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by

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June 1959

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Worship will probably be referred to the adoration of God as He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. It will be recognized that worship is a term that can be equated with the life of a man in Christ, and that worship is never completely understood unless it is seen as an activity of man in Christ. It will be acknowledged that worship in its foundation is an act of God, not of man, since "no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost"; and that worship cannot be understood apart from the working action of God, His Word, given to man in Sacrament and Scripture. But, though worship is of God, considered as to its origin, as to its object it is worship of God. Worship, most fully understood, will be considered as something given to God by man. Worship will be viewed as those acts of adoration, penitence, praise, and prayer which are offered to the Most High by man to his God His own.

The Sabbath is a term that will be understood in its most definite sense as the whole number of those who, by a

CHAPTER I

CONSIDER THE TERMS

Each term in the title of this thesis is too broad for consideration even in a presentation specific to itself. Placed side by side in this way, they do not so much narrow their width as increase their depth.

(Worship will explicitly be referred to the adoration of God as He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. It will be recognized that worship is a term that can be equated with the life of a man in Christ, and that worship is never completely understood unless it is seen as an activity of men in Christ.) It will be acknowledged that worship in its foundation is an act of God, not of man, since "no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost"; and that worship cannot be understood apart from the working action of God, His Word, given to men in Sacrament and Scripture. But, though worship is of God, considered as to its origin, as to its object it is worship of God. Worship, most finely understood, will be considered as something given to God by man. Worship will be viewed as those acts of adoration, penitance, praise, and prayer which are offered to the Most High by those He has made His own.

(The Church is a term that will be understood in its most Catholic sense as the whole number of those who, by a

new birth through the Spirit in Holy Baptism have been given the life of God in Jesus Christ. The Church will be seen as the people of God who are made members of the Body of Christ and together are sustained in His life by the working Word of God in Scripture and Sacrament. The Church will be recognized in the congregation of men, women and children made saints by grace and, in company with one another, continually seeking strength for the saintly life from the means of grace. Since the concern of this thesis is for children's place in the Church, the pattern considered will be that of a congregation in whose membership are included a growing number of children. Differences in the age factors in a congregation, differences in the neighborhood situations, differences in size, location and design of the church and school buildings, differences in the understanding and appreciation of Sacrament and Word and Liturgy, all will require adaptation of the approaches and solutions suggested here. This presentation will place its consideration in the frame of a Lutheran parish of contemporary America having obvious tinges of Suburbia. But, (in general, the Church will be considered as a parish in which there are Christian families, a Sunday school, a parish day school, and corporate services, in all of which the power of the Word is being received in Scripture and Sacrament and the response of worship being offered.)

the Church's worship until they know the Liturgy, naturally

(The Church's worship combines this understanding of worship and of the Church.) Both terms are already wide, and their combination has as broad a scope. This presentation will be concerned with all aspects of worship in all aspects of the child's life in a parish. But in its ultimate application it will relate specifically to the child's place in the corporate services of the congregation, the minor offices, "The Order of Morning Service Without Communion," and the Eucharistic service, where the Church expresses its reality as the Body of Christ, and where it repeats the commemorative action commanded by its Lord and receives the Body and Blood of its Redeemer and Head. This presentation will be concerned that children "pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands" but will submit that The Liturgy with its injunction, "Lift up your hearts," must also speak to the Church's children and the children must be able to "lift them up unto the Lord" in the corporate communion service of the congregation. Within Lutheranism the means of grace are administered to the congregation in The Liturgy. Children must be helped to love the Service in which their faith's sustenance is given, which most clearly demonstrates the Church's oneness, the centrality of worship in its life, and its historic continuity from Old Covenant to New Covenant to each child's own Baptismal X Covenant. (Children have not really found their relation to the Church's worship until they know The Liturgy, uniquely

the source of their growing life in the means of grace and the classic and ever helpful expression of their love and adoration of the Father of all saints.)

× (Children will be considered as contrasted with adults.)

But little attempt will be made to differentiate between children of varied ages. As the problem seen by this thesis is that the Church's worship is now shaped almost completely for the adult worshipers, a contention for a change need not be as detailed as the variation in childhood's characteristics but can be as radically simple as the difference between the boy and the man, the girl and the woman. Consideration will therefore range from the infant's first worshiping relation to God through Christian Baptism and Christian parents to the child's first communion with God through the holy Body and Blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

✓ (The burden of the thesis will be to ask how these Christians who are not adults can be helped to receive the grace of the Word of God; how they can be helped to respond to Him in worshiping words that will be a prelude to a worshiping life; and how they can learn to recognize their worshiping brethren in the family of God; and ultimately how they can learn to do this applying of the Word from Sacrament and Scripture, this replying of worship and, this supplying of edification in the Church's corporate worship and in the Church's Eucharistic service.

CHAPTER II

CONSIDER THE MILLSTONE

Evidently the fact of having been a child is not enough to guarantee sympathy with the state of being one.

In the Christian Church of all places could true understanding and appreciation of childhood be anticipated. Our Lord lived through a childhood. What is more, Christianity rejoices in the fact that God was found in fashion as a man--and this was accomplished through a miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and the birth of God's Son of the Virgin Mary. The incarnational nature of the Christian faith should give to childhood a special place. And it has. But all too few adults recognize it.

✓ A Lack of Concern for Childhood Expressed in the Church Today

(Our Lord had to warn the Twelve of this sin.) "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." His words are quoted in St. Matthew 18:6. But in the 19th chapter when "there were brought unto Him little children that He should put His hands on them and pray," the disciples failed to consider the millstone. "The disciples

rebuked them." Why? Was it a concern for the weariness of our Lord? Many have offered that excuse for them--but none of the three Scriptural accounts suggest it as their motive.¹ Matthew Henry, whose opinions always appear disarmingly frank in their aged phrases, considers the rebuke given by the disciples and comments:

They discountenanced the address as vain and frivolous, and reproved them that made it as impertinent and troublesome. Either they thought it below their Master to take notice of little children, except any thing in particular ailed them; or they thought he had toil enough with his other work, and would not have diverted him from it; or, they thought if such an address as this were encouraged, all the country would bring their children to him, and they would never see an end of it.²

The pertinent question is not about the disciples' conduct but about the practice of the churches today. When Jesus Christ "called a little child unto Him and set him in the midst"³ of the Twelve who were trying to decide who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He was using an object lesson to teach true standards of kingdom prominence. The Rev. John G. Williams comments:

It is impossible to miss the force of it also as a simple acted parable. It surely proclaims beyond any possibility of mistaking that the proper place of the child in the care and concern of the Christian Church (and in practice that means the local congregation) is

¹St. Mark 10:13; St. Luke 18:15; St. Matthew 18:19.

²Matthew Henry, A Commentary on the Holy Bible (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, n.d.), V, 156.

³St. Matthew 18:2.

"in the midst." The Church's children must be the centre and focus of the Church's work.⁴

Whatever the import of the object lesson, our Lord specifically added, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth Me,"⁵ and also, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."⁶

Is the Church today considering the millstone, receiving the child in the name of Christ, setting the children "in the midst"?

In many congregations the concern for the child is expressed in "one hour of religious training weekly." Those words are no improvement over one of the regulations in England's Pauper Apprentice Act of 1802, designed to improve the lot of homeless children, placed in the hands of labor contractors, shipped from city poorhouses to the cotton mills. The regulations governing the pauper apprentices required

a twelve-hour day exclusive of meals, one new suit of clothes per year, separate sleeping accommodations for boys and girls, not more than two children to sleep in each bed, and one hour of religious training weekly.⁷

⁴John G. Williams, Worship and the Modern Child (London: S.P.C.K., c.1957), p. 117.

⁵St. Matthew 18:5.

⁶St. Matthew 18:10.

⁷John Duffy, "Early Factory Legislation: A Neglected Aspect of British Humanitarianism," Chapter 4 in British Humanitarianism, edited by Samuel Clyde McCulloch (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, c.1950), p. 71.

Obviously none in the Church is now so oblivious to the sensibilities of children as to permit such hardship. But whereas the Christian conscience has brought about a drastic improvement in every other area, in many instances it has made no improvement at all on "one hour of religious training weekly."

Many parishes have, of course, pushed far ahead of this minimum in their concern for the child. But many others have been content to wait until the Church's children are old enough "to sit still" for their "hour of religious training weekly." The Church's responsibility, they feel, does not begin until the child is able to participate in a group learning situation; and then the learning situation is often indistinguishable from those offered to adults, except in the height of the chairs and the childish tone affected by the voice of the instructor.

In commenting on John and Charles Wesley's active interest in children, Phyllis Wetherell wrote:

Charles Wesley's muse was not gifted in the art of reaching an immature audience. His interest in children, like his brother's, did not include any great sympathy with childhood as a phase of development. Apparently, it was merely a condition one could overcome with a little effort.⁸

This is the same lack of concern that is included in Matthew

⁸Phyllis Jane Wetherell, "Education and the Children's Hymn in Eighteenth Century England," Chapter 10 in British Humanitarianism, op. cit., p. 195.

Henry's first excuse for the disciples' rebuking words to the women who brought their children to Jesus. "They thought it below their Master to take notice of little children, except any thing in particular ailed them." That our Lord was concerned about children was made explicitly clear in His words, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."⁹ Our Lord with a child in His arms is evidence enough that God acted on this concern. "He died for all"--and His word to His mother from the cross is our echo of His memories of childhood and an indication of His concern for those still children. "He rose again for our justification" and set no minimum age requirement for those who could accept the righteousness that avails before God.

The Church today agrees with this concern of God. But agreement in theory must be matched by agreement in action. God acted in providing the new life for children. His Church must act to give it to them. How is it acting? No generalizations will be fair to many parishes who are doing God's work excellently, but neither will any generalization be severe enough actually to picture the bungling that goes on in some congregational agencies that are supposedly agencies of the Holy Spirit.

⁹St. Matthew 18:14.

Holy Baptism--God's sacramental gift to convey new life to the Church's children--is being administered, but is it being remembered? Not only are countless parents forgetting to seek the blessing of Baptism for their children, but many who do, understand it only as "having the children done," and then regard it as something completed. Is the Church developing parents (not to bring up the whole situation of sponsors) who "put their child in mind of his Baptism" year by year? Do children--or their parents--know the date of their Baptismal birthday? Each morning when they arise are they conscious of the new man, the baptized man, who is daily to "come forth and arise and to live before God in righteousness and purity forever?"¹⁰

How great is the concern of His disciples today? How much does the Church follow through that God's concern be realized? How much consideration of the millstone is actually being given by those who go about "having" children? That Dr. Benjamin Spock's book should continue to be a best seller, placing expert information on the care and feeding of children into the hands of everyone who can read and has fifty cents (before hospital bills) is all to the good. But that couples should be more concerned with techniques of having and not having children than they are

¹⁰Martin Luther, Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), p. 17.

with saving them or offending them, this is tragedy in the Church. That pre-marital counselling includes more concern with the process of multiplying than with the product, this is tragedy. That the Church baptizes the child to make it one of "the little ones which believe in Me" and then leaves it in the care of parents who have no awareness of the millstone awaiting "whoso shall offend one of these little ones" or no instruction in their vital role as priests in the house to these children of God, this is tragedy.

When God gave the gift of procreation, man was in the image of God. The fall into sin did not destroy the power to reproduce, but it did completely change the quality of the product. The new boys and girls were not new men, but old man. And the parents who could not pass on the image of God by the regenerative process were also ill-equipped to convey the real new life that, although it could come about only by the regeneration of the Spirit, must be accomplished by their own use of the Spirit's means--their own love of God, their own example, and their own vocal explanations. And the first boy born was a murderer.

But he was born after the promise of a Savior, after we assume that Adam and Eve had repented and come to the new life of faith. If it could not be guaranteed to the first Christians that the ability to give birth included the wisdom to give life, the Church today cannot simply

assume that since a nice young couple is a nice young couple, and since both have been baptized and are "regular" in their Church attendance and are married and obviously have been given the gift of procreation, that thereby they are capable of conveying the life of God to their child, or are trustworthy ministers to whom to entrust the care and training in the vital first three years of the life of a Christian newly created in the Church by water and the Spirit.

(Does the Church look for no assurance that new parents will not offend one of its little ones?) If its concern for the children of its font is not great enough to cause it anxiety, ought it not be concerned for the parents who rope millstone after millstone of damnation to their own necks by their attitude toward their children? (In our denomination we expect communicants to announce their intention to commune) before they partake of the Sacrament, lest "any should eat or drink this Sacrament to his damnation." The theory is that pastoral care can be given to those who have announced, to be sure they are spiritually qualified to participate in the Holy Communion. Should some be found who do not know the goals of the faith or are not ready to give up the sins that will block the Christian life or evidently do not love the Lord who bought them, they can be warned away from the Table of the Lord, or even be excluded. (But does the Church expect an announcement of intention to

beget? It does insist on a legal ceremony and recommend an ecclesiastical one to solemnize and legitimize the con-nubial relationship. But does it make provision to instruct (not to limit the comparison simply to making inquiry) the Christians who desire to become parents on the Christian goals of parenthood? Does it insist on the abandonment of any conduct that might distort the Christian growth of the children that will be born into the Church? (This is very practical--does the Church permit the parents of its children to ignore the worship life of the Body of Christ and thus undo by their example all that the Spirit and the congregational agencies are attempting to do by their instruction--does the Church permit this to happen to its children? or does it let the millstones that are preferable be hung about the parents' neck with the observation that finally it is the parents' responsibility?) Must not the Church point out to potential candidates for its marriage rite that unless there is a working love for the Lord who bought them that will be extended to the children with whom that same Lord will bless them, that the Church can not give its benediction to the arrangement that will create them?

But where is it anywhere nearly that difficult to get married? And "who says it is anyone's business but my own if I become a father?"

If it is our God's concern that none of these little ones should perish, our concern, too, must reach out to the

children of the Church.

The agencies that the Church does employ--are they being used by parents and are they acting with God to bring the message of His love to children? The "child in the midst" was held by Jesus in His lap. He knew His love, he felt it. Do the Church services into whose midst our children are now brought convey the same warmth and joy? The New Testament does not give us examples of what our Lord said to children; it does reveal how He acted. His love came through in demonstration. If the disciples had let the women bring the children, but by their attitude had made them feel unwelcome, might not the warning on offense still have been in order?

All the adult worshipers in a morning congregation stand in the position of the disciples whenever a father and a mother enter the church building with their children. They can convey the impression that He who dwells in this house is too important "to take notice of little children" and at the same time is not above being extremely annoyed if children make themselves noticeable by being children in noise or wiggle. They can create the conviction in a child's mind that the fellowship of the Church is only for big fellows who can really sit in a pew and keep their legs hanging down, and (oh, the bliss!) be able to reach the floor when they do strive to keep their feet where they belong.

And if this they do, all are in line for our Lord's rebuke--pray God, not for His millstone.

Every parent who attempts to use the agency of the Church's services to bring his child into touch with the love of God will find his place in the narrative of our Lord and the children. Their intention places them in the company of the mothers. (The fathers, it is to be hoped, were all gainfully employed on the day shift when the incident took place and are to be excused.) If such a concern--"they would see Jesus"--brings them and their children to Church, a good number of the annoyances that cause the temperatures of adult worshipers to rise will already be under control.

But parents become offending disciples if their own desire is but to obey and not to see Jesus, if worship is to them a chore, if the Church service is a burden to be endured or a rather unintelligible part of family mores that is just done. They may think that in their Sunday suffering they are also "suffering the little children to come unto Him," teaching them that real life, true freedom, and the joy that lasts are to be found in the God who is named in the Invocation; but actually they are teaching their children that the pursuit of happiness, liberty and life must wait until the Benediction--or the seven-fold Amen, if the choir is in voice and in attendance. To enjoy God forever may be an eternal possibility but is obviously

impossible in time, and glorifying God, though it may not be the chief, is obviously a contributing cause to the end of man.

This is not really funny. It is cause for a millstone. And it is real.

Guns had to be checked outside of the swinging doors in the old West; strong spirits and gunpowder did not mix well. Parents might well be searched at the west entrance of the Church lest they bring in comic books or toys that will not serve as helps to the Spirit in this house. All too frequently this is the only devotional equipment which has been supplied for the children. They have not been helped to understand why they have come nor what they are to do, nor ever helped in how to do it. As long as the service does not recognize the presence of the Church's children, the children will need assistance to spend the time with their Lord. But the help given them should point them toward Him, not encourage them to ignore Him. The Church might provide, if parents are not informed enough to do so, the coloring books that are Christian, the picture books that are worthy, for the long periods of just sitting that so afflict the child's patience.

The point in question is--are parents concerned enough about their children to use the agencies the Church does provide for bringing people into conversation with a loving God? Is the Church building first introduced as a place to

be still even though you don't know why, or to be still because you do know He is God? Is the muscle tension in the arms of the parents and the despair in their hearts when their children are restless and noisy during a service caused by what others are thinking or muttering, or caused by the disappointment that their own gladness has not yet been shared by the child to whom they have said, "Let us go unto the house of the Lord"? And is the resulting approach to the child a "non-ecclesiastical laying on of hands" to enforce compliance with an unintelligible demand? Or are parents ready to see that for a few years theirs must be the preference for door keeping at the house of the Lord rather than the more comfortable dwelling in His tabernacle, and is theirs a love and reverence that will take time to teach the children to enter?

If these are their intentions, then they stand with the mothers who brought their children to our Lord that He should touch them, and who shall rebuke them? But it must be admitted that many still find preferable the millstone.

But who is it that is most easily compared with the disciples?--the pastor. (And, one must add, the elders or whoever is responsible for the arrangement of the services.) How does he suffer little children? Is the first humorous reaction, "when they insist on making the sermon a duet?" Most seriously, are not words from the pulpit often of all words heard by children most unintelligible? "Being forced

to hear sermons by mystical Germans" may be punishment to fit many a crime, but what is it accomplishing for the child who would see Jesus? The point here is not one of vocabulary, nor one of content--it is one of concern. The Christians who are in charge of conducting the congregation's services by and large are not concerned about the Church's children.

No highway department would put a stop sign on a throughway and route all traffic down a side street to a dead end. But at St. Nameless Suburban Church there is a huge Stop sign erected each Sunday in front of the exit from the Sunday School rooms, and a green Go sign pointing in the direction of the nave of the Church. But for those who turn right, what is offered? A Liturgy that has never been explained, to serve for acts of worship that are assumed to be instinctive, and instructional homiletical discourses that, though they may not be cause for legal judgment against "administering an anaesthetic without a license," are nevertheless not of concern to nor concerned with the child who appears. They have become a dead end. And there is no reason for surprise when the child develops one also. Either one. Or both.

And this is not funny. It is a practice that is making millstones the script with which the leaders of congregations are paid for their years of tenure. God forbid. But it is a parish approach that well earns a rebuke from our Lord.

"A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the way faring men, though fools"--and though children--"shall not err therein."¹¹

The Church must seek, not excuses, but solutions--for every reader will have excuses more than enough for whatever is true in this picture within his own frame of reference. Where concern has been expressed, have the solutions been justified?

Does a sound-proof room equipped with one-way glass share with children the joy of the house of God? Does an electronic voice that is just loud enough to force children to converse more loudly, but just a bit too dim for adult comprehension, accomplish the preaching of the Word to mothers who supervise the nursery, or create the fellowship of the flock with the lambs who have been corralled?

Let the children stand in the back and give them something to amuse them and forbid them not.

The very fact that the space often provided for use by the children comes to mind at this point is indication that a rebuke of our Lord is in order on architectural offenses. What is the strange understanding that makes "child" and "basement" synonymous in the minds of many building committees? But if adult concern really reaches out to the child,

¹¹Isaiah 35:8.

it should need only a reminder that little children learn more from what they feel and see than from what we say to bring any children's room in the Church plan above ground or into the cheerfulness of God's sun and air.

Let the children stay in the basement until they are big enough to come upstairs unto Me. Oh, and forbid them not. That is, let them come unto the nursery. In the basement.

While millstones are being measured, check our schools for size. When the adult concern urges Sunday School and day school as the place, like Gerizim, where they ought to worship, while the Church's services, like Jerusalem, should be reserved for the chosen who are no more babes but men, then look closely to see if the children know what they worship. If the spirit of worship often seems far removed from the nave, you won't often find it in the gym or the Church basement, though both are about as far removed as you can get. Not only the spirit, but also the truth is frequently absent. As noble as is the intent of many who volunteer to lead the Sunday School children in worship, or, who, "like the quarry slave at night" go scourged to the church basement to assume a superintendency they neither qualify for nor desire, "can" is still no necessary correlative to "ought." And the result, from the clanging of the chromium bell, and the call to worship ("All right, you children. Now let's be quiet. OK everybody. Will everybody

be seated and let's begin in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy Ghost!") to the intense interest in almost everything but the Most High during the time of folded hands, not to say prayer, is too discouragingly universal to develop further.

Let the children come unto Me and forbid them over and over again.

And what more shall be said? For the time would fail to tell of all the boys who obtained a good report at our parish day schools and yet received neither faith nor the promise. Be this much said at this point, that religious information can not always be equated with the Word of God, and the fourth R does not automatically make a school Christian. A school is not a Christian school simply by having Christian doctrine in its curriculum. A school is a Christian school when it is a worshiping school. Its pupils are of faith and of promise when they are worshiping children. The kindergarten children who are lined up at the door in coats and boots and who recognize the Lord's Prayer as the sign the bus is ready and school is over may be learning something, but it is not to worship God in the beauty of holiness.

Let the children come unto me and let's all begin by closing our eyes and reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Add one final word of rebuke to the unconcerned. Any worship that is not related to the Church's celebration of

the Eucharist and the Church's corporate devotions remains essentially private devotion. For when the bonds of the eighth grade dissolve, if those be the only blest ties that bind, the fellowship ceases. What wonder that the number on the roll in the eighth grade was much larger than the number at the rail eight years later if they never experienced, when they worshiped above the desk that held their speller and their egg salad sandwich, that the Church's worship is all this and something else again. If the children are to come unto Him through our schools, more will be needed than classrooms and the principal's office; the Church's nave and the Church's worship must be classroom and teaching, and the principal Office--the children's devotion.

All of this is of concern. Consider the millstone.

A Lack of Contact with the Child Found in the Church Today

A consideration of the millstone demands that this concern be reflected in an approach to children that will actually reach them. Scripture makes very clear that our Lord's concern for little children when "any thing in particular ailed them" was backed by an approach that reached the problem. Jairus "had one only daughter, about twelve years of age." Something very serious ailed her and Jairus "fell down at Jesus' feet and besought Him that He would come into his house." On the way a servant met them and

said, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." But when Jesus heard it, He said, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." When He entered the house filled with mourners, He said, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth." "And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And He put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called saying, 'Maid, arise.' And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway."¹²

In this account not only is the Lord's concern and His power to help made clear, but Matthew Henry's second excuse for the rebuking disciples is put under question. "They thought He had toil enough with His other work, and would not have diverted Him from it."¹³ "His other work," presumably, concerned adults. That work was important; children could wait. But here was Jairus' little twelve-year old, and Jesus came. It is true that "as He went the people thronged Him." It is true that when the woman touched His garment so that "He perceived, 'Virtue is gone out of Me,'" He stopped and would not go on until the woman revealed herself. But when the man from Jairus' household came to report, "Thy daughter is dead," and then with no concern for the grief-stricken father joined the rebuking disciples with his, "Trouble not the Master," our Lord showed a

¹²St. Luke 8:41-42, 49-56.

¹³Henry, loc. cit.

concern that went on to a direct contact. He went to where He could take her by the hand. His "other work" was not so important that it kept Him from reaching this child.

