

Chapter 1 : Christian Nurture Helps Fulfill the Church's Purpose to Know & Love God

I. WHAT CHRISTIAN NURTURE IS. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."â€”Ephesians, vi. THERE is then some kind of nurture which is of the Lord, deriving a quality and a power from Him, and communicating the same.

Please click button to get eschatology and christian nurture book now. This site is like a library, you could find million book here by using search box in the widget. Milton McCormick Gatch Language: Professor Gatch opens with three essays providing an overview of the themes of this book: Despite an undoubted acceptance of immortality and an active afterlife, Gatch believes that medieval eschatology remained strikingly oriented to the New Testament picture of the apocalypse and the resurrection of the dead. This is explored in studies on spirituality and perceptions of eternity in the Anglo-Saxon church, and a long essay surveys the teachings in the anonymous Old English homilies. The following studies look at what can be learned of the audience of such homilies in pre-Conquest England, and at their wider European context. The final pieces consider reflections of piety in treatments of the Noah story and in a little text about the piety of a late-Saxon nobleman. This timely introduction to Old English literature focuses on the production and reception of Old English texts, and on their relation to Anglo-Saxon history and culture. Introduces Old English texts and considers their relation to Anglo-Saxon culture. Responds to renewed emphasis on historical and cultural contexts in the field of medieval studies. Treats virtually the entire range of textual types preserved in Old English. Considers the production, reception and uses of Old English texts. Integrates the Anglo-Latin backgrounds crucial to understanding Old English literature. Offers very extensive bibliographical guidance. Demonstrates that Anglo-Saxon studies is uniquely placed to contribute to current literary debates. Claudia Di Sciacca Language: University of Toronto Press Format Available: Isidore of Seville circa was the author of the Etymologiae,. Finding the Right Words is the first book-length study to deal with the transmission and reception of works by Isidore of Seville in Anglo-Saxon England, with a particular focus on the Synonyma. The case for the particular receptiveness of the Synonyma in Anglo-Saxon England is strongly supported by both a close reading of primary sources and an extensive selection of secondary literature. This rigorous, well-documented volume demonstrates the significance of the Synonyma to our understanding of the literary pretensions and pedagogical practices of Anglo-Saxon England, and offers new insights into the interaction of Latin and vernacular within its literary culture.

Christian nurture, the edification of believers, helps people know and love God more. Teaching ministry must be a priority to help fulfill our church purpose.

THE real point of the declaration, here, is not that Abraham will command his children, but that he is such a man, having such qualities or qualifications as to be able to command, certain to command, and train them into an obedient and godly life. The declaration is, you will observe--"For I know him;" not simply and directly--"For I know the fact. He will certainly produce, or train a godly family, because it is in him, as a man, to do nothing else or less. The subject raised then by the declaration is, not so much family training and government, as it is-- The personal and religious qualifications, or qualifications of character, necessary to success in such family training and government. There is almost no duty or work, in this world, that does not require some outfit of qualifications, in order to the doing of it well. We all understand that some kind of preparation is necessary to fill the place of a magistrate, teach a school, drill a troop of soldiers, or do any such thing, in a right manner. Nay, we admit the necessity of serving some kind of apprenticeship, in order to become duly qualified for the calling, only of a milliner, or a tailor. And yet, as a matter of fact, we go into what we call the Christian training of our children, without any preparation for it whatever, and apparently without any such conviction of negligence or absurdity, as at all disturbs our assurance in what we do. Not that young parents, and especially young mothers, are not often heard lamenting their conscious insufficiency for the charge that is put upon them, but that, in such regrets, they commonly mean nothing more than that they feel very tenderly, and want to do better things than, in fact, any body can. It does not mean, as a general thing, that they are practically endeavoring to get hold of such qualifications as they want, in order to their Christian success. After all, it is likely to be assumed that they have their sufficient equipment in the tender instinct of their natural affection itself. So they go on, as in a kind of venture, to command, govern, manage, punish, teach, and turn about the way of their child, in just such tempers, and ways of example and views of life, as chance to be the element of their own disfigured, ill-begotten character at the time. This, in short, is their sin--the undoing, as it will by and by appear, of their children--that they undertake their most sacred office, without any sacred qualifications; govern without self-government, discharge the holiest responsibilities irresponsibly, and thrust their children into evil, by the evil and bad mind, out of which their training proceeds. I know not any thing that better shows the utter incompetency of mere natural affection as an equipment for the parental office, or that, in a short way, proves the fixed necessity in it, of some broader competency and higher qualification, than just to glance at the real cruelties, even commonly perpetrated, under just those tender, faithful instigations of natural affection, that we so readily expect to be a kind of infallible protection to the helplessness of infancy. How often is it a fact, that the fondest parents, owing to some want of insight, or of patience, or even to some uninstructed, only half intelligent desire to govern their child, will do it the greatest wrongs--stinging every day and hour, the little defenseless being, committed to their love, with the sense of bitter injustice; driving in the ploughshare of abuse and blame upon its tender feeling, by harsh words and pettish chastisements, when, in fact, the very thing in the child that annoys them is, that they themselves have thrown it into a fit of uneasiness and partial disorder, by their indiscreet feeding; or that in some appearance of irritability, or insubjection, it has only not the words to speak of its pain, or explain its innocence. The pain of such wrong goes deeper, too, than many fancy. No other creature suffers under conscious injury so intensely. And the mischief done is only aggravated by the fact that the sufferer has no power of redress, and has no alternative permitted, but either to be cowed into a weak and cringing submission, or else, when his nobler nature has too much stuff in it for that, to be stiffened in hate and the bitter grudges of wrong. I know not any thing more sad to think of, than the cruelties put upon children in this manner. It makes up a chapter which few persons read, and which almost every body takes for granted can not exist. For the honor of our human nature, I wish it could not; and that what we call maternal affection, the softest, dearest, most self-sacrificing of all earthly forms of tenderness and fidelity, were, at least, sufficient to save the dishonor, which, alas! Here, then, at just the point where we should, least of all, look for it, viz: Few

