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C.V.T

WHY GOD GAVE CHILDREN PARENTS

by Dr. W. Robert Smith



As featured over broadcasts of "The Biola Hour"

OUR HEAVENLY HOME

Our earthly homes are simple things,
of plaster and of board,
Sometimes as humble as the nest built
by a wildwood bird.
And yet through all our lives our
hearts cling to the childhood
home
Of hallowed, precious memories, no
matter where we roam.
And so I often think about how dear,
how very dear
Our heavenly home will come to be
with every passing year,
That home where we shall meet and
dwell with loved ones gone be-
fore,
And sometimes, looking up, shall see
our Lord come through the door.
O lovely home, where fulfilled joys
become rich memories,
And ever sweeter pleasures crowd age-
long eternities!

—*Martha Snell Nicholson*

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WHY GOD GAVE CHILDREN PARENTS



by Dr. W. Robert Smith

IT WAS A number of years ago that I was asked to address a Mother's Club on the aspect of child life. I started by saying, "I happen to be a father. My first child is six weeks old. I am sure that I'm acquainted with all the problems and have all the answers." (They chuckled, as did I.)

Since that time I have become, with my dear wife's help, a father of five children. Some of them have already established their own homes. In the intervening years I have counselled with young men and women in colleges and universities about marital and family relations.

There is no institution in all the world as significant as the family. This is the basic unit and final bulwark of our society. "If you will give us godly Christian homes," said one of our presidents a few years ago, "most of our real problems will take care of themselves." He was right!

Human beings, unlike animals take many years to mature. The government says a young man is not old enough to vote until he is 21 years of age. The reason for the difference is that animals are directed by instincts. Whether it be a Baltimore Oriole,

building the same kind of a nest which it has built through the years, or the elaborate diving bell of a water spider, the Almighty Creator directs each one in the instincts of its own development.

Human beings are not the same. We concern ourselves with mental, moral and spiritual values. A young man cannot be taught to be honest by instinct. In the providence of God there are long years necessary for the proper development of character. This is why God gave you children. The responsibility is up to you!

The first reason for this is that we might provide for our offspring. This includes provisions in the areas which are physical, mental, moral, esthetical and spiritual. Paul writes to his son in the faith, Timothy, "And one who does not provide for his own, especially for his own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." This provision is for the physical body, the proper kind of food, health, and medicine when needed. The little child cannot climb out of its crib or playroom and go to a doctor when there is a need, or when some immunization should be given.

I was visiting in a certain home

when a little boy came up to me and said, "Mr. Smith, I want to show you my pictures." He got out a box in which he had more than a hundred snapshots which he had taken with an expensive camera his father and mother had gotten for him. Frankly, it would have taken a Ph.D. to operate the thing. Do you know, not a single one of those pictures was in focus. When he had gone out to play I said to his mother, "Have you had little Jimmy's eyes examined? From the looks of his pictures, it may be he has seriously impaired vision." She was quite sure it was merely a case that he didn't know how to use the camera. She agreed, however, to take him to the doctor. His eyes were examined and he was fitted with glasses.

Some weeks later when I was in that same home the mother filled up with emotion and tears came in her eyes. She said, "Do you know what my little lad said to me after he got his glasses? 'Mommy, for the first time, I can see the tops of the trees!'" Whereas he had been doing poorly in school he later went to a university and took top honors in his particular field of study.

We are entirely responsible for our children's physical well being. How many mothers know the distinction between a carbohydrate, a vitamin and a protein? I wonder if they really know what a good balanced diet is. Are you providing all that is necessary for the proper development of your offspring? The Psalmist writes of the Lord, "Thou hast set the solitary in families." How grateful we should be for our children. Only the Lord can guide us as fathers and mothers with discernment. Will you seek His help in communion with Him and through the power and inspiration of His Word?

Chapter Two

ONE OF THE primary reasons why God has given children parents is

so that we might discipline them in love. A child cannot provide for itself. There are long years before he becomes mature enough to use proper discernment.

Science reveals today that many of the actions of the pregnant mother affect the embryo carried in her womb during the gestation period from conception to birth. How grateful we should be that our Saviour has so structured the body to protect the baby from much of the harmful action of the mother. As an example, the food intake of the mother may have a great and even a harmful affect upon the child.

Scientists at the University of Michigan have reported that a mother, carrying a child at certain times in her life, may affect it even by taking aspirin. This was reported in a medical journal just this last year. Last fall, a baby born to a 27 year old Yukon mother, an alcoholic, weighed 4 pounds and 15 ounces at birth. Its breath was alcoholic. This little child, for 24 hours, was jerky and jumpy. To quote the Canadian Medical Association Journal, it had delirium tremens symptoms.

The American Medical Association wrote of a similar experience in New Jersey. Doctors were surprised that a certain new born infant went through all the symptoms of narcotic addiction: withdrawal, convulsions and the like. Checking out the mother they found her to be a confirmed addict. For three or four days that child continued all of the symptoms.

It has been shown by statistics that twice as many babies are born mentally defective in the spring after a hot summer. Why is this? During the hot summer, not infrequently, mothers who are carrying a child when the cerebral cortex is being formed, instead of eating proteins and the proper building blocks, have nourished themselves on ice teas and soda water. These are delectable but do not provide material to build up the brain.

There is a great deal of data available concerning four areas or factors affecting the unborn baby in various

stages of development. One of these is social disease, such as "syphilis." Venereal disease affects the formation of the life cell. Another problem is white lead. This substance, found in many paints, can be most injurious to an unborn child. The third is radiation. This is the reason we are concerned about such things as X-rays.

The last is alcohol. You will not hear anything of its dangers in advertisements. Scientists believe that alcohol can and does definitely affect an offspring. Dr. C. F. Hodge of Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts carried on an experiment with psychological and physiological aspects of liquor. He took four cocker spaniels that were of the same strain and background. He mated them together and gave them the names of Nick and Topsy. He had a very interesting sense of humor. The other two dogs he called Bum and Topsy. He tested the dogs as to the affect of alcohol upon their offspring. Nick and Topsy had no alcohol with their meals while Bum and Topsy did. Checking the litters, the two which had no alcohol had 45 pups born to their union. Only 4 died and 90.2% were normal. Bum and Topsy, on the other hand, only had 23 pups born to their union. Nineteen of them died.

It was Dr. B. G. Fritz, a research scholar in Europe, who wrote a book in 1939 which was titled, "Alcohol, Another Germ Poison." He declared, in reporting on 491 cases in investigations of alcohol, that there is injury done to the offspring as a result of the consumption of alcohol. Knowing these things, and being guided by them, is one of the values of a real Christian life. When we follow our Saviour, and the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the Guide and Teacher of our lives, then He gives us a discernment as to moral values and character.

