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EMPHASES IN THE CHRISTIAN NURTURE OF CHILDREN AS REVEALED IN
SELECTED BOOKS FOR PARENTS

by

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INTRODUCTION

EMPHASES IN THE CHRISTIAN NURTURE OF CHILDREN AS REVEALED IN
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INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Subject

In recent years there has been increasing emphasis on the part of Christian educators on the importance of the home in the Christian nurture of the child. A number of books and pamphlets have been written with a view to bringing before parents their responsibility in the Christian nurture of their children and seeking to help them in this task. In this study an attempt will be made to discover the emphases in the field of the Christian nurture of children as revealed in the outstanding books dealing with the subject.

B. Significance of the Subject

In Your Child and God Miss Trent says, "Today's children face a world of rapidly shifting thought in industry, in government and in education. Desperately they need a center of stable thinking, a place of security in the midst of strain."¹ They need physical health, good standards of thinking and living, understandings and experiences that will cultivate healthy emotions, but most of all they need a sense of security whose ultimate is God.²

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1. Trent, Robbie: Your Child and God, p. 2.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 3.

Miss Trent points out that the 1940 White House Conference on children laid the primary responsibility for the religious nurture of the child on the parents.¹ The parents cannot shift this responsibility to the church and expect it to fulfill the function which belongs to them, for the church finds it difficult to do more than interpret or build on the teaching which is given in the home. It is in the home that the foundations are laid upon which the church must build. The parents are by far the most important people in the life of a little child. He senses their attitude to life, their ideals, and seeks to imitate them.² The family is the natural social unit in which the child learns best.

Nor can the parents leave the Christian nurture of the child to chance, saying that they wish him to be free to choose for himself when he is older, for religiousness of some sort will be part of his environment, he cannot escape it.³

Thus it is important to help parents in this great task of nurturing their children in the Christian faith.

C. Selection of Sources

The sources to be used in this study will be limited to eight selected books. In choosing these books only those especially for parents, written or revised within the last ten years, were considered. The number was further limited by selecting Protestant books

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1. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 5.
2. Cf. Nicholl, Noel E.: A Child's Personal Religion, p. 10.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin: Your Child's Religion, p. xi.

by American publishers. As only books written from a definitely religious standpoint were used, such books as There's No Place Like Home by James Lee Ellenwood and When Children Ask by Marguerite Bro were not included. And further, since it is the purpose of this study to consider the period of childhood as a unit, books limited to the nursery age were omitted.

Some of the books selected include chapters dealing with the adolescent. These chapters are not considered in this thesis, for its scope includes only children up to twelve years of age.

In order that the reader may become better acquainted with the nature of the sources a short review of each book is given herewith.

1. Children and Religion by Dora P. Chaplin

This, the most recent of the books selected, is not limited in scope to the study of the child of one to twelve years but deals also with the adolescent period. It is more comprehensive than the other books. It deals with the stages of growth and the needs of the different age groups. It discusses the place of the church, the church school, and the home in the Christian nurture of the child. Two chapters are given to the consideration of the place of books, pictures, music and poetry in the religious life of the child. Throughout the book the reader is constantly referred to other books for additional information.

This would be an excellent book for anyone who had the time and the desire to make a real study of the subject.

2. Your Child's Religion by Eakin and Eakin

Your Child's Religion claims to offer help to adults brought to bay by children's questions about God and other religious concepts. The authors also hope to make a contribution to the parent's own religious philosophy. They themselves are obviously extremely liberal in their point of view.

Every phase of the religious and social life of the child from one to twelve years is dealt with. The final chapter looks ahead to the adolescent period. At the end of the book there are reading suggestions for the adult and for the child.

3. The Child's Approach to Religion by H. W. Fox

This book by an English clergyman is written in the form of letters by the author to the parents of "Ian". The author, conscious of his own early religious training, is anxious that these parents should not fall into the same pitfalls as he feels his parents did. He emphasizes that one should not teach a child what he will have to unlearn later in life. This author also is liberal in his point of view.

This book deals with many questions asked by parents on how to teach children about prayer, the cross, the hereafter, miracles and parables, and the Old Testament. It is a very readable and practical book. It shows how through everyday experiences the great truths of the Christian faith can be unfolded simply and attractively.

4. The Faith of Our Children by Mary Alice Jones

The author has had years of experience in counseling parents

and teachers of children. She states her purpose in the preface as:

"The chapters in this book are written in the hope that they may make some contribution to parents and teachers who wish their children to believe in God, not merely verbally, but in such a manner as shall really determine the course of their lives."¹

This book suggests some approaches to the guidance of children in the understanding of the basic Christian doctrines, and in appreciation of the resources and practices of the Christian faith. It deals with purposes rather than with methods.

5. A Child's Personal Religion by Noel E. Nicholl

Written by an English author, this book is brief in its treatment and hence does not cover many problems and phases of the child's Christian nurture. However it is practical in its outlook. It is illustrated and contains accounts of experiences with children. The contents fall under three headings: the importance of parent-child relationship, the opportunities of daily life, and religious observances.

6. The Opening Doors of Childhood by Lewis Joseph Sherrill

The Opening Doors of Childhood deals chiefly with the inner world of children's experience of God. Lewis J. Sherrill, its author, deals first with the needs of the child's personality and shows how the Christian faith can meet these needs. The book has many valuable suggestions for puzzled parents. It is enriched by many accounts of actual experiences with the problems of children. There is much in it

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1. Jones, Mary Alice: The Faith of Our Children, p. 5.

which will help in the development of the parent as well as the child.

7. Opening the Door for God by Herman J. Sweet

This book endeavors to get at the underlying principles of the Christian nurture of children. It is not a book of rules or set patterns. The author emphasizes the importance of the parent's own faith and suggests that the book be read first for the message it has for the parents. It stresses the teaching that comes by right living and contains many concrete suggestions for religious practice in the home.

It is a book which would appeal to parents who are seriously interested in making the home more vitally Christian.

8. Your Child and God by Robbie Trent

The author of this attractive, easily read book is a conservative in her thought of God, of the Bible, and of Christian experience but has read extensively in the liberal field. Twenty years' experience in Sunday School teaching has convinced her of the supreme importance of the parents and the home in the Christian nurture of the child. Throughout the book the emphasis is on everyday living and on ways of making such living truly religious. The "Exercises in Parenthood" at the end of each chapter are designed to give the parents food for thought and to bring God into the center of home life.

D. Method of Procedure

Each of the books was first analysed for its chief emphases. The findings from all the books were then compared, grouped, and re-

grouped under three main headings. A chapter is devoted to each of these main groups.

Since all the books emphasized the significant role which the parents play in the Christian nurture of the child in the home, the first chapter of this study will be devoted to discussing the parents' responsibility. The theological concepts which the authors of these books feel that a child should be acquiring will then be discussed. The place of worship in the Christian nurture of children will be the subject of the third chapter. In conclusion, the findings of this study will be briefly summarized.

CHAPTER I

THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CHRISTIAN NURTURE
OF CHILDREN

CHAPTER I

THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CHRISTIAN NURTURE OF CHILDREN

A. Introduction

In The Opening Doors of Childhood Sherrill emphasizes the importance of the parents' part in the Christian nurture of children.

"... the religious experience of children is rooted down in the soil of family life. If the soil is rich and suited to the plant, the fruit can grow and ripen with proper care. But if the soil is poor in the ingredients needed to nourish religious experience, the fruit will be stunted and disappointing. So important is this, and so easily is it overlooked, that we must begin with the parents, when we are concerned with the children's experience."¹

The other books also point out the great responsibility of the parent for the Christian teaching of the child both by example and by precept.

B. Aspects of Parental Responsibility

Since all the authors feel that the relation between the parent and the child, and the parent's own religious conviction are of utmost importance in the Christian nurture of children, emphases in these fields will be discussed first. Then will follow a discussion of two other topics - Christian example and direct teaching - which likewise are treated by all the authors. Finally, the parents' responsibility for the child's social development will be considered.

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1. Sherrill, Lewis Joseph: The Opening Doors of Childhood, p. 4.

1. The Parent-Child Relationship

Since the home exerts the greatest influence for good or evil especially on the small child, all of the writers deem it necessary to consider the relationship between the parent and the child and its effect on the Christian nurture of the child.

Sherrill points out four basic needs of the child which are met through the proper relationship between parent and child and states that the meeting of these needs provides a secure foundation on which to build rich relationships with God. These needs are security, friendly companionship, character which can be respected, and freedom to grow.¹ Jones, Trent, Sweet, and Eakin and Eakin also mention the need of security and Jones, Nicholl, Sweet, and Chaplin suggest the need of friendly companionship. The need of seeing in the parents character which can be respected is mentioned by Fox, Nicholl, Chaplin, and Jones and that of freedom to grow by Fox, Nicholl, and Jones. It is evident, then, that there is general agreement concerning the needs which parents must meet.

a. The Need for Security

The child needs to know that he is loved by his parents and that his everyday needs of food and shelter are provided for. If he feels insecure in this respect, he has little foundation on which to build a faith and trust in a Father whom he has not seen; but if he has experienced the love and protection and care of earthly parents,

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 8-13.

it is a much shorter step to a faith in a Father greater and more powerful than he has yet known.¹

b. The Need for Friendly Companionship

Friendly companionship between child and parent is another foundation upon which religious values can be built. If there is mutual understanding and comradeship, the child will feel free to bring his problems and questions about life to his parent and the parent will have an opportunity to interpret his experience or to answer his questions from the Christian point of view. Opportunities will arise which will lead to rich worship experiences. On the other hand, if the child feels no companionship at home, he is more likely to turn to less wholesome sources for companionship. Then too genuine fellowship in the family group facilitates entry into a friendly relationship with God and with other Christians.²

c. The Need for Character Which Can Be Respected

Sherrill points out that if the character of the parents is such that the child can respect it, he will have a concrete ideal to look to in the development of his own character. Honesty and justice will seem right because he has seen that his parents have sought to display them.³ As he grows up there will be less chance of his laying

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 9; Jones, op. cit., p. 27; Trent, op. cit., pp. 2-4; Sweet, Herman J.: Opening the Door for God, p. 28.
2. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 10; Jones, op. cit., p. 16; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 11; Sweet, op. cit., pp. 22,23; Chaplin, Dora P.: Children and Religion, pp. 30,31.
3. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 10; Fox, H. W.: The Child's Approach to Religion, pp. 2,3; Nicholl, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

hold of a counterfeit religion which lays stress on inward belief but may overlook the working out of this in one's relations with one's fellow men.¹

Sincere respect for parents provides a foundation for a religion which has respect for the moral law as being within the very character of God.² It gives a basis for understanding such attributes of God as holiness, justice, and righteousness, and helps to guard against the child's forming the opinion that God should satisfy every little desire of his, even at the expense of others.³ It will also lead him to understand seemingly unanswered prayer.

d. The Need for Freedom to Grow

The relationship of the parent to the child should not be one of domination. The child needs freedom to grow and to develop.⁴ His religious experience can never be exactly the same as that of his parents. If they try to make it so, he may accept it but it will never be the growing experience it should be.⁵

The parent should respect the viewpoint of the child. His attitude should be one of sympathetic understanding which will help the child to grow in wisdom and stature.

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 11.
2. Cf. Ibid.; Jones, op. cit., pp. 16,17.
3. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 11.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 12; Jones, op. cit., p. 28; Fox, op. cit., p. 93; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 11.
5. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 12.

2. The Parents' Religious Conviction

All the books recognize the fact that the child's religion will depend a great deal on the parents' religion. The parent will not be able to lead the child into a deeper experience than he himself has had.

If the parents desire the child to have a vital, living faith, they must have one themselves.¹ It is futile for them to try to teach the child a religion which is no longer vital, creative, and growing in their own lives, merely because they feel an obligation to do so, and to expect it to become of importance to the child. "They cannot radiate a religious faith if they have none. They cannot teach if they do not know."² Unless the parents' religion means enough for them to live it day by day it will never mean anything to their children. The child will sense the fact, if the parents' faith is not real to them.³

Jones stresses that parents must have a sound theology and must teach theology to their children.⁴ Many parents have merely accepted what they have been taught and, uncritically, have passed it on to their children without any real experience or understanding of it. What they have sought to teach they have not actually rejected, but neither have they really adopted it. This causes the children much distress for they are given no real reason for believing what

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 30; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 35; Fox, op. cit., p. 30.
2. Sweet, op. cit., p. 30.
3. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 41.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 25.

they have been taught. When the child has questioned what he has been told, the parent has been unable to answer the questions or has resented the child's attitude. This has often led to confusion, skepticism, or indifference to religion.

Parents must be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them. They must be prepared to meet inquiring minds with sympathy, knowledge, and understanding. This does not mean that a parent must know all there is to know before he can teach the child, but he must feel God's presence and believe that God makes a real difference in life.¹ He must be willing to search and grow with the child.

