

only if his organic adjustment to society has been made in a harmonious way. Therefore discipline of the child also signifies that in all of his societal relationships, the child learns to live in a manner conformable to the nature of any given group or community, and so to reveal his membership in that community.

Naturally, this discipline cannot be achieved unless the child has experienced the "spirit" of a particular group. That is to say, that he learns to adapt himself to such an extent, that his feeling, the totality of his being is sensitized, as it were, to discover the *tendenza* which prevails in any particular locale. That is necessary if the child is to learn to shun any particular kind of fellowship which is wrong for him, or which in itself has a wrong purpose. Such a discipline must be practised with patience in quiet conversation with the child. But this exercise in discipline also implies that the child himself must learn to take a position with respect to the group or community. Although we do not wish to suggest that it is possible in the case of every child, yet it is the ideal of good discipline that the child learn not only to feel his way into the group or community, but that he also learns to maintain his personal independence and his critical judgment with respect to that group or community.

Moreover disciplining simultaneously has as its goal that the child may learn to restrain his inclinations, desires, passions, and instincts. It stands to reason that in relation to this objective habit-forming and habituation play an important part in the practice of living.

However, the principal goal of discipline is that the child may learn to subject himself obediently to the ordinances of God, and to do this in such a way that he daily experiences the law as love, also as love of God towards the individual child. Therefore disciplinary measures are justified only when the child experiences in that discipline the love of the disciplinarian. Every punishment given in a hot temper, every chastisement

Accordingly, we are now able to state that child-discipline has as its purpose the averting of all those bonds which are foreign to the essential nature of the child in general, and to this child in particular; but discipline must also serve to strengthen and fortify all the bonds which are inherent in the child in general, and inherent in any particular child. And this must take place in such a way that the child learns to be happy without those bonds which are foreign to his nature and happy with those bonds which are peculiar to his nature.

Now societal living is one of those bonds which is characteristic of the nature of the child. And the child can feel happy

administered in a fit of anger, every scolding resulting from irritation on the part of father or mother, and every snubbing out of self-preservation or nervousness, has the wrong effect, and is, in fact, not Christian discipline.

From what has been said so far it could be concluded that although the disciplining of children should conform to general rules, it is not necessary to make further distinctions. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Anyone who educates is dealing with a child who has particular characteristics, individual qualities, individual ways of reacting and individual talents. In the general practice of education and in the exercise of discipline in particular, the educator very definitely must take into account who and what the child is. The first requirement of good discipline is that the child, as he is, does not get a feeling of discouragement through the discipline because he does not experience love in discipline.

But the immediate implication of this fact is also that there must be a very great differentiation and variation in the exercise of discipline. In calling attention to the following examples, we emphasize that they are to be regarded merely as illustrations. A boy of six years, robust and strong, and possessing a genuine sense of humor, who at a given moment consciously violates a command of his father, must undergo a form of discipline which is quite different from that given another six-year old boy, equally healthy, but who lacks a sense of humor and is more rigid and schematized in his actions. Perhaps this rigid schematism in the boy is even to be attributed to his parents. But in any case there is behind this schematism in the little child a kind of fear for life, for what life may bring. Schematic people are after all always persons who take refuge in schematization because they have a fear of not being equal to life; they take flight into schematization out of ignorance, anxiety, or fear. Now schematization always has a negative cause. It is possible for a six-year old to reveal already a tendency to do everything in such a rigidly schematized manner

that you can notice his embarrassment when he is forced out of it. Such a child obviously is completely different from the boy who immediately reacts to a humorous situation and enjoys it. Let us say the boy with a sense of humor has an inclination to grab a cookie; he follows his inclination, takes the cookie and quickly eats it, but he is caught in the act. Then one might very well remark: that boy has taken a cookie and consequently a punishment must follow which suits a boy who steals a cookie. The same thing could be said for the second boy, the schematic one, the boy who is much more rigid. But it would be foolishness to think that punishment is something which can be administered according to the book: "The punishment fits the crime." It must also fit the criminal. Even a physician varies his prescriptions to fit the individual make-up of the patient. And when parents resort to punishment, they should take into consideration the type of child they are dealing with.

However, it is characteristic of such situations that the parents of the boy who has remained the humorous type are as a rule themselves responsible for the fact that their boy has a sense of humor; whereas in the case of the other child the parents themselves share responsibility for the fact that their six-year old boy takes flight into schematization. Needless to say, these situations make the problem difficult in practice, for in all likelihood the latter parents will also be inclined to proceed too schematically in exercising discipline because of the cookie; whereas the former parents may have an inclination to be lax in their discipline because they cannot help laughing at the "funny face" their boy pulls in his wrong-doing. It is necessary for the parents of both children to realize the background of the trespass of their child. Let us assume (by no means unlikely) that in the case of the humorous type of child the background is as follows: An attempt to see how far the boy can go in playing a trick on his parents. The only correct discipline in that event is for the parents to disrupt at once and without much ado the general feeling of good humor existing between