When we place our lives and our children in His care, when we pray for our child while the mother is yet carrying it, in those early years the Lord will give His discernment and grace. He wants to help us to live a consistent, righteous Christian life. We

need to pray that the Lord will help us to be wise and understanding so that we may protect our little ones from all the evils around us, as well as from the evils of our own intentions, ignorance or lack of discernment.

Chapter Three

THE NEW TESTAMENT speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ when He was only a little boy by saying, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." Our Saviour was brought into the world by the heavenly Father to be the incarnate Son of God, to die for our sins, and to rise again for our redemption. The Lord placed Him in the home of Mary and Joseph. They must have been wonderful people. Mary, it says in the Scriptures, was full of grace. Joseph, His foster father, must have been a man of great maturity. It was our heavenly Father's pleasure to give to the Lord Jesus, as an infant, a human father and mother to care and provide for Him.

In addition to providing proper food and health for our children, parents must provide a proper home. It certainly does not need to be a palatial mansion, but rather a humble abode where the Lord Jesus Christ has the pre-eminence. Do you fathers have a little bench at which your boy can play? Does he use a hammer or a chisel or some other tool? Oh, you say, "He'll dull the chisel." Yes, that is exactly what he will do. But it is far better to have a dull chisel and a sharp boy! Sometimes we do not understand this.

I knew of a teacher in Minneapolis who told of one of her experiences. Little Teddy came to school on one particular day and declared to his teacher, "You know what happened last night? I went to my first cub scout meeting. I went to the door of Jimmy's house and his mother opened the door. She told me, 'Who are you? Did you come to the Cub meeting?' I said, 'I

sure did!' Then she smiled and said, 'Little Teddy, you just come right on in.'" He told his teacher about that three times that same day. You see, his own home was a place where his mother didn't want him around. She was afraid he might disturb things and make them a little disorderly. I ask you, "What is a home for, anyway?"

I know a very fine Christian young man who has some very deep seated problems in his inner soul. Although his pattern of life is circumspect there are some scars on his psychological being. The background of his home was very fine with Godly parents. They, however, did not understand him. The home was a show place. The children had to play in the cellar or basement or go directly to their room. Woe betide them if they sat down in any other part of the house. There were covers over the furniture, cellophane still covered the lamps. Then, once every two weeks she unveiled them for a tea party so certain friends could come in and say, "My, what a wonderful home you have; how beautiful, how clean it is." This was all at the expense of her children. One of them grew up to totally repudiate the Gospel. He said, "If this is the way one is supposed to live, I don't want to have anything more to do with the church." The other boy used to come to me with some of his deep loneliness. He felt a sense of rejection. Problems were created for the lives involved.

Does our home belong to the children? What about play facilities? Is there the proper amount of space for it?

A few years ago in the Saturday Evening Post there was a very striking picture. The first segment showed the father sitting in his chair reading, looking down at his son. The boy had some milk cartons and blocks. He was chugging away playing train. The next picture showed the father greatly distressed. He wanted his boy to have an expensive electric train. He immediately went down to the store and picked out the best he could find. The third cartoon showed the father down on the

floor playing with his little boy and the elaborate new train. The fourth picture was exactly the same as the first except that the electric train was in the corner with no fascination for the boy. He was engrossed in pushing the milk cartons and blocks once again. Children don't need expensive toys, but they do need something.

May our prayer be that God will guide us, giving discernment so that we may provide the things necessary for our children for good physical bodies to avoid all the habits of evil. May our homes be places where children are loved, wanted, accepted and desired.

Chapter Four

LITERATURE IN THE home is one of the most valuable ways of guiding our children into spiritual truth. It is difficult for a young man or for a young woman to keep pure in mind and thought with all kinds of evil literature around.

While speaking in a certain college a young man came to me and said, "I'm deeply troubled. I have developed a habit of self abuse. The reason for it is that one day I went into my father's room. He didn't know that his dresser was unlocked. I knew I shouldn't, but I began snooping about. Here I found some of his lewd pictures and magazines. I began to read them and my mind was filled with all kinds of lust. I've never been able to get over this terrible self abuse. How do I master it?" We talked of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, about cleanliness of thought, and about controlling the mind through the power of the Holy Spirit. The cleansing power of our Lord Jesus Christ can cover every sin, but the scars of the tragedy still remain. We ought to avoid bringing into our homes anything which would cause our children to have temptations in any manner.

How many times do you find any-

thing that deals with the kingdom of God in the magazines and books found in the average home? How many religious periodicals do you take? Is there something that a young person can pick up to feed his soul? As parents we are also responsible for the control of these things which affect, mold and even militate against the development of the child. What about the television? Do you just let it go on and on day after day? There was a study made in one of our children's homes in an eastern city. A study was made of the affect ocean pictures had on the sleep habits of a child. They were not now concerned about the quality of the picture but about the excitement that resulted. The group which had seen these pictures during the day slept much more fitfully. What one sees can easily affect his nervous life.

There is even a need to provide for the esthetic development of the child. What kind of music do we have in the home? If all your youth hears is the jive or rock 'n roll beat he will grow up to be eccentric on that point. Do we have any of the great chorales of the church? What about some symphonies by Beethoven, or the Bach preludes and Chopin etudes? If you want your child to appreciate the great musical heritage of our world you must accept the responsibility and make a provision for it. The child cannot provide for itself. It does not know what a balanced diet is.

I know a dear mother who happens to be the wife of a college staff man. Her children all had very difficult times. They looked weak and were troubled with various kinds of problems. We found out that this woman was giving them some form of dried meat for economy every day. This wasn't enough. Today we have a vast choice of foods and vitamins. As a father or mother we must fully provide for our children. The Scripture says that if we do not, we have actually denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever.

The Lord gave your child to you that you might provide for it all that

is necessary for maturity. If that young man or young woman is to live for Jesus Christ and take his or her place in society you must make ample provision.

In our next message we will touch on this more fully, however, one of our prime responsibilities is to render loving discipline (notice what kind!). The one great desire of every human heart is love. If the child is loved and accepted, not rejected, regardless of whatever failures may come, they will generally be well adjusted. If the child is not accepted into the household, if it doesn't have sense of belonging he will be warped as long as he lives.

In the counselling ministry we find that many of the lonely hearts coming to us are a result of a lack of early love. A woman in her thirties came to me, and out of the hunger of her soul she said, "You know, it's very difficult to believe that God loves me. My father and mother never did." How can we show our children the love of God if we don't reveal a true love for them individually? That is why love and discipline go together. Your child needs a sense of belonging, a sense of real love, a sense of being accepted for its own sake.

At the same time, because it is a little child, born into the world with a self-centered will, it needs discipline and correction. This is how a child begins to grow and develop when the two are in proper perspective. Tell your child you love him. We should be interested in what the child is interested in. We ought to provide an atmosphere of love in which the child can live. Our discipline must be consistent. The child should be taught that whining gets it nothing. He will need to learn that all authority comes from the Lord. Discipline needs to come within the quiet pattern of that which is mature; not a fussing nature.

