this high art. Homes with many servants are not easily put in harness for the best nurture of children. The simple life is better. Shared tasks in kitchen, laundry, dining room, garden, wood yard, stable or garage, poultry yard, at the book table, in keeping household accounts, in marketing, in social life, in Bible study and church life, and in the conduct of family prayers; shared pleasures, carefully and wisely ordered; shared sorrows and anxieties, whether originating with parent or with child; shared finances, duly apportioned: all these things are the child's right, as opportunity may be in reach; and due attention to them will prove the safeguard of the home. By means of all this an abiding sense of mutuality—mutuality of interest and of obligation as twin forces and reciprocal interests—will grow into the life of the child and become indestructible part of the

fiber of his being. In no other way can children be adequately reared and equipped for the responsibilities of mature life. This is far the most important part of the child's education, and no father and mother should allow their children to be robbed of it.

### VI. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOME TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. This must now be evident as vital and momentous. The home is the germ cell of organic Christianity. The Church is, in substantial fact, made up of godly homes rather than of individuals. So also society, and the state. The most powerful evangelism, even the Sunday school, rates far below the home as a Christian factor. Piety needs to be ingrained in the very nerves of the body through the loving touch and speech of parents. Character is a bundle of habits, and these are for the most part shaped during childhood and youth. By rights this is chiefly done in the home. Through his two millions of bodily end organs of touch the very babe, if duly cared for, learns day by day, and hour by hour, that the powers above him—for him incarnate in his parents—can be trusted to handle him lovingly, firmly, wisely, and effectively. By the time he is two years old this fundamental fact is inbred in his nervous system and engraved on his brain: it has become part of his instinct, his subconscious mind, and soul. It is comparatively easy to translate this in later years into trust in God, the ultimate Power above; wise parents see to this, and under the ministries of the Holy Spirit they actually effect it. If parents fail here, all the preachers in Christendom can do little to repair the vital loss. The sense of touch—not the sense of hearing, nor even the sense of sight—holds the primacy in human nurture, as the sense of smell does in the life of ants and dogs, and the sense of sight with eagles and vultures. God has been at infinite pains to fix things so. Study the case of Helen Keller, whose soul was at length emancipated from its dreary prison by the persistent, loving touch of Miss Sullivan. Note how lavish Jesus was in using the sense of touch. The law of God for human salvation operates dominantly through his own provision of our five senses as his tools, with touch as chief factor; and of the home as chief workshop.

2. Proof from products is in easy reach. How many of our homes are homes of piety, loving, mutual ministries, regular churchgoing, and family prayer? Taking the Christian world over, probably one in ten at most. Yet, notoriously, this one tenth of our homes produces fully nine tenths of the men and women whom the world delights to honor; of men whom the people push into leadership, and of women whom multitudes trust and revere. A very undue proportion of the men are even sons of preachers, like Grover Cleveland, Charles E. Hughes, and Woodrow Wilson. Fully nine tenths of our Presidents, Vice Presidents, members of Cabinet, judges on the supreme bench, governors of states, and great educational leaders come from homes redolent of piety, along with such magnates as Arthur J. Balfour and Bonar Law, Generals Pershing, March, Haig, and Foch, and hosts of our more noted and honored financiers.

3. Do you know of a single family that has survived in honor or decency for three successive generations without at least one household in the line given to the ways of piety? The present writer has never been able to learn of a single instance. But, on the other hand, notoriously to careful observers, the bone and sinew of Christendom is predominantly made up of products of families in which habits of domestic and professed piety are carefully handed down from generation to generation. The vital and tremendous significance of this is obvious.

### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What makes a home? How much has house or furniture to do with it? eating? companionship? conversation? community of tasks and interests? Why do cats and dogs cling to human homes? If animals below us tend to center there, what about angels above us? Is any other center of activity in the universe so vital and interesting?

2. Where do we get most of our character-shaping experiences, taking these as a whole—in homes, or elsewhere? If elsewhere, what then?

3. How would you have family prayers conducted in homes including several children between eight and sixteen years of age? Should family prayers be prepared for by the leader? Would you recommend reading the Bible in course, a full chap-

ter at a time, in family prayers? How about using the daily readings announced with Sunday-school lessons?

4. In the home is the form of prayer the most important thing, or the spirit and habit of secret prayer? If the spirit of prayer exists in strength, can it easily be kept from expressing itself in some way?

5. How would you develop in children and youth a controlling sense of mutual interests in the home?

6. What do we mean by "from generation to generation"? And what has this to do with world redemption? What about cumulative results of Christian living and teaching? Can these duly develop and ripen save along the line of godly homes wherein the family heritage of piety is augmented as one generation succeeds another?

III

THE HOME ATMOSPHERE

BIBLE READINGS

Phil. 4: 1-9. "Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved.

I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

Personal messages in Paul's public letters carry an air of gracious intimacy and winsome warmth so steeped in the aroma of his personality as to give them lasting charm. The original recipients must have been deeply moved and powerfully swayed by them, and something of their flavor reaches even to us. He did not contrive all this; it was the natural outflow of his ardent, God-filled life. His "wherefore," here, draws into the words before us the moving power of his flaming, personal confession in the previous chapter: "Howbeit, what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ . . . Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may gain Christ, and be found in him." Phil. 3: 7-9. Note the warm word "my." The depth and largeness of Paul's spiritual experience gave "atmosphere" to all he said and did. So, also, his sincere use of endearing terms: "My brethren, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, . . . my beloved . . . true yokefellow"; and not less the tenor of his terse and burning messages: "Be of the same mind in the Lord"—this must have gone far to compose differences and heal alienations. "In nothing be anxious; but in

everything . . . let your requests be made known unto God"—how this must have stimulated the prayer life of his friends! "The peace of God . . . shall guard your hearts and thoughts"—leading those storm-tossed souls into safe harbor. "Whatever things are . . . lovely"—no room left for bickerings! "The things which ye . . . heard and saw in me . . . do"—challenging devout imitation. Just this is what all parents have to do. Well is it for the home in which the challenge can be safely pressed!

II Tim. 1: 1-6. "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also. For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands."

Paul had visited in that godly home, and had been regaled with its atmosphere of sincere and studious piety: three generations of Bible study and habitual prayer! Thus the character of young Timothy was shaped with care, and the lad became first Paul's pupil and later an effective preacher and public leader. Note Paul's reference to his "forefathers," as indicating his profound sense of indebtedness to parental training and ancestral influences.

Ex. 2: 1-9. "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her hand-maid to fetch it. And she opened it, and saw the child: and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrew's children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother. And

Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it."

It is easy from this glimpse to divine the atmosphere which distinguished the home that produced Moses, the peerless deliverer and lawgiver before Christ. Amram, the husband and father, was doubtless absent all day at his slave tasks, but his wife, Jochebed, ruled with a loving and firm hand. Her ten-year-old daughter was well trained, had learned to sympathize with her mother's patriotic yearnings, and became her shrewd and efficient helper in an emergency covering many months. Even three-year-old Aaron, though always free of spech, was schooled to keep family secrets and to walk warily. Back of the birth and of the rearing of Moses with all its marvels and its wonderful outcome, lay the devoted and intelligent piety and the far-reaching wisdom of his mother. Homes with such an atmosphere are nurseries of power. But for these nine verses the record of Moses' life would seem incredible; in this short record the mystery is solved.

### I. THE IMPORTANCE OF ATMOSPHERE

1. In development of character as in bodily health and growth, food and guidance are indispensable, specially and almost constantly to the babe or the young child; but atmosphere is incalculably more important than both together. Care is bestowed as needed, now and then; food, at intervals hours apart; while one breathes the atmosphere without pause. It has been shown that ninety-five per cent of the weight acquired by a growing tree comes from air, moisture, and sunshine. It seems probable that at least three fourths of the character acquired by children is unconsciously absorbed in like manner. Direct instruction, like soil and fertilizer supplied to the potted tree in the test alluded to above, is a five-per-cent contribution—possibly a little more since the mind of a human child in time becomes consciously active and outreaching as the life of a tree does not. Even in the experiences of school and church it is the influence of teacher and pastor that goes farthest and counts heaviest; much more is this true in the home, where character has gone far in taking decisive shape before the child is two years old. Character is a bundle of

habits—habits of thought, feeling, and action. Loving trust is the fundamental virtue of humanity, and if this be not inspired before the babe is six weeks old, and duly nurtured and developed before he is old enough to reason, his later life is governed by suspicion and distrust, almost beyond remedy.

2. The atmosphere is what we breathe. The Greek word for "spirit" in our New Testament means simply "breath." The Spirit of God is the breath of God. The Spirit of God is the inspiration of the true home. This inspiration is to be breathed out by the parents, because they are God-filled and cannot but breathe out God; and so it is breathed in, "inspired," by the children. It is what you are that counts, far more than all you do and say. Mere instruction crammed into children's minds is not only a futile thing—unless it be vitalized by genial quality and manner, and unless wrapped in an atmosphere of dominating gentleness and love, it becomes absolutely injurious, causing moral indigestion and breeding spiritual dyspepsia and anemia. Overt instruction is heavily and mischievously overused, in home, school, and church. We cannot mechanically stuff truth into the delicate tissues of character without poisoning them and stunting the growth of personality. The noblest influence we wield is subconscious and incessant. Our every act teaches. Our life is continually pouring either truth or error into the lives of all we touch—especially in the holy intimacies of the home. Harsh tones of voice, sodden silence, gloomy looks, selfish bias of feeling, drown out our good words: "I cannot hear what you say because of what you are," said a shrewd and not unkindly listener once; many a child could say this truthfully to his parent if only he knew how to reason, and all unsaid many a child feels it if he does not think it. The moral atmosphere of your home is—for good or ill—continuously and powerfully shaping the children's character "while you wait."

3. Therefore momentous issues hang on the secret habits of father and mother, particularly habits which foster or cripple their own piety. No parent can afford not to maintain close and conscious intimacy with the Father, such as the Master exhibited. Parents who in secret feed their own lives lavishly on God, in meditation, prayer, and sane Bible study, so that even the children see that father and mother are growing in



Christlikeness, are making their home wealthy in the power of righteousness.

4. For righteousness is not mere rectitude—a spindle-shanked and ungainly travesty of “the righteousness of God.” Righteousness is largeness of life, generosity, and kindness of feeling as well as of habit, steeped in the serenity of God. This real righteousness infects, rather than exacts. It depends little on prohibitions; its “don’ts” are a very minor matter, and are as genial as they thus prove effective. “Orders” go a scant way in producing wholesome domestic order. It is life, life, life that tells for righteousness; and life pours itself into other lives as silently and as acceptably as God’s sunshine. I do not ask merely, “Do you pray?” but, “Do you lead the prayer life?” Is your life continuously saturated with God?

5. All this would be appalling to us sinners but for God’s gracious promises to meet our grave emergency. Our children detect our infirmities: make no mistake about that! Concealments are vain; the little ones nose out our hypocrisy and instinctively despise it—and will despise us if we miss the path of repentance and humility. For, also, those same children know when we ourselves are aware of our infirmities and are struggling to outgrow them, and they tenderly sympathize with our evident effort. When you err, own up—fully and frankly; and let your open prayer at the family altar speak out your unfeigned repentance and deep humility, and your poignant consciousness of that common frailty which parents and children alike are subject to. But one minute of such utterance in family prayer bespeaks hours of agonizing secret prayer beforehand. The prayer life of a pardoned sinner, growing rich in God’s grace, lies back of all effective, parental admonition.

6. Then when our children, with awakened spiritual concern, come to us with inquiry, we shall have bitten so deep into experimental knowledge of Scripture, and of God in both Scripture and current events, that we shall be able to tell them what they want to know. We shall not feed them on the husks of truth, but on its vital essence as needed by them at the moment. They will soon discover that we know our Bible, that we have fed on its very heart, and that our knowledge is apt to the needs of daily life—for ourselves first, and then for them.

II. SPIRIT OF HOME GOVERNMENT

1. What "spirit"? Just the Spirit of God, the spirit Jesus habitually showed; that identical inward Force and Sweetness governing our own lives. This we shall not get without burying ourselves in the recesses of the four Gospels, searching out for ourselves Jesus' ways and manner amid the emergencies of daily life, until we instinctively know "what Jesus would do" in our place, moment by moment; although, indeed, this study needs to be reënforced by much familiarity with the supplementary exhortations of Paul's illuminating Epistles, and of all other parts of the Bible in due place and proportion—always provided that we thus "search the scriptures" for needed personal pabulum rather than for definitions, abstract ideas, or mere general truth. The Bible is to be daily ground up into needed food, not merely—nor chiefly—sized up and admired as a treatise, whether on theology, prophecy, morals, or history. FEED on the Word—on God in the Word, and in the world.

2. This practice will shape the disposition of parents, and will infect their manner, tones of voice, and methods of government. Most of all, it will reduce the machinery of domestic government to a minimum and will make it noiseless. Study Jesus' government of the Twelve. How few his direct and specific commands! and how subtly these were so interwoven with evident conditions that the disciples took his commands, usually, as a matter of course. Happy the home in which children's hearts and minds respond like that to parental guidance: "Father said so—of course: what else could he do?" "Mother did just right: she always does!" It was a wise father, Dr. T——, a doctor farmer of the fifties in the last century, who often on summer mornings waked his two reluctant boys with the inspiring and brisk but gently spoken words: "Boys, if you want to go swimming with me it is time to get up, or we shall not get done and have the chores finished before breakfast"; and in ten minutes they (sometimes with their astonished boy guest) were splashing in the pool of a near-by creek, gay as larks. Those boys and that guest adored that father to the end of his days.

3. One autumn day on that farm there were loads of big, yellow pumpkins to be hauled from the cornfield for feeding the cattle. This might have proved a tedious task for the lads

(the guest included), but the father managed to make it a frolic. The several loads were hauled to the top of a hill overlooking the feeding place, and the boys vied with one another in jerking the big, golden balls from the wagon bed and rolling them downhill, bumpety-bump, with some laughter-provoking collisions of boys and later of rolling pumpkins, and with the result that many reached the feeding ground duly broken for animal consumption. Dr. T—— surely knew boys! Where did he learn boys? From the heavenly Father. He had noted God's ways with us—perhaps Christ's ways with the multitudes on several occasions—wherein it appears that God does relish with us our love of frolic on due occasion. Some parents ought to read their Bibles—and God's Word—to better purpose than they do.

4. Very rarely did Dr. T—— speak sharply. As a consequence, when he did, his household was sure to "sit up and take notice." He reserved sharp speed for due occasion, and that in some deep interest. His private feelings were carefully made subordinate.

5. One busy and fatiguing day word reached him, six miles from home, that he was wanted to dress the wounds of a lad kicked in the face by a horse. The doctor, in a loaded lumber wagon, was taking his pastor's young son home as a guest, and actually apologized to the boy for the delay and the necessary detour involved. The boy guest was in an adjoining room while the injured lad's lip was sewed up, and was greatly distressed by his shrieks and groans. After the journey was resumed, in the late dark, he spoke to the doctor of this, commiserating the lad. "Oh," said the doctor very gently, "the poor boy made most of his own trouble. There were only four stitches. If he hadn't resisted so, I should have been done in a fourth of the time, and it would have hurt him far less." Then the boy guest remembered that the doctor had spared all angry protests, had paused more than once to soothe the excited mother, and quietly took as a matter of course the needless and considerable delay thus visited on him. Also, observe, the wise man quite omitted to lecture his boy comrade on the folly of making needless fuss, leaving the facts to sink the message silently into his brain and heart. That night ride was one of two comrades—the boy of eleven and the man of forty! Are we thus comrades with our children?

6. True domestic discipline hinges more on loss of coveted privilege than on the infliction of positive penalty. This is God's way with us. One boy who longed for a pocketknife had the habit of dilatoriness. One evening he reached home from a trivial errand an hour late, and heard his mother tell the father, "Keep that Barlow knife from him another week," was the not very savage reply—and no further attention was paid to the matter. That set the boy to thinking: "They have had a knife for me—I wonder how long! I s'pose I might have had it days ago if I had not been tardy again and again." He was exasperated—first with his parents, then with Barlow knives, last of all—very tardily—with himself. Once more he offended, and still again, and the knife was withheld until he fairly hated the Barlow knife—or thought he did. In later years he learned that beneath the surface, he was slowly—oh, so slowly—learning to hate his fault.

7. What can be done in the way of daily sharing the children's interests, by parents who are unduly absent from home, or who when at home are too much absorbed otherwise to enter sympathetically and vivaciously into their children's lives? There was once a boy whose father was on Sunday afternoons either absent preaching in the country or deep in study for evening sermon; but these Sunday afternoons his mother, though weary with her manifold household cares and worn with feeble health, made forever fragrant in memory for her children by consecutive hours of companionship with them—going over the next Sunday's lesson with them, telling them stories, singing with them; never catechism study—that hateful task was kept out of Sunday and seen to on Saturday. Once in a while, after a period of good behavior, real or alleged, the boy was granted the great privilege of accompanying his father on his six-mile ride and back, sometimes handling the lines—and of hearing sermons illustrated by a wall map showing Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, the aforesaid Dr. T—— using the pointer. Going to church a treat—think of that for a restless boy of ten! Three of the lad's school companions were children of a Methodist circuit rider who was absent from home most of the time, while their mother was so overburdened with domestic tasks as to seem obliged to leave them much to their own devices, Sundays and week days. The disastrous results were so evident that even this careless

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boy felt for his companions, who artlessly let him into the secret of their disheveled home life. Somehow a better way should always be found.

### III. MATERIAL SURROUNDINGS

1. These are always educative. One day an eight-year-old lad, going home from school, was caught up with by his teacher, and he naïvely showed his surprise that she was going out of her way. "I am going," she said, "to visit a dear friend of mine—one whose yard is the most beautiful in town, with trees, bushes, and flowers." He did not take the hint. To his astonishment she went through the home gate with him. Then he began to think—and to look around him. It was the most attractive "front yard" in the village. He had never noted this before. In later years he recognized with devout thankfulness the beneficent and educative effect of the neat and attractive surroundings in which, in spite of poverty, care, and pains, had infolded his childhood years. Even poverty is no excuse for squalor and neglect. God's world is beautiful. Some parents seem never to have noted the psalmist's astounding prayer, "Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us." Ps. 90: 17. Dowdiness is a travesty of truth.

2. Sometimes parents are ambitious for show at cost of good taste, even of comfort. This is a bane to good apparel, as well as to pocket; and often it mars both the architecture and the furnishing of the home. He who made hills, rocks, and trees knew how to adorn substance with beauty, how to give precedence to lasting quality and the fitness of things, and how to overleap the monotony of fixed fashion by creating endless diversity developed into affluent suitableness. Better imitate God's ways than borrow man's.

### IV. HOME OCCUPATIONS

1. Some seem to have none. To many the home degenerates into a place to eat and sleep in. Lasting, deep, and wholesome interest grows out of occupation, not out of unraveled desire.

2. Education is wrought far more by what we do than by all that is said to us. Habit molds character. You learn to write, by writing; to swim, by swimming; to achieve power, by overcoming obstacles; to fear God, by obeying him; and

all this, through repeated action which becomes habit. We are masters only of that which we have come to do instinctively—by habits painstakingly formed. The expert pianist has only to watch his score, not to pick out the keys. No child learns to walk or to talk save through tedious ordeal. Later acquirements follow the same law. Hence the major part of education comes by use of distinctive occupations; and that home is so far an abortion which does not provide occupations for its children and youth.

3. In the simple life of former days it was relatively easy to do this. Most of us old folks were brought up in villages or on farms, where tasks for children and adolescents were natural and wholesome. In every age and place the necessity for somehow arranging home occupation is imperative. An artificial home life, where everything is done for one by hire, is always hurtful and often ruinous to the child.

4. How to adjust modern life to this fundamental necessity is a problem which the united heads of every home must work out for themselves; but the thing can be done. And from the day of marriage it should be the accepted adage of the home that this has to be done at any cost.

5. Every girl can be trained to sew, to knit, to cook, to sweep, to bake, to order her own room, to keep living rooms tidy, even to grow flowers; every boy to do the rougher tasks, to aid in the more delicate ones, and to keep his own apparel and room in order. Odd hours may be given to music, to study, to systematic reading, to conversation, to social acts. Individual tastes and preferences may often be satisfied in apportioning tasks, but this is wholly a minor matter. The severe emphasis which the Master flung on "doing" is in keeping with the inherent demands of life. And where there is a will there is always a way.

### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Just why were those Philippians so warmly devoted to Paul as their behavior showed them to be, after all those years of absence?

2. What makes Eunice and Lois girl names of such worthy fragrance and popularity?

3. How do we know that Jochebed must have been a woman of signally strong and gracious character?

4. What has the growth of a giant oak tree to tell us of the power of silent, personal influence? And how do we know that the Holy Spirit is powerfully and constantly at work in silent ways? Just how much importance has right breathing? What about a home without a spiritual "sleeping porch"? How can we create an exhaustless reservoir of pure, moral atmosphere? How much of the "water of life" can trickle into a home through inch pipes with faucets shut off three fourths of the time—or how much of God's breath through mere cracks and doors opening only once a day? What freak of weather is portended by "sodden silences" and a "gloomy" sky? and whence come explosions in the home?

5. Why is "spindle-shanked rectitude" likely to end in moral "rickets"? What do you mean by "righteousness," and why does the Bible put forward this more robust word? What have "orders" to do with order?

6. Can it be proved that frolic is part of God's moral curriculum? Name three acts of Jesus that bear on this, and two of his utterances.

7. What do John 15: 15 and Mark 3: 14 suggest as to the importance of close, constant, and affectionate intimacies in the home? What about Sunday afternoons in the home? Just why do children usually like to go to Sunday school—and when do they not like to go?

8. Prove from Matt. 6: 25-34 that flowers and birds out of doors are meant by God to be the means of grace to a child, and are more important to him than fine clothes and costly food. Why are home "occupations" imperative? Who invented the jig saw?

9. What do you infer from Phil. 4: 1-5 as to the imperious necessity for a dominating spirit of serene joy in the home? and inquire how this is to be acquired.

IV

BUILDING STRONG BODIES

BIBLE READINGS

Judg. 6: 11-16. "And the angel of Jehovah came, and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my Lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian. And Jehovah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, Oh, Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And Jehovah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

I. GOD PICKS A LEADER

1. When God wanted a leader for the deliverance of his people from Midianite oppression he sought a "mighty man of valor," and found him at a work which at once tasked his wits, nursed his strength, and tested his spirit. Gideon's remarks betray intensity of pious conviction and patriotic feeling—clouded by depression but burning fiercely still. His complaint amounted to a challenge. This God fastened on as proof and product of stalwart quality, and as signal of great occasion: "Just so! It is time to deliver my people; and I am going to do it, through you!" "Go in this thy might . . . I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." He did!

2. In the campaign which followed, Gideon showed himself a man of resource and dauntless courage. His sense of God's presence never left him. Only the most intimate sense of that presence could have given him vision for the daring strategy and the astounding novelties which distinguished his campaign, and gave to it overwhelming victory. Note in Gideon the rare fusion of physical strength, ardent piety, habit of prayer, scope of intellect, penetrating knowledge of human nature, personal daring, and power to command.



Rom. 12: 1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service."