Realizing the importance of the parents' own faith and spiritual life, some of the books include suggestions for the parents' own growth. Trent has an exercise for parents at the end of each chapter of her book. The first part of this is directed towards the parents' spiritual growth. Suggestions such as the following are made:

"At least twice every day for a week, will you stop for a moment and thank God for something you have, some little thing?"²

"List three things you think about God."³

"Think about God at least ten minutes every day."⁴

"Read your favorite Bible passage aloud at least three times."⁵

"Write out your own definition of prayer."⁶

Eakin and Eakin give reading suggestions for the parents' own orientation.⁷ Sweet and Fox suggest that their books be read first for

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1. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 30.
2. Ibid., p. 24.
3. Ibid., p. 14.
4. Ibid., p. 35.
5. Ibid., p. 64.
6. Ibid., p. 99.
7. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 153.

the message they have for the parents themselves.¹

3. The Parents' Example

Closely akin to the parents' religious conviction is the parents' example, for what a person believes should be reflected in what he does. All the authors except Eakin and Eakin and Sherrill stress the importance of the parents' example in the Christian nurture of children. Sherrill implies that the parents will exemplify the Christian truths which they seek to teach.

There is a saying that religion is "caught and not taught".² This is certainly true for the very young child and remains true in part all through life. All the books agree that example is greater than precept. As Chaplin states it, "It is what we ARE, not what we SAY, which will effect the children most."³ This method of teaching is most effective because it will create the deepest and most lasting impression and because it is generally given quite unconsciously.⁴

Before the child is old enough to think or understand he can sense the attitude of the parent. Kneeling by the baby's bed to pray may seem of little importance but from it the child in some way begins to sense the nearness of God.⁵ He begins to sense the fact that the authority, wisdom and love of his parents are not ultimate but that they too look beyond to Someone who loves and sustains them.⁶

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 65; Fox, op. cit., p. 92.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 26; Nicholl, op. cit., pp. 10,13.
3. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 24; Fox, op. cit., p. 17; Jones, op. cit., pp. 17,19.
4. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 16.
5. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 26.
6. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 29.

As the child grows older, he will notice the parents' tone of voice, his attitude towards God's day, the church, and the Bible. If the parent takes no account of God in his conduct or if his attitude toward the church is one of criticism or ridicule, he is teaching the child that God does not count. If he respects and loves God and seeks to show this in his actions, he is teaching positive values. If the parents give evidence of finding in the church satisfactory experiences of fellowship and worship, the child will be inclined to expect similar satisfying experiences.¹ Similarly the parent may teach that God is kind by his own thoughtfulness and generosity to other people.

4. The Parents' Teaching Responsibility

While recognizing that religion is "caught", the authors are generally agreed that it must also be taught or it will lose its foundations and gradually become meaningless.² The child may learn first from the example of the parent, but direct teaching must begin soon afterwards. Children need help in expressing and clarifying their faith.

If the parent has set an example for the young child, as soon as he can talk he will begin to ask questions. If he has seen the parent kneeling by his bed, he will want to know to whom he was talking. This will provide an opportunity for direct teaching about God. And it is best that the child should begin asking about God

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1. Cf. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 141; Trent, *op. cit.*, pp. 13,14.
2. Cf. Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Chaplin, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-27; Nicholl, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

rather than that the parent should formally begin telling him about God at some selected time.¹ This tends to make the teaching vital rather than formal, tied up with life rather than artificially set apart.

The authors suggest some principles which should be kept in mind when instruction is being given.

a. Avoiding the Need for Later Unlearning

Trent and Fox point out that one must be careful not to teach what will lead to confusion of thought or what will have to be unlearned later in life.² "...all acquired knowledge ought to be an addition to that already possessed and not a subtraction of what was wrong."³ As an example, Miss Trent states that when telling a Bible story to a small child, details which are too difficult may be left out but completely new ones should not be added in order to enhance the story for these will have to be unlearned later and may lead to confusion.⁴

Fox gives an example from his own experience. He was brought up in a fine Christian home but his parents combined with their high Christian virtues an intolerance of the teaching of those with whom they did not themselves agree, an almost Puritan sternness regarding behaviour, and a rigidness of orthodox standards of belief. After he had reached the age of adolescence he found it necessary to unlearn

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 15.
2. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 71; Fox, op. cit., p. 19.
3. Fox, op. cit., p. 19.
4. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 71.

much which had been taught him as a boy before he could think out the fundamental facts of Christianity instead of taking for granted what had undoubtedly been satisfying to his parents.¹

b. Naturalness

All the authors agree that this is one of the important principles of Christian teaching. Teaching about God should "spring out of a real and normal, not an artificial and strained interest on the part of the parents and children".² One should not imply that there are certain fixed times when one talks about religion or practises religion but it should be associated with all of life.³ Religious conversations should grow naturally out of discussions, questions, experiences and should not be forced. The religion taught must be lived every day in the family and in the community or it becomes superficial and meaningless.⁴

The parent should be sensitive to the unexpressed questions and attitudes of the child and quick to respond to any advance on his part. He should keep the way open for further questions.

c. Sincerity and Honesty

All but one author point out that the parents must be sincere and honest in talking with the child and in answering his questions.

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1. Cf. Fox, op. cit., pp. 14,15.
2. Trent, op. cit., p. 42; cf. Nicholl, op. cit., pp. 13-28; cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 15.
3. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 26; Fox, op. cit., pp. 20,21; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 38; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 6; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 57.
4. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 22,26; Trent, op. cit., p. 19; Jones, op. cit., p. 18.

"Children sense honesty and evasion. They respond to sincerity with faith."¹ Eakin and Eakin suggest that evasive answers may be justified sometimes but say that it is usually best to be honest.²

There will be many questions which the parent cannot answer or to which the answer is beyond the comprehension of the child at the time. All the writers are agreed that the parent should not try to evade the child or say, "Oh, you can't understand", but should sincerely say, "I do not know. Many people have wondered about that."³

Answers should be simple and truthful. If it is a question to which the parent does not know the answer but knows where the information may be found, he can suggest that he and the child find the answer together or can send the child to look it up himself.⁴ If he answers honestly and sincerely, giving answers which represent his own best thinking, he wins the child's confidence and leaves the way open for further confidences and questions. If he evades the questions or answers untruthfully, he loses the child's confidence. In the words of Sweet,

"It is a painful experience to feel that fears and anxieties must be covered up and real feelings hidden because parents are unsympathetic. To scoff at or to make light of the fears and doubts and curiosities of children is to betray their confidence and add to their misgivings."⁵

5. The Parents and the Child's Social Development

Several of the authors mention that the parents have a respon-

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1. Trent, op. cit., p. 44.
2. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 51.
3. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 27; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 22; Fox, op. cit., p. 22; Trent, op. cit., p. 143.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 15; Trent, op. cit., p. 137.
5. Sweet, op. cit., p. 12.

sibility for seeing that the child's social development is Christian.

a. Social Contacts

Eakin and Eakin and Jones point out that the parents should see that their children have contact with other groups of children in the community. The children should learn to know their own neighborhood, its joys and its needs, its good things and its bad things. They should have a sense of belonging to it and should be taught to feel a responsibility for helping to right its wrongs.¹ In the words of Miss Jones,

"It is our obligation to prepare boys and girls to work, in the name of God, for the correction of practices in the community which hurt persons, all of whom are their brothers, children of their Father. It is our obligation to help them to 'make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet' as they begin to evaluate those social and economic and racial and international practices which their experience makes it reasonable for them to consider."²

Eakin and Eakin say that contact with other religions, races, and nations helps to break down dislikes, suspicions, and fears which often arise from ignorance or hasty generalizations.³ They suggest that children be taken to visit different places of worship and have opportunities of studying about different races and religions.⁴

b. Positive Cultural Influences

Miss Chaplin says that one must remember that religious education cannot be separated from education as a whole. All education

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1. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 117; Jones, op. cit., pp. 94-95.
2. Jones, op. cit., p. 94.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 119, 122.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 121-122.

should contribute to the enlargement of the spirit.¹ All that takes place affects and modifies one's attitude toward God and one's way of living which grows out of this attitude.² Miss Chaplin deplors the fact that children of this generation are losing the power to create from within. They have to be entertained continually. She points out that many movies and radio programs, comic papers, and poor literature lull to sleep the children's higher power of appreciation and criticism.³ Chaplin and Sweet agree that negative control of these things is next to impossible and hardly desirable and suggest the positive approach of selection and intelligent use.⁴ Chaplin says,

"If children are offered the best ones (books) - those that are attractive and interesting and open up new vistas of imagination - ones that according to their divers tastes they honestly enjoy, and if they are given them early, you have given them a standard, and although they may have a temporary taste for the 'funnies,' they are less likely to have a craving for them, and they are likely to pall very soon, especially when enough of the good fare is left within reach."⁵

Chaplin also suggests pictures, books, and films which are good for use with children.⁶ She warns that many religious books are so watered-down and sentimental that the healthy modern child thinks that religion is a weak kind of fairy story.⁷ Sweet adds that children should be familiar with biographies of great Christian heroes of the past and with stories of contemporary men and women in whom the power

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1. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 139.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 139-140.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 140-143.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 143; Sweet, op. cit., p. 109.
5. Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 143-144.
6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 144-148, 179-187.
7. Cf. Ibid., p. 177.

of the Christian faith is evident.¹

Chaplin also makes a plea for a better standard of poetry.² She says that every household with children in it should have some good anthologies for children, beginning with Mother Goose. She suggests some good ones.³ She emphasizes that children respond to the beauty of the poetry in the Bible if it is carefully chosen and read aloud.⁴

Both Chaplin and Sweet point out that the child should be led to appreciate good music.⁵ Chaplin says,

"The ideal is for the family to make music together, and for the child to have from the beginning simple songs and hymns as part of the pattern of everyday life. Certainly it should be part of the hour when children and parents can be together. If we cannot play, we can use some of the fine recordings available. In addition to this there is the obvious desirability of giving every child some instrument to play.⁶

Sweet says that religious pictures should be among those selected for the home. These should be of good quality and carefully chosen to suit the age of the child. They should be changed frequently as the child grows older.⁷

C. Summary

In this chapter the parents' responsibility for the Christian nurture of the child has been discussed with regard to the parent-

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 108-109.
2. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 158.
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 159-160.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 161.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 149; Sweet, op. cit., p. 105.
6. Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 149-150.
7. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

child relationship, the importance of the religious conviction of the parents, the parents' example in the home, their responsibility in the more direct religious teaching of the child, and their responsibility for his social development. It has been seen that security in the family group is an important foundation on which to build a faith in God and that a happy relationship between parents and child may be a basis for genuine fellowship with other Christians and with God. If a child is to have a concept of God as a righteous, just, and holy Being, it will help if he observes uprightness of character in his parents. If the religious life of the child is to grow, he must have freedom and the parents' attitude should be one of sympathetic understanding rather than domination.

The parents' religious conviction was then discussed. All the writers were found to agree that the parents' faith must be vital and growing. They must feel that God makes a real difference in life if they expect their child to. Some suggestions were given which might be helpful in deepening the parents' Christian experience.

Following this in a logical way the importance of the parental example was discussed. It is a common truism that example is greater than precept and all the authors considered agree that the parents' example is supremely important to the religious development of the child.

If the child's faith is to grow, it is necessary that he receive direct Christian teaching. The following principles were emphasized in most of the books: a) Care should be taken not to teach anything which must be unlearned or might lead to confusion of thinking

later on; b) Religious teaching should grow out of natural situations and not be forced; c) The parents should be sincere and honest in their instruction of the child.

It was mentioned by several of the authors that the child should be taught to evaluate social, economic, and racial practices in the light of his Christian faith and should feel a responsibility toward righting the evils in his community. Since religious education cannot be separated from education as a whole, the parents should see that the child grows in his ability to appreciate that which is best in music, art, and literature.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS EMPHASIZED IN THE CHRISTIAN NURTURE
OF CHILDREN

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A. Introduction

In the first chapter of this study it was seen that the authors studied are agreed that parents have a teaching responsibility toward their children.¹ In this chapter the theological content of that teaching as emphasized by the different writers will be discussed.

Analysis of the points stressed in the various books revealed that the emphases in this field could be grouped under the following subjects: concepts of God, concepts related to Jesus, and concepts of sin and forgiveness. These subjects were dealt with by all the authors.

B. Concepts of God

Sweet and Sherrill, in their books, emphasize the importance of teaching the child about God. Children ask questions which can only be answered in terms of God, if at all. One must interpret the character of God to the child or leave some vital place in his thinking blank.² If the child is not being taught good concepts of God, he

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1. Cf. Ante., p. 16.

2. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 56.

will be acquiring bad ones.¹ And further, the conception which a child forms affects his relationship with God.

