

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE CHINESE VIEW OF THE IDEAL FAMILY LIFE
AS SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

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INTRODUCTION

It started at Babel, when man's arrogance found him separated from his fellow human beings by the barrier of language. But the Bible testifies God's hand is behind all happenings, and from the diverging peoples of both East and West came languages, teachings, and customs all their own. God has richly blessed all peoples with the sacred responsibilities and joys of marriage, parenthood, and family. Moreover, He has given us the Bible, His Holy Word, as the complete guideline for all. For, however wise or experienced the peoples of the entire world seem to become, they all must find themselves relying on the infallible Word of God and the teachings set forth in the Bible, where guidance for the God-ordained family is shared. Using that Holy Word as the supreme authority, this dissertation presents selected concepts of Chinese culture in "The Chinese View of the Ideal Family Life as Seen Through the Light of the Bible."

Interest in the study. The saying, "Some cannot see the forest for the trees" is applicable here. For although this dissertation covers a seemingly broad topic, it also treats its subject matter with extensive detail and researched information, enabling both the "trees" and the "forest" to be seen. Because this is an age in which society traces its beginning to complex backgrounds and cultures, this dissertation speaks for the culture of the East on the subject of family life, reinforcing the whole with the plan of God as expressed in His Word.

Interest in this study came about doubtlessly because the writer

is a combination of the following factors: For one thing, she is a Chinese and an American citizen. Thus, she often feels herself the personification of the "twain" of East and West, contrary to Kipling's discredit of such a meeting. But already considered the inconceivable "twain", the writer feels qualified to speak with emphasis on the concepts of both East and West; for she has not only been brought up in the wealth of the Chinese cultures, but she has also had the influence of twenty years of study in the United States which finally adds up to a truly diversified past.

Furthermore, the writer, as a fourth-generation Christian, was brought up in an atmosphere of Christian teaching which has been the basic factor molding her life. Thus, the writer is able to furnish both the experience and familiarity needed to deal accordingly with these subjects. For, the dissertation consists of such resources as the research of pastors, doctors, psychologists, and laymen and employs both Oriental and Occidental concepts to which an audience of like constituents can not only relate but may also find guidance as well.

The purpose of the study. This study is written with three basic purposes in mind. Firstly, the writer's deep personal concern has been in the spiritual needs among millions of overseas Chinese--this will continue to be her future mission field. This particular group of Chinese have grown up in an atmosphere strong with their forefathers' traditions; and yet, at the same time, these people are under very strong Western influences. Thus, it is most important and meaningful to develop something that blends these ways of life. However, the ultimate goal is introducing God's Word to them, thus producing better Christian growth and maturity in these lives.

Secondly, statistics which cite the rapidly increasing numbers of juvenile delinquents and broken homes in the United States shock Christians in this land into going back to the fundamental teachings of family living as outlined in the Bible. At the same time, this dissertation also introduces the American reader to certain traditional concepts of Chinese family life which have allowed most Chinese to remain exempt from statistics of high crime and juvenile delinquency rates. The reader who is accustomed to knowing only Western family life may also find to be of interest some of the material on the Chinese family. He may dismiss certain areas of material as too strict; for since the early 1920s authoritarian discipline has been practically abandoned in the Western world where, influenced by the writings of Freud and his followers as well as misinterpreting some of these writings, a group of educators put a strong emphasis on permissiveness. However, much of the Biblical law concerns authoritarian discipline. Many aspects of the Bible's message come alive, for the subjects of marriage, parenthood and family are repeatedly taught in the Bible.

Thirdly, a further goal of this dissertation is to impart these truths to seminary students of the future, thus fulfilling one of the writer's major goals--that of teaching young people in seminary. Perhaps this dissertation could be of great help in this future sense.

Delimitation of the study. The number of Chinese now in the world is great enough to allow reference to the Chinese collectively to be used when speaking of Eastern concepts. However, when Chinese concepts are spoken of from this point on, it should be understood that reference is being made to Chinese traditions and concepts still practiced among the free Chinese as opposed to the Communist Chinese.

When Western concepts are spoken of, it should also be understood that the reference is to twentieth-century Americans.

This dissertation represents an attempt to describe the traditional concepts of Chinese family life. Whether or not these concepts meet contemporary standards of excellence, one should keep in mind that while family patterns the world over have changed a great deal in the past half century, many traditions of the Chinese have been faithfully followed and respected for the past four thousand years of civilization.

Stressed most strongly in this dissertation is the truth that the Bible is the highest authority not only on childrearing but marriage and family-raising as well. God's Holy Word, as found in the Bible, shall surely outlast recent psychological findings and centuries of cultural concepts, standing always as the absolute and infallible authority for these God-ordained institutions on which this study is based.

Delineation of the study. The study is divided into three sections. Part I is on the subject of marriage. Part II is on the subject of parenthood and Part III is on the subject of family. Each subject is discussed in three chapters. For example, the subject of marriage is divided in the following manner: "Marriage and the Bible," "The Chinese Concepts of Marriage," and "Practical Guidelines for a Successful Marriage."

The subjects of parenthood and family follow a similar outline with the Bible, the leading and supreme authority, always being the first chapter of each section. This arrangement is of major importance, for the Bible states timeless truths of God Himself and places much emphasis on the structure of the family, since the family is the fundamental core of all mankind. The timelessness of these Biblical truths is especially significant in this modern society of fast-changing values and morals.

The background of the middle chapter of each section has been explained previously. The writer herself is Chinese, and thus speaks with familiarity in these middle chapters which discuss Chinese concepts.

In the final chapter of each section, God's Holy Word, the Bible, again is used as the foundation for successful family life. Here Eastern and Western concepts are blended in an effort to present these, along with Biblical truths already mentioned, as practical guidelines for successful marriage, parenthood, and family.

Although marriage and family are certainly interrelated, two separate definitions are referred to in this dissertation. One is the concept of marriage, meaning simply the holy union of man and woman. The other is the definition of family, used here to refer to both the immediate family and the extended family, including all the relatives from grandparents to aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws.

It is the writer's prayer that this dissertation shall thus be a contribution to the reader.

PART I

MARRIAGE

CHAPTER I

MARRIAGE AND THE BIBLE

A Union Designed by God

The origin of marriage is found in the experiences of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The second chapter of Genesis gives vital insights into the concept of marriage. God created man in His own image from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Then God placed him in the beautiful Garden of Eden. However, something was lacking--the man was not complete for he was alone. Then God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18).¹

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. Then God took one of his ribs and made it into a woman. In a marriage "ceremony" with God Himself as the officiating minister, "the Lord God...brought her unto the man" (Gen. 2:22). Before God they stood, in the first marriage, knowing that they were husband and wife.

Oneness-the Uniqueness of Marriage

God said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). This passage gives the original nature of marriage. God set up marriage

¹All Scripture quotations shall be taken from the Authorized King James translation unless otherwise noted.

between one man and one woman.

Adam in his height and strength and power and Eve with her grace and tenderness were perfectly matched; for Eve needed Adam's might just as he needed her compassion. No longer were they two people, but, rather, they were one. Adam expressed the closeness of their union when he declared, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2:23).

No creature except man had his mate made from his own flesh, therefore, no creature under heaven should be like man in the love of his mate, but, rather, man should be above them all.² Marriage is oneness--oneness in mind, heart and soul -- and it is a physical and spiritual union, ordained by God to fulfill His holy purpose.

God said: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20). These two verses bring out two purposes of marriage. Firstly, the reason God made woman is that He might furnish the man with a suitable companion, a help meet. With Eve, Adam need never again be lonely. Secondly, she is named Eve in token of her motherhood.

God's institution and appointment of marriage is the means of propagating mankind. God had "Created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). The Scriptures teach that the whole human race is descended from a single pair. This truth lies at the foundation of Paul's doctrine of the organic unity of mankind in the first transgression, and of the provision of salvation

²Joseph S. Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Vol. I: Genesis (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963), p. 176.

for the race in Christ.

Biblical Principles of Sex

Marriage is instituted by God, therefore it is pure and holy. In I Corinthians, chapter seven, certain principles are clear. Sexual relations within marriage are holy and good. Sexual relationships are equal and reciprocal. Paul does not give the man superior rights to the woman. It is clear, then, that mutual stimulation and mutual initiation of relations are legitimate. When the basic relationship between the husband and wife has been established on scriptural grounds, they are ready for a happy marriage.

Jesus stated the divine intention for marriage in the following quotation:

But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Mk. 10:6-9).

The male and female creation is the basis for exclusive attraction and the establishment of one flesh. Sexuality is a gift of God, and as such has both a biological purpose and a further purpose, which is of the nature of a sacrament in that it is the outward symbol of an inner unity.

Roles of Husband and Wife

Certain relations of husband and wife as the Bible teaches are:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:22-25).

Submission is required of the wife towards her husband; though she is not to be subject as children to their parents, much less as servants

to their masters. Subjection, the subordination of wife to her husband, is a wise plan designed by God for the benefit of both husband and wife, so that in all relations, comfort and duty shall go together. The regulation of the duty must be done willingly and sincerely. It is true that the husband is to govern, not by fear, but by love. He is the image of Christ in governing His Church, and the wife is not a slave, but a help meet; but this love should not be a snare to him. It is also true that the wife should not be despised, for God said to Abraham: "Hearken unto her voice" (Gen. 21:12). However, there is a difference between hearkening to good counsel and swallowing a temptation or being driven to evil by the woman's imperiousness.

"Husbands, love your wives." A husband loves his wife with a hearty love, with a love that is true and intense. It is not lip-service. Since the Church is not fit for Christ by nature, He resolved to make her so by grace. The fruit of His love, "He gave Himself for it," in a painful death. The record is brief but it is enough, for the love was infinite. If a husband loves his wife as Christ loved the Church, he is ready to die for her at any cause. Certainly, the wife, understanding the quality or depth of such love, will be more than willing to obey him, to submit herself to him unconditionally.

The husband is the head of the household, but a wife's position does not imply inferiority. She, her husband's companion in life and for life, is to be regarded by him as his equal. A famous saying sums up the relationship:

Woman was created from the rib of man. She was not made from his head to top him, nor from his feet to be trampled upon. She was made from his side, to be equal to him. Under his arm, to be protected, and near his heart, to be loved.

Jesus' Ideal: No Divorce

The Pharisees asked Jesus whether it was lawful for a man "to put away his wife for every cause" (Mt. 19:3). In answer to their question, Jesus said:

. . . Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder . . . Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery (Mt. 19:4-9).