3. Observe the amazing antithesis: "Your bodies" are presented as "your spiritual service." How so? By making the body a "living sacrifice." We reach the spirit through the flesh, and can reach it in no other way. The human body is the agency by which the spirit is nursed, fed, and trained. Through the varied thrills, the pains and pleasures of the flesh, the divine spark within is schooled from inanity to personality. God has appointed this, and has labored at measureless pains to equip the human frame for this majestic business. Hence we serve God, and coöperate in his redemptive work, by placing our bodies in choice condition at his full disposal for his high use. To neglect this is to turn our backs on redemption and condemn the indwelling spirit to pine and starve. Our nerves are electric wires through which the Holy Spirit pours the divine life into the soul. Normally and fundamentally this is done by exciting our nerves to just satisfaction—as in the joy of activity, the refreshment of sleep after fatigue, the legitimate pleasures of the table:

"My son, eat thou honey, for it is good;  
And the droppings of the honeycomb, which are sweet to thy taste:  
So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul."

Prov. 24: 13, 14.

4. That is, the just satisfaction of fleshly appetite—any one of our three fundamental appetites, hunger, sex feeling, longing to achieve things—is God's primary and constant way of stimulating and nourishing the immortal spirit, making us "partakers of the divine nature." II Peter 1: 4, and building up that immortal thing known as personality. And along with this go those restraints and denials of appetite which occasion may demand. The entire training of the soul revolves around and works through our appetites and their product in the growth and vigor of a highly vitalized physical frame, so that a robust and well-nourished physique looms large in God's scheme for us. To hold our bodies sacred thus to his uses; to lay them and keep them on his altar for acute feeling and vibrant living under his constant touch; to guard and promote our health and vigor for divine ends; to school nerves

and brain to utmost sensitiveness of response to all God's varied appeals, keeping the body a high-strung and well-trained instrument for his fingers to play on; and to expect him to speak to us in tender intimacy moment by moment through our physical sensations and experiences: all this is part of that presenting "our bodies" to God as "a living sacrifice" which is so solemnly enjoined, and it is vital and momentous in that scheme of salvation whose goal is depicted in Eph. 4: 13-16.

"Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

5. And, beyond all other places, it is in the Christian home that this is to be kept in mind, conscientiously and painstakingly, in the rearing of our children. Neglect of this retards the coming of the Kingdom unspeakably.

6. I Sam. 17: 33-40. "And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant was keeping his father's sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant smote both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. And David said, Jehovah that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and Jehovah shall be with thee. And Saul clad David with his apparel, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his apparel, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his wallet; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine."

7. To the devout and acute mind this narrative carries its

own lessons. Not least of these is the advantages of outdoor life and hardy toil in rearing men for godly leadership. Not only did David, so schooled, meet a grave, public emergency; by this, and by his later seven years of robust and simple living as an exile in the wilderness of Judea, he acquired the physique, and developed to fullness of power his poetical and musical temperament, without which he could never have accomplished the prodigious tasks assigned him as conqueror, ruler, and creator of that psalmody and ritual of resounding worship whose developments vitalize and characterize the work of the Church to-day, after an interval of three thousand years.

## II. "DISMEMBERING SELF"

1. Here it is necessary to sound a sharp warning against that "dismembering of self" of which Dr. Richard L. Cabot speaks in his "What Men Live By." The self is a vital unit. Soul and body are vitally allied, intricately interlaced, and are parts of one whole. That "whole" is personality. David's energetic personality and his resistless prowess came by harmonious development of his entire being. His playing the harp for Saul belonged to the man of lithe movement and rugged physique who faced Goliath; his creation of psalmody and direction of orchestra in divine worship were intertwined with his achievements in mastering and binding to him the six hundred bandits with whom he kept Judea quiet and safe during Saul's decadent years. The man David was more than a composite of soul and body; he was a vital unit in which soul and body hurled themselves into each successive task as consciously one. David did not say, "My body killed Goliath; my soul worships God."

2. When God breathed into man's nostrils and made him a living soul he constructed an indissoluble unit, sacred to his uses as the organic vehicle of divine revelation, and as the arena of human nurture into comradeship with himself.

3. So you worship and enjoy companionship with God at table—not only before you eat, but while you eat; your toil at the plow is holy service and you should be conscious of this; your prayer involves the activity of your entire being; you go to gymnasium or to a picnic in the fear and love of God: you sleep, eat, work, play, love, and worship as God's vessel and God's child. Thus drudgery is eliminated. Piety gets its feet

down to earth. Heaven draws close. You live with God—all the time. God speaks to you every moment. Life is transformed, hallowed, glorified.

4. It was by neglect of this that the kiss of Judas was so odious: it was the act of his body divorced from his immortal soul. Just there his treason declared itself, and Scripture takes pains to throw a baleful glare over the hideous act. To leave God out in any act is to divorce soul from body, and this constitutes treason to one's own personality, and to God. To leave God out in buying one's attire or in putting it on; to leave God behind when you enter tennis court, countingroom, or social circle; to leave alertness of body or of brain behind you when you enter church doors; to fancy that you can serve God with any part of your being hanging slack—how this grieves and hampers the indwelling Spirit, warps piety, distorts and cripples self!

### III. OBLIGATION TO GIVE GOD OUR BEST

1. God has given us his best. The Author of sunshine, rain, verdure, bloom, bird song, the teeming life of sea and earth and air, and of the measureless spaces clotted with whirling stars is ever prodigal in bestowal. To crown all, he gave his only-begotten Son! To give God our best is not merely a matter of common decency: it is a stern necessity, from which there is no escape without irreparable loss to ourselves and to all the persons and interests concerned. In withholding aught we by so much stunt our own growth, mar our satisfactions, handicap our destiny, retard the development of the Kingdom, grieve and hamper the indwelling Spirit, inflict loss on our fellows, and help the enemy to weave that tangled web of mischief which enslaves the unwary while misery is sown broadcast in a suffering, sorrowing world.

2. God is Spirit: he has no bodily parts. It is we who are his hands and feet and voice. It is through us that he gives the healing, recreating touch. He cannot work over our heads. For two thousand years the Captain of our salvation has waited for us to exemplify fully and to put in operation his Golden Rule; how much longer he will have to wait, and humanity to suffer, is for us to say.

3. Every now and then some striking event or some translucent personality saturated with God, affords us a momentary

glimpse of radiant possibilities, shows us what life will be some day, and might be now if we who follow Christ did but follow him wholly, giving him our best. It is not merely the highly endowed, or the signally fortunate, who thus excel—men like Moses, or Paul, or Livingstone, or women like Frances E. Willard; the sympathetic and devout observer finds shining instances in humble life, even on beds of pain. In a certain Vermont community of some five hundred souls forty years ago the most radiant and influential personality was a woman of limited means who had not left her bed for thirty-three years, nor in all that time been for any long period free from racking, physical torture; that community was the summer home of a celebrated authoress and philanthropic executive, herself also a devout Christian, who rejoiced to work with, and largely through, her bed-ridden comrade, who was, in point of intellectual endowment and equipment, distinctly her inferior; and though the twain seemed like twins in Christly consecration and charm, it was the victim of pain who under its schooling appeared to have risen the higher of the two in power to serve, within her narrower range. Miss L— was a type of what our Lord loves to achieve in handicapped lives. Her joy was as marvelous as her influence over others for good, and was part of her power. Her secret lay in the fact that she habitually gave God her best, her all; her battered frame was her “living sacrifice.” Her countenance wore the charm of transcendent radiance. Such satisfactions of the flesh as were possible to her seemed almost ecstatic—as in her love of flowers, birds and folks, and her enjoyment of social intercourse.

4. But pain is not God’s chosen instrument for refining and potentizing most of us. He prefers to manifest himself through our health, vigor, comfort, and normal activities. All that is lacking in any one of us is adequate consecration. What was probably the most spectacular and striking individual achievement in the late World War was won by a stalwart, modest, and devoutly pious Tennessee mountaineer corporal who, with some help from seven privates, cleaned out a nest of thirty-five machine guns, personally shooting down twenty men in that one early morning expedition, and bringing in one hundred and thirty-two prisoners. In the loftier phases of the Kingdom’s conquests, the colossal and varied con-

structive results of Dwight L. Moody's work offer a brilliant parallel to this—at the outset an unlettered man and a bungler, but always dominated by fiery energy under the leadership and tutelage of God's Spirit; it was Moody who was so fond of quoting the saying that God has as yet lacked opportunity to show what he could effect through a thoroughly consecrated man—and his own marvelous career went far to show just what God can do through such a ready instrument, kept whetted to utmost sharpness for his service.

### IV. STRENGTH A DUTY

1. As to this the utterances of Holy Writ are explicit, copious, and energetic. "Love is strong as death," S. of Sol. 8: 6, and love is the root and the vitalizing force of redemption. Jesus as a child "grew, and waxed strong." Luke 2: 40. The repeated charge given Joshua was, "Be strong and of good courage." Josh 1: 6, and so on. Israel in the desert was commanded, "Keep all the commandments . . . that ye may be strong." Deut. 11: 8. David enjoined Solomon, "Be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man." I Kings 2: 2.

"Quit you like men, be strong." I Cor. 16: 13.

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might." Eph. 6: 10.

2. God is almighty, and no weakling can truly represent him. Pampered children are schooled for failure! Parents owe it to their young to cultivate in them robust quality. Undue sheltering robs children of opportunity. Vigor is better than safety. Better risk a broken bone than insure flabby muscles and a cowed spirit. The stern contacts of life should begin early. Even rude companions are to be preferred to a sissified unbringing. A bloody face is no crime, but a cringing spirit is surpassing misfortune. Bumps and bruises hurt less than craven timidity, and even a burly rowdy has a better chance for useful living than a confirmed whiner. Suppose David's fond mother had kept him at home through fear of that lion and that bear which as a lad he later had to slay! Poor little Joseph was petted and favored until he was almost spoiled, and it cost him thirteen years of untold hardships to outgrow the sad consequences and become the man God meant him to be; probably he is not the only darling child whom God finds

it necessary to tear for a time from a fond father's arms for his own good.

3. Let it be noted that Israel seemed to be going to seed amid the luxuries of fat Egypt, and needed schooling by the hardships of slavery, and later amid the rigors of desert life, before a generation could be produced stalwart enough to occupy Canaan, and to become a nation from whose loins should issue the conquering Christ and Christianity. God has not changed; the problem for us is the rearing of children to keep pace with him in the modern world.

### V. THE PHYSICAL BASIS

1. We are to subjugate the flesh by saturating and potentizing it with God, not by neglecting it, disparaging it, and leaving it to shivering weakness. Piety and personality are designed to develop normally through a robust, well-compacted, and highly sensitized physical frame, absorbing this and making it vital part of the product. Exceptions are only apparent, and go to prove the rule. Is it believable that our Lord Jesus was ever sick, that he was not of robust and well-nourished physique, that his nerves did not thrill to every touch with a surpassing acuteness of feeling and sensitiveness of temperament? What strains he endured without signs of fatigue! How swiftly and perfectly he responded to every appeal of nature or of humanity! His whole being was aflame with Spirit, his life surcharged with God. No bird song or child cry but caught his ear and was interpreted by his soul. Morning glow and midnight quiet stirred him to the depths. He could endure hunger, thirst, and weariness without quailing. His was perfect union of body and soul, of spirit and flesh, of God and matter.

2. And there stands revealed our Law incarnate. We are for substance to rear our children as he grew up, inured to hardy toil, schooled to the life of nature and of surrounding society, at once robust and sensitive, acute in feeling, and fit to endure and to conquer. Let it be said reverently, only a physical frame of surpassing vigor could have sustained Jesus Christ under the prodigious strain of carrying, for three years of public life, the full tides of divine energy which passed through him into human need. Only the finely compacted tissues of his perfect physique could have carried him to the

cross without collapse; and the manner of his death betrays the fact that he came to Calvary a worn-out man, under the incessant pressure of human woe and sin around him, and of continually giving out power to relieve and cure both.

3. Well, we are his followers and comrades and are set to rear our children for this taxing vocation. For this they too will need the utmost possible of physical quality. They will need all possible vigor, poise, sensitiveness to impression, and delicacy of feeling. In giving God our best we require this physical basis. And our children can have it, only as at our hands they are duly nurtured for it.

### VI. DEVELOPING THE BODY

1. There is profound and practical meaning for us in the fascination which Paul evidently felt for Greek athletics. How often and ardently he calls up the scenery of Greek races and boxing contests, so alien to Jewish methods of nurture! See Phil. 3: 7-14; Eph. 6: 15-20; I Cor. 9: 24-27. In these and many other passages he betrays his appreciation of those distinctive features of Greek life and culture which, under God, as he evidently felt, forever linked Grecian with Jewish civilization in the work of redemption: bodily strength and symmetry; artistic quality and supremacy; poetic susceptibility; philosophic acumen; the atmosphere of freedom; linguistic delicacy, and affluence. Of all these he made ample use in his work, and in his writings. The wise servant of our Lord cannot ignore or disparage this.

2. Athletics thus come distinctly into the Christian scheme; for development of physical strength, symmetry, and fineness lies close to the roots of Christian nurture, and should begin early, under parental stimulus and guidance. A conquering Church has little room for ninnies and clods, and piety has no affinity with debility or coarseness. In the simple life of pioneer days the tasks of home, farm, and workshop went far to take care of the children's physical vigor even if only in a crude way. For most of us those days have passed; and, under God's kindly providence, the agencies of a more adequate and symmetrical physical development have been brought within our reach: gymnasiums, outdoor games, camping out, mountaineering, and so on. It is for parents to devise ways and



seize occasions for affording their young the benefits of tools with which God has thus supplied us.

3. Often homes may still be so ordered as to minimize the need of artificial appliances in physical nurture, by supplying to boys and girls tasks which develop brawn, self-control, and the habit of teamwork; but even so the inspiration of games and contests ought not to be left out of their lives. Perhaps at no point will the resourcefulness of parents be more severely tested than just here. And particularly wise are those parents who go the limit, at any cost to themselves, in sharing wholesome and invigorating games and recreations with their children: tennis, boxing, camping out and extended tramping, hunting, fishing, horseback-riding, even baseball. Nor should the telling lessons of Theodore Roosevelt's mastery conquest of physical debility and his lifelong and strenuous nurture of personal vigor be left out in the councils and customs of our homes.

### VII. FOOD AND HYGIENE

1. How many parents have felt it their duty to learn even the rudiments of sound dietetics? How many housewives take pains to master the science of the balanced ration? How many unwary adolescents are allowed to become the dyspeptic victims of condiments, stimulants, and palate-ticklers: tea, coffee, black pepper, pickles, rich pastry, unlimited sweets! Healthy children have little taste for such things; but if indulged they reach the perilous period of adolescence with a disastrous bias for them, and then the mischief soon becomes evident and hard to combat.

2. The law of refreshing and adequate sleep is often and variously ignored in our homes. Happy the babe schooled to close its eyes at sunset, and to keep them closed most of the night; the school child who finds the law, "bed at eight" relentless; and youth who by ten o'clock are asleep, in separate beds and with no crony near! After sixteen years of age it may sometimes be found unavoidable to relax the rule, somewhat and on rare occasions; never often, and seldom for more than one hour at most. The clamors of society for any further relaxation should be firmly resisted; and at this point wise parents of allied homes will confer together and agree on at least some approach to common and inflexible rules.

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3. Moreover sleep should not be impinged upon by severe study just before retiring, nor by "eats." The delights of sleep, when one lies down care free, trusting in God, after heartfelt and quiet prayer, with brain and stomach unburdened, are God's appointed and priceless gift, of which none should be rudely or carelessly robbed. And youth should be so schooled that when nature has been duly refreshed they will, with little or no effort from without, arouse themselves, and then rise from their beds promptly and joyously, with that fine expectancy which is natural to the healthy child.

4. The due care of teeth, skin, and hair, of eyes and ears, of throat and nostrils, can easily be made hábitual, by parents who know how, begin early, adhere to requirements, and set their children a good example.

5. There is a special hygiene of posture and bearing; another of clothing; another of ventilation—even to the length of sleeping porches; another of avoidance in presence of ever-threatening epidemics and in obedience of ever-threatening laws; and still another belonging to the period of adolescence, which infallibly involves prior and reverent nurture in the laws of sex.

### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Show from Judg. 6: 13 that Gideon had been well schooled in religious knowledge and was deeply pious at heart; and from v. 11 that he was inured to hard work and shrewd behavior.

2. Show that our heavenly Father is warmly interested in the satisfaction of our appetites, and wants us to enjoy life acutely at every turn.

3. Just why is valuable space in the Bible given to such a story of prowess as that of David and Goliath? or to narrating the feats of Samson?

4. How could Miss L——, being in pain, acutely enjoy things as she did, and wear so beautiful a face?

5. In what two ways can body and soul be fused? What happens if body dominates soul? if spirit dominates body? Which way brings intenser satisfaction, and the more powerful personality?

6. Why is strength an essential ingredient of good character, and what has bodily vigor to do with this? Just why is

“safety first” not the highest rule for life. What becomes of pets? Was David petted?

7. Why has God appointed man to sore struggle in “subjugating the flesh” and saturating it with himself? Why does he not just pour himself into us while we stay passive? Are there those who demand that he do this?

8. How are athletics, musical sensibility, and piety vitally related? Do David’s Psalms, specially Psalms 8 and 19, suggest anything here? Why does the Y M C A find it necessary to have gymnasiums, games, and contests?

9. Show that hygiene and dietetics are inbedded deeply in God’s early training of the Jewish people. (See Lev., chs. 13 to 15; 10: 10, 14; ch. 11.)

10. Why is it well worth while to take so much trouble in the care of our bodies? (Here see I Cor. 6: 19, 20.)

11. Counting dyspepsia as a foe to pious feeling and personal efficiency, shall we merely combat it, or seek to prevent it? If the latter, when shall we begin?

V

GUIDING HABIT FORMATION

BIBLE READINGS

1. Prov. 22: 1-6. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches,  
And loving favor rather than silver and gold.  
The rich and the poor meet together:  
Jehovah is the maker of them all.  
A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself;  
But the simple pass on, and suffer for it.  
The reward of humility and the fear of Jehovah  
Is riches, and honor, and life.  
Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse:  
He that keepeth his soul shall be far from them.  
Train up a child in the way he should go,  
And even when he is old he will not depart from it."

In the rearing of children the book of Proverbs is of inestimable value, and the wise parent will saturate both his own and his children's minds with its pointed and rhythmical counsels. More than one distinguished man has avowed his joy that during his childhood his father had obliged him to commit the entire book to memory. Chapter 4: 1-6 is in point here:

"Hear, my sons, the instruction of a father,  
And attend to know understanding:  
For I give you good doctrine;  
Forsake ye not my law.  
For I was a son unto my father,  
Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.  
And he taught me, and said unto me:  
Let thy heart retain my words;  
Keep my commandments, and live;  
Get wisdom, get understanding;  
Forget not, neither decline from the words of my mouth;  
Forsake her not, and she will preserve thee;  
Love her, and she will keep thee."

The inevitable results are presented in ch. 6: 20-22:

"My son, keep the commandment of thy father,  
And forsake not the law of thy mother:  
Bind them continually upon thy heart;  
Tie them about thy neck.  
When thou walkest, it shall lead thee;  
When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee;  
And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee."

It is this ingraining of truth in mind and heart that is necessary: "When thou walkest it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee"; the vividness and the compelling power of it—the truth always there, and the life ever responding to its close touch! "Talk with thee"! When one has arrived at all this, he is far on in the life of godliness.

In ch. 4: 20, 21, and ch. 5: 1, 2, we have a hint of necessary method:

"My son, attend to my words;  
Incline thine ear unto my sayings.  
Let them not depart from thine eyes;  
Keep them in the midst of thy heart."

"My son, attend unto my wisdom;  
Incline thine ears to my understanding;  
That thou mayest preserve discretion,  
And that thy lips may keep knowledge."

Work here! Both attention and memorizing cost toil. Habits of close and receptive attention, and of careful memorizing, are part of the schooling which parents owe their children from early years. In ch. 2: 1, 2, 4-6 and ch. 8: 17 there is the further suggestion of intense application, born of eager desire:

"My son, if thou wilt receive my words,  
And lay up my commandments with thee;  
So as to incline thine ear unto wisdom,  
And apply thy heart to understanding; . . .  
If thou seek her as silver,  
And search for her as for hid treasures:  
Then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah,  
And find the knowledge of God.  
For Jehovah giveth wisdom;  
Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding: . . .  
I love them that love me;  
And those that seek me diligently shall find me."

Diligence—and its fine reward! In guiding the formation of their children's habits much force is to be applied here. Slackness in parental training, especially at points so vital as their absorption of fundamental truth and their practice of elementary duties, is apt to result in incurable flabbiness of character and slackness of performance. The entire book of Proverbs is bracing and tonic, just where this is gravely needed in family life and child nurture.

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

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2. Gal. 6: 8-10. "For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith."

"Our acts our angels are, for good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

The iron law of retribution and reward is not arbitrary. It has been inextricably interwoven with the processes of life from the very beginning of things. Our acts give bias and tend to repetition. Thus they operate as seeds in fertile soil; and the harvest is sure. Moreover, that harvest, whether of good or of bad, is immeasurably multifold, and cumulative—augmenting bountifully with every experience and every renewal of opportunity. Thus our spiritual harvests heap up, one after another, with fateful rapidity and relentlessness. In acquiring self-control and decision of character, for instance—two lofty qualities that are closely allied—assiduous practice may multiply one's power tenfold in a single month. So also with faith, love, buoyancy of spirit, the habit of loving service. And moral decay may prove just as rapid. The cumulative effect of actions is so prodigious and the direction of moral tendency—up or down—so certain, as to invest our common behavior with momentous concern. Every day, every hour, our acts are creating fixed character and molding destiny for us with constantly accumulating momentum. "Our deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds."

"We are our own fates. Our own deeds  
Are our doomsmen."

It is thus that the wicked shall "be filled with their own devices," while the "good man shall be satisfied from himself." Prov. 1: 31; 14: 14. Habit, good or bad, takes full possession of the soul.

### THE LAW OF HABIT

3. Thus, speaking broadly, character is little more than "a bundle of habits"—in the Christian a bundle of habits vitalized by the Spirit of God, fused by experience, aflame with love, and shaped by personal effort.

4. Our habits have a history in four stages. First come

those with which we are born: the habit of breathing, and a thousand other habitual nerve reactions. These are instinctive. By long process they were produced for us and in us to begin life with. We coolly take them for granted, but they had cost immeasurable toil and the travail of sore experience. The history of cell life is replete with tragedies of which we are the beneficiaries. The story of cell specialization, until one simple cell by long and arduous practice developed into an eye, another into an ear, and so on, is rich in romance. When the process had gone far enough God created the exquisitely organized human frame composed of some thirteen thousand million specialized cells, and breathed into it his Spirit. We are heirs of the entire process, and thus are born with countless instinctive and coordinated habits which underlie all our conscious behavior. Without this prodigious and intricate native endowment, human life as we know it would be a stark impossibility. From the very outset, habit is the framework of life. In this particular alone the wealth we come into at birth is incalculable.