persons, I apprehend, have any conception, on the other hand, of the immense number and sweep of the disqualifications that, in nominally or even really Christian parents, go in to hinder, and spoil of all success, the religious nurture of their children. Sometimes the disqualification is this, and sometimes it is that; sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious; sometimes observable by others and well understood, and sometimes undiscovered. The variety is infinite, and the modes of combination subtle, to such a degree, that persons taken to be eminently holy in their life, will have all their prayers and counsels blasted, by some hidden fatality, whose root is never known, or suspected, whether by others, or possibly by themselves. The wonder that children, whose parents were in high esteem for their piety, should so often grow up into a vicious and ungodly life, would, I think, give way to just the contrary wonder, if only some just conception were had of the various, multifarious, unknown, unsuspected disqualifications, by which modes of nurture, otherwise good, are fatally poisoned. Sometimes, for example, it is a fatal mischief, going before on the child, but probably unknown to the world, that the parents, one or both, or it may be the mother especially, does not accept the child willingly, but only submits to the maternal office and charge, as to some hard necessity. This charge is going to detain her at home, and limit her freedom. Or it will take her away from the shows and pleasures for which she is living. Or it will burden her days and nights with cares that weary her self-indulgence. Or she is not fond of children, and never means to be fond of them--they are not worth the trouble they cost. Indulging these and such like discontents, unwisely and even cruelly provoked, not unlikely, by the unchristian discontents and foolish speeches of her husband, she poisons both herself and her child beforehand, and receives it with no really glad welcome, when she takes it to her bosom. This abuse of marriage is, in fact, an offense against nature, and is no doubt bitterly offensive to God. Though commonly spoken of, in a way of astonishing lightness, it is just that sin, by which every good possibility of the family is corrupted. What can two parents do for the child, they only submit to look upon, and take as a foundling to their care? If now, at last, they somewhat love the child, which is theirs by compulsion, what office of a really Christian nurture can they fill in its behalf? They are under a complete and total disqualification, as respects the duties of their charge. They are out of rest in God, out of confidence toward Him, hindered in their prayers, lost to that sweetness of love and peace which ought to be the element of their house. Delving on thus, from such a point of beginning, and assuming the possible chance of success, in what they may do in the spirit of such a beginning, is simply absurd. What can they do in training a child for God, which they have accepted, at his hands, only as being thrust upon them by compulsion? I might speak of other disqualifications that have a similar character, as implying some disagreement with Providence. The child that is born to such keeping, and lovingly lapped in the peaceful trust of Providence, is born to a glorious heritage. On the other hand, where the endeavor and life-struggle of the house is, at bottom, a fight with Providence; envious, eager, anxious, out of content, out of rest, full of complaint and railings, it is impossible that any thing Christian should grow in such an element. The disqualification is complete. Another whole class of disqualifications require to be named by themselves; those I mean which are caused by a bad or false morality in the parties, at some point where the failure is not suspected, and misses being corrected by the slender and very partial experience of their discipleship. They are persons, for example, who make much of principles in their words, and really think that they are governed by principles, when, in fact, they do every thing for some reason of policy, and value their principles, more entirely than they know, for what they are worth in the computations of policy. Contrivance, artifice, or sometimes cunning, is the element of the house. Even the praying of the house takes on a prudential air, much as if it were done for some reason not stated. A stranger in the house, seeing no scandalous wrong, but a fine show of principle, has a certain sense of coldness upon him, which he can not account for. How much of true Christian nurture there may be in such a house, it is not difficult to judge. Here, probably, is going to be one of the cases, where everybody wonders that children brought up so correctly, turn out so badly. It is not understood that such children were brought up to know principles, only as a stunted undergrowth of prudence, and that now the result appears. Again there is, in some persons, who appear, in all other respects, to be Christian, a strange defect of truth or truthfulness. They are not conscious of it. They would take it as a cruel injustice, were they only to suspect their acquaintances of holding such an estimate of them. And yet there is a want of truth in every sort of demonstration they make. It is not their words only that

lie, but their voice, air, action, their every putting forth has a lying character. The atmosphere they live in is an atmosphere of pretense. Their virtues are affectations. Their compassions and sympathies are the airs they put on. Their friendship is their mood and nothing more. And yet they do not know it. They mean, it may be, no fraud. They only cheat themselves so effectually as to believe, that what they are only acting is their truth. And, what is difficult to reconcile, they have a great many Christian sentiments, they maintain prayer as a habit, and will sometimes speak intelligently of matters of Christian experience. But how dreadful must be the effect of such a character, on the simple, trustful soul of a little child. When the crimen falsi is in every thing heard, and looked upon, and done, he may grow up into a hypocrite, or a thief, but what shall make him a genuine Christian? In the same manner, I could go on to show a multitude of disqualifications for the office of a genuine Christian nurture, that are created by a bad or defective morality, in parents who live a credibly Christian life. They make a great virtue, it may be, of frugality or economy, and settle every thing into a scale of insupportable parsimony and meanness. Or, they make a praise of generous living, and run it into a profligate and spendthrift habit. Or, they make such a virtue of honor and magnanimity, as to set the opinions and principles of men in deference, above the principles of God. Or, they get their chief motives of action out of the appearances of virtue, and not out of its realities. There is no end to the impostures of bad morality, that find a place in the lives of reputedly Christian persons. They are generally too subtle to be detected by the inspection of their consciousness, and very commonly pass unobserved by others. And yet they have power to poison the nurture of the house, even though it appears to be, in some respects, Christian. Hence the profound necessity that Christian parents, consciously meaning to bring up their children for God, should make a thorough inspection of their morality itself, to find if there be any bad spot in it, knowing that, as certainly as there is, it will more or less fatally corrupt their children. We have still another whole class of disqualifications to speak of, that belong, as vices, to the Christian life itself, and will, as much more certainly, be ruinous in their effects. Some of them would never be thought of as disqualifications for the Christian training of children, and yet they are so, in a degree to even cut off the reasonable hope of success. Probably a great part of the cases of disaster, that occur in the training of Christian families, are referable to these Christian vices, which are commonly not put down as evidences of apostasy, or any radical defect of Christian principle, because they are not supposed to imply a discontinuance of prayers or a fatal subjection to the spirit of this world. Sanctimony, for example, as we commonly use the term, is one of these vices. It describes what we conceive to be a saintly, or over-saintly air and manner, when there is a much inferior degree of sanctity in the life. And what can be worse, or do more to set him off from all piety, by a fixed aversion, than to have gotten such impressions of it only, as he takes from this always unblessed, tedious, look of sanctimony. What can a poor child do, when the sense of nature and natural life, the smiles, glad voices, and cheerful notes of play, are all overcast and gloomed, or, as it were, forbidden, by that ghostly piety in which it is itself being brought up? And yet the world will wonder immensely at the strange perversity of the child that grows up under such a saintly training, to be known as a person mortally averse to religion! Why, it would be a much greater wonder if he could think of it even with patience. Bigotry is another of these Christian vices, and yet no one will assume his infallible capacity, in the matter of Christian training, as confidently as the bigot. Has he not the truth? Is he not in a way of speaking out always, and giving faithful testimonies in his house? Yes, that must be admitted; and yet he is a man that mauls every truth of God, and every gentle and lovely feeling of a genuinely Christian character. His intensities are made by his narrowness and hate, and not by his love. He fills the house with a noise of piety, and may dog his children possibly into some kind of conformity with his opinions. But he is much more likely, by this brassy din, to only stun their intelligence and make them incapable of any true religious impressions. There is no class of children that turn out worse, in general, than the children of the Christian bigots. The vice of Christian fanaticism operates, in another and different way, but with a commonly disastrous effect. The fanatic is a man who mixes false fire with the true, and burns with a partly diabolical heat. He means to be superlatively Christian, but it happens that what he gets, above others, is the addition of something to his passions, which would be more genuine, if it were in his affections. He scorches, but never melts. He is most impatient of what is ordinary and common, and does not sufficiently honor the solid works and experiences of that goodness which is fixed and faithful. This kind of character

makes a fiery element for childish piety to grow in. What can the child become, or learn to be, where every thing is in this key of excess?

Chapter 3 : Christian Nurture and Critical Openness

Christian Nurture and Critical Openness "Christian Nurture and Critical Openness" *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 34, pp. 17 Reprinted: Jeff Astley and Leslie Francis (eds) *Critical Perspectives on Christian Education: A Reader on the Aims, Principles and Philosophy of Christian Education* Leominster, Fowler Wright Books, pp. ISBN: 0 8.