Jesus' reply was, in effect, that man had no right at all to break a marriage. Dr. Ernest White wrote:

In his view, marriage was a sacred relationship which was not to be violated under any condition. He pointed out that divorce was originally made necessary by the presence of human nature.³

In the accounts both by Matthew and Mark of Jesus' teaching on divorce, there follows immediately the occasion of His blessing little children. His heart must have been especially sensitive at that moment to the victimizing of these helpless little ones by the situation of his day.

According to Jesus there is only one cause for which a man may be divorced from his wife--adultery. God said it was not good for man to be alone; so He made him a help meet. Had it been better for a man to have more than one wife, God would doubtless have made two. In Jesus' time women had multiplied; but He did not change the original law.

³Ernest White, Marriage and the Bible (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1965), p. 105.

Isaac and Rebekah's Marriage

The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah is the first one narrated in the Bible, as an example of how marriages were made in the patriarchal days.

Sarah had been laid in the tomb. Abraham was now an old man. But Isaac, the son on whom was founded every hope for the continuance of the line, had not yet chosen a wife. Abraham wanted his son to marry a woman of his own people and not one of the Canaanite women, with their idolatrous religion. He should have a pure breed of his own kind; one of the nomads belonging to the tribes of shepherds living on the Mesopotamian steppes. In short, one of the kinsfolk of the Hebrews. Of course, these tribes, too, were worshippers of false gods, but mutual understanding was easier with them.⁴ The patriarch entrusted the selection of the girl and the making of the contract to a servant--who may easily have been Eliezer.

Abraham was sure the Lord God would send an angel to guide the servant's choice. No one could argue against Abraham's faith, so without more delay the servant organized a caravan. Eliezer started on his journey taking something of the best of all his master owned--some ingots of gold and silver, and jewels. All of this was to provide the dowry, the purchase price of the girl.

Abraham's servant arrived outside Haran and halted his party at the gates of the city. The biblical account states:

And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray

⁴Henri Gaubert, Abraham Loved by God (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1968), pp. 176-177.

thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and there-by shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master (Gen. 24:11-14).

Before Eliezer has finished his prayer, Rebekah, who was Abraham's niece, emerged with her jug to draw water; the servant made his request of her; she gave him water to drink and then offered to draw water for his camels. It seemed to the excited Eliezer that Rebekah would be an ideal choice for Isaac--but he could judge only by her beauty and by her politeness. However, after he found out that Nahor, Abraham's own brother, was her grandfather, the servant was sure this was indeed the divine guidance, that Rebekah was the woman he should choose.

When Rebekah's father and brother were agreed that marriage to Isaac would be suitable, they said to her, "Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go" (Gen. 24:58).

At Rebekah's departure her family blessed her:

"Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them" (Gen. 24-26).

She left her home as a girl of a good family should, with the blessing of her family ringing in her ears, wearing, no doubt, the gold ring or earring and the two gold bracelets brought to her as betrothal gifts from Isaac, and with her nurse and her damsels riding behind her. At the end of Rebekah's long journey, in the cool of the evening, Isaac who "went out to meditate in the field," (Gen. 24:63) meditating, no doubt, about the appearance and the nature of the woman who had been chosen for him in this arbitrary fashion, lifting his eyes and saw the camel train approaching. At the same time, Rebekah asked the servant, "What man is that that walked

in the field?" The servant told her that it was Isaac, and she alighted from her camel and "took a veil and covered herself" (Gen. 24:65).

No formal religious ceremony is indicated at this early stage but strongly implied is that Rebekah was now Isaac's wife. Isaac loved her, "and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (Gen. 24:67) by his wife.

In summarizing Isaac and Rebekah's marriage, there is found:

1. The patriarch's choice of his son's marriage (Gen. 24:2-4).
2. The making of the contract to a faithful servant (Gen. 24:2-6).
3. The choice of a bride from the father's own people (Gen. 24:4).
4. The provision of the dowry (Gen. 24:10).
5. God answering the servant's earnest prayer (Gen. 24:11-14).
6. Rebekah was beautiful, polite, willing to work (Gen. 24:16-20).
7. Rebekah's direct relation to Abraham's family (Gen. 24:24).
8. Her family's full agreement upon the marriage (Gen. 24:50-51).
9. Rebekah's willingness to marry Isaac (Gen. 24:58).
10. Blessings from the bride's family (Gen. 24:60).
11. Isaac's love of Rebekah (Gen. 24:67).

Everyone was happy. What an ideal marriage!

The Biblical Marriage Ceremony

The bride and bridegroom in biblical times put on their best garments and jewels:

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels (Is. 61:10).

As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth (Is. 49:18b).

The bride's garments were often richly embroidered and in some cases may have been white:

She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee (Ps. 45:14).

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (Rev. 19:7-8a).

The bride's attendants "took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom" (Mt. 25:1). The wedding ceremony may have taken place at night as occurred in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

The bridegroom may have been escorted by friends and companions as well as by singers and musicians as indicated in the following verses:

So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him (Jud. 14:10-11).

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race (Ps. 19:5).

The voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness; the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride (Jer. 7:34b).

The Wedding Feast described in Matthew, chapter seven, was great. Sometimes the feast lasted seven days or more as in Jacob's wedding (Gen. 29:27). The well-known wedding feast at Cana, attended by Jesus and His mother (Jn. 2:1-11), included so many guests that the wine gave out.

CHAPTER II

THE CHINESE CONCEPTS OF MARRIAGE

China is the oldest living nation with a continuous culture. Chinese have faithfully followed and respected their traditions for the past four thousand years of civilization.

Variously known as the Middle Kingdom, the Celestial Empire, and the Land of Sinim (Is. 49:12), China is the oldest of the existing nations. Its legendary history goes back to about thirty centuries before the Christian era; its true historical period is conceded by Western scholars to date from 2200 B.C. In other words, China's history began 1,500 years before the founding of Rome, 700 years before the Exodus, and 300 years before the call of Abraham. Imagine a nation which has seen the rise, wane, and final extinction of the greatest world empires of history--Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome--and yet lives on, the same compact race, unimpaired in vitality and increasing steadily in numbers.¹

When Athens was no larger than a village and before Rome was built, Peking was the capital of a civilized country. Its people wore leather shoes and silk robes. They carried umbrellas and told time by the sundial.²

A recent newspaper stated that one of every four persons in the world is Chinese. By 1980 some baby will be the one billionth Chinese. By 2000 half of the world's population will be Chinese.³

¹Robert Hall Glover, The Progress of World Wide Missions (New York: Harper and Brother, 1960), p. 143.

²Liva Baker, World Faiths - A Story of Religion (New York: Abelard-Schuman Limited, 1965), p. 22.

³Daily Advance, 22 October 1974.

The Chinese Ideal of Human Marriage

The Chinese philosophy of marriage can be clearly seen in the following analogy:

"Twixt you and me
 There's too much emotion.
 That's the reason why
 There's such a commotion!
 Take a lump of clay,
 Wet it, pat it,
 And make an image of me,
 And an image of you.
 Then smash them, Crash them,
 And add a little water.
 Break them and re-make them
 Into an image of you,
 And an image of me.
 Then in my clay, there's a little of you.
 And in your clay, there's a little of me.
 And nothing ever shall us sever;
 Living, we'll sleep in the same quilt,
 And dead, we'll be buried together."⁴

The analogy of clay and water in human marriage was long ago expressed by Madame Kuan, a painter and teacher at the Imperial Court, and wife of the great Yuan painter Chao Mengfu.

Woman is water and man is clay, and water permeates and molds the clay, and the clay holds the water and gives the substance, in which water moves and lives and has its full being.

Both man and woman are individuals with separate wills of their own, yet in a happy marriage they grow to complement each other as one complete being. There is a complementing of each other's defects. There is a fusing of personalities, the merging of two wills, so that in having and by complementing each other the two beings become one; they become complete. Marriage is like one who has an extra window to his soul, an

⁴Lin Yutang, The Importance of Living (New York: The John Day Company, 1937), p. 183.

augmentation of his psychic powers for sensing dangers as well as for profiting from life's gifts and joy. This is the Chinese philosophy on marriage.

Chinese Marriage Customs

It is sometimes a question with Westerners as to what really constitutes the binding part in a Chinese marriage. In the West the kernel of the whole matter is contained in the proper preliminaries having been carried out as laid down by law and in the few sentences in which the married couple promise to take each other as husband and wife having been said. Not long ago, some Western marriages were such that if all the requirements of the civil law were complied with, as exemplified in a civil marriage before a Registrar, the marriage was a valid one, and the religious ceremony associated with marriage was added. But with the old Chinese tradition there are no notices to be given to a Registrar of Marriage; there are no such officials appointed.⁵

The Chinese saw that they lived in a busy universe. All nature, they saw, was busy. Day and night followed each other. Spring, summer, autumn and winter came without fail. The rain fell, the sun shone, the rice ripened. Plants grew, sprouted blossoms and bore fruit. People were born, married, grew older each day, died. Even after they died, they were busy watching over the people left behind. Because of these basic concepts of life, Chinese parents arranged their children's marriage while the children were young, so that they could produce offspring soon.

In old China, engagements were often made when both parties were very young and arranged without either the boy or girl seeing each other.

⁵Meh Hui-t'ing, Problems of Change of the Chinese Family (Taiwan: The Orient Cultural Service, 1953), p. 131.

At times the parents even arranged the children's marriage before the children were born.

Marriages were arranged in ancient China usually by calling a fortuneteller to "calculate their fortunes." The fortuneteller calculated their fortunes on the basis of "characters" such as the year, the month, the day and the hour of birth. The Chinese calculated time in cycles of sixty years, with each cycle subdivided into periods of twelve years, each of which is called after an animal.⁶ They are in this order: mouse, cow, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig. For example, if a girl was born in the year of tiger, and if she was born at night, the fortuneteller would predict that the girl would be diligent and never lack for food, for she was a female tiger. A man's family would rather avoid a female tiger, because she might eat up the husband!

