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ORTHODOX-CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF CHILDREN  
IN OUR DAYS.



Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N. Y.

1960



## ORTHODOX-CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN OUR DAYS.

*With us everything else should be secondary compared to our concern with children and their upbringing in the instruction and teaching of the Lord.*

St. John the Chrysostom.

We read daily in our newspapers of crimes committed by juveniles. Violence, murders by teenagers of their own parents, brothers and sisters, — these never were committed to such a degree as in our time.

I now recall one especially shocking crime.

Four youths found on a bench in a park a person they had never met before. Without any reason they attacked him, beat him up severely, burned his legs with cigarettes, tortured him, and finally drowned him.

They committed this crime through some kind of perversion in their natures, as seekers of strong sensations. And they went into the park namely with the intension of finding a sacrifice for their sadism.

Naturally, the suspicion arose that they were mentally abnormal. However, the newspapers soon reported that these youths externally were completely normal. They were not drug addicts, did not originate from the dregs of society, but were children, it would seem, of completely normal, well established families.

Their parents spoke of them as being good boys, their mental development in school was estimated to be above the average level.

Whence such sadism, whence such criminal, unreasonable cruelty?

There is something frightening about the spiritual state of the young generation, in whom we see an increasing number of such manifestations.

In a book with stunning facts, "1,000,000 Delinquents" (by Benjamin Fine, the World Publ. Co., 1955), the frightful numbers of criminals are given, mostly teenager and minors.

In 1952 there were 400,000 of these prosecuted. Between 1948 and 1953 their number increased by 45%. According to the calculations of the author, if the growth of crime continues at the same rate, in 1960 there can already be 750,000 trials, and if one adds to this the cases not coming to trial, the number of minor criminals could reach the menacing figure of 2,250,000. Recently the newspapers reported that in a Senate Committee in Washington it was announced that from 1948 to 1957 the number of children in the U.S.A. increased by 25%, while the number of youths who have been accused of something in trials increased almost 150%. In 1957 there were 603,000 delinquents on trial. "We are fast nearing the time when 2,000,000 will appear on trials for delinquents", said senator Hennings (The New York Times, Febr. 13, 1959). But to these figures one should add young people with crippled moral make up, themselves suffering and causing others to suffer, although not caught in criminal acts reaching the police authorities.

How and under what influence do these unfortunate youths grow up?

One cannot help but seek the answer in the environmental conditions, and in the direction and methods of contemporary education.

Never before have there been written so many books and articles concerning the education of children and their psychology, as in our time.

An attempt is being made to approach children with complete knowledge of their nature, both psychic and physical. Innumerable investigations of children's psychology are being

conducted, all their qualities and stages of development are being analyzed in hopes of resolving in this manner the problem of the bringing up of a spiritually wholesome generation.

But too many schools of thought exist in the field of pedagogy, psychiatry and now popular psychoanalysis. And, it seems, the more specialists try to find better ways of educating children, the more alarm do the latter arouse in society.

Unfortunately, the influence of the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, tells to a greater or lesser degree on all contemporary theories. And that is why we must say a few words about him.

When in the ninth decade of the last century Freud began to publish the results of his investigative work, to many it looked like some kind of revelation. Many began to think that he really did find a key which opens the way to an understanding and investigation at any rate of the majority of psycho-neuroses, if not all psychic disturbances.

Freud was an atheist. It should be quite evident that this limited his understanding of spiritual problems. There were many things which he did not see, was not able to see, or did not wish to see. In other cases he saw things in a crooked mirror, although perhaps he really tried to be an objective scientist.

Psychoanalysis, which was founded by him, originates from the supposition that all difficulties related to surrounding society, and arising in the course of a human being's life, are based on some unexpressed internal conflict situated in the subconscious.

Here then, it is necessary for us to clarify and explain, what namely the realm of the subconscious is understood to mean according to psychoanalysis.

Human thinking is carried on at two levels: at the conscious and in the unconscious. There is no definite boundary between the two. Graphically this is represented by a line which divides the brain into two parts — the upper and the lower. In the upper, or conscious part of the brain, all that is necessary for directing the current activity of a human being is concentrated, and the fruits of experience from one's life pass into the subconscious realm, whence when necessary they again pass into the conscious part of the brain through association of ideas and memory. The subconscious therefore is like a

great storehouse of experience and experienced feelings of an individual that have been written into the book of his life. All perceptions, all experienced emotions, all ideas, judgments and completed actions are recorded there exactly and in detail, as on a tape of a tape-recorder, or film of a movie camera. I spoke of this in greater detail in my article: "The Orthodox Family under

→ Although psychoanalysis contains the word "soul" (psyche)  
↳ Contemporary Conditions".

in its terminology, it concentrates its research on the functions of the brain; but we, of course, know that mysteriously related with the latter is an invisible soul which makes up part of our personality. One should take for granted that much of that which psychiatrists relate to the functions of the subconscious part of the brain, actually belongs not only or not so much to the brain, as to the soul itself.

When a person is hypnotized, the conscious part of the brain is induced to sleep and rendered inactive, and the hypnotizer himself, as it were, replaces it, giving these or other suggestions to the subconscious part of the brain, which never sleeps and which in turn relays them to the various organs of motor activity and feeling.

Orthodox asceticism through the voluntary subjection of oneself to God, and through constant prayer, carried on not only consciously, but also subconsciously (i. e. "mental or inner prayer of Jesus Christ") concentrates in the subconscious realm of experiences, ideas and feelings of grace, and in such a manner makes the ascetic internally unified in his striving towards God.

But the subconscious realm can also be, so to say, a storehouse of sinful experiences and feelings that cannot be fully reconciled with by the soul and conscience, which are guided by certain definite moral principles (ideals). And further, in the interaction of the two parts of the brain, the opposite phenomenon may also take place: when the good that dwells in the soul and subconscious struggles with the sinful movements of conscious thought before a human being accepts the sin that is suggested by it.