THERE is then some kind of nurture which is of the Lord, deriving a quality and a power from Him, and communicating the same. Being instituted By Him, it will of necessity have a method and a character peculiar to itself, or rather to Him. What then is the true idea of Christian or divine nurture, as distinguished from that which is not Christian? What is its aim? What its method of working? What its powers and instruments? What its contemplated results? Few questions have greater moment; and it is one of the pleasant signs of the times, that the subject involved is beginning to attract new interest, and excite a spirit of inquiry which heretofore has not prevailed in our churches. In ordinary cases, the better and more instructive way of handling this subject, would be to go directly into the practical methods of parental discipline, and show by what modes of government and instruction we may hope to realize the best results. But unhappily the public mind is preoccupied extensively by a view of the whole subject, which I must regard as a theoretical mistake, and one which will involve, as long as it continues, practical results systematically injurious. This mistaken view it is necessary, if possible, to remove. And accordingly what I have to say will take the form of an argument on the question thus put ill issue; though I design to gather round the subject, as I proceed, as much of practical instruction as the mode of the argument will suffer. Assuming then the question above stated, What is the true idea of Christian education? That the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise. In other words, the aim, effort, and expectation should be, not, as is commonly assumed, that the child is to grow up in sin, to be converted after he comes to a mature age; but that he is to open on the world as one that is spiritually renewed, not remembering the time when he went through a technical experience, but seeming rather to have loved what is good from his earliest years. I do not affirm that every child may, in fact and without exception, be so trained that he certainly will grow up a Christian. The qualifications it may be necessary to add will be given in another place, where they can be stated more intelligibly. I shall show you, before I have done with the argument, that it is as old as the Christian church, and prevails extensively at the present day in other parts of the world. Neither let your own experience raise a prejudice against it. If you have endeavored to realize the very truth I here affirm, but find that your children do not exhibit the character you have looked for; if they seem to be intractable to religious influences, and sometimes to display an apparent aversion to the very subject of religion itself, you are not of course to conclude that the doctrine I here maintain is untrue or impracticable. You may be unreasonable in your expectations of your children. Possibly, there may be seeds of holy principle in them, which you do not discover. A child acts out his present feelings, the feelings of the moment, without qualification or disguise. And how, many times, would all you appear, if you were to do the same? Will you expect of them to be better, and more constant and consistent, than yourselves; or will you rather expect them to be children, human children still, living a mixed life, trying out the good and evil of the world, and preparing, as older Christians do, when they have taken a lesson of sorrow and emptiness, to turn again to the true good? Perhaps they will go through a rough mental struggle, at some future day, and seem, to others and to themselves, there to have entered on a Christian life. But suppose there is really no trace or seed of holy principle in your children, has there been no fault of piety and constancy in your church? For it is not for you alone to realize all that is included in the idea of Christian education. It belongs to the church of God, according to the degree of its social power over you and in you and around your children, to bear a part of the responsibility with you. Then, again, have you nothing to blame in yourselves? Have you been so nearly even with your privilege and duty, that you can find no relief but to lay some charge upon God, or comfort yourselves in the conviction that he has appointed the failure you deplore? When God marks out a plan of education, or sets up an aim to direct its efforts, you will see, at once, that he could not base it on a want of piety in you, or on any imperfections that flow from a want of piety. It must be a plan measured by Himself and the fullness of his own gracious intentions. Besides, you must not assume that we, in

this age, are the best Christians that have ever lived, or most likely to produce all the fruits of piety. An assumption so pleasing to our vanity is more easily made than verified, but vanity is the weakest as it is the cheapest of all arguments. We have some good points, in which we compare favorably with other Christians, and Christians of other times, but our style of piety is sadly deficient, in many respects, and that to such a degree that we have little cause for self-congratulation. With all our activity and boldness of movement, there is a certain hardness and rudeness, a want of sensibility to things that do not lie in action, which can not be too much deplored, or too soon rectified. We hold a piety of conquest rather than of love, a kind of public piety, that is strenuous and fiery on great occasions, but wants the beauty of holiness, wants constancy, singleness of aim, loveliness, purity, richness, blamelessness, and if I may add another term not so immediately religious, but one that carries, by association, a thousand religious qualities wants domesticity of character; wants them, I mean, not as compared with the perfect standard of Christ, but as compared with other examples of piety that have been given in former times, and others that are given now. For some reason, we do not make a Christian atmosphere about us do not produce the conviction that we are living unto God. There is a marvelous want of savor in our piety. It is a flower of autumn, colored as highly as it need be to the eye, but destitute of fragrance. It is too much to hope that, with such an instrument, we can fulfill the true idea of Christian education. Any such hope were even presumptuous. At the same time, there is no so ready way of removing the deficiencies just described, as to recall our churches to their duties in domestic life; those humble, daily, hourly duties, where the spirit we breathe shall be a perpetual element of power and love, bathing the life of childhood. Thus much it was necessary to say, for the removal of prejudices that are likely to rise up in your minds, and make you inaccessible to the arguments I may offer. Let all such prejudices be removed, or, if this be too much, let them, at least, be suspended till you have heard what I have to advance; for it can not be desired of you to believe any thing more than what is shown you by adequate proofs. Which also it is right to ask that you will receive, in a spirit of conviction, such as becomes our wretched and low attainments, and with a willingness to let God be exalted, though at the expense of some abasement in ourselves. In pursuing the argument, I shall I. Collect some considerations which occur to us, viewing the subject on the human side. Show how far and by what methods God has justified, on his part, the doctrine we maintain. No absurdity in supposing that children are to grow up in Christ. On the other hand, if there is no absurdity, there is a very clear moral incongruity in setting up a contrary supposition, to be the aim of a system of Christian education. There could not be a worse or more baleful implication given to a child, than that he is to reject God and all holy principle, till he has come to a mature age. What authority have you from the Scriptures to tell your child, or, by any sign, to show him, that you do not expect him truly to love and obey God, till after he has spent whole years in hatred and wrong? What authority to make him feel that he is the most unprivileged of all human beings, capable of sin, but incapable of repentance; old enough to resist all good, but too young to receive any good whatever? It is reasonable to suppose that you have some express authority for a lesson so manifestly cruel and hurtful, else you would shudder to give it. I ask you for the chapter and verse, out of which it is derived. Meantime, wherein would it be less incongruous for you to teach your child that he is to lie and steal, and go the whole round of the vices, and then, after he comes to mature age, reform his conduct by the rules of virtue? Perhaps you do not give your child to expect that he is to grow up in sin; you only expect that he will yourself. That is scarcely better: You will never practically aim at what you practically despair of, and if you do not practically aim to unite your child to God, you will aim at something less; that is, something unchristian, wrong, sinful. But my child is a sinner, you will say; and how can I expect him to begin a right life, until God gives him a new heart? This is the common way of speaking, and I state the objection in its own phraseology, that it may recognize itself. Who then has told you that a child can not have the new heart of which you speak? Whence do you learn that if you live the life of Christ, before him and with him, the law of the Spirit of Life may not be such as to include and quicken him also? And why should it be thought incredible that there should be some really good principle awakened in the mind of a child? For this is all that is implied in a Christian state. The Christian is one who has simply begun to love what is good for its own sake, and why should it be thought impossible for a child to have this love begotten in him? Take any scheme of depravity you please, there is yet nothing in it to forbid the possibility that a child