All the authors except Fox and Eakin and Eakin are agreed that one should begin to talk to the child about God when he is quite young.² Eakin and Eakin do not believe in mentioning the "God concept" till the child is beyond the kindergarten age.³ Fox would begin by teaching the child about Jesus and would withhold any mention of God for some time.⁴

1. Desirable Concepts of God

All the authors mention concepts of God which they feel it is necessary for the child to acquire in order that his relationship with God be a healthy one.

a. God is a Person

Sherrill, Sweet, Trent, Fox, and Jones clearly state that God is a Person and one should teach one's child to have faith in a personal God.⁵ It is natural for the small child to think of God as a Person for he likes concrete ideas. He may think of God in physical terms at first. One need not be overly concerned about this but should be more concerned about the sort of Person he pictures God to be.⁶

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 39.
2. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 45; Jones, op. cit., p. 18; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 15; Sweet, op. cit., p. 39; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 11; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 26.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 13.
4. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 27.
5. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 38; Sweet, op. cit., p. 48; Jones, op. cit., p. 17; Trent, op. cit., p. 17; Fox, op. cit., p. 31.
6. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 48; Jones, op. cit., p. 18.

In references to God the parents should try to help the child to think more of the purposes of God and less of the physical form.¹

Nicholl and Chaplin do not explicitly state that the parent should teach his child to believe in a God who is a Person but seem to imply it.

Eakin and Eakin alone do not believe that God is a Person. To them God is the personification of good, one's ideal, the spirit of a people.² God is

"real with the reality of symbolic richness, of emotional appeal, of age-long effectiveness - a reality of the same order as that of Alma Mater or Uncle Sam though beyond measure more deeply rooted in the experience of man."³

The parents should leave God out of the picture altogether until the child is at least six years old and then He⁴ should be spoken of as "the good".⁵

b. God is the Creator

Sweet and Trent feel that the concept of God as Creator of all life is an important one and that at an early age the child should begin to know God as Creator. As soon as the parent begins to talk to the child he should associate ideas of God with creation.⁶ It should

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 18.
2. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 8,12.
3. Ibid., p. 12.
4. There is lack of uniformity among the books in capitalization of pronouns referring to God and Jesus. Four authors capitalize pronouns referring to God and three those pronouns referring to Jesus. For the sake of consistency, except in direct quotations, both will be capitalized in this thesis regardless of the book from which the material is taken.
5. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 13.
6. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 42; Trent, op. cit., p. 45.

be explained that most things one uses are made by people but that God made the things that these people used in their work. He made man's mind so that he could plan and gave him hands so that he could use the things.¹

Sherrill points out that this is an easy idea for the child to grasp for "The world, for a child, manifests someone."² Nicholl too says that children are interested in God as Creator of heaven and earth and come to look with awe and reverence at the wonders of creation as soon as they are old enough to be interested in any type of creative work.³

Jones and Nicholl suggest that this concept of God can be made more meaningful through helping the child to enjoy the wonders and beauties in the natural world, through planting and watering seeds and watching them sprout and blossom.⁴ The concept of God as Creator should also be associated with the coming of a new baby into the home.⁵ Trent points out that some children at least are unsatisfied with just a scientific, physical, explanation of birth.⁶

Although Chaplin does not discuss this concept nor state that it is important, in dealing with a problem of disbelief she implies that God is Creator of the universe.⁷

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 12.
2. Bovet as quoted by Sherrill, op. cit., p. 31.
3. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., pp. 18-20.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 17; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 19.
5. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., pl 21; Trent, op. cit., p. 8; Sweet, op. cit., p. 16.
6. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 8.
7. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 193.

To a child who asks, "Is God the maker of everything?", Eakin would answer, "So people have usually thought ... And now that science has shown us how wonderful the making process is, it doesn't seem surprising that God the good should be thought of as God the Maker, the Creator."¹ If the child does not ask, Eakin suggests that the parent would do well not to raise the question at all.

Fox believes that the story of creation must be taken as a legend and nowhere in his book suggests that the child should be taught that God is Creator.²

c. God is Great

Jones lays particular emphasis on the greatness and power of God. She feels that too little emphasis has been laid on the holiness, greatness, and otherness of God and too much emphasis upon man's own sufficiency. The greatness of God has been interpreted almost exclusively in terms of His plans for a beautiful world for the pleasure of His children and a fruitful world for their nurture.³ The transcendent sovereignty of God has not been stressed. She says,

"To help our children to recognize that God is 'great beyond our knowing' is as important a part of our responsibility as to teach them that God is near to each one of them. To help them to recognize, and stand in awe before, his sovereign power is as important as to help them to know that they may go to him in confidence as a child approaches his father."⁴

Miss Jones says that the first approach to realizing the greatness of God is through the world of nature. The towering mountain

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1. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 13-14.
2. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 86.
3. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 45.
4. Ibid., p. 47.

peaks, the movements of the planets, the raging force of a tempest, and the rainbow all reveal the limitless power and greatness of God and call forth wonder, awe, and humility.¹

Sweet and Fox also specifically mention the greatness of God.² Eakin and Eakin say that most people think that God is "boss" of the universe and that He is often called Supreme, Omnipotent.³ The other authors imply that God is great because He is Creator.

d. God is Love

All the authors except Eakin and Eakin feel that this is an important concept and one of the first ones which a child should acquire.⁴ To Eakin and Eakin God is the good and nothing more.

Jones and Sweet say that the child will first associate the love of God with His care, protection and provision for material needs.⁵ The child needs to know that God loves him even more than his parents do. He is ever near to help. He always wants the best for all His children.⁶ The knowledge of God's protecting love will do much to calm the fears and anxieties of little children.⁷

But the child must be led to think of God's love in other terms than in those of personal care and protection, Jones and Sherrill

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 46.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 16; Fox, op. cit., p. 28.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 14.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 9; Trent, op. cit., p. 43; Fox, op. cit., p. 41; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 76; Jones, op. cit., p. 27; Sweet, op. cit., p. 40; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 57;
5. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 40; Jones, op. cit., p. 27.
6. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 5; Sweet, op. cit., p. 17; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 42.
7. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 44; Trent, op. cit., p. 3.

point out. Otherwise when he meets sorrow, disaster, life as it really is he will not be able to face it. He will feel that these things deny the love of God.¹ He must realize that the love of God is bestowed, not because man merits it, but because it is of the nature of God to love. It is important that parents face with their children the fact of suffering, show them that there are many things which cannot be understood and help them to believe that suffering is not visited upon persons because God is angry with them. They must realize that much of man's suffering is brought upon himself because he violates natural laws. Further, when one cannot understand suffering, one must have faith to believe that there is a good purpose which it is meant to serve. Because God does understand and care suffering may be borne bravely.² Jones says,

"To be able to feel that God is love, to help children to associate joy and beauty and physical provisions with God's care, and at the same time to be able to face with them the fact that suffering, struggle, and want must also be compassed in God's love, is to achieve the faith and courage worthy of truly Christian teachers."³

Another aspect of God's love which Trent, Sweet, and Jones stress is that God loves both the good people and the bad people. Sin does not turn away the love of God.⁴ God's love is not measured and cautious, waiting to be sure that the sinner is truly penitent, but is generous, boundless, and outgoing. No statement is more untrue than "If you do that, God will not love you!"⁵ Although God hates sin, He

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 28; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 57.
2. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 37-38.
3. Ibid., p. 40.
4. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 29; Jones, op. cit., p. 30; Sweet, op. cit., p. 41.
5. Jones, op. cit., p. 30; cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 94.

loves and seeks the sinner. Sherrill, Sweet, and Nicholl also state that God's love expresses itself in forgiveness of the sinner who is truly penitent.¹

Jones points out that in His life and death Jesus made it clear that God's love did not express itself in prosperity, special benefits, or special exemptions from the ills of this life but rather it expresses itself in terms of fellowship.² All the authors but Eakin and Eakin state that the child can have fellowship with God, can feel his nearness, and can talk to Him anytime or anywhere.³ This fellowship is broken by sin but God's love remains constant.⁴ This high concept of the love of God is the one which the child should develop. In its fulness it is a mature conception and has increasing meaning as one meets the varied situations of life and therefore one cannot expect the child to move quickly from the thought of God as Provider to the thought of God as Companion. However the sense of fellowship is very real even to a small child and one can begin early to interpret the love of God in these terms.⁵ From experiences related by Phyllis Bottome in London Pride, a story of London families during the air war, Jones concludes,

"These facts suggest that the thought of God's love as finding expression primarily through fellowship may be more meaningful to children than dependence upon its manifestations in terms of physical

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 50; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 11; Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 20,29.
2. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 30-31.
3. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 53; Sweet, op. cit., p. 16; Trent, op. cit., p. 18; Jones, op. cit., p. 31; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 49; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 26; Fox, op. cit., p. 48.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 29; Sweet, op. cit., p. 41.
5. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 30-32.

care and security."¹

Jones and Nicholl point out that children should be given opportunities to experience the giving side of love. Only as they do can they really understand the outgoing creative love of God.² Very early in life they should be given opportunities to plan for others. These should be happy, satisfying experiences so that the desire will be strengthened. Later they will meet situations where they must choose between pleasing themselves and pleasing others. In their decisions they should not be influenced by any artificial reward, but the choice should stand on its own merits. As one is led to an experience where he has to suffer for the sake of love, he gradually comes to better understand the quality of God's love.³

e. God is a Father

Again all the authors except Eakin and Eakin speak of God as a Father.⁴ This concept of God is closely connected with that of God being loving and wise. The child probably first thinks of God in terms of a father and his concept of the fatherhood of God will depend to a great extent on the character of his earthly father.⁵ Chaplin points out that it may lead to the thought of God as being cruel, if his parents are cruel to him.⁶

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1. Jones, op. cit., p. 33.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 34; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 33.
3. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 35.
4. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 15; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 26; Fox, op. cit., p. 41; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 28; Trent, op. cit., p. 23; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 10; Jones, op. cit., p. 45.
5. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 37; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 24; Fox, op. cit., p. 41; Trent, op. cit., p. 21.
6. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 24.

f. God is Good and God is Just

The goodness of God is mentioned by Jones, Fox, Sweet, Nicholl, and Eakin and Eakin.¹ Eakin and Eakin state that the thought of God as good is more fundamental than any other thought of Him.² God is the personification of good. Sweet mentions that God is good and knows what is best for one even though one may find His way hard to understand.³ The other authors also imply that God is good.

The justice of God is another concept discussed by most of the authors. Chaplin says that it is not emphasized enough and that a shallow luke-warm goodness emerges from our teaching.⁴ Sherrill and others point out that it is important that the child should learn that right is right before God and wrong is wrong before God.⁵ Jones states that God may not abrogate the moral order without denying Himself. His judgments are not primarily for punishment but for redemption. He does not watch to catch a person in a wrong deed but He knows when that person does wrong and is hurt by it.⁶

2. Undesirable Concepts of God

All the authors but Nicholl mention one or more undesirable concepts of God which children may acquire. Sweet and others say that these wrong concepts of God may be acquired in a number of ways: from

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 56; Fox, op. cit., p. 32; Sweet, op. cit., p. 20; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 57; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 8.
2. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 8.
3. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 20.
4. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 64.
5. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 92; Trent, op. cit., p. 86; Sweet, op. cit., p. 50; Jones, op. cit., p. 52.
6. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 51,55.

false notions of parents, from careless unthinking remarks, from an overemphasis on Old Testament stories badly selected and wrongly used, from a jumble of family conversation, from irregular or ineffective Sunday School teaching, from Christmas stories, from remarks of play-mates, from false teaching or no teaching at all, and from the mishandling of discipline.¹ Fox also mentions that pictures of God will certainly give wrong impressions.²

a. God is a Bearded Old Man

This concept of God is mentioned by Trent, Sherrill, and Fox. Trent says that it sometimes develops from the thought of God as a Father. She says that one should not worry much about it as it at least interprets God as a definite personality, the best that the child knows.³ It is an early idea and the child will grow out of it.⁴ Fox feels that it is more dangerous and says that it is often the result of attempting to show the child a picture of God.⁵

b. God is a Spy

Sweet, Eakin and Eakin, Trent, and Sherrill give this as an undesirable concept which the child may acquire. Sherrill suggests that it may develop from the concept that God watches over the child.⁶ Trent says that this idea may be cured by giving the child the concept

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 38,39; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 36; Fox, op. cit., p. 89; Jones, op. cit., p. 25.
2. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 32.
3. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 21.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 34.
5. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 33.
6. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 36.

of God as a loving Father, for he cannot think of God as a spy and a loving Father at the same time.¹

c. God is Vengeful and Cruel

This is the concept which several of the writers suggest develops from the careless use of Old Testament stories.² Also, if parents show fear in an electric storm, children sometimes get the idea that God is angry and sends storms to punish people.³ Other children think that if they do wrong God will punish them in some drastic way. He may make the child's sister become sick and die or He may strike the child himself dead.⁴ Jones says that only the Old Testament stories that are in harmony with the teaching of Jesus should be told and that all stories that might tend to give the idea that God is vengeful should be avoided.⁵

d. God is a Santa Claus

Some children develop the idea that God is a great Santa Claus who always gives material gifts, or One who is a satisfier of selfish wants.⁶ This sometimes develops when too much emphasis is placed on God's love and protective care.⁷

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1. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 22.
2. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 25; Fox, op. cit., p. 89.
3. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 33.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 22; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 4; Sweet, op. cit., p. 33.
5. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 25.
6. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 88.
7. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 7.