5. Next come habits acquired in early infancy and childhood: seeing and listening with conscious attention, until this also becomes instinctive; grasping things with the hands; walking, talking, and the like. These habits are acquired at much cost of toil, struggle, pain, and persistent effort, which in later years we have forgotten all about. In this phase of growth the drama of each child's life is of momentous interest. It seems probable that there is thus more of vital and even painful experience compacted into the first three years of the average child's life than in any twenty years of maturity. The thing to be noted here is that God's plan for us continually involves the creation and development of habits which become instinctive and automatic.

6. It is thus that personality is built up, bit by bit, of myriad fragments experimentally and toilsomely wrought into the permanent equipment of the self. The fond and careful parent continuously stimulates, encourages, and directs the child in this early formation of vitally important habits; and his future welfare depends much on the fidelity, skill, and patience with which this is done. How ardently the loving mother coaxes her babe to look at her, to listen to her—to fix attention. This is instinctive, the outgrowth of yearning affection. The

mother does not realize the high good she is doing—that she is training her babe to habits of weighty moment in the development of its personality. God has most skillfully arranged life so that the fond mother can hardly avoid being, thus far at least, a wise preceptor. And what is thus begun is to be carried on in later stages until her babe's inner life has acquired a considerable framework of wholesome habits, laboriously acquired, and of lasting and momentous value. The child of three who has not been thus carefully trained, for instance, in correct articulation and utterance, schooled to attend always when spoken to, and initiated into right methods of eating and behavior at table and of coördinating muscles in his movements, passes out into later childhood heavily handicapped, and is likely to suffer all his life from this neglect. The well-schooled child of three has begun to learn that screaming, needless loudness of speech, passionate demands for attention, gobbling of food, and want of self-control, are not only out of harmony with the customs of the family but also disadvantageous to himself.

7. Up to this point the parent bears almost the entire burden in the formation of the child's habits. From now on a third phase is entered on, in which the child more and more feels the impulse to self-direction and personal initiative. He begins to choose for himself, or at least wants to do so. This is natural and wholesome when allowed under due guidance. Two extremes are to be avoided—leaving the bustling child to grow up unwatched and uncared for, and shutting him in a prison of regulations. Busy and careless parents leave their children too much to their own ways. Parental indolence prompts this. The results are a set of more or less hurtful habits unconsciously acquired, and a widening range of irresponsible and wayward conduct dictated by passing impulse, in which habit is conspicuous for its absence. Narrow-minded parents err at the other extreme, and even more hurtfully. Incessant and meticulous supervision tends to dwarf the mind and destroy independence of character; unless of resolute and dauntless spirit the child thus becomes stiff and precise, with spirit starved and crushed; but if dauntless, he becomes rebellious, perhaps bitter, and as soon as may he flings off all the restraints of home. Freedom is priceless, and even the young child should be allowed scope for individuality. After a



while he has to go out in the world "on his own," and first steps in the use of freedom should be taken early in preparation. The wise parent watches constantly and lovingly, but often without letting the child know that he is watching; and at fit moments he intervenes with apt suggestions which go farther than mere orders, and yet do not fetter liberty but rather stimulate vigor of will and soundness of judgment.

8. The well-schooled child of six years of age has more self-reliance and sagacity than many another has acquired at twelve; and meanwhile he is framing his life progressively in a set of habits that fit. He folds his hands during blessing at table; sits and kneels quietly during the brief service of family prayer; uses table tools with a certain precision; does not jerk and flounce about, and yet enjoys a wholesome freedom of artless movement; has begun to outgrow awkwardness and clumsiness; actually likes to take care of hair and teeth, and to have clean hands and face. These things he has been so reared to that he enjoys them—though it takes great patience and much sympathetic skill on the parents' part to achieve this. And by the time he is twelve these habits have become fixed, and have many others added to them—in the care of clothes, books, his own room, the practice of service and politeness, at home first of all and then with guests and even strangers.

9. Even more important and fundamental is it that our boys and girls be trained to decisive action, and to abhor fumbling, hesitation, dilly-dally, divided or wandering attention, and waste motion which squanders nerve force and so tends to enfeeble the will and leave the personality flabby. Often erratic motion on the part of a very young child is merely a giving vent to superfluous energy and therefore is wholesome; but if left untrained this, especially in the nonrobust, is apt to degenerate into twitching, thrumming, twisting about, jerking, perhaps Saint Vitus' dance. Teach even young children to act definitely and decisively; to go promptly at objects selected, and to stick relentlessly to efforts begun; to pick up a knife, or to open a door "in one time and two motions," with military precision, though not with military rigidity; to conserve energy and multiply achievement by weeding out useless motions; to choose with vigor and hit straight and hard. Men of force do not waste nerve power and work off nerve

irritation by fingering watch chains and key rings; nor have women who rest us dribbled away poise and balance by furious rocking and endless neck twists and head jerks: they have conserved energy, and achieved a repose with which they can now refresh us when we are jaded. Judicious attention to this phase of child-training will go far to bar the door against the doctor, and to fling wide open for our young the doors to mastery, to satisfaction, and to a piety never morbid but always robust.

10. A fourth stage sets in with the age of adolescence. Henceforth parental initiative and direction decline, and the burden of choice and direction belongs to the youth himself. Happy the child equipped for this perilous period by the fruits of wise guidance throughout his earlier years! If so equipped, he finds himself armed with a set of habits which suit him, and at the same time he feels firmly convinced that his father and mother know rather well "what's what," so that he is disposed to counsel frankly with them in emergencies. One American father found his heart overflowing with joy when a somewhat turbulent son, then a sophomore at college, with his president's consent telegraphed for leave to come home for a week to confer about religious duties and the spiritual life, which hitherto he had never taken seriously; hitherto he had in some ways taken his own course, with somewhat ragged results, but when real emergency arose he spontaneously turned to his parents for counsel—and the father felt then that the somewhat haphazard methods of his parental tutelage had come to test and proved not altogether a failure.

11. The test of parental method which comes with the child's adolescence is unescapable and severe. If from the very early years he has been encouraged more and more to venture on personal initiative—under due restraint and guidance, of course—he now has courage and wisdom for decisive choices, and he will sorely need this. Has he been trained to decide things and not to hesitate, falter, and haggle? Has he learned to stick to a course once fairly undertaken? Has he acquired some independent interest in Sunday-school work, in daily studies, in specific phases of athletics, and of reading; or is he "all at sea"—the creature of momentary impulse, or of external suggestion, or of hardened dullness and indifference, or of irrational dislikes?

12. For that which inevitably follows must be kept in view

from the first—the ultimate fullness of freedom and self-direction into which the grown child must pass. Adult life is full of surprises, perils, opportunities, which can be duly met only by the robust and courageous, inured to freedom while yet stabilized by fixed habits. No system of minute rules for personal conduct can be carried over unchanged from one generation to another, because conditions change; yet, ever, only conduct that is so framed as to have become automatic will enable one to get through the large part of a busy man's daily tasks without hopeless disorder and helpless floundering. Here it is the framework of habit that tells, and this is the product of toilsome years back to birth—and before: a heritage of more value than millions of money, to be heaped up for and in children under parental guidance.

### HOW TO CULTIVATE RIGHT HABITS

13. First, fix it in mind that principles are better than rules. Principles underlie rules, give life to them, and outlast them. Rules are inflexible—and brittle, breaking under strain. Principles are vital, flexible, of firm texture and enduring quality. Rabbinic rules for keeping the Sabbath perished long ago; but Christ's principle, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath," survives and is operative to-day. Principles give firmness to character; rules merely make men stiff, harsh, unbending. Rabbinism was a system of rules; Christianity is a religion of principles. Principles are self-adjusting; rules know no adjustments—you either keep them or violate them, and most men do both by turns, of necessity. Principles are firm at the roots, but flexible in sweep and scope, like the tree in a storm: firm in inner meaning, but flexible in application to varying conditions. Therefore our children should be schooled to think, to grasp the great principles of life and righteousness, and out of these presently to shape rules for themselves, and to hold these rules of minor value. Our Lord made it plain that the great principles of life are love, loyalty to God, and service to men; and that methods of putting these in practice should vary with occasion. Prayer, as the act and habit of fellowship with God, is cardinal to the Christian life; but forms and hours of prayer, and just what is to be said in prayer cannot be inflexibly ordained beforehand without stiffening prayer into lifeless routine. It is

the spirit of the thing that must govern, rather than the letter. Full loyalty and love will find the way better than servile dread of authority—and this more and more as the child's years advance and life widens before him. The Bible is a Book of principles, not of rules; and true home life is saturated with the Bible spirit.

14. Next, count the cost; or rather, do not count it, but joyfully pay it. The cost is great. The real father and mother find that they have to be always on the alert. They never know what is going to turn up next. This taxes attention heavily, and quite crowds out self-indulgence. Children do not exist for the parents, but parents for the children. Love of ease and comfort have a hard time of it in the life of a father and mother who really love their children: the two loves are incompatible and mutually exclusive. Only a heart rich in love and sympathy can endure the fierce strain of parenthood. You must take time to penetrate children's motives, rather than merely to judge their acts; to divine their real needs and plan to meet these; to live with your children; to keep in close touch with them—their plays, companions, and studies included; and thus to influence them in the formation of habits, much of the time unobtrusively. You have to talk with your children—not merely talk to them. You are to evoke their artless expressions of desire, and not too rudely frown on these, nor ever treat them with scorn and laughter. Take the children seriously. Think out their problems for them and with them. Confer. Ask questions. Use your superior wits to guide them into thinking out the right thing for themselves, rather than employ sheer authority in imposing your lofty judgment on them. "Cost?" Of course it costs! At what cost did Christ purchase our redemption? Life is no holiday excursion, least of all marriage—though many youngsters set out with that notion of it; and parenthood brings life to its severest test.

### THE INFLUENCE OF EXAMPLE

15. Always it is the things we do unwittingly and automatically that weigh heaviest in making up the sum of our influence over others. Most of our acts come under this head. That is what habit is for: it is the underlying factor of all efficiency. This is why the year-old babe must endure the prodigious strain of learning to talk and to walk, and presently

come to do both without having to stop and think out details of the process. The framework of life is automatic habit, and thus the bulk of our behavior and of our influence is either unconscious or subconscious: "we do it without thinking." Keep it in mind that the greater part of your influence is of this texture and location: it issues unwittingly from the unseen tissues and firm fiber of your character. It is the things you do without thinking that most sway others; and of all places it is in the home that this is most strikingly true.

16. Hence the imperative, the dominating necessity for fortifying and richly nourishing your own character, in secret. It is not a question so much of how much time you spend in fellowship with God by formal prayer, meditation, and Bible study, as how much of your energy is expended thus. In some way the life of every Christian, especially of every parent, needs to be fed constantly and lavishly from the great Fountain—until God's feelings are transfused into you and pour through you and out from you in a constant, life-giving stream. The essence of the thing is feeling God in life as the hours pass—God our constant, closest, and most influential Companion.

17. The only wholesome influence to be exerted on man is that which reflects God's thought, feeling, aims, and processes. We can so imbibe God's Spirit as to go far in reproducing Christ and thus reflecting God in both our conscious and unconscious behavior, and until we achieve this, the influence we wield over others is at best but a sad mixture of good and evil, of wisdom and folly. Any life can help other lives only in so far as it is full of God.

18. It is notorious that even wayward sons in later life respond to holy memories of a mother's gentle, saintly, self-sacrificing life; that is, the power of example outlasts all the direct influence of parental teachings. The things we inculcate weigh little and briefly with our children in comparison with the substance and flavor of what we are. They revere the solid and wholesome reality of parental living which lies behind all formal instruction and requirement, and this part of us never fades from their minds nor loses power over their hearts. At the very gates of death many a wastrel has turned to his mother's God, after years of persistent disregard for her teachings. It was the power of her example that wrought this.

TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What notable specific values would be lost to us if the book of Proverbs had been left out of the Bible? What marked contrasts do you note, and what fundamental likeness, when you compare Proverbs with the book of Psalms which in our Bibles immediately precedes it? Which of the two books comes more to the point in the training of children, and why? Which appeals more to the outer life, and which to the inner? How are both needed, even in child-training? How far should memorizing be employed in using both books in the home?

2. In Prov. 6: 20-22 what phrase impresses you as most vivid in suggestion of wholesome results?

3. Show from Proverbs, as cited, that attention and diligence are virtues of imperious moment. Are these habits easily acquired? How can they best be encouraged by parents?

4. Just how do our acts serve as seeds?

5. Just why is habit-forming so momentous an affair?

6. Note the four alleged stages in the formation of habit, and then calculate what proportion of fixed character is inherited, and—including this—what proportion is acquired by the time one is six years old.

7. How can a father best stimulate initiative and enterprise in his growing boys? a mother in her daughters? How can any parent best encourage and stimulate habits of frugality and thrift in both sons and daughters? How would you check carelessness and promote the habit of carefulness in a child of from six to ten years? What would you do with a child naturally left-handed? right-handed? of slouchy gait? of slovenly tendency?

8. Why is freedom priceless, and how should children be reared in order that they may use it wisely?

9. Which are better, rules or principles? What had the struggle between rules and principles to do with crucifying Christ? and what has it to do with human growth and religious progress to-day? How far do rules stifle freedom, and how far may they wholesomely promote robustness of character?

10. Why is example better than precept? Which costs more? Can you set a good example by trying to do this as occasion arises?

VI

HELPING THE CHILD TO STUDY

BIBLE READINGS

1. Prov. 4: 10-15. "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings;  
And the years of thy life shall be many.  
I have taught thee in the way of wisdom;  
I have led thee in paths of uprightness.  
When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened;  
And if thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.  
Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go;  
Keep her; for she is thy life.  
Enter not into the path of the wicked,  
And walk not in the way of evil men.  
Avoid it, pass not by it;  
Turn from it, and pass on."

Four things are here in due order, vitally allied and intertwined: instruction, incitement, study, and application of knowledge to the needs of life. (1) Instruction: "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings . . . I have taught thee in the way of wisdom." (2) Incitement, supplying motive: "And the years of thy life shall be many . . . when thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened"; "instruction . . . is thy life." (3) Study—the pupil is stirred to take hold: "I have led thee. . . . Take fast hold of instruction." (4) The student's personal application of knowledge to the needs of his unfolding life: "I have taught thee"—"in the way of wisdom; I have led thee . . . in paths of uprightness." How cunningly these four phases of education are interwoven, incitement and application beginning to rise to view from the first. This is psychologically sound; it accords with the intricate complex of real experience in the development of personality. Sagacious preceptors! No wonder his counsels are embalmed by inspiration, and are hoarded by succeeding ages.

2. The parent is here lifted into place as responsible preceptor: "Hear, O my son!" He may not relish the job, but he cannot elude the weighty responsibility. The young father may not feel wise; he may not be wise; but he is bound for his child's sake to become wise. And he can! Nothing whets and expands one's powers like love. You father and mother,

having that growing babe in your hands is enough to make you stop and think. For his sake you need to be greedy of wisdom, more than of gold.

3. The child must be provoked to respond. He needs the stimulus of motive as here keenly suggested and specified. To this he will respond. But it must be by the very atmosphere of the home that due motive is kept vividly in mind—not merely by a sharp word now and then. If the whole home life is evidently surcharged with longing for moral enlargement, as implied in the words “not . . . straitened,” and if the distant future is felt to be a main allurements in parental life and home ordering, the child will feel this at the very roots of his being; and if this spiritual atmosphere is kept bright and joyous, he will relish and absorb it. Be careful not to make piety somber, and the home life soggy and sad.

4. The child will have to study. He is not to be built up by stuffing instruction into his mind mechanically. He must take hold—“take fast hold.” The incitement supplied must be adequate to prompt and secure this. The aim is the child’s growth, not merely his safety. Salvation is vastly more than safety; it involves attainment of a developed and robust personality—and this involves vigorous and spontaneous action of his own powers: thinking, feeling, memorizing, imagining, resolving, and—

5. Acting. His acquired beliefs are to enter voluntarily and powerfully into his behavior—in avoidance and also in forward movement, by personal initiative and aggressive action. A full outline of a progressive Christian education lies before us here.

6. II Tim. 3:14-17. “But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”

These words, fondly addressed by Paul in later years, to his former pupil, were designed to set ringing in Timothy’s brain and heart rhythmic and hallowed memories of his favored childhood, when he was taught by his mother and grandmother;



then, presumably in the synagogue school; then at the hands of Paul himself. II Tim. 1:1-6. This personal apostolic counsel, useful for all of us, brings into notice new details:

7. The use of inspired Scripture as a book for downright study and a force in the development of strong, symmetrical, and righteous character. Ch. 3:16, 17. To the Old Testament, which was in Timothy's reach when a child, we have the superb addition of the New Testament, unfolding the meaning of the Old, presenting the person of Jesus Christ, and widening the spiritual horizon. The noble volume thus prepared for us becomes the vitalizing center of all educational manuals, itself an educational agency of surpassing aptness and value. To teach the Bible wisely requires vision, piety, skill, and pains; to secure this teaching to their children is incumbent on parents. By far the larger part of Bible knowledge which children have a right to must come from their parents direct, or they will never get it. To make Bible study attractive is a high art, which parents need to cultivate with assiduity. Beginning with the telling of Bible stories, by successive steps the children may be led to memorize, to read for themselves, to study Sunday-school lessons intensively, to enter into the spirit of Bible poetry and prophecy, and to appreciate their lofty quality, and thus so to store their minds with Scripture that by the time they are grown the Bible will have taken possession of their minds and hearts beyond possibility of displacement. This is a wealthy heritage to which every child is entitled, and of which only parental neglect can rob him.

8. Timothy is urged to remember what he was so taught, and by whom he was taught it, "from a babe." The divine appointment of parents as our natural instructors, and of the plastic years of infancy and early childhood as a momentous period in imparting instruction and in securing salvation, here rise vividly to view. Among influences and persons shaping their character most wise men assign mother, father, and the childhood home first place, and inspiring teachers during the period of youth second place. As a matter of fact, most children do "remember"—when there is aught of value to remember. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. 22:6. Here note the marginal translation, "according to his way," which

suggests due deference and adaptation to each child's individuality; for much depends on this.

9. It is well for adolescents and adults to take pains to recall early teachings. Wise revivalists make much of this, and many a careless man has thus been brought to his senses, and to the foot of the cross. The lasting and wholesome effects of due parental training are thus made plain. And the child is to be so instructed that he cannot forget. This means the inworking of divine truth with the fiber of his being—memory, reason, feeling, hope, imagination, personal habits, plans for the future.

### TRAINING TO OBSERVE AND DISCRIMINATE

10. To the infant's eyes and mind all things are a blur. Presently he notes definite objects; a little later, distances—that is, he picks out things in reach: the rest can go! Baby is intensely practical. What he cannot reach he wastes no time on. To him perspective is merely an adjustment to his need. He knows nothing of "laws of the universe," nor of any other abstractions. Everything is concrete as related to his own uses. Beyond that, for him, nothing exists. The world is his oyster. His Royal Highness owns everything. Through the lens of desire his instinctive self-interest probes the vacuity for personal satisfactions—whether they be persons or things is nothing to him. Mother and father, as such, do not exist: they are just part of his heritage in the New World, put there to satisfy his wants. But he soon knows which of the two is which; all his five senses conspire to tell him. And he never mistakes the one for the other. Most times he wants mother. Once in a great while he is sated with her, and craves the different touch and fragrance of father—or of nurse: it is all one to him, for a time. In the course of weeks it ceases to be the same; he has learned to detect the rougher touch and burlier strength of father, and something in his nervous system seeks the novelty of his handling. It is the first clear cry of nature for sheer recreation and refreshing change. Ten years later, under like spur, he will cry out for the movies, or baseball, or a Boy Scout hike.

11. The growth of the child's powers of observation and discrimination which begins with instinct and goes on with at first almost no need of schooling, soon needs guidance; but

the process and its laws shows no change save by development. Still the child's sense of personal need is to be appealed to; for a long time no other or higher motive is recognized. He is crying. His mother's voice sounds from twenty feet away: "Mother is coming!" He catches the tone, recognizes the voice, controls his cry somewhat to listen, learns to discriminate the clearer sound and the rustle of her gown as she draws nearer, looks, sees her while yet several feet distant, knows that his wants are to be met, and yields to the transient content of expectation. He has taken one long step in the development of character through expanding use of his senses.

12. This expansion and unfolding of self-activity are to be incessantly guided, stimulated, and fed. But recognize clearly the factors of the process: self-interest; specific desire; sense of parental care and watchfulness; hearing across increasing distances; following up hearing by sight with enlarging perspective; discriminating sounds, objects seen, and persons; powers of expectation; then—and then only—self-control; finally, the contentment of expectation rather than of instant satisfaction: nine distinct factors and steps of vital process! In one minute a babe of three weeks old thus makes a momentous advance in moral living and growth of character.

13. By this time both father and mother need to grasp intelligently the process of unfolding in their babe, and to adapt their ways carefully to the vital laws of that process. Every moment of home life has some bearing on permanent results. Of course there will be mistakes, but love sharpens the wits to correct these. A grandmother seventy-five years old regaled her audience of married children by recalling her own nervousness lest her restless first-born wake after a touch of colic, and her stopping the clock for fear the noise of its ticking should arouse him. "Of course," she added, "I soon learned better than that!" People have to grow used to various necessary noises and distractions, and the schooling for this should begin with infancy. Baby soon learns to discriminate between things usual and things unusual—both sounds and sights. You cannot bring up children in a vacuum; and it would be bad for them if you could. After baby has gone to sleep, let conversation proceed as usual; move about with the usual amount and kinds of noise; let the little one learn that the world and its activities

must move on, and that he must grow used to them. He will!

14. Here we must skip much, for the completely told story of one child's life would fill volumes. Take now a long leap, to the first distinct use of higher motive than sheer self-interest. This omits much needed training in the art of patient waiting, which should begin early. The self-restraint acquired thus paves the way for something still higher—regard for others. The rudiments of this should be ingrained by deft practice before the child is three years old. A playmate has come. The child shows interest, is pleased when the playmate looks pleased. But a quarrel arises over possession of a toy. The mother speaks: "Darling, see! Johnny is crying. Look at his face. Do you like to see it all screwed up? Let him have the toy a moment and see how he looks then." The appeal is to a modified self-interest. By steps like this any child may be schooled in the direction of altruism, and its superior delights. And still the original process continues, with wholesome unfoldment.

15. Take discrimination in its broadening ranges. A father was driving with his growing boy, across country new to him. "Son, how do you like the lay of this land? Does it lie right for good crops? If so, what crops? In what direction does it slope?" The lad, unused to observing in such matters, finally made out enough to say, "It slopes southeast." "Well, how is that for corn?" The son at once saw the point, noted how gentle the slope was, and ventured to reply with some boldness, "I should think it would be good for corn." "Yes, but what about the soil? Is it good soil for corn, or is it too light and sandy?" The boy looked again, and closely: "Not so sandy as some we passed a way back." "Not so bad," said the father; "but you haven't been used to noting such things. Better cultivate the habit." Years afterwards that son remembered that more than once his father had called him gawky, and then he saw that a new era in his education had at that time begun under thoughtful parental guidance. His sense of self-respect felt keenly the paternal appeal. He was old enough to resent being thought a ninny, and from that day he has never seen a landscape without the inner inquiry, "How does the land lie?"

