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ADN6723

Catholic Child Guidance

A STUDY OF THE CHILD'S
SPIRITUAL POWERS

With Discussion Club Outline

by

REV. DANIEL M. DOUGHERTY



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NEW YORK
THE PAULIST PRESS
401 WEST 59TH STREET

Nihil Obstat:

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.,
Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur:

✠ FRANCIS J. SPELLMAN, D.D.,
Archbishop of New York.

New York, March 6, 1941.

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THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE
IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN THE U. S. A.
BY THE PAULIST PRESS, NEW YORK, N. Y.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ST. ALBANS, VERMONT

FOREWORD

IN approaching the study of any subject, the first step is *to arouse interest*. Such is the only purpose of this pamphlet, *to arouse interest in the spiritual life of children*. It does not presume to go beyond that. For the succeeding steps in this most important study, the reader is encouraged to try these simple treatments:

- (a) For the theology of the subject, the following volumes in the Treasury of Faith Series (Macmillan):

Sanctifying Grace: Actual Grace;
The Supernatural Virtues;
The Sacramental System;
The Sacrament of Baptism;
The Sacrament of Confirmation.

- (b) For the application in the life of the child, articles in various numbers of

The Journal of Religious Instruction;
The Catholic School Journal.

FORWARD

In approaching the study of any subject, the first step is to examine it closely. Such is the only purpose of this pamphlet, to review material for students of this subject. It does not presume to go beyond that. For the succeeding steps in this most important study, the reader is encouraged to try these other treatments:

(a) For the theory of the subject, the following volumes in the Treasury of Faith Series (Specimens):

- Somebody (from about 1922)
- The Sacramental Theory
- The Sacramental Eucharist
- The Sacrament of Baptism
- The Sacrament of Confirmation

(b) For the application in the life of the child, articles in various numbers of The Journal of Religious Education, The Catholic School Journal.

THE HOME AND THE CHILD

“THE home is the child’s school of schools. As a rule that education will be more effective and lasting which is received in a well-ordered and well-disciplined Christian family.” So said Pope Pius XI. So must every parent echo in deed and in word. A parish school may have the finest equipment. Every effort may be made by priests, Sisters and teachers “to form unto the Lord a perfect people,” but the amount of success or failure in the endeavor rests with the home. “The art of arts is the guidance of souls” and the practice of this art, as far as children are concerned, is left by God’s plan in the hands of parents, first of all. Others may help or hinder, but the main aids or obstacles are the parents. They cannot be passive in this great work. They cannot release themselves from it by delegating it to others.

You have often heard of mothers who appear with their children and say, “These are my jewels, my treasures.” Are they just prattling under a strain of sentimentality? No, because their eyes of faith peer beneath Tommy’s face and through Mary’s eyes and see what Christ saw: “*The Kingdom of God is within you.*” What does that mean? Is it just a poetic way of talking about the child’s innocence? It is far, far more. It indicates the spiritual birth-right of every child baptized in Christ Jesus. It tells of the greatest gift God gives to man, a share in His very Life, a part in the blissful activity that goes on in the Holy Trinity forever. The Kingdom of God within the child is the “treasure hidden in the field,” “the pearl of great price” of which Christ spoke. Recognition of its presence in a child’s soul means the opening of limitless possibilities for the child’s growth. Ignorance and forgetfulness of its presence means a stunted soul.

This pamphlet will try to show what it is that

makes Tom and Mary and Joan and Peter such treasures. It will try to make parents aware if they be not, or more aware if they are, of the equipment that each baptized child has in the way of God's grace. It will try to reveal, as far as human mind can grasp and human words say, something of the mystery of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God in a child's mind and heart. Why? So that parents may know what the formation of a Christian child means; so that they may be able to guide, guard, direct and protect the precious inheritance which the child has through Baptism, namely, the Life of God spoken of by Christ when He said, "I am come that they may have Life and have it more abundantly."

The psychologist may tell us much about the child's temperament; the doctor may tell us much about the child's body; the social worker much about the effect of his surroundings, but only God's Church can tell us about the one thing that gives meaning to the whole child, the revealed truth that he is a *child of God*. It is unfortunate that Catholics generally know so little about the child's capacity for virtue. Because of this, even intelligent parents make mistakes of many kinds, but especially the tragic mistake of treating their child *naturally* and not *supernaturally*.

Pope Pius X when he insisted on children approaching the Sacraments at an early age said, "There will be saints among the children." He did not mean that children would show a flair for the externals of piety; he did not mean that from their early years they would show an inclination for the priesthood or the religious life; he meant very simply and forcefully, that children who made intelligent and fervent use of the Sacraments from their early youth would develop and grow in the Christ-Life, in the resemblance they have through Baptism to the Son of God.

Let us look more closely at a child. His little body is full of motion. He has power to move himself. This is life, the power to move oneself. But this much he has in common with the lower animals. What has he more? Long before what we usually call the dawn of reason, about six or seven, the average child has begun to use his mind. He does some thinking. Of course, it is not complex but it is an honest-to-goodness use of his intelligence. And with the use of his mind, he begins the use of his will, the power to choose freely. Now the mind and the will are the highest activities of the child and it is with the mind and the will that God's Life or grace works.

The child in Baptism has known the touch of God, nay, more than a touch. The child has been given a power to share in God's activity. Which means? That a child has the capacity or power to use his mind and will in the same activity as does God. He can know God; he can love God. And in that knowledge and love he can find happiness. This power, this movement of the mind and will toward God is more than natural. It is supernatural. To see this with faith is to unlock the doors to his heritage as a child of God. To guide him in the use of these powers from the first glimmerings of intelligence is the work given to a Christian parent. To indicate more about this beautiful task is the purpose of this writing.

It has been told that Tertullian, one of the earliest Christian writers, had the custom of going to the bedside of his son and there kneeling down reverently, he would adore the presence of God in the child's soul. What a new meaning would come into every Christian home, what new glow to the hearts of Christian parents, if their dealing with children were marked with such a spirit of faith!

Questions

1. What words of Pius XI emphasize the importance of the home in the child's formation?
2. As far as the child is concerned, what do these words of Christ mean, "The Kingdom of God is within you"?
3. Why is it more important that a parent know the guidance of the Church than the direction of the psychologist, doctor or social worker?
4. What did Pius X mean when he said, "There will be saints among the children"?
5. "The child through Baptism has been given power to share in God's activity." Discuss.