C. Concepts Related to Jesus

Miss Trent in Your Child and God says that if one is to teach children of God, one must show them Jesus, for Jesus translated God into terms that men could touch and understand.¹

As all the authors give concepts of Jesus which the child should be forming and all but Nicholl and Chaplin devote at least one chapter to the subject, these concepts will be considered first. Because of the emphasis accorded them by a number of the authors, the miracles and the crucifixion and resurrection will be dealt with separately.

1. Concepts of Jesus Himself

Seven of the authors emphasize that parents should begin to talk to the child about Jesus at a very early age. They should begin as soon as he is interested in stories.² Eakin and Eakin suggest that the child be acquainted first with the ideals of Jesus and not till later with Jesus Himself.³

Eakin and Eakin and Trent would tell the stories of Jesus as a baby first, whereas Sherrill, Fox, Sweet, and Jones would start with the stories of Jesus as a man. They would tell the stories that the children of Jesus' day must have heard.⁴ Jones mentions that at

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1. Cf. Trent, op. cit., pp. 28, 33.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 54; Jones, op. cit., p. 57; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 16; Fox, op. cit., p. 27; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 29; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 40; Sweet, op. cit., p. 56.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 40.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 17; Fox, op. cit., p. 24; Sweet, op. cit., p. 57; Jones, op. cit., p. 57.

the age of seven or eight years the child will be ready for a chronological story and a little later will want to hear of the nature and mission of Jesus.¹

All the authors are agreed that Jesus should be presented as a kind, strong person first and not as a wonder worker. Sweet emphasizes that the greatest need in teaching the child about Jesus is to let the character, personality, and teaching of Jesus speak for themselves.² Jesus himself will speak to the child's heart and to the child's understanding.³

a. Jesus is the Divine Son of God

Six of the books state or imply that Jesus is the divine Son of God, and the authors desire that the child have a growing awareness of Him as such.⁴ He is more than one of the great prophets. He is the supreme revelation of God.⁵

Eakin and Eakin believe that Jesus is only human and should be presented to the child as human. They say that a blameless, sinless Jesus will seem like a sissy to a growing boy. To make Jesus one with God will only cause confusion. Jesus reveals God, but so do many others in their sphere.⁶

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 59.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 55; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 18; Fox, op. cit., p. 67.
3. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 57.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 57; Trent, op. cit., p. 31; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 21; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 37; Sweet, op. cit., p. 62; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 10.
5. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 60; Trent, op. cit., p. 31; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 17.
6. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 36.

Fox nowhere states that Jesus is the Son of God. He says that "...there was a force, an agency, an impulse, a something, a Someone that was not Jesus, yet was in Jesus that enabled him to heal and help other people and to be kind to them."¹ This impulse is God. It was in Him all the time, but other people also did kind things by the same impulse.² Fox states that it was not till after the death of Jesus that the disciples came to recognize Jesus as God.³

b. Jesus is Savior

Sweet, Jones, and Trent want the child to know that Jesus is the Savior.⁴ Sweet says that he should get this conception of Jesus in adolescence but that which he is taught before then should build towards it.⁵ Fox believes that Jesus is Savior because in his death He asserted in a forcible way the importance of the highest values.⁶ Eakin and Eakin say that the "accept Christ as your Savior" formula involves a deceptive simplification of life's issues.⁷ Nicholl, Chaplin, and Sherrill do not specifically mention this concept.

c. Jesus is a Friend

The concept of Jesus as a friend is mentioned by all the authors. Miss Trent would have the mother introduce Jesus to the child:

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1. Fox, op. cit., p. 38.
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 39.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 60.
4. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 141; Trent, op. cit., p. 34; Jones, op. cit., p. 57.
5. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 62.
6. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 55.
7. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 34.

first as her own friend.¹ The child should learn of Jesus' concern for the hungry, of His sympathy for the underprivileged, of His kindness, of His helpfulness, and of His love for little children.² He should come to think of Jesus as his constant companion, his guide, his teacher, and his source of inspiration and help.

d. Jesus is an Example

All the authors agree that Jesus' life is an example on which children should seek to pattern their lives.³ Jones states that this desire to live in accordance with the example of Jesus should result from a response to the total personality of Jesus. One must respond to Him as a Person first of all or one is not likely to have the desire or the ability to imitate Him in specific situations.⁴ Eakin and Eakin do not agree with this. They believe one must discover where one is lacking in living Jesus' ideals and then begin a program to correct these shortcomings.⁵

e. Jesus is Strong and Courageous

Most of the authors agree that Jesus should be presented as a strong, fearless man. He courageously denounced evil without thought for His personal safety and demanded righteousness beyond the

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1. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 35.
2. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 19; Fox, op. cit., p. 24; Trent, op. cit., p. 28; Sweet, op. cit., p. 56; Jones, op. cit., p. 58; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 44.
3. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 64; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 28; Fox, op. cit., p. 54; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 33; Sweet, op. cit., p. 61; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 32; Trent, op. cit., p. 31.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 64-66.
5. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 33.

accepted code of the day. Children should not be given the impression that Jesus is effeminate or lacking in manliness.¹ Nicholl and Chaplin do not mention this concept.

f. Jesus is Alive Today

Sweet, Trent, and Sherrill desire that the child should realize that Jesus is not just an historic figure of the past but that He is alive today. He is a contemporary, the most vital factor in any happy life.² Chaplin, Fox, and Nicholl also mention that Jesus is alive.³

2. The Miracles of Jesus

Fox, Jones, Eakin and Eakin, and Chaplin are the only authors who discuss the miracles. Sweet just mentions them. All are agreed that the miraculous should not be emphasized with children.⁴ The child should not be introduced to problems beyond his understanding. Both Jones and Sweet point out that the uniqueness of Jesus does not rest upon the validity of the miracles but upon the interpretation of the character and total personality of Jesus.⁵ As Jones says,

"..the life of Jesus - his graciousness, his concern for others, his forgiveness of enemies - his life itself is, to those who consider it thoughtfully, more wonder-inspiring than incidents which we have come to call miracles."⁶

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1. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 36; Sweet, op. cit., p. 60; Jones, op. cit., p. 59; Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 20, 63; Fox, op. cit., p. 20; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 31.
2. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 34; Sweet, op. cit., p. 62; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 20.
3. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 30; Fox, op. cit., p. 60; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 34.
4. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 29; Sweet, op. cit., p. 60; Jones, op. cit., p. 61; Fox, op. cit., p. 24; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 203.
5. Jones, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

Thus she believes that stories of the deeds of Jesus should be told simply without either stressing or sliding over things which are beyond one's understanding. What Jesus did should always be related to the purpose back of it for His deeds were not a series of unrelated, spectacular feats but were part of a pattern of life.¹ If the child asks questions, the parent should answer humbly, to the best of his ability.

When questioned, Eakin and Eakin say, the parent should give an honest answer. For those, such as they, who do not believe in the miracles they give some suggestions for explaining the miracles to the child. They say that one cannot be sure what happened so many years ago. Then, too, very wise people believed in the supernatural with little difficulty. In those days men pretty generally were supposed to perform miracles. Now, thanks to science, people have a greater knowledge of what is credible and what is incredible.²

Fox, too, would rationalize what are called miracles as much as possible and set Jesus on an absolutely human plane.³ The "miracles" are not things which could not happen but it is unlikely that they did happen as described. Jesus is pictured as possessing extraordinary powers but there is equal evidence that in many respects His powers were not unique. Much of the seeming miraculous was due to lack of knowledge of the people in those days.⁴

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 63.
2. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 39,40.
3. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 24.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 69.

3. The Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus

All the authors but Eakin and Eakin discuss the crucifixion and the resurrection and suggest what the child should be told about them. They advise that children, while young, should hear at home the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection told in a simple, matter-of-fact, unemotional way before they hear it from outside the home with an undesirable connotation.¹

Chaplin and Trent give the story as they would tell it.² Trent and Jones emphasize that the story of the crucifixion should never be told without that of the resurrection as well.³ Fox would emphasize the joy and gladness of Easter and the fact that Jesus is alive.

Sweet would explain that Jesus' death was due to fear, selfishness, sin, and ignorance rather than to the horror and cruelty of men.⁴ Trent emphasizes the love of God in connection with the death of Jesus.⁵ Fox would seek to explain it to children by saying that kind people must suffer for kindness as well as bad people for their badness. Jesus suffered to show people the great importance of the good way of life and to inspire them by His example to choose that way.⁶ Fox is not prepared to say whether the resurrection stories

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1. Cf. Sherrill, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Chaplin, *op. cit.*, p. 38; Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 62; Nicholl, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Trent, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 67; Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
2. Cf. Chaplin, *op. cit.*, p. 38; Trent, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
3. Cf. Trent, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
4. Cf. Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
5. Cf. Trent, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
6. Cf. Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

are accurate records of historical events or not. He feels it is of little importance. The important thing, and that which he would tell the child, is that although Jesus died and His body was put in the grave, in some inexplicable way He made Himself known to His disciples. They felt His presence and experienced Him in a new, much fuller, wider and more constant way than before.¹

D. Concepts of Sin and Forgiveness

The subjects of sin and forgiveness are dealt with by all the authors in some form. Eakin and Eakin, Fox, Nicholl, Chaplin, Sweet, and Trent treat them briefly whereas Sherrill and Jones each devote a chapter to discussing them.

Eakin and Eakin say that to be a Christian one must put Jesus' principles into practise. Sin is a failure to do this. As indicated above with reference to Jesus' example,² these writers believe that in order to remedy such failure one must discover where one is lacking in living these principles and begin a program to correct these shortcomings and improve one's Christian way of life.³ The "Accept Christ as your Savior" formula is a deceptive simplification of life's issues.⁴ The influence of Jesus, reaching the child through other lives, should help to mold his life.

Fox describes sin as "badness". The child should be shown

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1. Cf. Fox, op. cit., pp. 60-62.
2. Cf. ante, p. 42.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 33.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

the effects of "badness" in this world and the importance of a good kind of life as exemplified by Jesus. Thus he will be led to hate what is bad and to refuse to do it. He will learn to hate sin and all the more to love Jesus who gave him this great example of the value of a good life. He will become disinclined to what is wrong and inclined to good. In other words he will be reconciled to God.¹ Fox says,

"Jesus is our 'Saviour', ... because he is the means of our 'salvation', and that 'salvation' comes about by our recognizing what his death was in his own conception, the asseveration in the most forcible way possible of the importance of the highest values; we, therefore, in our turn accept that standard of values, God's standard of values, as our own; our way of thinking is brought into line with God's way of thinking about life; we accept His outlook and it is we who by this change in ourselves are reconciled to Him."²

All the authors except Fox and Eakin and Eakin emphasize that the child should be learning to refer his conduct to Jesus Christ and to God. Again, as before stated,³ he must learn that right is right because it is the will of God and wrong is wrong because it is against God's will.⁴

The child must be helped to understand the nature and consequences of sin.⁵ Chaplin says that the average church school today no longer preaches hell-fire, but it errs the other way in not emphasizing the justice of God enough.⁶ Sin separates the sinner from

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1. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 54.
2. Ibid., p. 55.
3. Cf. ante, p. 36.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 28,92; Trent, op. cit., p. 44; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 64; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 34; Sweet, op. cit., p. 51; Jones, op. cit., p. 78.
5. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 80; Sweet, op. cit., p. 50; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 64; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 95.
6. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 64.

fellowship with God.¹ Sherrill also points out that every parent must help the child move toward a Christian conception of sin so that his ideas regarding the consequences of wrong may be held in that setting.² He gives the following as included in the Christian conception of sin:

- "..sin has a social meaning."³
- "..sin is a matter of deepest seriousness."⁴
- "..the consequences of both right and wrong reach on indefinitely into the future."⁵
- "..responsibility for sin is finally individual."⁶
- "..for every person who sins there is the possibility of restoration and recovery."⁷

Both Jones and Sherrill point out, however, that one should not stir up a morbid, depressing sense of guilt in children. It is not necessary for the child to be weighed down by guilt before he can become a child of God.⁸ The love of God should be the centre of emphasis.⁹

The parent should also discuss with the child what he needs to do to make things right.¹⁰ He needs to know the meaning of repentance.¹¹ He needs to realize that he needs help from Someone greater than himself.¹²

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1. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 64; Jones, op. cit., p. 80.
2. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 97.
3. Ibid., p. 98.
4. Ibid., p. 99.
5. Ibid., p. 100.
6. Ibid., p. 101.
7. Ibid., p. 102.
8. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 103-105; Jones, op. cit., p. 77.
9. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 106; Jones, op. cit., p. 77; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 34.
10. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 97.
11. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 64; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 35; Trent, op. cit., p. 85.
12. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 35; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 106; Sweet, op. cit., p. 140; Trent, op. cit., p. 35.