It is, however, interesting to wonder just what evidence they did have that our Lord was interested in more than "what ailed" children. Our Lord's actual approach to children by words, by conversation, by teaching, is not made clear in the New Testament. His use of parables at once comes to mind, but while some of them were certainly clear to children, many made points that were difficult even for adults to grasp, and all of them were designed for the adult audience. His concern for children is explicitly clear, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."¹⁴ But what of His contact? What He did for children made His love apparent. But what of what He said? Of course, when the child was called and set "in the midst" Jesus was not arranging an occasion for teaching the child; nor is the Bible itself designed as a children's book so that materials would be inspired on their level; nor do the Bible accounts of His dealing with children set out to reveal Christ's understanding of child psychology. But one wonders just how long Jesus kept the child "in the midst," and how much the child got out of the discussion that went on with the disciples.

¹⁴St. Matthew 18:14.

In St. Mark's account it is stated that "He took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when He had taken him in His arms, he said. . . ."15 Here what He said is not as important as what He did so far as the child is concerned. "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me." This was not addressed to the child at all, and were it, the child would have grasped little of it. (It is fair to say that adult disciples, too, would require a good bit of theological background to take it all in!) But what Jesus had to say to the child He said by taking him in His arms.

St. John seemed to have little concern for the child. He brought up a question about exorcism without a union card¹⁶ and received the answer, "He that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."¹⁷ It is easy to imagine that as Jesus was saying this to His disciples He gave a drink of water to the child in His arms. If He did, His actions were speaking to the child--but His words were not.

¹⁵St. Mark 9:36.

¹⁶St. Mark 9:38; St. Luke 9:49.

¹⁷St. Mark 9:40-41.

From there on in the child seems to have been completely ignored. In the account in St. Matthew the repeated references to a child in verses 6, 10, and 14, would suggest that the child remained "in the midst." But he had become the object lesson and nothing more--not part of the audience, not the object of the lessons Jesus was teaching. Look at the lessons. The punishment for offense would be worse than being thrown overboard tied to a millstone. It would be better to cut off the hand, or the foot, or to pluck out the eye that offends rather than, having both hands and both feet and both eyes, "to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"--and this said not once, but three times!¹⁸ One would hope that the child was by this time half asleep in our Lord's arms, or had already been given a friendly pat, well aimed, to propel him back to the rest of the boys and the game from which he had been called.

It is evident that the disciples did not pay any attention to the child either, whether he was "in the midst" or in our Lord's arms. Ignoring his interests, they continued to press for answers to their own problems. Nowhere does the New Testament give an indication of how the apostles got along with children in their ministry. Paul's "when I

¹⁸St. Matthew 18:7-9; St. Mark 9:42-48.

was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child"¹⁹ implies a rather slighting view of "childish things," and his "Children, obey your parents in the Lord" would appear rather pedantic and minimal if it were actually his only notice of the Church's children. Most references to children in the writings of the apostles, however, simply use them as examples in certain characteristics, notably obedience, for adult behavior, and as existential facts in human life. But because they are the Church's children, to acknowledge "not any should perish" is not enough. It is required in stewards who are found faithful also to find means of helping children become faith-full.

Actually the means, in the primary sense, do not have to be found. They have been given. God has always been interested in communicating with children, His children whom He created in His own image. Even perfect man was unable to initiate the conversation. God was the ways and means committee. When the King James Version describes the means God used it says, "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." The R.S.V. translates "the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden."²⁰ Had the deciduous trees already shed their leaves and did the Spirit God move among them like a rushing

¹⁹1 Corinthians 13:11.

²⁰Genesis 3:8.

mighty wind? As inexplicable as are God's means so explicit is the indication that man was reached. They heard Him.

God spoke and man heard. Even more amazing, man replied and God heard. The conversations probably occurred many times before the terrible day man died. It was in the day that they ate of the forbidden tree that they "surely died," that they lost the life of God which had been breathed into them; but it was in the moment that they made their first decision to listen to the devil's "Yea, hath God said?" rather than to what God had said that the problem of reaching the children of men with the grace of God began. They hid themselves. "But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.'"²¹ It was a problem. God found not only that man sought more and more hiding places but that he listened less and less. God never gave up but called more and more loudly, "Where are you?" He varied His methods in an effort to reach man. He expressed His Word in the first Gospel promise; He had men reiterate His words; He spoke in deed by the flood and at Babel. Since man continually heard His voice only to hide, He came down to earth and sought man out to save him. He

²¹Genesis 3:9-10.

set His Word into flesh and He dwelt among men; He lived His love for sinners and showed the result of sin in His dying. He rose to life again to demonstrate the certainty of forgiveness and life available for all men and received by all men who would in faith accept the gift. Because men were but children, God adapted His method of conveying His Word until finally He was acting it out in front of them. When He "changed His voice" again at the Ascension of our Lord and withdrew His visible presence in human form, He left real things, visible things to speak for Him, to act for Him. The scrolls had been reaching out to men for years--He added New Testament manuscripts. His voice had been present in ceremonies for years among a chosen people; now He took water and bread and wine as Sacraments, to say what He felt and to do what He desired to men.

If reaching His children was a problem to God, how much more was it a problem to reach His children's children! God chose parents to be His voice to the little ones. If parents find it hard to trust their children to the tender care of the kindergarten teacher, how must God have felt setting up Adam and Eve as agents of His loving action for a young Cain and little Abel whom He knew were coming along even before Eve did. If parents today feel that with all the experience of the human race they still really practice on the first child and do not understand their task until the second and third, what hope had Adam and Eve as parents

to the first child in all the world? But this was the way God determined to try to reach His children's children.

And Cain died in the attempt. Yes, Cain, for

by faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous, God bearing witness by accepting his gifts; he died, but through his faith he is still speaking.²²

Answers are not always apparent to the agonizing questions parents ask about the cause of the prodigal son. In the case of Cain they are not to be found. Some have wondered why the list of heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 begins with Abel and makes no mention of Adam or of Eve. The writer goes back to the creation of the world by the Word of God, but skips Adam to begin with Abel the list of men who were reached and recreated by the Word of God. Was Adam not a man of great faith and was this a contributing factor in Cain's delinquency? Certainly Adam was a man with experience and information of God's Word. He must have told Cain and Abel about all that had happened and that had been said. But he reached only one of his boys. Was it because he did not understand what a child is like? or what grace is like? Did he think the Word of God was only conveyed by words, and not by acts, his acts? Did he assume that Cain would be able to understand all the things he heard and saw just as he, Adam, had been able to when first he stood up from the dust of the creation?

²²Hebrews 11:4.

The questions are somewhat idle. They do not ask why God did not manage to reach through, nor why Abel was touched. But they do illustrate one of the biggest causes for millstone approaches to children, one of the chief reasons adults fail to reach children. They depend upon words. Since words are talked they assume that The Word can only be in talk. This approach is revealed as faulty because the child's own birth into death requires the establishment of communication with God with no delay in waiting for the development of his vocabulary. Not only the need of the child, but also the yearning love of the Father would urge that adoption could not be postponed until words were understood. When God found that the children of men did not understand His speaking to them, as a loving Father He gave them His Word in His actions. He revealed Himself in loving deeds of living. This is the proof of His grace and is also evidence about the means of grace. God's Word and God's grace are never limited to man's understanding. They work in Holy Baptism as they work in Holy Scripture.

It is probably an evidence of our own need for divine understanding that this many centuries later the first adult approach to filling children with the faith seems to be to fill them with words. That this would be a natural approach for the biblicist one could expect. That this would be the problem of those who deny the power of the Sacraments, who

see no means of grace in Holy Baptism would be an obvious concern. But that this should be also a major problem to those in the Church who know that by water and the Spirit one is reborn, this is perplexing. But it is terribly true that all too many millstones are being deserved by parents and teachers (who think to receive better things at the hands of the Lord as a reward for their efforts in teaching His little ones) because they have poured words over the child instead of the grace of God and have succeeded in almost drowning him rather than in giving him new life.

John Wesley's introduction to a book of children's hymns published by his brother Charles gives his solution to this problem of childhood.

There are two ways of writing or speaking to children: the one is, to let ourselves down to them; the other, to lift them up to us. Dr. Watts has wrote in the former way, and has succeeded admirably well speaking to children as children, and leaving them as he found them. The following hymns are written on the other plan; they contain strong and manly sense, yet expressed in such plain and easy language, as even children may understand. But when they do understand them, they will be children no longer, only in years and stature.²³

One of the most vivid pictures of the confusion produced in a child's mind by the verbiage of adults who do not make contact with the child mind is drawn by C. S. Lewis in the first chapter of The Pilgrim's Regress:

I dreamed of a boy who was born in the land of Puritania and his name was John. And I dreamed that when John

²³William T. Brooke, "Children's Hymns," A Dictionary of Hymnology, edited by John Julian (London: John Murray, 1925), p. 221.

was able to walk he ran out of his parents' garden on a fine morning on to the road. And on the other side of the road there was a deep wood, but not thick, full of primroses and soft green moss. When John set eyes on this he thought he had never seen anything so beautiful: and he ran across the road and into the wood, and was just about to go down on his hands and knees and to pull up the primroses by handfuls, when his mother came running out of the garden gate, and she also ran across the road, and caught John up, and smacked him soundly and told him he must never go into the wood again. And John cried, but he asked no questions, for he was not yet at the age for asking questions. Then a year went past. And then, another fine morning, John had a little sling and he went out into the garden and he saw a bird sitting on a branch. And John got his sling ready and was going to have a shot at the bird, when the cook came running out of the garden and caught John up and smacked him soundly and told him he must never kill any of the birds in the garden.

"Why?" said John.

"Because the Steward would be very angry," said cook.

"Who is the Steward?" said John.

"He is the man who makes rules for all the country round here," said cook.

"Why?" said John.

"Because the Landlord set him to do it."

"Who is the Landlord?" said John.

"He owns all the country," said the cook.

"Why?" said John.

And when he asked this, the cook went and told his mother. And his mother sat down and talked to John about the Landlord all afternoon: but John took none of it in, for he was not yet at the age for taking it in. Then a year went past, and one dark, cold, wet morning John was made to put on new clothes. They were the ugliest clothes that had ever been put upon him, which John did not mind at all, but they also caught him under the chin, and were tight under the arms, which he minded a great deal, and they made him itch all over. And his father and mother took him out along the road, one holding him by each hand (which was uncomfortable, too, and very unnecessary), and told him they were taking him to see the Steward. The Steward lived in a big dark house of Stone on the side of the road. The father and mother went in to talk to the Steward first, and John was left sitting in the hall on a chair so high that his feet did not reach the floor. There were other chairs in the hall where he could have sat in comfort, but his father had told him

that the Steward would be very angry if he did not sit absolutely still and be very good: and John was beginning to be afraid, so he sat still on the high chair with his feet dangling, and his clothes itching all over him, and his eyes starting out of his head. After a very long time his parents came back again, looking as if they had been with the doctor, very grave. Then they said that John must go in and see the Steward too. And when John came into the room, there was an old man with a red, round face, who was very kind and full of jokes, so that John quite got over his fears, and they had a good talk about fishing tackle and bicycles. But just when the talk was at its best, the Steward got up and cleared his throat. He then took down a mask from the wall with a long white beard attached to it and suddenly clapped it on his face, so that his appearance was awful. And he said, "Now I am going to talk to you about the Landlord. The Landlord owns all the country, and it is very, very kind of him to allow us to live on it at all--very, very kind." He went on repeating "very kind" in a queer sing-song voice so long that John would have laughed, but that now he was beginning to be frightened again. The Steward then took down from a peg a big card with small print all over it, and said, "Here is a list of all the things the Landlord says you must not do. You'd better look at it." So John took the card: but half the rules seemed to forbid things he had never heard of, and the other half forbade things he was doing every day and could not imagine not doing: and the number of the rules was so enormous that he felt he could never remember them all. "I hope," said the Steward, "that you have not already broken any of the rules?" John's heart began to thump, and his eyes bulged more and more, and he was at his wit's end when the Steward took the mask off and looked at John with his real face and said, "Better tell a lie, old chap, better tell a lie. Easiest for all concerned," and popped the mask on his face all in a flash. John gulped and said quickly, "Oh, no, sir." "That is just as well," said the Steward through the mask. "Because, you know, if you did break any of them and the Landlord got to know of it, do you know what he'd do to you?" "No, sir," said John: and the Steward's eyes seemed to be twinkling dreadfully through the holes of the mask. "He'd take you and shut you up for ever and ever in a black hole full of snakes and scorpions as large as lobsters--for ever and ever. And besides that, he is such a kind, good man, so very, very kind, that I am sure you would never want to displease him." "No, sir," said John. "But, please, sir . . ." "Well,"

said the Steward. "Please, sir, supposing I did break one, one little one, just by accident, you know. Could nothing stop the snakes and lobsters?" "Ah! . . ." said the Steward; and then he sat down and talked for a long time, but John could not understand a single syllable. However, it all ended with pointing out that the Landlord was quite extraordinarily kind and good to his tenants, and would certainly torture most of them to death the moment he had the slightest pretext. "And you can't blame him," said the Steward. "For after all, it is his land, and it is so very good of him to let us live here at all--people like us, you know." Then the Steward took off the mask and had a nice, sensible chat with John again, and gave him a cake and brought him out to his father and mother. But just as they were going he bent down and whispered in John's ear, "I shouldn't bother about it all too much if I were you." At the same time he slipped the card of the rules into John's hand and told him he could keep it for his own use.²⁴

The cook and the mother and the Steward--each one failed to reach the boy because of a lack of understanding of childhood and a lack of contact with the child. They operated with words, but "John was not at the age for taking it in." The danger of the millstone is shared by them all, but since Sunday morning sermons are most easily available for examination, consider how the children of a parish would be affected by the understanding and reach demonstrated in a few sermon introductions. These presentations on the Landlord are being conceived by Stewards week after week. It is expected that the families be present, cooperating with them who labor in the Word and doctrine. Now consider what could possibly be the result of the delivery.

²⁴C. S. Lewis, The Pilgrim's Regress (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1944), pp. 12-16.

The following introductory paragraphs were selected at random. The only basis for the choice was their titles, which suggest sermons that might be of interest or application to children. The first is from a sermon with the title, "Because God is Our Friend"; the second from "Jesus and the Children"; the third, "Jesus Expects Purity of heart." Imagine what the children who heard these words from the pulpit would make of them.

In the Fifth Canto of Dante's Inferno the poet Virgil leads Dante into the second circle of Hell, where the two behold the spirits of the carnal sinners, forever driven by foul winds and furies through the black air. Two of these unfortunate souls in misery cry to Dante: "O living creature, gracious and benign, if the King of the universe were our friend we would pray Him for thy peace." It is a cry of despair that must have echoed through all the long corridors of Hell. Likewise it is a cry that has been lifted from the ends of the world across all recorded time. "If the King of the universe were our friend!" If only in this vast unfriendly creation there were some Friend or Spirit to love and sustain us.²⁵

Or consider this one:

They brought little children to Jesus. The mothers who brought the children had no doubt learned to love Jesus. For there were some people who did love Jesus while He was here on earth. They were drawn to Him by the genuine affection and the earnestness which marked His whole personality. And they experienced His love and His grace. They were delighted with Him. But Jesus was not only kind and friendly to grown folks; He was also fond of children and was a real friend to them. It is no wonder, then, that these mothers wanted their children brought to Jesus. And so they came carrying their little ones with them. I like the picture of

²⁵Robert E. Luccock, If God Be For Us (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 23.

these mothers bringing their children to Jesus. We notice also that Jesus liked it.²⁶

There are twenty-six more lines recounting the story. But as soon as the point of the sermon is reached, the children present are automatically ruled out of the sermon except insofar as they are able to contemplate attaining the appropriate age and the approved estate of matrimony that may result in parenthood.

Parents can do nothing better for their children than to bring them to Jesus. . . . Let us bring our children to Jesus on the arms of prayer. . . . In the next place, we should bring our children to Jesus in holy baptism. . . . And then we should bring our children to God by instructing them in the Word of God.²⁷

How much differently this would be said if the preacher did not feel that "he had toil enough" working the sermon out for adults and "would not be diverted from it."

Who are the ones concerned, really concerned, with the relation between Baptism and the Lord Jesus?--those whose place in the Church, whose hope for salvation in all the few years of their lives has rested in that Sacrament as much as or more than in the understood Word. But they are not recognized. The concern is for new babies who will also be baptized if the parents follow through on the sermon. Are the children present? Are they in the Church?

²⁶J. N. Kildahl, Concerning Sin and Grace, translated by Bernhard H. J. Habel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954), p. 75.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 76-79.

Take the opening paragraphs of the third sermon:

Long before there was an organized government or church, there was the formal institution of the home, ordained by God the Creator. According to His principles, this institution is brought into being by the act of marriage. The Biblical definition of marriage is rather simple and clear. It consists of a union of one man and one woman for life. This marriage union becomes adulterated when either party violates the nature and purposes of this union.

These definitions of marriage and adultery lose their simplicity, however, when you define them according to civil law instead of God's Moral Law. Civil law recognizes the marriage of any man to any woman, provided there is a legal document to substantiate it. If there is no legal proof for marriage, civil law will declare such a marriage illegal. If a person disposes of his partner according to civil law and marries another, civil law will recognize the legality of the second marriage. It is possible, therefore, to be legally right and morally wrong at the same time.²⁸

These are good sermons. That point is not being raised.

What is apparent is that sermons such as these can only give a child the conviction that words spoken from behind the ramparts of a pulpit are not meant to be intelligible.

When at the same time the child is being taught that the preacher is dealing with the Word of God, has not our approach to the child in the Church's worship become an occasion for millstone warnings?

Some will say that this is no problem in their parish. The comment, "Everything our pastor says in his sermons can be understood by a first grader" is admittedly open to double

²⁸The Concordia Pulpit for 1958 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), p. 250.

meaning, but on either count it leaves unanswered the question, "Does the first grader listen?" Simplicity of language is not the most difficult part of suffering children to come. When one speaks to children, a whole new type of delivery comes into play. The spoken Word can only be conveyed to the listener, and the TV age has developed children who automatically tune out the sound that is not interesting to them.

The problem is further complicated by what the children understand even when they understand the words. What would a listening TV age child do with, "If a person disposes of his partner according to civil law. . . ."? Wouldn't he see a shallow grave in a deserted TV conception of a scene in the wild west?

More seriously, what would the average presentation of the act of atonement mean to a child? Take a sermon for Good Friday from the volume just quoted.²⁹ Its title is "The Historic Fact of Our Redemption Through the Crucifixion of the Son of God." Not fair? Well, it is probably true that children were urged to "attend church" on Good Friday. They were there. The first three and one-half pages describe "The Gory Scene of Death," "The Galling Disgrace," "The Supernatural Darkness," "The Depths of Suffering." Then follows "All Necessary for Man's Redemption." Here we are at the heart of the problem. "In Adam's fall all the

²⁹Ibid., p. 156.

children of men had forsaken God." Every child of man, of tender years or other years, is concerned. "If this grievous falling away was to be expiated, then the sinners' Substitute must needs suffer Himself to be forsaken of God, thereby bearing the iniquity and punishment of all."

This is unimpeachable theology and undigestible--as far as the Church's children who are present are concerned.

To be fair it must be noted that the sermon then developed a second part on "The Blessed Power of This Atoning Sacrifice." It was compared to Old Testament sacrifices and to the brass serpent in the wilderness. The statement "and all who look to Him now with the eyes of true faith are freed from the punishment and power of sin," leaves completely up to the child-hearer the task of interpreting how differently "eyes of true faith" operate from the eyes that are presently struggling with sleep. A summary sentence states,

Even so Christ, the one true High Priest through the one sufficient sacrifice of His own body as an atoning offering for sin, has fully reconciled the human race with God and thus extinguished the fire of divine wrath. God has "made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself."

Then the story of "curfew shall not ring tonight" illustrates the sermon's admonition to serve Jesus Christ in love.

This is not a criticism of the material as a sermon. It is a final comment on the evident fact that there is a lack of contact with the children in the Church today. It

is a criticism of sermons as material for the children who are urged to attend our services. When all the people say "Amen," what will the word mean for the gratefully sighing youngsters who recognize that the end is near?

An Inability to Cope with the Number of Children
in the Church Today

Matthew Henry cited a third reason that might have been cause for the rebuke Christ's disciples gave to the women who brought their children for blessing. He wrote, "They thought if such an address as this were encouraged, all the country would bring their children to Him, and they should never see an end of it."³⁰

"They would never see an end of it!" Here is a basic despair that can be found in almost every suburban parish. The problem is not simply the child, but children. There are so many of them! Even where there is a loving concern for a child, or at least, "for my children," there is despair, bewilderment, or a frank recognition of the comical involved in an attempt to cope with a multitude of small fry when there are only five on the teaching staff and but two small rooms. Many a Sunday school superintendent will concede the Old Testament statement that children are a gift of God, and will agree with the verse, "Blessed is he

³⁰Henry, loc. cit.

whose quiver is full of them," but would be ready to argue that a full quiver is a blessing only if you know how to shoot the arrows. The expanding number of children that are now crowding the Sunday schools and schools of the Church, are both the problem in the approach of the Church to children and the biggest argument for a reconsideration of the approach. Time magazine described the situation when it said that every new shopping center is crowded with shopping housewives, holding one child by the hand, having one child in a stroller and another in escrow.

What are the approaches the Church is using to cope with the blessing of children? The attempts vary as much as the congregational situations, but most of the solutions reveal that the Church's duty is regarded simply as the task of instruction.

The answer given by some is an increase in the number of rooms for teaching. Expenditures for new construction edge higher year by year and much of the money is being expended on educational buildings. Once the area for more classes is provided, the search for teachers to staff the classes is intensified. In most instances the instructional approach contends that with a smaller number of pupils a more effective job can be done, no matter what the quality of teacher given them. As a result, buildings are built with a multitude of small cubicles, or the number of circles is expanded on the old gym floor with a resulting expansion

in the decibels of teaching volume. As the amount of volume goes up it is often observed that the amount of spirituality goes down. This is not so much a problem of teaching as it is a problem for the learner. Facts are difficult enough to grasp in a bedlam, but reverence for Him who said, "Be still and know that I am God," is even more difficult to attain. Any change in mood is also difficult to accomplish, and an auditorium that has re-echoed to a teaching situation is only with difficulty converted into a room that can assist a worshiper in understanding with awe that the Holy God is present with His people.

The simple inability of the average parish to cope with the influx of the new generation through increased construction calls attention to the strange situation which requires that religious instruction be limited to an hour between nine and ten on a Sunday morning. If a congregation is blessed with many children, why must the program insist that all of the children be brought together at one time, even though there is not sufficient space for them? Parents who are celebrating the eighth birthday of their firstborn will be wiser than to pull together more children than the dining room and two supervisors can cope with. The Church, too, should balance numbers with ability and if necessary increase the number of celebrations arranged for the Lord who was born for the children. The instructional classes should be arranged in such a way that

the facilities are not over-taxed and the instruction be adequately presented. Most vital of all, parents must be recognized as the constant teachers of their children. They are the ones who must be enrolled in "teacher training" classes.

Parochial schools, too, throughout the nation are increasing their enrollment by pushing additional sets into already crowded rooms. The commendable effort to increase the number of classrooms increases the demand for teachers to staff them. The caliber of teachings, and the understanding of an approach to children that will enable them to live as the children of God, does not necessarily rise with the demand.

To say all of these things is simply to be saying facts already known. But certain premises inherent in these situations ought to be re-examined.

The basic question goes to the educational root of all children's agencies in the Church. Is the chief purpose of Christian education to convey information? The women brought their children to Jesus that He should touch them, that He should bless them, and our Lord agreed that they should. He sent His disciples in the Church into all the world to "make disciples" baptizing, and teaching. The making of disciples out of children must always stand in the first place. Teaching these disciples to observe all that Christ has commanded can never be minimized; but a

Christian Church that accepts the Lord's statement that by Holy Baptism a "regeneration in the Holy Ghost" takes place must also be careful not to minimize this Sacrament. This is to say more than that the children of the Church should be baptized. This implies a recognition of the fact that children are made disciples by the grace of God in baptism. The prime objective of any educational agency is not to convey information. The prime objective is to be of help to children who have already been made disciples as they face up to their opportunities for living the regenerate life.