should be led, in his first moral act, to cleave unto what is good and right, any more than in the first of his twentieth year. He is, in that case, only a child converted to good, leading a mixed life as all Christians do. The good in him goes into combat with the evil, and holds a qualified sovereignty. And why may not this internal conflict of goodness cover the whole life from its dawn, as well as any part of it? What opinion is more essentially monstrous, in fact, than that which regards the Holy Spirit as having no agency in the immature souls of children who are growing up, helpless and unconscious, into the perils of time? It is to be expected that Christian education will radically differ from that which is not Christian. Now, it is the very character and mark of all unchristian education, that it brings up the child for future conversion. No effort is made, save to form a habit of outward virtue, and, if God please to convert the family to something higher and better, after they come to the age of maturity, it is well. Is then Christian education, or the nurture of the Lord, no way different from this? Or is it rather to be supposed that it will have a higher aim and a more sacred character? And, since it is the distinction of Christian parents, that they are themselves in the nurture of the Lord, since Christ and the Divine Love, communicated through him, are become the food of their life, what will they so naturally seek as to have their children partakers with them, heirs together with them, in the grace of life? I am well aware of the common impression that Christian education is sufficiently distinguished by the endeavor of Christian parents to teach their children the lessons of Scripture history, and the doctrines or dogmas of Scripture theology. But if they are given to understand, at the same time, that these lessons can be expected to produce no fruit till they are come to a mature age—that they are to grow up still in the same character as other children do, who have no such instruction—what is this but to enforce the practical rejection of all the lessons taught them? And which, in truth, is better for them, to grow up in sin under Scripture light, with a heart hardened by so many religious lessons; or to grow up in sin, unvexed and unannoyed by the wearisome drill of lectures that only discourage all practical benefit? Which is better, to be piously brought up in sin, or to be allowed quietly to vegetate in it? These are questions that I know not how to decide; but the doubt in which they leave us will at least suffice to show that Christian education has, in this view, no such eminent advantages over that which is unchristian, as to raise any broad and dignified distinction between them. We certainly know that much of what is called Christian nurture, only serves to make the subject of religion odious, and that, as nearly as we can discover, in exact proportion to the amount of religious teaching received. And no small share of the difficulty to be overcome afterwards, in the struggle of conversion, is created in just this way. On the other hand, you will hear, for example, of cases like the following: A young man, correctly but not religiously brought up, light and gay in his manners, and thoughtless hitherto in regard to any thing of a serious nature, happens accidentally one Sunday, while his friends are gone to ride, to take down a book on the evidences of Christianity. His eye, floating over one of the pages, becomes fixed, and he is surprised to find his feelings flowing out strangely into its holy truths. He is conscious of no struggle of hostility, but a new joy dawns in his being. Henceforth, to the end of a long and useful life, he is a Christian man. The love into which he was surprised continues to flow, and he is remarkable, in the churches, all his life long, as one of the most beautiful, healthful, and dignified examples of Christian piety. Now, a very little miseducation, called Christian, discouraging the piety it teaches, and making enmity itself a necessary ingredient in the struggle of conversion, conversion no reality without a struggle, might have sufficed to close the mind of this man against every thought of religion to the end of life. Such facts for the case above given is a fact and not a fancy compel us to suspect the value of much that is called Christian education. They suggest the possibility also that Christian piety should begin in other and milder forms of exercise, than those which commonly distinguish the conversion of adults; that Christ himself, by that renewing Spirit who can sanctify from the womb, should be practically infused into the childish mind; in other words, that the house, having a domestic Spirit of grace dwelling in it, should become the church of childhood, the table and hearth a holy rite, and life an element of saving power. Something is wanted that is better than teaching, something that transcends mere effort and will-work—the loveliness of a good life, the repose of faith, the confidence of righteous expectation, the sacred and cheerful liberty of the Spirit—all glowing about the young soul, as a warm and genial nurture, and forming in it, by methods that are silent and imperceptible, a spirit of duty and religious obedience to God. This only is Christian nurture, the nurture of the Lord. It is a fact that all Christian

parents would like to see their children grow up in piety; and the better Christians they are, the more earnestly they desire it; and, the more lovely and constant the Christian spirit they manifest, the more likely it is, in general, that their children will early display the Christian character. This is current opinion. And, if it be generally seen that the children of such are more likely to become Christians early, what forbids the hope that, if they were riper still in their piety, living a more single and Christ-like life, and more cultivated in their views of family nurture, they might see their children grow up always in piety towards God?

Chapter 4 : Christian Nurture. - Christian Classics Ethereal Library

Nurture Christian Faith and Discipleship Experiences in Grace One unique gift of Christian camps and retreat centers that other types of programs and centers rarely highlight are specific opportunities to learn from and practice the Christian path taught by Jesus.

Snyder, an ordained pastor of the Presbyterian Church U. As people deal with ever-growing confusion, injustice, and depression, many are blaming God for their pain, which is leading some to become disillusioned with Christianity, or walk away from faith altogether, he warns. The author, who has taught New Testament studies at New College, Berkeley, California, shares of his own grief, frustration, and confusion when he underwent significant hardship and lost most of his eyesight for several years. Greatly challenging was that his Christian friends and pastor deemed his "raw response" to be unacceptable for a believer, an attitude that Snyder warns continues to manifest in many churches, isolating Christians who are struggling. The book, which was published on October 16, argues that much of these attitudes stem from an inaccurate view of God that misunderstands the role of suffering in faith, and advocates for the importance of good biblical teaching. It can strike any person, anytime, anywhere. Does forgiving mean I have to forget the past? What if I choose not to forgive? The email interview, conducted on Thursday, has been edited for clarity. Or are there not many good ways to address it at church at all? Jones Literary Author John I. Snyder in this undated photo. So there are sufficient precedents for teaching and preaching on the problem. In the book you point out the many reasons, including mistaken ideas of God, for why people come to resent God. What would you say are the root causes that lead people to gain mistaken perceptions of God? Abingdon Press *Resenting God: Snyder*, released on October 16, This is made worse by a tendency to nurture our resentments along with others who feel the same way we do, opening ourselves up to the kind of relativism that leads us to believe whatever it is that we feel. When we neglect Bible reading, we ignore the daily flow of biblical ideas and instead tend to adopt the ideas around us, or allow our own imaginations to fill in the theological blanks " typically with the most common illusions and myths. These factors lead to a growing resentment against God. We end up tending to avoid contact and honest conversations with other believers who could help us understand what we are going through. We need the body of Christ to log in on the struggles and doubts we may be experiencing. You talk about the persecution of Christians in North Korea, and how that compares to people in Western countries who call themselves Christians but do not really act like Jesus. Is there an argument to be made that those who suffer more are closer to Christ? When Christians in comparatively affluent nations pray for peace and prosperity in their own lives, and to some extent receive those things, are they perhaps limiting how the Christian faith is to be experienced? No old saint ever got that way by a hammock in the shade. Like it or not, suffering always has been high on the list of spiritual growth experiences, and whereas we may avoid it like the plague, nevertheless, it tends to come our way " regardless of whether we are living in affluence or poverty. God is sovereign over everything, and there is no way we can limit the heights or depths of growth in our faith he calls us to experience. The New Testament often speaks of the power of suffering, when blessed of God, to form within us the kind of maturity he seeks Romans 5: Disciples of Jesus are known by their fruit. What is it about resentment that makes people, Christians included, so reluctant to admit that they hold it? Often, the pattern is: I think this is the core issue. For Christians, I think there is often a sense of "spiritual shaming" in feeling resentment toward God; being resentful or bitter towards God earns you your degree in spiritual inferiority or failure. We have an image to maintain, particularly when among other church people who appear to have it all together. They might even be shunned in some communities. The question of why God allows evil and suffering seems to be in the heart of so many debates about religion. Often times, Christians do not have a great answer to that question. How do you approach it? Why did God permit it? This is probably the number one question raised against God and the Bible. If there is a loving God, why would He allow this or that? Our first response should be complete honesty: Only God knows why. But we can say some things that allow us to maintain an intelligent confidence in a loving God. God is always sovereign, and nothing happens in His universe that surprises Him or causes Him to wring His hands in despair or