Sherrill says that the child begins to learn about God's forgiveness through human forgiveness. As he grows in a knowledge of Jesus he begins to have a unique attitude toward Him. He begins to experience the help of Jesus in relation to sin and failure. He begins to have faith in Him. Sherrill emphasizes that this childhood experience of God through Jesus is not just a prelude to faith but is faith.¹ Sweet, too, points out that the child should "grow up in the nurture of the faith and never know himself separated from the love and mercy of God"² but along with Sherrill, Jones, and Trent he points out that there must come "a time of decision and acceptance; a time of wholehearted commitment and of determination to make the will of God as revealed in Christ the rule and practice of life."³ This experience is likely to come in late childhood or early adolescence but the exact age and form it should take will depend upon the experiences of the child, his home influences, and the attitude of the pastor.⁴ The parents have a responsible part to play in helping the child to understand God's plan of salvation.⁵

Sherrill says that one should not ever emphasize one great transforming experience, for the child needs to know the experience of forgiveness whenever he has fallen short of obeying the will of Christ.

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 30.
2. Sweet, op. cit., p. 140.
3. Ibid., pp. 140-141; cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 168; Jones, op. cit., p. 83; Trent, op. cit., p. 34.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 87; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 168; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 35.
5. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 34; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 35; Jones, op. cit., p. 80; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 176.

The way to keep on finding forgiveness needs to be made clear to him.

He says,

"..when Christian parents are trying to help children know Christ as Savior, as a living reality in a child's experience, the child will frequently be helped far more if he can learn to think of forgiveness as always possible in the present and on into the future."¹

Jones agrees that there will be other times of dedication and commitment but says that often this one experience sets the direction of the child's life purposes.²

Both Jones and Sherrill agree that the child should realize that his decision involves responsibility. He is now serving a Leader who claims all his loyalty and obedience.³

E. Summary

In this chapter the theological concepts emphasized in the Christian nurture of the child have been discussed. It has been seen that there are certain concepts of God which most of the authors agree the child should acquire if he is to have a happy experience of God. To all but Eakin and Eakin God is a Person. All the authors mention the greatness of God and most of them believe that He is the Creator. All but Eakin and Eakin consider the knowledge of the love of God important in meeting the need of the child for security. The justice of God is another concept which most of the authors feel is important.

Undesirable concepts of God such as: God is a bearded old man,

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1. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 176.
2. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 88.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 90; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 172.

God is a spy, God is vengeful and cruel, and God is a Santa Claus, which were mentioned by most of the authors were then discussed. Ways in which these might be guarded against were suggested.

The concepts of Jesus found in the different books were presented. Six of the authors were found to agree that Jesus was the Son of God. All agreed that He should be presented to the child as a friend and as an example.

Jesus' miracles and His crucifixion and resurrection were seen to receive special emphasis. All the authors were found to agree that the miraculous should not be overemphasized with children. Fox and Eakin and Eakin prefer to rationalize the miracles and give suggestions for explaining them to children. Most of the authors believe that the child should be given a simple, unemotional account of the crucifixion and resurrection before he reaches school age.

The subject of sin and forgiveness was then considered. All the authors recognized the fact of sin or failure to live up to one's ideals and most of them recognized the need of Someone much greater than oneself to deal with sin. It was found that four of the authors suggest that on the part of each child there must be a time of decision and commitment to the will of God as revealed in Christ.

CHAPTER III

WORSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN NURTURE OF CHILDREN

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A. Introduction

That worship experiences are important to the child's Christian growth is a point on which all the authors studied agree. In Your Child and God Miss Trent, quoting from Children of the New Day by Katherine Glover and Evelyn Dewey, says that the child has an intensely real capacity for reverence and worship and unless this is fed in early years it may lie dormant throughout his whole life.¹

In this chapter the place of both individual and group worship in the Christian nurture of children as found in the different books will be discussed. Since the use of the Bible and the place of prayer in the home life of the child are uniformly stressed, these will first be considered. Then will follow a discussion of the child's formal worship experiences in the home, the church, and the church school.

B. The Use of the Bible in the Home

Whatever each author's particular view on the authority of the Bible may be, all agree that the Bible is an important book and

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1. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 49.

that it is desirable that children be familiar with it.¹ Jones, for example, says:

"There is general agreement that the Bible is a treasury of the world's greatest religious literature, preserving the religious heritage of the race as no other literature does. It is therefore important for all persons in present-day situations to know the great teachings and the great characters found in the Bible. It is important because only in the light of the past can we interpret the present. It is important because it provides a basis of unity and understanding among persons of faiths widely differing."²

Both Chaplin and Sherrill say that the Bible is not the record of spiritual laws which have ceased to function but that the religious experiences recorded in it are much the same as those today. In the Bible one finds meaningful guidance for one's own time.³ Sweet adds that it is considered out of date only by those who do not read it.⁴ Chaplin also points out that the Bible is great literature and that the chief men of letters have learned their art in this school.⁵ Eakin and Eakin describe it as a treasure trove of ancient lore to which one shall be indebted in part for enlightenment in helping children build good lives.⁶ Trent says that the Bible is the most helpful book both in learning and in teaching of God. Some parts of it are puzzling but most of it is understandable for "in its pages is the touch of humanity as well as the breath of God. Because it is an elemental book, because it is life, it has much for little children --

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1. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 63; Jones, op. cit., p. 117; Sweet, op. cit., p. 67; Trent, op. cit., p. 53; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 106; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 77.
2. Jones, op. cit., p. 118.
3. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 106; Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 77-79.
4. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 67.
5. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 113.
6. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

and for parents."¹

Sherrill points out, as does Chaplin, that children will not know much of this important book unless they learn about it at home. The responsibility lies with the parents.²

All the books except Nicholl devote at least one whole chapter to a discussion of the use of the Bible. The different authors approach the subject in different ways and cover different phases of it. Fox mostly discusses the Old Testament. He gives the parents an idea of the type of material contained in Job, Song of Solomon, Proverbs, and Psalms.³ He gives his interpretation of such stories as that of Jonah, Creation in Genesis, the Fall, Daniel, the Flood, Babel, and Abraham and Isaac.⁴ He does not give much directly on the use of the Bible with the child.

Eakin and Eakin discuss the Genesis creation story and the effect on children of treating the Bible with special reverence. At the end of the chapter they give suggestions for the use of the Bible with and by children at different ages.

Sherrill emphasizes the fact that the child should get his knowledge and understanding of the Bible primarily through his parents. He thus stresses the importance of the parents' becoming thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures and suggests ways in which the Bible may become increasingly meaningful for them.

Nicholl discusses the child's use of the Bible. He mentions

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1. Trent, op. cit., p. 53.
2. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 121; Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 106, 133.
3. Cf. Fox, op. cit., pp. 79-83.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 84-91.

Bible Reading Groups which the child may join and suggests that the parents help the child to make a Bible Reading Card.¹

Miss Jones discusses the values and methods of experience-centred and child-centred approaches to Bible teaching. She also tries to help the parents to understand the Bible and suggests how it may be used with children.²

Sweet stresses the needs of letting the Bible speak for itself and of having teaching related to everyday living. He gives principles for the selection of Bible stories for children.³

Trent gives suggestions for the use of the Bible and Bible story books with children. She points out the elements of a good story and tries to help parents to learn to tell Bible stories in an interesting way.⁴

Miss Chaplin discusses the reasons for the neglect of the Bible by many today and the results of the present-day ignorance of its message. She then tells how the Bible came to be. She suggests books for the parents to read if they feel the need for guidance or information about the findings of recent Biblical scholarship.⁵ She discusses the selection of Biblical material for children and gives the principles of story telling. The last part of her chapter on the Bible deals with the church school curricula and lesson planning.⁶

Analysis of the various discussions of the Bible revealed

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1. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., pp. 36-38.
2. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 118-130.
3. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 67-75.
4. Cf. Trent, op. cit., pp. 53-77.
5. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 117.
6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 124-132.

that the main topics generally included are the authority of the Bible, the principles involved in the use of the Bible with children, Biblical material suitable for use with children, and memorization of Scripture. These will now be considered.

1. The Authority of the Bible

Chaplin and Sweet point out that one need not be afraid of modern research when it comes to Bible study.¹ The Bible will stand any amount of questioning and research and always come out on top.² Things are in the Bible because they are true and they do not need to be protected or defended. Chaplin says that one should value the clearer setting into which the events of the life of Jesus can be placed as a result of modern criticism.³ Later in her book Miss Chaplin seems to suggest that she agrees with those who freely reject whatever they consider to be outgrown in the morality or the theology of the Old Testament.⁴

Sherrill says that the Bible is the supreme source for the direction of one's thinking about God and one's experience of Him. It holds a wholly unique place in the Christian life. It is the "infallible rule of faith and practice". "God has communicated Himself to men, and ...in this Book we have an account of that revelation so reliable as to justify us in staking everything, for all time, upon that record."⁵

Jones says that the text of the Bible may or may not be the

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 66; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 107.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 66.
3. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 107.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 118.
5. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 68.

word of God to men. It depends on whether it is used or not and on how it is used. It is not the word of God to men so long as it remains unopened, so long as it is read perfunctorily or quoted in or out of context to win an argument. It is the word of God to those who, diligently studying it and meditating upon its sayings, through it hear God speak to them.¹

To Fox and to the Eakins the Bible is by no means a historical or scientific document and it is not a revelation from God.² Fox says that the writers of the Old Testament, when writing about matters of science, attempted "to put down what seemed to them or to the reciters of earlier legends, upon which they based their writings, to be a reasonable explanation of natural phenomena."³ Their knowledge of the character of God was primitive and very imperfect. Some of their conceptions were incomplete or even false in the light of the fuller knowledge which one has today.⁴ Eakin and Eakin say that one has a better knowledge of many of the scientific problems today than the writers had then and that one would trust the answer of today's scientists more than the Bible record.⁵ However Eakin and Eakin say that the value of the Bible by no means depends on all its material being strictly factual.⁶

Trent and Nicholl do not discuss this problem but imply that the Bible is a unique book. It is the word of God to man.

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 115.
2. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 84; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 38, 60.
3. Fox, op. cit., p. 84.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 85.
5. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 59-60.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 58.