HIS "OTHER EYES"

AT the birth of a child, special precautions are taken to protect his sight. So precious are the eyes of the little one that the concern manifest then, continues through the years, and by periodic examination and testing, parents and others do all that is possible to insure good vision. This is because they realize that the eyes are perhaps the most important of the senses, and without good eyes, the child will be handicapped in the learning process. "All knowledge comes through the senses," and defective sight is often the cause of defective knowledge.

At the spiritual birth of the child in Baptism, God gives the child a Gift which might well be called "his other eyes." It is the Gift of Faith. It opens a door to a world of knowledge that is not reached through bodily eyes. It is the world of God's own secrets, His mysteries, which He has allowed men to see only through this Gift. For example, think a moment of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity: there are Three Persons in One God. Now there were learned, very learned men before the coming of Christ. They fathomed the depths of reason and they brought to men, a knowledge of the secrets of nature which they arrived at through a keen use of their senses. But it was not until Christ came into the world, and lifted the veil and spoke the Mystery of the Trinity, and allowed men by a gift of His power to know of it, that they were aware of the great Truth hidden from the foundation of the world. And so, with other mysteries of Faith.

Marvelous, indeed, are the possibilities of the human mind. Prodigious in many ways is the activity of man's senses which has opened up vast spheres of

new learning, enriched life, and made it more glamorous as the days go on. But the Gift of Faith possessed by the baptized child gives him title to a mental awareness which is beyond the scope of the senses, which has its beginnings in time, it is true, but will have no end because the object of the knowing is God Himself Who is inexhaustible Perfection.

This pamphlet attempts to point out to parents some very practicable suggestions about what is often taken for an unpractical or unreal world, the world of the spirit. Our Divine Lord said rather plainly, "He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but hath the Light of Life." To walk or live only in the realm of sense-knowledge is to live only part of life. A baptized child who is growing mentally by the use of his senses, but who fails to grow mentally by the use of his faith, is cut off from the most precious part of life. And today, because the external world is so attractive to the senses, it is a duty of parents to be doubly alert in catering to the child's world of faith. In other words, parents have a solemn duty to help create an atmosphere in which a child can readily use the Faith given to him at Baptism.

For this Faith is a virtue, which means a *power*. It is the power to *believe firmly* all the truths which God has revealed and the Church teaches, because God has revealed them, and the Church, His Voice, speaks them. Now a power which God expects to grow into a habit of abiding thought will never come to fruit unless the child is given an opportunity to practice believing. Doesn't it seem a strange thing that parents will take delight in encouraging the child as he indulges in the fancies of the world of "make-believe," but will never think to even introduce him to the world of "I believe"? While his imagination is a powerful activity and should be kept alive and growing through

use, his Faith is far more important and should not be allowed to die through non-use. Did you ever hear the incident told by Enid Dinnis, of the two boys who entered a church where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration? One of the boys was not baptized, and the other was. The unbaptized boy was fascinated by the lights and flowers surrounding what looked to him like a big, golden clock. Said he to the baptized boy, "What time is it on that clock?" To which came the reply of the boy with faith, "That clock doesn't tell time; it tells Eternity."

Isn't it rather sad to find children who have been taken through the world of "The Big, Bad Wolf," "Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella," "Pop-Eye," "Buck Rogers," the movies and the funnies and who revel in all of these, and yet, or maybe because of this, have no relish for the things of the spirit? Is there now no fascination for a baptized child in the world where God is his Father and Christ his Brother and Mary his Mother? The world where sun, moon and stars, and plants and animals in all their amazing variety and wonder hold forth an invitation to come and see and understand how lovingly the Eternal Father has provided for him? Was Christ wrong when He stood the child in the midst of the disciples and told them, "Unless you become as one of these, you cannot enter the Kingdom"? Isn't there something in the child because of the Gift of Faith at Baptism which opens up the vision of God? Of whom more truly than the child was it said, "Blessed are the clean of heart; they shall see God"? Why do parents allow the child to get so mixed-up with the things of sense and time, that there is no room for the things of faith and eternity?

These are not idle questions, and their answers should stir up determination in parents to shut out

the world a bit from the lives of their children, so that God and His Kingdom may have a place. Among the fundamental things that can be done for children to enable them to grow in Faith, the most important is the cultivation of QUIET. Baptized children, apart from their play-time, have a right to an atmosphere of quiet. The world of blaring radios, movies, picture-papers, is not a child's world, and it does something dreadful to a child. It stimulates his senses overmuch and in the wrong direction. In these days of living in close quarters, in small apartments, it may require some sacrifice for a weary parent to shut off an entertaining program on the radio. It may require more than persuasion to send a child to bed early. It may take effort to guide the child to reading of the right kind, which will calm him instead of disturbing him. But this is all part of the task of the Catholic parent and cannot be neglected without damaging the child.

Another fundamental which will be possible in a quiet atmosphere is the cultivation of prayer. Long prayers are not necessary nor even possible for a child, but a simple recollection of God's presence is possible, and can be easily cultivated with the parents' aid and example. Prayers at the bedside at morning and night, prayers at table, with greater emphasis on what is being done than how, are of great importance. A great help in creating a prayerful attitude in children is the telling of stories of the lives of Saints. There are many of these printed today for children—notably those by Joan Windham, published by Sheed & Ward—which make very real the world of Faith.

But the parent who is alive to the precious Gift of Faith will need no urging to find ways and means to cultivate it in the child. The baptized child who grows up in the atmosphere of Faith, who loves to pray often and well, is safeguarded against tremendous dangers

to his peace of mind as well as the integrity of his will. No parent who has been careful to train a child to live by Faith need worry that he will come to know the world to his detriment. For the child with the vision of Faith will easily penetrate and see the wiles and deceits of the devil, the unreality and the dumbshow of the world, and will walk hand-in-hand with Christ his Brother and Mary his Mother to the feet of the Eternal Father Who with the Holy Spirit and the angels and the saints live in glory forever and ever.

Questions

1. Why is the gift of Faith called the child's "other eyes"?
2. Why must parents give the child opportunities to practice believing?
3. What may be the effect on the child's faith of the constant use of "funny books" and movies?
4. How will the cultivation of QUIET help a child's faith?
5. Give two means of developing the child's prayer-life.

THE CHILD'S "STRONG ARM"

IT is of the very nature of childhood to be dependent. A child looks to his elders for food and clothing, housing and protection, and *happiness* above all. A child seems to demand almost instinctively from us that we keep him safe, and give him the desires of his little heart. He does this without expressing it most of the time. We give him these things without advertence most of the time. We realize it only upon reflection, or when he makes the fact of their absence known to us. We get a glimmer of his deep-seated trust of us only at intervals, as when, for example, after some fright, he sobs himself to a safe sleep in our arms.