This internal struggle may lead to devastating consequences in the human soul, especially if sin opens to the devil a way of controlling human thought, which we then call possession by the devil, and which, of course, psychiatrists-positivists do

not recognize as such. The result of internal conflict are abnormal manifestations, which serve as objects of investigation to psychiatrists, for whom Freud, as it were, revealed the existence in man of the realm of subconscious.

In our times, the cause of this conflict is most frequently ascribed to the repression of sexual drives.

In truth, the struggle with such drives is actually the field where the majority of these fatalities occur. In Christianity this struggle is inspired by one's striving to maintain moral and spiritual purity, without which our union with God is impossible.

Through prayer, love and labour for the glory of God, our physical instincts are, as it were, transfigured. In addition, abstinence in our spiritual life is an indispensable tool for the enlightenment of our natures, if it is observed voluntarily and in the name of love for God.

Outside of this, abstinence from passions (drives) turns out to be an imposed or external law, an inexorable rule of decorum, and then it becomes a heavy burden for the human being.

Psychoanalysis usually regards abstinence only from this latter point of view. Not entering into the evaluation of one's passions, psychoanalysis has as its aim to remove the suffering which is caused by the internal struggle of the human being, to calm him, to reconcile him with the passion living within him, indicating to him a way in which he may live undisturbed in society, not violating its external laws of propriety but, at the same time, neither judging one's passion nor renouncing it.

The overcoming of passions and sin is thought to be necessary only as far as the person being possessed by them abnormally does harm to others or to his health. It follows, therefore, that passions are not subject to extirpation. The limitation of their gratification is essentially determined not so much by the higher moral principles, as by practical considerations.

Psychoanalysis advocates life guided by instincts, the repression of which in its view is abnormal and threatens to give rise to dangerous inner conflicts.

From here follows the advocacy of early teaching of sexual physiology to children, and the encouragement of early

manifestations of romantic relationships between young boys and girls, of which today many wise parents complain.

This advocacy is a result of a presumption, that sooner or later passions are bound to master the human being. Therefore, to protect him from too stormy a development of them, it is deemed necessary to acquaint him gradually and as early as possible in life with the field in which these passions usually become inflamed. Actually, if by so doing, such an aim is reached, then, from the Christian moral point of view, children are not benefited but harmed, for they early become acquainted with sin, while chastity remains unknown to them.

For clarification of the problems related to the subject of the current report, there is no need for us to delve any deeper into the rather morbid field of psychoanalysis.

Having given a general outline of the aims which it poses for itself, I touched upon this field only for the purpose of clearing whether or not it can serve as a real means for restoring spiritual-moral wholesomeness to humanity. Of course, the answer in essence has to be negative. However, in its study of human nature, psychoanalysis in its various theories still discloses certain data that are useful to us.

First of all, one should note that even atheistic Freud scientifically revealed the presence in humans of a kind of spiritual life which in its essence is concealed from materialists. His opponents revealed still more significant signs of it in man. Some of them came to the conclusion that religious feeling is innate in every human being. Jung said that those who do not see this — are blind.

Freud and his school, both those faithful to him, as well as those who rebelled against his teaching, were not able to see the complete picture, because they analyzed the mentality of people with natures damaged by sin, devoid of inner unity, who therefore could not have a true standard of normality.

This is a very important aspect of the problem, because one can hardly find a clear conception of this norm even amongst those psychologists who seek in psychoanalysis ways of overcoming child delinquency. They see various deviations away from the norm, but are unable to correct them because they do not know what the norm itself is. Thus, in listening to a choir one can notice that there is something wrong with the singing, but not being a choirmaster and not knowing the work being

performed, it is possible only to determine that this or another voice is not singing right, but it is not possible to show exactly how it should sound.

The representatives of the leading school of psychologists and pedagogues even when they are not followers of Freud are unable to free themselves of this method of thinking. Hence the primitiveness and superficiality, from our point of view, of their conclusions regarding the causes of sickness in the young generation and methods of its treatment.

The so-called "Oedipus Complex" (unconscious love of children for the parent of the opposite sex), maladjustment of the family, some type of grave experience of early temptation in sexuality, — these are the main reasons that psychologists give for explaining the disequilibrium in contemporary youth. Rarely is it understood, that in many cases these temptations would have passed without grave consequences for the psyche, or would not have been as strong in their influence if from infancy up there had been a right religious formation of the soul — a formation which helps to overcome the most difficult internal conflicts which arise under the influence of the surrounding environment. From here comes the exaggerated significance that is attributed to sports, which is supposed to be a means of discharging energy and thereby diverting away from all deviations from the norm. However, investigations carried on by the Institute of Human Relations at Yale University, edited under the title of "New Light on Delinquency and its Treatment" (William Healy, M. D., August F. Bonner, Ph. D.), came to an interesting conclusion: "participation in active sports, the investigators write, is often thought of as preventative of delinquency, but our studies show that more delinquents than controls engaged in swimming and skating or played football, baseball etc. . ." (Pg. 72).

Education founded on the principles of psychoanalysis is not able to raise the level of morality, because psychoanalysis, sometimes almost claiming to occupy the place of religion, actually has no firm religious or moral basis. In psychoanalysis the criteria for a norm in relation to each man turns out in each case to be the given man himself with all his sins and insufficiencies, but only in that state of calm which comes after overcoming all the conflicts that had arisen within his consciousness. In psychoanalysis an attempt is made to overcome and re-



move the conflict, after having lulled the conscience to sleep and reconciled man with the sin living within himself. It is for this reason that the very profound critic of psychoanalysis, Arvid Runestam, in the book "Psychoanalysis and Christianity" (Augustine Press, 1958), notes not without reason that in theory and practise psychoanalysis in general is a mighty herald of the right to a life directly controlled by instinct". "It is not as if it means, he writes, that all morality is evil per se. But morality presents itself more as a necessary evil than as a positive good" (Pg. 37).