Let us thank the Lord for the guidance His Holy Spirit gives in this area of life. May we willingly accept the discipline of our own lives so that we may be better examples for our youth.

Chapter Five

WHILE FLYING to speak at a Boston college I selected Luke's gospel as a study for my devotions. A passage struck my eye concerning Zacharias and the birth of John the Baptist. He, of course, was the forerunner of our Saviour, preaching the baptism of repentance and salvation. In speaking of John's purpose in coming, the Scripture states that one of his ministries was "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just." The last two verses of Malachi declare, "Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

The real hunger in every human soul is for love. The Lord has made us this way. There are hearts hungry for the love of a father and mother and for the fellowship of a real home. We are restless until we find this because it is a foretaste of the love of God manifest in Jesus Christ and through the life and soul of a human being. The Biblical concept of parenthood is not that the father and the mother are purely responsible for the life of the child but that the parents are to be guides and overseers to bless, love and direct the lives of their children.

One of the students at Bethel College, in St. Paul, was going out in the summer to reach the lives of some of the young people in his home town. He sought to cultivate their friendship by playing baseball with them. Then he began to talk to them about the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. He spoke of the real meaning of the love of Christ in their lives. He told them about God, our heavenly Father. One boy's face clouded and out of the deep trouble of his soul he said, "What did

you say? If God is anything like my old man, you can keep Him!" What an example his dad had set.

Every child hungers for love. In our home town a father and a mother were constantly quarrelling. Finally they decided to separate. The mother became enamoured of another man. In her sinfulness she decided to abandon her husband and four children. Her husband said, "Sweetheart, I love you. I want you to stay with the children." She said, "No, I don't love you, and I don't want any of you any more." His natural question was, "Well, what can I do for the children? How can I provide for them? I can't stay at home. They need a mother." She didn't care. She abandoned them all. The youngest was a little boy only a few months old. The father, not wanting to give up his children for adoption, decided he would put them in foster homes. This little lad was taken by a godly Christian family. There they loved him and he came to think of them as his real father and mother. He lived there for something over four years. Then the father decided that he would remarry. He began to collect his children from foster homes. But now, the real mother jealously came back into the picture. She insisted on having the right of taking the children at least part of the time. By some strange miscarriage of justice she was given the privilege. The little lad was badgered between his own mother who had abandoned him and his new step mother. His foster mother, whom he counted as his real mother, was never seen. He languished and became weaker and weaker. Finally he was hospitalized and died. One of the medical men said to me, "We had an autopsy and the only thing we could sort out was that this little child died of a broken heart. He no longer wanted to live."

In a hospital in New York City they have some young men and women whose chief function it is just to love the sick boys and girls. They are not there to give injections or to carry on any kind of medical care. Their one

and only job is love.

An interesting thing took place in one of our local courts. There was a young man who was a juvenile delinquent. Brought up before the judge for the second time, parole was not possible. The judge said, "I must sentence you to a correctional institution." His father was an upstanding and respected man in our community. The jurist continued, "Son, why have you done this? There isn't anything that your father and mother wouldn't do for you. Here you've broken their hearts. There's your mother weeping and your father deeply grieved. Why have you done this?" The boy spoke up, "Your honor, you've asked me. It's true there wasn't anything my father wouldn't do for me but there was nothing my father ever did *with* me. All I wanted was my father's love and affection. There was not friendship or understanding. He thought he could buy things and satisfy his own conscience. I sought my companionship elsewhere. I will pay my price; I will not whimper. But ask yourself who is really guilty."

You may ask, "But how do you love a child?" The first thing is that you must communicate with him. Tell him that you love him and mean it. Provide an atmosphere of love in which he finds acceptance. Let your love be poured out without selfish concern. And what will be your pattern? The Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He will give you the power, too, as you seek it through His Word and by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter Six

ONE OF THE most idyllic pictures in the entire New Testament is the love Joseph reveals for his spouse, Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first two chapters of Matthew, and Luke two, are beautiful. When Jesus was a boy about twelve He was already carrying on a ministry. His mother

and father were astonished. Mary said, "Son, why hast thou so dealt with us? Behold thy father and I sought thee sorrowing." And He said unto her, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they understood not the saying that he spake unto them. Joseph and Mary were concerned about Jesus as an earthly little boy. Not only did they have love for one another but also for the child. This is the kind of an atmosphere which is a priceless heritage for any youngster. When a child does not have such love he hungers for it.

I was visiting in a State institution in Des Moines, Iowa one day to pick up a friend who had a mentally unbalanced child in one of the buildings. Asking for the friend I was told he was probably with his child. The family tried to keep the lad at home for several years. They didn't know how to care for him properly. When he got out of hand the doctor told them it would be better for him to be in the institution. In the building where I looked for my friend there were 40 boys and girls. They ranged from the ages of 8 to 12 years. Turning from the main walk two children burst out. They took me by the hand and dragged me up the stairs and inside the building, chattering as they went. "You came to see us, didn't you? You came to see us." When I got inside the door, I was thronged with little children. They grasped me around my knees, hugged me and showered me with love. One little child, a little older and more bold than the others, reached up and stroked my chin and out of the loneliness of her heart said, "You came to see us, didn't you, because you really love us." My heart was heavy as I saw these who were starved for human affection.

A child doesn't need to be in an institution to have this happen. He may be living in a home where there is no love. There was a woman of mature years who had just buried her mother. She cried to my wife, "Just before my mother died, she said to me, 'Esther,

I've always loved you!' That's the first time I ever remember my mother saying she loved me." The woman had been involved in many patterns of life which were not of the highest character and chastity. One of her real hungers was to be loved. There are some children who do not remember that their father and mother ever took them around the shoulders and gave them a quiet hug. Have you ever told your child, "You're so sweet. I'm glad the Lord gave you into our home." Many a father restrains himself in telling his boy, "I'm so glad you're my son. The Lord has been good to give you to us. We love you."

A minister, troubled, burdened and sorrowing came to my office one day, broken hearted. His child, a teenage girl, was found with child out of wedlock. He wanted to know if he should resign; was his ministry ruined? He said, "You know we were so busy about many things that we didn't take time for our children. Our daughter has sought companionship somewhere else. Now she has an illegitimate child. What must I do?" I said, "The first thing you must do is to love her tenderly. She needs your care, not your ostracism." We prayed and he decided and vowed that he would become the kind of a father, even in this tragic crisis, that he ought to have been all along. I related this to my wife and daughter without mentioning any names. Daughter was frying some potatoes and onions in the kitchen. I went out to speak to her quietly. I said, "My dear, I hope and pray you will be protected and guided by our dear Saviour, so that you'll never fall into this kind of sin. But if you do, I shall love you, my child, until you die." She kissed me on the forehead and said, "Father, that's one of the reasons why it's such a joy to live in this home. Here we are all loved." What a priceless treasure.