consternation. What the believer needs to keep in mind is that there never has been, or will be, a square yard on the planet where God has been absent or uninvolved. The final act of the play, and the resolution to the mystery, is always in His hands. Comfort is the first order of the day. Not in counseling, but in a debate setting, some points could be brought out: First, if God simply stopped all evil in the world, every society would come to a grinding halt within minutes. Anything against His will would not be allowed to happen. The "Restrainer" 2 Thessalonians 2: Third, rather than obliterate all evil right now, God has chosen rather to use and exploit it for His own purposes Genesis My favorite illustration of this pattern is the Joseph story in Genesis, the plan of action God has followed up to the present day. The Bible has several figures and passages that express sadness, lamentation, and in some ways resentment toward God. Does that show that resentment has been a part of the human condition since the beginning? I think that it has; I see it as part of the Fall. Cain resented Abel to the extent that it flowered into a bitter hatred. In Genesis we read, "Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. This resentment led to the first murder recorded in the Bible. Human beings carry within the seeds of the Fall. That is an excellent question. Actually, after my long journey of resentment and disillusionment, I had come to a point of acceptance " God is God, he is sovereign, and if he had chosen to take away the use of my eyes, then I had to trust that this was his best for me. It was only following this that my eyesight was restored to the point where now I can do much of what I had lost. And with that exodus, he supplied me with more compassion and grace for others going through their valley experiences. What advice or message do you have to give to people who have resentment toward God, but at the moment do not see much hope in their lives? We must keep in mind that the story is not over. God creates for us an exodus " a way out and a way in. With God factored in your situation, there is never a case where there is no solution. Free sign up cp newsletter!

Chapter 5 : How we (fail to) nurture young talent - calendrierdelascience.com

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING OF CHILDREN. where his knowledge fails. It is to be nurture, presuming on a grace already and always given, and, for just.

There can no longer be an easy identification of Christian development with general education. Religious education within the state school systems of modern, pluralist democracies cannot be regarded as intending to nurture Christian faith. An outline of the problem was offered in *School Worship*. A religion can only encourage the personal freedom of its young people towards their future if the religion is free with regard to its own future. If Christian faith sought merely to reduplicate itself, to form young Christians who were the exact repetition of the previous generation, to pass on Christian faith as if it were like a parcel handed down from generation to generation, then it would be very difficult to distinguish between the passing on of this sort of thing and closed, authoritative instruction or even indoctrination. But *The Child in the Church* does not carry the discussion much further. The following remarks are an attempt to carry the discussion a little further. The problem defined We are dealing with a problem in practical theology, or a problem of applicability. We must first place the question of critical openness within the nature of practical theology. In a changing world an unchanging theology soon becomes irrelevant. A theology which is baldly declared, merely proclaimed or applied without pausing to listen and to examine itself presumes for itself an authority which will no longer be recognised. If practical theology is thought of as theology seeking to be related to the problems and possibilities of human life both inside and outside the community of faith, then critical openness must be a key feature of its method, defining not exhaustively of course the stance it will adopt towards itself and towards the world of human aspiration, achievement and sin, of which it is a part. Because documents from the past require constant reinterpretation, critical openness is a central feature of hermeneutics, and so becomes relevant to the branches of practical theology concerned with the theological criticism of history and literature. Critical openness is equally relevant in theological appraisal of the physical sciences, where new claims to knowledge are continually challenging the adequacy of existing claims to knowledge. When we come to the social sciences we find that critical openness is significant in the dialogue between theology and all the disciplines which conceive of development as guided by learning. These include aspects of psychotherapy, politics, education all these are in principle outside the community of faith and Christian nurture inside the community of faith. Critical Openness and Autonomy as a Goal of Education. An instructed person thinks what he is told to think, a socialised person thinks what others think, an indoctrinated person does not really think at all, an educated person thinks for himself. To think for yourself means that irrational authority i. Autonomy may be lost not only to other people but also to your own past self. If my past self directs my thinking to the point of preventing me from responding with suitable creativity to the problems of today, then I have lapsed into heteronomy? We must not only grow to reach autonomy, we must continue growing to retain autonomy. Other aspects of education exhibit similar features. The very idea of learning implies a willingness to see the limitation of what is known, and to respect the unknown, or be curious about it and so open towards it. Curriculum development requires critical criteria for content selection, and the problem of evaluating curricula also calls for clarification of values. Critical openness in Islam may mean the process of drawing contemporary inferences from a received theological structure, or in Hinduism the devotional and intellectual consequences of the relation between the one and the many. But enough has been said to show how the way the idea occurs in modern western education creates this challenge for Christian thought: And how can Christian processes of upbringing avoid invidious comparisons with general education, which will seem more noble, since it includes the ideal of autonomy? Christian Nurture and Critical Openness. Christian nurture is offered by Christians to Christians in order to strengthen Christian faith and to develop Christian character. It is easily distinguished from general education, since the latter does not intend the building up of Christian faith although it may in passing have this effect nor must the teachers of general education be Christian although they may be. It is possible but not necessary to base general education on Christian faith, but it is necessary that Christian nurture should spring from and be defined by Christian faith. It is because Christian

nurture is set in a certain community the Church, the beliefs of which are controversial in society at large, that it may appear to be a form of indoctrination. This is indeed apparently the case with the teaching methods of several religious communities currently the Korean Moon sect which attract public attention through their practice of separating young adherents from their schools and families in order to present their teachings with as little distraction as possible, and to avoid the relativising effect of living side by side with different religious and non-religious communities. It is probably true that the reaction of religious groups to pluralism has usually been to create special residential areas. No doubt the Christian, Jewish and Muslim quarters of cities in the middle east are not only congenial from the cultural and language points of view, but also simplify the process of passing on religious traditions. But such religious apartheid is ill at ease with the mobility, the mass communications and the common schools of the western democracies. At this point, it may look as if Christian nurture has close affinities with anti-autonomous and conformist processes. This is perfectly correct, but only a closer examination of the relation between Christian nurture and critical openness will dispel remaining doubts. If Christians were content as some seem to be to let education have a monopoly of critical openness and to allow Christian nurture to be assimilated into Christian instruction or even Christian indoctrination this particular problem would be solved. It would then simply be the case that critical openness had little part to play in Christian upbringing. In the first case Christian participation in education becomes more difficult, since a basic feature of education is admitted to be alien to Christian upbringing. We would have Christian children withdrawn from religious education classes or from the public schools altogether. The last position is the worst of all, since the conflict is internal to the young Christian. He may now think for himself in every area except that which is expected to be his deepest commitment. Such a policy will not attract worthwhile youngsters for five minutes, nor would it deserve to. If Christian nurture were to be collapsed into Christian instruction the idea of being a Christian person would also have changed. Just as education, instruction, socialisation, indoctrination and so on imply different views of man, so Christian nurture, Christian instruction, Christian training and so on imply different views of Christian man. Are Christians to be conformist, passive acceptors of authority, unable to adapt to crises, too set in the received ways to think creatively? Only a Christian nurtured in critical openness can have characteristics other than these. For those who think as I do that this other Christian life is essential for the continued vitality and relevance of Christian faith, the problem of how Christian nurture can be like education in possessing critical openness, yet unlike education in intending Christian life and faith, is a central concern. Theological notes on critical openness So far we have been considering critical openness as a problem for practical theology with respect to an area outside the community of faith general education and inside Christian nurture. But difficulties in applying theology usually lead back to problems of conceptual coherence within the belief structure itself. The matter was simpler when upbringing processes within the church were modelled on secular education theories of psychological development and so on. When an explicitly Christian rationale is sought for Christian nurture today, the main difficulty is whether critical openness can be accommodated within the framework of Christian belief. Four areas where this tension is apparent are selected for comment. This list is not exhaustive. If Christian faith is complete and perfect, how can there be room for the exercise of critical openness upon it and within it? One could be critically open towards the outside world, but surely not towards the faith itself? Does it not undermine the teaching office of the church by over-emphasising individual judgment? Is it not far removed from the child-like trust which a creature should have towards the Creator? Does not critical openness exalt the reason of man above the Word of God? Is not critical openness hostile to the spirit of discipleship? Surely we are called not to criticise but to follow, to take up our crosses not our syllogisms? Does not the note of detached reserve in critical openness quench the utter abandonment which is demanded of those who would enter the kingdom? Perhaps we could distinguish finality in principle from actual finality. What was implicit becomes explicit as the tradition develops. There is a consistent unfolding. In its, Protestant form, the approach subjects the ongoing church and its theology: For the central principle of the Reformed faith, which it asserts, is that the Word of God is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and that no other document. The actual Church can be assessed by the norms of the real Church. But how are the essentials to be criticised? This approach seems to encourage the notion of a permanent essence of Christianity different