For this reason the cause of the increase in criminality and methods of combating it are sought outside the problem of sin and the overcoming of sin in man.

But the fall of the first human beings brought sin into the very life of man, into the nature of each one of us, introducing a division into it, which is overcome only with the help of grace.

Saint John of Damaskus indicates on the one hand the work within each one of us of the law of God, which enters into our minds and attracts the mind to itself, renewing our conscience and, on the other hand, — the law of sin, i. e. the suggestion of the evil one, which enters our life through bodily desire and inclination and motions, and puts the unwise part of our soul into a state of struggle with the law of conscience. Even though man desires the Law of God and loves it, the devil, through the pleasure of physical gratification and through carnal desire, seduces and convinces one to become a slave of sin (Exact Exposition of Faith, Book 4, chap. XXII).

Concerning this division Apostle Paul speaks convincingly: .... "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present within me; but **how** to perform that which is good I find not... I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Romans 7, 18, 21-23).

And it is namely this internal division present in every sinful man that is overcome by the ascetic exploit of true Christian living, whose aim is the attainment of such a state that life in Christ is realized almost without any internal con-

flict, so that the just man together with Apostle Paul can say: "... not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2, 20).

One should note a certain artificiality in the choice of subjects upon whom psychoanalytic experiments have been and are being conducted. In an overwhelming majority of cases these are people in whom sin has to a significant degree disrupted internal wholeness of feeling. It is not known to us what the conclusion of psychologists would have been had they subjected to psychoanalysis normal church men, and the more so, saints. Undoubtedly this would have provided them with data which would have appeared completely extraordinary to them and offering an entirely new standard of normality.

Psychoanalysts forget or do not know that man was created sinless, and, therefore, that which is normal for his nature one ought to recognize as the state of Adam before his sinful fall. Sin led man away from the normal, and, consequently, the more sinful he is the more abnormal does he become, although externally this may not be noticeable, because we now judge people by an entirely different standard. He who does not stand out from a surrounding society diseased with sin is represented to us as being normal.

In early Christian society "neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4, 32). When Barnabas, having sold his land, brought the money and placed it at the feet of the Apostle (Acts 4, 36-37), this was a normal act for that society. On the other hand, a man who would have acted similarly in our "bedeviled" and egoistic society would have been considered abnormal by many. In 1946 a certain rich man in Brooklyn distributed 3,500 dollars in his restaurant. For this he was sent to a hospital for examination. On the contrary, in our society a man who directs all his energies in the direction of only making profits is considered completely normal, even if he does it at the expense of his neighbours.

Likewise, fornication in early Christian society was a phenomenon so contradictory to the norm, that Apostle Paul directed the Corinthians not to associate with him, who, calling himself a brother, i. e. a Christian, remains a fornicator (1 Corinthians 5, 9-10). Today, however, on the contrary, many consider such a sin so common, that in their toleration of it they are not far removed from the heathen contemporaries of

Apostle Paul, and Church authorities sometimes have occasion to meet opposition to the sections of the Church statute which denies the right of vote in local church councils to those who live in unlawful cohabitation.

Recently I learned of a characteristic case in an American school. A 16 year old Russian girl is the leading student according to her progress in learning and general development. At the same time she is very modest, does not use cosmetics and does not have a boy-friend. In general, she is an example of the ordinary chaste orthodox girl, like those we used to see everywhere in previous times in Russia as a most common, normal phenomenon, and of which evidently there are not a small number even at the present time. The teachers several times told this girl that it is necessary to have a boy-friend, but she did not listen to them, not seeing any necessity for this.

Finally, the teachers came to her parents and tried through them to influence this pupil, saying that her behaviour indicates a certain abnormality.

Here is a clear example of how corrupt can be the conception of the norm in the realm of morality and education.

And so, when we speak of the right development of the Christian and his bringing up, we first of all should come to terms regarding the **s t a n d a r d** which we want to realize in life.

At the present time there acutely stands before all parents the question of what direction they should take in the education of their children.

Alas, one sometimes has occasion to hear such opinions from immigrants: we live far away from our Homeland, in an entirely different environment. It is necessary that our children not be brought up alien to it. The most important thing is not to poison their life either by internal conflicts or external difficulties. For the sake of this they are willing to sacrifice their church life. Parents who think in such a manner should not be surprised if their children take on the worst habits from their surrounding society and thus lose the firm basis of orthodox morality.

Christian formation of the human being should not depend upon the surrounding environment. The first Christians were isolated, however they overcame the influence of the heathen world with which it was impossible not to associate.

Apostle Paul recognized the unavoidable of associating to a certain degree with the wicked members of this world. Cautioning Christians against association with fornicators, he stresses that he has in view only those who pretend to belong to the Church, but not a prohibition of associating "altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of this world" (1 Corinthians 5, 10).

Thus, the Apostle does not pose before us demands which we are unable to fulfill. It is impossible to live in this world and not to associate with its component people. However, Christians can lead a cultural life separated from that of the surrounding society. This is precisely what the Apostle is exhorting us to do. He allows for the association with people of different morals, but wants us to understand that they are, as it were, alien to us, that association with them must bear the character of practical cooperation, but not spiritual unity. We live amongst them and it is impossible for us not to associate with them, but we have to guard our soul and heart from their influence.

The superficial character of our mutual relation with them is stressed by Apostle Paul in that he does not forbid association with wicked people as long as they do not belong to the Church. A depraved member of the Church is more responsible and can more easily influence Her children and seduce them. In addition the very depravity itself, if it is firmly rooted in him, makes him in essence alien to the Church, and that is why the Apostle gives such a severe sentence: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5, 13).

The task of orthodox parents is to aid in the development in their children of Christian feelings and consciousness from the earliest period of their lives no matter under what conditions they may be.