My boys all used to make a "chug." That is made from an old broken down washing machine. It is put on a board with four wheels and chugs down the alley. You could probably crawl down the alley faster than the thing could

go, but it was a lot of fun. Are you interested in that which interests your children? Some day those sons, because you helped them when they were little boys, will listen to you when you give them advice on moral problems and a direction for life which is based upon the Word of God.

Chapter Seven

IN THE New Testament there are some very glorious experiences recorded between men who had affection one for another. Perhaps most outstanding is that of the aged Apostle for his son in the Lord, Timothy. The Holy Spirit caused Paul to write, "Unceasingly I remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy."

It was because of this atmosphere Timothy grew to be a strong man in Jesus Christ. The love of a father for his son has kept many a boy steadfast. Conversely, the lack of it has turned many a son away from Jesus Christ. Our heavenly Father expects us to love our children.

A young man came to me one Saturday morning. He had waited several weeks until he was sure I was home. His first remark was, "You'll probably think I'm a silly kid. You see, I want to run away from home. I don't think my father loves me. He's never ever told me he loves me. I know my mother loves me and I'm afraid if I'd run away it would break her heart. My father wouldn't care. He's always yacking at me, anyway. Dr. Smith, I'm not a bad boy. Oh, maybe I don't keep myself as orderly as I should, I don't study as much as I should, and some of those other little things, but I'm not a bad boy. I remember the time I went to a youth rally. When they gave the invitation I thought I loved the Lord, but I decided maybe I didn't because of the way my father talked to me. So I went forward, kneeling, and I found again the quiet assurance that Jesus

Christ loves me. I came home that night. My father was sitting in the easy chair in the living room. He was reading when I entered. I thought he would thank me now; maybe he would even express appreciation. So I walked up and said, 'Dad, I did something tonight I think will make you happy. I went forward and accepted Christ as my Saviour.' Dr. Smith, I thought he would pray with me; I thought he'd put his arm around me and maybe say, 'Well, son, I'm glad that you've come to this decision.' But he didn't. He stood up, put his finger out at me and angrily said, 'Now you're going to do what I tell you. Now you're going to be obedient. You'll have to be or you'll be a hypocrite.' He's been badgering me about it for about six months. Now, I've given it all up. I don't even know whether God exists and frankly, I'm not sure I even care. I just want to get away from it all!"

I knew his father. He didn't need to tell me that he was a fine, clean, up-standing man in the community and church. He taught a Sunday school class and was a member of the choir. Yet his son felt rejected and wanted to run away. What a tragic situation with which to be confronted. There was a wide gap between the two with a lack of understanding and communication.

Some churches are just too busy. They have meetings on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. This was not our Lord's intention. The church is not to be an end in itself. It is supposed to be an institution where, with prayer and exhortation and the reading and preaching of the Word, we have fellowship together. It is to be a place where we may grow and mature in Christ. Sometimes we become so enamoured with our own goals that we forget that the prime responsibility of any man or woman who has a child is the child himself.

If a mother has to work that is one thing. But if she is working merely because she wants more of the things of society then that is an altogether wrong motive. How many children come home

to an empty house. Or they come in the evening and since the mother has been working all day, she is tired and irritable. Instead of being a lovely, kind gracious mother sharing the common joys, play and fellowship with her child, she is cross and mean. The child grows up in an atmosphere where there is no real love.

A preacher friend of mine was engaged in an itinerant ministry and was away most of the time. When he came home between meetings his family was delighted to see him. One time when he had to leave, his young son said, "Father, you're not going again are you? Why don't you live with us like other fathers?" He said kindly and understandingly, "I'm doing this because I love the Lord and want men to be saved. You love Jesus, don't you?" The little boy had tears in his eyes as he responded, "I'm not sure, 'cause it's Jesus who's taking you away from me." This man wisely gave up his wide spread ministry. He had to be with his child to understand and love him.

There are some fathers who have never spent an hour or two with their sons in a single week since they were born. Then they wonder why the boys turn out as they do. When they do what happens? In Chicago a father came up to me after a meeting. It was right after the Christmas holidays several years ago. He said, "You know, 'Doc,' it's beginning to pay off. My son was home from the army and told me, 'Dad, there are all kinds of corruption and evil in the service. A guy is tempted in many ways. But when this happens, I just remember the times you and I played and had fellowship together. You lived like Christ, dad. Then I say to myself, 'You can't do that. You'd break your dad's heart.' Yes, 'Doc,' it's all beginning to pay off!"

Have we fathers so loved our children that they seek to become like us? You were given of the Lord to your child to love him and to provide for him. May God give us grace to be the kind of parents he would have us be.

Chapter Eight

THE LORD GAVE very specific instructions to the Jewish people concerning their responsibilities as parents. In Deuteronomy, the sixth chapter, we read, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." What a tightly knit group this suggests in a fellowship which engenders faith and love.

It was about 5:30 one particular day when I came home between work and heading out to a banquet on the other side of Minneapolis. I had only about a half an hour to get dressed and freshen up. Just as I was entering the back door, my little fellow said, "Say, father, would you be willing to fix my bike chain right now?" I wondered to myself, "Who has time for bike chains?" My boy continued, "You know it's been broken for two days. Tomorrow is Saturday and I sure need it." "Let's have a look, son." I got off my pastoral garb and put on some old duds. We went up to the hardware store for a couple of links. But when we got home we found out somebody had made a mistake and had given us two different sizes. So we went back for the right ones. When I had finished, I had him take a spin around the block just to make sure it worked. My reward was his words, "Oh father, I'm so glad you took the time to fix my bike chain. I sure think you're swell!" When I got to the banquet they were having the dessert. The man who was in charge thought he was going to have to make the speech. I told him I had a little emergency; a broken bike chain. "You didn't have to come on a bicycle, did you?" he asked unbelievably.

Not only are fathers and mothers to love their children, but also each child is to live in an atmosphere of love. That is why Paul says, "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church." Wives, on the other hand, are to love their husbands and to be in submission to them. No matter how much a parent may love a child there is a great blight if he does not love the mother. The same is conversely true. Young people will sometimes say to me, "My father and my mother quarrel all the time." Dear mothers and fathers, do we really love one another as Christ intended? This is not merely a sentimental romantic attachment. That is naturally involved in the marriage vows and relationship.

Sometimes we get the impression that all the problems of the home are because parents do not live a righteous life. This is not true. There are a good many respectable people who have never understood real love. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church that love is kind, love doesn't compile statistics on another's errors. Love tries to find a way to be constructive, bears all things, believes the good and doesn't gloat over the evil. Love lasts forever because it is focalized in our Lord.