In some Chinese families even today, consultation with a go-between is one of the most important matters, and a marriage is not proper without such a consultation. The parents often take the boy's "characters" and the girl's "characters" written on red paper to the go-between. This go-between takes the characters to a fortuneteller to see whether the "characters" portend a happy marriage. Next, these "character" strips are taken and placed under the incense burner which stands before the boy's ancestral table for a period of three days. If no misfortune occurs to the family during that time, that is, if nothing is broken, even a bowl or a chopstick, the family knows that this marriage will be good, and an engagement is agreed upon; the boy's "characters" and those of the girl are

⁶Christiana Tsai, Queen of the Dark Chamber (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1968), pp. 32-33.

written in special red and gold folders. Possession of these folders is equivalent to having a marriage license.⁷

These superstitions make such a narrow thread of happiness that binds two lives together. Of course, Chinese Christians do not follow these superstitious practices. However, the parents still play the most important part in their children's marriages.

Before the actual marriage ceremony takes place, the most important thing to have is the Three Documents and Six Ceremonials. Of the six Ceremonials the most important is the Three Generations. This must be present; all the rest may be wanting. The time at which the woman becomes the man's wife is when they worship the man's ancestors. Strickly speaking the marriage is only supposed to be complete after their joint visit to the bride's family, when they both worship her ancestral tablets, but in law they are husband and wife after the first joint worship mentioned above.⁸

A Chinese engagement is a double-ring ceremony with a feast for the family and friends. It is Chinese etiquette for the guests invited to a marriage to call to congratulate the parents of the bridegroom on the morning of the marriage. After the marriage ceremony takes place, a big feast will follow immediately, usually a twelve-course dinner with ten people per table. From ten to a hundred or more tables of food will be served--according to the financial situation of the parents of the bridegroom. Because of the great emphasis the Chinese place on marriage,

⁷Meh Hui-t'ing, Problems of Change of the Chinese (Taiwan: The Oriental Press, 1959), p. 89.

⁸J. Dyer Ball, Things Chinese (London: John Murray, 1926, pp. 371-373.

much effort and money go into the wedding feast. Furthermore, because this is such an important occasion, a large number of guests are invited to the happy celebration, regardless of the cost.

Under the old system, marriage was not a personal matter but a family decision, aimed at producing offspring. Decisions leading to a marriage were made by elders, especially the males, although, in fact, elder women often carried on much of the negotiation. The authority of the elders to arrange marriage was still recognized in the early years of the Republic.⁹

Since the establishment of the Republic, the essentials of marriage have generally remained the same; but changes are to be noted here and there, such as the greater freedom of the modern girl, who at the time claims the right to choose her own husband. The ceremonial changes consist chiefly in the adoption in some cases of Western costumes, and absence of much of the ceremonial detail and superstition of the old regime.¹⁰

⁹Tung-Tsu Chii, Law and Society in Tradition China, (Paris: Mouton, 1961), pp. 29-30.

¹⁰Olga Lang, Chinese Family and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), p. 104.

CHAPTER III

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

Marriage Preparation

The Boy Scout motto is "Be prepared." It is an excellent idea to help boys to learn early in life skills that will be useful to them later. This is, in fact, the main purpose of education. The school prepares people for a life vocation and for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

There are those who behave as though preparing for marriage is little more than buying some new clothes, picking up the license, and going to the clergyman. Others, with enough foresight, say, "I'm planning to be married in six weeks. What should I do in order to insure our continued happiness?" They are usually considered by both themselves and others wisely superior.

Next to salvation, marriage is the most important single step any two individuals ever take. The new roles of husband, wife, and parent involve new responsibilities. The traditional marriage ceremony says, "One should not enter the holy estate of matrimony lightly or unadvisedly, but soberly, reverently and in the fear of God."

The failure of a great many married people to walk together agreeably is due to a lack of preparation for the journey into the

land of matrimony.¹

Readiness for Marriage

Finding the right partner and developing a personal relationship are the first two steps toward marriage. A young couple may be thoroughly compatible, very much in love, and still not ready for marriage. It may be said that people generally enter matrimony thinking they are in love and believing that marriage will bring them instant happiness, which will solve all problems. Actually, in many instances, they are swept into marriage on a tidal wave of romance, not love.

Romance is usually ephemeral; it is selfish. Romantic "lovers" are distraught and miserable when separated, and this misery is caused by selfishness of the most egocentric type. The "lover" is sorry for himself and is grieving over his loss of pleasure and intimacy. This state of mind is closely related to another selfish emotion--jealousy. Many people believe they are marrying for love. This is a false assumption and a dangerous myth.²

Emotional Maturity

Emotional maturity is a normative concept in developmental psychology which means that the individual has arrived at adulthood. He is no longer a rebellious adolescent. Emotional maturity is tested in the crises of life. A mature person makes the best of the situation.

¹Strother A. Campbell, Making Marriage Christian (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1937), p. 37.

²William J. Lederer and Don D. Jackson, The Mirages of Marriage (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1968), pp. 45-46.

To an immature person, frustration is an occasion for a tantrum.

Emotions out of control wreck many marriages, disturb family relations and injure children for life. Emotional maturity needs cultivation. Christians will pray for the gifts of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-24). Jesus could be both gentle and firm. Christians will endeavor to be like Him.³

A mature person has the ability to establish and maintain personal relationships. Maturity involves both the ability to give and the ability to receive. In other words, a mature person has the ability to love.

Immature persons are so wrapped up in their own needs that they cannot understand how others feel. Babies are self-centered and take years to learn to recognize the feelings of others. A mature person should be able to understand how others feel. Marriage is not for children. Nor does the ability to physically care for oneself necessarily qualify a person for marriage.

What is emotional maturity? It is usually dealt with as an undefined concept, explained by enumerating some of its manifestations.

The emotionally mature person relies on himself and takes the responsibility for his own acts. He knows that what happens to him is not so important as what he does about it. He continually learns from experience instead of suffering from repetition of the same mistakes. Life is no meaningless, dead-end thing to him. There is purpose

³Oscar E. Feucht, Helping Families Through the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), p. 19.

to it, and that purpose is self-fulfillment through growth.⁴

He has learned to live with situations he cannot change or honorably avoid. He keeps his promises. He does not blame others for what goes wrong, nor attempt to get the credit for what goes right. His principal concern is getting things done well. He is kind but with no trace of weakness, not just tolerant, able to withstand strain or pressure. Genuinely liking other people, he wants to work with them and for them, even despite occasional provocation from people who are not emotionally mature. But, whenever others represent ends which are intolerant, coercive, or dogmatic, he resists vigorously in a sportsmanlike manner.⁵

He is sincere, and therefore never a poser. He has found himself, accepted his own unique personality, and continued to develop his potentialities, free from the imposed bondages of anyone who would dominate him. He has learned to retain his inner emotional balance under trying circumstances, all the while holding to the things that matter with a sound sense of proportion.⁶

In summary, some signs of emotional maturity are:

1. Confidence in and respect for one's own integrity.
2. Ability to face reality honestly, no matter how disappointing the situation actually is.
3. Self-control, even in an upsetting situation.
4. The desire to serve rather than be served.

⁴Chau Yang Hsu, Problems of Marriage (Shanghai: Chang-Woo Publishers, 1940), p. 140.

⁵Koo Yun Chen, Problems of the Chinese Family (Shanghai: Chang-Woo Publishers, 1939), p. 120.

⁶Ibid.

Physical Fitness

Before choosing a mate, one should be physically fit for matrimony. A person has no right to match a good bill of health with a vicious disease. Good health is an asset to matrimonial happiness, while poor health is a serious liability. No man has the right to bring tainted blood to the marriage altar.

Because of the importance of physical fitness, it is wise to consider the heredity of one's mate as well as the family into which one marries--for there lies the background of wedded life. One can choose the family into which he marries. The family with a streak of insanity running through it must be shunned. The family with a bad hereditary trait of any kind should be avoided.

Sickle cell anemia is an example of such an undesirable, inherited trait. Resulting from a gene which causes the production of an abnormal hemoglobin (Hemoglobin S), the disease's development depends upon the nature of the partner gene. If this gene is similarly defective, the individual makes only Hemoglobin S and sickle cell anemia results.

Each full sibling of a known case of sickle cell anemia has a 25 percent chance of having the disease and a 50 percent chance of having the sickle cell trait (carrier state). If the other parent is also a case, the risk is 50 percent for the disease and 100 percent for carrying at least one sickling gene.⁷

Nothing can be of more help in avoiding such a situation than the right kind of premarital medical examination. The premarital medical

⁷Contra Costa County Health Department, "Empiric Risk Figures," University of California School of Public Health, 1965.

examination is usually regarded by engaged couples as just another red tape requirement, while some doctors regard it as entailing little--if any--more than the administering of the necessary tests to establish the absence of transmittable diseases. Wise choice of the physician who is to give the premarital medical examination is therefore important.

Financial Fitness

In every human society--until recently at least--man has been the provider and woman the preparer. Economic fitness, especially on the part of the man, has generally been regarded as one of the most important social standards of fitness for marriage.⁸

But no matter what current social or economic trends dictate, experience has proven untrue the saying "Two can live as cheaply as one." A man does not need to have a fortune; but he does need to have an income enough to keep the house warm and his wife reasonably content with her lot.

What is the minimum income a couple must have to get along? The answer varies from couple to couple, depending on their values. Some people "just could not survive" on less than a certain amount of money per year and would rather stay single than try. For others, rock bottom is a good deal lower. Every couple has a minimum standard below which life would be too barren. Realistic budgeting can determine what that minimum is.

The fact that both suffer similarly is a saving grace. If eating hamburgers and making do with second-hand furniture in a one-room

⁸ Abraham Stone and Hannah Stone, A Marriage Manual (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), p. 17.

apartment is an equal comedown for both, neither is likely to feel better. Stretching dollars can also be challenging.

In earlier generations money in the bank proved one's readiness for marriage. Today's couples depend more on their current income potential.

Two cannot live as cheaply as one. In fact, it is doubtful that two can live as cheaply as two, when the two are married. For marriage brings new needs and new desires: equipment, furniture, supplies for entertaining, the setting up of a new home and the preparation for children. All these are expensive, and still at the same time the previous needs for food, clothing, recreation, and so on continue for both the man and the woman. Financial fitness must receive due consideration.

Spiritual Fitness

One should be more than physically and financially fit, for marriage is an adventure in character development.

Spiritual fitness is the only guarantee against matrimonial disintegration. It is that quality which keeps marriage the holy thing that it was when first ordained of God.