16. Swiftiness in discriminating observation is a factor of

power. A standard exercise for this is passing a shop window at one's usual gait, and then telling what one saw there. Children and youth should be so trained to observe and discriminate that, on going out into the world, they instinctively and instantaneously note facts and faces as they pass men by, and are ready to assess values promptly, if need should arise. Very young children have a native knack in this, but it is soon lost if not painstakingly developed and kept in harness. Nor is there any other department of life which so urgently needs sympathetic and keenly discriminating observation at our hands than the personalities with whom we are brought in contact; the faces, forms, gait and movement, voice and tone. How we do need, like our Master, to know what is in men—to read men at a glance!

### ENCOURAGEMENT IN STUDY

17. Sustained mental application is a tax on energy not readily submitted to by most; hence the need of parental encouragement. Normally, this begins by noting the child's aptitudes and preferences, and luring him on in things he voluntarily undertakes. Here parents who have the reading habit have a mighty leverage. Children observe what their parents do, and want to imitate them. Thus in homes of studious parents many a child of three or four will be found amusing himself with a book or magazine, pretending to read. The watchful mother will seize occasion here. She can supply stimulus to what the child is already doing and wants to do. Even a child of two years has been known to pick out words naming familiar objects; and this is a real beginning of study if parents see that what is begun as a diversion is developed into a studious habit.

18. But as the years pass, and as children and cares multiply, parents are too apt to drop out of the shared life of study, and leave this to school and teachers, to the children's detriment. A busy father found his daughter of three years quite responsive to his companionship, and before she was four he had taught her to read by the word method. Forty years later she was proud to be able to keep pace with her own children, and to help them with their Cæsar, algebra, and music. Example and companionship tell heavily in all this. Ever it is the shared life that counts.

### COÖPERATION WITH SCHOOLS

19. Studious and sympathetic parents, who live with and for their children, find relatively little trouble as to this. Most teachers are swift to respond to tactful, parental suggestion. It is neglectful parents who most embarrass instructors—and harm their own young, sometimes by raw and blundering interference, oftener by absolute inattention. It is a sad thing when parents permit divorce from their children's life, by any such neglect. Take time by the forelock. Visit your school before any difficulty arises. Keep in touch with things. Talk matters over at home. Assist. Show unflinching interest. Cultivate capability in sharing with your children the burden of their school tasks, and the varied interests of their school life. All this will prove an investment paying large returns. To omit making the investment, year by year, is to impoverish your children beyond words.

### HELPING THE CHILD TO KNOW AND LOVE HIS BIBLE

20. The first and most momentous factor in this is seeing to it that you yourself know and love your Bible. Let its language be often and wisely on your lips—seldom by reproof, often by suggestion, always with charm; for the compelling quality of Scripture is its charm. There is rhythm in its speech, aptness in its address, warmth in its appeals, the peace of heaven in its meaning. Let the liquid melody of Psalm 23 become familiar in the recitations of home life; later, the more majestic and resounding rhythm of Isa., ch. 55; of Psalm 19; of Rom., ch. 8; much later, the plaintive but powerful appeals of Isa., ch. 53, and of John, ch. 14. Avoid stressing the darker things of Scripture. Use its severities sparingly. Let love and sympathy select. Let the Bible be a familiar book. In family worship choose readings with care—and let them be brief.

21. Go over the Sunday-school lesson with your children in advance. Have the children attend public worship with you when this can be justly done. At the very least, let there be occasions when they do this. On such occasions let each have his own Bible in hand, and look up the text of the sermon, perhaps marking it. Not a few children can recite afterwards much of sermons they hear, and it is well to encourage them to do this.

22. Every child should have a Bible of his own. Reading the volume through in course is a doubtful advantage, on the part of children under twelve. Better take one book at a time. Have Ruth read at a sitting, and then its story recited in the child's own words; then Esther; then Philemon; and so on. Let Leviticus wait a while. See to it that each youth of sixteen has acquired a fairly good working knowledge of the Bible as a connected whole, has become familiar with its leading characters from Adam to Paul, and with most of its narratives—for these are found to possess thrilling interest for children and youth, when well presented; and that they have stored in memory many such passages as: Psalms 1, 8, 19, 23, 51, 103, 139; parts, at least, of Prov., chs. 1 to 3, and ch. 8; John, ch. 14; Rom., ch. 8; I Cor., ch. 15; and that their minds are saturated with fundamental Bible truth and characteristic Bible language. Thus, along with moral and spiritual equipment, they will have acquired an invaluable training in the best literary style, and will have their minds stored with apt and choice utterances for ready use.

#### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. How does it appear that the writer of Prov., ch. 4, had sympathetic insight into the mind and needs of a growing child? What have incitements and incentives to do with success in rearing children? Is the normal child already of a practical turn, or do we have to induce him to become practical? (Here consult paragraphs 1 to 3, and 10.)

2. Are healthy children really averse to mental application, or only to enforced and continuous study, or to study of uncongenial things and alien subjects? How are we to overcome reluctance to study? Can this reluctance be headed off by keeping the child interested?

3. Suppose your child should show acute interest in insects, or in bird life, what would you do? Suppose one child wants to bring toads into the house—then what? or if another shows quick responsiveness to vivid colors?

4. How shall we deal with the hard questions the children ask? Are we to deal primarily with the questions, or with the children? Is it well to discourage inquisitiveness?

5. When should Bible instruction begin, and how? When downright Bible study? What about pictorial editions of the

Bible? Are crude pictures better or worse than none? How can we use such defective tools to advantage? What about waiting for perfect tools before we go to work? Can the parent get on without lavish use of his own personality and ingenuity?

6. How can we best get what we think worked in with what the children are thinking? Suppose we treat lightly their thoughts and feelings, and just slam ours at them—what will result?

7. Should children's quarrels be simply repressed, or turned to their advantage and growth? How far will summary dealing go in nourishing vigorous character?

8. How would you deal with a child's discriminating remarks in censure of adults? Suppose a child feels that he has been rudely "sat down on" when he knows he is right in his judgment? Is it possible to restrain expression of such judgments without repressing the child? Is unmingled reproof usually wise? Is it ever wise when it is clear that the child is acting or speaking honestly?

9. Can we nurture growth in discriminating observation without working this genially into the daily life of the home and daily habits of the child? Can we do our biggest job in "off hours"?

10. Can parents keep justly in touch with their children without keeping their own minds bright and well informed? Should parents, for their children's sake, keep up studious habits? Do you know of any parent who by hard study learned a new language late in life in order to keep pace with his or her child?



VII

THE CHILD AT PLAY

BIBLE READINGS

1. Luke 7: 31, 32. "Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like unto children that sit in the marketplace, and call one to another; who say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep."

Five facts of grave moment here rise to view: (1) That the adults whom the Master was here castigating had behaved themselves at play, when children, much as the children he spoke of were doing while he watched them. (2) That Christ watched children at play with loving sympathy and fond concern, and had done so from his own early life, noting traits of character thus unfolding and hardening during plastic years. (3) That he felt the plays of childhood to be formative, and hence momentous. (4) That he felt the matter of children's play to be so vital as to require his thus calling attention sharply to it. (5) That the inspiring Spirit seized upon this utterance of our Lord, snatched it out from the multitudes of things he said and did which must be left to oblivion, and carefully embalmed it in Holy Scripture, for like weighty reason. Here, as elsewhere, it must be kept in mind that more than nine tenths of the Master's utterances and deeds have of necessity been left unnoted—a careful investigator having estimated that all we are told of him could have been said and done in thirty-five busy days, or about one thirtieth of his public life; hence the exalted importance of every fragment preserved from the wreck of ages for our use. It means much for us that Luke was led to discover this one pregnant utterance, among many others which had escaped the knowledge or notice of Mark and of Matthew, and to fasten it in his studiously prepared and closely condensed narrative.

2. I Cor. 9: 24-27. "Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected."

Paul's utterance here is characteristic. From it we learn: (1) That, though a Jew, he had been providentially directed to observe Grecian customs. (2) That he had been profoundly impressed by Greek athletics, in their costly ministry to the formation of character. (3) That he felt play to be a valuable if not a necessary factor in the shaping of character, whose use ought to be systematized as the Greeks had systematized it, and projected from childhood into adult life as had been done by the Greeks. (4) That strenuousness in play tends to promote wholesome strenuousness in the weightier affairs of life, and must be carried over into these if we are to grow like Christ and serve him effectively. (5) That self-control, achieved at savage cost, is not duly nurtured in the average child or adult without the stimulus and exactions of organized play, while yet it is of imperious necessity in the Christian life—of preachers and other Christian leaders as well as of the laity. (6) That while much that Paul said and wrote has necessarily been relegated to oblivion, the divine Author and Preserver of Scripture has been at pains to preserve this sharp and striking bit of Paul's personal experiences and apostolic exhortations for our use—in part because the matter of duly regulated play is of such vital moment in the Christian scheme.

### PLAY A DIVINELY GIVEN INSTINCT

3. "Little Erik, aged four years and three months," says Mrs. Ivy Kellerman Reed, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1919, shows "ability to read easily and rapidly, a knowledge of arithmetic and geography roughly equivalent to the work of the third and even higher grades in the public schools, and an attitude toward intellectual pursuits which will make learning and study a pleasurable pursuit during the rest of his life." He began early by imitating his reading parents. They at once seized opportunity by converting his play into well-directed habits, yet keeping up the "play." The little fellow seems normal in every way—full of life, with zest for adventure. Were all parents as studious, sagacious, and devoted, the case would be typical rather than exceptional. Play is the divinely appointed doorway to human development.

4. The instinct for play is deep-seated. It is found among animals; and is universal in human life, except where life's severities have frozen it out—at cost of stifling growth. No

adult should ever get beyond zest for play. To repress it in a child is to dwarf personality. Ingenuity can convert necessary tasks into play which the child will relish and profit by. To divorce work from play and make these antagonists is to fly in the face of Providence and rob child and man of opportunity. Play is adventure into the unknown, and when adventure ceases life shrivels. Play involves and whets spontaneity, and when this dies the grave yawns. The instinct is born of faith—faith that life holds secrets worth going for, and that we can lay hold of them; to suppress or neglect this instinct is to strike at the roots of morality, religion, personality, and human progress.

5. Play involves imitation, harmless pretense, invention, courage, desire, aspiration, spontaneity, unified activity of mind and body, concentrated attention, effort after mastery, joyous behavior, and self-forgetfulness—the actual enfranchisement of the soul, for the time, from that incubus of self which ever threatens to crush life into sodden self-pity and black despair. From the morbid self-consciousness which is the door to all these evils, play for the moment sets us free. If only we could always play! Well, we can—and should. The quality of play belongs to all healthy life and growth. There is a certain pervasive gaiety of whole-hearted trust which no adversities can wholly suppress. Christ had it, and it was part of his inextinguishable and compelling charm. To freeze this out of any human life is to visit that life with appalling calamity.

6. Plaster-of-Paris propriety abhors the innocent and preparational pretense involved in play, and cries out for something hard and stern and “real” to nail child endeavor to—as to a spurious cross. This cheap and factitious realism flouts nature, Providence, Holy Writ, our blessed Saviour, and the deep instinct planted by our Father in the human heart. “Education by illusion” is wisely declared by Ex-President Patton of Princeton to be one of the three fundamental laws of the Kingdom of God. Eve fancied that Cain might be Messiah, Abraham hoped that Isaac would be, and so, the race was wholesomely lured on toward its goal. Joseph and Moses were differing “types” of Christ, and tabernacle and Temple were intricately contrived to foreshadow him. Canaan prefigured paradise. Jer., chs. 18, 24, 27, and so on, and Ezek., chs. 4, 8, 17, 19, dramatized and impersonated; and children

excel in these arts—until shyness and convention snuff out their spontaneity. Jesus said over and over, "The kingdom of heaven is like"—this and that, and his telling parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan appealingly invited Bunyan's instructive allegories, *Mansoul* and *Pilgrim's Progress*—both educative plays constructed out of undeceptive pretense and useful imitation. Back of all this, by gracious, divine ordering, refreshing sleep simulates death, sheds a glow of beauty over it, and daily prepares us to welcome it; the transient delights of the table forecast nourishment of the spirit by feeding on Christ; and the Christian home is God's living picture of heaven and the chief arena of preparation for it. To strip life of its pictorial illusions and reduce it to bald necessities and relentless "realism" is to crowd God out of it and rob us of the greatest realities of all. Life is healthy only when suffused with the softening and illuminating spirit of play. Emphatically is this true of childhood. Our mature years, confronted by obstacles, perils, and weighty responsibilities, can be insured against spiritual hardening only by such a generous and sustained education to playful and courageous adventure, fortified and animated by childlike trust, that we can never lose zest in living, an underlying gayety of spirit, the habit of joyous quest, and perpetual welcome of the new and unknown.

### PLAY AS A FACTOR IN CHARACTER-BUILDING

7. That it is a factor, and a momentous one, must already be evident. It remains only to point out some practical details. Take the constructive faculty—and see what the boy does with blocks, the girl with scissors and paper, or with a board for a table and almost anything for dishes; ingenuity, painstaking skill, labor to a designed end, persistence to the point of completeness, nurture of will in effecting desired results—all come thus into view in the unfolding of personality, under guidance of the indwelling Spirit, and in acceptance of the gifts and limitations of Providence. Take teamwork—a later development which is vitally involved in the socialization of humanity, the work of the Kingdom, and training for the coöperative tasks of heaven; this begins with boys' joint games: baseball; playing circus; camping out. With girls, teamwork seems to come harder; but the little ones' pretended tea parties,

and the social efforts of high-school girls, in turn, afford some useful training along the bent of spontaneous desire, in the spirit of play and adventure. Leave out spontaneity and a measure of freedom, and how soon life withers! The spirit of youth has died out. But redemption means perpetual youth. How our iron stupidity does thwart redemption!

8. The Christian life means a growing and passionate longing for fellowship, for holy intimacies and commingled lives, for comradeship in service, for enjoyment in serving others. Play introduces us to all this—when conducted under God's hand, by wise parents particularly, by other sage counselors in their turn. Recall Christ's excursion with his disciples into an uninhabited district for the purpose of spiritual refreshment and consolation after tidings of the Baptist's death had reached him: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place," said he, "and rest a while." But the curious and eager multitudes followed him, and broke in on the quiet vacation of the little band. Jesus hospitably went out to meet them; talked with them; held them until late afternoon. Then followed a royal banquet to the five thousand men, "besides women and children." John tells us touchingly that "there was much grass in the place." They sat down on the grass, in orderly ranks as bidden. The tiny supply of food was brought forward. A blessing from God was asked. The disciples served the people. The fragments were gathered up, and the crowd was sent joyfully homeward. It was a festive occasion, never to be forgotten—with all the elements of diversion and play, nobly mingled with timely realities, and glorified by supernal benefaction and a broadening of human fellowship through service. How large a factor this, in training the Twelve for their life work! All the more because the occasion and its handling by our Lord were out of the common, does the scene exemplify the spirit of the gospel, and the law of life as related to our nurture in comradeship and service. Our training for this comes largely through byways of the unexpected, the emergencies of recreation, and the spirit of play. Let it be said most reverently, the Lord's Supper is but an exaltation of pretended nourishment akin to that of children's tea parties, into supernal reality, with the hallowing touch of Christ to beget heaven on earth, and through our simulated feeding of the flesh to lead us into actual nourishment of the spirit, and into

most fond and intimate fellowship with God and one another. To rob the Holy Supper of its imaginative quality is to devastate and devitalize it, and degrade it into a fetish.

### THE NOBLE COMPANY PLAY KEEPS

9. In his instructive volume, "What Men Live By," Dr. Richard C. Cabot discusses work, play, love, and worship, and shows in a happy way the vital alliance and interweaving of these four factors of human life as God has designed it: to omit any one of the four is to cripple and scar the others, and to threaten one's life with futility and failure. In a chapter entitled "Play and Its Enemies," Dr. Cabot warns us that seriousness without playfulness is disastrous:

Seriousness is so fundamental a trend of the soul that it can accompany any of the soul's efforts. One can play seriously, as children, baseball experts, and chess-players do. One can be both serious and funny: witness G. B. Shaw . . . Lowell . . . and the fool in "Lear." Work, love, and even prayer can be either flippant or serious.

But just because seriousness is universally accepted as an ingredient, it tastes harsh and crude when we get it alone. Bare and unadorned seriousness is indistinguishable from dullness. Like the sky, we always want it as a background. But put it in the foreground, take away all else, and seriousness becomes a void or mist quenching animation, vivacity, and effort.

10. It is because this is so often done that religion is made nauseous—not to youth only, but to all who love vivacity and naturalness. The whole thing is felt to be unreal, unsuitable to human needs, in some way false: "Something wrong with it! We will have none of it!" True, many so acutely feel the need of religion that they gulp it down in spite of its manufactured nauseousness; or, for the moment, they forget or ignore its unadorned seriousness: it is no longer dull to them, because their sense of need is justly tragic and compelling. In their dilemma these act wisely; but why should the unscriptural and irrational dilemma be forced on them?

11. The answer lies in the gloomy garb in which religion has so often been falsely presented. Because of this men behold it with unrelieved awe and dread, and are fain to postpone accepting it until disaster or imminent death forces the act. How grossly all this misrepresents Christ! To him, and for the early disciples with him, intimacy with the Father was

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

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normal, natural, inviting, refreshing, and free from strain. To him and in measure to them it meant gracious and friendly welcome; new and deeper satisfaction in birds, flowers, sunshine, the pleasures of the table, the delights of companionship, the life of joy and laughter; and a complete enfranchisement from dread and dullness. To him, and so far as they apprehended Christ to them, life with God wove about them a glow which made seriousness and laughter comrades.

12. It is for us to cure the cruel distortion of Christian discipleship which our one-sidedness has begotten, beginning in the home. If there the spirit of joy, rooted in childlike trust, abounds and pervades all things; if good cheer and light-heartedness suffuse the manner and speech of the parents so that seriousness and play seem inseparable like heavenly twins, and inextricable in their hallowing and bliss-giving operations; and if the spirit of play rises normally into organic expression in domestic routine, the children will encounter even the rather stiff formality of public worship so fortified that it will not appall nor seriously distress them. And when the Church comes to be made up of homes like this, its public gatherings will inevitably shed much of the frigidity which otherwise can hardly be avoided.

13. A further quotation from Dr. Cabot may help us here:

Let us cease to blaspheme against the spirit of eternal youth by supposing . . . that play means chiefly a preparation for the "serious" work of life. Whatever has seriousness as its dominant note is a senile degeneration, a sad relapse from the healthy, adventurous playfulness of childhood.

Worst of all, perhaps, is our habit of associating morality with a drab and bleak solemnity. . . . Perhaps there was once real use in the stiff, ugly armor miscalled seriousness. . . . Our present business, in any case, is to divorce morality from dullness. God never put them together. If in the past, for temporary and specific purposes, man has brought them together, it is now man's duty in the service of eternal ends to keep them apart.

14. Only those who think the religious life should be rigorously shaped to suit the somber tastes of adults will resent the spirit of these exhortations. Christ found religion thus misshaped, but he did not leave it so: it is perverted human nature that, like a bent sapling, when released, continually reverts to Pharisaic monstrosities. He sharply resented the clamor of even his own disciples which sought to keep children

in the background, and his habit in attending feasts gave the lie to the canons of the morose. In both these things, and in many others which attended them, he astonished everyone. From that day loyalty to Christ means keeping to the front, in all our religious life, the needs of vivacious childhood; the spirit of childhood as typical of all true piety; and the genial habit of frequenting feasts and social gatherings, and of so conducting ourselves there as to animate a just hilarity rather than extinguish it. Under Christ's hand play has become an ingredient in religious method. To contest this is to disembowel the four Gospels, to distort spirituality into a forbidding thing, and to make religion needlessly odious to some, and sadly undernourishing to all the rest of us.

### TYPES OF PLAY

15. We need both indoor and outdoor amusements. Of both kinds it is well to cultivate those which have valuable and permanent quality, with easy adjustment to changing form and method, from the needs and experiences of childhood to those of maturest adult life. The instinct of imitation helps here. Tiny children's tea parties survive in spirit, and no little in form, in social entertainments given by adults. The tiny child's rubber ball is not so very different in form or in use, from that found on the baseball field, at the tennis court, or on the golf links; while a certain tumultuousness natural to children's playing survives in basket ball and football. In sedentary amusements, puzzle maps and dissected pictures call for an ingenuity later available in checkers and chess, as well as in the sober tasks of life. Many children are tempted by crayons and a box of colors; and the serious work of draughtsmen, architects, painters, and illustrators involves developed tendencies and aptitudes best nourished first in childhood.

16. The lavish variety of toys in these days offered for children gives wide room for choice in providing for them. Nor is it necessary to restrict choice baldly to things useful. Purchased toys are not always necessary. Unwise parents sometimes surfeit children with these. Better have some of home manufacture. Keep the entire list to a minimum. Too many parents seek to relieve themselves of personal responsibility by choking the children's playroom with toys and then leaving the children to themselves. The true home is that in



which amusements are simple, and are shared—parents and children playing together. Work converted into play has surpassing value, and exacts much parental ingenuity, close supervision, constant sharing, and intimate fellowship. Studies and household tasks may thus be utilized—and in not a few families this is happily done.

17. Keep an eye to the future. Let the spirit of play rule rather than any one method; and let this pervade home life. Prefer constructive plays; those which involve wholesome physical exercise, and at the same time stimulate the mind and feed social life; and such as will in some form enter structurally and wholesomely into the habits of mature years. Above all, let parents play with their children, and so order their own amusements that their boys and girls, and their grown sons and daughters, shall largely share these with them. Let amusements resorted to for mere distraction be reduced to a minimum. And see to it that kindly humor and genial vivacity so shrine in the home as to make it radiant. Thus we so reduce the claims of formal and taxing amusements as to make those claims almost negligible.

### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Why did Christ watch children at play, and tell us that he did? What formative factors in play does he suggest?

2. Why does Paul introduce us to races and boxing bouts? What lasting value may come to us from the strenuousness of play, and the self-control it exacts, as here indicated by him?

3. What lesson do you draw from the case of "little Erik?" (Paragraph 3.)

4. Why should adults never get beyond zest for play? (Paragraph 4.)

5. What about the character values of play named in paragraph 5? How does deliverance from morbid self-consciousness enter here?

6. What radical difference is there between illusion and delusion, and to what extent is illusion divinely made a factor in our training and in religious development? (Paragraph 6.)

7. What about teamwork, spontaneity, adventure, and perpetual youth, in the Christian scheme? (Paragraph 7.)

8. Discuss the feeding of the five thousand and the institu-

tion of the Lord's Supper, as related to recreation and to Christ's use of the imagination. (Paragraph 8.)

9. How far do you agree with Dr. Cabot about seriousness? Should religious methods be shaped chiefly to the needs of adults? Can we be playful without becoming frivolous? Is gayety a mark of sin? (Paragraphs 9 to 14.)

10. Should play, and the business of amusements, be turned over to children, with a minimum of parental sharing? How can humor and geniality in the home reduce the tax of formal amusements? (Paragraphs 15-17.)