A minister once confessed to me, "You know, my wife died just a few months ago. I'm deeply troubled and convicted. She had a complete mental breakdown and died in an institution. When I went to call on her in the psychopathic ward of the hospital, I handed her a glass of orange juice. She looked at me and threw it in my face. She said, 'You're my problem. You've been the great big I am. You've wanted everything you saw for yourself. You've been the leader. You've never loved other people and you've never loved me. I've been patient and have borne it. Now I'm broken. I know I'm mentally gone. I know I'll never get well. That's because I don't want to get well. I want to go home with Jesus Christ. He'll love me even if you didn't. If you hand me a glass of orange juice or water again I'll throw it in your face. I want to teach you the

judgment of a husband who didn't love his wife.'” Oh, my friend, how tragic this picture, the home of a minister of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to remember that romance is a tender flower which can die very quickly. We ought to be careful to make love to our wives; take them out to dinner; give them a box of candy; take them some flowers; court them. If we love one another we won't be living in a continual state of bickering and quarrelling.

A child in the home sees much more than we realize. They understand whether we really love one another or not. Mary must have loved Joseph, and Joseph must have had a great deal of understanding love for his wife. Do you husbands love your wives and do you wives love your husbands? Is there an atmosphere of love together in the home? In this atmosphere we are ready to discipline them in love that has a solid and a firm foundation.

Chapter Nine

EVERY PARENT needs to understand that love without discipline is pure sentiment. Discipline without love is tyranny. They both need to be combined into one individual who, himself, has been dedicated to the Lord. A father or mother in the home have the ideal circumstance in which to discipline, guide and direct a child. This is the manner in which God ordained that the home should be established. Because the parents provide for the child they establish a real understanding. They are able to gain confidence and acceptance. Discipline can naturally follow.

How many of our discipline problems are accentuated in the home if there is not real love, if the child feels he is deprived of the normal affection and attention the father and mother should give him. It may be the father is too busy. Perhaps the mother has

too many outside activities. The mother may be so concerned about the tasks of life that she is irritable in the presence of the children. Sometimes this is true when a child is born late in life.

There was a little son born into a certain home who was totally rejected. The boy grew up with all kinds of inner frustrations and problems. He didn't feel wanted. One reason for the juvenile gangs is because they are seeking for a sense of belonging. It is a need every human being experiences. If a child is a part of the home where father loves mother and mother loves father and together they love the child, then this is the foretaste of glory and harmony. There is nothing so wonderful in all the world as a loving home where Christ is honored and where we live as joint heirs of the grace of God together. In such an atmosphere discipline is not only accepted, it is readily expected; it is what the child wants.

There was a little girl who was guilty of stealing. She also had some other bad moral problems. When counseled, the pitiful lass said, “Well, at least when I do these things my mother beats me. Then I get her attention.” You see, a little child understands that he needs discipline and he wants this. No child lives normally in a society in which he is permitted to do anything he wants to do. If a child never learns the “No” of an earthly parent, it is difficult for him to understand the “No” of the society in which he lives.

We, as parents, need to lay down the guide lines. We should lay down a line to the right and a line to the left and then say to our children, in effect, “You can wobble around inside these two walls but over this side you do not go.” Moral values are not something one learns automatically. We all must learn that the good brings its rewards, and that the evil is punished. There are certain ethics and traditions by which all must abide based on laws, culture, heritage and divine sovereignty. The Scriptures deal with this constantly.

The Lord spoke to the young lad Samuel, “Behold, I will do a thing

in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that hears it shall tingle. In that day, I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: When I begin, I will also make an end." Eli was the preacher and had two sons who were wicked men. Instead of disciplining his sons he reaped a whirlwind of tragedy to himself as well as to the house of Israel. The Lord continues, "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever." May God help us to so live as Christ would have us live that it would never be true in our lives.

Chapter Ten

THERE ARE several basic psychological principles involved in disciplining children. The basic, undergirding framework would be that our love and discipline is a reflection of the character of our Lord Himself. The Scripture tells us that we are to train up a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. God manifests His judgment against sin and wickedness. God is not a sentimental Being. He loves us enough to die for us but He is not a permissive Being. The Scripture states, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The discipline we manifest to our children must reflect the judgment of our Lord. As a father I am standing in the place of my heavenly Father before my children reflecting the character of the Lord.

If you were to empty our mental institutions, our juvenile institutions, our correctional institutions of all who had come from permissive homes where fathers and mothers permitted them to do anything they wanted, eighty per cent

of the people would be taken out.

The first basic rule for all disciplining should be love. This atmosphere is where you mean what you say and where you say what you mean. There are certain traditional patterns of conduct in our social fabric which every child has to learn to face. This same thing is true in the kingdom of our Lord. Too many correct their children making disciplinary threats but never carry them out.

Riding along with a friend, the father told his young son, "Now, I want to talk to Dr. Smith. Please don't turn on the radio!" The boy commenced to turn it on, so the father turned it off. But the boy just as promptly turned the radio back on. The father admonished, "Son, I told you not to turn that radio on." This went on nine or ten times, but still the father did nothing.

We must teach consistency to our children. If you don't go to work and do your job can you go to the paymaster and get your check? If you happen to go through a stop sign repeatedly and the officer says, "Don't do that, you will be tagged if you do it again." Does he merely warn you again if the incident recurs. In society, when the law says you cannot, you dare not do it without an according penalty.

Children don't always have to be nagged or "yacked" at. All that is required is a consistency. In our home, whenever father called, the children came. I would step outside and let our "family" whistle go. All over the neighborhood one could hear little voices, "Coming father." They knew if they didn't come then they wouldn't play tomorrow. That doesn't mean you have to scream at your children. It is a matter of being firm and keeping your word.

We have a lovely Christian teenage daughter to whom we frequently say, "Elizabeth, you are a pure joy and delight to your father and mother." When she was a little child she used to whine for things. I would ask her, "Does whining get you anything?" She knew from experience that it didn't. But, it still took her a while to learn this. She

is no different from any of the rest of us. One doesn't whine his way into heaven. The Lord says, "the wages of sin is death;" and, "the soul that sinneth it shall die." A person cannot rebel against the Lord, choosing his own way and then some day expect to stand before the portals of heaven like the foolish virgins.

Fathers and mothers are given the glorious privilege of representing to their child the very character and blessedness of our sovereign Father, Son and Holy Spirit. How well are you doing it in your home? Ask the Lord's blessing as you apply these practical principles taken from His holy will.

Chapter Eleven

ONE OF THE most blessed things about the Word of God is its wonderful practicality. The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote, "Fathers do not provoke your children lest they be frustrated and discouraged." Again he declared, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath or to anger, but nurture them in the chastening and discipline of the Lord." This is one of the paramount reasons why the Lord gave children parents.

One area of important care is in relation to the responsibility we have of seeing they get the proper food. They grow rapidly building bones, sinew, muscle and flesh. They need the proper physical as well as spiritual nutrients. You may wonder where in the world they put it." They've got a tape-worm," a mother once said to me. No, they are just growing and need building blocks. Children need far more food than a grown man because they are not only exercising and expending a lot of energy but also are building new bones, sinews, and muscles.