The child lives happily only when he is secure. Disturb this security in any way, and you have allowed the entrance of pain into his little life. Children suffer acutely, more mentally than physically, perhaps because they are not made to suffer much at all. By God's plan, adults must make a strong wall of understanding sympathy about them, until they have grown steady enough by nurture to stand the burden of life.

These are some of the reasons why parents should be more aware of the presence in the baptized child, of a God-given capacity to HOPE and TRUST. This virtue grows out of the child's Faith and becomes a "strong arm" about him, as he moves on through the maze of experiences which make up his life. His "other eyes" of faith enable him to see God's Providence about him, and God's Life in him. He is conscious that God loves him, and this makes him happy. St. Francis de Sales, who maintained a child-like confidence in God all his days, owed it to his clear view of the fact, as he puts it, that "God and my mother love me."

The virtue of Hope given at Baptism is a capacity to lean on God for all that is necessary for salvation, through the merits of Christ. In a simpler way, it may be looked at as the virtue that enables the baptized child *to rely upon God for happiness here and hereafter.*

Parents who wish to assist the child in the practice of Hope must be aware of the distinction between *pleasure* and *happiness*. Many make the mistake of preparing the child for happiness by giving him pleasure, and too much of it. The taste for pleasure overdeveloped usually leads to unhappiness. And for these reasons: Happiness is the satisfaction that comes from delighting the mind and the will; pleasure is the satisfaction that comes from delighting the senses. I hear agreeable sounds, I smell a rose, I taste well-cooked food, I touch a piece of velvet, I see a snowfall—in all these, I find pleasure, and these are good. But if a child gets to the stage when sound and smell, taste and touch and sight give pleasure to the senses and no more, then he has missed the meaning of life. The child is more than an animal, more than a creature of sense. He has intelligence and will, and his highest delight, his happiness, consists in the proper use of mind and will. The child's thought-life and the child's virtuous acts of will are the sources of his happiness.

It is true that a child relies upon us very much to provide the necessary sense pleasures, because sense pleasure under control means his appetites, and the satisfaction of these normally makes for a balanced physical and emotional life. But if we teach him to rely on these pleasures for his happiness, we have made a fatal mistake. We must teach him that these are only means to an end, and if the end cannot be obtained through their use, they must be foregone. The child must be given the opportunity to exercise

the virtue of HOPE by relying on God for the assurance of his happiness in this world as well as the next.

And where are these opportunities? They follow from the exercise of his faith. When he knows by faith that he is not a mere animal, but actually a son of God and a brother of Jesus Christ, that he can count on God for love when all others fail, then he begins to know security. And for the child, this is happiness, this is the highest delight of his mind and will. It is no wonder that St. Paul said, "We are saved by HOPE," and in no life is this more true than in the life of the child. Because, before he has achieved the so-called "self-reliance" that the world would have him cultivate, he has learned to lean on God. "I remembered God and was delighted," says David the Psalmist, and it symbolizes the easy contentment of the child who has learned early to walk, sheltered by God's "strong arm," the virtue of Hope. Certainly, there was nothing taught more emphatically by Christ than this utter reliance upon the Father for everything. No wonder, then, that Christ saw in the child the perfect example of Christianity which is essentially the religion of HOPE born of FAITH in God's LOVE.

Parents do well to tell and retell the story of the Saviour, reading and re-reading for themselves the Gospel, until they have learned those countless incidents where Christ shows His own child-like trust in the Father. Plainly we can see this, when the Christmas scene is enacted again in the Liturgy. If we, as adults, feel at ease in the presence of God as a child, and forget the barrier our sins have put between us and Him, and know only His gracious love, then we can understand a bit, perhaps, how a child approaches Him more securely *as a child*. When the child knows that Jesus was a weak and helpless baby, and allowed

Himself to be the abiding object of care on the part of Joseph and Mary, then he knows in a new and vital way how close he is to Jesus, how much God loves him.

How important, then, for parents to let the child grow up with Jesus growing up, go to school with Jesus going to school, obeying and being subject with Jesus. Thus, the child walks hand-in-hand by faith with Christ, and grows in hope because he is happy. How easy for him to relish each new experience with God, as he approaches the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, as he grows in the more constant use of prayer.

Do our children need exercise in the virtue of hope? Only a very ignorant adult would say, "No." About us are millions of young and old confusing pleasure with happiness, and making a sorry task of their lives by so doing. Witness the unhappy efforts of people in mature life as they try to achieve through natural means, a serenity and poise and security which they neglected to build in themselves as children by means of the virtue of hope. Broken hearts, shattered careers, empty lives tell the story of neglect of trust in God. The so-called wildness of youth is due entirely to a wrong concept of true happiness, founded on hope.

Happy the children who stand at Christmas time at the crib, grasping the tiny hands of the Baby in their own. Happy those who walk later with the Boy down to Nazareth, linking their growing lives with His. They will never have to look for the world's empty wells to satisfy their thirst for happiness. They have known Jesus, their Hope. Having Him, they need nothing else beside. With David the Psalmist, they can well say, "In peace, in the selfsame, I shall sleep and rest, for Thou, O Lord, hast singularly settled me in HOPE."

Questions

1. Explain a child's sense of dependence.
2. What does the virtue of hope enable a child to do?
3. Why must parents be careful to help a child control his craving for pleasure?
4. Name some practical ways for a child to exercise hope.
5. How does an intimate knowledge of Christ's life help a child to rely on God for happiness?

THE CHILD'S GLOWING HEART

WHEN parents and others speak of children as being "the light," "the warmth," "the heart" of the home, they implicitly indicate the lovableness of children and their capacity to love. Now, in a baptized child, this quality is more than a gift of nature or temperament. St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that the virtue of Charity which is given to a child at Baptism makes him "intimate with God." It does this by giving him power to be a true child of God. By reason of this, he has power to know God as He knows Himself, to love Him as He loves Himself and to enjoy His company.

The familiarity with spiritual things that we observe in children is not the same inclination that makes them play with toys and engage in games of fancy. The *simple joy* of their attitude toward God as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier is the chief effect of the presence of the virtue of Charity in them. The gay response that a child makes to the things of faith, the warm confidence that he places without questioning in those who take God's place in his life are manifestations of "the joy that no man can take from him."