But is not the problem of coping with this objective to be solved by activity in the area of instruction? No one will deny its importance and cheer for all efforts in each educational agency to improve teaching facilities. But more fundamental is the recognition that the problem may be even more successfully met in the area of worship, more pertinent is the recognition that religious instruction is made meaningful by worship. Educators agree in an accent on life-related materials. Religious educators consistently point out that what is learned of God and the Christian life must be applied to the child's situation and stress that the child must be constantly encouraged to put it all into practice. In most areas of instruction this is as far as a teacher can go. An instructor who is dealing with the form of government in the United States, for instance, can

explain the election of officials and representatives and the importance of the citizen's vote; but he cannot take the class out to vote. He could take them to the polls to see others vote--he could let them see him step into a voting booth and draw the curtain behind him--he could let them vote a sample ballot that would not really count. All of this would be helpful, would be a good teaching device. But he who teaches the Christian faith can do all that and much more. The best teaching will be going on as the instructor and the pupils vote together. It is in worship that the most effective teaching will go on. As they worship, they practice what he teaches.

But has worship been recognized for what it is, and have facilities for worship been utilized in any near ratio to the amount of new classroom space being built? Most congregations have a church building. They often picture their need for a new educational building by showing the number of Sunday School classes that must be held in the church. It is a problem when worship can not be distinguished from study by its setting. But what happens when the new building is completed? The children are pulled out of the church. The setting for worship is not used at all by many children, and for those who do attend the parish services to worship there is no graded curriculum such as the congregation insists upon in its study program. What worship does go on in the new facilities is at best separated from the

church at worship, is usually the part of the Sunday School session that is carried on without any training of the volunteer worship leader, and is all too often a perfunctory habit that conveys more false ideas about God and more heresy about the way we commune with Him than can be corrected by all the explicit teaching of the day. Too frequently the worship is a sample ballot designed to enable the children to do something later on, or a demonstration of what is often done differently at another time and place.

An aspect of this approach is the fact that the man who theoretically has been most carefully trained to lead the worship of the congregation is not utilizing his skill for the children of the Church. Once again, it is the problem of coping with so many, and he but one. But the pastor meets that same problem with the adults and solves it in the corporate services. The contention that the children are being reached in these corporate services has been met before. Were this true, the Sunday School session might helpfully be regarded as instruction only. But where it is not true, the learning by doing that takes place in worship should have a high place on the school's curriculum. Where it does not, either worship is not understood or else the Church's task of making disciples has been narrowed to the conveying of information.

This accent does not minimize the Church's teaching task. It only suggests that there should be no giving of

information apart from a very apparent accent on living the life. An accent on living can certainly be made by further instruction and application. But much more effective would seem to be an approach that accents worship in the educational program of the Church. It will be the contention of the following chapters that worship is really Christian living in miniature. There is no act of sanctified living that does not develop through an act of worship. The act of worship may not be conscious or vocal, but any act of a Christian that can be labeled good is done to the glory of God. This implies that before the deed is done the individual is conscious of the God for whose majesty the deed is performed. A Christian who has been born into the family of God may not always be mentally conscious of the One for whom he performs his deeds, but, even as his faith continually clings to the God who has called him, so his actions are continually directed toward the God he has answered. It will be the contention of the following chapters that it is in the activity of worship that a child actually makes his Christian information functional. If he is not helped to translate what he knows into what he does, he will certainly not be moved in the direction of living his faith. On the other hand if he can be shown that every new fact of revelation is part of God's insistent urging that men should live as His children, and if he is then given the opportunity to be active as a child of God in the

reverence and devotion of worship, he will have made the first step in making his life a Christian life.

This particular accent would call attention to the fact that an increase in the number of classrooms or an increase in the size of the instructional staff may result simply in an increase in the number of unfinished tasks being done by a parish educational program. If children are only being taught to know and not to do, an increase in the number who are cultivating bad consciences will not solve the problem of the Church's future. An increase in the number of pupils who are exposed to full-time programs of education, whose arithmetic and geography are permeated with a Christian atmosphere, is an answer to the problem only if the atmosphere is one of worship and not simply one of fact.

There have always been voices in the Protestant Church that question whether the accent on educational agencies such as the Sunday school were really the answer to the necessities of the Church's life. The following chapters will not seek to minimize the teaching aspect, but will urge an increase in the worshiping life of the individual congregation, so that the new generation will find that its place in the Church is a place of worshiping action and not simply a place of knowing the right terminology and attending the right classes. Here the place of the children in the Church's worship will become important. In these

decades of the Church's history the importance of its worship life on the lives of its children should be recognized, and instead of expecting the children to adapt themselves to a service conducted for adults, the Church should adapt the approach to worship in one service to the child's understanding and the child's ability to participate.

More than space and more than instruction enter into the relationship that must be established between children and the Christ. Matthew Henry in his final comment on St. Matthew's account of the blessing of the children said it this way:

He received the little children, and did as He was desired; He laid His hands on them, that is, He blessed them. The strongest believer lives not so much by apprehending Christ as by being apprehended by Him, not so much by knowing God as by being known of Him; and this the least child is capable of. If they cannot stretch out their hands to Christ, yet He can lay His hands on them, and so make them His own, and own them for His own.

Methinks it has something observable in it, that, when He had done this, He departed thence, verse 15. As if He reckoned He had done enough there, when He had thus asserted the rights of the lambs of His flock, and made this provision for a succession of subjects in His Kingdom.³¹

³¹Henry, loc. cit.

CHAPTER III

CONSIDER WORSHIP

The neglect of worship in the lives of children and of children in the worshiping life of the Church is not due to a lack of appreciation of worship, as worship is understood. There is no need to advance argument in favor of worship. There is need for discussion to attain clarity as to what worship is and what worship does.

Worship Must Be Considered as an Act to Realize its Reaction

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, prepared for the Church of England and presented to Parliament in 1647, contains the famous question and answer: "What is the chief end of man?"

"Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Actually, that is close to a definition of worship. Worship in such terms covers all of the life of man, both in time and in eternity. Worship in such terms becomes life's most important activity both from God's point of view and from man's point of view. But if worship is to be defined in terms that practically equate it with the Christian life, the place of specific acts of worship and of the corporate devotional life of the Church in the life

of the Christian could never be analyzed, the meaning and importance of acts of love toward God would not be considered, and no attention given to the effect such acts of worship have on the life of the one who worships. A more focused consideration of worship is therefore necessary both to understand it as an act and to realize its reaction on the worshiper.

All who accept the confessions of the Lutheran Church will agree "that worship in its essence IS faith in God through Christ, and that faith in God through Christ IS worship." They will agree that "The Catholic Faith is this that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity"; and that "The right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man" as the Athanasian Creed expresses it. Just as acceptable are the words of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, "God wishes us to believe Him and to receive from Him blessings, and this He declares to be true worship" and also,

The worship and divine service of the Gospel is to receive gifts from God. . . . The chief worship of the Gospel is to wish to receive remission of sins, grace, and righteousness.¹

All of these accents are necessary, and were especially in point at the time of the Reformation to combat an attitude

¹Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "What the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church Have To Say About Worship and the Sacraments" (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), p. 3.

which equated worship with the performance of a rite. But this accent is apt to result in the wrong stress by an age that no longer possesses the Reformation's understanding of "faith." Since "faith without works is dead," an understanding of "faith" that equates it with "knowledge" or with a state of "believing" in contrast to "not believing" will not serve as a synonym of worship. The Catholic faith is that we do something about the Holy Trinity. Faith is a living, active thing. In this sense the Catholic faith is that we worship. Obviously knowing about Him must come first, but worshipping Him involves an action that develops out of that knowledge. Certainly believing in Him, receiving forgiveness, grace, righteousness, must come first; but the Christian man's response to these gifts is his gift to God. Worship in its most simple sense will include that direction--it is something offered to God. What man receives from God must always be involved in worship, but what man offers to God as a response to God's gifts, is basic in a definition of worship. And it is only in the developing of that understanding of the action of worship and in the participation by worshipping children in that action that the blessings of worship will be gained.

When the action of worship is expanded to include the entire life of the Christian man, the picture is also confused. This understanding is correct, but frequently those who say that a man's most important task is to live a

Christian life go on to infer that worship, considered as a specific action, is only one, and hardly a chief part of that life. In an address to the 1957 North American Conference on Faith and Order in Oberlin, Ohio, Dr. Joseph Sittler quoted a member of the Commission on Worship, Prof. Leonard Trinterud:

Our English word "worship" mis-states the whole content and significance of that which in the New Testament is called "the service of God," i. e., leiturgia, latria, diakonia, and their respective related terms. In the N. T. these terms refer normatively to "serving God," "doing the will of God," in a great variety of ways most of which are without cultic significance or form, and which refer principally to that which is done for and among men--not to something done to or for God in a sanctuary. The New Testament knows nothing of a leiturgia, latria, diakonia which is localized in an edifice, or to fixed times of occurrence. These terms refer to the whole round of the Christian's ordinary life as a people.

Acts such as prayer, thanksgiving, breaking of bread are regarded in the New Testament as but an aspect of the "service of God," and not necessarily the controlling or central aspect. That which in the New Testament is central and controlling in the "service of God" is the presence of Christ, the Head of the Church, in the Holy Spirit given to the Church. The living Christ, thus present, directs, guides, builds up the Church, and thus it "serves God." Our ideas of worship are too often rooted in the situation of the people of God before the Resurrection and Pentecost. There, indeed, priests, strictly so-called, performed cultic acts, in properly consecrated sanctuaries, acts addressed to God on behalf of the people. But the new aeon comes when the promise of God has been fulfilled, when the redeeming work of God has been done in Christ, and when the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers. God's people are now related to Him in a new and living way previously only promised. So also, God is now present among His people, by the Holy Spirit, a manner of presence which previously was but a promise.

We cannot discuss "worship" as though we were still

in the old aeon, on the other side of Pentecost and the Resurrection.²

Prof. Sittler gives permission to "disagree with a great deal of what Prof. Trinterud says; but such disagreement has nothing to do with the size or importance of the problem thus explicated." He reported to the Conference that the Commission on Worship proposed the following as the first step toward solving the problem:

A thoroughgoing biblical enquiry into the relation between the "service of God" and what we have come to call the "service of worship" by the congregation of believers assembled in a specific place, has got to be undertaken. The enormous exegetical ferment which has been engendered by recent decades of brilliant and notion-cracking biblical studies makes it quite impossible to derive schematically neat ideas about worship from the New Testament community. Some old certainties as to how worship was then practiced have been made untenable, and a confusing and exciting richness of life has been exposed.³

While awaiting the completion of such a thorough study, it is possible to consider the meaning and significance of the action under consideration by a simple examination of Biblical terms. The most frequently used word in the Old Testament to designate the worship action is *Shahā* שָׁחָה. The Greek word which is its equivalent in meaning and in frequency of use in the New Testament is *Proskuneo*, προσκυνέω. The words mean "to make obeisance, to bow

²Paul S. Minear, editor, The Nature of the Unity We Seek (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1958), p. 104.

³Ibid., p. 105.

down, to prostrate oneself."

The prostration of body signifies and expresses the prostration of soul. Such humility of the human worshiper implies two things, which find their corroboration in Scripture. (a) Confession of the Divine perfection. (b) Confession of the human imperfection.⁴

The next term in order of frequency is the Old Testament word Yare אָרַךְ, and the New Testament synonym Sebomai, σέβουαι. The meaning of the terms involves "the fear which excites wonder, love and praise. It is that quality of the soul we call reverence. It is the human spirit's recognition of divine greatness."⁵

Just as it is basic to the worship life that God Himself must be both the source and object of man's worshiping action, so for the purposes of this discussion it will be asserted that the adoration of God is the starting point of all worshiping action. It will also be maintained that the development of the spirit of reverence and adoration must be a first objective of worship training, and that the blessings of worship to the life of individual and of Church can increase only as this foundation is strengthened.

Just as there is no general unanimity in the use of the term "worship" so there is no common understanding of its significance in the Christian life. There are some who

⁴Francis Davidson, "The Scriptural Doctrine of Worship," The Evangelical Quarterly, VII (January, 1935), 54.

⁵Ibid., p. 55.

would sharply deny the position of Dietrich von Hildebrand that, although the Liturgy "must never be celebrated with the sole intention of participating in its graces," there is a formation of personality and a development of the sanctified life brought about in the one who brings God adoration and sacrifice. He asserts that there is a process of personal transformation brought about through the Spirit incarnated in the Liturgy.

The deepest pedagogical effect is achieved through that which is not used as a pedagogical means. It is achieved through that which, independent from pedagogical action, dispenses it as a superfluum or gift of super-abundance.⁶

The negative reaction from Protestant minds to this contention is usually called out by a critical evaluation of the average worshiper's participation in the Liturgy. But if actual worship is assumed in the premise, is not the claim of benefit to the worshiper from his action of worship quite true? And is it not true of every act of personal devotion and of every informal corporate worship as well as of participation in the Liturgy? There is a "spirit incarnated" in worship. God's own Spirit is present in the worshiper--for "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost"; and God's Spirit is present in the worship action, for His Word is full of His Spirit.

⁶Dietrich von Hildebrand, Liturgy and Personality (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1943), pp. 3-7.

Worship Is Something the Child Does

Because God Is

This is not a complete definition nor the whole story, but it is a direction that must be recognized before we can build. A building committee that begins to study a blueprint must first find the arrow that points to North before it can follow the drawings or direct the construction of the building. Here is the primary direction for building worshipping lives: worship is something the child does.

It is not something that your child is. That seems obvious enough. It is true that one cannot isolate being from doing--if one is, one does, by definition. But the point needs to be made. Many parents and teachers seem to be content that their baptized children are Christians whether or not they do what Christians are to do. And many more are content to believe that their children are living up to God's expectant hopes because they are doing the obvious Christian things of attending church services and (but more frequently), or, Sunday School, whether or not they are even paying attention to the prayers spoken by the superintendent or thinking of God at all during the Liturgy. We are not that naive about our children's approach to bath-time before bedtime. We feel the wash cloth to see if it has been used, and we question the subject, not only

whether he is a bathroom goer but whether he has been a bathtub user. And if we find he is not, we convert him in the simplest sense--we turn him around and march him back in.

Nor are we satisfied if he knows something about the properties of soap and water--we are interested in whether he uses them. We are not satisfied if he is present when we wash and so knows the technique of face washing--we want him to wash. Worship is something your child does, not something that he knows. If he "had all knowledge and understood all mysteries" and had not worshiped, what the profit?

If he had not washed, we would discover it and proceed with vim to help him do it. But even if we are aware of a worship deficiency, our solution is more often than not to send him to a place where he is taught something. The subject matter we insist must be Biblical, but it is usually fact, not action. We proceed on the

uncriticized assumption that religious knowledge has a certain value as an end in itself, so that the child who knows, and does not do, can be held to be in a somewhat better case than the child who is in complete ignorance.⁷

Worship is something a child must do. It is not something he receives--although of course he never could worship

⁷J. Reginald Lumb, The Education of Souls (London: The Faith Press, 1952), p. 5.

or even exist if it were not for what God initially does for him and to him; nor could he continue to live from day to day or even be able to worship apart from the gifts of God's grace and love. But no matter how much God has loved the world or does for the child, he is not a worshiper until he loves, until he does something. And, contrariwise, if it were possible to imagine our life as existing without any gifts received from God, still our worship would be required. What seems to be an abstract point is really very pertinent, because parents and teachers assume so easily that if they give a child more information, or admonition, or paraphrased words called prayers to be memorized they are making him into a worshiper.

In pointing this out we already begin to assert the next phase of this initial direction that is basic to the construction of worshiping lives. Worship is something the child does because God is. Once again, this expression does not say everything, but it implies a major reality about the nature of worship.

Worship Is an Adoring Response to God

The very existence of the Eternal compels the response of the creature.

There is a sense in which we may think of the whole life of the Universe, seen and unseen, conscious and

unconscious, as an act of worship, glorifying its Origin, Sustainer and End.⁸

Worship is adoration

A quotation from Selected Letters of von Hügel states:

The first or central act of religion is adoration, sense of God, His otherness though nearness, His distinctness from all finite beings, though not separate-ness--aloofness--from them.

Underhill adds the comment,

It is true that from first to last self-regarding elements are mixed with human worship; but these are no real part of it. Not man's needs and wishes, but God's presence and incitement, first evoke it.⁹

To Thy majesty, O God, ten thousand times ten thousand
bow down and adore,
Singing and praising without ceasing, and saying
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts;
Heaven and earth are full of thy praises;
Hosanna in the highest.¹⁰

For angels there is no question that adoration is the basic nature of worship. That must also have been true for God's first man and woman in Eden. They saw God! They adored! Theirs was the "Vision of God--that disclosure of the Supernatural which is overwhelming, self-giving, and attractive all at once."¹¹

⁸Evelyn Underhill, Worship (Torchbook edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 3.

⁹Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰Eric Milner-White and G. W. Briggs, Daily Prayer (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 5.

¹¹Underhill, op. cit., p. 4.

Although man has turned his back upon God he has never gotten away from the brightness of His presence. The primitive still knows the majesty of God and responds. Luther discussed this worship response of the heathen. The substance of his comments is given in Luther on Worship:

Of course, the idols are empty and vain. But their power to call forth awe, worship, and obedience comes from God. It is His wrath which subjects men to the fragments of their own making. And those who worship idols meet the true God in his wrath.¹²

The Christian knows more. He has met God in the face of Jesus Christ. He has known love, not that he loves God, but that God loved him.

This is the second phase of worship's cause, the power of the working Word of God, and yet it is part of the first. Every adoring action is a response both to the nature of God and to the action of God, for what God is and what He does are the same. God is love, for example, and God does love, always and everyone. This accents the accuracy of Underhill's definition of worship as "the total adoring response of man to the one Eternal God self-revealed in time."¹³ Christian worship is the response of faith to the Blessed Trinity who has revealed Himself as He is and does through the life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

¹²Vilmos Vajta, Luther on Worship (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 7.

¹³Underhill, op. cit., p. 61.

Certainly there is nothing in this revelation that makes adoration less the heart of worship for the Christian than it is for the primitive or pagan. The holiness and purity of God are only magnified by the agony He Himself had to endure to solve the damning problem of sin. The power and dominion of God are only brought down to the level of man's eyesight, not diminished, by the incarnation. His omnipresence did not cease at His presence with us, but this, with all the rest of the wonder of Deity, was made more understandable to man by His presence in time, and man was made more aware of the eternal truth, "Lo, I am with you always." Since God came into time, man has been able better to grasp eternity and to comprehend that his destiny lies in the "praise, adoration and manifestation" of God.

If that is man's destiny, is it not our ambition for our children, now? Our goal does not stop at knowing, or receiving, or being, but is reached in their adoring of the Thrice Holy One!

Worship includes confession

No understanding adoration of the awful, sinless holiness of God could exist without the reaction of humility and unworthiness. Even the seraphim in Isaiah's vision used four wings to cover face and feet as they cried their Tersanctus. For sinful man the holiness of God has become

a consuming fire, and it would be the undoing of any man to look upon God.

But our confession is because of what God does. The giving of Himself--and for sin!--is God's method of bringing us to repentance, of causing us to turn to Him again. Donald Baillie's picture of mankind in a great circle, all with their backs turned to God who was to be the center of their lives, points up the reality and power of what God has done. Since men could no longer see Him, in the fullness of time He stepped out of eternity's center and walked in the periphery of life, showing Himself and His love to men.¹⁴ This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it is the power of God unto salvation because the understanding of this love of God turns men, and they are turned--back to the center, to adoration.

Once again it is clear that our objective is not that our children know sin (the devils also tremble) or receive forgiveness (that grace may abound) or be forgiven (as free from sin yet living therein)--our objective is that our forgiven children adore with lips and lives Him who, while we were yet sinners, died for us.

Worship involves thanksgiving

"God's in His heaven, all's right with the world"--

¹⁴Donald M. Baillie, God Was In Christ (New York: Scribners, 1948), pp. 205-06.

with what thanksgiving unfallen man could have said it. If even God could say of our creation, "Behold! it is very good," what must have been the reaction of created man! From him who is the recipient of the unbounded giving of God there could be no worship without the note of thanksgiving to the Giver God.

But "this poor word 'Thanksgiving,'" as Underhill calls it,

with its suggestion of dutiful gratitude for benefits received, is far from suggesting that total adoring acknowledgment of God in His cosmic splendour and merciful dealings with men, that disinterested worship, that delighted God-ward reference and consequent sanctifying action which this word [Eucharist] implied first for devout Jews, and then for those early Christians who so promptly adopted it as the best of all titles for their chief religious rite. Plainly there is a sense in which the creature's approach to God must be covered, directed and coloured by Thanksgiving, since it is all occasioned and made possible first by His gracious movement towards us, and then by the incitements of His grace.¹⁵

With this we agree--our thanksgivings are due to God for what He is and for what He has done and continues to do for us. But what is our goal for our children--that they know thanks are due? that they receive and accept our reminders about saying "Thanks"? First in importance is that they do thank. Once again, worship is an action that must involve the worshiper. Thanksgiving must mean that the child knows God, appreciates a blessing as God's gift, and that he really gives God thanks.

¹⁵Underhill, op. cit., p. 141.

But our goal is greater than mere polite expression. Society expects graceful acknowledgment for favors received--but in this, too, God is not mocked. Lest our children "be deceived" about this, their worship training must include an understanding of Christian thankfulness. They must learn more than words of thanks; they must gain the character of thankfulness that recognizes the cause for thanks not in gifts defined by man as "good" but in God Himself who only and always is good. Him they must thank.

Lord,
 if we love Thee
 for the pleasure that we receive
 then we but love ourselves;

But if we love Thee
 to do Thee pleasure again,
 then let us rejoice to obey Thee,
 and, for thy sake, to love our brethren. . . .¹⁶

Dorothy Parker's well-to-do Mrs. Whittaker was thankful. "God had always supplied her with the best of service. She could have given Him an excellent reference at any time."¹⁷ And Dr. Casteel who quotes Mrs. Whittaker also quotes the Pharisee, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." If thanksgiving is self-congratulation, it is not worship.

To say, "Thanks God," even for some passing and trivial benefit that has fallen to us, is to place ourselves

¹⁶Milner-White and Briggs, op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁷John L. Casteel, Rediscovering Prayer (New York: Association Press, 1955), p. 87.

at the point where we must decide whether the fundamental motive of our living is to be self-satisfaction or self-offering. If we are not to use the mercy of God more and more as means to our own ends, we have no choice but to give ourselves up to His service, and to bring our lives, with his help, into that "holiness and righteousness" for which he intends us.

To give thanks means, in this profound and controlling sense, that we accept the whole of our life with deep and reverent joy as the gift which God, in his goodness, has bestowed upon us.¹⁸

Once more, this aspect of worship involves a doing, and the doing is grounded in adoring.

Worship expands into supplication

Whether we begin with God, "Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" and for whose sake we love our brethren, or whether we begin with our necessities, supplication will be a part of our worship. In one sense it would seem such requests would cease to be worship and become prayer,

for worship is essentially disinterested--it "means only God"--but prayer is only in some of its aspects disinterested. . . . But as the genuine religious impulse becomes dominant, adoration more and more takes charge. "I come to seek God because I need Him," may be an adequate formula for prayer. "I come to adore His splendour, and fling myself and all that I have at His feet," is the only possible formula for worship.¹⁹

Here again our objective for our worshipping children is that

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 102, 88.

¹⁹Underhill, op. cit., p. 9.

both their petitions for themselves and their intercessions for others be offered in the frame of adoration. "The lifting up of our temporal necessities into the atmosphere of eternity is itself an act of adoration and indeed a fundamental character of full worship."²⁰

We would have our children bring their supplications to God, not because they want their answers but because they want His will. What God is and what God does are also the source of this aspect of their worship, and in this worship, too, they must not only receive but ask, not only know but do.