2. Principles Involved in the Use of the Bible With Children

Four of the authors state that the parents must have found the Bible helpful in their own lives before they can make it meaningful to the children.¹ Sweet says that the parents need not be Bible experts before they can help their children but they need to feel that the Bible has a message for them as well as for their children. He suggests that as well as studying the Bible individually they should attend a good class for Bible study.² Sherrill points out that the Bible is meant to guide the thinking of adults who will then guide the thought and experience of the child. Since the Bible reaches the child through the parents, it is highly important for the parents to grow in their understanding of the Bible.³ He says that the fact that the Bible reaches the child through the parents remains true to a large extent throughout childhood even after many parts of the Bible can be fairly well understood.⁴ He adds that "In so far as the parents' conception of ethics is governed by the Bible, the Bible makes its way through to children long before any of its formal teaching could be understood."⁵ The spirit of the parent in his living will shape the child's grasp of the Bible far more than any techniques, however valuable in themselves, for using the Bible in the family.⁶ Jones also points out that even before the children have had any definite teaching about

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 66; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 69; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 38; Jones, op. cit., p. 117.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 65.
3. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 75.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 80.
5. Ibid., p. 76.
6. Cf. Ibid., pp. 76-77.

the Bible they should have formed an attitude of expectancy toward it through seeing their parents or older children reading it.¹

Trent thinks that there is value in treating the Bible with special reverence and not putting any other book on it.² Eakin and Eakin disagree with this view and think it does more harm than good.³

Chaplin and Sherrill agree in pointing out that one should not use a special voice when talking about or reading the Bible to children.⁴

Nearly all the authors suggest the use of several versions of the Bible as aids in interpretation. They also mention the use of Children's Bibles.⁵ Chaplin points out the beauty of the language in the King James version and suggests that very young children will appreciate its cadences without understanding its meaning.⁶

Chaplin, Jones, Sweet, and Nicholl agree that one must work to make the Bible come alive for children.⁷ If the Bible is taught in an interesting and meaningful way early in life, it is likely to continue to be interesting later in life. But if it is taught wrongly early in life, the Bible may become neglected or despised later on.⁸ The child must be motivated to read the Bible. He will appreciate and want to read it himself if it has been associated with many hours of

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 117.
2. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 62.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 58-59.
4. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 118; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 116.
5. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 77; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 117; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 118; Jones, op. cit., p. 124; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 36.
6. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 118.
7. Cf. Ibid., p. 109; Jones, op. cit., p. 123; Sweet, op. cit., p. 70; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 38.
8. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 70.

companionship in story telling and study with the parents. He will love it if he has been helped to find in it the answers to questions about the meaning of life.¹ Sweet says that one should stop worrying about storing the child's mind with the Bible and put all one's effort on getting the Bible into his experience.² Sweet and Trent say that if one lets the Bible speak for itself, the child will enjoy it.³ It is not knowledge about the Bible, that one needs most but rather "persistent, unclouded everyday exposure to its light and truth."⁴

Eakin and Eakin believe that the parent will do most for the child by seeing that his urge for discovery is turned at the proper times and in proper ways toward the Bible. The child should peruse the Bible not because so doing is supposed to be good for him but because he likes to.⁵

Fox says that at first the parent should tell the Bible stories in his own words, but as the child grows older the parent should gradually approximate his words to the language of the Bible itself so that the child will become familiar with the incomparable speech of the English Bible.⁶ Trent suggests that many passages can be told directly in the language of the Bible even to small children. The creation story, the twenty-third Psalm and the story of the lost sheep are suitable for this because of their distinct rhythm.⁷

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 67; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 38; Jones, op. cit., p. 123.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 71.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 67; Trent, op. cit., p. 60.
4. Sweet, op. cit., p. 67.
5. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 63.
6. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 91.
7. Cf. Trent, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

Sherrill, Jones, and Sweet suggest that the parent and the child should read the Bible together as great literature.¹ When the children ask for stories to be read or told, there is opportunity to use the Bible.²

3. Biblical Material Suitable for Use With Children

Chaplin says, and most of the other authors seem to agree that there is no set rule as to what Bible teaching a child should have at a given age.³ Sweet gives some principles for selecting Bible stories for use with children. They take into account emotional qualities, imagination and ability to grasp abstract ideas as well as the age of the child. They are as follows:

"First, is there an interest, or can a normal interest be created?... Secondly, does the story have any real present meaning?... Thirdly, what sort of permanent impression is the story likely to make?... Finally, does the story tend to develop appreciation?"⁴

Sherrill says that the amount of material in the Bible which a very young child can grasp is exceedingly limited,⁵ but Trent seems to think that he can grasp a great deal.⁶ Eakin and Eakin would use very few Bible stories with the small child.⁷ The other authors do not mention this problem specifically.

Sweet, Chaplin, and Jones point out that, although the child will first learn of single incidents in the life of Jesus and in the

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 69-70; Sweet, op. cit., p. 68; Jones, op. cit., p. 119.
2. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 115.
3. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 119.
4. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
5. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 74.
6. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 60.
7. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 66.

life of the Old Testament characters, these studies should later be supplemented with whole book studies so that the child will get a total view of the Bible and not just a fragmentary hodgepodge knowledge which often leaves a totally false impression.¹ Sherrill suggests Mark as suitable for the first consecutive reading of an entire gospel. He also mentions Acts as a good book for study with children.² Chaplin says that it is better to tell a few stories which are understood than many which cause confusion.³ Jones and Sweet feel that by eight or ten years of age the child is ready for a few brief biographies.⁴

Chaplin and Sweet point out that the Old Testament should not be overstressed with small children, to the neglect of the New Testament. One should not think of the Old Testament as being preeminently the children's part of the Bible. So doing may be the cause of many young people's having a sub-Christian or even unchristian idea of God. The young child needs the comfort and the joy of knowing that Jesus came to show him what God is like, and to hear a few stories about Him.⁵ Sherrill says that the stories of Jesus will constantly be at the centre of one's teaching even with little children.⁶ Eakin and Eakin also mention the stories of the baby Jesus and Jesus as a boy among the first Bible stories to be told.⁷ Trent says that if one is to teach

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 75-76; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 122; Jones, op. cit., p. 119.
2. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 120.
3. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 122.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., pp. 128-129; Sweet, op. cit., p. 76.
5. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 76; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 122.
6. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 118.
7. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 66.

little children of God, one must show them Jesus.¹ Thus New Testament stories would comprise an important part of her teaching material too.

Among the Old Testament stories those of Moses, Samuel, David, Joseph, and Ruth are the most frequently mentioned for use with the little child.² Fox deals mostly with the interpretation of Old Testament stories. Jonah has a fascination when told as a fairy story, but will create in the child's mind an unpleasant idea of the parent's credulity if told as a historic incident.³ Along with Eakin and Eakin, Fox believes that the story of creation as told in Genesis should be taught as a legend.⁴ The same principle holds for the stories of the Fall, Daniel in the lion's den, and the three men in the furnace. In fact, according to Fox, all the early stories should be treated as legends and one should take care that the child shall understand that they have no scientific or historical value. However one should try to get the child to understand the truths that lie behind them. The stories of the Flood and Babel have no particular value and are attempts to express early ideas of the origin of racial and tribal distribution.⁵

Jones says not to tell Old Testament stories which represent God as vengeful, but only those which help to clarify his thoughts of God in harmony with the teachings and revelation of Jesus.⁶

Sweet and Jones point out that in selecting material for

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1. Cf. Trent, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
2. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, *op. cit.*, p. 66; Sherrill, *op. cit.*, p. 118; Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
3. Cf. Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
4. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 86; Eakin and Eakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.
5. Cf. Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
6. Cf. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

use with children one should recognize the fact that many passages such as the twenty-third Psalm may be used for a partial interpretation. It is not necessary to wait till they can be fully understood by the child, for the child will get a feeling of well being and trust from the great musical quality of the Psalm. He will form impressions and attitudes which will be a foundation for a growing appreciation and understanding.¹

Trent lists some stories that she would use with little children.² Sweet and Sherrill also give helpful lists of Biblical material which is suited to use with children.³

Several of the authors mention that the child should be getting background material about the Bible also. Nicholl says that by eight or nine years of age the child should be familiar with the appearance of the Jewish Roll of the Law. He should know stories of St. Columba and St. Cuthbert and the monks who laboured to copy the Scriptures.⁴ Along with Jones and Chaplin he mentions that the child should learn also of the adventures and courage of the other translators.⁵ Nicholl, Jones, Chaplin, and Eakin and Eakin say that he should know something about the Bible as a collection of books and of how it came to be. Chaplin gives in detail just what the child should be told.⁶ Chaplin also says that by six or seven years of age he should be learn-

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 128; Sweet, op. cit., p. 73.
2. Cf. Trent, op. cit., pp. 67-68.
3. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 119-120; Sweet, op. cit., pp. 77-81.
4. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 37.
5. Cf. Ibid.; Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 107-113; Jones, op. cit., p. 130.
6. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 66; Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 109-113; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 38.

ing something of Palestinian life and the customs of the East.¹

4. Memorization of Scripture

Only Sweet, Eakin and Eakin, and Chaplin discuss the subject of memorization of Scripture passages. All are agreed that there is little value in it if the child does not understand the meaning of the words.² Sweet emphasizes that Scripture should not be learned only to carry it tucked away in the memory so that it may mean something to one when one gets older but it must mean something now in order to be more than mere repetition of words.³ On the other hand Chaplin says that the child needs his memory stored with lovely things in order to help him against the difficult years ahead.⁴ She says that there is a great need for more memorizing of the Bible and suggests that at the age of six or seven simple memory work, carefully chosen, can begin.⁵ She says that the Junior age is the time when some of the noblest passages of the Bible should be committed to memory.⁶

Eakin and Eakin emphasize the fact that one cannot count much on bare memorization of lofty maxims of conduct as a means of building up children's lives or making Christians of them. They say that,

"Only as the Bible verse or lines of a hymn or poem make contact with something in the child's experience which gives it meaning

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1. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 123.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 69; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 35; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 62.
3. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 70.
4. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 37.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 124.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 35.

and warmth, only thus is there substantial ground for hoping that it may be a force for good in him."¹

C. The Place of Prayer in the Home

All of the authors are agreed that prayer is important in the child's life. Sweet says that the manner of prayer shapes the child's attitudes.² Nicholl says that prayer is a refuge from fear and anxiety to tiny children.³ Jones mentions that prayer is creative. It changes the one who prays. She continues by saying that

"God can do through men who pray what he cannot do through men who do not pray, because the man who prays comes increasingly to understand the purposes of God and renews his strength to undertake the hard, often unpopular work that must be done to realize those purposes in the earth."⁴

Sweet mentions the importance of prayer in the family life. "Prayer brings God into the family... Sincere prayer and the conditions that make it possible tend to lift family life to higher levels, to keep the sights high, to push the horizons back."⁵

It was found that most of the authors included in their discussions of prayer the following topics: the meaning of prayer, teaching the child to pray, reality in prayer, wrong concepts of prayer, the use of printed prayers, grace at meals. These will now be considered.

1. The Meaning of Prayer

All of the authors except Eakin and Eakin agree that prayer

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1. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 62.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 90.
3. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 44.
4. Jones, op. cit., p. 164.
5. Sweet, op. cit., p. 83.

is fellowship with God.¹ For the child it is talking with God, really getting in touch with Him and telling Him what one needs and sharing one's joys with Him. It is listening to God and waiting for His guidance.²

To Eakin and Eakin prayer for the child is communion with the good in the parent. It is quiet conversation with the parent when the parent helps the child to see his failures and decide about his mistakes. This is the best kind of communion with God. This is real.³ Eakin and Eakin mention that later a child may begin to express himself not only to the parent but to God, that is, to "the good".⁴

Fox and Chaplin also suggest that evening prayers may sometimes be a talk between parent and child.⁵ But Fox says that the parent should remind the child that God is also there listening. The child may say, "Thank you Father" for some happy experience or "I'm sorry, and God knows that I'm sorry just as you do" when things have gone wrong.⁶

2. Teaching the Child to Pray

Six of the authors believe that the parent should begin to teach the child about prayer and to teach him how to pray when he is young.⁷ Chaplin and Nicholl say that the child's first experience of

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 83; Fox, op. cit., p. 45; Trent, op. cit., p. 88; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 130; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 40; Jones, op. cit., p. 158; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 53.
2. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 88; Sweet, op. cit., p. 85.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 17, 21.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 27.
5. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 64; Fox, op. cit., p. 49.
6. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 49.
7. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 89; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 136; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 39; Jones, op. cit., p. 153; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 55; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 26.

prayer may come through seeing a parent or older child praying. This may call forth a feeling of love and reverence to the One to whom the prayers are said and create in the child a desire to pray also.¹ Nicholl mentions that a child may be led to pray through seeing a picture of the baby Jesus over his cot, and after a talk with his mother, say good-night to the Baby.²

Trent says that the first step in teaching a child to pray is to lead him to want to pray. This can be done by helping him to think of God as the kind of person to whom he would like to talk. If he has been led to think of God as kind and loving, as the Creator of the universe, when he begins to wonder about the beautiful flowers he sees, it will be natural for him to want to say "Thank you" to God.³ Again through the use of special prayers on his birthday and in times of illness or in times of special joy, the child may be led to think of prayer naturally.⁴

Sherrill believes that when a family worships together and when this worship is genuine there is no necessity to select a time or way to begin telling the child about prayer. He will select his own time and way of beginning to pray. The parents need only to guide the experience.⁵ If this method is not possible, the child may be led to pray through an experience of gratitude and wonder over the good gifts of life.⁶ Jones, too, believes that it is through the door of wonder

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1. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 55-56; Nicholl, op. cit., pp. 39-40.
2. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 40.
3. Cf. Trent, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 86-87.
5. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 137.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 138.

that the child is most likely to first experience prayer.¹

Sweet does not mention how soon a child should begin to pray or how one should go about teaching him but emphasizes that it should be natural.²

It would appear that Fox would not teach the child about prayer very early. He would explain prayer and teach the child to pray through telling him about Jesus' habits of prayer to God and would withhold any mention of God till the child has learned quite a bit about Jesus.³ Thus it would seem that prayer is postponed for some time.

3. Reality in Prayer

All the authors agree that prayer is not real prayer unless it is sincere and natural. Prayer is not just a set of words without any meaning to the person using them. It is not a magic formula to ward off evil.⁴ Thus Sherrill, Nicholl, Sweet, Fox, Trent, and Eakin and Eakin emphasize that it is important that prayer be related to the daily experiences of the child and not be an isolated experience.⁵ The child should not think of praying only in a special place, or at a special time such as bedtime, or on a special day, but should be led to realize that he can pray to God at anytime or anywhere.⁶ However, Nicholl and Sherrill point out that there is value in having a set

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 153.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 84.
3. Cf. Fox, op. cit., pp. 28, 45.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 133.
5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 135-136; Sweet, op. cit., p. 89; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 16; Fox, op. cit., pp. 47-48; Trent, op. cit., p. 87; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 46.
6. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 48.