The only time this joy is mingled with sadness, St. Thomas says, is when the child becomes aware of any evil, physical or moral, that prevents happiness for himself, those around him or those of whom he knows. It is well to observe that this sadness comes from the loss of or interference with *happiness*, not from the loss of *pleasure*, or passing good. It is for this reason that a parent who trains his child to use "his other eyes" of faith and "the strong arm" of hope, is by that guidance giving him a sense of values which will keep the gloom of selfishness out of his life while

he bears the sadness of selfless sympathy along with his abiding joy.

Another effect of the virtue of Charity given to a child at Baptism is *PEACE*. St. Thomas tells us that "peace is the tranquillity of order." When a child has come to grow in the love of God and neighbor by exercising this capacity given at Baptism, his emotions, his mind and his will have a certain harmony about them. Grown-ups look wistfully at the serenity, the poise, and the easy contentment of children. But children possess these without any special effort other than that of keeping their simple inclinations turned towards God. For this reason, it is the bounden duty of parents to keep the child from acquiring or multiplying his desires for unnecessary things or things which merely give pleasure. Cravings for satisfaction for the senses quickly remove the child's inclination for love, and substitute the selfishness which destroys Charity.

It is of great importance, too, for parents to know that because of the virtue of Charity, the child has a leaning and an aid towards *mercy* and *kindliness*. He is not a little animal who has to be domesticated so that he can live with the group and be thoughtful of them. He is already a domestic, a family member of the very House of God. Charity has put into him a capacity to be "at home with God," and he needs only guidance and encouragement to see that he can practice this everywhere.

Mercy, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, is a sorrow for the misery of others as if it were in some sense our own. Such an attitude while it may seem to an adult, grown weary of human selfishness, a rather difficult one at times, is not a strenuous effort for the child. Witness the intelligent sympathy shown by Catholic children in the work of the Foreign Mis-

sions. See how eagerly they respond to sacrifices to contribute to the rescuing of abandoned infants so that these little ones may be made members of the Kingdom. Reflect that a story with a sad incident will often move a child to grief, and the sight of a loved one in suffering—even when the beloved is an animal—lets loose a flood of genuine tears. The kindness of children, too, is evident to all who deal intimately with them. If this is not chilled or hardened by the example and attitude of adults, it is a most tender thing. Love responds to love, and the response in a good child is an eager one. He needs only little encouragement to express himself in kind words and kind deeds because he knows nothing of unkind thoughts.

He knows nothing of these unless—and this is the tragedy at times—he lives with adults who think that way. One of the most pathetic happenings to witness is that of a gossiping or a bickering or a resentful child. He has not only grown old before his time—if there is ever a time to grow old in the ways of God—but more sad, he has lost his glowing heart.

The child's heart is a glowing thing because it radiates not something he has inherited from his parents, or achieved through his own efforts. It radiates the Charity of God which "is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us," as says St. Paul.

May all Christian parents help their children to GLOW with God-given Charity! Thus will the Kingdom of God grow on earth. Like St. Augustine, called the "saint of the glowing heart," children will do what their elders fail to do. In his words, they will say, "I do not want to love our Lord alone. I do not want to possess Him alone. I will light the fire of His love in the hearts of all around me."

Questions

1. Whence come the simple joy of the baptized child in the things of faith?
2. What, according to St. Thomas, introduces sadness into a child's life?
3. What relation is there between the virtue of charity and serenity of soul?
4. Explain mercy and kindness in a baptized child.
5. What causes a tendency to gossip and bickering in a child?

THE GREAT HINGE

AT graduation exercises, orators like to speak of the children as being "on the threshold of life." This makes a pretty picture but it is not real. A child is, from the very dawn of his active intelligence, very much "in life." The time of childhood all through is well-called "the doorway of life." The senses of the child are his doorways, and through them, back and forth, he goes the livelong day, carrying impressions to be made into ideas. These ideas then function or are brought into the outside world through the activity of the will and the co-operation of the body. The parent who is alive to this ceaseless process will do much to guide the child in the use of his God-given powers, the powers of nature, but more especially, the powers of grace, the virtues.

Before ideas can be the basis of good activity, they must pass through another doorway, that of *right reason*. If this doorway swings easily, and permits the idea to get to the will as a "good thing to do," then the will accepts the idea and puts it into activity. In His goodness, God has provided a means to smoothly swing this doorway of reason, a *great hinge* that keeps the reason steady to swing to the right, and keeps the will swift to give the command to do it. This great hinge is the virtue of *Prudence*.

It is true that the world associates prudence with maturity, with grown-ups, and does not expect us to have it until we are old! It is for this reason, probably, that so many adults are very imprudent in their lives. If we wait—as most of us do—to get our prudence with the years, it is usually what is called the "prudence of the flesh" or the world's way of doing things, rather than what God wants. In God's plan, children must be allowed to practice prudence.

Prudence, St. Thomas tells us, is the act of giving a command or a decision at the time when one has to act. What we ordinarily call prudence is really only preliminary to real prudence. Taking counsel with oneself or consulting with others is merely a step to the command or decision which is essentially the act of prudence. Now, in our attempts to guide the child in the use of "the great hinge" upon which the door of his right reason depends, we must understand what it is that makes up prudence.

We are told by the great Saint that prudence is made up of (1) a memory of past things; (2) an insight into the reasons for doing things; (3) a docility and respect for what has been determined by wise people; and (4) a thoughtfulness before an act as to the way of doing it and its likely effects.

All this means that when we are training a child to use his prudence, we must give him through stories that indicate both the use and the misuse of "the great hinge," a *memory* of what has been done by others so that he will be able to act wisely to command what is right. Primarily, a Christian child should be given early through story form, a memory of the story of the Fall of Adam and Eve, a misuse of prudence, and the Rise of all men through Christ, a right use of prudence. Similar stories in the lives of saints and historical people will further aid his memory, and then, as he grows older, the memory of his own use and misuse of prudence will come home to him through the practice of the examination of conscience. A child should be taught as part of his evening prayer, to recall the acts of the day, and recognize his successes and his failures.

Further, a child should be trained to an *insight into the reasons why things are done*. He is best aided in this by being encouraged to think before he speaks and

acts. This is done when the parents help the child to sense a problem where it exists, and seek slowly to solve it, and quickly to decide the answer and follow it. Even puzzle games and toys can be used to develop the consciousness of reasons for doing things. With older children, their conduct problems will permit abundant exercise for the virtue of prudence. Because obedience is eminently an act of the virtue of prudence, in face of a problem, children should be given the opportunity to think through the way of doing it, and *to accept the guidance of a wiser head*, if their own way of acting is not correct. Respect and patience on the part of the adult for the child's growing prudence will give rise to a greater docility on the part of the child who will trust the grown-up and rely upon his experience.