There is nothing more attractive than a pure, unspoiled infant. It is not in vain that the Saviour set up as an ideal standard for Christians the purity of a child. We read in the Gospel: "And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them and said: verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18, 2-3).

But on the other hand how horrible it is to see a child who as a result of incorrect development begins to lose the holy qualities of a chaste infant and develops in himself the beginnings of sin!

Here one should return to the words of St. John of Damaskus. Let us recall that this Holy Father speaks of the law of sin, that enters our life through carnal lust, physical inclination and movement of the body and sets the unwise part of our soul into a state of struggle with the law of conscience.

According to observations by a series of experienced physicians, a child from two years up already clearly expresses internal conflicts. His difficulties arise from the fact that he enters the field of contradiction. He often has to make a choice between two opposite stimuli (Arnold Geselle and Francis D. Ilg, and others at Yale University, "The Child from Five to Ten", Harper and Brothers Publ. N. Y., 1946, p. 54).

A child still does not possess a conscious sinful will, but satanic temptation already begins to penetrate early into that which St. John of Damaskus calls "the unwise part of the soul".

Thus, the formation of a human being or a moral individual begins very early, and, moreover, the behaviour of the infant is inextricably linked with his whole nervous system and in general with his whole organism according to the degree of its growth and development.

It is not in vain that since ancient times an expectant mother was very carefully protected from all nervous shocks. The moral state of a mother is most intimately related to her physical organism through the nervous system and in like manner it is also far from being indifferent with regard to the growing infant in her womb.

It should be noticed that the most Holy Virgin Mary, as well as many of the greatest saints, having manifested qualities of holiness up from their childhood, as Saint John the Baptist, were born of mothers who obtained them through prayers to God, and who in like manner carried them through to birth in continual and earnest prayer.

The nature of a child, prepared by the faith of the parents, very early becomes capable of accepting the conception of the existence of God and of respecting Him as a Heavenly Father. On the other hand, very often depraved behaviour in the mother during pregnancy gravely affects the whole psychic development of the infant which she is to bear.

The positivists reject as untrue any inborn capacity of children to cherish faith in God. However, even atheist Freud in a certain sense had to accept it. Freud recognized that in childhood everybody has a conception of an Omnipotent Father, who rewards for good deeds and punishes for evil ones. But Freud tried to explain this away by his idea of the so-called "Primal Father", considering God to be a product of imagination and an illusion.

In his work, "The Future of an Illusion", Freud gives as an explanation for the existence of the conception of an omnipotent God, characteristic of everybody in their childhood, the common, worldly struggles in a human being's life and fear before impending death. A human being, from his point of view, seeks consolation and security. There forms in him a rich store of ideas which arise from the need of making one's helplessness endurable. The terrible effect of infantile helplessness calls forth the need for defense — defense in love — which is realized in the father throughout his entire life, and the discovery that this helplessness will be felt throughout life calls forth the necessity of clinging to the existence of a father, but this time to One more mighty than the natural father. In such a manner, according to Freud, arises the conception of a benevolent ruling by Divine Providence.

The whole idea is superficial and its philosophical insubstantiality has been brought out by many authors. Freud in essence was neither a philosopher nor a religious thinker, and all the more so since his personal disbelief made him incapable of understanding the truths of faith.

But as an investigator of human consciousness and especially the subconscious, he was unable not to notice the inborn existence of faith in man up from infancy. Freud wanted to give this fact an atheistic explanation, reckoning that, in having called the idea of God primitive, he by that would establish its insubstantiality. Actually though, the weakness and figmental nature of his theory is obvious to all. However, laying aside his insubstantial explanation, we receive the substantiation of a fact most important for us, that up from childhood faith is present in man. The recognition of this by Freud is all the more valuable in that this fact established by his works destroys the whole artificial structure of this godless author.



Besides the inherent capacity to believe in God, man possesses a free will, but this will receives its direction under the influence of numerous factors.

In a very interesting, recently issued book, "Psychiatry and Religious Experience" — a work of two authors, Dr. Louis Lynn and Leon Schwartz, the chapter on religious development in childhood begins with the words: "The experiences of childhood hold the key to all later behaviour, religious or other . . . There are exceptions of course, but the evidence of psychiatry overwhelmingly bears out the close correspondence between childhood experience and adult behaviour" (Pg. 23). And further: "And this being so, we may say that religious feelings and ideas in an adult are not merely the result of reasoning or inspiration. Even when they occur later in life, taking on adult forms and influenced appearingly by none of the person's childhood associates in actual fact they go back to childhood relationships and the unfolding of self and conscience" (on the same page).

This extremely important observation by two learned Jewish psychiatrists confirms what long ago has been evident to Orthodox experience. It refutes old Protestant rationalism. Attributing an exaggerated significance to mind and consciousness, people infected with this rationalism usually do not see the need for religious education until the onset of the conscious period of life. These same authors justly note: "Nothing could be more mistaken than the common parental attitude that religious affiliation should be deferred until the child is "old enough" to make his own decision. To defer affiliation until the school years or adolescence is to by-pass an important developmental phase in the life of the child; it has unfortunate effects, not only on the problem of personal identification but on other psychological problems as well. Our clinical data indicate that parents should make the decision for the child and make it before he has reached the age of five" (the same pages, 33-34).

A non-orthodox but thoughtful contemporary research worker, psychologist Eva Louis also indicates the necessity of early cultivating in children religious feeling and consciousness. She says that at the present time a sin is being committed with respect to children in that it is not accepted as necessary to guide from the earliest possible age the development of their

spirituality. "It is not enough to say, that he must be left to make up his mind for himself on religious matters when he reaches years of discretion. He will have no mind to make up — in this respect at all events — for he will have no foundation of experience, awareness, and requisite information upon which to build" \*).