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time and place for prayer. It aids in establishing a habit of prayer.¹ Nicholl says that one should suggest to the child that it is a good thing to start each day with God's blessing and finish each day by telling Him how one has got along, by saying one is sorry for wrong things, and by asking Him to remind and help one to do better.²

Fox points out that position in prayer does not really matter and it does not matter whether one's eyes are open or closed. However, he says that the parent should tell the child that one usually finds it easier to think of God and talk to Him when one can shut out of sight the things around one which tend to take one's thoughts away from God.³ Although Sherrill agrees that position in prayer does not make any essential difference he warns that reverence for God may be lost through over-familiarity.⁴

Nicholl and Chaplin suggest that one should not talk about "saying" prayers but about praying or talking with God.⁵

Jones suggests that it often helps the child to experience reality in prayer if the parent and child first talk over the things that the child wishes to say to God or ask God. The parent may guide the thoughts of the prayer by helping the child to word it.⁶

Fox, Nicholl, and Chaplin agree that the parent should see that the child's requests are definite. "Bless" is a vague and lazy word. It generally has little meaning for the child and when such is

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 136.
2. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 47.
3. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 47.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 136.
5. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 44; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 36.
6. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 161.

the case it should be avoided.¹

All of the authors except Eakin and Eakin, who do not discuss the subject, agree that the child's prayers must be more than asking.² Trent says that the child's first prayers should be "thank you" prayers.³ Chaplin believes that they should take the form of contemplation.⁴ Jones says that the child's experience in prayer should move from "asking God" or "telling God" to seeking to know the will of God and to finding in prayer true fellowship with God.⁵ Nicholl, Sherrill, Sweet, and Trent stress the fact that the child should learn to pray for strength to act rather than for God to do something for him.⁶

Most of the authors agree that prayer for the child should include intercession for others and prayers for forgiveness as well as personal petitions and "thank yous".⁷ They agree that these, too, should be closely related to experience. Fox says that the parent should talk with the child about his friends and those whom he has met during the day and decide what he shall "wish" for them.⁸ Nicholl says that praying for people seems to be more real if the child talks to God of someone who is already in his mind, for example, the man who wrote

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1. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 40; Fox, op. cit., p. 50; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 62.
2. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 45; Fox, op. cit., p. 48; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 53; Trent, op. cit., p. 88; Jones, op. cit., p. 166; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 145; Sweet, op. cit., p. 89.
3. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 89.
4. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 53.
5. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 166.
6. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 45; Sweet, op. cit., p. 89; Trent, op. cit., p. 88; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 146.
7. Cf. Fox, op. cit., pp. 47, 49; Trent, op. cit., p. 86; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 47; Jones, op. cit., p. 159; Sweet, op. cit., pp. 84-86; Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 60-65; Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 140, 142.
8. Cf. Fox, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

the story book he has been reading.¹ Trent and Chaplin say that if confessions of wrongdoing and prayers for forgiveness are to mean anything to the child they must come naturally and voluntarily and they must be sincere, simple, and concrete.²

Chaplin and Sweet mention that training in the practice of silence and meditation has been neglected.³

4. Wrong Concepts of Prayer

All the authors except Fox point out that children often get altogether wrong concepts of prayer which, if not corrected, have a devastating effect on their concept of God and their faith in prayer.⁴ Trent, Jones, Chaplin, Nicholl, and Sweet point out that some children think of God as a kind of Santa Claus and prayer as a magic formula to get what they want.⁵ Others think of themselves as "assistant managers" of the universe and think they should be able to control the weather by their prayers.⁶ Others because of blind belief in prayer are disillusioned when a sick person for whom they have prayed dies.⁷ The authors suggest certain conditions of prayer which, if realized by the child, will help him to avoid these pitfalls. They are:

1. The person who prays has much to do with the answer he

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1. Cf. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 45.
2. Cf. Trent, op. cit., pp. 86,89; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 63.
3. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 65; Sweet, op. cit., p. 85.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 143.
5. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 88; Jones, op. cit., p. 160; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 61; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 44; Sweet, op. cit., p. 89.
6. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 89; Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 143-144; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 62.
7. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 19; Trent, op. cit., p. 84.

receives.¹

2. God knows what is best for one and sometimes His answer is "no". This can be accepted if one knows that God's love is behind it.²
3. God's ways are sometimes beyond one's understanding but His love is unchanging.³
4. The answer to a prayer sometimes comes through a combination of events which one could not foresee.⁴
5. God has to think of the greater good. He cannot satisfy every little whim of each individual.⁵
6. There are limits to the requests which one has any right to make of God.⁶
7. The test of prayer is not so much whether one gets what one wishes as it is whether one becomes the kind of person God wishes.⁷

5. The Use of Printed Prayers

All the authors agree that memorized or printed prayers have some value but emphasize that they should be varied and explained so

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 89; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 144; Jones, op. cit., p. 164.
2. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 61; Sweet, op. cit., p. 90; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 19; Trent, op. cit., p. 88; Jones, op. cit., p. 162.
3. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 84; Sweet, op. cit., p. 90.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 145.
5. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 89; Jones, op. cit., p. 161.
6. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 144.
7. Cf. Ibid., p. 145.

that they do not become mere vain repetition.¹ Sweet and Sherrill suggest that this kind of prayers may be helpful in guiding the child's thoughts and in giving him a mode and medium of expression.² Eakin and Eakin say that, if a child learns a few bits of verse which can be used as prayer expressions, he will be fortified against an emergency. He will be able to say that he prays.³ Fox and Trent suggest that the child be helped to make up his own prayers which he can learn and use from time to time.⁴

Sweet, Trent, and Chaplin include examples of prayers in their books and also suggest books of prayers which may be used with children.⁵

All are agreed, however, that it is important that the child be encouraged to talk to God in his own way.

6. Grace at Meals

Sherrill, Nicholl, Trent, and Chaplin are the only authors who discuss this subject. All agree that grace, as other prayer, should not be allowed to become stereotyped. Any one pattern of words should be avoided.⁶ All mention the fact that the child should have opportunities to take part in "grace". Trent suggests that a simple verse may be helpful in leading the small child to express his own thanks.⁷ All

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 84; Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., pp. 16,18, 28; Fox, op. cit., p. 48; Trent, op. cit., pp. 90,96; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 113; Nicholl, op. cit., pp. 46,47; Jones, op. cit., p. 166; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 64.
2. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 84; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 139.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 18.
4. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 49; Trent, op. cit., p. 93.
5. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., pp. 92-98; Trent, op. cit., pp. 92-95; Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 58-59.
6. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 113; Trent, op. cit., p. 91; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 49; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 59.
7. Cf. Trent, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

give examples of prayers suitable for use at meals.¹

D. Formal Worship Experiences

Besides the individual worship experiences which the child may have, all the authors except Fox mention that the child needs experiences in group worship. Jones puts it in these words:

"To many persons a sense of the reality of God and fellowship with him comes most readily through group worship. Indeed, there are some thoughtful students who are of the opinion that it is primarily when persons feel themselves a part of a group, responsible for, and responsive to, others, that they are likely to have a real experience of God. Togetherness among human personalities is, beyond doubt, a great incentive to the worship of God...In the home and in the church boys and girls need the experience of group worship."²

Most of the authors discuss some aspects of worship in the home, in the church, and in the church school. A consideration of each of these follows.

1. Worship in the Home

Eakin and Eakin, Sweet, Chaplin, Sherrill, Trent, and Jones all mention family worship. Eakin and Eakin say that it is impracticable these days. It was only a means, often not a very effective one, to the enrichment and improvement of life for the family and its members, and there are other means as good or better.³ Jones believes that children need the experience of group worship in the home but she does not discuss this subject.⁴

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 113-114; Trent, op. cit., p. 91; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 48; Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 59-60.
2. Jones, op. cit., p. 170.
3. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 94.
4. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 170.

The other authors discuss family worship at more length.

All are in favour of it.¹ Trent says,

"Because family worship puts God at the center of life and recognizes him as an integral part of normal, happy living, it does much to help the child to build his concept and grow in his relationship to God...try family worship."²

Sherrill adds,

"In the family there is, in some respects, the finest of all opportunities for worship in which children may share. It has the great advantage of being more intimate and personal than is possible in a larger group. It helps children to regard prayer as part of a normal life, and not as an experience reserved only for our privacy or for occasions when we are in church. The ideas can be adapted to the background of particular children in a way that cannot be done in larger groups. And the widest freedom is possible, thus not only greatly broadening and enriching the experience of worship itself, but also offering a unique opportunity to prevent it from becoming a mechanical and dreaded routine."³

All but Trent discuss the time when family worship is held.

Sweet says that right before or after breakfast is best as it gives a good start for the day but, if this is not possible, the next best time is after the evening meal.⁴ He points out that if it is impossible to have it every day or even at certain times during the week, one can make use of special occasions such as family nights, special outings, and Sunday evenings.⁵ Chaplin suggests that the parents and child spend some time together in worship just before the child goes to bed.⁶

Sherrill says that, if it is impossible to get the whole family to-

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 103; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 57; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 124; Trent, op. cit., p. 103.
2. Trent, op. cit., p. 103.
3. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 123.
4. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 103.
5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 104-105.
6. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 57.

gether for worship regularly, two or more of them might unite for worship.¹

All agree that one should be careful not to isolate these worship experiences from the experiences of everyday life.² Trent, Sweet, and Sherrill agree that the one who leads the worship must give careful thought and planning to it so that there is newness and expectancy and not monotony.³ It is suggested that the worship may include some of the following: a story, a Scripture reading, hymns, prayer, a discussion about the Scripture passage or about family problems, the study of a picture, and listening to music.⁴ Trent stresses the fact that everything that is used should be related to the experience of the child.⁵ She gives a list of Psalms which are suitable for use with children⁶ and suggests that stories of Jesus and stories Jesus told might be the basis of other series of worship services.⁷ The hymns used should be those which the child is likely to hear at church and church school. One should help the child to understand their meaning. If there is no musical instrument, the hymns may be read.⁸ Trent also mentions that one should help the child "see" in his mind the scene portrayed by the Scripture.⁹

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 124.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 125,126; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 57; Sweet, op. cit., p. 103; Trent, op. cit., p. 104.
3. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 103; Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 124, 125; Trent, op. cit., p. 104.
4. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., p. 57; Sweet, op. cit., p. 103; Trent, op. cit., p. 110; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 125.
5. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 104.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 108.
7. Cf. Ibid., p. 112.
8. Cf. Ibid., pp. 112-113.
9. Cf. Ibid., p. 114.

Sherrill suggests that instead of having a uniform manner of reading the Scripture, at times a Psalm might be said in concert after it has been memorized by all. The children should have opportunities to participate in the worship. As they grow older they can take turns at reading the Scripture, telling a story, or praying.¹

Both Trent and Sherrill mention the use of poems which stir the mood of wonder and worship.² They state that birthdays and other special occasions offer opportunities for thanksgiving.³ Sherrill also mentions the use of special booklets and printed prayers in family worship.⁴

Sweet suggests that it is a good thing to have a family altar - a sacred or dedicated spot marked by a religious picture or by the presence of the Bible or devotional literature. This spot helps to remind one of God's presence.⁵

2. Worship in the Church

As well as there being value in corporate worship in the home, all the authors except Fox, who does not discuss the church, assume or point out that there are some values for the child in worshipping with the church group.⁶ Sherrill, quoting Mary Alice Jones, says,

"Both adults and children need the sense of fellowship, one with

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1. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 125.
2. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 114; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 125.
3. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 116; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 126.
4. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 128-129.
5. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 107.
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 123; Nicholl, op. cit., p. 51; Trent, op. cit., p. 124; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 151; Jones, op. cit., p. 136; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 32.

the other, in worship. For children to have the experience of seeing the entire congregation worshipping together, the men of affairs and the humble workers, to feel themselves a part of the great church universal, is an experience of high religious value.¹

There are, however, varying views among the authors as to the age at which the child should begin to worship with the family in the church. Eakin and Eakin say that if a person does not attend church when he is a child he probably will not when he is an adult but they feel that the average church service has little appeal for the child. They say also that children's sermons seldom accomplish much.² They feel that the answer is through closer co-operation between the church and the church school.³ If the church school is spoken of as the church, then the children feel that they belong to the church in a very real sense.⁴ They believe that there should be several Family Day Services in the year when the service is planned to meet the needs of the children. Thus some of the values of worshipping with the other members of the family are maintained.⁵

Nicholl says, "Undoubtedly, in the early years, parents and children should attend Church as a family group."⁶ But he explains, "If we covet for the children experiences of corporate worship, feeling that from that basis real spiritual growth may come, we must consider how best we can help them to desire to take part in the services of the

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1. Jones, M. A.: The Church and the Children, as quoted by Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 160-161.
2. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 82.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 83.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 88.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 87.
6. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 51.