from the actual faith which is its temporary linguistic and cultural garb. The distinction between potential and actual finality thus becomes a device for limiting the operation of critical openness. A second possible approach would be to distinguish the finality of experience from the finality of thought. The idea of the finality of the work of Christ can refer to its experienced religious adequacy. I may find that tomorrow I am even more deeply satisfied. That would not carry the implication that yesterday my satisfaction was less than complete, for me as I was then. I may grow in my capacity for experiencing the profound beauty of the cross of Christ, without ever being conscious of dissatisfaction. In this sense, finality and development are compatible. The last coach on the train is always final, regardless of the speed of the train. But if I articulate my experience in propositions, i. Perhaps this distinction between experienced finality the lack of any experience of religious dissatisfaction and reflective in finality the knowledge that sharper and clearer expression may show me that I was at least partly wrong in speaking about it the way I did yesterday may help to define the nature of critical openness in relation to the finality and perfection of the Christian faith. The distinction has its limits however. Can experience and reflection be so neatly distinguished? Does not the distinction lead me to be critically open towards the thoughts of others but self-enclosed as far as my experience goes? Does it not fail to open me to the experience of others? And may I not delude myself about my experience, thinking I was satisfied when I was not, or attributing my satisfaction to this when later I realise it was that which was the true source of my satisfaction? It is not easy to see how this approach can be defended any better than the last one from the suspicion that in the end it can become a way for limiting the operation of critical openness. In discussing the problem of critical openness towards the future of the child, *The Child in the Church* remarks that the Christian nurturer knows what he is nurturing his children out of, but not what he is nurturing them into. But whereas the report suggests the metaphor of the paintbox, the metaphor of the hidden time capsule would also fit. Christian faith is regarded as a capsule full of items hidden by Christ and the early Church two thousand years ago. We are learning how to unlock the compartments, and to draw out new items, not knowing what impact they will have upon us or our Christian future. But the truth is more complex. The past of Christian faith is not protected from its environment in a time capsule, to be opened by us, to find each thing as it was when first stored away. The past of Christian faith is available to us only in language and ritual. Both are inescapably imbedded in culture, and demand constant interpretation. No doubt the past is just exactly whatever it was. But we do not know what it was, and as we make it our past, our perceptions of it and apart from these it is only retained in the infallible omniscience of the divine memory also change.

WHAT CHRISTIAN NURTURE IS. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."--Ephesians, vi. 4. THERE is then some kind of nurture which is of the Lord, deriving a quality and a power from Him, and communicating the same.

Here is a passage oft misunderstood; sometimes used in error. I find it very thought provoking, its instructions helpful and fair. Wives are told to submit to their husband, husbands to love their wives; Saints of God who work at these things, live richer, fuller lives. Husband, do you love your wife in the manner Christ loves His bride? Do you lead your family spiritually, setting lesser things aside? Is your wife honored in your home, is your love for her on display? Does your wife feel her thoughts are valued, her conclusions received? This is how a godly leader comes to be heard and believed. God has called each husband to set the spiritual tone He who does not dishonors his wife and fails to lead his home. Children are to obey their parents; the home is the greatest school, The building block of a healthy culture, not a place to raise a fool. Mothers nurture and care for their kids; a father holds the line. Together they work to develop them body, soul, and mind. The patient nurture of a mom and the diligent headship of dad Will build character in their offspring; create their launching pad. But fathers must learn to communicate and not provoke their child; Too much anger may drive him away with a refusal to reconcile. Servant employees respect your boss, serve with a genuine heart. Your motive should be to honor God in the way you do your part. Whatever the assignment, big or small, do it enthusiastically Knowing God sees all of your heart; remunerates actively. Masters must treat their employees fairly caring about their needs Knowing they have a God in heaven observing their habits and deeds. Over the years I have noted that generous bosses are blessed. Both boss and servant experience grace, their hearts at peace and rest. God will reward all who please Him and the evil will be repaid. The faithful man has nothing to fear, but the wicked will be dismayed. God is not partial; He cannot be bought or by argument swayed, By truth each person will be judged, by truth each one repaid. This poem won 2nd place for the July poetry contest [Click Here](#) to contact George Cuff to request permission to use this poem.

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In his typical shocking manner, he contends that "at least a third" of Christian mothers have adopted a curriculum based on the worldview that endorsed homosexuality, polytheism, slavery, and female infanticide--pagan humanism. And it teaches Latin. But it is the Latin that appears to be the focus of this diatribe: Then the poisoning of the mind will be complete and humanistic elements will converge into a full-blown pagan worldview or at least a severely retarded Christian world-view. As though that has not already happened before the popularity of Latin! Assuming that the typical Christian has a weak grasp on the Biblical antithesis, this is a serious concern. And assuming that Latin is or can only be taught with the classics, this could be a concern as well. Not only that, the poor near-sided Puritans imbibed the same sewage. North admits that the Puritans used the classical curriculum from the grammar schools to the universities but fails to mention that Luther, Calvin, Knox, et. More importantly, he fails to explain the cultural milieu in which the Latin and the rest of the subjects were taught. The English society was homogeneous on a level modern Americans little comprehend. Even when the Puritans were outnumbered most of the time , many of the laws and social expectations were strongly influenced by the Bible. The same schools that taught Latin, instructed in Bible reading, rehearsed the catechisms and reviewed the Sunday sermon. This religious instruction, integrated with the Protestant Gospel, included the work of the ministers sermons, catechizing, weekly lectures and home visitations and especially the household instruction, catechizing and devotions by the parents. When the young are encircled by such a spiritual phalanx, learning Latin with edited texts was not a means to "separate Christian children from their parents. On the other hand, such a culture no longer exists. And many self-proclaimed Christians are biblically ignorant on a scale that makes the Statute of Liberty appear like a toy doll. So, learning Latin even without reference to the pagan sources at all will do little and may even be harmful. It is claimed that using such a method or rather learning Latin? Using the classical educational approach apparently imported "alien philosophical categories into the Church. And the historical "evidence" is vague at best. Many things are linked to unfaithfulness in the rise and fall of churches. In fact, it is not exactly clear why using some useful tools of unbelievers like learning a foreign language is necessarily wrong or will necessarily lead to humanistic compromise. Much of the article is based upon a slippery slope assumption--a logical fallacy taught by unbelieving logicians everywhere. In fact, Aristotle first systematized logic--does that make it suspect? Perhaps the children learning logic may be tempted to read Aristotle? Such an amazing effort to run Latin into the ground by asserting its negative affects in history leads to a curious logic: If this is the fruit of no Latin, give me Latin schools any day! But then, do I have to have one without the other? Or cannot families and schools teach Latin and Greek as they used to? More significantly, with all this hammering going on North has certainly hit upon something here. It is Calvinism that is needed now, not Latin. Rather than hyping up the power of this or that curriculum or method, we ought to return our children to the lost tool of learning that should structure any legitimate method, the Puritan ABCs: Posted by polymathis at.