But there are times when a child doesn't grow. There are times when he eats very little. For a few weeks or a month he doesn't want very much.

This is the time we usually battle them. We should not do this.

Another thing, do not fill up the plate of a child the same as you would an adult. Some parents unwisely expect children to eat the same size portions as adults and as a result they rebel and the entire matter of eating is unpleasant for them. Give them just the right amount so that they can clean up their plates.

The child should be taught that whining will get him no where. There was a little fellow in our household who didn't want to take a nap. To show us how definite he was he threw himself down on the floor in a violent temper tantrum. My wife gave me an urgent call. When I got there we both knew what needed to be done. We knelt with him on the floor and banged his head until he got the point. That was the last time that ever occurred. Several years later when his younger brother came along he tried the same thing. The older boy sideled up to him and said, "I'd advise you not to try that. I did and it doesn't work." The child must learn these facts early in life or the rest of his days will be misery and frustration for himself as well as for those around him. If you really love your child, you will discipline him, putting down firm rules and regulations. All of this, of course, is to be done in love. But consistency is the watchword.

Coming home from the depot in Saint Paul some months ago, I noticed two teenage young people who were quite loud in their talk. One said, "How do you get what you want at home?" "Oh," she replied, "I just stay with it. My brother, he doesn't know how to do it. He just blows his stack. Then father blows his and it's a mess. If I want this or that, I just say 'Mommy, can I have it?' She'll say, 'No, we can't afford it.' Then I start the next day and just keep it up long enough until she gives in."

Children must know that they can't whine their way into heaven. One can't whine his way into a better job. He can't whine his way into morality or

into character. One doesn't go to a piano and, while whining, finally become a brilliant musician. If you don't mold your child with God's help, the world will do it for you. While there is still time, make the important days for Christ count. Yours is the greatest task in the economy of the Lord.

Chapter Twelve

CHILDREN ALWAYS need to know the boundaries which have been set for them. After one of my meetings, I was standing out by the church house near the cemetery. There was a mother nearby with her little pre-school daughter. They were observing another mother with her son who was behaving very poorly. The little girl tugged her mother's hand and declared, "If his Mommy really loved him she wouldn't permit him to do that would she?" Yes, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength."

If we love our children, we will not permit them to go undisciplined. In this study, however, I want to point out that we must not overcorrect our children. Sometimes we can do more for a child without a lot of correction but by using appreciation, encouragement and praise. When he does something that is good and right, give him an understanding word so that he will see that you approve of this kind of behavior.

Evil behavior, of course, ought to be punished and disapproved of. Good behavior, however, should not be passed by. It is not necessary in good family discipline to be fussy. Don't always be picking at your children or "hacking" at them. Many times our disciplinary problems are a reflection of our own personality and character. We, ourselves have not learned the quiet peace of the Lord. Or it could be that we are experiencing physical problems such as being tired.

A woman came to me for counsel who said, "You know, I can do all right

in the morning when I get up until about 10 o'clock. I have three pre-school children at home and three others in school. About mid-morning I could scream and climb the walls. I am afraid I might choke one of them." I explained that with this large of a family, tensions are bound to be involved. The feeling of wanting to harm them, however, is abnormal. "Yes," she said, "I think I'm going mad and may lose my life."

Without discussing the entire case, I discovered she wasn't getting enough rest. Her husband came home and never helped her about the house. He settled down to look at TV, the late show, and the late, late show. When they retired after midnight she was physically weary and not in any kind of a romantic mood. She had to get up at the crack of dawn while he stayed in bed until it was time to go to work. She was never able to get any rest in the afternoon and her diet was something that she caught on the run. No wonder that she was experiencing some real problems.

After a while I asked the husband to come in. He asked if I had discovered the problem. When I told him that *he* was the cause, he was somewhat shocked. He wisely wanted to know what to do. I told him to go down in the basement and get a hammer. With that to knock a hole in the TV. Or, for less stringency, at least turn it to the wall. "You are wasting your life and your wife," I frankly told him.

The wives of our land, in similar conditions are in danger of serious nervous collapse. For untold numbers it is already too late. No wonder the mother was fussy and irritable. We, ourselves, as parents, must make sure that we get enough rest and that we eat properly. Sometimes the particular behavior patterns manifest in our children are because we are not properly caring for ourselves. We need rest, love and discipline in our own lives. Coupled with this we need worship, recreation, and social life in fellowship with companionable friends.

Don't always be shouting and pick-

ing at your children. Teach them that all glory is unto the Lord and that you are under Christ's authority, even as they are under you.

Chapter Thirteen

PROBABLY the most important aspect of discipline is that we ought to be consistent. That means we ought to say what we mean and mean what we say. We ought to teach them that whining gets them nothing. We ought to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit day after day to make us sweet, filling us with the fruits of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, kindness, goodness, self-control, and fidelity.

We ought not to over-correct our children but to show them that all authority is unto the Lord. I have heard some parents say, "I don't know what I'm going to do with the child. I don't know whatever's going to become of him." In this way you have killed all hope. The child ought to have your confidence if he is going to achieve anything. The Lord called Simon Peter a rock. Now, he was anything but a rock, however, the Lord gave him confidence in himself. A little child lives in hope and we must be very careful not to destroy this trust in us as well as in himself.

In one school the teacher, the principal, even the school psychologist were perplexed over the problem of a young boy. The doctor finally discovered that the trouble was in the mother's corrective habits. The little child had not stopped wetting the bed and his mother was shaming him day after day with such foolish chants as, "You're a baby, you're a baby! I'm going to put diapers on you!" By fighting all the other children at school he showed that he was no "baby." The psychologist could give some good help in this case. What can be done positively to help the child? First, guard that it doesn't have an abundance of fluids in late afternoon and evening. Go to your family phy-

sician for other practical advice. Shaming, however, only creates greater problems far worse than bed wetting.

This is true with sucking the thumb. In persistent cases it can affect the contour of the teeth. I have been teaching college and university for a good many years and have never seen a boy or girl in a college class sucking his knuckle. They usually get over it and we ought to exercise patience. Those of us who are Christians and want our children to live circumspect lives sometimes ought to fall over backwards to give them an appreciation of our love.

King David wailed and wailed when Absalom was killed. He said, "Would to God I had died for you Absalom." Scripture tells us he wouldn't let his son even come into his presence at times; he continually ostracized him. A child doesn't want you to die for him, dear parent. He wants you to live for him!

Do we let the child have encouragement and the money it needs? There is a danger in being stingy as well as in being overly indulgent. If we teach the child that authority is under the Lord, then he understands that we are not the sovereign judge but simply standing in the place of our Lord for the instruction, blessing and guidance of his life. This is our most important calling and this is the reason why God gave children parents.