Worship builds the brother

All these acts of worship are acts of individuals. But the God who knew it was not good for the man He had made to be alone, who loved the world and revealed that a love for the brother was evidence of a love for Him, calls on men to worship together. His objective is not a louder chorus nor increase of beauty in polyphony, but that we might "teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord."²¹ In teaching His disciples to pray our Lord said, "Say, 'Our Father.'" His apostle St. Paul reminded

²⁰Ibid., p. 150.

²¹Colossians 3:16.

Christians more than once that they were members of the Body of Christ and therefore involved in the lives of every other brother.

The child who comes into the world expressing the action if not the vocabulary of "mine" needs helpful training to gain an understanding of "thine." The worshiping child needs our assistance to realize that the action of worship is the more singular because the heavenly Father expects it to be corporate.

Worship involves all of life

Not least of all the aspects of worship is the understanding that worship is more than a bringing of "the calves of the lips";²² worship is "to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."²³ The prayer for God's will to be done becomes worship only as the worshiper follows the will of God, "even his sanctification."²⁴

Even while the objective of all of life as worship is set before our children, we will need to help them remember that the standard is not the outward appearance of the action, but the motivation that is the heart of the action. "Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter

²²Hosea 14:2.

²³Micah 6:8.

²⁴1 Thessalonians 4:3.

into the Kingdom of God, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"²⁵ must be read in the light of, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."²⁶ This is the service of the Lord that is worship, actions that are satellites of God, put into orbit by the thrust of the love of God.

This sharpens up our understanding of worship but should at the same time be helpful in cutting away complacency with the worship life of children. If we cannot be content with knowledge, then going to a Christian day school or a Sunday School may not be the self-evident solution to the problem of rearing worshiping children. [Learning to worship and worshiping must head up the curriculum before schooling is part of the answer. If "being a Christian" is not necessarily the equivalent of being a worshiper, then being a soul statistic on a church record is no guarantee of our objective. If "receiving" will not answer, then neither attendance at church services nor presence in family devotions is the solution, no matter how we succeed in having our children sit still through both.]

But all these are obviously loaded comparisons. Our children do pray--before bedtime, at meals, in church and

²⁵Matthew 7:21.

²⁶Mark 12:30.

school, and perhaps all by themselves. Then ask, "Do they worship? Do they adore?" Do we, for that matter? Do we, child and adult, have a worship life of Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication that can be summarized in the mnemonic word ACTS and so remind us that worship is what we do because of what God is? Does our action of worship serve also to edify our brothers? Do we consciously give our actions a Godward orientation?

If we want to grow--or if we covet this worship life for our children, we need to look to the means--to the source of the worship life. Since man, left to his own ignorance, simply creates a god patterned on his own desires and so can find only God in His wrath, true worship can begin only in a revelation of God from God. [Worship is something a Christian does--and a Christian is already the result of something God does. Worship is something the child does--and this point is the first to be accented in order to stress its vital importance in the definition; but first in point of time is what God does to the child to make him a worshiper. The worshiper is a child of God begotten by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God.]

CHAPTER IV

CONSIDER THE WORD

In Biblical terms the Word of God is God Himself in action. To use the phrases employed in the previous paragraphs, the Word of God is what God is and does. Since worship is a reaction by man to what God is and does, its relation to the Word of God is obvious. Wherever there is worship there will be found the Word of God as its source and cause. What is often not so obvious is the relation of the human factor to the Word of God and to worship. The presence of the Word of God is not a guarantee of worship. Worship is a reaction by men to the action of God, and if men do not react, the action of the Word alone is not worship. If this seems needlessly complex, note that it is exactly the point which is being overlooked when we are content with an objective of receiving or knowing the Word of God, when we are content with our children's exposure to the Word and not concerned with their reaction in worship.

A consideration of this aspect of worship will require first an understanding of the nature of God's Word and then a consideration of the kind of response which a child, who is both body and soul, can make to the Infinite. The first will be undertaken in this chapter, the second in Chapter V.

God's Word Is God's Work

"The Word was God," wrote St. John and continued by describing how the Word was the light and life of men. Man was created a worshiper, for in him was the light and life of God. In him was the Word and he had no sinfulness to block his adoring response to the Word--his worship. The life of God left man and he surely died in the day he disobeyed. The light of life went out and man was in the darkness of sin. But the Word of God did not pass away-- God continued to be a part of man's life and to move out to man in mercy and kindness. He drove men out of the garden, an act that seemed harsh until He made it clear that He would keep them from the tree of life lest they eat and, like the evil angels, live forever as sinners. He promised to remain an active agent in man's existence until climactically in the Seed of the woman He would crush the power of Satan. He continued to work in Adam and Eve's lives, convincing them by labor against thorn and thistle and by labor in childbirth that they needed His mercy and grace. He was active in Cain's and Abel's lives so that they responded in sacrifice, and gave the first evidence of the terribly determinative element of the human factor in the response that is worship. He was active in the call of grace to Abraham and the clear statement of law to Moses. And at last "when all was still and it was midnight, Thine Almighty

Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne."¹ The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. God's Son was the Word, supremely revealing the loving kindness of God, the power that changes a man from unbelief to faith and thus restores him to life.

In all this it is clear that God's Word is God's work. We sometimes think that the biggest revelation of God is now completed, that with the loss of the visible presence of Jesus Christ at His ascension we have no longer quite the same working action of God in our lives. But our Lord told His disciples that it was expedient for Him to go away in order that the Comforter might come to us. As wonderful an incarnation of God as happened on that first Christmas midnight happens each time the Holy Spirit takes over the life of a man. God "becomes incarnate" in each man who by the Spirit's power is enabled to call Jesus Christ, Lord. We know and should not forget that the bodies of our children who believe in Him are temples of the Holy Ghost. He is in them. They are neither their own nor are they really ours. They are in a sense incarnations of God the Holy Ghost who leads their worship, saying those things they are not able to say and expressing an adoration that is true and acceptable before God though we sometimes judge it to be childish

¹"The Introit for the Sunday after Christmas," The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), p. 56.

and incomplete. Each act of worship is an evidence of God's working Word.

God's Word in God's Words

"Thou hast the words of eternal life" confessed Peter, "and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God."² The Word used words, and the words were the Word of life.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.³

God has used words as His Word from the beginning--they were means He had to employ to reveal His love and gracious purpose. He spoke to Adam and Eve, to Cain and to Abel. He called Abraham; He carved His law for Moses; He promised His Son through prophets; He sent a Christmas canticle to shepherds; He moved holy men to speak and to write. He reached us in words which the apostles and prophets wrote by inspiration of His Spirit and by words our ancestors spoke. His Word acts through symbols men learned to write

²John 6:68-69.

³1 John 1:1-3.

and through print which conveys the words through which the Word acted. He continues to work on our children as we speak to them the Word of life and as they read the Scriptures' words of life. All of this means that we use the Scriptures with awe and gratitude--objective: worship! We tell Bible stories to our children, read Epistles and Gospels, teach Bible passages--desired result: worship! We want them to know, to memorize, to understand a scheme of Bible teaching such as Luther's Catechisms present in order to bring them the Word, to expose them to the Spirit, all that they might worship.

But because for generations we have been so much better acquainted with God's work in words than with other revelations of the working Word, we are careful not to confuse the power with the form, the action with the agent. The Bible is the Word of God because through it God confronts man with His gracious purpose to save the whole world by Christ's passion and resurrection. It is the power of God unto salvation because God is working in it. It is the Word of God because by it God accomplishes His work. And its work is accomplished when men who hear believe and adore--God!

But the Bible is not an end in itself, not a power if uncomprehended, not always an evidence of a higher Christian caliber if taken in larger doses than in smaller. If our children confuse knowledge with worship, the words with the Word, the possession with the action, they are little more

blessed by their possession of the Bible than was Tom Sawyer after he traded to acquire his. His objective was at least clear--he wanted Becky Thatcher. Do our children see God (to glorify and to enjoy forever) as the goal of their Bible study?

God's Word in Water

Teaching all things that Jesus put into words is a vital part of the Church's commission. But as great a part of the task of making disciples is baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. To a man who knew the Scriptures of his day our Lord said, "Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."⁴ When St. Paul wrote to Titus "according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost,"⁵ he made God's point clear that God's working Word is active in the water of Baptism. This was Martin Luther's point: "Baptism is not simple water only but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word." Much more is said here than that Scripture records Baptism as the will of God. Luther points out that the Word, the work, of God is in and with the water and that God is working forgiveness

⁴John 3:3.

⁵Titus 3:5.

of sin and the life and light of God through Baptism's water.

Surely this is the starting point in any consideration of children's worship.

There is a special urgency about such a consideration because so much of religious education (and notably that which claims to be based on a "common Christianity") has thrown its accent almost entirely upon truth and has almost regarded the life in the Sacraments as optional and additional, rather than as the very stuff and essence of the Spiritual life.⁶

There is no suggestion here that truth be minimized, but if sacramental grace be given a second place in the scale of God's working Word, what of our infants who must believe but who cannot hear, preacher or no preacher? And if by Scripture, confessions, and conviction we believe that the Spirit does take possession of our children's bodies and lives through this Holy Sacrament, why do we begin to stress teaching, even before our words are intelligible, as though all depended on knowledge? The fact is our infants have certainly been worshiping since they were incorporated into the Body of Christ by this Sacrament. Once we recognize this (we walk by faith), even educational theory would point out that the point of departure in the Christian training of our children is worship. From the known to the unknown we proceed. Worship with the children--that they already do--and then add to their faith knowledge.

⁶J. Reginald Lumb, The Education of Souls (London: The Faith Press, 1952), p. 24.

God's Word in Relationships

Our Lord, knowing our incapacity, told us of evident fruits by which we may recognize evil. But He did not lead us to suppose that we are qualified to detect the consequences of grace in the child of the font. They may be there in every child of the font, for all we know, seen plainly of angels and saints, but hidden from our carnal eyes.⁷

This would be a conclusion faith draws from God's promise of His Word working in Holy Baptism's water. Must the eyes of faith not also see God's love continue its work in the child through his relationship with his parents? How did God show His love to us? He was made in the likeness of men.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; . . . Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.⁸

He spoke to us, He acted for us, but first He was for us.

Before our children of the font can understand anything we say to them, before we can explain His reconciling work for us, we must be for them the evidence of the love of God. "To believe is to be confronted by, to respond to, and to live in the eternal God. Faith is, therefore, more a

⁷Ibid., p. 97.

⁸Hebrews 2:14,17.

matter of relationship than of intellectual assent."⁹

By our relationship with our children we begin to teach them the love of God. The infant that enters a terrifying and completely unknown world, peopled with giants and thundering with sounds, how shall he learn the love of God apart from the love of parents? When we in all boldness and confidence call God "our Father," we give evidence of a basic understanding taught by the love of our earthly father. We learned to love by being loved; we learned of love by being shown a love.

Parents are engaged in the work of conveying the working Word of God when they struggle up to give their child his two o'clock feeding.

Their only means of communication with him is that of physical care. Given in the context of love, physical care becomes the outward and visible sign of an inner grace on the part of the parent for the child.¹⁰

The language of relationships is the only language a child can understand. God who spake in times past by the persons of prophets, and in these last times by the person of His Son, speaks also through the persons He gives as parents to children. Without over-emphasizing this aspect of God's care for His own we can agree

⁹Reuel L. Howe, The Need for a Ministry to the Pre-School Child (Greenwich, Conn.: The Seabury Press, 1952), p. 11.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 5.

that He means for our children to have their first experience of His love in the love of their parents. Therefore our children's experiences of learning to love by first being loved matches the experience of Christians through the centuries as expressed by St. John, "we love Him, because He first loved us."¹¹

The language of relationships must convey other ultimately important understandings. The child must begin to say "I" and not in a way that leads to a selfish chain running through "my teddy bear," "my bicycle," "my car," "my girl" until "my God" becomes only another possessed appendage to life; he must learn self-identification and respect within the relationship to loved ones and especially to God.

We believe that when a person says "I" meaningfully, the next best thing he can say is "believe in God." . . . We prepare our pre-school child for credal relationship in a rudimentary way by living with him in such a way that he acquires an individuality that finds fulfillment in fellowship.¹²

Or think of the child's relationship to authority-- your approach to discipline will result in more than the securing of quiet when you want it or preserving of the perpendicular position of a glass of milk on the dining room table. Conflicts of will between child and parent outside of the context of love and understanding can arouse feelings of hate, fear and guilt which may be transferred to the God who is introduced as "Father" in later years. Without

¹¹Ibid., p. 9.

¹²Ibid., pp. 11-12.

exaggerating the effects, it is evident that

these encounters between parent and child carry with them the issues of spiritual life and death for the child. The purpose of the relationship here is so to live with the child that through his experiences with our authority he will be helped to worship and therefore truly to love God, the Ultimate Authority, whom otherwise the child might, and very easily, only fear and resent. He who can truly worship God has made his "adjustment" to authority. Inability to relate to authority except fearfully and resentfully explains why many people worship not "in spirit and in truth" but formally and compulsively and without release.¹³

If our eternal destiny is to worship God eternally, if our evidence of divine life in time is our present adoration of the Eternal, how vital the ministry of parents appears. And yet how apparent is the Church's failure to recognize the vital role of this ministry. Millions are spent to train ministers of the Word of God to lead adults in their worship life, which has already been greatly formed by parental ministers of the working Word who deal with parishioners in the first years of their lives in which they learn more than in any comparable period of their existence. "Lay hands suddenly on no man"--and the Church heeds. But "falling in love" is not on theological Seminary curricula; no dean determines a young couple's matriculation in this school; and almost anyone can become a parent.

God's Word in the Church's Fellowship

It is but a step from cradle to cradle roll, and from

¹³Ibid., pp. 12-13.

there to the beginner's department. But Kathy Ann, Kindergartner, gives woeful testimony to the language of relationships that is understood by the child who first enters the Church's life.

When we got to church this morning, my mother said to a man in front, "Will you please tell us where the kindergarten meets?" The man said, "Go down those steps and ask somebody." We started downstairs. We meet a woman and Mommy asked her, "Is the kindergarten room down here?" And the woman said, "I don't know much about the basement. I teach upstairs." We heard a crying noise, and Mommy went that way. And there by the furnace was the kindergarten. The little girl who was crying was holding on to her mother and saying, "No, no, no!" The teacher saw us by the door, and I heard her say, "Oh, my! another one!" She walked over and said, "How old is she?" I can talk myself. I told her, "I'm four and a half."¹⁴

The Rev. John S. Williams suggests that when "Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them"¹⁵ it was not only to teach some profound truths about the true values in the Kingdom of God, but was an acted parable as well.

Jesus called the child to come and stand side by side with Him (an act of identification which on another occasion he made even more explicit in the words "Inasmuch . . .") and then he placed the child deliberately in the very centre of that company of twelve supremely important men, lifting him up into a place of conspicuous prominence as he said: "Whosoever receives a little child like this in my name is receiving me." . . . It surely proclaims beyond any possibility of mistaking that the proper place of the child in the care and concern of the Christian Church (and in

¹⁴Frances Dunlap Heron, Kathy Ann, Kindergartner (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1955), p. 11.

¹⁵Matthew 19:2-6.

practice that means the local congregation) is "in the midst." The Church's children must be the centre and focus of the Church's work.¹⁶

Apply all that has been said in previous paragraphs on relationships to the situation of the average child set in the midst of our congregations. That there is a concern for the child is beyond question. But is it not principally a concern for knowledge? Schools, Sunday schools, Saturday schools, confirmation instruction classes--but where the Church is being itself, in its worship, it must be said "that ours is a Church for the 'sheep' and that we have not begun to be a Church for the 'lambs.'¹⁷

It is too easy to stress the negative aspects of "crying rooms" equipped with one directional glass and an electronic speaker; but are they not partly symptoms of a congregational attitude that implies children should neither be seen nor heard? Nor is that congregation necessarily in better grace that has neither crying room nor nursery. The command of our Lord was more than "Don't separate lambs from ewes"; it was "Feed my lambs." What is required here comes under more explicit consideration in a later section. But the language of relationships spoken in the fellowship of the Church may already be saying so much

¹⁶John S. Williams, Worship and The Modern Child (London: National Society, SPCK, 1957), p. 117.

¹⁷Lumb, op. cit., p. 82.

that any improvement in our communication will be handicapped.

Much of the most valuable part of early training comes not through "understanding," but in the partial participation of an onlooker, which is in fact life's way of education as a new entrant into a community looks, and learns, and makes his adjustments. The child who sits in his pram by the grocer's door, whilst his mother takes her place in the queue, does not "understand" much about it at all. Yet he is naturally finding his way into his environment, as he watches the panorama of people, dogs, cars, and other children.

In very much the same way, pedestrian though the analogy may appear, the little child at his mother's side in church begins to fit into his spiritual environment and heritage at the august mysteries of the Eucharist, as he surveys the people around him, recognizes the noises of organ and bells, and comes to know that the priest at the altar is speaking to God. Best of all, and never to be forgotten whilst life lasts, will it be if he can see (and these things cannot be concealed from a child's eyes) that his mother is engaged in something that brings her joy and peace. . . . There he will find an infection of worship and a sense that he has his place in the House of God.¹⁸

Certainly at least two conclusions result from thought on the Church's language of relationship. The place of parents' worship becomes decisive. Non-worshiping parents cannot transmit the Christian faith. The Spirit of God can go beyond them, and does, may His grace be praised. But parents teach the Word of God by what they do much more effectively than by what they say. This is true both because of the limit of the average parent's teaching ability and because of the vocabulary and conceptual limitations in the

¹⁸Ibid., p. 79.

child. But it is even more true because the truths that are implicit, that are simply taken for granted, are asserted much more positively than anything that is merely stated in words.

During those early formative years from infancy to the age of ten or so, the really vital thing is going to be, not what they learn about religion objectively, but what they come to feel about it from their contacts with older people. It is going to be the general impression, pleasant or unpleasant, real or bogus, that will determine whether, in later years, the child will find God or will throw overboard (perhaps scornfully) everything that he imagines religion to be; and the general impression he gets of it will be derived almost entirely from the religious atmosphere of the home, positive or negative. If religion means little or nothing to you, then, however much good sense you may talk, the chances are hundreds to one that your child will be infected by your unspoken attitude. Some wise words are spoken by one of the characters in T. S. Eliot's play Family Reunion: "I think that the things that are taken for granted make a deeper impression on children than what they are told."¹⁹

This language of relationship in worship is the responsibility of parents as the Church in the home, and also the responsibility of the other Church members who together with parents worship with the Church's children in the services of the congregation. The fellowship of the Church in worship is a vital means employed by God to work with His Word. The congregation's welcome to the child is a second aspect of the Church's language of fellowship. A parishioner who glares at an infant worshiper making a joyful noise unto the Lord (again we walk by faith) will set the child's emotional

¹⁹Williams, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

response against the Church as much as an irritable grocer will make the trip to the store an unhappy chore. A nursery or a beginner's department located in a part of the church basement shared with dampness and the plumbing pipes will convey a very strange idea of the resplendent majesty and goodness of God to a child, no matter how much a teacher insists that the bearded man in the white Palestinian robe is the proof of what God is really like. A preacher who implies that sitting still is the basic ingredient of a child's worship in church conveys a picture of a God who does not understand even the physical make-up of the children He Himself has made, and is helping the child to a conclusion that the less he has to do with such a divinity the happier he will be. All the Church's doctrine about Holy Baptism as God's means for bringing a child into the fellowship of the believing Body is denied if the clergy race through the form in order to pacify the disgruntled adults whose sighs and glance at wrist watches are already teaching the older children how they were received into the Church and how they should understand that Baptism is important but not as important as Sunday dinner, that Holy Baptism is a means of grace, yes, but food is the real means of life.

Williams makes this conclusion:

The most decisive thing we can do, during the first ten years of a child's life, is to put him in the way of gaining a happy and attractive impression of religion,

so that he may at least be favorably disposed toward it when the time comes for him to "make up his mind about it." He will then be in a position to face the intellectual and moral claims of the faith without prejudice; that is, without a distorted emotional attitude. We must try, both by example and precept, to give him an impression of religion which will appeal to all that is most natural and healthy in him, to his sense of fun as well as to his sense of obligation. It should be "interesting" to the point of fascination. It should be free from all unnecessary restraints and prohibitions, though it must at the same time demand a high degree of discipline (a thing which children both respect and desire). Most important of all, it should appeal at every stage to the child's ambition to be "grown-up"; that is, it should be forward-looking and adult in flavour, avoiding that kind of half-sentimental simplicity which some people think children like, though, in fact, it embarrasses them and confirms them in the idea that religion belongs to childhood and can be abandoned as they grow older.²⁰

This is taken out of a context that does stress the necessity of theology as the foundation for all Christian faith and worship. No accent on the Word in words should make us ignore the importance of the work God would work through His Word in relationships and in the Church's fellowship.

God's Word in the Act of Worship Itself

It is apparent that worship, as a major aspect of the adult fellowship, will exert an influence on those who are present in a service either as a help or a hindrance to the Word's work. Even more vital is the Word influence which worship brings to bear upon the one who worships. The act of worship itself becomes a channel (to the one who

²⁰Ibid., pp. 61-62.

worships) of the very Word that makes of man a worshiper.

"Learning by doing" is never more true than in the area of worship, not because practice makes perfect, but because the Perfect God is the sole cause and so much of the content of the practice. God's gracious and working Word is active wherever a Christian is worshiping--there can be no worship without this power of God--and therefore wherever true worship is taking place there is to be found the Word of God.

Take adoration--what happens when a Christian begins to adore God? The majesty and splendor and transcendent glory of God come to his mind and cause him to kneel and adore. What is this memory but the Word of God? This is what the heavens have declared and the firmament has shown, but that the psalmist and the prophet have made even more explicit in words. The surge of remembered Word that rises to the mind when the sanctified will prompt the Christian to adoration is certainly no less in power or in value than Word read in a chapter-a-day program of Bible use. A comparison between the two uses of the Word might point up that the content of what is remembered is probably much smaller in scope than all that is recorded; but this would only indicate a fact that is admitted by every worshiper, that acts of worship are not a substitute for a use of Scripture. At the same time every Bible student will be able to see that he uses Scripture's revelation in every

act of worship and uses it most pertinently because he acts on it. From either point of departure the working Word of God is seen to be brought to bear on the worshiper by his act of worship.

The point would only be magnified if the worship acts of confession, thanksgiving and supplication were considered. Obviously what is being considered here is true worship and Christian worship, not insincere, ignorant mouthings or quatrains memorized in childhood under the label of prayer and regarded as efficacious because child-like faith seems a close cousin to "childish" praying. But of real worship it can be said that "he who kneels is rewarded with an increase of worshiping love" and that "worship is both creative and redemptive."²¹

This becomes an extremely important truth in any approach to developing Christian children. It asserts not only that a good Christian is a worshiping Christian but also that a better Christian develops as a result of Christian worshiping. It asserts that one becomes a better worshiper by worshiping. It does not at all imply a lesser place for knowledge nor deprecate the primacy of God's grace in Scripture and Sacrament as the source of the Christian life; but it does assert that in the very act of worshiping

²¹Evelyn Underhill, Worship (Torchbook edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), pp. 26, 78.

a person is making the most direct and personal application of the Word to himself. Worship is a means for the Means of Grace.

A child can be told that hitting the neighbor boy in a selfish assertion of property rights is a fracture of the fifth commandment and a basic infringement on the law of love expressed in the second table of the law; the child may understand all of this, see the ethical point and the logical connection, and give back all the right answers to the pertinent review questions; but none of this instruction and knowledge touches the real boy where he lives as will an act of that boy's own worship. When he walks into the presence of his holy and loving Father, acknowledges both those attributes in adoration and all his own unworthiness in confession, then the instruction is really applied. He applied it himself. Of course, this does not require locomotion to a chapel nor vocalizing of the Collect for penitence. Any repentant thought, any awareness of God's interest in the case that is before the bar of parental judgment, any mental admission of truth in the facts of the case presented before him probably is such a worship action by a Christian child. But the point is that the ability to do that worship act of adoration and confession is what we would help our children to obtain--and they are able to do it in the crisis time for having learned to do it in more normal circumstances. And they learn most effectively to

worship as they apply the working Word of God to themselves by worshiping.