A child thus encouraged to act prudently, *to think before he acts*, and then act promptly to do the right, will grow in awareness of his problem and his possibilities in the present, and the effects of his actions in the future. He will thus avoid the defects or sins against prudence of which St. Thomas speaks. He will not be hasty, thoughtless, inconstant, sly or deceitful, and especially, he will not be negligent nor lazy.

Baptism makes a child a "son of God." The use of the powers given in Baptism makes a child an active "son of God." The use of the "great hinge," prudence, makes the door of his right reason swing promptly and decisively toward the will of God. Isn't it sad to look around and see so many apathetic grown-up Catholics? Catholics who are lazy about the one thing necessary, their own spiritual growth? Catholics who are thoughtless of the effect their lives have upon other Catholics and upon the whole world? Catholics who are sly and deceitful and live lives of pretense? Such lives are distorted lives, unbalanced

existences. They are like doors hanging loosely on their hinges, or creaking for want of use or oil. Such Catholics have not the virtue of prudence, they put off the right decision to act, when it is time to do so.

Christ gave a picture of the prudent Christian in the parable of the Five Wise and the Five Foolish Virgins. The wise virgins were prudent virgins, they acted promptly. They received their reward. Are you training your child to use his God-given Prudence now?

Questions

1. Why call the virtue of Prudence "The Great Hinge"?
2. Ordinarily what we call "prudence" is only a step in the process. What four qualities does real prudence possess?
3. How does the daily examination of conscience help a child to grow in prudence?
4. Tell why older children should be given an opportunity to think through their problems, and then, accept guidance.
5. What are some of the effects of imprudence which right training will offset?

KEEPING HIS BALANCE

AS we move along in this study of the virtues given to children with their Baptism, it must be evident to all that we are slow, too slow in encouraging children to use these powers. Often, under the name of psychology or child guidance, false worldly thinking encourages parents to use methods that produce at most, a temporary good. Here, as elsewhere, it is true that "they build in vain who build without the Lord."

Justice is the name given to the special power of the baptized soul by which he is inclined to desire spontaneously and without ceasing the good of those around him, so that he wants each one to have his due. The soul under the influence of this blessed power does not need force or fear to cause him to render to God and neighbor their due, but he has abidingly with him, the whispering Holy Ghost saying very gently, "Pay what thou owest!" Only through the aid given to the naturally selfish soul by grace is the miracle accomplished by which the individual achieves the perfect balance represented in sculpture by the even scale.

Lest we think that the virtue of justice is a harsh one, a virtue concerned merely with measuring out to each what belong to each and no more, St. Thomas pictures it with the accompanying Gift of Piety as the virtue which sanctifies the relations between man and man, and between them and God. He sees in it an inclination to treat God as a Father, tenderly serving Him and obeying Him, and then looking towards all men as most dear brothers in Christ. There is nothing cold, nothing artificial about this capacity to be just. It has about it none of the calculating way of the world which aims merely at being honest. It wants to give not because it has to, but because giving is one

of the attributes of a kindly Father, and justice makes the soul like Him in generosity.

How important it is, then, in a world sick with bartering and commercialism and rugged individualism, to build up in our baptized children, the capacity they have to be just. Justice, as we understand it, is the capacity above all, *to be reverent, to be truthful in our dealings with others and with God.* Justice tells the soul it possesses that he walks in the world as in a sanctuary, that all about him are holy things, the things of God and the personality and property of his brother humans.

Justice helps the child to be reverent, but we must guide him and indicate to him the objects of reverence. We must show the child first of all, *how to pray.* That is his fundamental debt to God, to lean upon Him for everything. And it is well to remember that saying prayers is not praying. Lifting up the mind and heart to God is at the basis of good praying, and little children can do this. They can do it under guidance, when they see the trees and birds and sun and stars, and say very simply in admiration, "It's grand, God!" This is a prayer of adoration, profound and intense. When they come to their eating, to their playing, to their sleeping, a little "Thank You, God!" gives direction to a life of humble thanksgiving. When they tell God they are sorry they have not given Him all that belongs to Him, their little sighs are deep contrition. When they talk to Him, earnestly, and with assurance about their tiny needs and the wants of their parents, they are truly showing their dependence upon the Lord and Giver of all. When they learn to kneel and stand and behave in the Church, they are giving to God in union with the official Church, the worship that belongs to Him alone.

This reverent justice shown to God continues in

their attitude towards their parents and those over them. Esteem for authority helps much, and the wise parent will never criticize priests, teachers, policemen or others with the task of supervision, in the presence of little ones. They will, on the contrary, establish habits of loyalty to those above them, and a spirit of gracious thanksgiving for favors conferred.

Children with this God-given virtue of Justice must be guided in the respect shown to the personality and property of others. St. Thomas warns us of rudeness, whether in speech or in action, towards others. We owe to others reverence, because they are children of God and the little one who is shown how to esteem others rightly, is a happy child, indeed. Courtesy shown to companions, extra courtesy shown to unfortunate companions, should be the norm that parents hold up to the child. Idle comparisons with playmates, bickering and quarreling with words of abuse for others, should be checked from the start by parents who want their children to practice Justice. High and holy reverence for the truth in speech should be insisted upon, also. No parent worthy of the name will countenance lying or pretense or any form of hypocrisy in a child. How utterly sad for a little innocent child to come to the point where he thinks he must hide under the lie to save himself from a real or imaginary punishment! Parents should cultivate such confidence in a child that the child will not hesitate to manifest his own faults, and take in the proper spirit, the necessary correction. How pathetic, too, for a child to come to the point where he must pose and pretend in order to get affection and appreciation! A child must be taught that the basis of true values is within and not without.

It should be the earnest effort, too, of parents to build up respect for the property of others. The best

and surest way of doing this is by giving the child property of his own. The just child will reverence his own clothing, his toys, his food, his furniture, because they are the gifts of God and the fruit of his parents' effort. The just child will hold the same idea toward money. The wise parent will not indulge the child with extra money for foolish pleasure, but he will cultivate the sense of honest possession in a child by allowing him the simple use of modest sums. Out of this, he should be encouraged to save. The child who steals, who violates the property rights of others, is usually the child who has been pampered and so given excessive needs for pleasure, or the child who has nothing at all and envies others. If a parent discovers a child in stealing, he must insist that the child return the property or its equivalent, but he must never destroy the child's reputation either at home or outside by indicating him as a "child to be watched."