The advice that God gave to Samuel as He sent him forth in search of a real man (David) is good advice for those who contemplate choosing a mate: "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). Man looks on the face, God on the heart; man on the body, God on the soul. Man's judgment is false, God's true. God's heart is the test of man's heart, as is God's wish, God's plan, God's purpose. In other words, God's

law shows the perfect standard.⁹

Marriage can never be a success if either party to the contract is a moral bankrupt. Constancy is essential to a happy married life, and until one is morally fit, one is not capable of constancy in any large degree.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14). There is an essential spiritual difference between those who are converted and those who are not. Christians are to have no compromising connection with anything in the world which is alien to God. There is really no congeniality between the two spirits. One's delight in the relationship of an irreligious party bears on it the evidence of his own irreligion.¹⁰

A spiritually mature Christian should not choose an unbeliever for a mate. To consort with the ungodly not only proves the existence of a kindred leaven in his spirit, but tends to ferment it. Who can deny the blight and the barrenness that are brought upon the spirit by this union with the unbeliever?

Mate Choice

Other than accepting salvation, the degree of happiness and personality development that one attains in life is perhaps more dependent on the wise choice of a life partner than on any other factor.

It seems unfortunate, therefore, that this choice is made particularly difficult because it usually comes in youth when experience is limited and judgment immature. The fact that there are so many divorces as a result of teen-age marriage in the Western world suggests that perhaps

⁹Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, 1 Samuel, p. 382.

¹⁰Ibid., 2 Corinthians, p. 345.

young people cannot be trusted to choose their marriage partners wisely.

Choose Objectively

In general, the greater the gap between the two marriage partners in culture and taste the greater the likelihood that they will find themselves incompatible--the greater will be their difficulty in forming a highly functional relationship.

There is an old saying which says, "A woman should not marry a man for his money, but she should never let it stand in the way." Fortunately, it is relatively easy for most people to reject the idea of marrying for money--the choices should be based on love, common experience in religion, similar backgrounds, and equal educational and social levels.¹¹

Approval of Parents

Most parents take an interest in the mating choices of their children. But because of the traditional emphasis on personal freedom in the United States, parental advice is more likely to be indirect than direct. It is interesting to note that more than three-fourths of the happily married men and women reported that their parents approved their prospective mates.¹²

Age Differences

In most circumstances, a difference of ten to fifteen years may well lead to difficulties in adjustment. Great differences in the maturity of the partners may also result in a cleavage of viewpoint or outlook. The

¹¹Lloyd Saxton, The Individual, Marriage, and the Family (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 202-203.

¹²Harvey J. Locke, Prediction Adjustment in Marriage (New York: Henry Holt & Co., Inc., 1951), pp. 118-119.

more advanced age of one partner may bring about glandular changes sooner than if the partners were matched for age. Age differences will also affect the chances of one's being left a widow or widower.¹³

Interracial Marriages

Such terms as "half-breed" and "half-caste" usually carry disapproval and scorn. Part of this feeling is due to society's tabooing of intermarriage. Much of the disapproval is due merely to race prejudice. Such prejudice, no matter how much the few deplore it, does exist and is very powerful. No moral question of right and wrong is involved, but the implications of social expediency are tremendous. Persons who defy the social barriers of race are often asking for trouble. They may be strong enough to withstand the pressure and they may be so constituted that social opposition adds zest to their venture. The honeymoon may be so thrilling that the couple snap their fingers at social scorn, but the honeymoon is soon over and its comparative isolation at an end.

Racial background is so powerful. One example is that of an American educator in the Far East, a man of highest character and intellect who married a brilliant Chinese woman and established a successful home. Yet the sons of this union, handsome and brilliant though they were, never were fully accepted by either race. Such offspring are literally men "without a race." Another case is that of a noted American journalist who married a talented Chinese woman, both frankly recognizing the difficulties they were assuming. This was a mixed marriage in the truest sense of the word. She was Chinese, a Christian, of high social

¹³E. W. Burgess and L. S. Cottrell, Prediction of Success or Failure in Marriage (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), p. 110.

status and with British cultural heritage; he was Polish, a Jew, born and raised in the ghetto of New York City, with the American culture pattern. But although they had a respect, a common sense which they shared made them both admit that their child would meet many difficult situations as he grew older.¹⁴

A white marrying a Negro is at once ostracized by nearly all whites and is frequently accepted very coolly in Negro circles. The offspring of such unions, for generations to come, must be classed as Negroes. Since any amount of Negro blood, no matter how small, will ostracize a person from white society, the only method for those who seek racial escape is to become light enough successfully to "pass"--a deception to which the honorable and racially proud refuse to stoop.¹⁵

Most parents tend to shake their heads at their child's mixed marriage, calling it unwise and disgraceful. Hence it is almost impossible to have a truly happy interracial marriage.

Interfaith Marriages

Religious separatism is still very strong now. Catholics, Protestants and Jews who work harmoniously in the business world, whose children frequently attend the same schools and colleges, and who are native-born of several generations are still acutely conscious of the marriage lines established by their faiths. The religious patterns for those strictly brought up in their faiths are usually so important that they desire no one of alien faith; yet, at the same time, there are

¹⁴George E. Sodolsky, "My Mixed Marriage," Atlantic, August 1933, pp. 137-146.

¹⁵Ray E. Baber, Marriage and the Family, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1939), p. 160.

people who break loose from tradition and marry into another faith. What are the special difficulties they meet? A common error is made in the assumption that two young people of different religious faiths are different only in their religious beliefs. More than that is involved. For although the couple might have similar theological views, each may still be far apart in certain basic attitudes. Thus, different religious backgrounds can cause much trouble.¹⁶

In summary, for a happy marriage, the couple should come from the same "side of the tracks" and be of like religious faith. Before any couple ceases to be a purely recreational pair and before they think of themselves in terms of marriage, they need to take time to explore each other's religious faith. They should not wait until they are already "in love"--that will be much too late. For when the "honeymoon is over," problems will arise. Many problems are eradicated when both partners of the marriage have been brought up in the same church. Then, union at this, the deepest level of existence, is facilitated by belief and training.

Oneness

Physical Oneness

Physical intimacy is consummated in the marriage. Sexual intercourse involves the greatest intimacy, the greatest revelation of the self; the maximum interaction of body with body. When it unites partners in love, they give themselves unreservedly to each other.

The challenge of marriage is to integrate the sexual and nonsexual

¹⁶Sodolsky, "My Mixed Marriage," pp. 137-46.

aspects to produce a deeper oneness, expressing in new terms the language of love. Then husband and wife experience most profoundly the communion of one life with another. Then marriage is unique, transcending the closest relationship.¹⁷

Sexual relations involve physical oneness, emotional oneness and spiritual oneness. Most people look upon sex as a physical thrill, so much have the physical aspects of sex been stressed. From an emotional aspect, the sex act can be and often is an expression of love. For some people, especially women, love is its major aspect. There are women who engage in sexual intercourse not to become physically excited, but because they love their husbands. Sometimes love feelings precede and make possible the physical enjoyment of sexual relations.¹⁸

The feeling of belonging to someone is another feeling that is frequently associated with sex. To know that "we belong to each other" can be a very satisfying feeling, and is often best expressed and heightened through sexual intercourse.¹⁹

Spiritual Oneness

Sex is certainly more than just physical union. Actually, it is the deep constraints of the spirit which draw a man and woman together and make them indeed one. Until husband and wife have come to a realization of the necessity for complete oneness of body and spirit, happiness cannot grow out of the marriage relation.

¹⁷Robert O. Blood, Jr., Marriage (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 293.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 294.

¹⁹Jerome Rainer and Julia Rainer, Sexual Pleasure in Marriage (New York: Permabooks, 1962), p. 120.

The sex act is the act that produces life. Elements of mystery and faith surround it. There is never a time in marriage when a couple are more literally "one" than when united in sexual communion. When all these and other factors are considered it should not be difficult to see that sex is potentially a spiritual experience as well as a physical one.

Man cannot separate his body and soul, as such all that pertains to his soul pertains to his physical life, and all that pertains to his physical life pertains also to his soul. Chancellor Milford puts it thus:

You are nothing in this world apart from your body, what you do in your body you do in yourself, what you do with your body, you do with yourself. That is why sex is important.²⁰

Emotional Oneness

Emotional oneness is the sharing of likes and dislikes as they relate to living and working together. A struggle exists to keep the original emotional feelings intact as the "romance" wears off.

Marriages usually begin with the sharing of love. Men and women not only love but they hate, they fear, and they hope. They feel lonely, insecure, unwanted, enthusiastic, jealous, tender, passionate. Perhaps there is no limit to the combination of feelings a person can experience and express. Marriage should provide for the sharing of most of them.²¹

Sharing feelings brings a couple closer together, constantly opens up new and exciting aspects of one another and cements the past with a common background. Sharing makes it easier to present a united front to an often hostile and threatening world. It promotes unity as

²⁰T. R. Milford, The Christian Philosophy of Sex (London: S. C. M. Press, 1949), p. 80.

²¹Chau, Problems of Marriage, p. 110.

well as faith and confidence.

Understanding in marriage is also a prerequisite for happiness. Understanding does not always bring agreement; it may also be used to make disagreements tolerable and acceptable.

After feelings and needs have been adequately expressed and accepted, a husband and wife may decide to disagree and accept different points of view within the household. Understanding can also be used to promote confidence. It is important to realize that understanding comes from practice in communication.²²

Spiritual Oneness

Christian marriage is built on the twin foundation; it is mate to mate. Christian marriage also involves challenge; each partner has to grow in and through the relationship, through the daily prayers in the home. It is often said, "A couple who prays together stays together." A Christian couple should make of every meal a fellowship of blessing and of every task an offering to God.

Spiritual intimacy is achieved when two Christians are able fully and freely to share with one another God's dealing in their lives, their total dedication and their victorious Christian living.

A oneness of spirit is accomplished as both seek to get as close as they can to God in their own personal lives. As each one develops his spiritual responsibilities and opportunities, a deepening fellowship exists and a greater ability of communication with each other develops.

Ephesians 4:5 speaks of "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." How is this Lordship essential to a Christian couple? It binds them

²²Chau, Problems of Marriage, p. 120.

together in spiritual unity. It unites them to a precious Saviour. It requires obedience. They are servants under one Master; disciples under one Teacher; soldiers under one Captain; subjects under one Lord. He is pre-eminent and paramount. And it is His Lordship that gives tone to their character, firmness to their testimony, steadfastness to their lives, and direction in all things.²³

A Christian couple must have spiritual oneness. Their home is a weapon for God to use, and they are committed to using their talents and money for the sake of the coming of His Kingdom on earth as in heaven.