God's Word in the Celebration of the Eucharist

No account of the gracious activity of God in the lives of men would be complete without a recognition of His working Word in the Eucharist. That there is here a source of strength for the adult life of worship is conceded by all Christians, although its significance is variously interpreted by denominations, and its varied blessing often unrecognized by members of our own. Since the worship life of children is developed as much by what their elders do as by what they say, and since the children of the Church are in attendance at the services which are in remembrance of our Lord, it is apparent that Eucharistic worship is of major significance. Since the impact of the Word touches the worship life of children out of the fellowship of the Church, this celebration, both representative and creative of the holiest communion between the Head of the Church and His members, is a prime factor in the child's worship life.

Obviously adults will be able to transmit to their children by language only that which they themselves understand, and will transfer by action and attitude only that in which they actually participate. A realization of all that the Word of God is working in this Sacramental service is basic to all that communicants do and to all they would

show forth, "as often as they eat this Bread and drink this Cup." The answer to the question, "What mean ye by this service?" is important not only for those who commune but for the next generation who from their example and instruction will take up this high privilege of receiving and adoring the Most High.

Two elements must be present in a consideration of the activity of the Word of God in the Eucharist. One is centered in the Body and Blood given in the Sacrament and the words of Scripture that surround and interpret this Gift of God Himself. The other is an understanding of the varied aspects of worship that are included in the Eucharistic service as the Church now celebrates it. This second point has an important bearing on the goal of children's worship because worship itself conveys the Word. If a communicant approaches the Altar with an understanding of the Sacrament that makes penitence his only worship action, he will teach only confession to his observing children. If reception of the Body and Blood is the only action which an adult understands as participation in the Eucharist, the chief thing he will have to teach his non-communicant children will be the virtue of patience and ready submission demanded by an arbitrary age for admission to the Sacrament. And if the adult's understanding of the service is such as to make quite normal a rejection of the Lord's invitation on alternate months, or even a departure from the room in which the

Lord is present in the Bread and Wine as a Gift to His people, it is painful to consider just what he is teaching his children. Both of these areas of the Word's activity are important for the child's present worshiping, but become important twice over when it is remembered that Eucharistic worship is the ultimate goal toward which we as Christians direct our children. A child's Christian worship is only then properly developing when it is oriented toward the Church's Eucharistic worship--and the adult understanding of both the Sacrament and the Eucharistic Service are true north and compass needle in that orientation.

Here only the briefest outline of the relationship between Sacrament and Service can be presented. But the understanding must be sought that the Word in the Eucharist be received in the completeness which the words of Scripture would indicate was in the mind of our Lord as He instituted the Supper in the upper room. Using those words as a point of departure it is possible to point out that the aspects of word and of worship expressed in the Liturgy were also included in our Lord's "Do this" and in the Church's understanding of them.²²

²²Dom Gregory Dix in The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster: Dacre Press, c.1947) has developed the point that the eating and drinking would have been continued by the disciples in any case because of the nature of their fellowship circle and Old Testament background.

The life-giving love of God for men

"Take eat My Body given for you, take drink My Blood shed for you for the remission of sins." These words of Scripture are clearly the Word of God announcing and accomplishing the "forgiveness of sins, life and salvation" of which Luther speaks in describing the benefits of the Sacrament. His understanding of this blessing never separated "life and salvation" from "forgiveness" as though the Sacrament gave forgiveness now in order to guarantee eternal life later on. But the forgiveness of sins meant the redemption, the restoration of the image of God to the new man, the companionship of God in the Spirit's indwelling. The words of Christ indicate all of this and more. God is eternally giving Himself for man. Christ is sacrifice for man's sin and because of this sacrifice man is forgiven. Christ gives Himself to men, Himself lives in and with the communicant.

"Do this in remembrance of Me." The response expected is evident in these words. The Body and Blood are to be

The Sacrament's significance lies equally in "This is My Body and Blood" and "Do in remembrance of Me"--the combination of Sacrament and Service. Evelyn Underhill presents a study of the worship elements from the background of the Liturgy in Worship, pp. 138ff. Yngve Brilioth in Eucharistic Faith and Practice, Evangelical and Catholic, translated from the Swedish by A. G. Hebert (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, c.1939) develops both aspects of the celebration's significance, as gift and as worship, from a New Testament study.

received and all that Christ's living and dying mean and accomplish are to be remembered and accepted in faith. By this worshiping action man has what Christ gives, forgiveness, life, salvation, the living presence of God-with-us. This reception and remembering are already acts of worship, and both the Word and the worship are teaching both the communicants and their children in every Eucharistic service.

The life-surrendered love of man for God

But much more is involved. Adoration is anticipated. "My Body--My Blood" express the completeness of God's gift of His life and love dramatically revealed in the incarnation. The communicant's adoration, obviously not of the host, but of Him who both deigns to dwell with men and has gone to prepare a place for those who love Him, is both the resulting worship and the teaching Word of all God's action in man's history.

Confession must follow upon the acceptance of the Word of forgiveness. And this act of worship will be the parents' teaching of both sin and grace to their children.

Thanksgiving is the work of worship that follows the word "given and shed for you and for many." It will be a thanksgiving for all the gifts of God since He who spared not His only Son but delivered Him up for us all will surely with Him freely give us all things. The understanding

communicant proclaims all that he can express of that beneficence in words, and much that he cannot phrase he teaches by his attitude.

The supplications of the faithful are anticipated in the very plural of "Drink ye all of it." The Christ is for all, all are to receive, all to remember all the Lord commanded. Prayer for His will to be done in all things temporal will be the worship result of the reception of the Word, as well as prayers for all sorts and conditions of men. That we pray in the Eucharist is a proclaiming of the Word to our children, and what we pray is explicit teaching.

In addition to these acts of sacrificial worship, in addition to the sacrificial self-offering of Jesus Christ, sacrifice is present in another sense. Historically the gifts of bread and wine brought by the Christians for the poor and for use in the Eucharist were blessed and offered for use as the elements in the Supper. The offertory in the service made this more than a practical way to meet a necessity--these gifts were a symbol of the total sacrifice, the "living sacrifice" of the bodies of God's people for which St. Paul called. This sacrifice is still our "reasonable liturgy" today as we present our alms at the altar and symbolize still the greater and more complete sacrifice of our lives and our all. In this act of worship, too, the understanding communicant teaches his children the Word of God. Here is both the source and the demonstration of the Christian's "life as worship."

The words "Holy Communion" express the fellowship in the faith existing among members of the Church, the Body of Christ, as well as the communion resulting from the mystery of the Presence in the Sacrament. "Drink ye all," said our Lord, and St. Paul's words emphasize the implication, "For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."²³ The reality of our fellowship across all lines of culture and color, of occupation and education is shared with our children as they see this Holy Communion in operation. Our worship preaches His Word.

Closely related to this is the final aspect of the Eucharist's meaning--witness. "Do this as oft as ye do it" are words of Scripture that imply what St. Paul made specific when he wrote, "As often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Others may come to a service of preaching and not commit themselves; but those who receive the Body and the Blood testify to their conviction that our Lord's death for sin and resurrection for justification really avail for sinners and will be ultimate safety in the day of judgment. This witness is an effective Word for the children of communicants.

Draw them together--all the strands of meaning in the Word which the Eucharistic action proclaims--and you have the curriculum the Church's adults should be conveying to

²³1 Corinthians 10:17.

her children. The lesson as conveyed by both Sacrament and Service, must first be learned and then taught by word and attitude to the Church's children.

Only when all the ways in which the Word of God reaches the lives of children are recognized and utilized will the Church most effectively be helping children to worship our God. He draws the children by His grace and Spirit. He commands, "Permit the little children to come unto Me."

CHAPTER V

CONSIDER THE CHILD'S CREATURELY RESPONSE

✓ The action on the part of the child who worships, and the prior and continuing action on the part of God in all acts of worship, are united in the person who worships. The worshiper must always be a principal factor in worship, not only in the sense that "the gift without the giver is bare" but even more essentially in that there can be no gift apart from a giver.

Man's Involvement in Himself

The sum of the law always involves a summing up of the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual parts of the one who is to obey the law.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.¹

"As thyself" is a measurement, but it is also involvement, for it repeats the fact that we should employ emotion and spirit and reason and physical ability in our love. It is clear that just as our love for our neighbour must include the involvement of what we are and do, our love and worship

¹Mark 12:30-31.

of God must involve our total humanness if it is to be ours.

Without making any attempt to deal in psychologically exact terms, a reflection on the creation of man illustrates the point. An attitude that depreciates man's physical nature ignores the "fearful and wonderful" reality of all that "dust of the earth" includes; and forgets that the very breath of God breathed into man's very physical nostrils results in the combination "man, a living soul." It was this man that was then able to walk with God, to adore and thank and speak, to serve the neighbor in love, and, sadly, to eat the fruit of death and yet at last by God's grace to confess and live again. All that worship includes, from adoration to the smallest service to the least brother done as to God, involves man in his total creaturehood.

No less a life than our Lord's illustrates the same truth. Jesus wept--and would any disciple say this grief was selfish, with no God-relatedness to transform His emotion into worship? Jesus lifted His eyes to heaven--and must this be only a demonstration to those who stood by, and not an indication that our Lord also used the reality and inter-relatedness of his human body to assist His worshiping spirit when He prayed on a solitary mountainside or when He "fell on His face" in Gethsemane? His sorrowful reproach to Peter, James and John made clear that a sleepy

flesh could defeat even a willing spirit. The devil knew the close correlation between hunger and the heart when he chose the time of the temptation. He who took Bread and the Cup and urged eating and drinking as part of a worship action even promised that when we see Him as He is He would drink again with us the new wine of the new Kingdom.

The Human Situation of Childhood

"Male and female created He them" and in the process began the development of an emotionally varied humanity. But it must be recognized that the variety exists within the single person and not only as categories of the crowd. But the one division within all this variation that can never be dropped from the reckoning is childhood. This is a fact so obvious that it seems superfluous to mention it except for the fact that what has become a commonplace in almost all areas from industry to graded schools is too frequently little considered in worshiping.

In introducing the study of The First Five Years of Life Arnold Gesell asserted its importance in terms that can readily be applied to an understanding of similar stages of growth in worshiping lives.

In early life defects are often veiled beneath a plausible exterior of "mere immaturity." Incompleteness, weakness, and inadequacy are overlooked; or they are too readily excused on the blind faith that the infant will "outgrow" his difficulties. . . .

It happens also that errors are often made in the reverse direction. . . . They misjudge the child

because they do not perceive his incompleteness, weakness, and inadequacy in terms of immaturity. . . .

Then there are the uncounted everyday misinterpretations which all of us are bound to make because of sheer ignorance of the nature and needs of the child's psychology. We lack knowledge of the ways in which he grows and learns. We accept the fact that he is not a miniature adult, but we do not know enough about the traits which make him different from the adult.²

Nor did Dr. Gesell find a solution in a study of the ordinary concepts of habits, intelligence and mental abilities, because the patterns of behavior undergo ceaseless transformations in relationships and organization. He attempted therefore to study the child's "growth," to find "laws of sequence and maturation" which would make possible some general conclusions on similarities and basic trends of child development, noting meanwhile that no two children grow in exactly the same way. His study classifies child growth in four basic fields of behavior: motor characteristics, adaptive behavior, language behavior, and personal-social behavior.

An analysis of the five-year old in Foster and Headley's Education in the Kindergarten covers the areas of physical development, motor development, intellectual development, language, information, learning, imagination, interests, emotional development, social development, and individual

²Arnold Gesell, The First Five Years of Life (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), p. 5.

differences.³

A simple listing of the areas and problems involved is enough to indicate the complexity of understanding the child's human situation. The realization that most home situations and all classroom and church group situations will involve multitudes of variations in individuals and in organization of behavior patterns because of relationships which themselves are constantly changing makes any approach seem hopelessly oversimplified. Yet there needs to be added one even greater imponderable, the work of the Holy Ghost. The mention of the Spirit "that bloweth where He listeth" brings the grace of God into the picture and the means of grace, Scripture and Sacraments, through which God stoops to the human situation.

The Accommodation of Grace to Man

Although the mystery of God's gracious activity, foreknowledge and election takes complete comprehension beyond the border of man's mind, it serves as a catalyst in the complex of variables existing in the situation of childhood and humanity, for it crystallizes the Church's responsibility and makes clear the participation of the divine. The Church in its representative parent or pastor or teacher must bring

³Josephine C. Foster and Neith E. Headley, Education in the Kindergarten (2nd edition; New York: American Book Company, 1948), pp. 1-14.

the grace of God to bear on the child in the human situation making disciples by baptizing and teaching all things the Lord has commanded; but God promises to give the new birth and entrance into the kingdom by His Spirit and Baptism. This does not relieve man of the responsibility for understanding the human situation in order that the Word of God may work its work, nor of the necessity of knowing the child in order that the Holy Ghost might come upon him and the overshadowing power of the Highest bring to birth in him that good work which He has promised to perform unto the day of Jesus Christ; but it does promise participation in the work by God, to whom all things are possible.

It is for His agents, then, to take seriously the work and grace of the Spirit and the reality of the new life He creates and develops; and at the same time never to minimize the reality of the human situation, itself a result of the creative power of the same God.

For indeed an idolatry which pins religion to abstract thoughts and notions alone is not much better than an idolatry which pins it to concrete stocks and stones alone. . . . Man, incited by God, dimly or sharply conscious of the obscure pressure of God, responds to Him best not by a simple movement of the mind; but by a rich and complex action, in which his whole nature is concerned, and which has at its fulfillment the characters of a work of art. He is framed for an existence which includes not only thought and speech, but gesture and manual action; and when he turns Godward, his life here will not be fully representative of his nature, nor will his act of worship be complete, unless all these forms of expression find a place in it. His religious action must be social, as well as

personal; rhythmic and ceremonial, as well as interior and free. It must link every sense with that element of his being which transcends and co-ordinates sense, so that the whole of his nature plays its part in his total response to the Unseen.⁴

This is not merely a theoretical matter, nor merely a comment on the use of the cultic elements of ritual, symbol, Sacrament and sacrifice. Consider how the facets in the analysis of the five-year old previously listed affect the child's reception of the Spirit in the Word as well as his response in worshiping love and action.

This is as practical as the height of the average church pew--for the child's physical development will determine his comfort in church and this in turn will influence what he hears of the spoken Word and even more his attitude toward all that is represented in the situation.

The child's motor development determines what he can do in a worship action, and makes demands on his nature of things he must do for his big muscle development--and sitting still for twenty minutes is not one of either.

His intellectual development gives the lie to extreme simplification of revelation's truths and prompts a scorn as real as any adult's to every approach that minimizez the reality of his stage of being grown-up and big. An approach that makes small the God which the child can understand is

⁴Evelyn Underhill, Worship (Torchbook edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 23.

in danger of understanding the child's intellectual potential as well as of minimizing the God who is developing it and His Spirit who gives wisdom.

His language delimits more than his power to express himself. It sets a rigid limit on what he can comprehend by the itemization of what he has already understood. At the same time his interest in verbalizing and his ever-increasing questioning that begins to look for causes and relationships set horizons to his religious potential as broad as the patience and love of his elders. It is here that the tendency to phrase all children's worship materials in "simple" words ought critically to be re-examined. Words serve to convey the extra spiritual dimension of worship. Children are not strangers to that dimension and are eager to learn its language. And his ability to express his worship in words his parents can understand ought be but a revelation of how much God has been able to comprehend and rejoiced to hear since the day of the child's Baptism.

His fund of information will handicap him in making generalizations. This should be a challenge to his teacher to build carefully but not less, and to share his worship in order to share with him the faith.

His desire to learn ought to be matched at least by an adult desire to teach. And since his desire will be in relation to the subject's desirability his parents must be of those who are glad when men say unto them, "Let us go unto the house of the Lord."

His imagination should not be confused with the lies of his elders who should know better, nor his fears dismissed as small because his body is not large. But the Spirit's promise that young men shall dream dreams should be counted on that the child be blessed with the vision of God.

The child's interests will govern his activity. The teacher will help him know the God who is interested even in the sparrow's fall, and will not demand his attention only to what God has designed for the interest of the adult. And the parent will recognize that the faith which can express itself in activities of junior size may be as large as any saint's.

The five-year old's emotional development is of such a maturity that he may enjoy restraining his emotions in a liturgic pattern for a time, but that he may be likely to burst into joyous activity whenever he is ready. And blessed is he who recognizes that the life of the Spirit is to be found in both. Anger, jealousy and rivalry will remind of the presence of sin, but judgment will be made in the realization of the difficulty of acting on the understanding of "thine" and "mine." And the love that is a child's adoration will be given opportunity to express itself and to expand in worship. The natural place that singing takes in expressing human emotion should be recognized, and hymns should be selected not only for

intelligibility but for their ability to convey the realities of worship. This applies to tunes as well as to texts.

His social development will be marked in play and should be exercised in worship. Those who are in the faith can see and help to channel a grace that is both a tool and a result of the Spirit who brings men together in the Church. And all who would see the Church's children take their place in the worshiping fellowship will not fail to remember that they are now, by their Baptism, in Christ.

The mention of individual differences brings the whole matter back to its complex starting point and urges all who work with children to work even more closely with the One Spirit who out of many can make one Body under one Head.

CHAPTER VI

CONSIDER THE PRINCIPLES OF WORSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Now an urgency to set down practical principles of developing the worshiping life of children must combine with a brevity that recognizes the limitations of this discussion. These points can most pertinently be expressed in direct address to the adults who train children in the way they should go.

Growth in the Home

1. Recognize the primacy of grace, of the Spirit active in the working Word. By Holy Baptism God makes the child a worshiper. Baptism is obviously the first, and the very early first step. Take seriously the promise to "put the child in mind of his Baptism." Celebrate his Baptismal birthday each year with at least as much ceremony and happiness as you do his entrance into the world. Even more vital, put yourself constantly "in mind" of the new life that is your child's through Holy Baptism.

2. Be a means of the means of grace to your child. By what you are and love and do teach what the child can not yet understand in words. Be what you want your child to know and adore in God. Love, that your child will love.

Worship, that your child will worship. Remind yourself constantly, "I am all the time introducing this child to God."¹

3. Be the priests of "the church in thy house." When a child enters a home, God is setting the solitary in family, and parents are the two who make up the triad gathered in His name in whose midst Christ is present. The "care of all the Churches" was a concern to St. Paul, but no greater a responsibility than the congregation of one, two or five over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. If you favor theological instruction in seminaries for those who are to be pastors to congregations, be consistent and enroll in classes in parental theology to help you be a pastor to your lambs. Pre-marital counselling that alerts parents to the probability of a family in marriage is not half as needful as counselling that alerts them to the possibilities of a family-in-God.

4. Teach prayer by praying. The child's

first direct awareness of prayer should be of praying people. It can be deliberately provided by the familiar sight of father and mother (and perhaps older children) kneeling by his cot, with hands together and eyes closed praying aloud.²

Take seriously the human limitation which your child assumes

¹John S. Williams, Worship and the Modern Child (London: National Society, S P C K, 1957), p. 65.

²Ibid., p. 66.

in his birth--he cannot understand what you are saying at this point. Here, too, the child learns by doing, by what you are doing.

5. Teach worship by "practicing the presence of God." Your days are bound to be filled with a concern for "things"--you can "pray without ceasing" only by seeing God in everything. We have grown accustomed to "simple" things like water and bread and milk, but remember that our Lord used things as usual as these for His means of grace. While your child is fascinated with the myriad things he is learning to identify, help him to recognize God in them all, help him to understand adoration by simple references to Him from whom come all the good and perfect gifts that satisfy the desires of every living thing.

6. Develop the ability to pray by teaching its parts. You help your child understand the different use of fork and knife and spoon. Give as much time to the use of acts of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. It is not done over night, but bedtime will provide the occasion for developing a simple prayer formula--telling God of our love, "sorry" prayers, "thank-you" prayers, prayers for ourselves and prayers for others. And make all of this so centered in contentment with the will of God that prayer becomes a lifting up of our days and selves to the already-seeing, already-blessing friendship of God.

7. Realize that both religion and worship are things that are done, not primarily things that are known. Religious education is designed to direct the child to do Christian things about God and his neighbor through Jesus Christ our Lord.³ The action toward God means specific acts of worship and prayer and the action toward our neighbor means loving service to fellowmen (which means loving "play" for children) that makes of all life a worship. This makes clear that manners and unselfishness, kindness and gentleness, are very much the subjects of religious training and objects of the worshiping life. But study what research on a child's growth has revealed and don't make into sins of selfishness acts that simply indicate a child is just beginning to understand his own existence as a person and has not yet progressed even to an understanding of the separate existence of another child, much less to a comprehension of Christ's statement about turning the other cheek. We will not be satisfied with actions and attitudes that are "only natural" for a child of a certain age, for our children have been given a super-natural life by the Spirit; but we must understand what the child is going through in his own struggle to fit into an immense world of relationships and requirements before we point out the mote in his eye and in love see clearly to remove it.

³Reginald Lumb, The First Three Years (Fifth impression; London: A. R. Mowbray and Co., Ltd., 1944), p. 12.

This makes clear as well the value of actions in worship. The previous development of the reality of our body-spirit creaturehood has already given premises for this point. Help your child to do things with his body as he does things with his Spirit and his mind. His bodily action will help bring both the thought and the spirit into the captivity a worship of the Spirit God requires. Folded hands are a common denominator for illustration. Teachers may have ulterior motives for promoting this worship action (as, some suspect, kindergarten teachers do when they insist on "rest time" for the children!) but the result is a physical assist in the spiritual act of worship. And this simple ritual act, taken seriously, has a reflex importance. When the child prays, he folds his hands; when the child folds his hands, he is at least helped to pray. If this is true in practices which even the crypto-Calvinist pursues, is it not also valid in other catholic actions such as kneeling for prayer and the use of the sign of the cross which Luther recommended together with the invocation's echo of the Baptismal formula as the new man daily comes forth from the covers and arises? The very repetition of words that have been made meaningful for worship and reminiscent of joyful experiences of worship results in the same reflex value. "As those who deliberately smile are rewarded by an increase of cheerfulness, so those who deliberately

kneel are rewarded by an increase in worshiping love."⁴

8. Ration the facts of God's revelation in ratio to your child's growth in understanding. An accent on the extent of knowledge is not always an illustration of appreciation of the value of the Scriptures; it may demonstrate an undervaluing of Holy Baptism as a means of grace. Recognizing that the Bible is an adult book, we approach instruction not by looking for stories in its pages that will interest a child but by considering what are the first important truths a child should know and can grasp.

Lumb suggests that

we translate the great things of the baptismal promises into a few words, or ideas, that a baby can begin to learn from the start: "Sorry" (to teach repentance); "Father" and "Jesus" (to introduce him to the Faith); "Ought" (to introduce the life of obedience); "Prayer" (to lead him towards worship); "Church" (to introduce him to his Father's house).⁵

Such a summary will require simple explanations of the truth in our own words. But soon we will supplement our ability with simple stories. The Church Year will be the best schedule for our selection as well as a tool that recognizes our human situation in time. Other stories that teach the "oughts" of the faith and the truths of "Church" and the necessity of "sorry" are also tools for our teaching of the

⁴Evelyn Underhill, Worship (Torchbook edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 26.

⁵Lumb, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

Word. And pictures--select them with care. Worth a thousand words! Then a bad picture, a heretically sentimental portrayal of our Lord, will take more words to undo than a child has in his vocabulary.