Chapter 8 : 'Resenting God': When Christians Feel Anger, Where Churches Fail, and Why the Bible Is Viti

How much of true Christian nurture there may be in such a house, it is not difficult to judge. Here, probably, is going to be one of the cases, where everybody wonders that children brought up so correctly, turn out so badly.

This refers to the ability of the person to generalize, to deal with principles, to move from the concrete to the abstract. This is the difference between confessing to acts of sin I have lied, I have stolen and recognizing that I am a sinner. Although there are intermediate stages, the changes are somewhat radical and can be readily determined. Abstract and integrative thinking is necessary for a responsible decision for Christ. Only this perspective allows persons to recognize themselves as sinners, to see Jesus as the Savior of all and to give themselves in a responsible commitment to a life of faith and discipleship. This brief survey of some insights from the social sciences does not allow us to specify an age of accountability. However, one can draw the cautious conclusion that the closer one comes to puberty and adolescence, the greater probability there is of religious responsibility. We may not invalidate the religious experience of the child. The spiritual growth and development of the child in the Christian home is firmly rooted in the processes of socialization. Children do learn to love Jesus, they do seek to live in ways that are pleasing to God, they can experience the sense of forgiveness that comes through an awareness of the love of God. Thus the experience of the child can have permanent validity, even though at the time the implications of that experience were veiled. A decision at one point, though not for a radical turn, can set the stage for the further decisions. The spiritual experiences of childhood should not be equated or confused with responsible decisions for Christ. We dare not superimpose adult definitions of Christian experiences upon the child. As Wiebe has stated: Some time in the future, however, that child must yet make an adult commitment regarding his faith. Here the family and the church should work together. We ought to provide specific opportunities and encouragement for early adolescents to make a commitment of their life to Christ and to the mission and fellowship of the church. At this time they would be baptized and become members of the church, based on their personal decision. Since the spiritual decisions of childhood are genuine and valid although not responsible and since they are a desired and necessary part of the natural growth processes with the Christian family, consideration might be given to an appropriate recognition of these experiences. Proctor suggests the following: This profession should be given proper recognition. It would provide the child with a sense of belonging on the basis of identification with the community. The implications of such action will need to be explored further. This study indicates that the biblical materials concerning the child do not provide adequate guidance in meeting the spiritual needs of the child in the church today. However, our theology of sin, repentance, and faith implies that a level of maturity not reached in childhood is required for conversion. Social science findings point to early adolescence as the time when such maturity is reached. To remain consistent with our theological convictions and our knowledge of the developing child, we conclude that responsible conversion of children will not take place before then. The spiritual experiences of children are considered genuine and valid and should be encouraged. These will then form the basis of later, responsible decisions. Doorway to Discipleship, ed. Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, , p. Broadman Press, , p. This section is based largely on the study by Honeycutt, pp. The sin of Achan as well as the subsequent punishment was shared by the family group. This section is largely based on the study by William B. For the historical development and practices of different confessions cf. Herald Press, , chapters I and II.

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Page - And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us ; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. THIS exhortation of the apostle to his young friend Timothy, is the more remarkable that it relates to his training in the Old Testament scriptures, which were the only sacred writings known at the time of his childhood—“And that, from a child, thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Under cover of this beautiful example, as it appears in all the parties concerned, the young minister and disciple, the godly mother and her instructions, the apostle and his congratulations, you will perceive that I am going to speak of—” The Christian teaching of children. The very great importance of this teaching, when rightly dispensed. It is not indeed the first duty of the parent, for other duties go before, as we have already seen, preceding even the use of language. Neither is it, as a great many parents appear to assume, a matter in which their religious duties to their children are principally summed up. It is not every thing to teach, or verbally instruct their children, least of all to indoctrinate them in the formulas and theoretic principles of the faith. But how very great importance must there be in the teaching, when an apostle, setting his young friend in charge as a preacher of the gospel, bids him continue still in the teachings of his godly mother, and even to remember them for her sake. The New Testament preacher is exhorted still to be an Old Testament son, and is sent forth, in the power of the ancient Scripture, even after Christ has come. The ten commandments and certain selected Psalms, were probably the scriptures in which they were most. And there is this very great advantage in the scriptural teaching, or training, that it fills the mind with the word and light of the Spirit, and not with any mere wisdoms of opinion. And there is the less reason, now, for going out of the divine word to get lessons for the teaching of children, that our scripture roll is enlarged by the addition of the words and history of Christ himself. In a right use of the Scripture, thus amplified by the gospel, there is no end to the subjects of interest that may be raised. The words are simple, the facts are vital, the varieties of locality, dialogue, incident, character, and topic, endless. I do not undertake to say that nothing shall be taught which is not in the words of the Scripture. But it must be obvious that very small children are more likely to be worried and drummed into apathy by dogmatic catechisms, than to get any profit from them. If exercised in them at all, it should be at a later period, when their intelligence is considerably advanced; that they may, at least, get some shadow of meaning in them, to repay the labor of committing them to memory. It is generally supposed, in the arguments urged for a training in catechism, that the real advantage to be gained is the fastening or anchoring of the child in some fixed faith. But the deplorable fact is, that what is called a fastening is really the shutting in, or encasing of the soul, in that particular shell of opinion—the training of the child to be a sectarian before he is a Christian. Here he does not merely memorize, but he assents; and, what is more, does it by an act of practical homage, or worship—a confession. And then what he assents to is no matter of opinion, or speculative theology, but a recitation of the supernatural facts of the gospel, taken simply as facts. For these facts are intelligible even to a very young child, and will be recited always with the greater interest, that the recitation is itself a religious act, or confession. It is a great thing for a child, in all the after life, to “know of whom” he learned these things, and to see a godly father, or a faithful mother, in them. No truth is really taught by words, or interpreted by intellectual and logical methods; truth must be lived into meaning, before it can be truly known. Examples are the only sufficient commentaries; living epistles the only fit expounders of written epistles. When the truly Christian father and mother teach as being taught of God, when their prayers go into their lives and their lives into their doctrine, when their goodness melts into the memory, and heaven, too, breathes into the associated thoughts and sentiments to make a kind of blessed memory for all they teach, then we see the beautiful office they are in, fulfilled. In this manner, Timothy was supposed to have a complete set of recollections from his mother woven into his very feeling of the truth itself. It was more true because it had been taught him by her. There was even a sense of her loving personality in it, by which it always had been, and was always to be,