²³Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Ephesians, p. 368.

PART II
PARENTHOOD

CHAPTER IV

PARENTHOOD AND THE BIBLE

On the subject of parents and children and their relation to each other, educators, physicians, psychiatrists and psychologists have written so many books and pamphlets that parents often grow bewildered. But, however wise or experienced those professionals may be, they have changed their theories from time to time. Only God's Word, the Bible, is the absolute authority where guidance for parents is clearly written throughout its pages. And because the Bible's truths are incomparable and are final, this section will quote many Scriptural texts.

The Father's Role

The Father--One Who Rules His Family

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him (Gen. 18:19).

The Father--One Who Teaches His Children About God

Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons (Deut. 4:9).

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children (Isa. 54:13).

The Father--One Who Disciplines His Children In Time

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (Prov. 13:24).

The Father--One Who Loves His Children

And he said, Take now thy son . . . whom thou lovest (Gen. 22:2).

The Father--One Who Pities His Children

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him (Ps. 103:13).

The Father--One Who Instructs His Children

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: (Prov. 1:8).

The Father--One Who Corrects His Children

For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth (Prov. 3:12).

The Father--One Who Guides His Children

Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? (Jer. 3:4).

The Father--One Who Forgives His Children

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee . . . But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him (Lk. 15:18, 20).

The Father--One Who Comforts His Children

As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, (1 Thes. 2:11).

The Father--One Who Gives Gifts To His Children

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matt. 7:11).

The Father--One Who Provokes Not His Children

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:

but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Fathers Who Succeeded

Noah--the father who brought his whole family safely into the Ark. The Bible recorded:

And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation . . . And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, (Gen. 7:1, 5, 7).

Noah had his whole family with him in the Ark. He could not spare any of them. His wife, his three sons and their wives obeyed him. The secret of his success was that "Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him" (Gen. 7:5), and thus, he set a wonderful example for his family to follow.

Noah was able to gain his entire family's respect and obedience unlike Lot, Abraham's nephew. The angels had advised Lot and his family to depart from Sodom so as to escape the destruction to come. Lot had two sons-in-law; they did not believe him when he told them of the impending destruction, so they did not leave. However, Noah's family believed him, and they were all willing to trust his judgment and avoid a horrible fate.

Abraham--the father who put God above his beloved son. The words of God were:

Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of . . . And Abraham rose up early in the morning . . . and Isaac his son . . . and went unto the place of which God had told him (Gen. 22:2-3).

No earthly father of a beloved son ever felt called upon to make a greater sacrifice than Abraham. Any father's heart would sink

within him at such a command. However, Abraham obeyed God.

Abraham built an altar, and in a most orderly way, laid the kindling wood on it. He tied Isaac, and he laid him on the altar, on the top of the wood. He then stretched forth his hand and took hold of the knife. Abraham's eagerness for his son, and the emotions within him need not be told explicitly. However, God was fully aware of them and thus sent, just in time, an angel who said to Abraham, "For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." (Gen. 22:12).

Abraham's faith in God remained steadfast through the entire testing. Furthermore, Isaac's submission to parental authority was faith in transaction--like father, like son:

Fathers Who Failed

Eli--a wonderful teacher to Samuel, but a failure as a father to his own sons.

Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress . . . Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father . . . (1 Sam. 2:22-25).

Eli tried to reprimand his sons, but it was too late. He did not discipline them when they were young, and by the time he regretted his failure, his opportunity to correct his sons had passed, for they were already grown and set in their evil ways.

A messenger from God rebuked Eli, saying,

Honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people . . . for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed (1 Sam. 2:29-30).

Eli honored his sons above God, unlike Abraham who put God above his only son. Likewise, the outcomes of these two fathers' lives differed. Abraham received due rewards and bountiful blessings from God, while Eli received just punishment from Him.

Samuel--who a perfect judge and prophet in Israel, somehow, also failed as a father. The Bible says:

And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment (1 Sam. 8:3).

Perhaps Samuel was so busy with his work as a successful leader of Israel that he neglected his own sons' training. Samuel was a disappointed father. He had evidently hoped that his sons might fill his place when his days were ended.¹ However, they had abused the example of their father's ways.

David--a successful king and warrior who also failed as a father. It was David's sorest wounding when one of his sons after another wrought folly and wickedness in Israel.

David's eldest son Amnon wronged his beautiful half-sister, Tamar (2 Sam. 13). When King David heard the news, "he was very wroth" (2 Sam. 13:21). However, he did nothing to punish Amnon. Therefore, Absalom, Tamar's brother, desired revenge:

Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? (2 Sam. 13:28).

At this point, David was unable to punish Absalom just as he had failed to punish Amnon, finally allowing Absalom to return home from his exile.

¹Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, 1 Samuel, p. 195.

As is often the case, one neglect led to another. Absalom, evidently brought up without restraints, was impelled by his own ambition to the point that he set out to dethrone his own father. The beloved son of David "stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (2 Sam. 15:6). Civil war began, and David had to flee from Jerusalem.

It is difficult to believe that David was unaware of Absalom's rebellious intentions. In fact, the Bible says, "for there is no matter hid from the king" (2 Sam. 18:13). David always had the support of a large group of intimate and intensely loyal friends, even in the days of his greatest danger. It is even doubtful that David was fooled by Absalom's pretext for going to Hebron (2 Sam. 15:7-9). One suspects that David simply refused to face the seditious implications of his son's rebellion.²

Upon Absalom's death, David's heartbroken cry ended the tragic episode of a father's ruined relationship with a beloved but rebellious son. His favorite and undisciplined son was dead; the heartbroken father cried most bitterly, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam. 18:33). David's weakness for his son and his overwhelming fondness for him, made him close his eyes to what was a tremendous danger for the kingdom.³

The Mother's Role

There are many lovely aspects to womanhood, such as those so beautifully delineated in Proverbs 31. But motherhood is truly one of

²B. Davie Napier, From Faith to Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), p. 138.

³Edith Samuel, In The Beginning Love (New York: The John Day Company, 1973), p. 151.

the most precious and most honored of positions held by women. In the Bible many examples are found of women who showed their joy in their roles as mothers in ways that were different and yet similar.

Rejoicing in Motherhood

Eve--the first mother who ever cradled a baby in her arms exclaimed with joy, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." (Gen. 4:1). She called her eldest son Cain, which signifieth a possession.⁴

Sarah--rejoicing in Isaac's birth, said, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me . . . Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children such? for I have born him a son in his old age" (Gen. 21:6-7). There were elements of amazement and wonder. And Sarah named her son Isaac, meaning laughter--an acknowledgment of the parents' genuine happiness.

Leah--rejoiced in all of her children. The names of the four sons successively born to her were all significant, and revealed that pious habit of mind which recognized the hand of God in all that befell her. She called the firstborn Reuben, meaning "see ye a son." The second son was named Simeon, meaning "hearing," for God had heard her prayer and seen her affliction. The third was named Levi, meaning "joined." For now, surely, would the breach be healed and the husband and wife joined together by this threefold cord. The fourth she called Judah, meaning "praise," as if recording her thankfulness and joyfulness to the Lord.⁵

Rachel--the favorite wife of Jacob, was barren for a long time,

⁴Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Genesis I, p. 318.

⁵Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Genesis II, p. 242.

and she told her husband, "Give me children, or else I die" (Gen. 30:1). Then she offered to Jacob her handmaid, Bilhah, whose son would legally be counted as hers. Bilhah did bear a son, and when he was born, Rachel rejoiced and named him Dan and said, "God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son" (Gen. 30:6). When Rachel had a son of her own she said, "God hath taken away my reproach: And she called his name Joseph; and said, The Lord shall add to me another son" (Gen. 30:23-24).

Hannah--Elkanah's beloved wife, was also barren for a long time. Although her husband's love for her was most tender, it could not satisfy the childless wife. Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?" (1 Sam. 1:8). Hannah's heart could not be happy until God answered her prayer. But He soon did when a son was born to her. She was finally a mother in Israel, and a mother of what a child: her heart was full of joy and thanksgiving for the birth of her son Samuel. She said, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord" (1 Sam. 2:1).

People rejoiced similarly at another birth--the birth of John the Baptist:

And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her (Lk. 1:14, 58).

The Queen Mothers of Israel

The phrase "And his mother was" appears again and again in 1 and 2 Kings and in 1 and 2 Chronicles. Especially in describing the lives of many Old Testament kings, the Bible puts much stress upon the

character of the mothers of these kings.

The names of the mothers of seven kings who did "good or right in the sight of the Lord" were: Maachah, mother of King Asa; Zibiah, mother of King Jehoash; Jehoaddan, mother of King Amaziah (who started well but ended badly); Jecoliah, mother of King Uzziah (Azariah); Jerusha, mother of King Jotham; Abijah, mother of King Hezekiah; and Jedidah, mother of King Josiah.⁶

The mothers of the eight kings who did "evil in the sight of the Lord" were also mentioned: Naamah, mother of King Rehoboam; Maachah (Miciah), mother of King Abijah; Athaliah, also a queen and mother of King Ahaziah; Heph-zibah, mother of King Manasseh; Hamutal, mother of two kings, Jehoahaz II and Zedekiah; Zebudah, mother of King Jehoiakim, and Nehushta, mother of King Jehoiachin (who with his mother became a captive in Babylon when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took over Jerusalem).⁷

Of the wicked King Ahaziah the Bible says:

He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly . . . For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord did they bestow upon Baalim" (2 Chron. 22:3, 24:7).

Napoleon said, "They that rock the cradle rule the world." To have a cradle rocked by such a mother as Athaliah surely was enough to be foredoomed to endless misery.⁸

⁶1 Kings 15:10; 2 Kings 12:1, 14:2, 15:2, 15:33; 2 Chron. 29:1; 2 Kings 22:1.

⁷1 Kings 14:21, 15:22; 2 Chron. 22:2; 2 Kings 21:1, 23:31, 24:18, 23:36, 24:8.

⁸Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, 1 Chronicles-Esther, p. 102.