Remember that knowledge is not an end in itself but a means to the favorable "sentiment" toward the Christian way and toward the actions of the Christian life of worship.

9. Introduce the child to his place in the Church. Take him to visit--and to pray--in the church building when he is still an infant and when there are no others around to make your teaching difficult. Help him to be at least as familiar with, as interested in and as friendly towards the Church as to the local super market.

And help him to his place in the fellowship of the family of God, the worshiping fellowship as well as the fellowship of friendship among your Christian friends. Since the congregation must express this fellowship before your child can experience it, this aspect will be expanded in the final section of this chapter.

Growth in the Schools

The premises developed in this chapter would result in some practical principles governing the growth of the worship life of children in the schools. The wide variety of school situations, the obvious difference between a parish day school and a once-a-week Saturday or Sunday school

opportunity, the practical differences ranging from facts of architecture to members of school boards, and numerous other factors will make any attempt to summarize imitatingly over-simplified. But the listing of points of conclusion may stimulate further thought.

1. Be concerned with the place worship is given in your child's schools. When a kindergarten child (your first-born) makes his first step into academic circles, and finds there no reference to God on the part of the teacher who now begins to share with parents the position of divine ambassador, the value of a Christian school comes into focus. But a school is not Christian because it is found next to a church or financed by a congregation; nor is it Christian simply because it teaches Christian doctrine. A school is Christian when the students do Christian things about God and one another. It is a Christian school when it is a worshiping school. The quality of its worship will to a great extent determine how much of its Christian information is accepted and believed, and how much of the knowledge is translated into life. God's working Word makes the child a worshiper, but as a child adores God and confesses his own weakness, he also becomes ready to hear and heed the words of God. As with folded hands a child thanks God, he is led to a conscious opening of hands and heart to receive all the grace God offers him and begins to live the appreciative life that respects property and talent and time.

As a child prays for himself and others, he is knocking at God's doors and is actually anticipating their opening and made aware of his own responsibility to walk through entrances that become the strait gates opening into life. Life as worship develops through the worship life.

If your child's school can give no place to worship on its curriculum, you must supply it. Engage your child in conversation about the school day's happenings, not to discover your child's presidential possibilities or his hope of promotion, but to discover the situations that call for thanksgiving or confession. Begin the morning not with a rush to beat the tardy bell, but with adoration that will enable him to take His God along.

2. Be concerned with the kind of worship being practiced in your child's schools. If the accent is predominantly that truths are to be understood, or, even worse, simply that truths are to be spoken, whether listened to or not, work with school board, faculty and pastor for worship that is an offering from the child to God. Whatever its label or its location, an activity is not worship unless it is something a child does toward God. This is not to underplay the value of knowledge, of instruction in the Scriptures and proclamation of the Word. It rather accents it, for, as Williams says,

never mind how good our formal religious instruction may be, it is all at a discount if our worship is poor

or false, because it is in worship that the real teaching of the Faith is done.⁶

An act of worship in point of fact communicates religious truths far more powerfully than any kind of direct religious instruction--and it does so at a much deeper level, because the truths are implicit and not explicit; because, in fact, they are simply taken for granted.⁷

When the worship's direction does indicate that it is what worship should be, be concerned still. For any act of worship is conveying ideas about the nature of God and about the nature of our relationship with God.

The very materials that make up an act of worship--hymns, prayers, readings, and so on--are the whole time, quite inevitably, communicating to the worshiper, without any direct teaching at all, ideas about God. The fatal thing is when any of these things are so poor in quality that they communicate half-truths or even positive falsities about God.⁸

Be concerned, then, about the hymns your child is learning. Words that suggest "a kind of mild nature worship," texts that convey no note of the majesty of the Most High, selections that include no Savior, no Spirit, no Holy Trinity, no Church, no Baptism, verses that offend the child's natural desire to be grown-up may be defended on some grounds but not on the ground that counts--the goal of training Christian worshipers. And the arguments advanced

⁶John G. Williams, Leading School Worship (London: SPCK National Society, 1953), p. 7.

⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁸Ibid., p. 7.

for hymns less than the best are all turned to arguments for the best in texts and tunes when experience proves the truth and practicality of the position stated by Williams:

For very tiny children, who find the mere articulation of words difficult, there is plenty of admirable material like "Praise Him, Praise Him, All Ye Little Children" depending on simplicity and repetition. But as soon as they can begin to get their tongues round the actual words (that is the real test) start them off on some of the great Christian hymns--yes, the adult ones, Whenever we approach God in prayer, we ought to do so with awe, because we know we are standing in the presence of mystery. The disastrous thing--and so many poor hymns and prayers for children try to do this--is to attempt to water down great religious truths within their limited grasp. . . . Children find the right kind of delight in singing some of the great mysterious hymns of adoration ("Immortal, Invisible," for example, and "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty") and it is the words that intrigue them as well as the tune, make no mistake about it. But do not try to explain the thing away to them--let them experience it at their own level without any undue interference from us. The only question we need ask about a hymn is not, "Will the children understand it?" but, "Does this hymn express sound Christian truth?"--because the theology of it will seep into their minds and shape their whole attitude toward God. The only limit I myself would set in choosing hymns for children is this--avoid sentimental ones (that is obvious) and avoid ones that express emotions or subjective experiences (such as profound penitence for sin) which children cannot be expected to know. Go for the great objective hymns, with good clean tunes, and you cannot go far wrong.⁹

Be concerned with the use of readings, and be balanced.

Recognize that

the sense of mystery is a most important element in worship and it is good to let children listen to some of the great resounding passages from the Prophets or

⁹Ibid., pp. 10-11.

the Epistles, full of a sense of God's power and justice and compassion. . . .¹⁰

But realize also that readings, like sermons, are to inform as well and must not only be intelligible but presented in a way that will compel interest.

The same balance and concern should judge the prayers offered in school worship. That children should express their own thoughts to God requires both opportunities for personal expression and a prayer vocabulary which is understandable. But that a group should pray together requires a vocabulary which, like poetry, will produce a heightened emotional mood and serve as a medium for varied content and different levels of meaningful response.

The acts of worship in our schools are also implicitly conveying ideas about the nature of our relationship with God--devotional ideas. Be concerned with this aspect of the kind of worship in your schools, too. If worship is permitted to become a mere matter of rote, if participation is purely a matter of personal whim, if decorum is in direct relation to the eyes of the pastor with no concern for the divine attribute of omniscience, what kind of a God are we preaching, no matter what we say in words? If the conversation with God can be broken off at any minute (with no apologies to the Almighty) at the option of the leader, for

¹⁰Ibid., p. 11.

purposes of rebuke to late-comers or exhortations to greater volume ("peradventure He sleepeth, and must be awaked"-- 1 Kings 18:27), what importance are we giving to prayer? If our prayers must constantly inform God of the situation in world and parish, if they are so full of requests for this gift and that blessing for us, and our plans for His action, so that there is no time to adore or confess or thank or intercede, whom are we describing to the children as the audience of our much speaking?

Not only must the full area of the A-C-T-S of worship be covered in the school's worship program, but the children must be taught to do the acting. Their understanding must go beyond giving to God--it must include catching the Word from God, sharing the faith with the neighbor, and the implications of a life with God. To make this possible they must be helped to see the purpose of psalm and hymn, versicle and collect--to serve as channels for their own prayer thoughts, which will always include much more than the number of words included in the service would seem to make possible. Their services must be arranged for reverence and planned for interest and conducted with devotional concentration.¹¹

3. Be concerned with the scheduling and setting of worship in your schools. Worship as an "enjoyment of God

¹¹Ibid., pp. 16-19.

forever" does not mean an endless service once a week--it means a never-ending adoration. This would indicate not only acts of worship throughout the school day and worshipful activity with text books as well as hymn books, with bats and balls as well as kneelers and crucifixes, but also regularly scheduled periods of worship each day. It would argue for a worship service expressing all the ideals being advocated here at the beginning of each day. And all the care and expenditure of skill and funds invested in the architecture of a church building would urge the use of the high altar, the chancel and the nave as the setting of this opening worship. There will be so much worship going on at so many other times and places that such an arrangement would never give the impression that an indefinable atmosphere must always surround an offering to God before it can really qualify as true prayer.

4. Be concerned that worship in the school (and the home) leads to worship in the Church. Holy Baptism brings the child into membership in the one holy Church and the training in all of her agencies should be directed toward bringing the child into the worshiping fellowship of the Church. The question of whether God is worshiped in church denominations that do not believe in the Sacraments or in their efficacy as means of grace does not enter here. Our church does. And leaders of school worship must be aware that any worship not related to the Church's worship

remains essentially private worship--a worship both basic and deeply to be desired, but a worship that should be a step in the direction of its final full expression in that communion our Lord Himself initiated and continues to create by the gift of Himself. The school's program ought to include the goal of "bringing children into a living and loving relationship with our Lord within the sacramental fellowship of the Church."¹²

The problem of uniting many individuals and many levels in common worship, of meeting the common needs and problems of worshipers, of expressing the unity of the Church in all ages and areas has been solved to the satisfaction of centuries in The Liturgy of the Holy Communion. And if every new generation must make a new discovery that the solution is a good one, the worship training of the children must move from an understanding of the acts of worship to a utilization of The Liturgy as a form for the action. Certainly the Church should not allow the arguments of some who are not yet convinced or of a few who were themselves not introduced to the worship pattern of our Church to use the assemblies of the Church's children as a forum for debate over the Church's worship. Whether a superintendent of a Sunday School is himself a "green hymnal" Christian or a "red hymnal" Christian, or a publishing house markets a

¹²Williams, Worship and the Modern Child, p. 128.

hymnal of another color, our educational program at the present time must be directed toward the development of "blue hymnal" Christians, Christians who have come to know and love the official hymnal of the Church.

Growth in the Church

Finally, it must be obvious that the declaration of duties of parents and leaders in worship training is useless "unless we first provide a setting within which it is practicable to observe them."¹³ And this will come about only as the congregation recognizes its responsibilities toward the children born into its membership by the Spirit.

1. The church must recognize Holy Baptism as the reception of children into full congregational membership. This may mean an arrangement that avoids the impression the Sacrament is added to a Sunday service because it must be done sometime and this happens to be the day that the grandparents could be present. It could mean that one service a month (more or less, depending on the number of arrows God grants--blessed the congregation "whose quiver is full of them"¹⁴) is specifically arranged for the reception of members by Baptism, and the worshipers are involved in the total service. Every member must be helped to realize that

¹³Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁴Psalm 127:5.

every child baptized becomes the concern of every member of the parish.

2. The church must realize that parents are "ordained" to be priests in the homes of the parish. Classes should be arranged to prepare expectant parents for the tasks of training worshiping Christians, which are in every way as technical and by every count more vital than details of "the care and feeding of children." If every member visitations are important to help members plan on the contributions they will give to the Church's budget each year, more vital are visits by trained helpers to counsel parents on preparing the children they are contributing to the Church's life. Sponsors should be drawn into the classes to be alerted to their opportunities of "putting the child in mind of his Baptism." Parents whose main interest appears to be having the child "done" should be involved in a strenuous series of classes to instruct them in the things they must do for the congregation's new members.

3. The church must realize that her schools are agencies for training worshiping church members. Would it be too much to hope that parents could be led to realize "you cannot teach Christianity to non-worshiping children?"¹⁵ Is the worship issue not vital enough that before enrollment of their child in Sunday School parents be called together

¹⁵Lumb, op. cit., p. 91.

to learn their own obligations (if they have not been participants in the Baptism classes)? They should know that the teachings presented to their child must be substantiated in their lives as parents. If they are not, the example they give will destroy the lessons the child learns, or the new found faith will set the child against his father in ways deeper than perhaps either will realize. They should be helped to introduce the child to God's house, if they have not already done so, by visits during the week, and should clearly understand that Sunday School or parish day school admission includes the requirement of regular Sunday worship.

If the missionary nature of a parish makes this procedure impossible, proxy parents should be arranged for the child, who will undertake the serious responsibility of being parents-in-God, responsible for the child's relation to the Church at worship.

4. The church should arrange one service for worship by families. Increasingly congregations conduct more than one service each Sunday morning. Since there are no two identical persons in a congregation, why should there be two identical services? Since children we will always have with us, should not one service be arranged with the child in mind? Since all that has been said about worship leads ultimately to the participation of the young Christian in the Church's corporate service, it is essential that the

service be arranged to convey its blessings also upon the younger members of the Church.

Three things would be necessary in such a service. They are things every parent wishes to do for his child when he brings him to church, but cannot because of the nature of the service. The pastor will therefore have to do them--and he will gladden the heart of every parent if he will.

The first is to help the child understand what worship means. By preliminary announcements and by incidental instruction during the service the pastor can, over the course of a year, alert the child to apply the Word of God to himself, to reply in A-C-T-S of Sacrificial response, to supply to those who worship with him the edification God encourages.

The second is to help the child understand where in The Liturgy his opportunities for receiving from God and giving to God and sharing with his neighbors occur. Again over the course of a year, for this cannot all be done each Sunday, the pastor will explain the opportunities for worship The Liturgy offers, and will alert the child to his task as a specific opportunity arises.

The third necessity in such a family service would be an approach that would make the instructional parts of The Liturgy comprehensible. The theme should be made clear before the service begins. The relation of the lessons to

the theme could receive a brief explanation before they are read. Above all, the sermon should be preached to the children. What is required here is a certain abbreviation and an amount of simplification, but primarily a change in attitude and presentation. One talks differently to children, with more comparisons, with questions and answers, with illustrations. The content of the sermon will remain basically that which will later be preached in the "adult" service, but it will be so different that the children will listen! and understand! and receive a blessing from the Word.

These are objectives that cannot be achieved unless it is frankly asserted that the entire service will be conducted with the children in mind. Parents will be happy to make the adjustment to an approach not specifically aimed at them, an adjustment which is quite possible for them to achieve and which for so many years the children have been expected to make and for the most part found quite impossible to accomplish.

These practical approaches, so briefly presented as to be more provocative than definitive, would seem to point the direction that the parish worship program must take if children are really to be given their rightful place in Christian worship. It may be that this generation in the Church will see a change not only in the translation of the words of our Lord, "Suffer the little children . . ." but a development in the Church's implementation of that

earnest desire of Him who was once Himself a little Child,
"You must let little children come to me--never stop them!
For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

APPENDIX A

AN APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF WORSHIP

The first example in this section is an outline of worship as developed for use in Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools, together with the Commentary prepared for the instructors.

With modifications, parts of this outline are useful for the presentation of the subject of worship to children from the kindergarten throughout the grades. For younger children, for example, prayers of adoration would be "telling God how we love Him"; confession would become "sorry prayers"; thanksgiving would be "thank-you prayers"; and supplication would include "prayers for ourselves and prayers for others."

Worship, an Outline for LSV Schools

- I. The Ingredients of Worship
 - A. The Impetus--God must be the impetus of the worship cycle
 - B. The Motion--Faith is our motion at the impetus of God's life in us
 - C. The Response--The Faithful People's first response is worship
- II. The Action of Worship
 - A. The Deed
 1. Life as Worship
 2. The Worship Life

- B. The Doing and the Done
 - 1. Sacramental Aspects
 - 2. Sacrificial Aspects
- C. The Doers
 - 1. Individual Worship (Sacramental and Sacrificial)
 - 2. Corporate Worship (Sacramental and Sacrificial)

Worship is the faithful's response to God's love in Christ, which is given through the Word and Sacrament, expressed individually or corporately, in living with our neighbor or in actions toward God.

III. The Well-Rounded Worshiper

- A. His life as worship develops through his worship life
- B. His sacrificial worship life is well balanced
 - Adoration
 - Confession
 - Thanksgiving
 - Supplication
- C. His sacramental worship life is well balanced
 - Absolving
 - Confirming
 - Teaching
 - Sacramental
- D. He accepts grace with knowledge and through Sacraments, and by grace he acts
 - 1. In Edifying
 - Admonishing
 - Comforting
 - Teaching
 - Singing
 - 2. In all of Life
 - Awareness
 - Committment
 - Transforming
 - Self-forgetfulness, self-sacrifice

The Ingredients of Worship

The Impetus

God must be the impetus of the worship cycle.

In one sense it can be said that God is the one who worships. In Him we live and move and have our being, and there is nothing that a man can do without the grace of God. No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost. No man can worship except God be the impetus to set him into worship motion.

In His goodness God has done this. In the first creation He set man in motion in His image, after His likeness, in the direction of His life and His eternity. But with the fall into sin man reversed that motion. He set his face away from God and life in heaven and began to move in the opposite direction. If man were to be a worshiper, God would have to provide a new impetus. And this He did. He gave a new impetus with His working Word. It was the Word of His love and His desire to save mankind, spoken to Adam and Eve, repeated through all of the holy men and prophets of the Old Testament, dramatized in His action at the Exodus and through all His saving work with the children of Israel, and climaxed in the giving of Himself, when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, that turned man once again toward God. That impetus of God continues to be applied to mankind in every preaching, every remembrance, every reading, of the activity of God, especially of the Gospel center of the living and dying and rising again of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That same impetus, that working Word of God, reaches us in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This is the bringer of the grace of God which pushes at man to set him in motion in the right direction again, or to keep him in that motion of grace, or to contest the opposite impetus which is constantly being exerted by the forces of devil and evil round about us.

The Motion

Faith is our motion at the impetus of God's life in us.

It was the law of God which came in at right angles to our wrong motion and made us face up to the disaster of sin. It is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ coming down to us from the Father in heaven that moved us, converted us, regenerated us and set our life back

into God's motion. This motion may be said to be the Christian faith, faith which understands all that God has revealed about His love and His saving action, and also the faith which is in us, by which we accept the love of God in Christ Jesus. Once this revelation of God, once this grace of God in sacrament, creates the accepting faith in our lives, it has set us into new motion, motion that moves us in the way of God, in the life of God, to the heaven of God.

The response

The faithful people's first response is worship.

In order to visualize all of the action indicated above think of a wheel of a bicycle that has been turned upside-down. The wheel is spinning in the wrong direction at first, but the downward action of the grace of God in Word and Sacrament comes down like a hand used to spin a bicycle wheel and turns it in the right direction. Once a wheel is turning its centrifugal action will throw off and away any water or gravel that comes into contact with it. Once the motion of faith has been established in the hearts of people, it can be expected to send up, as though by centrifugal action, a response to Him who has set it in motion. The response that comes from the motion of faith is worship. When people who have been moved by the grace of God to rotate in His direction do anything, say anything, think anything, this is worship in its broadest sense.

The Action of Worship

The deed

Life as worship.--This would imply that everything which a child of God does or says or thinks should be worship. And in one sense this is true. St. Paul says that we should present our bodies as living sacrifices unto God, and calls this our logical liturgy, our reasonable service. All of life should be worship. This was Luther's emphasis and it is an emphasis which is being stressed today in Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Lutheranism.

The worship life.--But there are certain very distinct things which can be classified as "the worship life." Since it is God who is worshiped, in the narrower sense worship must be something which is given to Him.

The worship life, in this sense, would involve those acts of praise and adoration and thanksgiving and penitence that are offered by a man to God.

The doing and the done

Sacramental aspects.---One can never lose sight of the fact, however, that it must always be God who is initiating the worship life, as well as life as worship. No bicycle wheel set spinning by a human hand would turn very long unless force were applied again and again. No life as worship and no worship life could long continue were it not for the continuing action of God's grace. The things that God does to us to keep us in faith and in faith's motion are sometimes called sacramental acts. This can be remembered as we think of the sacraments themselves, which are means of God's grace to us. But it includes all that action which God puts into His working Word to keep us in grace and to move us to do His will.

Sacrificial aspects.---But in the narrowest sense the worship life is what we offer to God. These acts, these thoughts, these intentions, rise to God like the smoke of the Old Testament sacrifices. We use the word sacrificial to describe those actions in which man is offering his worship to God.

The doers

Individual worship (Sacramental and Sacrificial).---It is possible to think of the life of worship and the worship life in two senses. One is a matter of individual worship. The individual Christian both receives the grace of God by himself, and offers to God the sacrifice of prayer and praise by himself. This is individual worship. He may also as an individual serve God in acts that are helpful to others, or in acts that are pleasing to God simply in connection with his own life. All of this would be individual worship.

Corporate worship (Sacramental and Sacrificial).---God has set man into families. God has called man into a fellowship which He refers to as the body of which Jesus Christ is the Head. This indicates the same will of God about our worship which is made explicit in the words, "continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." God evidently wants men "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together." God has given the holy Eucharist, the Communion, as an opportunity for men to give thanks to God together, and to

receive His means of grace, together. All of this is corporate worship. In the same way God expects His people to work together for one another's welfare and for the welfare of His earth. These corporate acts of worship are part of the life of the Church.

Definition of worship: Worship is the faithful's response to God's love in Christ which is given through the Word and Sacrament, expressed individually or corporately, in living with our neighbor or in actions toward God.

The Well-Rounded Worshiper

His life as worship develops through his worship life

The will of God is our sanctification. He wants us to be holy and to do holy things. For this reason He gave His Word, He gave Himself, He gives His grace in the Sacraments and the Scriptures. But there is another relationship that is important. Life as worship, our holy living, never takes place apart from our relationship to God. Before a person does something that will please God, he thinks of God. This is not always a conscious action, nor is it always occurring in direct relationship. But if one were to analyze any good work, one could see that it begins with a recognition of God. If you hear of someone who is ill, your thought toward God is one of gratefulness for your own health. As you give God thanks for His goodness to you, you remember and receive again the Word of His goodness. This Word sets your faith life into greater motion and your reaction is to go and be of service to the one who is ill. That good work began as an act of adoration and thanksgiving to God and moved on to thankful service to others.

This is what is meant by the statement that the life as worship develops through the worship life. As a person deliberately sets his mind to acts of the life as worship he is reminding himself of all of the sacramental things which God has done for him. As a result his faith life is stirred up and he is prompted to respond in increased acts of the worship life and in acts of life as worship.

It can be said that information about God does not automatically result in acts for God. An understanding in the mind of the facts of God's Word and of the

existence of God's grace does not automatically issue in the holy life. These powers of God must be received and applied to the life of the individual and increase in him the motion of faith, or he will not respond in life as worship. Acts of worship, deliberately undertaken by the sanctified will of the believer, set up the situation in which a man is ready to be moved by God. Worshiping acts are the first step in making knowledge functional. For this reason it would seem to be essential to develop the worship life in order that the objective of sanctified living, of life as worship, might be attained.

His sacrificial worship life is well-balanced

In order to attain this well-rounded life it is necessary to emphasize all facets of sacrificial worship. It is possible to develop the worship life in words that are formed on the mnemonic word acts.

Adoration.--When a man knows that God is what He is, man can but fall down on his knees and worship. Adoration is the very heart of man's worship of God. Since we know God in Jesus Christ, our adoration is not only an awe but is a tremendous love of Him who first loved us.

Confession.--No adoration of the Most High can be carried on by the human heart without a reaction of penitence. No man who knows God's love in Jesus Christ can fail to acknowledge his own unworthiness, and respond by a confession of his sin.

Thanksgiving.--Not only does the response of man to all that God has done in Jesus Christ well up in a thankful response, but everything man has received at the gracious hand of God in nature and in time prompts him to continuous thankfulness.

Supplication.--As soon as a man is aware of God's power, his love and his goodness, he will turn to Him with requests, requests for himself which are called petitions, and requests for his loved ones which are called intercessions. If a man truly adores and understandingly confesses, his supplications will not be demands, but will be a lifting up of his necessities and desires into the light and love of the greater knowledge and will of God.

His sacramental worship life is well-balanced

If the worshiper is to be well-rounded, he must also receive a balanced diet of the grace of God. God must be pushing at him from all the various angles of His grace.

Absolving.--The most important reception of grace is the reception of forgiveness. All that God has done in His Word from the beginning of time, all that God has done through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, all that God now does through His Church, the ministry, and the means of grace are included in the absolving action of God.