St. Thomas tells us that after the "great hinge" virtue of Prudence, the most important of all the moral virtues is the virtue of Justice. Good Catholic parents will do all in their power, aided by prayer, to build up the virtue which in his relations with God and men, helps the child *to keep his balance*.

Questions

1. To what does the virtue of Justice incline the child?
2. Why is there nothing cold nor calculating about the Christian virtue of Justice?
3. What little prayer practices will help a child to grow in Justice toward God?
4. Tell the parts that courtesy and truthfulness play in forming the just child.
5. How does thrift and saving help the child to be just?

LITTLE BODY: GREAT SOUL

“**I** FEAR nothing but fear,” said Cardinal Mercier, the great Primate of Belgium at the time of the World War. Upon honest reflection, every human being can echo the thought. Most certainly, our Divine Lord would encourage such thinking. For if there is one thing more than others which stands out in the Gospel story, it is the fact that Christ destroyed fear by love. “Fear not, it is I.” Why He did it is easy to see. Adam and Eve, our first parents, in God’s original plan were in perfect control of themselves and of the orders of creation below them. By the gift of God, they were without fear until by their sin, they moved out of the realm of security into the unknown. At once, they became afraid. And they transmitted this fear together with other ills to their posterity.

When He walked the earth, Christ conquered fear in the lives of those about Him. The sinner and the saint, the great and the lowly, the learned and the unlearned, all classes and conditions, were at ease with Him. They had only to be honest and they knew His mercy. This deep-down-in-the-soul security, this triumph over the circumstances and events of life, this serenity in the face of pain and even death, this true poise alike in little children and adults, came to be the mark of the Christian soul. And it came to be because of the Baptism which Jesus had established as a Sacrament to give men the virtue of FORTITUDE or BRAVERY.

This great power or virtue which Baptism gives to a Christian enables him to hold firm in the presence of the greatest fear, and to keep within bounds the most daring boldness. Every age in world history has needed this power for every man. With our eyes be-

wildered by the world's confusion today, all adults will agree that our children will need it today and tomorrow.

St. Thomas Aquinas tells us first of all, that FORTITUDE helps a person to be GREAT-SOULED or magnanimous. It makes the soul brave to overcome fears, to go ahead and do great things, things that may not seem to be great in the eyes of men but are truly great. St. Thomas realizes that the world has confused people in their standards and so he points out that one of the difficulties or sins which keeps people from having *great souls* is VAINGLORY. This, he tells us, is the showing off of one's own excellence which one seeks in everything, and which may lead one to commit all manner of sins. Some of them he mentions: hypocrisy, stubbornness, discord, strife and disobedience. What parent can fail to recognize in this list some basic difficulty of childhood? How many parents, however, will recognize the root of VAINGLORY? How many will see the danger which they cause when they encourage the child to "show off" some minor talent to win applause, or to strive for some honor merely that the parent may be gratified? In these days of child prodigies in every field, and "child beauty contests," how difficult for the good Catholic parents to keep themselves from exploiting the child as St. Thomas says, for "some glory that has no object, or an object of little worth, or one which is not directed to the one true end, the glory of God and the welfare of men."

On the other hand, is it not well for Catholic parents to think of the other sin which keeps children from being GREAT-SOULED, namely, the minimizing of the child's gifts, so that he becomes small-souled? St. Thomas calls this pusillanimity, and perhaps, when we look for the real reason why Catholics with all their gifts of grace, fail to achieve great things for God and

country, we shall find the answer here. So many of our gifted children—and all are gifted by grace, if not all equally by nature—remain at a low level of achievement simply because parents do not help them to overcome by the virtue of FORTITUDE, the FEAR which will not face the effort of study and persevering effort to achieve a worth-while goal.

Again, St. Thomas points out to parents truly interested in guiding their children, that the virtue of FORTITUDE gives the child a capacity to be PATIENT and to PERSEVERE. Patience, he tells us, has to do with the bearing with troubles which come unceasingly in life, whether they come by life's own whims or by the actions of others in dealing with us. Unfortunately, many parents have passed on to children, the "chip-on-the-shoulder" attitude, so that they are ready to hide their own fear of effort under the complaint that other people and circumstances are against them; that others always seem to make the right contacts, etc., etc. Again, so many effeminate parents, both men and women, by their example, have inclined their children to give way to the least difficulty and the least fatigue. They pamper their little aches and pains, they excuse their faulty relationship with other children, they tell the children that the teacher misunderstands them, and so on. And when a child of this type takes refuge in obstinacy, another defect mentioned by St. Thomas, they encourage the child to hold out for "principle," and so set him on the way to be at permanent odds with the rest of the world.

When Pope Pius X in encouraging children at an early age to go to frequent Holy Communion, foretold that "there would be saints among the children," he knew what he was talking about. For the child who has been given the virtue of FORTITUDE in Baptism, a virtue which sets him bravely to face his own weak-

nesses and the confusion of the world, is made into a true tower of strength when he feeds on Christ, "the bread of the strong."

Christian parents who are well aware that "the life of man is a continual warfare" should do all they can to encourage the child to use the virtue of FORTITUDE, so that though he be little in body, he will be what God wants the Christian to be—GREAT IN SOUL.

Questions

1. How does Fortitude help the child to acquire serenity and a sense of security?
2. What is the source of hypocrisy and disobedience?
3. What should parents avoid and what should they encourage in the talents of their children?
4. Explain the qualities in Christian Fortitude which offset softness and instability in children.
5. How will a child little in body be great in soul?

STRONG ANCHOR FOR STRONG SEAS

IT SHOULD be quite plain from our study thus far that the baptized child is indeed fortunate in the possession of the virtues. Armed with capacities and powers for living a happy life in the truest sense of the word, he has only to be guided and encouraged by those over him to achieve this success. His is a success not to be had by a hit-and-miss system, but by a divinely-planned program. The gifts of grace given to him with his Baptism lead him by the sweet compulsion of the Spirit of God and his own directed efforts to a fruitful integrity, a harmonious blending of all his powers of body and soul.

This truth is strikingly evident in the virtue of *temperance*, the power to control the bodily appetites. St. Thomas tells us that it is given by God so that the appetites will not be carried away by pleasure. When the virtue of temperance keeps within the bounds of reason, the appetite for self-preservation with regard to food and drink, it is called *abstinence* and *sobriety*; when it does the same for the appetite for race-preservation, it is called *chastity*.