VIII

DEVELOPING A TASTE FOR GOOD READING

BIBLE READINGS

1. Deut. 6: 6-9. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house, and upon thy gates."

This ancient injunction, expanded to cover the wider expanse of our sacred Volume, is in force to-day. Reading, study, and parental instruction, as vital factors in redemption, thus date back thousands of years. "Teach them diligently," "talk of them when thou sittest in thy house," and so on—how deeply imbedded in family life the habits of intellectual application were meant to be! No wonder the Christian religion, the outgrowth of this venerable Judaism, has become popularly known as "the religion of the Book"! Also it is clear that habits of careful reading, at first under parental direction and suggestion, are essential to progress and power in the work of the Kingdom.

2. Josh. 1: 7-9. "Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

"Book of the law . . . meditate thereon day and night . . . then shalt thou make thy way prosperous. . . . Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage." The intense force of this as related to the use of good literature in shaping character under God's hand cannot easily be overstated. How any Christian household can neglect good reading as a constant and formative factor in the family life, in presence of such

injunctions, it is not easy to understand. The divine assertion that such use of choice reading has a direct and powerful bearing on success in the life of godliness and in the advancement of the Kingdom, is amply vindicated by experience. Neglect of studious reading impoverishes and paralyzes.

3. Acts 8:27-31. "And he arose and went: and behold a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him."

A striking instance! This traveling magnate was absorbed in reading—the very choicest reading at that: a lesson by which many users of Pullman cars might profit. Yet, intellectual as he was, he needed guidance and interpretation; and Philip, though a layman, was able to supply it. Philip had probably had training as a student from a child; the Ethiopian had not had this. It is meant that every child in a Christian home shall have it.

### LAYING FOUNDATIONS

4. This must be done early. Few children from bookless homes develop studious habits and love of good books in later life. The intellectual faculties need stimulus and bias during plastic years. Brain toil is far more arduous than muscular labor. The higher pursuits involve a severe tax, which is resented by those not accustomed to them from childhood. This is why mental and spiritual achievements of high order are so rare. Manual labor and money-making come more easily. The tendency to mental and spiritual idleness and apathy are best counteracted by stimulus and direction supplied in very early years. The child may thus acquire a wholesome bias for lofty pursuits which he will never lose; and only this can obviate painful strain, should he take them up for the first time in later life. Habit hardens. If intellectual hunger and spiritual aspiration are not whetted into habitual activity before the child is six years old, he will go through life crippled and limping at best. Every normal child is born with latent

aptitudes for these things, but if these are not nursed into organic power during childhood they shrivel and atrophy. Better send a boy into the world with two lame legs than with mental and spiritual hunger dried up through disuse.

5. In a large and prominent family of eighty years ago in a western state, one son was compassionated because his lower limbs were paralyzed from infancy; parents and kindred used to say, "The others will all do well"—and they did! "but D—— can never amount to anything." Happily he was of resolute spirit, and in his quiet way determined to falsify the universal prediction. From a child he became studious of men, and of life. He thought much, observed carefully, applied himself to the laws of business and the needs of the people, became a highly successful merchant, developed force enough to name for his wife the thriving inland city that took shape under his hand in the center of the region which was to a considerable degree populated by his kindred, and long before his death was cheerfully conceded by all the rest to be quite the most successful man in the entire connection. He began early, under pressure.

6. In the family of a clergyman whose salary was five hundred dollars, some seventy years ago, of the two boys the brighter and stronger died in an epidemic at the age of five—already a fluent reader, and on his own initiative able to recite perfectly the one hundred and seven extended answers in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. His brother, then aged seven, undersized and feeble from infancy, took the sickness on the day of the little fellow's funeral, recovered, as the physician frankly confessed only because of wiser medical treatment, had a long and lonely convalescence in the absence of his vivacious comrade and of all visitors, and in desperation formed the reading habit, to put in the time; for the strain of poverty and of sickness, and his ailing mother's burden of care for the household and for his baby sister, robbed him of even her lavish ministries, to which he had been accustomed. She had for years regaled her two lads with Bible stories, and encouraged them to intellectual inquiry. After exhausting recent periodicals the boy asked his mother for more. She told him that he would find on the back porch a big box filled with old files of *The New York Observer* and the *Presbyterian Banner*, running back a number of years. One by one he de-

voured these—such portions of them as he could grasp and assimilate. Years later he could recall lying face down on the floor, too feeble even to sit erect, and fatigued after each trip to that “back porch,” buried and happy in reading; and the reading habit which so influenced his life that when he was sixteen his father expressed the fear lest he become a mere bookworm, he dates from that time. In this instance the bias given to a rather sluggish mind by parental care from earliest years needed and found the special providential ministry of tedious days; but what would have happened if that bias had not been so painstakingly given him from the outset, or even then if that impecunious home had not supplied suitable resources for his awakening moral and mental hunger? In the absence of any other distinction it gives him joy thus to memorialize a faithful and wise mother who more than thirty years ago went to adorn a fairer clime, the devoted father who nine years later at an advanced age followed her, and the typical Christian home in which they reared him—a home whose traces can be found on every page in this series of lessons.

### STORY-TELLING

7. That mother fed her children on Bible stories, and shaped their speech and tastes with the sharp tool of terse and vivid Bible language, as well as by lavish use of its more lyric and dramatic utterances. These features of Holy Scriptures are ever remarked by literary critics, but are not enough noted by ambitious parents, nor enough made use of in our homes. What a wealth of telling narrative in the Bible! Our best preachers make generous use of this; but it is in the home and for the greedy minds of young children, that these tales are most apt. A very large percentage of the contents of the Volume is made up of sheer and sparkling narrative; and, rightly read, almost every page is underlaid and tinged with personal experience: the red blood of poignant, human struggle colors the entire Book. To ignore this is to miss not only the amaranthine glow and the surpassing charm of the Bible, but also to mislay its profounder meanings, and squander the prodigious power with which it is surcharged.

8. Tell your children, in your own interpretative way, but with much use of Bible language, the story of Creation; of Cain and Abel; of Noah; of Abraham; of Isaac and Rebekah;

of Jacob and Esau; of Joseph and his brethren; of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; of Joshua, of Samson, of Gideon; of Ruth; of Hannah and Samuel; of David and Goliath; David and Saul; David and Jonathan; of Solomon, of poor Rehoboam, and of Jeroboam; of Jehu, Josiah, Hezekiah, Jeremiah; the many stories of Elijah and Elisha; the tale of Esther, Mordecai, and Haman. Above all, reproduce the story of Jesus, bit by bit. Nothing interests us so much as folks—and the Bible is full of them. Particularly are the narratives of the Old Testament adapted to arrest and hold the attention of children; and, properly interpreted, these charge their minds with elementary truth. Children clamor for stories. If they are well nourished on Bible tales, their judgment and feeling are taken possession of; they acquire taste for the Bible, and an elementary familiarity with it which will go far to make their later use of it easy and fruitful. Otherwise in later years they will find it a hard book to decipher, or even to attack. The marvelous condensation of the Scripture baffles untrained inquiry, especially when taste for the Book has not been decisively formed in the plastic years of childhood, and some skill in handling it acquired.

9. Other narratives will follow. Avoid much use of somber tales—as of persecutions, martyrdoms, and other tragedies. Tell about Luther, Cromwell, Washington, Lincoln. Employ a long and varied list of instructive biographies. Widen the range to take in nature stories. Early beget interest in animal and plant life; such books as Dixon's "The Human Side of Plants" will help here. It is important that children should escape from the crude and superficial notions of animals and plant life which the unschooled mind picks up. Beget in them an intelligent sympathy with life in all its lower stages; for the beautiful works of God shine in these, and so our own lives are better understood and the deep mystery of life as a whole more truly fathomed. The youth who has grown up with only mechanical and casual conceptions of trees, flowers, and insects, is greatly to be pitied. The fault lies with parents—and it is a grievous fault.

10. Story-telling is God's own method in primary education. The structure of the Bible shows this. Unpleasant experience on the obverse side confirms it. If you withhold good stories, children will hunt up bad stories—either vicious, or

wishy-washy, or trivial; and thus they grow up confirmed gossips—about as bad a mental and moral state as it is possible to reach. Gossip is the sawdust with which untrained appetite stuffs empty minds, and sometimes it proves explosive. Get your children in the habit of craving something worth knowing, and when grown, they will have neither taste nor room for moral dishwater, social venom, and literary slush. Taste must be created for good things, or things either useless or actually hurtful will usurp place.

11. The human heart is hungry for life, not for apothegms, rules, and statistics; and the human mind craves its instruction in living shape; we “want to see the wheels go ’round.” We want to see how the thing works—to behold it alive and moving, not dead. Inert truth does not charm. Later one may see the color and feel the tingle of life in description and analysis, if only he has been schooled to look for this by having been fed on breezy narratives replete with truth. The play of the imagination is ever necessary, and imagination must be educated by wise use of narratives in childhood or in later years it will not rise to the bait of history, chemistry, or Paul’s Epistle to the Romans.

#### SELECTING BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

12. First of all, be sure you have some books and periodicals suitable for children, while yet they are very young; then, such as are suitable for each stage of advancing growth. There are such books and periodicals. More or less wisely, school readers are built on this plan—in series, from primer up. Pictures, open print, easy tales, bits of taking verse: better Mother Goose than nothing! Extracts from periodicals for tiny tots may be read to them, and then the pages handed over to them for looking at the pictures. After a few years they will reach out in turn for Kings’ Treasuries, Queens’ Gardens, Forward, Youth’s Companion. Most of our public libraries have books for children of various ages, and for youth. Books and periodicals should be fitted to growth as much as clothes; and the supply should be just as constant and as adequate. By the age of ten at least the child should have his own copy of the New Testament and should be sympathetically and sagely guided in reading here and there in it: parts of Mark; some parables from Luke; presently the story in John, ch. 9;



and so on. At not later than twelve he should have his own Bible, and be shown how to pick out the Old Testament stories he had been fed on years before, and to read them advantageously for himself; then marked and brief selections from Proverbs, carefully fitted to his turn of mind, and to occasion; and so on, until he has begun to relish portions of Isaiah, and to be at home with pretty much the entire Volume.

13. Be careful to choose for each child both books and periodicals which combine these qualities: good matter, attractive form, simplicity and charm of literary style, subjects suited to personal tastes and aptitudes, and treatment adapted to his years. Do not throw "Paradise Lost" at the average youth of fourteen, nor make him grind through Leviticus or the Epistle to the Hebrews. A college sophomore of fifteen who had stood second in his class, tugged hard at Shakspeare and could not get interested; two years later, while on a long sea voyage, he devoured it, play after play. At sixteen "David Copperfield" captivated him, and in some measure profited him—though much less than when he reread it a score of years later. In such matters no two youngsters are alike. There must be adjustment to individualities as well as to different ages. One student at sixteen enjoyed "Telemaque" in the original French, while he tired of Macauley and Milton; at seventeen he feasted for weeks on bound volumes of Harper's, and soon found that current issues of the Atlantic Monthly satisfied his hunger—and led him to plod with profit and some pleasure through Tennyson's "In Memoriam," then just out.

14. By judicious and painstaking effort in selection, and by keeping a hand at once on a few good periodicals, a few standard volumes, and choice new books, parents may go far in keeping their young going along educative lines without either weariness or waste. But the task is almost never easy, and only sympathetic shrewdness, flavored by companionship and employed at much cost of time and at some cost in cash, will avail.

15. Purely sentimental novels, trashy verse, and whatever is either coarse, clumsy, or heavy, should in a general way be banned. However, a mental picnic, with accompanying sun-burn, may prove inevitable and even useful—once in a while, after long periods of hard work and rigid confinement to routine; there comes times, even to youth, when a dish of

jokes or a handful of literary fudge meets for the moment a felt want. After a month with Walter Scott and ancient history, a taste of Galsworthy, W. J. Locke, Mark Twain, and even O. Henry, may restore jaded appetite; and after a siege of Browning one may really need Kipling. In poetry, for girls especially, the mellifluous quietudes of Longfellow may well be followed in turn by the more tonic verses of Oliver Wendell Holmes and, in lighter vein, the keen-edged satires of Saxe. Emerson and Thoreau are not best fed out in too large doses; the letters of Junius should be read in very small installments; and H. G. Wells is never food for babes.

16. A number of our librarians will be found skilled and ready to serve both parents and youth in the selection of fit books and periodicals. Not a few high-school teachers are able, and stand ready to help. Studious pastors may be consulted with advantage. Close study of book advertisements and reviews will help much. Publishers' catalogues ought to be as much sought and studied in our homes as the fat and gaudy volumes which advertise jewelry and other articles for bodily adornment or mechanical use. The kinds of catalogues you welcome and revel in go far to show the kind of person you are, the quality of your home life, and the bias you are giving your children. Parents who really crave wisdom in book matters need be at no loss for it. Where well-equipped libraries are within reach it is better to use these freely rather than overbuy, and in such cases conferences between parents and librarians will obviate many difficulties.

17. Does your child show traits which to your penetration indicate the specific life work which Providence has appointed him to follow? Then select for him some reading that will stimulate and feed this; by no means all that he reads should follow this bent, but some. Possibly he is himself already aware of distinctive tastes for some permanent vocation. These are divinely implanted, and should be reverently and wisely nursed. Reading will both nourish them and tend to fix them. Often it is the parent who must divine the child's true vocational outcome, because as yet it lies below the surface of his consciousness. Girls as well as boys should be considered here; the time has passed when an individuality-extinguishing marriage should be deemed a girl's inevitable destiny. Do not blanket girls with narrow prospects, feeding frivolity and

coquetry, and keeping their minds empty. Some girls should be teachers, nurses, artists, writers—even though they wisely marry, earlier or later. Feed the brains of both sexes generously.

18. Easy to bring up children in this age so prolific of brain food? By no means! Never before was the task of parents so exacting. The wisest and most painstaking fathers and mothers sometimes find themselves almost at their wits' end. The very wealth of opportunity and material, the constantly increasing strenuousness, vivacity, and complexity of modern life, and the varied and restless appetites of our uneasy youngsters, add heavily to our cares. But fond devotion, readiness to pay all costs, sympathetic concern, close comradeship, and an alert and well-nourished intelligence will surely carry devoted and praying parents past rocks and shoals, and enable them to steer their young out into the wide ocean for fruitful voyaging, well supplied with useful cargoes and unflinching charts. The rest we leave to God.

### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Can you find in Deut. 6: 6-9 a reason for the fact that the Jews proved too strong for the Canaanites, and strong enough to outlast all other peoples of that early day? What effect do reading and studious habits have on personal and national character?

2. How do you suppose that Ethiopian magnate, paragraph 3, living a thousand miles away, got hold of the sacred Book of the Jews, and was led to take the long trip to Jerusalem? Why did the Book wield such power over the man? Suppose all of us were interested in the Bible like that!

3. Why do so many find mental toil more irksome than manual labor? How can parents help to head off this disaster from their children?

4. Why do children relish tales? which part of Scripture is the richer in these, its earlier or its later books? Why did God put Samson and Goliath into the Bible? Is the picturesque an aid to piety? Can we make it help? To what faculty of our minds does the picturesque appeal?

5. In case the reading habit is not formed early, what harmful results are apt to follow? (See especially paragraph 10.)

6. If we ought eventually to study Ezekiel or the Epistle to the Romans with zest, how and when are we to be prepared for this?

7. What proportion of books kept at hand for daily use should be solid literature, and how much of a lighter nature? In which class would you rank Browning? Kipling? Dickens? Shakspeare? Motley? the Bible? What about excessive doses from either class?

8. Are public libraries a bane or a blessing? How should we use them?

9. What about girls and vocations? (Paragraph 17.)

IX

SELECTING COMPANIONS

BIBLE READINGS

1. Dan. 1: 17; 2: 17, 18, 48, 49. "Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. . . .

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his companions should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. . . . Then the king made Daniel great, and gave him many great gifts, and made him to rule over the whole province of Babylon, and to be chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon. And Daniel requested of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel was in the gate of the king."

These four lads seem to have been about fourteen years of age. They were exiles, far from home. Their parents could now have no direct influence on their selection of companions. But under God they had done much indirectly; they had so trained their boys that these would naturally gravitate toward one another. The lads had inherited and had been bred to stalwart, moral character and devout habits. Thus, in their plight as exiles, Providence took their case in hand. Providence is apt to do just this. Having fed the parents to loyalty in home life and nurture of their young, God now acted as their unseen Partner, and finished for them the job they could not now handle. Parents who do their utmost and then, because of circumstances, fall short, can count on God thus to carry their work to fruition. Are the sons and daughters whom you are to send to college so reared and equipped that God by his Spirit and Providence—God in them and all around them—can be counted on to bring them into fit companionship there? How greatly the brilliant later careers of these four lads hinged on their coming together and sticking together as they did! Oh, give God a chance with your boys and girls! That is just what these unknown parents had done; they had given God a chance. Trust him for using it—but first see to it that you give it to him. From the children's infancy the parents

had been on the job, heart and soul. Evidently home atmosphere and parental training had been saturated with God—to make boys like that! Is your home of like quality and caliber? If not, how you are robbing your children; if so, how wealthy you are making them!

2. Mark 3: 14. "And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach."

The training of the Twelve by Jesus was chiefly a matter of personal intimacy "with him"; by this intimacy, far more than by any formal instruction, they absorbed Christ: his feelings, ideas, aims, moral force. Here you have the key to real education. True, these were now grown men, but they had been reared in pious homes, so that their characters were still in a measure plastic, and their home life had done much to prepare them as lads for intimacy with Christ and to make them welcome and relish it. It is ever thus that men and women are trained for Christian leadership. At least four of these men had already been companions for years, under parental influence: even from boyhood. This was their start toward that shining joint career which led to Pentecost and laid the solid foundations of Christianity after our Lord's ascension. Note Acts 2: 14; 3: 1 and following; and 4: 13, as showing how prominent in this were Peter and John, two of the Twelve who had been companions from early childhood:

"Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, . . . they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

There are volumes in this one verse, and volumes more in Acts, chs. 1 to 10, which go with it—every volume shouting to us the fundamental principles of character formation, and of power in Christian propaganda: (1) intimacy with Christ; (2) choice companionships centering on Christ; (3) back of all, parental training which sets in motion the wheels of such companionships and such intimacy with the Lord.

3. Ps. 119: 63. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, And of them that observe thy precepts."  
Prov. 13: 20. "Walk with wise men, and thou shalt be wise; But the companion of fools shall smart for it."

These verses show the formative effects of companionship, as related to character. The psalmist is celebrating the value of training in the Scriptures; but here he turns aside to indicate how this disposes one to good companionships, expresses itself in good companionships, and uses good companionships for advancing piety.

4. Prov. 28: 7. "Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son;  
But he that is a companion of gluttons shameth his father."

In this terse epitome we discern that parents have much to do with their children's choice of companions, that they suffer when the children choose amiss, and specifically that boys who cling to self-indulgent comrades, greedy to satisfy fleshly desire, bring disgrace on themselves and discredit on the homes which reared them.

5. I Sam. 18: 1-4. "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle."

The story of David and Jonathan is the world's peerless idyl of friendship. Jonathan's loyalty, love, and devout spirit made the spontaneous and timely gift of his comradeship of priceless value to David. Jonathan was the older of the two. By his devotion the boyish David was infolded, and by it he was nourished and protected, at a critical time. No choicer earthly gift was ever vouchsafed him. God took pains to meet his need by providing this for him. The home of Jesse seems to have left the lad without intimate companions, but clearly it had so schooled him that he could relish and find advantage in this one close comradeship when Providence sent it his way.

6. John 21: 2, 3. "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter said unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee."

Teamwork—born of long and happy companionship, and gravely needed now by all, especially in Simon's case because

of his plight as a discredited apostle. This developed power of teamwork, rooted in godly companionships, lies on the surface throughout Acts, chs. 1 to 10, as referred to in paragraph 2 on page 93. The Church and the Kingdom center on this—as the product of godly homes, in fellowship with Christ.

7. Phil. 2: 25-27. “But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need; since he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick: for indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.”

A touching instance of life in close comradeship, projected into mature years and critically advantageous there. See Rom., ch. 16, for striking evidence that Paul had grown so much like his Master that he could enumerate twenty-eight close friends in a city he had never visited. One needs to lay this to heart, in all that it implies, in order to see how prodigious and vital a factor choice companionships are in the furthering of the Kingdom, and how important it is that parents early begin in various ways to school their young for these.

### THE INFLUENCE OF COMPANIONS UPON A YOUNG LIFE

8. Recall the case of Daniel and his three boy friends; of young David when Jonathan took him in his embrace. Add to this the half-suppressed story of the runaway Onesimus as revealed under scrutiny of Paul's short letter to Philemon: Paul saving a wastrel by taking him to his heart and into his service! One needs to brood long over those records, so pregnant with meaning for us.

9. The normal child craves companions, and is going to have them—if not at home or under parental provision otherwise, then perhaps in the back alley, or from the slums. “My son!” says the horrified mother, noting her boy's new and ungainly swagger and his outburst of temper and bad language, “where did you learn that?” No need for answer! But what of the parental neglect that left the gate open for this calamity?

10. Every child has a right to fit companionship in his own home first of all. Pity the lone child, the only son or daughter! If God denies the parents more children, all the more



need for close and sympathetic parental companionship. Alice Freeman Palmer, a distinguished president of Wellesley College, avowed her deep indebtedness to the intimate comradeship of her father, a devout Presbyterian elder and a busy country doctor, both on his rounds and in the home.

11. But this is not enough. The youngster must have comrades of his own age. These can be brought into the home by judicious parents; only after that, and with even more sedulous care, can they be furnished him by them in neighboring homes, with due consent secured there—and how careful one must be in choosing the homes! Long before school age the child should have acquired strong bias for fit companions, and disrelish for unfit ones. Only so is he duly guarded amid the exposures brought him by school life, and in the streets as he goes back and forth.

12. Children absorb. They are infected by atmosphere more than by instruction. One hour with a vicious but taking companion may undo the home teaching of years—specially if home instruction has been more by precept than by example, and if the child has not been hourly fed by close, parental comradeship in a home redolent of love and piety. Children were made to absorb. In absorbing they are naturally ravenous and indiscriminating. Their instincts of propriety and morals are feeble and plastic. Companions of their own age infect them more than parents and other people of mature years are able to do. They fancy that children understand what they want, better than “old folks” can do. Only parents of generous and penetrating Christliness really do understand their own children; but all parents imperiously need to understand them, and so to preoccupy their young hearts with an animating warmth of attachment and a rocklike confidence. Children so nurtured are not apt to accept unsuitable companions—then or later.

13. The child reared in loneliness becomes abnormal. Either his social instincts shrivel, or they grow rebellious and lead him to stray off in search of companions. In this case, any sort will meet his craving, and the unfit are sure to get in their work. In case his loneliness becomes a habit, and is accepted by him, he is spoiled for life. No recluse goes far. For the straying child there is room for hope; for the child imprisoned in himself there is none. Either way, long before he is six

years old—if left to himself—his character has acquired dangerous bias.

#### LIMITS OF PARENTAL SELECTION

14. Much depends on the location of one's home. Lot "pitched his tent toward Sodom," because superior opportunities for making money lay there. The dreadful consequences engulfed his entire household. But why wonder? His girls naturally married the men in reach, and absorbed the degrading immorality that environed them. In choosing a home consult your children's highest interests as mandatory. Contrast Lot with Abraham, who remained in a less perilous neighborhood; and when the time came for Isaac to marry, what pains Abraham took to secure him a fit wife! In exercising parental right Abraham here went the limit; but parents of a child weak in initiative, like Isaac, will do well to ponder Gen., ch. 24, and this with reference to the entire problem of companionships, not marriage merely, perhaps not chiefly.