I shall note in passing, that such a form of action by parents in mixed marriages is usually explained by the following: having felt to what extent the question of choosing a religion for their child can separate them, they put off its decision. As a result it so often happens that children from mixed marriages grow up to be indifferent to religion.

But even if early in his life the child is taught two or three prayers, or even some Biblical narrations, however outside of the Church he remains devoid of that wealth of grace which the Orthodox Church gives him, especially in the Mysteries of baptism, chrismation, and frequent communion of the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

The infant can not understand or acknowledge the significance of Communion. Later he probably will even forget that he ever was brought up to the Holy Chalice, but the grace of the Holy Mystery nevertheless enlightens the depth of his soul and heart, purifying that which Saint John Damaskin calls "the unwise part of the soul".

Concerning this, interesting are the thoughts of the western fifth century writer St. Prosper of Aquitaine.

He says that every human soul is endowed with a will manifesting itself in one way or other. It desires what is pleasant and is repulsed by that which is unpleasant. With regard to its natural impulses, now weakened with the disease of original sin, this will is of two kinds, either animal or natural. But when the grace of God is present, then a third kind of will is added — the gift of the Spirit. The will then becomes spiritual and, thanks to this higher impulse, it controls its own inclinations, no matter where they might arise from, in accordance with the laws of higher wisdom.

"The Animal will, which we may also call carnal, does not rise above the impulse that is born of the bodily senses, as in

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\*) Essay; "Religious Attitude in Children" in the book "Christian Essays in Psychiatry", New York, 1956, pg. 86.



the case of infants. Although these do not have the use of reason, yet they show that they desire some things and do not want others. They, too, have therefore a will of their own. This will may be inexperienced and unable to foresee or to deliberate, but it likes to be busy about objects that flatter the animal senses — until rational nature wakes up to life in them, when the functions of the body are more developed, and is stirred to use the service of its limbs, not at another's bidding but according to its own ruling . . . \*).

From this animal will, which is the only one found in those adults who are insane and remain deprived of the use of reason, man rises to the level of natural will. Though at this stage the will can, before it is guided by the Spirit of God, raise itself above its animal impulses, still, as long as it does not share in divine charity, it busies itself with earthly and perishable things. When led by it at this level, human hearts do not, it is true, undergo the shameful slavery of bodily pleasures, but rule their desires according to the laws of justice and probity" (An appeal to all peoples 1, chapt. 2-4). Only with the aid of love and grace can the will pass over to a higher order and stimulate a man to struggle with one's sinful feelings and impulses.



The observations of Saint Prosper are entirely in agreement with that which Bishop Theophan the Recluse writes about children. In his splendid work, "Path to Salvation", he first of all dwells on the significance of baptism. He states that through baptism a seed of life in Christ is placed in the infant. But it is still not his and acts as a force that forms him. Through the grace of baptism in the infant spiritual life is begotten which, however, becomes his own from the moment when he, having reached consciousness, dedicates himself through free will to God, and through voluntary, joyous and thankful acceptance assimilates the power of grace which he has discovered within himself.

"If, writes Bishop Theophan, in general each seed develops according to its heredity, then the seed of graceful life may also develop in the baptised. If the seed of overcoming sin through appeal to God is placed in him, then it likewise can be developed and grown like other seeds".

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\*) St. Prosper of Aquitaine. Chapter 3. The Animal will.

Bishop Theophan the Recluse gives a series of very valuable practical indications as to how parents and sponsors should guide the child in order that he, having reached consciousness, would acknowledge the presence of graceful powers in himself, and with joyful desire would accept these together with the accompanying responsibilities and manner of life that is demanded of him.

It would be desirable for parents to start the education of their children only after having studied these instructions of Bishop Theophan. Unfortunately, his "Way to Salvation" is difficult to obtain today. Therefore we shall briefly borrow several of his wise instructions in application to contemporary problems.

The first supposition of Bishop Theophan is, that through baptism the infant is torn free of the powers that Satan has over him, and he communes with life in God. For the sake of the inner state that is characteristic of such a life, he is granted gifts of grace. But just as soon as such a state of mind and heart decreases in content, immediately sin again begins to possess the heart, and through sin the fetters of Satan are placed about him, and the mutual inheritance with Christ is taken away.

The whole attention of those on whom rests the responsibility of guarding in purity the child-Christian which they have received from the font should be directed towards not allowing him to be possessed by sin, to weaken the latter and to stimulate and strengthen the way to God.

"The infant lives, consequently it is possible to influence his life", writes Bishop Theophan.

How is this influence effected? Through the Holy Sacraments, and following this — the whole content of the Church, and together with this — the faith and religious devotion of the parents.

Here we have to make a certain deviation from our presentation of Bishop Theophan's teaching.

All parents want their children to be pious. Christian parents want children to have faith, they want to see respect and obedience on their part, they want them to grow up virtuous and useful in society.

Parents, however, must remember the words of the Saviour, that "the servant is not greater than his Lord" (Luke 6, 40). Religious faith in children will be measured by the faith of

the parents, who are unable to give their children more than they themselves possess.

And so, on entering upon the birth and upbringing of children, parents must first of all think of their responsibility before them, and in acknowledgment of this to raise their own spiritual level.

It follows then that Christian upbringing of children should begin with the parents' work on their own selves. If with passing years their own religious consciousness grows and their "churchification" becomes strengthened, then in like manner their children will also grow spiritually. But if they have no prayerful Church life, if they do not develop in a Church sense, but remain on the same level, then in like manner there will not be present in the family the conditions necessary for the development and spiritual growth of their children.

Life is a movement forward, development, growth. In order to have children commune with religious life, it is necessary that this life exist in their parents, and that children be able to enter this life, communing with it to an increasingly fuller extent according to the degree of growth in their development.