endeared. On the other hand, it will always be found that every kind of teaching in religion, which adds no personal interest, or attraction to the truth, sheds no light upon it from a good and beautiful life, is nearly or quite worthless.. But these are general considerations, which it is sufficient to have suggested without further dwelling upon them. There are yet a great many subordinate and particular points, of a more promiscuous character, to which also I must call your attention. And I deem it here a matter of consequence to make out, first of all, a somewhat extended roll of things, which are not to be taught; for so many things are taught which are not true for any body, and so many which are only theologically true for minds in full maturityâ€”to all others meaningless and repulsiveâ€”that many a child is fatally stumbled in religion, just because of his teaching. First of all, then, children are not to be taught that they were regenerated in their baptism. That will only convert the rite into a superstition, and put the child in a totally false position, where he will rest his Christian title on a mere outward transaction already past, and what is even worse, on a function of priestly magic. Furthermore, if the child should turn out, when he is fully grown, to be a totally reckless and profane person, having no pretense, or even semblance of religious character, it will now be discovered to him that his regeneration meant nothing, had no practical effect or value, and since there is no second baptismal regeneration, it will only be left him to have neither any care for the old, or hope of a new that is better. Indeed he must now be saved, for aught that appears, without re. But no young child can grasp such a conception evenly enough to hold it. The most that can be said to him, therefore, of his baptism, is that God gave it to his parents and to himself, as a pledge of the Holy Spirit, and all needed help, that he may grow up into good, as a regenerated man. As little are young children to be taught that they are of course unregenerated. This, with many, is even a fixed point of orthodoxy, and of course they have no doubt of it. They put their children on the precise footing of heathens, and take it for granted that they are to be converted in the same manner. But they ought not to be in the same condition as heathens. Again, you are not to teach your children that they need, of course, to be regenerated, because they fail in obedience, show bad tempers, and display manifold other faults. Have you no faults yourselves? Shortcomings, faults, casual disinclinations of feeling, are bad signs, such as ought to waken distrust, but they are not, of course, conclusive evidences. As little are you to teach them that they are certainly unregenerate, or without piety, because they are light in many of their demonstrations, full of play, abounding in frolicsome gayeties. Which is worse and farthest from God, these innocent exuberances of life, or the covetous, overcaring overworking, enviously plotting, sobriety of their parents? Again you are never to teach your very young children that they are too young to be good, or to be really Christian. Never allow them to see that you expect them to be pious only at some future day, when they are older. What you despair of, or assume to be no possibility for them, they certainly will not attempt and the discouragement of good, thus thrown upon them, may be even fatal to their future character. Draw them rather into your own exercises, taking always for granted, that they will be with you. Again, do not teach them that they can never pray, or do any thing acceptable to God, till after they are converted or regenerated. This, with many, is a great point of orthodoxy, and I would not speak of it with severity, because it is a very natural mistake and yet it is one of the most hurtful delusions, short of real infidelity, that can be put into language. It is not only not true for children, but it is not true for any body, and is, in fact, a kind of barricade before the heavenly gate for every body, still outside. It is very true that no one can pray, or do any thing acceptably, to God, as being and remaining unconverted, unregenerated; but that is a very different thing from showing that no one can pray, or do any thing acceptably till after they are converted, or regenerated. The difference is just as wide as between all good possibility and none whatever. If the prayers of the wicked are an abomination, as they certainly are, let them come to cease being wicked, and be made right with God. Can not a wicked man become right? His very prayer will be a praying out of wickedness into right. But when he can not think, work, pray; can not do any thing acceptably, till after he is born of the Spirit, that word after fences him back; shuts him up in his sin, there to bide his time. What multitudes of children have been shut away from the kingdom of God, by this one misconception of piously intended orthodoxy. The mistake of teaching is scarcely less fatal, when the child is put to the doing of good works, and the making up of a character in the self-regulating way. That kind of duty is so legal and painful, and the poor child will be so often floored by his failures in it, that he will not continue long. A kind of despair will come upon him in a short time, and religion itself will take on a hard impossible

look, that is even repulsive. Nothing will draw the child onward in ways of piety, but the sense of forgivenesses, helps, felt sympathies of grace and love. Salvation by faith, is the only kind of religion that a child can support. If there is no ladder to heaven but a ladder of will-works and observances, he will not be climbing it long. Where Luther fell off and lay groaning infant steps will not persist. It is a great mistake, too, and a great Christian wrong. A great many parents do this unthinkingly, because it is just so to them. Where there is a real living faith. But if the parent is down in the lowest grades of possible devotion, worried and not blessed by his piety, galled and not comforted; if the children hear him mourning always in his prayer, and confessing shortcomings and defeats and poverty enough to un-gospel all the gospel promises, it should not be wonderful that they are not particularly drawn to that kind of piety. These, now, are some of the things which are not to be taught, but carefully avoided in the training of children. There are a great many other things which are not to be taught, for the reason that they can not be sufficiently apprehended, and will only confound the understanding instead of giving it light. Thus depravity in Adam, the fall of the race, the atonement by Christ in any view that makes it a ground of forgiveness, regeneration itself as a metaphysically defined change in character—none of these can be taught as a doctrine for young children. And yet they can all be taught implicitly. Thus we may represent to children that we are all sinners, and that God is displeased with us whenever we do or think what is wrong; that we want a better and a clean heart, so that we shall love to do what is right, and that Christ came down into the world to give it to us; that when we feel sorry for wrong he loves to forgive us, and that when we feel weak and are much tempted he will help us, hearing our prayer, and coming to us by his Spirit, to give us strength. Meantime we must not omit teaching that Jesus had a most dear love to children, took them in his arms, blessed them, loved them even the more tenderly because of the bad world into which they are come; and that breathing his own love into them, he was able to say that of such is the kingdom of heaven. Proceeding in this manner, let the call be to the child to become good, and to be always trusting Christ to make him so, and he will get the force, implicitly, of a whole gospel, in this very simple and summary version. While the whole teaching centers at this point, the mind of the child will not be wearied, of course, by a continual reiteration of the same very simple matter, but it will be led about, into free ranges and excursions, among the facts and very dramatic incidents of the Scripture history. Little debates will be raised about duties in common matters; characters will be held up for approbation, or to be condemned. And so there will be a rotary movement of inquiry and teaching, all round the great central point of being good, and the readiness of Christ to help us in it. Due care will be taken also not to thrust religious subjects on the child, when he is excited by other things, in a manner to make it unwelcome. His times of thought and appetite must be watched. Play with him when he wants to play, teach him when he wants to be taught. Untimely intrusions of religion will only make it odious—the child can not be crammed with doctrine. Children often break upon their parents with very tough questions, and questions that wear a considerable looking towards infidelity. It requires, in fact, but a simple child to ask questions that no philosopher can answer. Parents are not to be hurried or flurried in such cases, and make up extempore answers that are only meant to confuse the child, and consciously have no real verity. It is equally bad, if the child is scolded for his freedom; for what respect can he have for the truth, when he may not so much as question where it is? Or, sometimes, if the question is one that plainly can not be answered by any body, occasion should be taken to show the child how little we know, and how many things God knows which are too deep for us—how reverently, therefore, we are to submit our mind to his, and let him teach us when he will, what is true. Observe also, at just this point, the immense advantage that a Christian parent has in Jesus Christ, as regards the religious teaching of his children. I speak here of the fact that all truth finds in him the concrete form Truth is not less really incarnate in him, than God. Indeed he testifies, himself, that he is the truth. And he is so, not merely in the sense that he parabolizes the truth, and gets it thus into human conditions or analogies, but that his own person also and life are the eternal form of truth; that he lives it, acts it forth, groans it in his Gethsemane, sheds it from his veins in the bleeding of his cross. You may take your children along therefore, through his childhood, into his ministries of healing, on to his death-scene itself, and it will be as if you led them through a gallery, where all divinest, most life-giving truth is pictured. No abstractions will be wanted, no difficult reaches of comprehension required; you have nothing to do but to show them Jesus as he is, and

the Great Teaching will be in themâ€”all that is needed as the vital bread of their intelligence, and heart, and character. Converse much of him and about him, make him familiar, and it will be strange if you do not find that both your conversation and theirs is in heaven, where he sitteth at the right hand of God. And of this you will be the more certain if you teach Christ not by words only, but by so living as to make your own life the interpreter of his.