Confirming.--The grace of God not only brings us to faith, but it is His grace which keeps us there. All that God does by His Holy Spirit and His grace to confirm us in the good work which He has begun in us is included in this aspect of the sacramental.

Teaching.--Since everything which we know of the grace and life of God must be revealed to us, it is evident that there must be a constant action of teaching in our lives. This is the area in which the stress on the use of the Holy Bible is to be found. In the sacred Scriptures God has revealed all man needs to know of God, of grace, of salvation and of the holy life. It is essential that man constantly use this teaching in order to grow. But it is also true that in this word God is working. In the Scriptures God is giving the power unto salvation.

Sacraments.--God has not limited Himself to things which reach the mind of man. His grace operates on the whole of mankind. The sacraments then become an important part of God's sacramental impetus. Holy Baptism not only brings the grace of God to children apart from mental understanding, but it creates in a man the life of God which His grace works to maintain until the day of Jesus Christ. For that reason we should constantly remember our Baptism, not as an event in the past, but as the beginning of a life which now operates within us. The grace which God gives us in the Lord's Supper is exactly the same as His grace given to us in Scripture and in Baptism and in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Christ gives us Himself in this Sacrament, He gives us all that He has secured for us by His atoning work. That is why the Eucharist not only gives us grace, but supremely calls forth from us all of the sacrificial

acts of worship. We meet Jesus Christ there and not only receive Him and His goodness, but have the opportunity to offer up our deepest adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

He accepts grace with knowledge and through Sacraments, and by grace he acts

In edifying.--The corporate nature of the church means that God wants the members of the Body of Christ to be serving one another. He is constantly encouraging us to encourage one another, to build one another up in the holy faith.

Admonishing.--These words come from the passage "teaching and admonishing one another in songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). The admonition which the Christians should give to one another must always be for the purpose of building up.

Comforting.--This word is expressed in the passage "Comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18). The grace which God has given to us is the answer to life's needs. It is as we speak the good Gospel of the good Christ to one another that we share the comfort that is present in His grace.

Teaching.--As important as teaching is in the total sacramental worship life, so vital a part does it play in our building up of the brother. Since we know that the brother is not able to live to God by himself, but is in constant need of the power which the Scriptures bring and the knowledge the Scriptures contain, we must constantly take the opportunities that present themselves to bring him the Word of God by teaching.

Singing.--This particular word is really a summary word to pull together all of our actions for one another in a corporate worship situation. With grace in our hearts we go through the various acts of our liturgies and informal worship services. With the grace of God moving us we sing in worship. In these actions we bring our sacrifice of worship to God. But every one of these actions is also useful for building up the brother who worships with us. By our songs and prayers and creeds we apply God's Word to our fellow worshiper.

In all of life.--Finally everything that has been said of worship can be summarized in the fact that life

itself should be a worship of God. Worship can never be something isolated into one out of seven days, or into a few moments out of twenty-four hours. If God is at all, He is in all. If we are for God, we can never take ourselves from God. All of life must be lived in relationship with Him who gave His life for us. In order to accomplish this kind of twenty-four hour worship, we need to stress certain understandings and approaches.

Awareness.--It is of vital importance that we have this awareness that all of life is expected by God as an act of worship from man. We must be aware of the fact that God came into time in order to make Himself a part of our every minute. We must be aware of the fact that the new life of God given to us in Holy Baptism is present in us each minute. Each new day and as we arise from the covers we must remember that the new man must daily come forth and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever. We need to be aware of the fact that our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. We need to be aware that this incarnation of God's Spirit in us is as tremendous a miracle as the incarnation of our Lord. By His Spirit we must strive to live a Christ-like life.

Commitment.--It is one thing to know this and it is another thing to commit one's self to do this living of worship. In this sense, awareness implies a constant receiving of the sacramental, while commitment demands a continuous response to God in sacrificial living. Since life as worship develops through the worship life, it is essential that a person constantly commit himself to the God of whom he is continually aware. This requires a "praying without ceasing" such as St. Paul urges.

Transforming.--The aware and committed Christian now confronts the various events of life. He should see every opportunity of life as a worship opportunity. Take temptation, something which seems very far from an opportunity for worship. Actually it is in the area of temptation that the Christian has his best chance to worship God by his actions. At a time of tempting we are very near to hell, but it is at the time of tempting that the grace of God enables us to rise up more nearly to the heavenly life. In a time of testing one should see the downward pull of the enemy, and transform it into an equal and opposite reaction, an upward surge to virtue.

Self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice.--All of this action of life as worship can finally be summarized in the passage from Philippians, "Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). This is the pattern for the worship life. A life of complete self-forgetfulness, a life filled with the kind of love for God which reaches out even to the unlovely. It should be a life willing to devote itself in self-sacrifice to the cause of God and the needs of men.

To such a life of worship which is made strong by the grace of God and which is constantly expressing itself in a life of worship comes also the promise of the heavenly kingdom where we will find "the throne of God and of the Lamb. And His servants shall worship Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:3-5).

The second illustration provides samples of a devotional booklet for children that requires a sacrificial response in acts of worship at least as much as it aims to supply a sacramental impetus. The approach in the first group is both simple and quite Lutheran, inasmuch as each devotion simply leads the child to a use of Luther's suggestions for morning and evening prayer as the frame for a specific response to the Word of God stressed in the devotion. The second part of the series of devotional material develops the concepts of worship as outlined in the previous material for LSV schools. On the last sheets it supplies specific acts of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication as the pattern for the sacrificial response.

The child's relation to the Sunday worship of the Church is stressed in the Saturday and Sunday material. The idea of preparation for the work of worship is one emphasis, and a connection of the aspects of worship with items in the Liturgy is another.

An Order of Worship from the Catechism
of Martin Luther, 1529

Morning prayer

In the morning, when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, confess the Creed and pray the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this prayer:

I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray Thee that Thou wouldst keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please Thee. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Then go joyfully to your work, singing a hymn, like that on the Ten Commandments, or whatever your devotion may suggest.

Evening Prayer

In the evening, when you go to bed, make the sign of the holy cross and say:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, confess the Creed and pray

the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may also say this prayer:

I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast graciously kept me this day; and I pray Thee that Thou wouldst forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer.

Be a Regular Saint

(All Saints' Day)

You plan to use this book to help you worship God. It's important that you understand what you are doing. Worship is more than reading. It's different from thinking. "Saying our prayers" isn't what it means, either.

Worship is something for which you need to prepare and to practice. When people have a chance to appear before a King, think how many preparations they make! You have an opportunity to be with God, to hear God's Word to you and to speak to God!

This book will help you to worship Him every day, and at the same time it will help you to understand more about what you do when you worship.

The devotional reading for each day will tell you something God wants you to know. Think about it carefully--it is God's word to you.

But each day you'll want to bring your words to God, too, in worship. On the inside of the front cover is an order of worship from the Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther which you may use each day after the reading. There is a form for the morning and for the evening. You'll want to add prayers in your own words, too.

Worship takes work. You must really pay attention to what you are reading and think what you are praying; and you must really decide to worship regularly. If every day you let the lazy side of you argue with the good side of you about whether you should use this

booklet and worship, your worship will probably not be very regular.

Decide right now with God's help to be faithful in your worship. Win the argument once for all. Today is All Saints' Day. A saint is a holy person--one who is holy because his sins are forgiven. A saint is a holy person--one who does holy things with the help of the Holy Ghost.

You are a saint--because your sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ. Make worship a regular part of your holy life. The Order of Worship on page two will help you to worship your God right now.

God is Love

(22nd Sunday after Trinity)

A good devotion today would be the parable Jesus told about the merciful king and the unmerciful servant. Read it from your Bible in St. Matthew 18:23-35.

This story is the Gospel for the 22nd Sunday after Trinity. Have you been worshipping God in your church for the twenty-two Sundays since the Feast of the Holy Trinity? Does thinking about the king who was so kind and forgiving toward his servant help you worship your heavenly King?

Think about your heavenly King now. He is kind, like the king in the parable. We are in debt to Him just as the servant was to the king. We owe Him many good things we have not done. We "owe" Him for many wrong things we have done that we should not have done.

But there's a difference--the king was "moved with compassion" when the servant begged for time. Instead of being angry and demanding his money, the king changed to being forgiving.

God always is forgiving. Remember the passage, "God is love?" (1 John 4:8). That doesn't mean merely that He does love once in a while. His very nature is all love. He is love.

What a wonderful God! We ought to fall on our knees and worship Him! Begin now with the words of the Invocation (page two), "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

The Lord--He is the God!

(Monday)

God is waiting for you to worship Him. God is not someone you would want to keep waiting.

God's prophet, Elijah, said that to the Israelites when some of them were worshiping the idol god, Baal, instead of the true God. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

You'll find the story in 1 Kings 18:17-40. The Lord proved he was really God by sending fire from heaven and burning up both the sacrifice and the altar Elijah had prepared.

Then the people fell on their faces and they cried, "The Lord, He is the God! The Lord, He is the God!" Now they knew what God was like, and they worshiped Him.

Sometimes you have trouble making up your mind--"Shall I buy this dress or that one?" "Shall I take chocolate or strawberry?" But do you ever really have trouble deciding whom you love best in all the world? Most of you could say you love those who love you--your parents and family. You know what they are like--they're on your side--and you're on their side.

You know what God is like, too. The God who sent fire to destroy the stones of Elijah's altar is also so loving He sent His Son to be the sacrifice for our sins. The all-powerful God is our all-loving Father! He is on our side--and we show we are on His side as we worship!

Now as you remember what God is like, say, "The Lord--He is the God!" and worship Him!

How Do You Feel about God?

(Tuesday)

When you know there is a God and that He is loving and powerful and forgiving, you feel different. And you act differently, too. You are happy and unafraid because you know what God is like. Everything that you think and do because of your love for God can be called worship.

It's something like what happens when you wake up and remember, "Today's Saturday! No school!" Everything about the morning seems different. Even though you haven't begun to do the different things that make Saturday wonderful, you feel different. Just lying in bed, you can tell it's Saturday. You feel different because of what Saturday is--a day off.

This is the way God makes a difference in your life-- just because He is what He is. Worship is what you are because God is. You see, worship can be just how you feel toward God, how you love God, how happy you are having God for your Father, His Son Jesus Christ for your Brother, the Holy Spirit for your Friend!

This is important for you to remember as you now prepare to pray. Your worship includes how you feel about God. Remember Him before you begin to pray.

"Be still, and know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:10).

Before you use the Order of Worship on page two be still for a moment, and remember how good God is! Be loving Him as you say, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

God Loves, and You Do

(Wednesday)

Everything we know about God makes us want to worship Him. That's the way it should be. God says so, too. "I am the Lord, that is My name, and My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

When God says in the Bible, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," what do you say?

"Oh, come! Let us worship!"

Our feelings about God, our faith and love, are part of our worship. But we will not only think about Him. We will do things. Worship is what you do because of what God is.

Perhaps it would help to think about it like this: Suppose you were walking along a mountain trail. Suddenly you turned and there was a grizzly bear! What

would you do? You'd run or hide--or freeze in fright! Even if the bear did nothing, you would! You know what a grizzly is like!

Much more we should do something when we come upon our God! We know God's love for us--He is our Savior! We know that He is lord over heaven and earth! We will not run from Him--He is our Father. We will come to Him. If you would suddenly see your parents walking down the street in front of you, wouldn't you run to catch up? And wouldn't you greet them and talk to them when you reached them?

That's what we do when we worship. We think of God, we hear His Word, we remember all He has done for us; we love Him. This is the way we draw near to Him. Then we talk to Him, we pray to Him.

This is what you will do right now. It's very natural to do these acts of worship when you know how good God is!

God Does--and So Do You

(Thursday)

How can you love God or talk to Him when you can't even see Him? You want to catch up with your parents because you love them--but you wouldn't run if you couldn't see them ahead of you.

We see God in the things He does. "God who . . . spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds. (He is) the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. . . ." (Hebrews 1:1-3).

By His wonderful creation God has shown us what He is like. By giving His own life for our forgiveness, He showed His love for us, He proved His love for us.

Suppose it was in a National Park that you ran into the grizzly bear of yesterday's story. You had met the ranger on duty there. He seemed nice, but you really didn't give him a second thought--until the grizzly chased you! Then it was the ranger you needed--and when the ranger shot the bear and saved your life you felt a lot differently about him. And if he wanted you to do something for him, you surely would.

Worship is like that. It is what we do because of what God does for us. We worship God for what He is and what He has done. As you use the Order of Worship, saying the Invocation and the Apostles' Creed, remember all He has done for you! And remembering--worship!

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble!" (Psalm 46:1).

Being and Doing

(Friday)

God is even more kind and generous than the king who forgave the servant's debt in last Sunday's worship. He is ready to forgive us all the things we have ever done wrong, and He does. We worship Him for what He is--a loving God--and for what He does!

But here's the biggest point. What God is and what God does are always the same! Sometimes one of the fellows you know may tell you what a good basketball player he is. But if he doesn't play as well as he talks, you don't pay much attention to him. The unmerciful servant, who was forgiven so much, had much for which to be grateful. He probably said all kinds of thanks to the king. But he showed by his unforgiving action what he was really like. And, as a result, we don't like him. A person who doesn't act like the kind of person he says he is doesn't get our love or respect.

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). In God, being and doing come together. God does just like He is. He is loving, and so He came to earth in Jesus Christ, and by all that He did, saved us!

When the Holy Spirit shows us this wonderful love of God, we love Him. If you love God, this is part of your being. This is how you are because of God's love. If you worship God, it is the first part of your doing! Being and doing should come together in our lives too--in worship!

Get Ready for Sunday!

(Saturday)

Today is Saturday! It's a good day--it gives you a chance to play, to do all kinds of things! You plan for it the day before, don't you? "Tomorrow we'll get up a football game" or "We'll go on a bike hike."

Tomorrow is Sunday! That's a day that gives you a special chance to do something, too--to worship! If you plan ahead for a football game, wouldn't it be a good idea to plan ahead for worshipping God, too?

One way to plan ahead is to start thinking about how good God is and how much He has done for you. That's why you have a Sunday School lesson. It tells you about God's deeds and God's love for you. When you think about them, you want to worship.

Another way to plan ahead is to think about the church service of the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity. In many churches the Gospel will be St. Matthew 22:15-22. If you read it today, you will be more ready to think about it in church tomorrow. Then it will help you remember what God is like and how one of the things that belongs to Him is your worship!

"Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's!" (Matthew 22:21).

Acts that Make You Air-borne

(Monday)

If a rocket on its launching pad were able to wish, what do you suppose it would want? Probably it would want to push the buttons that would make its fuel explode so it could roar away into space. A rocket was made to zoom into the air--that's what it would want.

God made you to be His child. You want to explode in worship, too, don't you? and zoom up to God. Rockets may be complicated to make--but it was even harder to make you into a heaven-bound person. Sin has made us harder to lift off the earth than any tons of metal. Our sinful nature doesn't want to be with God. That's why God came to be with us. Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth to change our minds and make us want to be God's children. That's what happened to you when

you were baptized--you were born over again from a sinful child to God's child. When the Bible urges you to "repent," it is showing you how much God loves you, and pleading with you to "change your mind" and love God back again. And you have repented, haven't you? And you do love God, don't you?

That makes you one of God's rockets, ready to explode in worship. Remember we said that acts of worship help you to want to worship more? Acts of worship help you to do everything for God because you remind yourself of what God wants as you pray to Him. It's important, then, to know how to do acts of worship. They are like the buttons you push to get your rocket exploding in worship. Once you get them started you'll get your whole life air-borne and be living closer to God in everything you do.

What are the acts of worship that start your worship life exploding? Try these:

Adoration
Confession
Thanksgiving
Supplication

We'll talk about them in the coming days. Right now why not do them? On the back cover you'll find Acts of Worship. Pray them slowly. Think the thoughts they bring to your mind. Take off for God in worship!

Begin with Adoration

(Tuesday)

If you want to be a worshiper, if you want to get off the ground in living for God, begin with adoration.

"Adoring" means to feel the highest admiration for someone, the greatest love and affection. We use it for little things--"I adore that sweater." But that's not really our highest admiration. We say, "I'd adore to go," or "I adore her," but we don't really mean that these are the most important things in our whole lives. Adoring is really something you do about God. Only God can be the most admirable, the most loved, the most powerful, the most wonderful One in your life. But "adoring" also means expressing that feeling. We tell God how we feel about Him. We say our love in words or songs or psalms. Feeling this way about God comes to us when we are made His children; and saying how we

feel--telling God how we feel, is something every child of God can do. This is what you should do if you really want to start worshipping.

Here's how it works. Think about your parents. How do you feel about them right now? They're nice and you love them? But no tears come to your eyes as you remember them, do they? If you think about it, though, you can almost start to cry for love of them. Just remember other fellows and girls who are reading this book right now who don't have a father or a mother. Remember how nice your mother was when last you hurt yourself, when last you were lonesome. How swell it is to have Dad tuck you in at night--even if you are pretty big for that kind of thing! What if your parents were to get disgusted with you for breaking dishes or tracking mud, and stop loving you. . . .

Is it happening to you? Thinking about your parents and you, you begin to love them more. You remember how you feel toward them more--and you want to do something for them--or go give them a kiss to show them you love them.

This is what adoration does for your worship. Some of you may be saying, "Thinking about my parents didn't help me." Perhaps you're still angry with them for something they did. Well, parents do make mistakes--but God doesn't. Parents do forget to be kind sometimes--but God is love, remember? So even if thinking about parents didn't make you love more, thinking about God will. He is the Best!

Some of you don't have parents with you to think about. Some parents are dead. Your father or mother may have left your home. "Thinking about them doesn't help." Maybe not. But thinking about God will help! He never leaves you nor forsakes you! "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). Adoration will help you to love God more. It will start off your worship!

Try it now. Say the Act of Adoration on the back cover very slowly and think about what it means for you! The all-holy, almighty God loves you and takes care of you.

You might use Psalm 27, too. Psalms are Acts of Worship that God saved for us in the Bible. They help you adore.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation! Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life! Of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).

You Confess Because You Adore

(Thursday)

Confession naturally follows adoration. Not only in the word ACTS--adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication--but in real life, too.

If your mother asked you please to keep your clothes clean on the way to the Parent-Teachers' program, but instead you fooled around, slipped, and got them wet and muddy, how would you feel? If you had to stand up on the stage with your clothes so mud-spattered, you yourself would be humiliated and ashamed.

But you'd feel even worse about what you were doing to your mother. You know how hard she worked to get your clothes all ready. You know how much she wanted you to look nice in the program. You love her because of her love and her care for you. She's swell! (This is like adoration of our God, who made us and loved us and has forgiven us!) And now because you didn't behave, you've made her work all for nothing; you've embarrassed her; you've made her almost ready to cry! You want her to know how much you do love her; and how sorry you are you did what she warned you not to do; and how much you're planning to be more careful after this! When you tell her all this--that's confession.

You see, confession of sin doesn't mean just admitting you were wrong--so what? or that you're sorry anyone found out; or that you are embarrassed about what you did. Confession is something that only a person who loves God can do. Confession is loving God so much that you could cry because you did something to displease Him.

You can see why confession will follow adoration. When you adore God you remind yourself how much you love Him. When you adore Him you remember how holy and pure and loving He is. The more you adore, the more you are sorry you have displeased your heavenly Father. You want to tell Him so. You want to confess.

Sometimes it's hard to find words to tell people--or to tell God--how sorry we are. On the back cover

you'll find an Act of Confession to help you. You'll want to say your confession--for in this too, doing it helps you to think about it and mean it. Confessing your wrongdoing helps you to keep from doing the sin all over again. Your confessing is an act of worship that helps you live for God.

Get Set to Adore and Confess

(Saturday)

It's time to prepare for Sunday's worship again. Today you might plan to find a place in your church service where you will really adore God. Plan for another place in which you can really confess your sins to God.

Some church services begin with the words, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." You can adore when those words are said. If you're ready, you can be thinking about all the things the Holy Trinity has done for you and the church.

Some services begin with "O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise." This is a place for confession. We can all get our mouths open; but unless God opens our lips for us--really gives us a clean heart and mind and voice--we won't praise Him. Without forgiveness and help we can't be good children of God.

Remember, you've got to be ready to put your thoughts into the service. It will go right past you if you're not thinking. If you stand by an escalator and watch it go up, will you get to the next floor? You won't worship either unless you plan what you are going to do and, when the right place in the service comes along, you adore and confess.

Thank God, and Become Thankful

(Monday)

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful unto Him and bless His name!" (Psalm 100:14).

Today you have probably said "thanks" and "thank you" a hundred times. You say it to your mother for

breakfast food, to your teacher for help with your lessons, to your friend for a piece of his candy. How many times did you say it--and think it--to God?

Think back--list the things you really thanked God for today. Did you say "thanks" for Jesus Christ your Savior? Did you say "thanks" for heaven and for the church, for the Holy Ghost's help in doing good? Did you really say "thank you" for bread, for air, for legs, for a friend? These are just four things out of thousands God has given you!

What if a person says he believes God gives him all things and yet doesn't say "thank you" for them? It would be hard to believe he really believes. Does your faith show up in thanksgiving?

Of course God would know, whether you said anything or not; you would disappoint Him if you forgot. It's not so much that God wants your appreciation. It's more that God wants you to be an appreciating person--the kind of person who knows how much God has done for you and loves Him for it.

How do your parents train you to be that kind of person? They keep reminding you to say "thank you." When you say it after every favor you receive, you soon learn to appreciate what others do for you.

That's why thanksgiving is important in your worship, too. As you remember to thank God for all He has done, you appreciate Him more and love Him always. By thanking God you become more thankful! That's why giving thanks at mealtime is such a good practice. It not only pleases God, it helps you become more God-pleasing.

You have adored, confessed--now thank God. Use the Act of Thanksgiving on the last page of this booklet. You'll have special thanks of your own to add!

Intercede for Others

(Wednesday)

"I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men" (1 Timothy 2:1).

There are two kinds of supplication, of "asking" prayers, in our worship ACTS. One is petition--those are

prayers for yourself. The other kind are intercessions--those are prayers for other people.

Imagine two Americans in prison in China. They had been arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. The government allowed the mothers of the men to visit them. After their visit one mother returned to the States. The other made a special trip to Peking to ask for the release of her son. It was granted!

How happy that man would be! He received a great blessing, his freedom, because his mother asked for it. When you pray to God for others you, like the mother, bring God's blessings to them.

How disappointed the other man would be! He didn't receive his freedom because no one asked for it.

God promises, "Ask, and it shall be given." He doesn't promise to give the same things whether you ask or not. How terrible the other mother would feel because she didn't ask! Are you forgetting to pray for others?

Ask now--and it shall be given!

Oh, Come, Let Us Worship

(Thanksgiving Day)

This would be a good day for a complete ACT of Worship. Use all of the Acts on the back page--Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.

Remember--when you worship like this in words, you intend to do everything in your life worshipfully, too!

The Lord be with you!

Acts of Worship

An Act of Adoration

God is my loving Father! Jesus the Son of God is my Savior and Brother! The Holy Spirit is my Friend and Comforter!

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory!

We praise Thee, O God! We acknowledge Thee to be the Lord! All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting!

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!

An Act of Confession

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin (Psalm 32:5).

O merciful Father, help me to confess all the wrongs by which I have hurt Thee this day. It hurts to admit each foolish and sinful act and thought. Use this pain of my confession to make me hate the sins I've done. I confess to these sins: (Here tell God frankly each thing you remember that was wrongly done.)

I trust in Thy mercy and love, for Thy Son, my Savior Jesus Christ, both died for me and rose again!

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit (Psalm 51:10-12).

An Act of Thanksgiving

Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever.

We thank Thee, Lord God, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for all Thy benefits, who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

For these people and things I give Thee special thanks:

For . . . I thank Thee, God!
For . . . I thank Thee, God!

An Act of Supplication

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings, with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy continual help;

that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name, and finally by Thy mercy obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear my prayer, O Father, for. . . .
and for. . . .