Bishop Theophan, in giving a series of councils on how to seek the graceful influence of the Church on children, makes a statement of reserve, that all this can be destroyed and deprived of fruitful results by a lack of faith, carelessness, impiety, and bad living on the part of parents. There is an incomprehensible tie between the souls of parents, especially that of the mother, and the soul of the child, and we are unable to determine to what degree the influence of the former extends to the latter.

Passing over to the means of influencing with grace the infant's soul, Bishop Theophan, of course, indicates the necessity of administering to infants as frequently as possible the Holy Sacraments of Christ, that "in a lively and actual manner they will unite him with the Lord, through His Divinely Pure Body and Blood will bless him and within Him give peace and make him inaccessible to the powers of darkness".

Bishop Theophan indicates that many notice in a striking manner the fruits of the graceful action of Communion on infants, and that not infrequently it is accompanied by miracles. Saint Andrew of Crete did not speak for a long time in his childhood. When his parents turned to prayer and means of

grace, then during Communion the Lord gave him the gift of speech.

"The frequent bringing of children into church, coming into actual contact with Christ's Cross, the Gospel and ikons has a great influence on children; likewise at home — the frequent being brought before ikons, the frequent making of the sign of the Cross, blessing with holy water, burning of incense, making the sign of the Cross over the cradle, food and everything that the child comes in contact with, blessing by a priest, the bringing of church ikons into homes and singing of Te Deum services; in general, everything connected with the Church in a miraculous manner warms and nurtures the graceful life of the child, and always is the safest and most impenetrable defense against attacks by invisible dark powers that are everywhere ready to penetrate into the soul which is just beginning to develop in order to corrupt it with its breath" (Bishop Theophan).

On the contrary, making use of that nearness of spirit which exists between good parents and their children, they can influence them with their feeling of love in that early period of life when children are still not receptive to other forms of influence. "It is necessary, writes Bishop Theophan the recluse, that in the glances of parents not only love should shine, which is so natural, but also a faith that in their hands they have more than just an ordinary child, and also a hope that He Who gave them this treasure to watch over like a vessel of grace, will provide them both with sufficient powers to preserve it and, finally, in their eyes should be seen prayer which is being continually carried on in spirit, being inspired by hope which comes from faith".

Bishop Theophan gives a splendid picture in his explanation of how important it is to act by means of the Church on the child both without and within, in order that about this life which is just beginning there be provided an atmosphere related to the Church, which would infuse him with Her spirit. He compares a child to a newly constructed vessel which preserves for a long time, if not always, the odor of that substance which is poured into it at that period.

But, unnoticed to the parents, consciousness grows in the child, and for its upbringing greater attention and love is demanded on their part.

According to the degree of growth, there also begin to appear sinful tendencies in the child, at the beginning completely unconscious. However, if they are not watched, these sinful drives may gradually pass over to become habitual.

Thus, for example, capriciousness, zeal, anger, sloth, disobedience, stubbornness, jealousy, covetousness can make their appearance very early in the child's life.

Some children begin to use cunning at a very early age, and even lie.

At five years in the child one can already see the rudiments of his future character. These rudiments develop and together with them, just as certain virtues enter into the nature of the child, so also do certain faults. One must patiently struggle with these faults, trying to prevent them from becoming habitual, and simultaneously trying to aid in the development of good qualities in the soul and the heart.

In a very serious and interesting investigation concerning child development, Dr. Geselle and Dr. Ilg note that the spiritual development of a child does not progress along a straight line but, as it were, spirally. The child returns to some of its earlier weaknesses, which seemed to be overcome, and then becomes freed of these in order to again return to them with certain changes in form corresponding to age (Cit. composition, pages 58-59).

On the part of parents there is needed here great vigilance and great patience.

The main thing is for parents not to become angry at children for their faults and delinquencies, but to stop them with patience, love, and together with this, also with firmness. Have the children see that their delinquencies not so much anger as grieve their parents.

The parents should always remember that no matter how superficial and unimportant the individual misdeeds of the children may seem, that these, remaining uncorrected, easily pass over into foolish practice, and with years, into sinful habit.

Small children are pure and unspoiled, yet in them early there can be engendered the beginnings of various future passions.

However, at the same time, the purity of a child's heart opens unlimited opportunity for sowing seeds of faith and religious devotion, if only one does not lose any valuable time for this.

Bishop Theophan indicates that if, on the one hand, in children, who from infancy have been brought up according to the above indicated measures, there develops an attraction towards God, then, on the other hand, — the sin that dwells in them does not slumber. Children alone, with their own powers, are incapable of waging an internal struggle with sin. This struggle should be waged and the child guided in it by the parents.

But in order to act intelligently in this respect, parents must know "what the sin that remains in us seeks, what it feeds on, and namely through what it gains control over us". The basic stimuli that draw towards sin, according to his words, are self-mindedness in one's mind, self-will in one's will and self-gratification in one's feelings. "Therefore, he writes, the developing powers of the soul and body should be lead and directed in such a manner that they not be taken prisoner by sensuality, self-will, or gratification, for this would then be a captivity in sin, — but, on the contrary, to teach them to deny and overcome these within themselves".

What first of all demands attention, is the needs of the body, which are present from the diaper stage to death, and which therefore have to be placed within certain limits and this made fast through habit. Bishop Theophan justly indicates that for health both of the body and the soul, it is necessary to subject to certain rules, corresponding to age, the utilization of food in which the time, quantity, and method of feeding would be determined, and then not to step back from the established order without dire need.

It is very bad when the child is fed without choice of time, whenever it might ask for food. This is harmful for the body, but even more so for the soul, for it accustoms it to self-will and looseness of behaviour. In general, it is very important to subject the whole order of the day to an exact schedule which, incidentally it should be said, children accept with great eagerness, often expressing dissatisfaction when exceptions are made to an order which has become habitual for them. Activity should be subjected to both schedule and observation by elders; i. e. playing, in order that an unstable development left to free will, in some not develop an excessive playfulness and absence of mind, while in others — languidness, lifelessness and sloth. The first, according to the words of Bishop Theophan,

strengthens and transforms into law self-will and disobedience, in connection with which are found irritability, wrathfulness and unrestraint in desires. The latter state submerges one into one's body gives one over to sensual gratifications.