15. Compare the case of Esau. Left too much to himself by a careless father and a mother devoted to her other son only, his companionships were undesirable and his marriages were "a grief of mind" to his parents. Rebekah's partiality kept his brother Jacob dangling at her apron strings too long, but when the necessary moment came she took pains to send him to her brother Laban, where his opportunities were of the best; yet so inadequately trained was he that he was led into a sad matrimonial tangle even there—though not into marriages as debasing as those of Esau—far less debasing than those of Lot's daughters. In later days the prophet Samuel was robbed of Hannah's sage maternal care and of Elkanah's wholesome, paternal influence and comradeship just when he needed both most, living with old Eli and seeing even his mother but once a year, from boyhood; judging from the unruly sons he later had, his companionships were not duly fruitful and his marriage was inferior. As for Samson—whew! in what a mess of bad associations and devious ways he was left by parental feebleness to defile his dedicated life and wreck his otherwise promising career!

16. In this as in all else, indirect, parental influence is best; it is less obnoxious to the child, is more potent, and it lasts longer. The ideal home will leave an orphaned child of

seven years so grounded that he is not likely to go far or permanently astray in his choice of intimates or otherwise. The case of Jochebed and her son Moses is in point here; even though Moses was adopted into Pharaoh's household while his parents were still living, note how thoroughly trained he had been at home in early childhood.

17. After locating your home, choosing your church, and selecting schools for your children, you will find yourselves hedged in; your children's companions are already in great measure chosen for them, indirectly but inevitably. How many parents duly weigh their children's needs in making these preliminary arrangements? Better a church and later a college otherwise inferior, than one where warm and fit associations for your boys and girls will be out of reach or hard to secure. Yet, with the best choice possible as to home, church, and school, much will depend on the bias given to their character and the firmness it has acquired in very early years at home. It is not impossible to beget in children a rooted and dominating distaste for unsuitable companionships, and this is the very best safeguard they can have. But in seeing to this one must beware of making children narrow, bigoted, unsocial, priggish, and exclusive. A Christly largeness of feeling generated in the home should permeate those refined tastes and stalwart convictions to which our youth should be bred under the parental hand while their lives are yet readily impressible. So much can be done in this direction for children between the ages of three and fourteen—in homes radiant with Christ and devoted to the children's interests!

### A FEW SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

18. What about inviting other children and youth to an informal afternoon or evening in the home now and then? Many English homes surpass in this. There often one or two entire families are asked in, and an evening of music, conversation, varied games, and light refreshments, is shared by all, of various ages, under skilled parental management: games for those of various ages proceeding simultaneously in connected parts of the house—children under nine or ten retiring at nine o'clock, before music and refreshments come in. Afternoon parties for children, and evening gatherings for youths of high-school age, offer variant forms of social activity in

which parental influence over the companionships of the young may be made wholesomely and acceptably felt. Leaving everything of the kind to the children themselves is as unwise as it is cheap—cheap for the moment in relieving parents of care, but costly in the outcome, as to both cash and character. Indolent parents have much to answer for, and indolence of will in meeting such social necessities involves most grievous abdication of parental responsibility.

19. Reference has just been made to music. The writer, at the age of sixteen, was one wet night marooned in a plain country home miles from any town, where there were four musical youngsters of high-school age—and a melodeon. After some sixty years the fragrant memory of that evening lingers yet, though he had never met any of that family before nor has seen any of them since. Of all the homes to which he was admitted between the ages of fifteen and twenty, there remains now distinct and pleasing memory of only the eight or ten where music was a factor—in two or three instances known only at family prayers, without organ or piano. Music as a social lubricant, as an educative agency, as a stimulus to wholesome sentiment and social feeling, and as a substitute for foolish performances, is almost indispensable in a well-regulated home; and it has a valuable influence in cementing desirable companionships.

20. By all means, from the very beginning, talk with your boys and girls so freely and genially that they will naturally keep you informed as to who and what their companions are. Then take time to follow this up, acquiring personal knowledge. If you have been wise and faithful you will know in advance about most of these; now make sure about the others. Find out about their parents. Get into touch with these. And thus and otherwise so keep in touch with your children that your influence can at any critical moment be exerted effectively in checking hurtful companionships and in encouraging useful ones.

21. Should you discover that evil companions have entered their lives, your finest diplomacy will be needed to neutralize the influence of these. In rare cases it may be found possible to break up the injurious associations. In the case of children older than twelve this may prove out of the question. It is then that your tact, skill, and time, will be taxed to the utmost,

if you are not to surrender in indolence and helplessness to a dangerous status. In such an emergency, sometimes parents have even removed to another and distant community, for the children's sake. If this ought not to be done, or even otherwise, the objectionable youth may be so welcomed in your own home, and so skillfully and kindly handled there, that either his character is remodeled, or that your son or daughter acquires a disrelish for his companionship. In very rare cases, such a comrade may be replaced by substituting a more fit one for him, by adroit, parental management. In all cases parental influence should have become so strong and so welcome that the children will in the end yield to counsel, and will ever be moved more by the atmosphere and trend of home life than by any hostile influence from without. A warm, rich, genial, hearty home life, saturated with God and concentrated on the children's interests, is the one indispensable and overwhelming asset in parental accounts.

### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What was the distinguishing quality common to Daniel and his three less intellectual comrades, and where and when did they all acquire it? (Paragraph 1.)

2. Can you imagine Jesus finding twelve apostles outside of Judaism? Why not—when Greece and Rome were so distinguished in point of intellect and culture? Suppose he had gone out and converted twelve choice Greeks and Romans and appointed them to the work, just why must these have failed? Why does the home life of the Jews for hundreds of years before Christ count so heavily in the Christianity of to-day? (Paragraphs 2 to 7.)

3. What kind of companionships had Onesimus, a stranger in Rome, probably fallen into before Paul took him up (paragraph 8); and how could so busy a scholar as Paul at fifty get a grip on the youth?

4. Why are young people's companionships inevitable, and so acutely influential? (Paragraphs 9 to 12.) In what years are the most influential companionships normally formed, and under what influences? Suppose a child is brought up in unrelieved loneliness? (Paragraph 13.)

5. What has the location of the home to do with all this? (Paragraph 14.) Is it as easy to rear children, and to secure

them fit companions, in Shanghai or Singapore as in the average American community? in San Francisco? in Philadelphia? in a mining community as in a college town?

6. How much had parental feebleness to do with Samson's eccentric choice of companions, and his resulting misfortunes? (Paragraph 15.) Study his picturesque story in Judg., chs. 13 to 16. Was it altogether good for Samuel to be so much away from his home in later childhood and throughout his adolescent years? (Paragraph 15, with references to I Sam. 2: 11, 18, 19, and ch. 8: 1-3.)

7. What may we learn here from the case of Moses? (Paragraph 16.)

8. What is the relative influence on formation of companionships, of the home and the school—and what is necessary to give the same due preponderance here? (Paragraph 17, noting last two sentences.)

9. To what extent should entertainments and music in the home be employed in developing wholesome companionships? (Paragraphs 18, 19.)

10. How would you go to work, before and after, to neutralize the influence of evil companions? (Paragraphs 20, 21.)

11. Why does the Bible make so much of our companionships?

## X

## DOING FOR OTHERS

## BIBLE READINGS

1. Luke 10 : 25-37. "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readeest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him. Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

In this parable the Master strips off the husks with which men had encrusted religion and shows us its core—a throbbing heart pouring out lifeblood. In essence and substance Christianity is neither a creed, a code, nor a ritual, but an operative force grounded in filial and serene trust, and fired by a consuming passion of brotherhood—a passion for doing good to others as occasion offers. It finds its satisfactions less in inner quietude than in outer behavior. Its passion for God finds vent in serving men. Study here with care Christ's vivid pictorial rendering of the judgment scene, Matt. 25: 31-46, noting the critical occasion of this utterance; also John, chs. 13 to 17, as one connected record of utterances and acts wherewith our Lord's last night with his disciples was solemnized; I Cor., ch. 13; and the First Epistle of John throughout. Note also the story of Jesus' own illustrative life as recorded in the four

Gospels, and summed up in the words, "Who went about doing good." Acts 10: 38. From the tremendous and inspiring force of these appeals there is no escape. The Christian family should be so ordered and animated that its children shall easily absorb this fundamental conception of Christian reality. Only thus can future generations be freed from the gross travesties of Christianity now so prevalent—after all these centuries.

2. In saying bluntly to the Samaritan woman, John 4: 22, that "salvation is from the Jews," our Saviour put a just premium on orthodox belief; but in here choosing a heretic Samaritan as exemplar, and driving even his Jewish questioner to pay honor to that heretic, our Master exhibits Christianity as transcending all boundaries of creed, cult, and code.

3. "Doing good to others" finds its highest expression in bringing men to Christ and so uniting them to God, John 1: 42; and in nurturing Christian character, John 21: 15-17—the three-fold injunction to Peter when he was restored to his forfeited apostleship; but in this parable, as in his own conduct and injunctions, as shown in John 13: 1-15, and in Matt. 25: 31-46, Jesus makes it plain that common service of men's everyday needs must bulk largest in our ministries to men. It is when, like the Samaritan on the way to Jericho, or like Jesus at the Supper, we find ourselves by instinct irresistibly impelled to drop everything else in order to serve another's urgent bodily need, however trivial if it be real, that we most illustrate the gospel, best please God, and most compellingly "preach Christ." Are our children daily absorbing this from our conduct in the home? If not, they are growing up with perverted conceptions of Christianity which will torment them and hamper their Christian growth all their days—and thus hinder the development of the Kingdom.

4. II Kings 5 : 1-4, 9, 10, 14. "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria: he was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maiden that is of the land of Israel. . . . So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger



unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. . . . Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

We see here how a little child may be so schooled that even in exile her instincts will infallibly prompt and drive her to useful ministries. The unknown Jewish home which had reared her is by this record exalted in history. All this took place nearly three thousand years ago—long before the days of Jesus and our New Testament; yet how shining the record! What a shame if our children are less nobly and less effectively reared! Note with care that this typical child product of a godly home does not rudely and priggishly say, "Naaman ought to know God and be pious," though that was true enough; what singles her out is that she was eager to serve his bodily needs. Let the meaning of this be well laid to heart; for just here lies the one big field of Christian endeavor—mostly uncultivated as yet.

5. I Cor. 12 : 12, 25, 26. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ . . . that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

Here we find the underlying philosophy. This is rooted in the Master's words, John 14: 20, "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you"; John 17: 21, 23, "That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me." The marvelous organic unity of life from God, through all! That is, this is the divine intent, and the true human ideal to which Christianity ministers, and which it aims to produce. Children are to be taught to assume this as fundamental. One body! A vital and tender sympathy running through all! Family life offers a fine arena for exemplifying this. But how seldom we live out the truth! We allow divided and rival interests to creep in, even in the home, alas! "It's

mine!" "I want it—let go!" . . . "Yes," says the mother to her husband, before her children, "I know you are tired, but consider how tired I am!" Even when we say nothing our actions betray our false, self-centered feeling. All this is nothing short of calamity. We act on a false philosophy of life. We cherish selfish feelings. We want each a separate satisfaction, a mere personal deference and enjoyment. Thus our children absorb from us poison in place of Christian nourishment. They are born with selfish bias, and our conduct gives countenance to it. But if parents are "conformed to Christ," the little ones, under the Spirit's ministry, soon acquire the Christly instinct of sympathetic oneness, as did the little Jewish maid—and in later life this will rule them as it ruled her. How that wee, lonely child did forget self in serving others!

### THE BACKGROUND OF PARENTAL PIETY

6. Some families—even when professedly Christian—seem to have no background. Everything there is at random—a matter of momentary impulse or necessity. Every act is a mere happen-so. No ballast; no weight of character; no dominating and lofty passion outside the interests of the passing moment; no slowly gathered forces of inward righteousness; no moral and spiritual reserves; no center of deep-seated feeling outside of self: no God in the life, in any effective way!

7. Granted that the ideal is beyond immediate and perfect attainment; still we can keep it steadily in sight, and bend energy to working toward it. And parents must do that or their family life and child-rearing will prove pitiful failures—save so far as God's marvelous management shall save some glorious fragments from the wreck. Without a background of faithfully nourished piety and steadfast self-discipline, no parents have any right to expect their children ever to amount to much that is good, or to contribute anything worth while to the advancement of the Kingdom. Parents can impart to their children, at best, nothing but what wholly possesses themselves; the stream simply cannot rise higher than the fountain!

8. Pause, then, for decisive reply to these searching questions: Have you committed your life wholly to God? Have you passed through the Door, Jesus Christ, into close and life-long intimacy with the Father? If so, you are aglow with

serene, filial trust, radiant with joy, and habitually considerate of others. Does your home life show that?

9. Next, are you sedulously feeding your personal piety by active fellowship with God? Do you daily absorb God through Bible study and the prayer life, and through watching for and appreciating God in nature and in current events so that you are daily more and more coming to see God and feel God in all that happens? These things are elementary to any effective piety, or to such warm atmosphere of home life as shall result in any decent nurture of children in godliness. Without this, any effort to school the children to the high art of doing good will prove mechanical and futile. The whole thing must be organic. Our boys and girls cannot be either cajoled or driven into the habit by sheer precept; they must come to love it, to feel it a part of life, to absorb it from the prevailing ways of the home and the dominating spirit of their parents.

#### VISION OF THE CHILDREN'S LIFE WORK

10. For what are you rearing your children? Making money? Getting on in the world? Eclipsing others? Being like everyone else, only a little smarter? Or are you rearing them to serve? Make sure about this. There must be a definite aim, or you will get nowhere. Merely putting by the years and letting the children develop as best they can—keeping them safe and well fed meanwhile—is just what the animals do. To aim at their worldly success merely, or chiefly, is to pattern after pagan Chinese, and so to poison their lives. It is necessary to rear them distinctly and intelligently for Christian usefulness. Each child has latent in him some native bias, given by God, for one or another form of this; this native bias it is parental privilege to develop. You may or may not clearly divine the specific form of your child's life work. Future conditions may open for him forms of service not now in sight. The generic aim is the main thing. So inspire your child with Christly feeling, and so school him to habits which express it in useful action, that his individuality will in time acquire the best to which God has appointed him, and for which he has given the child's nature secret bias. You may have vision of your son as a preacher, of your daughter as a missionary; God may have appointed them to things better in their case. Rear them for service: God will see to the rest.

UNSELFISHNESS FUNDAMENTAL

11. Recall the little maid in Naaman's home; the unselfishness of Christ; Paul's flaming words in I Cor. 13: 5, "Love . . . seeketh not its own"; and the life of habitual self-forgetfulness in service indicated in Matt. 25: 31-46 as the constant behavior of all who enter heaven; and make it cardinal that this is fostered and inculcated in your home, as vital and imperative.

12. "But my children are naturally selfish." All children are. Yet below this hard crust there lies, deep down in your child's heart, the instinct of loving and self-forgetful service. This, under God, you are to evoke into activity and nourish to power—as fundamental to your child's well-being. The Holy Spirit will abet your effort in this to the utmost. He stands ready and eager to make your aim and effort to this end effective. Only give God a chance with your child!

HOW?

13. By parental example. Let your daily life show your child that you ever prefer others' comfort and welfare to your own—and that you find your chief joy in ministering to others' needs, in home affairs first of all. Without this, all precept will become to your children either empty drivel or odious exaction; but the influence of such example never fails to infect the little ones. At least the following six distinct child memories of some seventy years ago are vivid and potent yet as these lines are written: (1) Of a busy father who every day had some time and energy to devote to his two boys and their pursuits, often as a comrade; (2) Of a mother who lovingly lavished time and thought on her children, even when herself evidently weary; (3) Of the same mother as sent for, and always going, as if it were a matter of course, to aid in homes of sickness and affliction, and universally loved: she always contrived somehow to have her home well cared for in these rather frequent absences; (4) Of one day, after school, bursting headlong into the father's study and stumbling over the body of a drunken man prostrate on a pallet there: by inquiry it was later learned that the father had found his parishioner staggering on the street, and had brought him to his own home to sober up, later taking the man from there to his place of abode in the country; (5) Of varied and effec-

tive ministries by both father and mother to a neighboring family smitten, one after another, with smallpox and carefully avoided by all others in the village save the doctor, under whose directions these ministries were managed without taking or carrying infection, though the disease proved malignant, one member of the afflicted family dying; (6) Of more than one runaway slave harbored in the house on the way to Canada, though the parents were far from being "abolitionists," and though the personal habits of these blacks, in at least one instance, proved tryingly offensive because of stark ignorance.

14. By promoting kind deeds on the part of the children themselves—in the home, on the street, in the schoolroom, on the playground. This involves watchful parental forethought, and intimate conferences with the children. Opportunities are never far to seek. It is not enough to say, in a general way, "Children, always be kind and helpful." It is necessary to show the way on specific occasions, sometimes by penetrating forecast.

15. By constantly suggesting high ideals. The force of parental example, even when noblest and most lavish, must sometimes be sharpened into definite effect by translation into words. This may be done casually, as part of fond conference with the children touching their known companions: "How does James get along? He is rather weakly and timid, isn't he? Wouldn't it help him if you sometimes left the more robust boys and played with him instead?" Sympathetic thoughtfulness may go far here—and there is a wide field to cover.

16. By so delegating a well-measured responsibility to a child as to develop his will, and beget useful habits of service. Care of the younger children by those a little older can be made to go far here, with wholesome results for all concerned. Only the other day, on a city street, the writer's attention was arrested as he was walking somewhat rapidly by, on seeing a girl of six suddenly leave her companions and rush after her brother of three who had broken away from her. Her manner was firm but kindly; and her act was effective. Evidently she had been placed in charge of the restless little one; and both her countenance and her decisive manner betrayed a well-developed sense of weighty responsibility, and at the same time a dominating kindness and affection. Children learn best by actually doing things.

TANGIBLE RESULTS

17. When due nurture is supplied as above indicated, habits of unselfish service are acquired and become ingrained by processes so natural and inevitable that the children scarcely know that they have been put in training for them. The wise ordering of everyday life, including the judicious management of domestic and other emergencies, makes it all seem a mere matter of course to them.

18. Further, such habits tend to become deep-seated instincts, and to broaden out into new and spontaneous forms of kindly ministry, as the years pass and character develops, with the ever-widening opportunities of advancing life. This acquired spontaneity and independent initiative are priceless. The well-reared youth of fifteen has normally become distinguished by these qualities, without well knowing how they were acquired; he just grew into them under God's hand—and yours!

19. By this time his mind has begun to grasp the fact of inherent community obligations and with little or no strain he may now be led, distinctly and with expanding intelligence, into acceptance of these as part of the burden of every normal life, and into readiness and satisfaction in adjusting his daily life to them. Thus, so far, you have prepared him to find and enter on that specific life work of Christly usefulness to which God had appointed him before he was born. Notable instances of just this among women are found in the brilliantly useful careers of Frances E. Willard and Alice Freeman Palmer, both signally indebted in early years to a home life impregnated with the spirit of lowly and kindly service, generated and fostered by the indwelling Holy One openly worshiped in their homes. And among clergymen and missionaries particularly, those most celebrated for effective toil and for the love of the people won by them nearly always come from such homes. Is your home of this quality and caliber? If not, why not—and how will you answer for the resulting impoverishment of your adult children?

20. During adolescent years the youth grows ripe for at least preliminary inquiry as to his own life work, and the motive of useful service will now inevitably enter into this inquiry. The form his activities take after he is sixteen or so should be determined with this in mind—whether or not he is to finish high school, or enter into business, business college, a factory,

a machine shop. Later, if sent to college, at least room should be left open for such high choice as may seem likely to be made for some institutions of learning are famous for infecting youths with the virus of mere worldly ambition, or of gilded social superficiality. During the months in which such problems are at the front, parents will do well to confer freely with their children, though without excess of overt suggestion. Let the youngsters speak. Encourage them to indicate what they want. Searching questions will evoke their reasons, and if these are superficial they can be countered by deft manipulation. Parental sympathy must here be evident and lavish; then the soil is watered for the seeds of parental wisdom, and if these be wisely sown at such a time they will soon sprout and ultimately bear full fruit. Many a youth has thus in a few months been quietly swung about to his own later satisfaction, he knew not how: he has abandoned his crude early preference for his parents' wiser judgment, or else he has fallen upon some third and still wiser choice not at first in sight of either parent or child. What a field for parental skill!

21. But all this while let the great aim of Christly usefulness as the goal not be lost sight of for one moment: "What good to men, what service of the Kingdom, have you in mind? How can you best minister to some deep human need? Just who is there in most urgent need of you? Will your life work measure up to Matt 25: 31-46?" Lure the growing boys and girls on to highest things! Lead them to see and feel how small and mean a thing mere worldly "success" is. If their childhood home has been made warmly attractive and satisfying to them, its genial and godly atmosphere will now—and ever after—sway them toward wise choices and habits, and their careers will prove worthy of their early training, which you had taken such pains to afford them, and of their high opportunity. In all essentials they will rival Daniel and his three friends; or the Jewish maid; or the Good Samaritan; or the apostles of Christ. Meanwhile do give God a chance with them.

### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. In your mind construct the home life in which Daniel had been trained; his three friends; the Jewish maid; what features of daily routine rise to the front as you gaze, what qualities and what habits? Were money-making and social prestige put first?

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

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Were the parents stern and distant? or careless and easy-going? How often and in what terms was God named in these homes?

2. Why did the Good Samaritan drop his own business so freely and promptly and at such cost to himself? Where do we get the deep-seated instinct that prompts to such things and makes such acts inevitable?

3. Why did the little maid in Naaman's house "strike twelve" on her first known mention of God there? How does it happen that mere bodily needs come to the front so, in religious service and propagandism? What had Jesus' ways of feeding and healing to do with this?

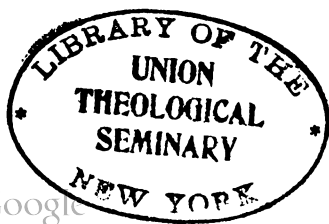
4. Why at the Last Supper, according to John 13: 1-13, did the Master suspend religious exhortation for so trivial a ministry as washing the disciples' feet? Just how are we to "wash one another's feet" as he enjoined?

5. How far is the oneness of life to rule us? What did Christ's questioner in Luke, ch. 15, mean by asking, "Who is my neighbor"? Why do we squirm over every expansion of the domain of sympathy and obligation for service? Do we owe the Chinese anything? our slum neighbors? the people who jostle us in the subway? If so, what?

6. How are children to be infected with these ideals of life? Can these be drilled into them by precept, in the Sunday school or in the revival tent—or even in the home? What have parents' secret devotional habits to do with this? their manners and aims in everyday home life? What about background and ballast?

7. How early does the oak sapling show that it is not going to be a pine tree? and how soon should one's life work begin to operate?

8. How can children be permanently infected with high ideals before they are old enough to know what an ideal is?





XI

TRAINING THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE

BIBLE READINGS

1. I Sam. 1 : 21-28. "And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto Jehovah the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned; and then I will bring him, that he may appear before Jehovah, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah, her husband, said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him: only Jehovah establish his word. So the woman tarried and gave her son suck, until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of Jehovah in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Jehovah. For this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have granted him to Jehovah; as long as he liveth he is granted to Jehovah. And he worshipped Jehovah there."