Chapter Fourteen

WE MUST NEVER forget that the chief instructors of a child should be the father and mother. We are responsible for the guidance of our children in the ordinary things of life. We must give them ample and satisfactory explanations of their physical bodies. We instruct them in the proper kinds of values: cultural, moral and eternal.

We are grateful for all that public schools and churches do. However, the obligation rests upon us to instruct

them. How well are we doing it? Does the little child have to pick up the knowledge of procreation from the streets or are we, as Christian fathers and mothers, placing it in their hands in wisdom and love? We want them some day to be wed in holy wedlock, heirs together with their spouse of the grace of life. But what are we doing about proper instruction along these lines?

Are we teaching them courtesy and honesty? Are we helping them to be free from race prejudice and all the evils of men, even as we ourselves are? If you teach these things well in an atmosphere of love, the child will learn and learn well. The school systems have limitations and weaknesses. An intelligence quotient measures the ability of your child to do well in school in such things as mathematics and various skills. It does not measure a lot of factors such as musical aptitude or any social quotient. It, of course, cannot measure character value either.

Our young son had an unusually high ability. He was given problems before he went to school and, hence, did very well in the first grade. In second grade I got a note from his teacher saying, "If your son doesn't do better I'm going to send him back to the first grade." All within a year's time. I was deeply concerned and went to see the teacher. The problem was he was bored with his work books and wasn't bothering to do his assignments. He had been going to the library and getting books to read. The teacher wouldn't let him take the work books

home. She said he would have to do them in school. He was kept out of recess; he couldn't go to visual aid, and generally he quite naturally reacted in a very bad way. The teacher said, "You're the dumbest child I've ever had."

We didn't understand how deep seated this problem really was. I discovered that our child had a very serious mental block. I told my dear wife it would take care, love and much concern. It takes much patience, love and understanding to find a balance between pressure which overcomes hindrances and pressure which makes for frustration. We didn't have a TV in our home for a good many years, not because we couldn't have, but because of the problems involved. It is much easier to say "No" once for all, than it is to say "No" for five children all evening long.

Some of the discipline problems encountered with our children are the result of the lack of achievement. This is why we need to spend time helping our children. If you cannot teach your child without becoming impatient, then you ask the Lord to give you grace and make you kind and loving taking the time to do it.

There are children who get mental blocks in early school years which run all through their life, blighting their personality. You are responsible for the instruction of your children in all areas of life. I think this is what Scripture means when we read, train them up in all things and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Chapter Fifteen

About the Author :

Dr. W. Robert Smith is a member of the faculty of Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota. His ministry in Bible conferences, spiritual life meetings, and evangelical services have been greatly blessed of the Lord in this country as well as in other parts of the world.

IN A DECADENT and immoral society in which we are living there is a vital need for parents to guide their children in upright character. Are we teaching them to be honest? Are we giving them any cultural values? Are they learning orderliness and refinement? They need to be taught how to

be grateful and thankful. They should know how to recognize authority and submit to it. They need to know ethical as well as eternal values. They need to learn to be free from race prejudices, one of the real blights in our world today. These are just a few of the vital things a child is supposed to learn at the feet of his father and mother: character values and eternal values.

Basically, the reason the Lord gave children parents is so that the child may have an understanding of the grace of our Lord and come to know our Saviour as a born-again soul in Jesus Christ. This, of course, involves many things. Are we instructing our children in the Scriptures? You as a father and mother are failing yourselves, and God more importantly, unless you take the responsibility. You must first know the experience of His grace. You must know how to pray, how to gain truths out of the Bible and then pass them along to your child. We are grateful for all of the Sunday schools teaching our children basic principles of the holy faith. But they can only do this a few minutes a week. Day after day there should be prayer and a study of the Bible with the children. This need not, and for spiritual profit cannot, be "above their heads." This is a part of the family altar.

Many times children grow up to be ignorant of the priceless gifts contained in the Word of God. If you have never done this decide now, by the grace of God, that you will. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and guidance. He will; He has promised to do so.

After hearing such an exhortation one father told me, "I went home to my family and I said to them after supper, 'Now don't go away. I want you all to come into the living room. I have a confession to make. I've not been what I should be to you. We've never had Bible reading. We've never had prayer in our home. We're going to begin tonight. If someone will get the Bible you'll have to help your father because I'm not given to much speaking and this will be difficult. Let's

read through the 23rd Psalm and then let's pray together the Lord's prayer.'" The results were that the entire home was changed through such a humble beginning. There will be difficult times along the way but stick by it and God will reward you and your family with untold blessings both for the moment as well as for the years ahead.

Two Christian parents do not make a Christian home in itself any more than two professors make a Christian university. It is when father and mother dedicate their home to the glory of our blessed Lord, purposing that their lives shall be a reflection of the very nature of our Lord. This is largely the accomplishment of the family altar.

The next question is, "How do you keep your children in the family altar from being bored?" The chief purpose of the family altar is not a mere habit, it is that which is desperately needed. There are many things you can do.

When the children are in their younger years, let them get some of the Bible story books which are available. Let every child have a Bible and when they are old enough to read aloud let them have a part. For further variety, sometimes let one of the children be responsible for the family altar and then sometimes another.

In addition to the family altar we need to instruct our children as to the values of Christian fellowship. Be sure to take them to Sunday school and church. Don't ask your child whether he wants to go, any more than you would ask him whether he wants to go to high school. This is permissiveness which is wrong. You must decide as a father and mother what is good for the child. Then you should be sure to go yourself. The Scripture says that children ought to honor their father and mother.

As one boy said to me, "Well, I know parents who aren't worth obeying." Unfortunately, he was right. The father is the particular head of the house. He should set the pattern. When the time comes for Sunday school all will go. You can't tell your boy to go; you must show him. We are supposed to

instruct our children not only by precept but also by example! We are to lead and guide the child into the experiences of these values by our own personal traits and by the habits of life we have formed.

Chapter Sixteen

WITHOUT EXCEPTION the greatest force in the world is the unconscious influence of a life with another life. This is what makes us a part of society. This is why the pressures on the crowd of young people is enormous. They are pushed, unthinkingly, into conformity. It is only human nature not to want to be unlike other people.

There are two kinds of influence given to every man. There is a positive influence such as a salesman might exert when he seeks to sell his wares. In a sense it is like the influence of a minister of the Gospel who seeks to preach so that men understand that apart from Christ our Saviour there is no salvation; that we need His power and His gracious love. This is the kind of influence that a teacher tries to exert on a pupil.

When a parent tries to guide his child by appreciation and instruction, he is positively and actively trying to influence the young life. The other side of influence is unconscious and involuntary. It can be well said that "The parent is the child's first copybook."

In the early years of life the child is influenced far more by the pattern of the parent's life than by any other active instruction it receives. If you dear wives want your children to yell like fishwives, all you need to do is yell like a fishwife. If you want them to live in a certain manner of life, you walk like that and they will follow you. One of the greatest difficulties of life is that our children will follow us in the things we don't want them to do. This includes bad habits and character traits. They see the evil in our lives far more readily than they

do the good. Children will talk as well as walk like their fathers and mothers.