O God, grant that what we have said with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and practice and show forth in our lives, to the glory of Thy great name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APPENDIX B

AN APPROACH TO THE CONDUCT OF THE FAMILY SERVICE

Illustrations of various approaches to meaningful worship in a service such as this are here developed for Quasimodogeniti.

An Introduction to the Theme of the Day

This is an example of an explanation that might be given to the congregation before the opening hymn.

Today's service will really be a Family Service. "Quasimodogeniti" is the name of the Sunday, and it means, "As newborn babes." (You'll find the words of the Introit from which those words come on page 69 of The Lutheran Hymnal.) The name of the Sunday, then, is telling everyone here to be like little children.

The Epistle tells us to be children of God who believe. Everyone who is born of God overcomes the world. St. John writes that it is our faith that Jesus is the Son of God which overcomes the world. So this Sunday tells you to be a child of God who believes in Jesus.

The Gospel agrees. Listen carefully and you will hear Jesus' words to Thomas, "Blessed is he that hath not seen and yet believes." And St. John adds that the Gospel he wrote was to help us "believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that, believing you might have life through His name."

If you are going to be helpful in believing in the Risen Jesus you will need to do something else like a baby. "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word." Just as a baby wants milk so you should want God to give you His Word, to work on your heart to make your faith stronger. If you really want God's Word you'll need to take it for yourself. Listen, hear, but also talk--talk it to yourself and so preach the Word to your own needs.

But remember, babies don't drink milk just because it tastes good. They want to grow. So in the Collect we will pray that all of us who have celebrated the resurrection "may bring forth the fruits thereof in our life and conversation." That means we will ask God to help us live risen lives, to help us so that in all we do we remember that our Lord lives and that we should live also, His way. The sermon will help you think about that kind of life.

Now for the first hymn. "Sing aloud unto God, our Strength, make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob."

Interpreting Worship in the Frame of the Service

After the Introit and before the Gloria in Excelsis and the Kyrie, the pastor might step to the rail and remind the worshipers at the Family Service:

This will be our second opportunity since Lent to sing the Gloria in Excelsis. Remember that you do not simply want to say, "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee," you want to do all that. As you sing the words think of the wonderful things He has done and is still doing for you and do praise, bless, and worship Him. We worship when we really give to God the glory due His name.

Only one or two worship reminders of this type would be included in any one service; but over the course of a year all the elements of worship could be accented.

Explaining Liturgical Forms in a Service

An explanation of the Collect as a liturgical form might be inserted in the service in words such as the following, although probably not in the same service as the comment on the "Gloria":

We are now about to pray the Collect. This prayer will collect all the prayers you are saying by yourself to God and summarize them in a beautiful sentence which all of us can pray together. Remember, you must have prayers of your own or there will be nothing to collect.

The Collect asks God to help us "bring forth the fruit of the Lord's resurrection." We are asking Him to help us do good things by the power of our new life in Christ. Each one think of a special good thing he'd like God's help on during the week. Pray about it now for a moment, and then hear the words of the Collect collect all your individual prayers.

Again only an occasional explanation such as this will be inserted in the service, but over the course of a year all aspects of the Liturgy will be given brief explanation.

Preaching to the Interest and Understanding of Children

This Family Service sermon is an adaptation of the regular Sunday sermon based on 1 Peter 1:3-9. It contains the same basic outline and chief points of the adult sermon. The title is: "Also We Shall Live."

It's been a week since Easter. Did the fact that Jesus came out of the grave alive make your life any different? I know a bat boy for a baseball team who was on the job all day yesterday. The team made a trip to play in another town. When he got home, he was really tired. You know what he said? "I don't know why, but I just feel like crying." I guess there's not a boy or a girl or a parent anywhere who hasn't felt just like crying sometimes, and usually wasn't sure just why he felt that way. On a day when everything seems to go wrong a person sometimes says, "I don't know how I'm going to live through this day." What do you think? Should a person be able to live through things better because Jesus is alive?

What about this week since we celebrated Jesus' resurrection? You lived through it, didn't you? Did you

live through it, through His resurrection? That's a way to ask if the fact that Jesus is alive helped you to live the way God wants you to during the week. It's an important question, because you're probably going to live some more weeks; and you're probably going to have some troubles to live through, too; and you're all going to die, to stop living sometime; and you're all going to live on forever after you die. Now, will Jesus' resurrection make a difference to you through all of those things that will happen to you?

He promised, "Because I live you shall live also." You've heard of an "also-ran"--that's someone so far back in the race he didn't come near winning a prize. Well, we're "also lives"; we will "live also." But that's good. That means that Jesus' life will always make our lives better, happier, more the way God wants them to be! His life will make us win out over all our problems. We have a victory that overcomes the whole world--our faith.

St. Peter described how we can now "live also." The text for this sermon is in his first letter, the first chapter; and the first thing he tells us is that we have a living hope. Then he tells us that we can enjoy hopeful living! Think about the first one first.

- I. We have a living hope by faith in Christ's living again.

Listen to St. Peter's words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. . . ."

- A. We have a living hope because the Resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us new life.

The new life that came to our Lord in the grave gives us a new life, and gives a new life to our hope. It is a living hope that goes on and on forever, all the way to our life in heaven. Christ who came to life again after He was dead gives us a new life like His by His resurrection.

Let's see if we can understand that. Is it just a matter of our saying, "Well, He did it--He came to life again; so we can too?" That doesn't prove anything, does it? Have you ever tried to walk along the top of a fence, a high board fence, the kind that Tom

Sawyer had to whitewash? It's a pretty narrow place to walk, and awfully high. Well, if you saw another boy, a little older than you, climb up and balance carefully, and then ever so slowly walk the whole length of that fence, would you decide, "He did it. So I can too?" You might say it--but it's not really that simple, is it? He did it and that proves it can be done, but it doesn't prove that it can be done by you.

St. Peter must mean something else when he says we can have a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. A boy who walks a fence does it just for the fun of it--or to show off--but Jesus wouldn't have come to earth and have died and have risen only to show us He could. There's more to the resurrection than just a fact. There is an act of God there. Back of it all is the great mercy of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The resurrection is part of all that God was doing to save us from sin. When Jesus rose from the dead, it proved He had done everything necessary to raise us up from being "dead in sins." That's why His resurrection gives us a living hope. Jesus wasn't showing off, or showing us how to do something; He was doing something for us. It was more as though He had picked us up and carried us the whole length of the fence. When He got to the end, He would have carried us there, too! When He got His life back, He had done everything to give us the new life, too! His living gives us life and our living hope!

But there's more.

B. We have a living hope because by Holy Baptism we have been given a new birth.

St. Peter says, "By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope." This says the same thing, you see, but it says it in a different way. By Baptism God has us born over again to be alive with His kind of life--and back of that Baptism is Christ's resurrection, His death, His life, everything He did to change us from being dead as sinners to being alive as the children of God. When Jesus said we should be baptized, He wasn't just giving us an illustration and saying, "It would be good if you would wash away your sins like water washes away dirt." He really washed away our sins. He wasn't just saying, "It would be nice if you were washed as clean as a brand new baby after his bath." He really made us brand new people when we were baptized. We were born anew. We started a new way of living, with His life in us.

Do you wonder about that sometimes? If you were baptized as a little baby you can't even remember when it happened, much less understand how it happened. So it's not surprising that you might wonder whether it happened. Do you wonder how Baptism could put a new life in you? Well, you wonder about how you could be born as a baby, too, don't you? You don't remember being born as a human person either. But you don't start an argument about that. Your mother told you you were born and that's that. If I were to come up to you while you were jumping rope or playing ball and ask, "Do you know whether you were born?" why, you'd laugh! You'd say, "Of course I was born. How could I be jumping rope, or how could I have hit that two-bagger if I weren't born?"

It's the same way with being born again by Holy Baptism and getting new life by all Jesus did for us in His death and resurrection. There's no point arguing. God says you have, and God is the one who made you be born again. When God says the Resurrection and Baptism put the life of God in you, there's no point in wondering if it's true. It's true, all right. There is a lot of point in living that life, God's kind of life, just as much point as there is in playing ball and jumping rope. And when you do love God, and like to do things the way He wants you to, and when you are kind to others in your grade and thoughtful about your folks, it proves you have God's life in you. How could you be doing God's kind of things if you didn't have God's kind of life in you? It's happened. All that Jesus did for you has made it as though He came out of the grave and has come to live inside of you, in your mind and your heart.

Just by the way, you should remember to take care of that new life, too. When your mother tells you, "You have to take care of your body; eat your vegetables; get to bed on time," you may not always want to, but you know you should. And when God tells you to take care of His life in you, you should, too. That's what this Sunday is telling you. "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word." Those are words from the next chapter of this same letter from St. Peter. He tells you to want the Word of God just as a baby wants milk "that you may grow thereby." You eat because it tastes good--but you eat to grow, too. That's why God gives us His Word--"that you may grow up to salvation." God's Word is everything that God uses to work up the new life in you--it's the Bible; it's Baptism; it's the Holy Communion in which some of you

will soon be ready to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord; it's everything God has done in Jesus Christ, all the way to His resurrection. "Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation; for you have tasted the kindness of the Lord."

Now let's go back for one more reason we can be sure ours is a living hope.

St. Peter tells us

C. We have a living hope because we have a certain inheritance.

How would you like to have a rich relative die and leave you an inheritance of a hundred thousand dollars? A million dollars? Well, God tells us we have received a much better inheritance than that when Jesus died and rose again. "We have been born anew to a living hope . . . and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." No wonder ours is a living hope. We already have the inheritance that Jesus died to get for us.

That's better than inheritances here on earth. Sometimes a child inherits a lot of money, but by the time he is grown up the money has all been spent, or it's been stolen, and there's nothing left for him. But that won't happen to our inheritance. It's "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you."

Did you read about the two college students who won a brand new convertible in a contest? They drove the car from the display room back to the campus, and on the way they ran off the road and smashed the car on a tree. That's what can happen to things you are given on earth. But what God has given us--the new life by the resurrection of Christ--that will never be destroyed. That's how living our hope is, how certain, how wonderful.

But there's even more. Not only is our inheritance being kept for us, but we are being kept for it! "By God's power we are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." If the new convertible had turned over and then bounced right side up again without even a scratch, but both the students had been killed, it would have been even

worse than if only the car had been smashed. If our inheritance were being kept for us, but we were not being "guarded for salvation" our hope wouldn't be very sure. But ours is a living hope! God is keeping us and our inheritance.

Did any of you go to see the movie "The Shaggy Dog"? If you got to the theater when everyone was out of school, you know there was a line about two blocks long waiting to get in to see the show. Well, if you were at the end of that line, you'd be worried. You'd be saying, "What if, by the time we get up to the ticket office, they say there is no more room?" But what if you had a friend who was already inside who had promised to hold a seat for you? You'd have a living hope. You'd say, "I don't have to worry. My seat is saved." That's how living your hope is. Jesus Christ has gone on to heaven and He is saving a place for you. That is His promise.

But there's more to it. You already have your ticket, a reserved seat. You might be impatient, having to stand in line. You might say, "Why do I have to wait so long before I get to go in?" but you wouldn't be concerned about it. That's what St. Peter is saying about our living hope. Christ has gone on to prepare a place for us in heaven, but He left us a sure promise, a reserved place! We're impatient sometimes because we have to wait so long for heaven, but we're not hopeless. Even when we feel like crying for no reason, even when things are really rough, we're happy because we have a place that's certain. We have a living hope through faith in His living again. No wonder St. Peter says, "In this you rejoice." I should hope so.

But St. Peter continues with the second point. "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials. . . ." You have a living hope, but you're also going to be living for weeks and weeks if God permits you to. What you want is hopeful living. Jesus promised, "Because I live, you shall live also." Also--does that mean only in heaven? or also here? Are our problems only going to be solved after we die?

What if there were a boy who was afraid of the water, but he wanted very much to swim. Would it do any good if someone told him, "Go ahead--jump in. You'll drown--but you won't be afraid of the water any more"? It would be true--but that's a pretty rough way to cure

being afraid of the water! Jesus told us better things. He said, "Lo I am with you always, to the close of the age" (St. Matthew 28:20). His coming to life while He was still with us on earth is the promise that we will win out over all our troubles here on earth, too.

II. Ours is hopeful living--by faith in His living again.

We can live hopefully even in trials because

A. Trials build up our faith and make it grow strong.

St. Peter tells us, "For a while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold, which, though perishable, is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." It's a lot like wanting strong muscles. Do you get muscles by sitting down on a sofa all day long and not moving? No--you get them by exercising those muscles. Now sometimes fellows complain--girls do, too--about all the hard jobs they have to do at home. If the boys have to push the lawn mower, that's terrible. That's a trial. But it's by pushing the lawn mower you get the strong muscles you want. That's true about house cleaning, too. It isn't always easy to remember, but hard work helps make you a healthy person, a strong person.

God is making us become persons of strong, healthy faith through the sad things and the rough things that happen to us. When men want to make pure gold, they heat the metal to white heat to burn away all the impurities. If you were a piece of gold, would you want to be bright and shiny--or would you be content to be a dirty looking stone? You'd say, "That fire is terribly hot, but I know at the end I'll be pure gold; and I want terribly to be pure gold," and you'd welcome the heat. St. Peter tells you that just as you can have happiness while your muscles are being exercised, so you can have a hopeful life while your faith is being exercised.

There's another reason for rejoicing even in trials.

B. Trials give us the opportunity to hear our Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

You remember that Jesus told us about the day of judgment, when God will send those who love Him to heaven? On that day God will say to those who have really lived for Him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." How could God say that to you if there were nothing for you to do all your life long? If you go to a basketball game and just sit in the bleachers and watch the game, does anyone come up to you afterwards and say, "That was a good game you played"? No, they say that to the boys who played. If you want to hear God's "Well done," you'll be ready to face trials, even though they won't quite make you happy, because you know they give you the chance to live the kind of life God calls good and faithful. So yours can be hopeful living, no matter what comes in your life.

Now add all of this sermon up. There are two things that should be different about your life because of Jesus' resurrection. You should have a living hope and you should have a hopeful life. Well, do you? After every problem in arithmetic, you prove the answer to make sure it's correct. You can use the last words of this text to prove whether you have a living hope and a hopeful life.

"Without having seen Him, we love Him." You've never seen Jesus. How does it happen that you love Him? You do, don't you? God has given you a new life by His resurrection and your Baptism, that's how you've come to love Him. You're passing the test!

Try another. "Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy." How about that? You can't see Jesus here with us, alive and risen from the dead. But you're happy about it, aren't you? You're glad that Jesus is alive and with you always? That proves it--you have a living hope because you believe that Jesus is risen from the dead, Jesus who said, "Because I live, you shall live also." And you can always have a hopeful life, because, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "As the outcome of your faith, you obtain the salvation of your souls."

You have a living hope for eternity. Now make sure that all next week yours is a hopeful life. He lives and we should, too, in Him!

Assisting the Worship Concentration
During a Service

Because God's service is so large and the child's attention span is so small, brief reminders during the Liturgy are helpful in a Family Service. Following the sermon given as a sample in this appendix, Hymn 207 in The Lutheran Hymnal was to be sung during the distribution of Holy Communion. A reminder such as the following would serve as an aid to worship concentration:

The sermon reminded us that we have a living hope and can have hopeful living because of our Lord's resurrection. During the distribution of the Lord's Supper it is everyone's special task to keep talking with God, worshiping Him. Hymn 207 is a prayer. Pray it as you sing it. There is one line that talks about our living hope--see if you think about it as you sing the hymn.

Reminders such as this should not be too frequent. The referee's whistle can spoil a game if it is blown too frequently. What is more, cultic, liturgical material should be polysemous, capable of conveying meanings ranging from the simple to the profound. The pastor's mood can not determine the worship response of every member. But over the course of a year reminders such as this can accent the worshiper's need to apply the Word to himself, to reply in mind and word to God, and to supply to others the upbuilding Gospel.

APPENDIX C

AN APPROACH TO CONDUCTING CHILDREN'S WORSHIP IN A SCHOOL

The ideal situation suggested in this thesis would be a worship period conducted by the pastor in the Church each morning during the school week. Three accents would be present in these devotional periods. One would be directed at instructing the children in the understanding of worship and helping them actively participate in it. The second would be a stress on the festivals and seasons to help them learn to live the yearly round of the Church's life. The third would involve sacramental material based on the six chief parts of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, always presented with the objective of stimulating a sacrificial response.

The following examples are samples of the instructional, or the sacramental, material that might be presented in school devotions. The stress on an understanding of various acts of worship and a familiarity with the Church year is indicated in these sermons. This instruction is designed to be presented in a framework of worship and should bring the impetus of the Word of God to bear on children who would then be given the opportunity to make a sacrificial response in the remainder of the service.

The devotions assume participation on the part of the children. Questioning is employed to hold attention and to initiate thought. When questions are included, the dots are intended to indicate time for answers from the listening children. In an atmosphere relaxed, yet devotional, both learning and worship can proceed.

Week of 15th After Trinity

(Tuesday)

What's the first thing you ask a new boy who comes to your school or into your neighborhood? . . . One of the first things you'd like to know would be his name. He would say, "John" or whatever his name would be. Then you would say, "John what?" And then he would say, "John William." And then you would say, "John William what?" And he would say, "John William Johnson." After he had told you his three names you would feel, "Now I know him better. I know what to call him."

This isn't a perfect illustration, but we can do something like this to help you try to know God better. Today let's pretend we're coming up to God and asking Him, "What's your name?" We know He is God even though it's hard to understand exactly what He is like, so let's begin to find out what He is like by finding out more about His name.

"What's your name, God?" Then pretend God would answer that question out loud. "My name is Father, God the Father." Then we'd say, "What's your middle name?" and we can pretend that God answers, "God the Son." And then we'd ask again, "What's your last name?" And God might answer us, "God the Holy Ghost."

Really God has answered those questions of ours in the Holy Bible. "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," we hear those words over and over. We use them in a very special way in our buildings and church designs. Look around the chapel and count how many things you see that are arranged in threes. There are three lancets in the windows, the altar has three panels. Now some others. . . . Think of the symbols

on the altar paraments. There are triangles and three circles. Sometimes there are three crosses. All of them remind us that God has told us He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Just because you know a person's name, you don't really know the person. If there were a new boy in your neighborhood, you would like to know other things about him. What is he like? Is he strong and can he make things with you? can he help you when you need help? does he like you? If you're swimming and suddenly need help, will he jump in to save you when you yell, "John!"

So with God--knowing His three names is a beginning in our knowing about Him; but we will understand Him better when we know what God does. When we learn that God is the strongest ever, who made everything and who helps you do everything good you do; how God saw we needed help to be with Him and please Him and sent God the Son to save us even before we called for help; how God sends His Spirit to us to give us all the good ideas we ever get and the strength to do the good things. God is wonderful. It's worth while getting to know God! That's what we'll talk about in chapel in the coming weeks.

We ought to remember all the time that it must be God who tells us about Himself. You can watch a new boy and find out things about him even if he doesn't tell you his name. But remember God is a Spirit. We can't see Him, and so we have to learn about Him from things that He shows us. Be ready to listen to what He says about Himself and to look at the things He shows us about Himself in the Bible. Don't try to tell God what He is like. Let Him tell you!

That is a good reminder for praying time, too, for God tells us, "Be still and know that I am God." Let's be very quiet for a moment, and then we will offer our prayers. Who will take the "thank you" prayers? . . . the "sorry" prayers? . . . the "prayers for others"? . . . the prayers for ourselves? . . .

Now we'll be quiet, but it will be an important quiet because we will be remembering that God is God!

Cantate Week

(Tuesday)

We are connected with Jesus our Lord. If we are really connected with Him, then we will go where He goes. We will be where He is. When He goes to heaven we will be sure that we will go there, too. Our Lord said, "Where I am there shall also my servants be." This is the thing that we would like to think about today, especially remembering about our dying and rising again.

Yesterday we said that the living Jesus is our power in life. We said it was like a train, pulled by a locomotive. What is it that makes the locomotive go? . . . The steam is the power, it is the thing that makes the "choo choo" noise that drives the wheels and pulls the train along. We could ask the question this way--what is it that makes the caboose go? . . . If you say the engine, then I will ask what makes the engine go? Finally the answer is "The caboose goes because of the steam in the engine." In the same way all of us who are connected to Jesus, like cars are connected to the locomotive, are able to live because Jesus lives. The life of Jesus Christ is our power to live. Because Jesus rose from the dead, after dying for our forgiveness and our eternal life, we too are alive. We are moved along by the moving life of Jesus who rose from the dead.

What would you say is the thing that connects us with Jesus? . . . Every car is connected to the car in front of him and finally connected to the locomotive. What connects us with Jesus? . . . There are a number of things that are right. You could say "The Holy Spirit is the one who connects us." That would be correct because it is the spirit of God who gives us the things that we need to hold on to Jesus. Somebody says, "Just hold on to Jesus." Well, how can you hold on to Him? You can't see Him, can you? You can't touch Him, can you? How are you able to hold on to Him? Here the answers would be faith, or believing, or love.

How do we know we have hold, that He is pulling? The Holy Spirit changes us to be the kind of person who loves Jesus and believes in Him. And as soon as we believe in Him, we know He is up there moving us. If a freight car is fastened to the middle of a train, it may not be able to see the locomotive, but as soon as the train begins to move, the freight car is sure

that the engine is up there. It may not be able to see it, but it's able to feel it pull the freight car. That's about the same way that we are sure that our Lord Jesus Christ is moving us, is really alive, is really the Son of God. We know inside of us that it is true. The Bible tells us this is the voice of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with us that Jesus is really God's Son and our living Savior. As He moves us He gives us faith. Our faith, or our love, or our believing in Jesus is the thing that couples us, that fastens us on to our Lord who moves us.

In the Apostles' Creed we say it in the last part about the Holy Ghost. Let's stand and say it together, and you hold up your hand as soon as we get to the part that shows how we are connected with our Lord. "I believe in the Holy Ghost (some of you are holding up your hands now because the Holy Ghost connects us); the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints (some of you are holding up your hands now because when we are made saints we become part of the train, the union of all those who are made holy by Jesus); the forgiveness of sins (some of you are holding up your hands now because we have our sins forgiven; that shows that we have faith in Christ, that we believe in Him, that we love Him)." All of this part of the Creed is talking about the way we are fastened together and to Jesus. The Holy Christian Church is one long line of saints connected together to the living Jesus Christ. Where He goes we go. Because He lives we live. Where He is there we will also be.

Now imagine that the top of this pew screen is the track. Here is a long train. I'll take this hymn book and open it up on top of the track. Now what does it look like? . . . This is a tunnel. Imagine that it is a long tunnel in which the train would be completely hidden. Now you can see the train going into the tunnel. After a while you will see the engine come out. Now what about the rest of the cars? . . . What can you be pretty sure about them? . . . They're going to come out, too; because they are fastened to the engine they will make it along the way, too.

That's exactly what we can believe about Jesus, ourselves and the grave. We remember that Jesus went into the grave after He had died for our sins. But on the third day He rose again from the dead. Now we are fastened to Jesus, connected with Him by faith. We are going to die, too. When our life is ended, either

as a young person or as an old person, we too will die and will be buried. But we can be just as sure about ourselves as we are about the train. Just as Jesus came out of the grave, so we will come out of the grave. Just as He rose from the dead, so we will rise from the dead. Now we could say the rest of that part of the Creed. Hold up your hand when we come to that part that talks about our following Jesus out of the grave. "I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body"--this is the part. We believe our bodies will be raised up from the grave. We will live with Jesus forever and ever.

Today our prayer is one to which we will have to pay particular attention. We're going to be thanking God that we are going to be living with Him forever. But when will you start to live with Him? Just when you die--just at Judgment Day? Why waste today? Today we should begin to live with Him. So we will thank Him for being permitted to live with Him forever, but will ask Him especially to help us live with Him and for Him today.

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