Who has not observed how a child who has been allowed to indulge in excessive play becomes disobedient and capricious? Even from this one example it follows, that it is necessary to hold his activity under certain control. However, in this there may be two extremes: extreme severity, or on the contrary — weakness and allowance of extreme latitude of freedom.

Mrs. Roosevelt, in describing her trip to the Soviet Union, tells of her visit to a children's home. She was struck by how two year old children brought out for gymnastics acted like well-trained small animals. Such kind of training is needed by the communists in order to more easily incline human nature towards sensual feelings and activity repugnant to itself. They try in such a manner to bring up absolutely submissive, obedient robots of human form.

Orthodox upbringing, on the contrary, should form individuality, freely following the ways of Truth, which she loves and outside of which she does not imagine herself to be. In children one should develop will, but a will directed towards good.

How is this to be done, where is one to find a suitable working standard, on the one hand freedom, and on the other — an intelligent constraint and supervision? In each individual case the parents should be guided by their intuition and judgment, which are dictated by their love and supported by the help of God. When this suitable working standard is not present, results are discouraging.

In the already cited interesting book of Benjamin Fine, "1,000,000 delinquents", are presented examples of youth-criminals who gave testimony of how they reached their low moral state. One of the investigations showed that of 500 junior criminals, in 70 % the fathers were characterized by inordinate strictness and unrestraint in the punishment of their children, and 20 % by allowance of undue latitude of freedom in behaviour. Only 5 % combined firmness and love, but apparently were unable to cope with the harmful side influences from which it is especially necessary to guard children. It is not in vain that it was commonly said in Russia: "With whom you have dealings, by him you will be influenced".

Here it is timely to recall a tragic letter of a mother, published several years ago by a Russian newspaper in California.

She wrote of how her son had been a wonderful angelic being, loving, meek and obedient, when she came to America with her family. In order to more quickly raise the level of their material subsistence, both parents tried to devote as much time as possible to work. They also wanted to learn the English language as quickly as possible. They therefore were happy to see their son spend whole days with other children from the neighboring homes.

The parents noticed too late that their son had become wild, slackened in faith, and even lost his love for his parents. When the mother wrote her letter to the newspaper in order to share her sad experience with other parents, she already had lost her son spiritually. He definitely had given himself over to various vices and denied his parents.

A wise discipline on the one hand, and a compliant atmosphere of mutual love of all members of the family on the other — these are extremely important elements in the education of children. It is not in vain that Apostle Paul teaches parents: "Fathers, do not irritate your children" (1 Corinthians 13, 5).

But no less important is it for parents not to become irritated at their children.

Irritation is a sign of a weakening of love. At its basis lies wrathfulness and egoism. In a state of irritation the human being does not think of his neighbor, does not sympathise with him, but thinks only of himself. In most cases, parents become irritated at their children because the latter bother them in some way, divert them away from some needed or interesting activity, demand on their part some kind of exertion and sacrifice.

But irritation on the part of parents, being a sin against love, at the same time acts very harmfully on the psyche of children. Punishment, imposed in a state of irritation, no matter how deserved it may be, loses a significant part of its strength and calls forth a similar response of irritation in children.

In one of his letters Bishop Theophan speaks of this very vividly: "To teach children is the obligation of parents — consequently yours. And what is there to fear? A loving word



never irritates. A commanding word alone never bears any fruit". That which Bishop Theophan calls a "commanding word", when it is spoken with irritation, creates an extremely harmful atmosphere in the family, it spiritually mutilates the child, and that is why one should be especially careful in that respect.

But one also should no less be on guard against allowing unreasonable latitude of freedom in behaviour, in which also an insufficiency of love for children is manifested.

It is interesting to note that if on the one hand, as it has already been said earlier, irritation and abuse of punishment have harmful effects, which was manifested as one of the reasons of vice in 75 % of the junior criminals, then in many others the reason consisted of parents' manifestation of indifference with respect to their children's behaviour.

The children themselves sometimes feel in this an insufficiency of love towards them, and often overly strict parents receive greater love than those who allow their children everything.

There is still one other important law which it is necessary for parents to follow: they must never make children witnesses of their arguments, and never should complain to children about each other. Likewise, if one of the parents does not agree with the punishment imposed on the child by the other parent — it is better for the former to remain silent and give consideration to this question only when both are alone. Children must always see their parents in agreement.

Depending on the level of development of the child's mind, one should learn how to feed it appropriate wholesome food.

It is too much accustomed with us to occupy the child's mind only with empty things. Bishop Theophan says that it is necessary to start the education of the mind together with the word i. e. — from the time the child begins to speak. "The main thing to keep in view, he writes, is to have wholesome conceptions and thinking based on Christian sources concerning everything that is met with or coming to the attention of the child; what good and evil are, what is good and what is bad". This is very easy to do by means of ordinary conversations and questions. Bishop Theophan advises to call all things by their true names in these conversations. "For example, in such questions as what contemporary life means, how it ends, from

whence everything is received, what gratification is, what true value these or other customs have. Let the parents talk with their children and reason for them directly or indirectly, or, best of all, through stories". It is beneficial to ask children what they think about these or other issues, and correct their errors. Further, one should develop them through the reading of the lives of the saints, Church History, pure and edifying stories.

Parents, who desire to give their children a Christian-Orthodox upbringing, in many cases strongly feel that they are being obstructed in this by the surrounding environment, and, in particular, by the school.