The Biblical Illustrator describes a mother's influence so well:

Mothers, ye are the sculptors of the souls of the coming men; queens of the cradle, humble or high, ye are the queens of the future. In your hands lie the destinies of men. Nero's mother was a murderess; Nero was a murderer, on a gigantic scale. Byron's mother was proud, ill-tempered, and violent; Byron was proud, ill-tempered, and violent. Washington's mother was noble and pure; Washington was noble and pure. Scott's mother loved poetry and painting; you know what Walter Scott was. Carlyle's mother was stern, and full of reverence; Carlyle was very much so. Wesley's mother was a God-like woman; Wesley was a God-like man. The prison chaplain will tell you that the last thing forgotten, in all the recklessness of dissolute profligacy, is the prayer or hymn taught by a mother's lips or uttered at a father's knee. Yes, when all other roads are closed, there is one road open to the heart of the desperate man--the memory of his mother.⁹

Faith of the Mother

The role of faith is best exemplified by Timothy's mother Eunice. Paul said, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." (2 Tim. 1:5). The grandmother, the mother, and the mother's son had the same faith, and their faith, like fruits, proceeded from them or else Paul would never have called it unfeigned, said that it dwelt in them, or given all three the same testimony.

Timothy's father was a Greek; yet Eunice had diligently instructed her son in the history and contents of the Holy Scriptures, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

⁹Ibid.

Lord Shaftesbury of England said:

Give me a generation of Christian mothers and I will undertake to change the whole face of society in twelve months.¹⁰

Then a missionary in Ceylon writes as a "noticeable fact:"

Where Christian women are married to heathen husbands, generally the influence in the household is Christian, whereas, when a Christian man takes a heathen woman he usually loses his Christian character, and the influences of the household are on the side of heathenism.¹¹

What a privilege to be a mother!

Parental Roles in Disciplining Children

Instruction of the Children

The instruction of children is an important duty of parents.

God also commands continuance of ordinances for instruction of posterity.

And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year (Ex. 13:8-10).

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (Deut. 6:7-9).

And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up (Deut. 11:19).

¹⁰Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, 2 Timothy-Philemon, p. 9.

¹¹Ibid.

For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments (Ps. 78:5-7).

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6).

Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation (Joel 1:3).

Correction of the Children

Too often there is a good deal of correction of children but it comes at the wrong time--when the child's will has grown strong, his passions have acquired a tenacious hold upon his mind, and the correction comes too late in life. It is the easiest of all things to spare the rod; it avoids all controversy and all painful collision between the parents and the children. For a time it seems beautiful, but on the contrary, it ought to be reprobated. The child that is wisely chastened comes to love the very hand that used the rod. God's Word says:

He that spareth the rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (Prov. 13:24).

Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying (Prov. 19:18).

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him (Prov. 22:15).

Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (Prov. 23:13-14).

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul (Prov. 29:15, 17).

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged (Col. 3:21).

Punishment of the Children

God's indignation towards unfilial children:

And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death (Ex. 21:15, 17).

For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him (Lev. 20:9).

If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear (Deut. 21:18-21).

Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen (Deut. 27:16).

For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death (Mk. 7:10).

Children's Obligations to Parents

God's Commandment

Children are to show to their parents honour, respect, love and obedience.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee (Ex. 20:12).

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck (Prov. 1:8-9).

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart (Prov. 3:1-3).

Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live (Prov. 4:1-4).

My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge (Prov. 5:1-2).

My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman (Prov. 6:20-24).

Hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not (Prov. 8:32-33).

Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways (Prov. 23:22, 26).

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is good (Eph. 6:1).

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord (Col. 3:20).

Examples of Children Showing Filial Piety:

Obedience to Parents

And they come to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son (Gen. 22:9-10).

And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram (Gen. 28:7).

And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; . . . And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me (Jud. 11:36-37).

Love Towards Parents

And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness (Gen. 9:23).

And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while (Gen. 46:29).

But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place (Gen. 47:30).

And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me (Ruth 1:16-17).

And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold (1 Sam. 22:3-4).

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home (Jn. 19:26-27).

In Their Father's Command

Joseph--Seventeen-year-old Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, performed service to his father. Joseph was obedient to his father to the point that he abandoned the comforts of his father's home and became a wanderer in search of his brothers. Joseph put himself to so much trouble to find his brothers that he might inform his father of their

welfare; but they took advantage of his love to wreak their hatred upon him. However, unwittingly they started him on his road to greatness.¹²

Gideon--While Gideon was threshing wheat for his father to save their crop from the enemy, an angel of the Lord appeared to the young man and said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour . . . And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (Jud. 6:12, 16).

Gideon, when actively and humbly doing his duty, was best fitted for the reception of heavenly visitants.¹³

Saul--Handsome young Saul was likewise working for his father when God blessed him in a wonderful way. "And the asses of Kish Saul's father was lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses" (1 Sam. 9:3). While searching for the asses, Saul met the prophet Samuel, who anointed him to be the first king of Israel. One thing to notice about young Saul is his filial piety. There is no duty more plainly or strongly enforced in the Scriptures than the duty of obeying parents. And with it is associated the highest rewards and the severest punishments; rewards and punishments pertaining not only to the future, but the present life as well.¹⁴

David--Jesse said to his young son David, "Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;. . . And David rose up early in the morning,

¹²Gen. 37.

¹³Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Josphua-Ruth, p. 93.

¹⁴Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, 1 Samuel, p. 211.

and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him" (1 Sam. 17:17,20). David is sent with food, and doubtlessly, kind messages from his father, just as Joseph was sent by Jacob to visit his brethren at Shechem. David was on an errand for his father when his opportunity came to confront Goliath. Later he became the greatest king of Israel.

Elisha--The prophet Elijah found young Elisha one day plowing on his father's farm. "Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him" (1 Kings 19:19).

Elisha was ready to follow the call of God. But remembering his parents, Elisha said to Elijah, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee" (1 Kings 19:20). Elisha is not found engaged in temple worship in Jerusalem or Samaria, nor in meditation and prayer, but rather, at his father's farm--driving before him his team of oxen.¹⁵

James and John--What manner of men were James and John when Jesus called them to His Service? "He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him" (Mk. 1:19-20). They were working side by side with their father. Implied is that James and John had a close relationship with their parents, Zebedee and Solome.

Jesus--Our Lord Himself worked with His earthly father Joseph in his carpenter's shop. He was called "the carpenter's son" (Mt. 13:55) and "the carpenter" (Mk. 6:3). Christ is God manifested in the flesh--

¹⁵Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, 1 Kings, p. 267.

the King of kings and Lord of lords; but still He demonstrated the filial piety required of a human son.

CHAPTER V

THE CHINESE CONCEPTS OF PARENTHOOD

Unlike the Chinese, old people in the Western world efface themselves and prefer to live alone in some apartment, doing so out of consideration for their children and an entirely unselfish desire not to interfere in their home life. But the old people have the right to "interfere," and if interference is unpleasant, it is nevertheless natural, for all life, particularly the domestic life, is a lesson in restraint. Parents interfere with their children anyway when they are young. But if one cannot tolerate his parents, now old and relatively helpless, who have done so much for him, who else can one tolerate in the world?

The Chinese idea supporting this personal service to the parents is expressly defended on the sole ground of gratitude. The debts to one's friends may be numbered, but the debts to one's parents are countless. Again and again Chinese essays on filial piety mention the fact of washing diapers, a menial yet noteworthy task, which takes on significance when one becomes a parent himself. In return, therefore, is it not right that in their old age the parents should be served with the best food and have their favorite dishes placed before them?

Role of Parenthood

The majority of Chinese parents will stick to their work from

morning till night, plodding faithfully at the most monotonous task. The Chinese have a talent for work, rising early and toiling late. Chinese parents also have the endowment for contentment, convinced that it is better to bear the ills they have than to fly to others that they know too well. They respect family ties.¹

The patriarch was the absolute head of the family. There is no Chinese term corresponding to that of patria potestas, but the Chinese father had practically as much power over his family as the Roman father. However, the father was subject to the authority of the grandfather, if he were still living. It was the custom for sons, on marriage, to bring their brides home and raise their families under one roof as long as their parents lived. This great household might consist of four or five generations.² The parenthood authority remains the same from generation to generation.

Chinese parents are the most self-sacrificing parents on earth. They will do everything possible for their children to get the best education, and do their full share for the welfare of their children. They discipline their children very strictly.³

Most of the Chinese parents hold education in top priority; the teacher therefore receives much admiration and is held in high esteem by Chinese students who have long been taught by their parents respect for teachers.

One such revered teacher was Hsun Tzu, who, without qualification,

¹Princeton S. Hsu, Bible and Chinese Filial Piety (Hong Kong: Baptist Press, 1965), p. 17.

²Baber, Marriage and the Family, pp. 65-66.

³Hsu Chau-Yang, Chinese Family (Shanghai: Shung-Wu Press, 1938), p. 88.

was one of the most brilliant philosophers the world has ever produced. He was born around 300 B. C. in the northwestern state of Chao. He studied philosophy in the state of Ch'i, where he was highly honored as a scholar and given office at the court.⁴ He said:

If a man is without a teacher or precepts, then if he is intelligent, he will inevitably be a robber; if he is brave, he will be a brigand; if he has ability he will be a trouble-maker; if he is a researcher, he will be interested only in strange phenomena; if he is a dialectician his arguments will be absurd. But if he has a teacher and precepts, then if he is intelligent he will quickly become learned; if he is brave, he will quickly become awe-inspiring; if he has ability, he will quickly accomplish whatever he undertakes to do; if he is a researcher, he will quickly push his investigations to their conclusion; if he is a dialectician, he will quickly solve every problem. Thus a teacher and precepts are the most important treasures a man can have; to be without a teacher and precepts is the greatest of misfortunes. The man who lacks a teacher and precepts exalts his original nature; he who has a teacher and precepts emphasizes of self-cultivation.⁵

Mencius' Mother--An Exemplary Chinese Mother

Mencius, the third of the great scholars of the Chou dynasty, was born in 372 B. C. His mother was so careful in his training that she changed their residence from time to time to avoid what she considered dangerous influences. She took her little son from the neighborhood of a cemetery to prevent his mimicking the mourners. She left the neighborhood of a slaughterhouse to keep him from imitating the cries of the animals. She moved from a house near the market to avoid the danger of his acquiring the rough manners of the tradespeople. Finally she settled in the vicinity of a school, and in this Mencius became deeply interested.⁶

⁴Herrlee G. Creel, Chinese Thought (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 115-116.

⁵Ibid., p. 125.

⁶Frank F. Bunker, China and Japan (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1928), p. 11.