Here is a father who is smoking. He says to his son, "I don't want you to smoke." But the son sees the father and says, "I want to be like my dad." And he does just that. This same is true with any vice.

Here is a father coming home from work. He slips into his lunch box something which belongs to the company. His son sees this and thinks, "If dad can get away with it, so can I." And we wonder why children go wrong.

Are we dishonest in the payment of our taxes? Do we lie to people? Our children see more than we think. You are responsible before the Lord for setting a proper example of Christ-likeness and godliness in character.

If you are quarrelsome and irritable the tendency is for your children to become like you. If you are prejudiced against a man of another race, calling him some scurrilous name, the children will pick this up.

My father was a kind and gracious man. He loved the Lord. He was a loyal churchman. I never knew my father to lie. I never knew him to tell a smutty story. He was clean in his habits of life. I remember one day bursting into the room and finding my father kneeling in prayer. I tiptoed back out. My father not only talked about prayer, he prayed. I have never forgotten the character of my father and I always wanted to grow up to be like him. Would you want your son or daughters to grow up and be like you?

As fathers and mothers we must influence our children for good because we cannot escape our responsibility. The only real way to do this is to live so close to our Saviour, growing in Christian maturity and Christ-likeness, that somehow the light of His grace in our souls will shine out to them. What kind of a life are you living father and mother? Whatever way you are going on the narrow road that leads to eternal life and the path toward the

city of God, there is some little boy or girl who is following in your footsteps.

Chapter Seventeen

AS PARENTS it is far more significant for us to be concerned with our children than it is to succeed in business, society, or even in the church. We become so foolishly attached to values which are not important. Our chief concern should be with reference to our children.

For our last message together I want to point out that a very real reason why the Lord has given parents to children is to protect them from the encroachments of society and from the environment of life. We need to learn how much a child can stand. If he has been overpowered by the questionable influences around him, we need to take rather drastic and protective steps. We should be deeply concerned about the kind of schools we have. The same interest should be noted in the social situations in which our children are found. This would involve their companions, their habits, and the places they frequent.

Are we fully aware of the fact that every area of life seems to be pushing our children into marriage before they are even mature enough to think of it? Because our civilization is sex-mad the end result is a rapidly ascending percentage of broken homes. These often come from teenage marriages. It seems that there isn't time today to talk about illegitimacy in our teenage groups. We fathers and mothers should protect ourselves and our children from a society which is trying to throw children together by such things as school dances. The youngsters are not mature enough to stand the temptations of the proper sexual experiences as the Lord intended.

A boy came before the judge on a charge of breaking of the law. His father was there and the judge said to him quietly, "Why do you live in that

neighborhood? You don't have to." The man responded in a huff, "This neighborhood is good enough for me to live in. I grew up here and my son's going to grow up here." "But," the judge reasoned, "You're putting your son in an area where there are altogether different values. There are serious problem children there. Their parents are drunks, prostitutes, and the like. There are all kinds of problems. Your son just isn't able to stand it. Why don't you move away?" The man didn't and his son went into the problem of juvenile delinquency deeper and deeper. In many of these sad cases the parents are guilty. We are responsible for the kind of a church to which we go and the kind of a school system in which our children are educated. We ought to be concerned in the fight against pornography and filth which is flooding our land. We should be concerned to get out in the forefront of some of these things for the sake of our children.

But basically, before all of the rest, the Lord has entrusted children to parents that they might direct them by example and precept to accept the grace of God so that they might come to know Jesus Christ as Saviour. This is paramount and supercedes all else. What good would it do if I preached to thousands and yet my own children did not believe the truth of God? What good would all of the rest have been? Scripture tells us that we are first to provide for our own. This means spiritually as well as economically. Is your home as it ought to be? Remember, if it is not, we have adequate resources in our Saviour. He will forgive and cleanse us if we purpose from this day forward that our homes shall be filled with divine intention so that our children may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is nothing on earth compared to a Godly home. It is a foretaste of heaven. It is the place the Lord intended for us to live in with joy and in Christlikeness. May the Lord's continued blessing and benediction rest upon it to this end.

A BOY OR A GIRL

Some folks pray for a boy, some for a
golden haired little girl to come.

Some claim to think there is more joy
wrapped up in the smile of a
little boy;

While others pretend that the soapy
curls and plump pink cheeks of
a little girl,

Bring more of bliss to the old home
place, than a small boy's queer
little freckled face.

Now, which is better I couldn't say, if
the Lord should ask me to choose
today.

If He should put in a call for me and
say, "Now, what shall your
order be, a boy or girl?"

I have both in store, which of the two
are you waiting for? I'd say
with one of my broadest grins,
"Send either one if it can't be twins."

I've head it said to some people's
shame, that they cried with grief
when a small boy came,

For they wanted a girl, and some folks
I know who wanted a boy, just
took on so when a girl was sent.

But it seems to me that mothers and
fathers should happy be, to think
that when the baby has hurried-
ly come,

That the Lord should bless them with
either one.

A boy or a girl, there can be no
choice, there's something lovely
in either voice.

And all I ask of the Lord to do is to
see that the mother comes safely
through,

And guard the baby and have it well,
with perfect form and a healthy
yell,

A pair of eyes and a shock of hair,
either boy or girl, and its dad
won't care.

THINK

Think of your child in his Christian
home

See him in prayer at your knee.
Then think of the child in the godless
home,

What manner of chance has he?
What chance to learn that the dear
Lord died

And why His blood was shed.
Would he only learn salvations' plan
too late

When he is dead?
As the twig is bent, the tree inclines.

A child is a tender plant,
And a child needs God as a flower
needs light,

And the soul can die from want.
"Suffer the little children to come
unto me."

Dear Saviour can there be a greater
service,,

A sweeter task than to bring a child
to Thee?

—Martha Snell Nicholson

TV ON SUNDAY NIGHT

Sunday morning's very nice,
But Sunday night's such sacrifice!
With television's relaxation
Must I make the congregation
One man larger? After all
I'm only one, and one's so small;
And surely I'm within my right
To skip the service Sunday night.

Others will be there to see
That worship's kept. They don't need
me.

O I like a church with an evening
service;

In any other I'd be nervous.
It marks a church as spiritually
right—

But I'll still stay home on Sunday
night.

—Rev. William H. Rice

It is with a real joy of heart and a sincere prayer of purpose that we have presented these special messages by Dr. W. Robert Smith. If you have specific questions concerning needs in your own home, particular prayer requests you would like to share with us, or some other special problems, we cordially invite you to let us know.

If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, we urge you to make this most important of all life's decisions. Your home cannot be built solidly and profitably without the One of Whom it is said, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ."



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"Train up a child in the
way he should go; and
when he is old, he will
not depart from it."

Proverbs 6:22



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