To control in the child the appetite for food and drink is not overly difficult, because lack of control on his part usually brings a painful reminder in the form of an ache in the stomach or head. However, parents have a serious duty to emphasize abstinence and sobriety by their own example and in these days of liquor parties, a double task falls to parents of keeping children and liquor in their respective places at the same time.

It is not so easy, however, to assist the child in the cultivation of chastity. Too often, the virtue's growth

is left severely alone, and when the ugly head of unchastity rears itself in the life of the adolescent, the parents try to salve their consciences by exclamations similar to those in the Gospel story of the parents of the boy born blind, "Who hath opened his eyes, we know not!" Eyes opened during childhood to the fierce, white beauty of chastity will not be dazed later by the lurid glow of unchastity.

Our late Holy Father, Pius XI, in his letter "On the Education of Children," emphasizes the positive aspect of child training when he speaks of the virtue of chastity. There has been and there is, a great deal of confusion regarding this important virtue, simply because it has been approached from the negative aspect, or in terms of sin. By insisting to children that they must avoid this type of word, that kind of thought, this form of action, etc., etc., we have implicitly brought such things to their attention. In fact, what usually happens is that any discussion about this virtue is done negatively, and is held over until we begin to suspect that it is about time they were interested in such sin. Not much seems to be done particularly to build up in the child's mind, a concept of the little virtue of *modesty*, to give him a love for it, and to indicate how he can use occasions to practice this virtue, which is the bulwark of chastity. By the laws of habit, no one is suddenly bad and no one is suddenly good. Life is a growth, and whatever way the forces are permitted to go, in that direction are the habits formed.

St. Thomas Aquinas comes to the assistance of those who want to proceed sensibly with children in building up the virtue of chastity. He tells us that "Modesty is that virtue which restrains the sensitive appetite in things which are *less difficult* to regulate. These things are *the desire of one's own excellence; the desire to know; the exterior actions of the body; and one's man-*

ner of dress." The restraint of these things comes under the headings of *humility, the virtue of the studious, and modesty* in the strict sense.

Thus, a child who is to live chastely must begin (even remotely in the earliest years) *to be humble, to have a wholesome curiosity, and to have good manners*. These are positive attitudes; they are foundation stones. Therefore, any plan of training children must embody in theory and practice, opportunities to know, love and practice these little virtues.

One tangible way, for instance, to exercise a child in humility is by training him, in little things, to a *sense of duty*. Humility is the virtue of knowing one's place, and if a child is slowly but surely, given a chance to become aware of his place by having a task to do, he will surely grow in this fundamental. So many things are done for us in modern life by machines, that the children learn to depend on externals overmuch. This, strange to say, gives rise to a false independence which is a species of pride. The child, of course, is not aware of his growth in such an attitude until he is confronted by situations where his lack of humility causes a conflict with some power stronger than himself. A child, on the other hand, who has been trained to be self-reliant, to be dutiful, and so, to know his place, has a strong wall set around himself against the intrusion of the selfishness whose particular attraction is pleasure of the flesh.

Again, training in *wholesome curiosity* is very necessary to offset what St. Thomas calls the "inordinate desire to know what one has no right to know, or to know what may prove a source of danger to virtue owing to one's weakness." It is this "inordinate desire" that our Holy Father warns against when he cautioned against the "naturalism" which would scatter before the child's mind, a wholesale collection of mor-

bidities on the plea that such "knowledge is a safeguard."

A training in wholesome curiosity means that we foster the interests of the child in those things that develop his imagination, his memory and his intellect *without* stimulating his lower nature. Under this heading, the fostering of a love for good reading, encouraging his little efforts at artistry in any form, his appreciation of music and dramatics, will make the child capable of enjoying pleasures of the mind which he can use during those leisure hours of which modern life is so full. But unless this is done early and with attractiveness, it will not be done at all.

A love of reading or an interest in some mental hobby does imply work. To devote the attention to the printed word so that the ideas conveyed live and give pleasure does require mental effort. It is certainly much easier to sit with eye fixed on the silver screen and with ear alert to the noises of a sound machine. The child, like the grown-up, takes the easier way out, unless the movies are shut out or rarely indulged in, until the other wholesome habit has been developed. The same holds true of the numberless newspapers and magazines, chock full of pictures, which are left around for youthful eyes and minds to feast upon. It is very easy in an environment of movies and picture-papers to grow unconsciously into the inordinate desire to know and see everything, to a lack of restraint in custody of the senses.

That consideration of this safeguard of chastity has been much neglected in our teaching is evident to anyone who has been interested in children and who knows how rare a "reader" is among them, and how utterly restless children are on a dull day when outdoor activity is impossible, and a movie inaccessible.

It might seem at first that *good manners* is a far

stretch to the virtue of chastity. But it is precisely this that St. Thomas meant when he spoke of modesty in the strict sense. To him, modesty is "everything in a person's exterior, his movements, gestures, words, tones of voice and general attitude which ought to be according to his status." St. Paul indicated the standard of Christian good manners when he wrote, "You are bought with a great price; glorify and bear God in your body." And St. Benedict enjoined it as a step in the right direction when he wrote, "Show the humility of the heart in the bearing of the body."

Now, in times like ours when great social changes are taking place, it is inevitable that the standards of external conduct should be affected. In addition, the presentation of worldly types upon the screen and in the news sets up models vastly different from the Christian pattern. The child who will mimic and imitate those who are attractive is deeply influenced by such behavior. Without adverting to it, the child acquires mannerisms and attitudes which are unrestrained and unreserved. His bodily movement, gestures, and words are impulsive and according to mood. Fashioned in this way by circumstances and environment, he has not the reverence implied in good manners. Without such reverence which is a mighty bar to selfishness, he is an easy prey to the first stirrings of passion.

The child, on the other hand, who has learned by the simple practice of good manners to be self-controlled always rises above and is master of his circumstances. He has what moderns call "poise" and the spiritual writers "a sense of the presence of God." He has developed his God-given sense of shame on the foundation of reverence, and he has retained his capacity to blush as a danger-signal. For him, precision in speech is a barrier to the poverty of language which

is manifested in prudishness and vulgarity. For him, the carriage of his little body marks his humble direction towards his Father's House and away from the husks of swine. For him, the unaffectedness and lack of poise in his good manners is an indication of his frank and generous mind which tries to hide nothing from God or man. Thus, his childlike courtesy to God, to himself and to others is the strong root from which the flower of chastity springs.