Church."¹ Before the child goes to church on Sunday he should be told simply about the service, and should visit the church through the week.² After the child has been to church, the parent should talk with him about the service, try to discover his reaction, and be ready to help and explain if need be.³ The service should not be criticized in the child's hearing.⁴

Trent believes that the child should be taken to the church service when young. She says that most of the objections to taking him come from the parents and not from the child.⁵ She cites several contributions which she feels the church service can make to the child. They are:

1. "From his experiences in church the child gets a sense of something big, something worth while, a feeling of Somebody so great, so powerful, so loving that people come together to think about him and talk about him and to speak with him."⁶
2. "At church the child can operate, outwardly at least, on an adult level. This he likes to do for short periods of time."⁷
3. "From the people about him the child gets a cumulative feeling that there is a connection between God and happiness."⁸
4. "At church the child hears talk of God and of right and wrong. As he listens to discussions of what is pleasing and displeasing to God, he comes to form his own standards of right and wrong. He comes to think of conduct in the light of God's approval or disapproval, and later to have some conception of sin as departure from God's way."⁹

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1. Nicholl, op. cit., p. 51.
2. Cf. Ibid.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 53.
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 54.
5. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 124.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., pp. 124-125.

5. "Church experiences make a contribution to the child's vocabulary."¹
6. "In addition to a vocabulary, the child absorbs easily certain attitudes and concepts both from the things he hears and from the things he feels as he sits with his father and mother in the church service."²
7. "Often, in church, the child gets help for everyday living."³
8. The church service proper offers to the child the experience of being with a group of individuals who are seeking and coming into contact with God.⁴

Sherrill also says that it is desirable that children attend church with the family at least by the time they are six.⁵ He says,

"It is a common conviction that a serious gap springs up in personal Christian life and in corporate church life if children do not begin early to attend the service of worship in which the whole congregation gathers; and that there is a corresponding gain if there is this participation."⁶

Sherrill recognizes the difficulty of conducting worship services so that the children's needs will be met and says that the most promising efforts lie along the line of trying to bridge the gap between church and church school and thus having only a church.⁷

Sweet stresses the importance of the church in the life of the family. He says, "The Church lifts the family together toward higher loyalties, which give meaning, greater permanence, and stability to family loyalties."⁸ Therefore the church activities deserve to have

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1. Trent, op. cit., p. 125.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 126-127.
4. Ibid., p. 130.
5. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 160, 162.
6. Ibid., pp. 159-160.
7. Cf. Ibid., pp. 162, 163.
8. Sweet, op. cit., p. 119.

a place in the family schedule. Sweet says that not later than the junior age, children should learn to participate with their parents in the church services. The services should be planned to make family worship possible.¹

Chaplin says that children get "something" from the music, the fellowship, and the general atmosphere of the church. She also says that most of the service is over the heads of the children and often conditions them to thinking that religion is just a lot of meaningless words. This, she says, can be partly counteracted at home by helping them to understand the form of service, the prayers, and the hymns.²

Jones feels that regularly the children should have services of their own or be left at home at least till they are of school age. She says that the graded program of the church school provides for many needs peculiar to children but there are needs, interests, and experiences which children share with adults and there should be opportunity for meeting these needs through a common service of worship.³ Both adults and children need the sense of fellowship one with the other in worship. She suggests that there should be occasions for a common service of worship for all the members of the church family, planned with all participants in mind.⁴

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1. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 123.
2. Cf. Chaplin, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
3. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 173.
4. Cf. Ibid.

3. Worship in the Church School

All of the authors except Nicholl and Fox, who do not discuss the church school, point out that the church school offers excellent opportunities for the child to participate in worship in a larger group than the family. Because it is suited to the different age groups, it has more meaning and reality than an adult service.¹ Sherrill, Chaplin, Trent, and Sweet add that it provides a means of reinforcing the efforts of the home.² It affords opportunities of planning with children for worship. The informal methods used in many church schools allow for moments of spontaneous worship.³

Trent says that the basic contribution of the church school is that it provides association with men and women who love God and who want to share their experience of Him with little children.⁴ It also offers the little child songs on his own level, happy experiences in praise and prayer, knowledge of the Bible, and understanding of its relation to daily living.⁵

Eakin and Eakin, Sweet, Sherrill, and Jones clearly point out that parents should not have the attitude that the church school is only for children, but should themselves take a vital interest in it.⁶

Jones and Sweet state that the church school should help the

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1. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 86; Trent, op. cit., p. 123; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 156; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 91.
2. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., p. 154; Chaplin, op. cit., p. 79; Trent, op. cit., p. 123; Sweet, op. cit., p. 123.
3. Cf. Sherrill, op. cit., pp. 156, 157.
4. Cf. Trent, op. cit., p. 122.
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 123.
6. Cf. Eakin and Eakin, op. cit., p. 72; Sweet, op. cit., p. 125; Sherrill, op. cit., p. 158; Jones, op. cit., p. 141.

child feel that he is in a real sense a member of the church family.¹

E. Summary

In this chapter the place of both individual and group worship in the Christian nurture of children has been discussed. The use of the Bible in the home with and by children was first considered. It was found that all the writers agree that the Bible is a book with which children should become acquainted early in life. There is some disagreement among the authors as to the authority of the Scriptures. It was found emphasized that the parent's attitude toward the Bible influences the child's attitude toward it and his understanding of it. Four of the authors point out that parents must work to make the Bible come alive for children. It must be taught in an interesting way and be related to the child's experiences and problems. There is some disagreement, too, it was discovered, among the authors as to the amount of material in the Bible which the young child can grasp. Sweet, Chaplin, Jones, and Sherrill mention that the study of individual Bible stories needs to be supplemented by whole book studies. Biblical material used with small children should include New Testament as well as Old Testament stories. Memorization of Scripture is discussed by three of the authors. They are agreed that it should have some present meaning for the child if it is to be worthwhile.

All but Eakin and Eakin were found to agree that prayer is fellowship with God. Six of the authors believe that the parent should

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1. Cf. Jones, op. cit., p. 142; Sweet, op. cit., p. 126.

begin to teach the child about prayer when he is quite young. The child may be led to pray through seeing others pray or through an experience of gratitude and wonder over the good gifts of life. If children's prayers are to be real, they need to be sincere, definite, related to the daily experiences of the children and not limited to bedtime prayers. They should include intercession, thanksgiving, petition, confession, and meditation. Wrong concepts of prayer which affect the child's concept of God and his faith in prayer are pointed out. All the authors agree that memorized or printed prayers have some value but they suggest that they should be varied.

All but two of the books were seen to mention family worship. All are in favour of it except Eakin and Eakin who think it is impracticable. All agree that the program should be varied and related to life so that it does not become monotonous and meaningless. Each member of the family should have some part in it and it should be planned to meet the needs of all.

All but Fox, it was found, agree that the child needs experiences of worship in groups outside the home. They are agreed that there is some value for the child in worshiping with his family in the main worship service. However most of the authors feel that this service is not usually planned for children and suggest that they usually benefit more from attending services planned for them in the church school. In this case Family Services in the church should be planned several times a year in order to maintain some of the values of worshiping with the other members of the family.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Summary

In recent years there has been a new emphasis upon the importance of the home in the Christian nurture of children. As a result authorities in the field of Christian education have written books to help parents meet their responsibility. For this study Protestant books for parents dealing with the Christian nurture of children up to twelve years of age which were written in the last ten years and published in America were selected. The purpose of this thesis has been to examine these eight books to discover their emphases. On examination it was found that the main emphases lay in the realm of the parents' responsibility, the theological concepts to be taught, and the place of worship in the Christian nurture of children.

In the first chapter the parents' responsibility in the Christian nurture of children, as stressed by the authors, was briefly discussed. It was seen that there is general agreement concerning the four basic needs of children - the needs of security, friendly companionship, association with people whose character they can respect, and freedom to grow - which, if met, form firm foundations on which religious values can be built. It was found that these needs are met through a proper parent-child relationship.

Most of the writers express the opinion that the parents'

own religious conviction is of utmost importance to the Christian nurture of the children. The parents cannot lead the child into a deeper experience than they themselves have known.

All the authors were seen to agree that parents have a responsibility to teach their children in the Christian faith both by example and by precept. It was found that there are certain principles of teaching which are emphasized in most of the books. These are:

- a) Care should be taken that nothing is taught which later will have to be unlearned;
- b) All Christian teaching should arise out of natural situations and should not be forced.
- c) The parents always should be sincere and honest in their dealings with the child.

A few of the authors, it was discovered, mention that the parents have a responsibility for seeing that the child's social development is such that it will strengthen his Christian experience and further his growth.

In chapter two the theological concepts emphasized in the Christian nurture of children were studied. They included concepts of God, Jesus, and sin and forgiveness. It was found desirable that the child should conceive of God as a Person, the Creator, a Father who is great, powerful, loving, good and just. Concepts of God as a spy, a bearded old man, a Santa Claus, or a vengeful and cruel Person should be guarded against.

All but Fox and the Eakins state that Jesus is the divine Son of God, the Savior. That Jesus should be portrayed to the child as a Friend, an example, a strong, courageous Person, all are agreed. Jesus' miracles and His crucifixion and resurrection were seen to

receive special attention by the authors. Fox and Eakin and Eakin rationalize the miracles. All agree that children should be given a simple unemotional account of the crucifixion and the resurrection before they go to school.

Furthermore, all the authors were found to recognize the fact of sin or failure and the need of some kind of a remedy. Most of them emphasize that it requires Someone greater than oneself to deal with the problem of sin. The child does not need to be weighed down by a sense of guilt before he can become a child of God, but it is pointed out by four of the authors that there must come a time of decision and commitment to the will of God as revealed in Christ.

The third chapter dealt with the place of worship in the Christian nurture of children. The importance of Bible study and teaching and of prayer in the life of the child was found to be emphasized by all the authors. The main topics included in the various discussions of the Bible are: the authority of the Bible, the principles involved in the use of the Bible with children, Biblical material suitable for use with children, and memorization of Scripture. Again, all but Fox and the Eakins were seen to consider the Bible to be the revealed Word of God. The Bible must be meaningful to the parents if they are to make it live for the children. The use of various versions of the Bible as aids to interpretation was found mentioned by most of the authors. All agree that the Bible must be related to the daily experiences of the child, if it is to be meaningful to him and effective in his life. Most of the authors agree that the New Testament should receive a prominent place in the Biblical material used with small

children as well as with older children. Studies of single incidents in the lives of the Bible characters should be supplemented by biographical sketches and whole book studies. Background material should be given to enrich Bible stories and make them more meaningful. Memorization of Scripture is held to be valuable if it is understood and related to experience.

The meaning of prayer, teaching the child to pray, reality in prayer, wrong concepts of prayer, the use of printed prayers, and grace at meals, it was discovered, are the chief topics discussed by the authors in the field of prayer. All but Eakin and Eakin agree that in prayer the child should experience fellowship with God. He should early learn to experience this fellowship. His prayers should be sincere, definite, and related to his whole experience. Printed and memorized prayers often help to guide a child's thought and give him a medium of expression but they are harmful if they become mere vain repetition.

Besides individual worship experiences, the child can gain much from worshiping with a group in the home, the church, and the church school. Active participation in these worship services makes them more meaningful to the child. Programs should be varied and be related to experience if they are to be most valuable. Church school services are considered generally more suited to the needs of the child than the ordinary church worship services, but the value in united worship of the whole family group with other Christians warrants the planning of occasional special services for the whole family.

B. Conclusion

In this study of the emphases in the Christian nurture of children as revealed in the selected books, it has been found that in most instances there is general agreement among the authors. Where there is disagreement, Fox and Eakin and Eakin usually differ from the others.

As a result of this study there are three things which stand out as having received special emphasis by all the authors. They are:

1. The influence of the home and particularly the character and religious conviction of the parents is of supreme importance in the Christian nurture of children.
2. The Christian teaching that is given must be related to experience and must be put to practice in everyday life if it is to be meaningful.
3. Prayer and the study of the Bible are indispensable to the Christian growth of the child.

The writer feels that parents would find most of these books helpful both in their own Christian life and in guiding their children. Although one may not agree with the theological viewpoint of some of the authors, their books contain many good practical suggestions. To the writer's mind, because of their readable style, their stimulation to personal commitment and more vital Christian living, and their clear-cut directions regarding the training of children, the books by Trent, Sweet, Sherrill, and Jones are particularly helpful.

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