A remarkable household that! Both husband and wife were devout at home and faithful also to public religious duty, and while each was gifted with vigorous independent initiative, yet so deferential to and so considerate of each other were they, that harmony and warm mutual affection fused them in one—and this in spite of the awkward fact that, in accordance with the customs of the time, there was another wife, to whom also the husband was duly loyal. One needs to scrutinize the entire chapter in order to discern all this and to peruse the revealing lines sympathetically in order to grasp the fullness of it. It is not unlikely that Penninah was the senior wife, taken by Elkanah under obligation of the Law, that one must marry his brother's childless widow. Deut. 25: 5-10. At any rate, Hannah was clearly the wife of his choice and of his heart. She was a woman of very unusual intellectual quality and literary skill; her outburst of song recorded in ch. 2: 1-10—one of the oldest religious lyrics extant—has the ring of power, of deep and tender feeling, of large and lofty conceptions, and of far-reaching spiritual vision. As for Elkanah—well, how many modern husbands would persist as he did in painstaking fidelity to public worship when his wife was detained at home?

2. Such was the home chosen to nourish the roots of history, and such the mother to water them with her prayers. Samuel, her son, not only founded the kingdom of David and Solomon and drafted its constitution, ch. 10: 25; he seems also to have founded those schools of the prophets out of which all modern systems of education have grown, and to have been the first of that continuous line of prophets now known as the Christian ministry. His public leadership, at first quiet and always modest, brought an end to the chaos of four hundred years—the period of “judges” of whom he was the last—and the beginning of the end to Philistine oppressions, ch. 7; but the yet more remarkable fact is that next after Moses, his life enters organically into the institutions of our day beyond that of any other save the apostle Paul. It is fit, and it was inevitable, that two books of our Bible should bear his name. He was a man of studious tendencies and devout habits; he came from a praying home; and he was born in answer to specific and ardent prayer. In such soil are the roots of history ever to be found, and by preëminence in the devotional life are they ever nurtured. Do you want your children lastingly effective in leadership? Then see to it that yours is a home signalized by prayerfulness, and that they are reared to the devotional life—as well as to public spirit and lofty principles; and that they are trained, as Samuel was, in some central institution of the Church, and for the work of the Kingdom.

3. I Sam. 2 : 18, 26; 3: 9. “But Samuel ministered before Jehovah, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. . . . And the child Samuel grew on, and increased in favor both with Jehovah, and also with men. . . . Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.”

Samuel’s training for the devotional life began with habits of lowly toil under religious auspices. Only after some years of growth in symmetry and largeness of character does he begin to appear as a factor in public affairs. When he does so begin to appear, he comes out before us from a night of intimate communion with God. His prophetic impulse and his skill in leadership were imbedded in prayer and nursed by prayer. But observe his engaging modesty; his fond loyalty to his aged preceptor; and his dependence on Eli’s counsel and guidance in the art of prayer. Signal skill in this high art lies at the

heart of all true leadership; but how shall our youth acquire this if they be not inducted into it by their elders who themselves have faithfully practiced the art? This majestic preceptorial function of parents can never be neglected, or carelessly performed by them, without grave loss to their offspring—and to the Kingdom.

4. Ps. 34 : 11. "Come, ye children, hearken unto me:  
I will teach you the fear of Jehovah."

It is easy to wonder at and to misjudge the relative fewness of direct Scriptural injunctions as to training children in the devotional life. In all matters so intricate and momentous it is the Bible method rather to exhibit than to enjoin or dogmatize. Would you know the deep mysteries of Providence? Direct statements as to this are few, though trust in Providence is a dominating strand in Bible faith; but read the Book of Esther; the story of Joseph; the complicated narrative of the Shunammite woman and her stolen land restored, rising to its startling climax in II Kings 8:1-6; there you "see the wheels go round," and understand without argument. Thus also the parental duty underlying our children's prayer life is rather held up to view in narratives such as are cited in paragraphs 1 to 3 above, than left to be driven home by mere proof texts. Yet here is one proof text. Read the entire psalm. Note how children are singled out for specific counsel. Note vs. 3-6 and 17:

"Oh magnify Jehovah with me,  
And let us exalt his name together.  
I sought Jehovah, and he answered me,  
And delivered me from all my fears.  
They looked unto him, and were radiant;  
And their faces shall never be confounded.  
This poor man cried, and Jehovah heard him,  
And saved him out of all his troubles. . . .  
The righteous cried, and Jehovah heard,  
And delivered them out of all their troubles."

We here learn (1) that the devotional life invariably involves concerted action—"with me," "let us exalt his name together." The same thing appears in the "Our Father" of The Lord's Prayer. (2) That the entire religious life suggested in the words, "the fear of Jehovah," centers on habits of prayer and

the spirit of prayer. (3) That in a unique way children need at our hands instruction as to this: the unified and effective life of the Kingdom is hinged on such rearing of the young in the ways of piety that they shall be "mighty in prayer."

5. Psalm 100. "Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all ye lands.  
Serve Jehovah with gladness:  
Come before his presence with singing.  
Know ye that Jehovah, he is God:  
It is he that hath made us, and we are his;  
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.  
Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,  
And into his courts with praise:  
Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.  
For Jehovah is good; his lovingkindness endureth for ever,  
And his faithfulness unto all generations."

The spirit of praise, of joy, and gladness: devout thanksgiving a dominating feature of true prayer! It is imperative that our children be reared to this. Prayer as mere beggary has no standing—and no vital or lasting outcome. Has your home, and have the prayers heard there, the joyous quality? Is gladness the prevailing note? Is rock-built confidence in God's enduring "lovingkindness" the foundation of home piety, and does it pervade and brighten all your home life? If so, your children's training in "the devotional life" begins before they are aware of it, and exercises a formative influence on their character and tendencies before they can even pronounce the name of God. If their devotional life is to be real and wholesome it must be thus subtly inwrought with the inmost fibers of their being from their earliest years.

### SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

6. Be careful not to treat "the devotional life" as a thing apart. It is organic. To isolate it is to dislocate and devitalize it and make it mechanical. Be natural. Let family prayer and blessing at table be as much a matter of course as eating when you are hungry, or going to bed when you are sleepy. Let the spirit of prayer be so pervasive and fundamental in the home that overt acts and seasons of prayer shall seem inevitable—like kissing good night or good-by, and like these acts shall always be warm and vital: let nothing be merely formal and perfunctory. "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath"; let it from the first seem to your children as natural, as whole-

some, and as inevitable, as breathing. We do not stop work to breathe—save for a moment, when “out of breath”; no more do we stop life for prayer: it is inherent in the life. The devotional spirit breathes through the entire family life—only pausing for momentary special refreshment at the family altar, or in beseeching God’s close comradeship in the act of eating, or in time of sickness, or the like.

7. Do not excite children’s emotions excessively—especially in connection with their religious life. That way lie artificiality and exhaustion of the religious impulse. Children are naturally emotional, and any labored stimulation of their feelings is likely to lead to hurtful excitement and dangerous reaction—ending in dullness of religious feeling, perhaps even in repugnance to religion. One of the most dreadful mistakes of a public leader I ever writhed under was a torturing appeal to emotion in a gathering of children, wherein the physical torments of Christ’s crucifixion were so vividly and so tearfully depicted as almost to produce convulsions. Children’s feelings are easily stirred. What they need, rather, is moral stimulus and mental nourishment. Quietness of manner is most befitting, and the sane vivacity which springs from an undertone of simple gladness must always be present.

8. Even more than adults, children learn best in company. The element of generous and sympathetic comradeship, so vital to religion, appeals strongly to them. Hence the superb value of family prayer when wisely conducted, of asking the blessing at table, and as such group instruction as is most beneficially given in our choicer Sunday-school Primary Departments.

9. Music is a great aid. By this the emotions are gently stirred, and group feeling is wisely strengthened and used. Moreover, the effects of devotional instruction conveyed through the better class of children’s hymns prove wholesome and ineradicable. Children taught in class to sing such hymns as “Jesus Loves Me,” “I Am So Glad That Our Father in Heaven,” “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want,” “I Think When I Read That Sweet Story of Old,” “Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us,” “Count Your Blessings,” “Brighten the Corner Where You Are,” and “There Is a Happy Land,” are equipped for life with a body of practical truth from whose grip they can never escape, and have their devotional feeling

wholesomely fed and directed—in channels of actual prayer as well as of religious conviction. Moreover—specially if due pains be taken to exclude trashy and misleading hymns—such training cultivates refined taste and good judgment, and thus ministers to sound character as a whole, while also it prepares the children for sympathetic use of the hymnology of the Church in later years.

10. There remains, however, a realm of intimate privacy to be gently and warily taken possession of in the name of the Lord. Often, not to say usually, the nightly bedtime brings fit occasion for this. Sometimes personal emergencies thrust it upon us. The wise parent seizes every occasion to speak the Master's timely word to the little one. A child's grief, or perplexity, or misconduct; a family sorrow or a family joy; it may be a birthday, or a Christmas or an Easter season; or some unexpected and probing question sprung by the child—such things as these are providential opportunities. The child is in your lap, or close by your side. His emotions are already stirred to the depths, or at least are near the surface. Wise and happy the father or mother so skilled and so warm in divine fellowship as to rise easily to every occasion of this kind. A few fit words then go far. Do not go too much into detail. Yet avoid mere generalities. Be concrete, but brief. Get to the point quickly and tenderly. The little one soon wants change. But in one minute you may confer on your small son or daughter advantages more precious than rubies and more lasting than gold.

11. Once in a while emergency forbids privacy for pointed counsel, when otherwise this would seem preferable. One striking instance from very early school life rises to mind: The teacher overheard a small pupil angrily and bitingly assail a fellow pupil of inferior mind and social culture with the epithet, "You fool!" This was done on the playground and in such a way as to arrest the attention of quite a body of children, who seemed shocked. The bell rang; recess over. At once the teacher, a wise, Christian woman of mature years whom the children dearly loved and the entire community revered, called all the youngsters concerned to stand in a row before her desk as if in one large reading class, handed an opened New Testament to the offending one, and pointing to the verse quietly bade him read aloud Matt. 5: 22: "But I say

unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire." Of course the lad read the words—and hung his head. That teacher was as quick-witted as she was devout and warm of heart. She said little; there was no need. Her pitying look went home to all those children, along with the words of Holy Writ. The devotional as well as the moral life of her pupils was touched to the core, and the impression conveyed could never be erased.

#### SOME MATTERS OF DETAIL

12. "When and how shall my child be led consciously to accept Christ?" Are you sure he has not already done so? In the well-regulated home, duly endowed with a pervasive spiritual life and devotional habit, it is not likely that any child will reach the age of five without having given his heart to God. Many from such homes are unable to recall the time when they began to trust him. It is wise to assume the Holy Spirit's work as beginning early—if only the entire home life be rife with the Spirit. It is most unwise, unscriptural, and hurtful to assume that the child must grow old enough to be rasped by pungent appeals and to writhe under poignant and prolonged conviction of sin before he can consciously cling to Christ as his Saviour and nestle in the arms of the heavenly Father. Such tardiness of conversion may occur in homes marred by bad temper and fitfulness in parental management, may even be sadly expected there; but, unless Christ is thus or otherwise discredited in daily behavior, lateness of decisive Christian developments in the children should be reckoned the exception rather than the rule. It is the lofty covenant privilege of pious parents to rear their young for Christ and in Christ from the very beginning. Where this is wisely and simply done, honor God by expecting results and by looking for them early. Treat your children as from the first belonging to God, and as they grow to consciousness of themselves as individuals they may usually be expected to show conscious trust. And in case of a child thus naïvely trusting God, to talk to him as if he were an unforgiven sinner is cruel, and it is not unlikely to drive him into years of bitter doubt and overshadowing gloom. If at the age of five your child is not, in his

childlike way, in vital touch with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, the odium of the sad fact usually attaches to the parents and their defective home life, rather than to the poor child; pour your scorn where it belongs! Even as late as this, set to work, first of all, to remedy the defects in your heart and home—and even now the child will not be slow to respond to a home atmosphere vital and throbbing with the love of God.

13. If for any reason a child of five, in any way brought under your hand—say by adoption—has clearly not yet learned to trust God, by all means lose no time in gently and lovingly suggesting implicit trust and loving obedience as vital and as most natural and wholesome; here, as before, assuming the Holy Spirit's prompt coöperation in his regenerating work. Do not talk too much. Let life speak. Be radiant. Have the child join in Christian song and prayer. Then take results for granted. On occasion probe deep, but briefly; yet do not assume in any child an obduracy befitting adult years and prolonged impenitence. Any prolonged session of personal appeals to "repent and believe" is out of place. Let there be a fullness of unconscious influence brought to bear. This will go far. Hectic urgency is to be avoided. Let your strenuousness show in Christly winsomeness, rather than in jagged warnings. "Thy gentleness hath made me great," says the psalmist; your gentleness, armed with strength and infused with Christ, will win that child!

14. In dealing with unconverted children of six years and upwards there must be some adjustments, dependent on their age, temperament, history, and habits, their present mental and moral attitude, and their environment. Even yet the rule is to say little by way of direct appeal, to speak briefly, to give large room to indirect influence and unconscious impression, and to see that your manner continually bespeaks a loving heart richly nourished in secret prayer. Yearn for your child's conversion, pray for it, live for it, and you may surely expect it. If still it seems to tarry, a word passed in secret to his Sunday-school teacher or pastor may lead to decisive results; but it is always better that children be led to God by the parents themselves: this is the natural way, and in genuine Christian homes it rarely fails.

15. What about teaching the child to pray? Begin very



early. Make it seem a matter of course. Reduce formality to a minimum. Use the opportunity of bedtime. Encourage spontaneity. Do not frown on or laugh at childish *naïveté* in prayer. Do not repress. Be reverent, but not stiff. Sometimes kneel with the child and pray with him—always briefly and with pointed utterance. Let the little one learn by sharing. Teach him a short and suitable form of blessing at table and have him take his turn in reverently asking the blessing; for this, also, is prayer. When emergencies arise, take him aside for special prayer in which he is led to join orally—after a fault, a joy, a sorrow, a sickness; but on all such occasions be informal, gentle, and brief—always brief, in dealing with a child.

16. Much depends on the tone and quality of family worship. Here is the true nursery of the prayer life for children. Unless there be song, five minutes is ample for the entire service. When there are children old enough, have them take part—often if not always. Let a short psalm be read “verse about,” each having his own Bible; or a short section from Proverbs; or a few verses from the Sermon on the Mount, Matt., chs. 5 to 7; or part of Rom., ch. 8, or John, ch. 14 or ch. 15, or of I Cor., ch. 13. If a parable or a connected narrative is to be read, let one child alone do the reading, the rest following with their eyes on their books. On knees, let The Lord’s Prayer be sometimes used in concert. When one child grows old enough, say at twelve or fourteen, if he has been duly schooled, let him take a turn in leading in the entire prayer in his own way. If adults habitually offer the prayer, let this be short—and pertinent; and see that it varies with occasion. If there be song, let this usually be between the reading and the prayer. Keep it in mind that sharing in the service is vital, and so arrange that this shall not be burdensome. Make the entire service reverent, but informal and prompt: no distracting delays!

17. The child of not more than ten years old and upwards, learns to use his Bible by having one of his own; by studying his Sunday-school lesson from it, under parental guidance; by reading from it, at times at least, in the family service of prayer; by marking sermon texts in it; by being shown where to find the Bible stories on which he has for years been fed; by having his attention called to such portions as Psalms 1,

8, 23, 100; John, ch. 14, and later, some choice chapters in Isaiah, and so on, with the suggestion that he peruse these in turn and then tell about them; by whetting his curiosity about Ruth, Esther, and certain parts of the historical books, and getting him to peruse these one by one, as he would a favorite book or a poem; by having him taught to name the books of the Bible in order, and to find them—a task that can profitably be turned into a family game: “Who can find Hosea first, and tell what comes before and after it,” or Hebrews; or Job; by being shown which books are “historical,” which are “poetical,” and so on. There ought to be an hour or part of an hour each week for work of this kind.

18. By such methods the devotional life will grow of itself—in any home of real piety; and the boy or the girl of fifteen will be found well nourished and established in it, and rather well equipped for taking part actively in young people’s meetings, by oral prayer and otherwise. Many an academy and college has found its religious societies equipped with students, including boys and girls of from fifteen to eighteen, so trained thus at home as to carry on the work independently with fervor and efficiency; and such students away from home prove useful missionaries among comrades less amply schooled to religious utterance and activity. So much depends on whether parents give God and his Kingdom a chance with their children!

19. Parents do well to keep in touch with the superintendent and teachers of their Sunday school, to enlist their coöperation, and to respond by actively coöperating with them; and in like manner with the pastor, and with leaders in young people’s societies of the church. We cannot travel far alone. Our children are infected by the community in which they live. It is poor policy to take good management of one’s church and Sunday school for granted. If the church is cold and formal your children will suffer. We are all bound up together. Community life lays obligations on us all. Our own children need the impact of other young lives. Other people’s children need touch with ours—if we have been rearing them wisely. The best-reared youth will advance the more rapidly and wholesomely in the devotional life, and in all godliness, for warm and continuous contacts with their fellows in the church. Any tendency to isolation, or to semi-isolation, should for every reason be promptly and effectively headed off. For, let it be

said again, and with new emphasis, the devotional life is not a thing by itself, but an inwrought part of one organic whole, wherein brain and heart and body, prayer, study, and behavior, solitude and society, work, worship, and play, are closely interknit in producing a symmetrical, robust, and wholesome character, vitalized by the Spirit of God, and rich in power to serve men. Prayer is not a function of the hermit or the recluse: it belongs to the man of action, and really "finds itself" only in one who goes out in a busy world in whom it is a constant force of a useful and potent personality.

### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Just why was the work of Samuel so much more wholesome, and its effects more lasting, than those of Samson, his tontemporary and fellow "judge" and Nazirite?

2. What dominating quality in Psalm 100 makes it still so popular? What makes gladness spontaneous, irresistible, and pervasive? Why is this necessary to sane piety in home life?

3. Why does the power of Christian songs learned in childhood last so long, when most other songs current forty years ago are forgotten?

4. What usefulness has music in promoting Christian comradeship and the sense of sharing?

5. Why does nurture of the devotional life involve habits of sharing?

6. What happens if we treat the devotional life as a thing apart? What dangers result from breaking up the complex personality into dissevered fragments—making religion, business, and play each an isolated affair?

7. What happens if we neglect the unities of community life, each trying to be pious, or to be successful, apart from others?

XII

THE CHILD AND THE CHURCH

BIBLE READINGS

1. Luke 2 : 40-52. "And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

This priceless record is the only record afforded us touching Jesus' life between infancy and the age of thirty; but it is enough. In the glare of light thus flung on the high spot—when he became twelve years old and began the life of adolescence—we can see clearly how he had been reared until then, how he conducted himself for his remaining eighteen years at home, and how we are to interpret his bold acts and language as to institutional religion throughout his subsequent public career: (1) He was from early childhood reared to hold Jewish public worship and places of public worship—notably the Temple at Jerusalem—in reverential affection as of central moment. In effect he says to his parents when lost, "Where could I go but to God's house? You know how you have reared me!" (2) That his parents had fondly noted his normal but rapid development in mental vigor and robust character, centering on the things of God, and had already begun to feel that his intellectual and spiritual attainments and

attitude were beyond their power to fathom: see vs. 40 and 50-52. (3) That he responded to parental training, even while in results transcending it—as many another loyal child may do now, though by no means so surpassingly: even the matchless Son of God needed the warm and constant parental touch, and was appointed to “grow” to himself by means of parental rearing! (4) That he had been trained to attend the synagogue and the synagogue school in Nazareth and to find in these a link between direct parental teaching and family life on the one hand, and the significance of Temple worship at Jerusalem on the other hand: one vitalized organic life of piety rooted in the home and brought to devotional climax in “the Church.” (5) That his vigorous and active brain looked eagerly to Bible truth and official teaching at the Temple for its highest stimulus and satisfaction: for him no other form or phase of truth could rival this. (6) That by this time he not only felt fully at home in what we would call “church circles,” but was irresistibly impelled to take active part there, as a perfectly natural thing—facing there the great problems of life, and bending his energies to their solution. (7) That no defects in the “church” life of his time, great as these defects were, could then or later estrange him from what, as it has since become developed, we now call “the Church” with its existing institutions, and its routine. Thus we are prepared for——

2. Mark 10: 13-16. “And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.”

This is one of those centrally significant occurrences which neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke could omit when making up his official record; and when once we have fathomed Jesus' own early training and its results as above indicated, we find no difficulty in interpreting his words and conduct here: (1) Children can “come to Jesus”! (2) They should be encouraged to come—never forbidden, nor estranged by those frigid formalities which adults often affect. (3) They should be

shown that it is natural for them to come—that Jesus understands them and their needs, and that they will feel at home in his arms. (4) There must be warmth in all this; as Weymouth's rendering shows, Jesus "threw his arms around" the babes, drawing them close to his person in a fervent and thrilling embrace which they welcomed, and by which their being was stimulated and nourished. (5) That, in the absence of the fleshly Jesus from the world, his Church—"the body of Christ"—is to take his place in drawing and holding children, in "blessing" and embracing them, and in making them feel the welcome warmth and power of the unseen Spirit; and the Church should so order her work and worship that children shall never seem an intrusion and shall be made to feel themselves at home in her gatherings, and nursed by her active care. There may still be gatherings and occasions in church life for adults chiefly, as happened on the last night of our Lord's earthly career; but adults must not be allowed to usurp priority, much less to arrogate to themselves a superior, disparaging, and semi-exclusive demeanor, as if to say: "These are only children; what can they understand? Let them stick to their Sunday school—and not get in our way, and under our feet."

A clear line should be drawn between disparaging children and recognizing their natural limitations.

### WHAT THE CHURCH CAN DO FOR THE CHILD

3. First of all, it can stimulate, encourage, feed, scheme centrally for, and imperiously require of parents, a well-furnished and warmly nourished domestic piety, including family worship and domestic instruction in the Scriptures, as the fundamental thing in church life and growth. Not the individual but the family is the unit in the church: the church is made up of pious homes, rather than of pious individuals. Family attendance at Sunday school, and family study of the Sunday-school lesson, are ever test features of a healthy church. If need be, let new schedules of church services be arranged, and new methods of conducting these. Place the emphasis of church life and order where it belongs. Let adults cease to usurp privilege, crowd the children into minor place, and push family religion into a corner, when justly it holds chief importance. Let pastors and churches spend less money and

energy on adult evangelism and on elaborated discourses which youth cannot grasp, than on nourishing religion in the home: instigating parental fidelity; injecting religious books and periodicals into the homes of the church; creating in these homes such an atmosphere and habit that family worship shall every week normally graduate into public worship and find there its natural and eager expression. Then let the hymns of public worship, its prayers, the tone and quality of sermons, the matter and manner of preaching, the hours and length of service, be such that even young children shall feel at home in the entire performance, and shall not be wearied. All this is said, not to disparage evangelism and work for adults, but to exalt family piety and child nurture to their rightful place.