Training in chastity, a part of the virtue of temperance, is a long process. But success can be achieved, by God's grace, if we do not blunder into modern methods based on "naturalism" against which our Holy Father warned. If we follow the guidance of St. Thomas and ground our children in humility by giving them a sense of duty, in wholesome curiosity by building up their mental powers through studious interests, and in true modesty through the self-discipline of good manners, we shall have made a high wall around their young hearts and save for them, the fairest flower in the garden of the virtues.

Questions

1. Show how Temperance helps the child to control his bodily appetites.
2. How does the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas aid parents in building up the virtue of chastity in children?
3. Explain the relation between a child's sense of duty and humility.
4. What steps can any parent take to develop wholesome curiosity in a child?
5. What about good manners as a part of the virtue of chastity?

THE CHILD'S GARDEN OF VIRTUES

IN PRECEDING sections, we indicated to parents how the grace of God works in the soul of a child. We pointed out that the child has a definite capacity for virtue, that he has from God Himself a share in His Divine Life which enables him to act in keeping with the will of God, and so attain happiness. It was seen that God puts into the soul at Baptism, powers of Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude. The nature of these powers and occasions when they might be used were shown. We have reserved to now, a discussion on *prayer* which is truly *the child's garden of virtues*, since they will never grow elsewhere than in a soul attuned to God.

First of all, it is well for parents to remind themselves that when they teach a child to pray, they are acting as secondary teachers. They are like monitors or directors only. Souls are first taught by God in this intimate matter. "No one comes to Me except the Father draw him," says our Lord. What the parent does is to aid this work, by helping the child to control his environment, and by directing him in the laws of habit formation.

The spirit of prayer is a more fundamental thing than the ability to say prayers. A child can memorize the words of a prayer in a short time. He can learn to fold his hands correctly and to bow his head gracefully without a long drawn-out process. But unless all other conditions are favorable, he will not in a short time learn how to pray. It will take much time. Here as elsewhere in religion, one must look for the inevitable conflict between nature and grace. It is not natural to pray; it is supernatural. Prayer always

requires effort. Prayer is a "lifting up of the mind and heart to God"; it is not, at least for the average soul, a being "lifted up." Today, perhaps more than ever, when the stress of living is so intense, both exteriorly and interiorly, there is need for a *controlled environment* as an aid to prayer.

By the environment we mean the combination of persons, circumstances and things which surround and influence the individual at a given time. In the environment of the child learning to pray, there are *things* and *persons* as sources of help or hindrance. By the *things*, we mean first, statues, pictures and other sacramentals which are part of the traditional setting for prayer. In a home these should be few and well-chosen, rather than many and ill-chosen. For a child, a statue or picture before which he can make his devotions morning and evening, should be placed not high up on the wall but at his eye-level. They should be his own, too, and the decoration of little altars and the care of his articles of devotion should be given to him as his personal and individual task. Another *thing* which the parents must watch is the child's position at prayer. Kneeling in a cramped position or leaning on another because of insufficient space, makes it more difficult for the child to lift the mind. The child must gradually learn enough self-control to keep respectful positions at prayer, and this is best done by prefacing the prayer-time with a moment's reflection in order to emphasize the needed reverence.

In the matter of *persons* in the environment of the child, the parent is outstanding. The parents who relish prayer themselves teach prayer best. If a child observes that while he prays, the parents pray and mean it, a big part of the work is done. If a child sees the parent kneel down to pray, or sit down to read a spiritual book in quiet, or stand reverently to pray be-

fore and after meals, more is done for the child's formation in prayer than all the talking in the world.

In addition, it must be remembered that prayer is a living thing and it must follow the laws of growth. For the acquiring of mental habits, it is said that there are three laws: (1) the law of readiness and interest; (2) the law of exercise and practice; (3) the law of effect, or satisfaction and annoyance.

The law of readiness and interest. This means that the habit is best developed when the child has the urge to pray, because of his own felt need. The desire for prayer has to be developed. Prayer is an acknowledgement of the dependence of ourselves on God. The child must grow in the realization of the power and protection of God; God is all-powerful and we are nothing and we can do nothing without Him. This sense of dependence on God can be developed in the child by the telling of stories which bring out God's loving interest in man and His answers to prayer. The miracles of Christ, the lives of the saints, and modern evidences of this can be used. It can be developed also by encouraging the child to pray for what may be called his "childish" needs. *When there is a felt need, there is an opportunity for real prayer.* Even if the present need of the child seems exaggerated to our adult minds, the child should be encouraged to pray. Later, when he acquires a new sense of value, he will have the habit of turning to God more firmly established. Even though the child's need seems trivial, prayer for that need comes spontaneously to him and should be encouraged.

The law of exercise and practice. No matter how many stories we tell to whet the child's desire for prayer, or how often we suggest objects of petition, we will not effect much unless we give the child a real opportunity to practice prayer in the ordinary situa-

tions of life. It would seem that prayers before and after meals, offered briefly but reverently and sincerely, must never be omitted. Prayer before going out of the house which would be made both spontaneous and reflective by having a holy water font at the door, would slowly teach the child that God is with him in "his goings-out and comings-in," and that though he may leave parents and home for an interval, he never leaves God at all.

The law of effect, or satisfaction or annoyance. For a habit to be effectively formed, the practice must be accompanied with genuine satisfaction to the child. When annoyance enters or the task appears burdensome, no progress is made. If it appears to be developing, it will drop away as soon as pressure from without disappears. That is why the teaching of prayer requires such delicate attention. In prayer, the child must come of his own need and for his own satisfaction. He must not, because he cannot, be driven there. The child may spend years saying prayers, but if they are done out of routine, with no great satisfaction to himself, no habit of prayer will be developed.

Prayer was the greatest activity of Christ. Through the years of the hidden life, and through the long nights of prayer in the active life, Christ showed us how to "lean on the Father." No wonder that the disciples knowing their many needs came to Him, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray!" They were adults and they knew from sad experience the need of walking hand-in-hand with God through the confused ways of life. How fortunate for the Christian child while life is still young to learn to build up the grace of God, by walking in prayer in the garden of God.

Questions

1. Why is the cultivation of a child's prayer-life essential to growth in virtue?
2. Explain "controlled environment" as an aid to prayer.
3. Tell how stories of Christ's life and those of saints help the child's *interest* in prayer.
4. Give a list of daily opportunities for a child to exercise prayer.
5. Why must we guard against routine in teaching a child to pray?

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