After much sacrifice, the mother secured sufficient means to place him in the school. Becoming tired of study one day, he returned to his home, threw down his books, and declared that he would never go to school again. Instantly the mother caught up a knife and cut in pieces the garment she was weaving. The boy in alarm cried out, "You have made impossible my winter clothing." The mother then said, "I have made impossible your comfort only for the winter; you have made impossible both your comfort and your success for life." The lesson was so impressive that Mencius resumed his studies and pursued them so diligently that he rose to the rank of sage.⁷

The western world's knowledge of Mencius comes chiefly from the work that bears his name. This is undoubtedly one of the greatest books of the world's literature. I. A. Richards, who made a study of the works of Mencius, wrote that he ranked with Plato, "in historic and intrinsic interest."⁸

Mencius considered service to one's parents the "richest fruits of love."⁹ In his childhood it was his mother who inspired and directed his studies. The Chinese parents believe that rearing and training of a child is like "a rough gem, that requires grinding;" the process is slow and painful but the result will be beautiful. But without his mother, Mencius could have made no contribution to the world.

⁷Ibid., p. 12.

⁸Creel, Chinese Thought, p. 71.

⁹Pang Kuang-tan, Chinese Family (Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service, 1926), p. 88.

Moral Influences of Parents

Confucius was born in the small state of Lu, which was located in what is now the Shantung Province. He was the greatest of the learned men of Chinese antiquity.¹⁰ Confucians, both traditional ones as well as those of today, give an important place to parents as a moral influence. It is in childhood that personality has its main development, and a family life is a kind of social school in which the child encounters the problems of responsibility and privilege that he will meet in other forms in the world at large. The Confucians believe that the state is an extension of the family teaching, which contains the same attitudes toward authority and obedience that are valued in the state.¹¹

Confucius said, "In their nature at birth men are nearly alike, in their habits they are vastly different."¹² Confucius, knowing that these habits were the results of experience, emphasized the importance of education in forming character and in cultivating a moral standard. Education was largely ethical, for parents were responsible for the moral state of the children under their authority. Therefore, Confucius aimed to turn people into good family men and good subjects of the emperor. The officials were to provide a good example for the people, and the emperor was to show the way for all to follow. If he failed in this, the state must fall into decay.¹³

¹⁰Creel, Chinese Thought, p. 25.

¹¹Paul Thomas Welty, The Asians (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1970), p. 155.

¹²Pang, Chinese Family, p. 90.

¹³Welty, The Asians, p. 155.

Thus the role of parenthood is so very important. A wise patriarch is very careful to select a woman of sound heritage, as a gardener is careful to select the proper strain for grafting a branch. It is well suspected that a man's life, particularly his home life, is made by the wife he marries, and the entire character of the future family is determined by her.¹⁴

A Chinese widow is able to endure years of misery, ignominy and even persecution, if she has a child. Chinese history and literature are full of such widows who endured all kinds of hardships and persecutions, living for the day when their children should do well and prosper, and perhaps even become prominent citizens. The widow does not fail as long as there is hope for her child, for her success comes from realistically incorporating upright character and morals as far as the bringing up of children is concerned.¹⁵

One of the Chinese parent's greatest concerns is that of seeing his sons and daughters properly married before he dies; for to him that is an even more important concern than the site of his own grave or the selection of a good coffin. For he cannot know what kind of life his children are going to have until he sees for himself what type of woman and man his sons and daughters marry, and if the son-in-law or daughter-in-law looks fairly satisfactory, he is quite willing to close his eyes without regret on his deathbed.¹⁶

¹⁴Hsu, Chinese Family, p. 120.

¹⁵Lou Tsu-K'uang, Folkliterature Series (Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service, 1959), p. 320.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 400.

Filial Relations

Chinese children are taught from an early age to respect, love and obey their parents. The following are some of the duties of the children as prescribed by Tu Hsishih and incorporated in a book of moral instruction very popular as a text in the old schools:

In the summer months, one should, while attending to his parents, stand by their side and fan them, to drive away the heat and the flies and mosquitoes. In winter, he should see that the bed quilts are warm enough and the stove fire is hot enough, and see that it is just right by attending to it constantly. He should also see if there are holes or crevices in the doors and windows, that there may be no draft, to the end that his parents are comfortable and happy.

A child above ten should get up before his parents in the morning, and after the toilet go to their bed and ask if they have had a good night. If his parents have already gotten up, he should first curtsy to them before inquiring after their health, and should retire with another curtsy after the question. Before going to bed at night, he should prepare the bed, when the parents are going to sleep, and stand by until he sees that they have fallen off to sleep and then pull down the bed curtain and retire himself.¹⁷

The youths are taught the acts of devotion by the recital of instances of self-denial on behalf of parents. Filial piety is the greatest of all virtues in the Chinese eyes, while disobedience is the greatest of all crimes. From his early childhood the child is trained up, as far as books are concerned, in this area. Filial piety is very wide reaching in its application among the Chinese.¹⁸

Similarly, filial duty is the root of virtue, and the stem from which instruction in the moral principle springs. The first thing which filial duty requires of children is that they carefully preserve from

¹⁷Lin, The Importance of Living, pp. 200-201.

¹⁸Ball, Things Chinese, p. 209.

all injury, and keep in a perfect state, the bodies which they have received from their parents. And when the children acquire for themselves a station in the world, they should regulate their conduct by correct principles so as to transmit their name to future generations and reflect glory on their parents. This is the ultimate aim of filial duty. Thus it commences in attention to parents, is continued through a course of services rendered to the prince, and is completed by elevation of themselves.¹⁹

Mencius declared that love for one's parents should take precedence over love for one's country. Perhaps no other saying could show more clearly the importance attached to filial devotion--it was the first duty of man, supreme and unchallenged. Pampered children are not entirely unknown among any people; but on the whole, Chinese children showed their parents the greatest reverence, and it was seldom that a boy or girl, even when grown, would dare to oppose the parents in any important matter. Indulgence in small affairs did not diminish the insistence of parents to receive the most unquestioning obedience in major matters.²⁰

Countless stories are found in Chinese history and literature relating to the devotion of children to their parents; the boy who, when punished by his aged mother, wept because the feeble blows revealed her failing strength, Tung Yung who sold himself into slavery in order to pay his father's funeral expenses, Wu Meng who allowed the mosquitoes to sting him so they would not worry his parents, Wang Hsiang,

¹⁹Hsu, Chinese Family, p. 97.

²⁰Baber, Marriage and the Family, p. 72.

who melted the ice with his naked body in order to secure fresh fish for his mother. Another, though seventy years old, played like a child to amuse his aged father and mother.²¹

The beautiful example of filial devotion is shown in the laments of a soldier whose duties prevented him from performing his rightful service to his parents:

Than to live an orphan;
It would be better to have been long dead.
Fatherless, who is there to rely on?
Motherless, who is there to depend on?
When I go abroad, I carry my grief with me;
When I come home, I have no one to go to.

Oh my father, who begat me!
Oh my mother, who nourished me,
Ye indulged me, ye fed me,
Ye looked after me, ye never left me,
Out and in ye bore me in your arms.
If I would return your kindness;
It is like great Heaven, illimitable!²²

Another poem was expressed in two lines by a high official who returned too late to his home, when his parents had already died:

The tree desires repose,
But the wind will not stop;
The son desires to serve,
But his parents are already gone.²³

Who, therefore, would not want to be a parent in China? They can enjoy the love and filial responsibility from their children in their old age. The old are made to live in peace and security, while the young shall learn to love and be loyal to their parents.

²¹E. Chalmers Werner, Things Chinese, (London: John Murray, 1926), p. 239.

²²Herbert F. Rudd, Chinese Social Origins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), p. 72.

²³Lin, The Importance of Living, p. 193.

CHAPTER VI

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL PARENTHOOD

Parenthood is highly valued! Pity is usually extended to those who are unable to have children. The setting aside of special days to honor mothers and fathers are but two of the indications of the importance accorded parenthood. The majority of people entering marriage desire to have children; few enter marriage expecting to have no children. Some married couples plan to have children early in their marriage, while others plan to postpone parenthood. However, children bind husband and wife together, and make more certain the marriage tie. When two adults have a baby, the love they have for each other does not change, but they love the baby in addition, which means that their joy is that much increased.

The Approach to Parenthood

Before the expected baby arrives, the parents talk about him, agree on what kind of child he shall be, or disagree, each hoping for the special baby of his dreams. Frequently parents plan the child's life work, and some Oriental parents will select the husband or wife-to-be even before the child's birth.

That is fine if it is all done in good fun; but if the wish is so deep as to cause disappointment when the actual child arrives and fails to measure up to specifications, it is likely to prove a serious

matter for the child. If a girl was wanted and a boy comes, or the other way around, and the parents' disappointment lasts, the child's life is shadowed at the start.¹ It is far wiser to welcome the child one gets, and to realize from the beginning that each child differs from all others.

Preparing for the Baby

The mother has nine months in which to prepare for the arrival of her baby. Most mothers emphasize their own physical care and the obtaining of a layette for the baby, but they may overlook the necessity for making personal and family adjustments before the baby is born. This psychological preparation is often more important than the physical preparation.²

Ideally, all preparation for the new baby--physical, material, and psychological--should begin as soon as the doctor informs the woman that she is to have a baby. This gives her plenty of time to get ready or to be ready ahead of time should the baby arrive early, and it also avoids fatiguing, confusing, last-minute preparations for a baby.

Psychological Preparation of the Mother

In spite of the joy that most expectant mothers experience when they are certain that they are going to have a baby, sometimes there are also feelings of worry and fear along with the joy. The reason for this can be traced to a belief in the past that childbirth is not only a painful experience but also a dangerous one. The more a woman thinks and

¹Robert K. Kelley, Courtship, Marriage, and Family (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969), pp. 528-529.

²Blood, Marriage, p. 431.

talks about this, the more worried she will become.

The best psychological preparation for a mother-to-be consists of convincing her that all will be well, provided she follows her doctor's instructions carefully. Complications or death in childbirth are rare today, except in cases where medical advice has been ignored. Pregnancy is a normal, healthy condition and should be regarded as such. If the woman can achieve and maintain this point of view, her psychological preparation will be excellent.³

Like all adjustments, a slow, gradual realization of the responsibilities and sacrifices of motherhood will go far to help a young mother-to-be prepare herself psychologically for the arrival of her baby. Furthermore, she must realize that a new baby will add new work and new responsibilities to her daily life. An already busy day will be even busier after her new baby arrives. The more fully a woman accepts herself and the more fully she and her husband accept each other, the more the pregnancy will be welcomed--in spite of the apprehensions it creates and the inconveniences it involves.⁴

Many mothers are disappointed with the appearance of their babies. Real newborns do not look like the babies on the backs of baby cereal boxes. Some new mothers have even cried when the nurse handed them their newborn babies, because they did not look like the babies that they had dreamed of during the past nine months. The baby's head may be misshapen. Very often it is unnaturally elongated, with a kind of bony bun in the back, or there may be a distinct swelling on one or both sides of the head. To

³Arthur T. Jersild, Child Psychology (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 37.