4. Exceptions? See how these were managed by Elkanah and Hannah, I Sam., ch. 1, as indicated in chapter XI, and how Jesus had been so reared that at twelve he normally rose to the adult activities of God's house; for these things "were written for our learning." In the perpetual readjustments of churchly methods let there be no rest until the ideal thus set before us is reached; else we miss the meaning of Mark 10: 13-16: see paragraph 2. It is not so much that the child must be made to feel that the church exists chiefly for him, as a child, as that it centers on his own and other allied families as such, himself included, and brings his rearing in the family into due public expression and culmination, with the thread of influence and method extended but not broken—so that, being at church, with one or other or both of his parents he shall feel perfectly at home there, shall be interested and fed, and shall go back to his home with the sense of domestic piety stimulated and nurtured by his experience in the house of God.

5. There is not enough of Bible story-telling and interpretation in our pulpits: that is, we do not adequately use the Bible method of religious instruction and appeal. A visiting preacher once held forth for fifty minutes on Jacob and Esau; next day the pastor reported that his son of eleven had been deeply interested in his guest's discourse and as a result had gone to the study of Genesis with a zest unknown before. There is ample and apt material in Scripture to furnish hundreds of discourses in like vein—with biographical or other narrative basis, and with dramatic delineation. How little of logical elaboration there is in our Lord's recorded discourses, and how

much of vivid narrative! What right have we coolly to disregard this in our pulpit work? But if parents keep their children away from church and pack the pews with adults, just this is sure to happen. Preachers will preach to the audiences furnished them. It is up to parents to lead in bringing in better ways.

6. If we must, for a time, still adhere to the current method of two preaching services each Lord's Day, and a Sunday-school service so hitched on just before or just after morning worship that it is hard to avoid weariness in those taking part in both, then we are under obligation to take extra pains in making adjustments by means of which this weariness may be reduced to an endurable and not unwholesome minimum. In the present writer's boyhood experience, Sunday school began at 9 o'clock and closed at 10.30, allowing half an hour for outdoor refreshment before "morning worship" began, and most of us boys attended both services habitually; while also in church the hymns and tunes were those we had grown used to in Sunday school. These conditions helped to abate the tedium of those long hours. Ingenuity duly directed to the just aim in our entire work could now go much farther in that wholesome direction. Public worship should be less formal and more vivacious than it often is as witness the Master's methods. Its routine should be flexible, not fixed. A short pre-sermon to children especially, often used with some advantage, is merely a sop to Cerberus: the young should be able to enter heartily into the entire service, and it should be pitched to such a key that they can do this without strain—if well schooled at home. It is not the length of the sermon that militates against this, so much as its tone, quality, and manner of delivery. Unapt discourse forfeits the youngsters' attention in five minutes and never regains it, while fit discourse may hold them an hour if need be—as readily as will a double reel at the movies. The vital difference lies in the simple fact that the film is aptly addressed, while too often the sermon is not. In the face of our Saviour's words and habitual manner, we have shoved the children to one side; we have neglected the dominating nurture of family piety, so that neither are our children duly reared for sympathetic and intelligent sharing in our public worship, nor is that worship adjusted to their needs and aptitudes. The resulting chasm between children and the church must continue



to widen until our entire aim and method are reconstructed on a Scriptural and rational basis.

#### WHAT THE CHILD CAN DO FOR THE CHURCH

7. Nothing—and everything! If shoved aside, he can only leave the church to stiffen into adult rigidities. We all know that adult life grows more and more self-conscious, rife with conformities to fashion, custom, and “the established order,” while childhood is irrepressibly spontaneous, naïve, artless, and rich in surprises. The unspoiled child thinks little of how he “looks” to others, or what they think of him; an audience of adults has all spontaneity frozen out of it by mutual timidities. Did you ever preach part of a sermon with your year-old boy in your arms? One preacher found it necessary to do this once—and no harm came of it to sermon, preacher, audience, or child. At another time, a three-year-old in the fashionable audience waved her hand to her friend the preacher when he rose in the pulpit, and he smiled and waved back. Why should he not? Once a preacher found his congregation, after his sermon began, showing signs of warm feeling repressed by convention, and he broke into song, calling the people to their feet so that they joined in the apt and familiar words. Why not? Anything but a frigid, fear-begotten formalism! Well, let family piety be duly nurtured by the church, and each family come to public worship in a body; then if the preacher does not presently learn to rise to occasion and shed his stiffness, there will in due time be a change of pastors. Give children and child nurture their rightful place in the church, and a good many wholesome things will happen.

8. One of these wholesome things will be a new simplicity, fervor, and flexibility in the service of song; another, a modulation in the prayers; still another, a new sense of tender and mutual intimacy in the observance of the Lord's Supper; yet another, a race of preachers and pastors so conscious of childhood and its claims that they will feel obliged to emulate the Master's compelling vivacity of manner and vividness of speech, and to put their energy more and more into the development of family religion as the real nursery of the Church's growth and power; and in the end our public worship will develop a mutuality of spontaneousness and of reverent informality which will make it outrival movies in charm for people of all ages

and all grades of intelligence, and will go far to strip our worship and social life of artificiality and cold formalism.

### PREPARING THE YOUNG FOR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

9. Every child should be a Church member by birthright, and the child of Christian parents actually is. This fact should be clearly stated at the baptismal service, and ever so acted on by pastor, elder, members, and especially by the parents. The child should from the first think of the church as his; of the pastor as his pastor—and his friend; and of all church privileges and responsibilities as justly shared by him—increasingly as his years advance and his powers unfold.

10. Systematic giving by the child should begin very early. In every home there should be—in many homes of even limited means there is—a weekly allowance to each child from the family's current budget administered for him by the parents in his early years, and by him under parental guidance as he grows older, all his personal expenses being met out of this allowance; and he should, at least from the age of five or six, be consulted, and his spontaneity and personal activity encouraged, in sharing with others of the family its contributions to the church and to various benevolences. The every-member canvass now coming rapidly into vogue will help as to this. From very early years he should be accustomed to attendance at the Lord's Supper—upon occasion at least, say at Easter—and should be promised full participation presently, "when old enough to understand fully." Church affairs should be judiciously talked over in his presence, his questions as to these duly answered, and all criticism of pastor or church life weeded out of family discussion, or else so tempered as to work only good to him and to the church. Church books and periodicals should be on the family table, and betimes placed in his hands. In a word, the entire tone and trend of family life should have in view his early achievement of full membership.

### HOW EARLY?

11. The "Directory for Worship" says, when he arrives at "years of discretion," and leaves this to be determined by parents and the church session. Some children of six are fit to come to the Communion table; many of seven or eight; and not a few

have been so received. Better then than later—when the rearing has been apt and adequate. Spurgeon was wont to say that none of the many he received to membership as children ever gave him trouble, while many received in later years did; and most pastors with due experience in the premises will agree with him.

12. "Active" membership should begin, in ways indicated above, before accession to "full" membership by admission to the Lord's table. Thus the child grows by natural and successive stages into such consciousness of his membership and its opportunities, that his graduation into the privileges of the Lord's Supper shall be an early and inevitable fruitage of his rearing.

### PUBLICLY CONFESSING CHRIST

13. The Presbyterian book of church order does not contemplate any formal public confession by baptized children when admitted to the Lord's table, though the custom of requiring such confession has for about one hundred years been growing in our churches. As to the wisdom of this, opinions differ. Many decisively object to exploiting children needlessly in public formalities, and some pastors still habitually receive baptized children in public, to the privileges of full membership, by merely announcing their names, and perhaps requesting them, if present, to arise and stand for a moment in their places for public recognition, as their names are pronounced, as members received by letter from other churches also are asked to do. Pastors who punctiliously steer clear of formalism may find a way to secure a public confession—if this is felt to be desirable—by using Children's Day services, the Easter occasion, or the like, and by then minimizing the formalities of occasion, and so adjusting tone, words, and manner, as fully to enlist the child's sympathetic apprehension, and avoid embarrassment. Pastors rich in sympathy with childhood will find ways for all this which will stimulate and strengthen the child, and mutually fuse him and the church in the tender sense of a common life, without either embarrassing the little one, or rubbing off the bloom of his lovely unconsciousness of self; but it takes a wise and wary as well as a sympathetic man to achieve this; and every true pastor will feel at liberty to vary method with occasion, ever making the child's interests superior to all claims of rule or custom. The

claims of the child, and the needs of his character, are supreme in this matter, and the modest methods indicated by our "Directory for Worship" are not to be lightly disregarded—in obedience even to prevailing custom.

14. There is a place for symbolism in religious nurture, and a measure of ceremony may by due care be made wholesome here. When reception to the Lord's table is deferred until the age of fifteen or so, and especially when a considerable number of companions are then received together—both these being conditions not wholly normal or natural—a well-arranged ceremony may be made very impressive to all concerned. The present writer once witnessed a highly elaborated service of this kind in a synagogue of Reformed Jews, which was, in its way, quite free from objection, and was evidently wholesome as well as tenderly touching in effect. But this had to do with those very postponements of approach to full membership until adolescence which are herein deprecated as needless and hurtful. "Early" is the word!

15. And it is ever to be kept in mind that observance of the Lord's Supper in itself constitutes a public confession of Christ—a confession which, in the case of a child baptized in infancy, is adequate, being the natural culmination and normal outcome of the parental confession implied in that baptismal service. Do not ignore or belittle God's covenant with believing parents who are faithful in rearing their young for him. More and more, the emphasis of Christian propagandism is to be thrown on the Christian home and parental rearing. In the entire perspective of our churchly affairs let this loom largest: the parent the first and most effective preacher to the child, the home the real nucleus of the church and nursery of piety!

#### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. What did the boy Jesus mean when he said, "Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house"? Do parents sometimes forget what they have taught their children? Why do they forget?

2. Just why is the rearing of boys and girls of more moment than appeals to adults?

3. Is there any good defense of religious customs which put children's needs in minor place? What had Jesus to say as to this?

4. Is there any good reason why church services cannot attract and hold people of all ages as the movies do, and hold them interested as long?

5. Suppose our home life were as stiff and formal as public worship often is—what effect would this have on the children's love of home?

6. Would the habitual presence of all the children in public worship be on the whole a gain or a loss to adults, and to the tone and quality of that worship?

7. Which is the more important in our church life, spontaneity or formal routine? polish or "pep"? logic or life?

XIII

THE GOAL OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

BIBLE READINGS

Eph. 4 : 1-16. "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith,

When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive,  
And gave gifts unto men.

(Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

1. No other passage of Scripture so distinctly visualizes the goal of the gospel on the human plane, or so succinctly unfolds the office of the Church. The aim? Not so much heaven, as fitness for heaven: not place, but persons—persons fused in one body; not our standing, but our stature; not so much safety, as growth; not position, but power—"unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ"! Our eyes are here lured away from paradise and are fixed on Christly character and service. Just this is to be centrally in mind as we rear our children; and the pious family is, to the utmost possible, to be made an exemplification of the completed product—personalities grown to perfection in Christ,

and fused in a loving community life, for ends of usefulness rather than of more prosperity and enjoyment.

2. Heirs of heaven? Yes, with the emphasis on "heirs" rather than on "heaven"—on inward character rather than on outward circumstance. From the very first this is to be made clear to our little ones—by the nature of our parental life, by the quality and atmosphere of the home, and by the way in which we present religion and the future to the children. Note well that in the entire passage death and eternity are not so much as named; our gaze is fixed on Christ, and on our life and growth in him. Morbid piety, tintured with the sadness of the grave and dread of death, finds no warrant here. The life we are called to is one of dominating joy and inspiration wherein death becomes a negligible incident, and heaven merely a fit arena for our larger life—to be easily and quietly taken for granted rather than aimed at as a goal.

3. The outline of vision here furnished us is complete: Our risen Lord; his ascension gifts: church officers as Christian leaders, a flexible and developing body of varying functions; apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers mentioned, but not in an exclusive way, for there may be a hundred novelities in the list, not yet disclosed; the specific business of all these—not clutching men for heaven, so much as "the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ"; the process, growth in faith and knowledge, day by day, "unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"—and see what scorn is here poured on the undeveloping life of spiritual and moral childishness, and sluggish contentment with immaturity! "that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about," the victims of fanatic whims, vagrant cults, narrow partialisms, raucous controversies over minor phases of truth, and those savage partisanships which rend the Church into colliding fragments! And all this brings us to the ecstatic vision—not so much of golden streets as of a loving society fused in one organic body and radiant with the Christ who "went about doing good." Not a place, so much as folks!

4. Not a word about symbols—save the phrase, "one baptism"! Now symbolism figures largely in actual church life and literature—and has recognized place in the New Testament itself, notably in the Apocalypse—elsewhere a relatively small

place. Symbolism has its transient values. We could not well do without baptism, the Lord's Supper, or the alluring vision of the city with jasper walls. But here Paul omits all this as of purely minor moment. True, children need symbols—though we do not want our little ones fooled by them, but helped. Symbols are bridges across deep water to an unknown land, but let no one settle down on a bridge! Little girls have dolls, but all the while they know that these are but illusions. Nurture the children by the symbols of religion, but only as lures to the reality beyond. By all means have them use baptism, the Lord's Supper, the vision of heaven; yet see to it that their minds grasp and their lives are nurtured thus into the one real and lasting thing—likeness to Christ.

### PERSONALITY

5. This comes first among the several forefront advantages of that abundant life into which Christ brings us. Be somebody! Christ himself was. We are expected to be "like him."

6. Personality is the one thing that lasts. It survives the wreck of ages. Worlds wax, wane, and suffer catastrophe: the "elements shall one day melt with fervent heat"; but personality, fed from God and linked with God, can never perish. Man was born to command, to subdue matter, to rule the universe, to have dominion. Gen. 1: 26-28. In Christ we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," and as such are partners in the eternal God's colossal enterprise. He has created and redeemed us, and he is now rearing us for this brilliant destiny. He is making men of us! After he shall have achieved this, it will seem to us a small matter where we find ourselves: he will put us where we belong—each where he can serve best; and we shall find our "rest" in "heaven" the repose of a powerful and harmonious activity, the joy of tireless toil and lofty management, in lowly ministries somewhat such as those by which our Father now pours sunshine and moisture on our planet, feeds its birds, creates its bloom and verdure and fruitage, and succors human need. We are in training for this, and only towering and Christly personalities can have part in it. "Be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man," I Kings 2: 2; Josh. 1: 6, 7, 9; Eph. 6: 10. These admonitions are imperious; and they are central. We are to keep them to the front in rearing our children.



7. In the newborn babe personality is feeble because undeveloped. It is to be schooled and nourished into life and power. Consciousness of self awakens slowly. Under wise and kind parental ministry it steadily and wholesomely unfolds. Your babe is to be nursed at your breast as one destined to distinction and force in God's universe, in the image of Christ. He is to be thought of, prayed for, cared for, and presently talked with, with this constantly in mind. His personality is to be an achievement won under your hands—and God's. Do you rear him for it, as yourself God's agent and partner in the majestic task, and God will see to it that he is perfected.

8. The word "perfect," if used here, must have reference to quality, not to bulk, size, or quantity. Our Lord so uses the term in Matt. 5: 48. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." The Master clearly did not mean greatness, but likeness: no creature can be so great as his Creator, but a man can partake of the divine nature to the utmost of his capacity. There may be a limit to one's capacity, yet he can be "filled unto all the fulness of God." Eph. 3: 19. And it is evident that this involves:

### GROWTH

9. "Till we all attain . . . unto a fullgrown man . . . the fulness of Christ . . . that we may be no longer children, . . . but . . . may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ." Here is the process—just plain growth! As your baby's body grows, so character is to develop and unfold, by successive stages and through occasional crises, toward full "stature." To get your boys and girls "into the church" and then turn them loose as "safe for heaven" is miserable business. Bringing them into "active membership" and "full membership," in the Church—see chapter XII—denotes but very minor matters marking steps in a great process.

10. What counts is so ordering the home that it shall be saturated with Christ—filled with God—so that your children absorb him more and more, day by day; and so ordering their lives and guiding their activities, one by one, that each in his own way shall be kept hungry for God, and supplied with fit agencies for feeding on God. All that has been urged in preceding lessons of this series rises anew into view here. Constant nurture! God's truth lived in the home! The children lured

into and guided in Christian activity—not merely “behavior”—and kept duly equipped for satisfying their spiritual hunger: with Bibles, music, good books, religious periodicals, money of their own to handle and give away, specific educational advantages, stimulating church and social opportunities, and so on.

### INDIVIDUALITY

11. Do not try to run all your children into one mold—or any of them into your own particular mold. Your effort to do this will fail, but meanwhile it will do them harm, and will discredit the largeness of the gospel and the beautiful diversities of the redeemed life. They will feel cramped, twisted—perhaps disgusted. There are different types of piety, to fit varying individualities. Thank God the gospel is big enough to cover the needs and aptitudes of all! Mary could not wear the harness of her sister Martha. Peter would have made a bad mess of it trying to be John, and John could never have preached that telling sermon on the Day of Pentecost; nor could either of them have had the distinctive religious experience of Paul—nor have put it into words as Paul did. James could not have written the Epistle to the Romans, nor could Paul have indited the Epistle of James: his feelings and thoughts did not run that way. It is impossible to imagine Phillips Brooks in the rôle of Dwight L. Moody, or vice versa; yet how the two men wrought together, and what a giant each was! Each in his own way—yes! Well, see that each of your children has a chance to grow in his own way. Individuality is priceless; it is God’s distinctive gift to each person. Avoid grooves. Especially avoid trying to fit another into your groove. Do not forget the marginal reading of Prov. 22: 6: “Train up a child according to his way, and even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

12. For this reason provisions should in each home be made for different temperaments, tastes, and aptitudes. Generosity recognizes wholesome differences, and seeks to give wide room for these. In the home this involves a certain lavishness—not only of gracious deference to another’s “peculiar” ways, but also of provision for differing needs. Happy the home where each child can have his separate room, or at least his own corner of a room, fitted up to his taste; each one with his own books, tools, knickknacks, Bible helps, and his own season of uninter-

rupted privacy. It is a wise parent who discerns his child's native bent and gives it legitimate scope. The pious interests of one may be in missions; of another, in philanthropy; of another, in social activities; one may shine best as teacher in the Sunday school, another as worker in the Christian Endeavor Society, another as pastor's errand boy, or typist, or just as mother's helper. There is room in the same home—if it be well ordered—for a mystic, a student, a worker, a musician, a social factor, a dramatist, a poet, an organizer and executive, a capable "second fiddle"—all devoted to Christ and his service. And thus the same home may, to the large advantage of the Kingdom, turn out a merchant prince, a statesman, a famous writer, a preacher of power, an educator, a physician, a journalist, a naturalist, an artist—a missionary—and several first-class homemakers.

### "THE BODY OF CHRIST"

13. Two colliding tendencies of our enlightened and restless times are covered by the two competing words—individualism and socialism. These two opposing tendencies meet and are fused in one, in the gospel of Christ as presented by Paul in Eph., ch. 4. No literature extant goes further in promoting individuality and personality; yet none is so effective as this appeal of the apostle for recognition of "the body of Christ"; "from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." No skilled modern biologist, sociologist, or socialist could go farther than that—and no program ever presented from any other source can be so wholesomely and powerfully effective in that direction as the program of Christ here announced by Paul.

14. Community life! All peoples fused in one body of love, animated by Christ, guided by divine wisdom, rich in mutual ministries, and so organized and compacted as to be "fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." Amazing vision granted to Paul! This is the goal toward which Christianity is moving.

15. And our children are to be advised of this, to be brought into sympathy with it, and to be schooled to contribute actively

and intelligently to the divine achievement of it—beginning their community activities while they are yet young. The children's generous sympathies for community needs are to be enlisted. They are to be led into a developing consciousness of community life, a vital sense of community experiences, and compassion in presence of community defects and distresses. They are to learn that the home they love is but a part of this wide, organic whole, exemplified partly in the Church, and due ultimately to become realized more broadly in that Kingdom of which the Church is the nucleating center and vitalizing force. Let their sympathies be duly extended to take in all the churches of Christ, all forms of interdenominational effort, and all the outlying domains of Christian ministry and product which tend to affect society as a whole. Let there be no restricted interest, no petrifying narrowness of sympathy and of active good will. Teach them that the gospel does mean "good will to men," and was meant to promote human welfare at large—through the progressive absorption of humanity into "the body of Christ."

### MINISTERING

16. "Unto the work of ministering." This is the ultimate goal revealed. Our achieved personality, however commanding, is not for its own sake. "The body of Christ" does not exist for its own sake. The gospel brings life, and life demands expression. Its highest expression is not lordship, but service. The abundant life of Christ in us and through us is to reveal itself in service. The more we have of Christ in us, the more eager we shall be to serve. To the Christlike man service becomes spontaneous, inevitable, irrepressible. Christ came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister"—even at cost of his life. The heart of God burns to serve and bursts out in service. He who feeds on God longs to serve, and finds his satisfaction in serving. Ministry to others is the ultimate goal of life.

17. Train the young for this. The glory of it! It is the height of godliness. Lead their feeble steps in paths of service. Give them something to do. They are to grow by "speaking truth in love"—which the margin renders "dealing truly"—pointing to serviceable activities more than to truthful convictions merely as such. Children like to do things for others. Encourage them in this. Let their unfolding years be guided

into expanding ministries. Let parental example speak, and home atmosphere infect them. See to it that they grow to maturity careless of mere personal advantage, but imbued with the spirit and accustomed to a life of ministering. Under God's Spirit and providence they will infallibly respond.

18. This once achieved, they will no longer worry over what planet they may reside on, or over when and how they are to be translated from this planet into the lordly freedom of the higher life and its larger opportunities. They will go through this life ever increasingly endowed with what one has aptly called "the abundance of a loving heart," and will escape all life's belittling meannesses and narrowness: largeness of soul will constrain them to rise above envy, paltry dislikes, and disparagements of others, and will make them ever eager to be wisely of use to their fellows at any cost. And if life's emergencies shall ever summon them, as during the late World War it summoned so many, to "the supreme sacrifice," they will not shrink or repine; while if preserved for years of humble and lowly toil on earth, under whatever conditions of pain, and want of human appreciation, they will be found joyously faithful, increasingly youthful in spirit to the end, buoyant with hope, ardent in devotion to Christ and the Kingdom, and so adorned with grace as to be a credit to the home that reared them for this "larger life."

#### TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Is the place of symbols and ceremonies in religion a major or a minor place? the place of the Apocalypse—the book of symbols—as one of the phases of revelation?

2. What place should longing for heaven have among the emotions of the Christian? If a minor place? why? and what other emotions should transcend it?

3. What stages of Christian growth are marked by lavish devotion to symbols and ceremonies, or by keeping heaven to the front in feeling and aim. Why?

4. Are our minds to be most engaged with Christ ministering comfort to us, or with our privilege of ministering to others? Are we to "lean on Christ" chiefly for the sake of leaning and the satisfying sense of safety, or for the sake of the "strength to serve" to be thus acquired?

5. If concerned chiefly with our own salvation, is there thus

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

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danger of our spiritual isolation? Is there such a thing as religious selfishness? If so, how are we to escape it?

6. Should our sense of community life spread beyond the family? Beyond our own church? How far should it spread? To what extent is a Christian handicapped and dwarfed if he is content with a defective sense of community interests and obligations?

7. Can children be early reared to some practical sense of these great things? If so, how?





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