them and the child; and that they then say: "No, that is not nice, that is not funny at all; now you really are making a nuisance of yourself; that is naughty, and if it happens again, we shall have to punish you." This child must learn to feel what is the difference between a joke and something which is really wrong. But in the case of the second boy, the situation very probably is different. We will assume that the following condition is present: This schematic child who has in his background certain fears of life and certain inhibitions toward father and mother, has the tendency to create his own little world in which he experiences a degree of pleasure in a manner agreeable to himself. Perhaps feelings of vengeance also play something of a role. Now if this child is severely punished—and schematic parents are apt to punish severely—then the child's feeling of being isolated will be aggravated, and his feeling of vengeance will be intensified. And further, if the child is given a long lecture on the sin of stealing, he will again feel the punishment to be within the same schematization in which he has been trained all the while. Therefore, when mother notices that her child has helped himself to a cookie, it is quite possible that she would do best to put her arm around her son and say: "My boy, did you really want a cookie that badly? You may ask mother for one, but don't just help yourself; mother doesn't like that, and you shouldn't do it either. You know that, don't you? Tonight mother will give you another cookie." We have called attention to these two examples to demonstrate how the same offense may require different forms of discipline, even in the case of comparatively young children. The purpose of discipline is always to preserve, to teach the child to go in the right path. Therefore, the exercise of discipline surely does not always imply chastising, punishing. To exercise discipline signifies: to take that measure which is needed to bring the child to self-discipline. Consequently, the idea of some Christian parents who think they sin if they do not punish a certain violation of their child is wholly erroneous.

Sometimes to forgive is a much better means of discipline than to spank. That likewise depends upon the nature of the child and the nature of the wrong. In this connection it should be emphatically emphasized that in all disciplining and particularly in all punishing one must consider what the child has really done. We should not forget that we exercise discipline upon the child and not upon the deed of the child.

By discipline we must always attempt to reach the inner self of the child. Discipline must not be measured in terms of the more or less accidental external situation. Therefore discipline must always be exercised with much understanding of the inner attitude of the child toward his parents and toward the command, and thus toward him who gives the command. It is a serious mistake on the part of many parents that they do not have an eye for these matters. Perhaps it is necessary for us to admit that unfortunately the sin of many educators is their use of discipline solely as a ruler or measuring line which, moreover, is applied only to external situations. In this manner, however, discipline works inversely and accordingly the child develops a dislike for the commandment. For then he gets the feeling that the law is not love, but hate; that the law is not life, but the severance of life, that it is death to all that lives.

If discipline must be exercised in different ways for different children, then it also follows that in the form and content of disciplinary measures we should take into consideration the age of the children. The educator should possess, as it were, the gift of growing up with the child in the educational activities. The exercise of discipline here also comes into immediate contact with moral education, although not exclusively with it; in every branch of pedagogical activity it is always necessary to demand maximum achievement of the child when it is a question of the child subordinating his life to a form of self-discipline. When it is possible to persuade the child to do

something good or to avoid something bad from considerations arising out of the content of his own life, the discipline will possess far greater value, viewed pedagogically, than when the child has been obedient in response to some advice, to some rebuke previously given by the parents. There are very many extremely obedient children who are obedient until they are twenty years old, but who are of no significance for the rest of their lives. Whether it is due to innate disposition, or whether it is due to their education, they have not been brought to the point of confronting life as independent individuals. The exercise of discipline will always have to be directed toward enabling the child to make his own decisions. Not until this choosing of a position is clearly sinful, or is clearly harmful to the child, will it be necessary to resort to discipline.

It will be readily understood that in exercising discipline we must constantly keep in mind that the child is also a religious being. Discipline makes it final, if you will its highest, appeal to the religious nature of the child. This does not mean that the appeal consists exclusively in holding up to the child the command of God. Discipline makes an appeal to the entire personality in the totality of its attributes, characteristics, and qualities; and these are present only because the child is a religious being.

The various attributes of the individual such as trust, submissiveness, faith, devotion, control of natural inclinations, knowledge of God's will, awareness of life's potentialities, and experiential acquaintance with life — all of these must be viewed as an organic unity, proceeding from the ego and basically directed toward the service of God, but all of these qualities must also be incorporated into the life of discipline. The root of all discipline is to teach the child to understand "that you are not your own." That is one side of the matter. But there also is immediately and even simultaneously another side; not until our life is disciplined in submission to God and his service will our life be happy and peaceful; not until then can

we live ourselves to the full and do the things we really like; not until then will our life become one with the life of the people about us; in fact, one with the life of all creation. The purpose of discipline is therefore ever and anew to reach the child to experience the love of God which comes to us in the law and ordinances; so that we, living in discipline, may see the light and may be able to live happily and contentedly. Viewed thus the expression "to kiss the rod" is intelligible. This is not the cringing attitude of the individual who caresses the punishing hand of the master and thus tries to compel friendliness, but it is the grateful attitude of the person who feels again the love of the Father and who has been brought back into that framework of life in which he only can find happiness.