This is entirely natural, to the extent that we live amongst people of different faiths and religions, and in school children have as teachers people who have been brought up on fundamentals that are alien to Orthodoxy. The nature of their mentality is different from ours, and in the education of children they usually come under the strong influence of the ideas of Freud and other proponents of psychoanalysis.

Such a conception of the world is rather imposing, and rarely is it that contradiction is given opportunity to assert itself here. Parents often complain that children are instilled with the idea that they have to put the significance and authority of the school on first place, and consequently to consider the voice of their parents to be of secondary importance. In this respect the school claims a certain authority, although it declares that it tries to develop in children independent thought and will.

I had occasion to hear complaints of parents, that it was easier for them to preserve the soul and mind of children in the Soviet Union than under conditions of freedom in the Western World.

One should explain this by the fact that in the Soviet Union these families felt themselves persecuted. Therefore the authority in power and all that proceeded from it, and this included the ideas that were presented by them in school, were felt not only by parents, but also by children as something alien and inimical to their families. **Their own** was limited to the family and a narrow circle of people deserving unconditional confidence.

In the West, self-preservation does not demand such isolation, for there is no real danger threatening the physical existence

of all the members of the family. But for this reason, here there is perhaps danger for the mind and heart.

What are parents able to do under such conditions?

In a certain respect this same problem stood before church minded parents even in pre-revolutionary Russia, for a considerable part of the intelligentsia and pedagogues there were infected with the very same materialistic spirit. The mentality of our leftist intelligentsia was very close to that which we meet here in pedagogues. I shall say of myself, that in our family, from childhood up, we heard and acknowledged that according to our church-monarchist views, we belonged sooner to the minority than to the majority. For this reason the non-church revolutionary content of the teachings of certain pedagogues, and the ensuing revolutionary craziness that grasped all of Russia could not find sympathy in us.

And therefore, before everything else in early childhood we must convince children that they, being children of the Orthodox Church, belong to a special kind of spiritual organism which has its own laws and its own mentality, and which in many respects is alien to the surrounding majority. Even before attending school, children should feel and know that loyalty with regards to government, of which in many countries they are native citizens, by no means should have any effect on their religious views and on their mode of living. They must be taught early that they should not fear or be ashamed of being in some way different from the surrounding majority. If they enter school informed with regards to this, and are brought up in respectful self-sacrifice before the ascetic exploit of professing one's faith, it should be easier for them to resist invasion by a mentality alien to our own.

If this invasion become too aggressive, then the parents may go to school and make known their demands — of receiving due respect for certain principles connected with our faith.

Here, of course, it is especially important that parents enter into more intimate relations with the life of their children. Parents should call forth on the part of their children, descriptions of that which had taken place in school, and in turn give them explanations concerning questions which had arisen according to the Christian-Orthodox point of view.

This is by no means an easy task, but love, faith, and constant attention, together with prayer, will prompt parents as to

how it is better to influence their children in order to protect them from harmful influences.

It is understood that it is especially important to watch with whom they make friends, trying to bring them together when possible with orthodox children from strong wholesome families.

Let the most important center of interests for them be the local church, and let the parents hold the spiritual authority of the church pastor high in the eyes of their children. Children must be protected from all criticism of their priest. It is difficult to ascertain to what degree such criticism can poison their hearts for many years to come, and sometimes for their whole lives.

But this cultivation in children of a consciousness that they belong to a special kind of Church organism and culture, must not be combined with a contempt for or judgment of others. It should not be determined by such feelings, but by a love and devotion to the spiritual wealth of one's Church.

Such feelings are reared in children not so much by instruction as by an established order in the home, based on an Orthodox way of life with its characteristics. The atmosphere that is created in the family by parents is important.

It is very beneficial, when possible, to acquaint children with the life of their ancestors, especially if among the latter were persons who were remarkable for their virtue or some kind of heroic deeds. Such narrations are good because they give children, as it were, a kind of rooting in actual life. It is important to give children of Russian extraction narrations concerning the family in connection with the History or Russia, teaching children to love and value that which is related to its bright pages.

Metropolitan Anthony wrote that the death of Russia as a Christian State does not signify a ruin of Holy Russia (Russ), which may be composed of Russian people, who although scattered throughout the various countries of the world, are nevertheless unified spiritually by her bright ideals and preserve her Orthodox way of life. In America there are not a small number of Irish or Scotch living in a similar manner, and who, preserving their cultural characteristics, nevertheless are regarded as useful citizens of the United States.

That, if one may so express oneself, charge which is given

by parents to the child's brain in the first years of its development, will in the future most certainly yield fruits, which sometimes are noticeable only in the later years of life.

In bringing up the mind, it is no less important also to bring up the feeling of the child. First of all, one accustoms children to prayer, both in the home and in the church. The sooner children are brought into the house of the Lord, the easier do they become accustomed to prayer which very easily becomes part of them at this young age. The sooner the fear of God is impressed upon and prayer is aroused in children, the more firm will be their religious devotion in subsequent years, writes Bishop Theophan.

At the present time, parents must especially try to abundantly nurture their children with pious thoughts and feelings in the early pre-school age, in order that they be prepared to meet alien influences on the part of school teachers and friends.

Here even greater attention is demanded on the part of parents, and here they must especially feel how important for children is their work on their own selves and on their own spiritual development.

Children are like plants which God has entrusted to their parents, as to gardeners.

If the latter graft on to them good grafts of church living, if they be concerned with their growing on the good soil of the Christian family and the Orthodox way of living, if they guard to uproot weeds which could choke everything good in them, and water them with the living water of the Word of God — then they should fulfill their obligation before God and the Church, to their own consolation and happiness.

But let not parents complain about anyone but themselves, if by their inattention the small plant which has been entrusted into their hands, grows into an unfruitful fig tree. Will they then not hear that severe saying of God, which the prophet Samuel had to declare to the first-priest Eli for carelessness in the bringing up of his sons: "... I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever".

**Protopresbyter G. Grabbe.**