⁴Ibid., pp. 39-40.

make matters worse, he may open only one eye.

At the same time, many mothers are so worried that they might give birth to a deformed child that they are relieved when they see that their newborn babies are better than they had feared. Many first mothers go through a period of obsessional psychosis, which lasts about three months. It expresses itself in excessive preoccupation with normal events and slight variations that affect many babies.⁵

On Being A Parent

What is it like to be a parent? One thing that can be said for sure is that it is not always what one thought it would be like. Parents often feel differently about their children once they are actually on the scene than they thought they would in their plans and daydreams beforehand.

A mother's feelings for her baby can be affected by some of his characteristics--for example, whether he is cuddly or not, or whether or not he fits in with her ideas of what a baby should be like in general--characteristics which the mother may feel confirms whether or not she is a good mother. This is important to realize because how a mother feels about her child determines in great measure how she relates to him--how she handles him when he is very young and how she treats him when he is older. In fact, feelings often play a greater role than conscious beliefs or principles of child-raising.⁶

In effect, one has to be parent for all seasons. In the sense

⁵Marvin J. Gersh, How to Raise Children at Home (New York: Stein and Day, 1967), pp. 22-23.

⁶Lee Salk and Rita Kramer, How to Raise A Human Being (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 76-77.

that it means providing what is best for the child in the long run, the parent's role remains constant for as long as the child needs parenting-- that is, until he is grown up. In another sense, a parent has to keep changing constantly, depending on the child's changing developmental needs.

Parents are called upon to make countless decisions every day and a great deal has been written to guide them in making these decisions. Such advice may be helpful, but it may also miss the mark since the role of a parent involves more than a succession of separate acts.

Many people find it much easier to be "baby" parents than to cope with school-age children. They are comfortable in the indulging role of the parents of young infants, but unable to bring themselves to set limits on these same children as they grow older. Others, whose natural bent for rules and order helps them to take a firm hand with older children, may be too rigid with young infants. Some parents seem to have done all the "right" things for their young infants, but never stopped doing these things, even when these actions were no longer the correct responses for the child's age, as he had begun to need to learn self-control and to handle a certain amount of frustration. Yet in the literature of child development, frustration typically has a bad connotation. Therefore, it is not good for parents to frustrate their child; failure is psychologically damaging.⁷

Most people think of parenthood in terms of the obligations and the problems that go with it. The good parent tries to do what will develop the child's ability to cope with circumstances for himself. Parents should always have in mind the goals they have for their child.

⁷Boy R. McCandless, Children Behaviour and Development (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1967), p. 500.

What Does A Good Parent Do?

Parents Need Serenity of Spirit

The responsibility for the children presses hard. Anxiety for their future brings sleepless nights. Fear for their safety in the world causes many an unhappy hour of conflict with the inexperienced children. Everyone is aware that it is extremely hard to always be gentle and loving and understanding. There are many times when one is tired, when things all seem to be going wrong. The only thing to do is learn to face the day with calmness, with serenity of spirit, with courage, and with hope. Worry will never help, but it can and will add grief.

Many parents become angered and frustrated when attempts at discipline fail in public situations. That is when one expects the most and gets the least. Some lessons of life are best taught first at home.⁸

Human growth is a slow-growing process. It must come from the inside, and it requires years of experience and training to breed the essential power of understanding. Be patient, because one cannot take the short cut. If parents have been loving and warmhearted, and the child has been able to sense this love from his early babyhood, there will be a good relationship between parent and child, and acceptable behavior will be easier for the child to learn.⁹

Kindness gives a musical tone to any voice, and it is certain to

⁸Gersh, How to Raise Children at Home, p. 112.

⁹Blood, Marriage, p. 453.

reach the heart as well as the ears of the listener and win his good will and good word. It is easy to be impatient with children. One's voice is the sound of one's spiritual quality. Gentleness of spirit makes a voice say, "Come unto me." It draws people to it, for there is nobody on this long-suffering earth who is not in need of sympathy, kindness, gentleness, and love. The voice that expresses these qualities falls like a benediction upon troubled hearts.

Those who have obligations to children and young people should listen to themselves as they speak to discover the quality of spirit they are expressing and its effect upon those they hope to impress.

One Authority for Children

There must be undivided authority in rearing children. Father and mother must agree on what they stand for in the home and on what they want for the children. If mother pushes father to one side, or the other way around, the children soon lose the feeling of strength and authority that good team work supplies. They lose, too, the feeling of security in their parents that they need and indeed must have to thrive.¹⁰

Children are quick to feel any difference of opinion and will between their parents, and they are quick to take advantage of it. If an appeal can be carried from one parent to the other and won, there ends harmony in the household, along with an end of trustful obedience on the part of the children. The children will play one off against the other and become wayward, ill-controlled, and miserable. Children

¹⁰A. Donald Bell, The Family in Dialogue (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968), pp. 45-46.

do best under good leadership and wise authority. There must be someone who can say, "You must," and prove himself able to enforce his command.

Divided authority does not always concern parents alone. Relatives sometimes enter in. Family complications sometimes force other adult members of a family to take charge. When this happens, there must be one person on whom responsibility rests, with the responsibility and authority to control and direct the children. If one says "yes", and another criticizes and sympathizes openly with a complaining child (complaining because he is being obliged to do his duty), that child will be spoiled. His character will be weakened. His attitudes toward commonplace matters of daily living will get in his way and prevent him from being the useful, happy person he should have been.¹¹

It is a good idea for mother and father to give the question of discipline careful thought and discussion. A goal for discipline can then be set up that will meet the needs of each child in the family as well as the needs of the parents.

Necessity of Discipline

Some people have false concepts of discipline and love. In dealing with children, they feel almost as if they have the choice of administering either discipline or love. This is not at all the case. Discipline, inasmuch as it refers to training, can be accomplished only through love. There can be no question of "either, or".

To most people discipline means punishment, but the standard

¹¹Lou Tsu-K'uang, Problems of the Chinese Family (Taipei: The Orient Culture Service, 1959), p. 153.

dictionaries define it as "training in self-control and obedience" or "education." It also means training that molds, strengthens, or perfects. True discipline does involve punishment, but punishment is not all there is to discipline.

In the old days of authoritarian discipline, things were probably easier for parents. Parents were firm, and most children were in awe of parental authority. Strict discipline was maintained in most homes.

Since the early 1920's, "authoritarian discipline" has almost withdrawn completely from the Western world. Incited by the writings of Freud and his followers and misinterpreting some of these writings, certain people sponsored a program of "progressive education" which put strong emphasis on permissiveness. This philosophy of education has had a marked influence on home discipline and has resulted in a new type of discipline known as "permissive discipline."¹²

This type of "permissive discipline" is in contradiction to the Bible. Today's countless juvenile delinquency problems are the true results of "permissive discipline."

What is the difference between the approach of their grandparents and of today's parents in disciplining children? Whatever their grandfather did was done with authority; whatever modern-day parents do now is done with hesitation. Even when in the right, they act with doubt. Where does their uncertainty in relation to children come from?

The training and discipline of a child from birth to maturity is a long, long task requiring all the skill, intelligence, love and devotion that the most consecrated mother and father can apply. It needs

¹²Elizabeth B. Hurlock, Child Growth and Development (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968), pp. 335-336.

the day-by-day necessity of correcting, advising and compelling a child to go the right way. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

Do's and Don'ts

Do Instruct

Parents are the most important teachers. The primary meaning of the word "discipline" is to teach or to instruct. From the New Testament viewpoint, "discipline" means the process of teaching and training by which the person is increasingly formed into the image of Christ.¹³

Parents have no right to expect any church, school, or group to carry the primary responsibility for the religious instruction of their children. Rather, the major responsibility is their own.

The Bible says to parents on this subject:

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,
and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house,
and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down,
and when thou risest up (Deut. 6:7).

Religious instruction of the young is necessary because God commanded it. That is clear and definite to all who believe the Scriptures. There never was a time when this divine command needed to be more accentuated than at present. Secular education, as opposed to that education given in Christian schools, is only partial education; it omits moral and spiritual training--the higher elements of human being.

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great

¹³Clifford Ingle, Children and Conversion (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1970), p. 112.

¹⁴Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Deuteronomy, p. 199.

shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. 54:13).

Instruction is the birthright of every child; national prosperity depends on the early training of its families. Spiritual instruction is the best gift that parents can give to their children.¹⁵

Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation (Joel 1:3).

Children must be instructed in the historical revelation which God has made concerning Himself. Parents should ever remember that the ages are mysteriously linked together, and that they as parents are transmitting moral influences and instruction which the future must inherit.¹⁶

Christian parents have the great privilege to teach their children about God and to express God's love to them. They should teach the Bible and Bible stories to their children as Eunice and Lois did to young Timothy.

Small children are attracted to stories about parents and neighbors. The Bible abounds in stories that lie within the range of the child's taste and experience.

In telling such stories, God may be likened to the kind father. The child should be told of how the Father cared for the prophet and of the Good Shepherd who cared for His sheep. The child should be allowed to live with the children of the Bible and presented with the kind Teacher who took little boys and girls in His arms. The child will then be anxious to thank the Heavenly Father who is kind to animals and

¹⁵Excell, The Biblical Illustrator, Isaiah, p. 189.

¹⁶Excell, The Biblical Illustrator, Joel, p. 4.

flowers and children.

A parent who has the privilege of answering the questions of his child has a golden opportunity. If parents are successful in prompting their child to ask questions about God, in answering them intelligently, they have made a lasting contribution to the development of their child's spiritual life.

An important Biblical truth is that God speaks to each individual at his own level. The parents must do their part in teaching the child, beginning when he is a mere baby. If this is done, later discipline problems will be much easier to solve.

It is the home that sets the spiritual values in children. A child lives at home, under the influence of the family's expression. The life of the family is the best teacher.¹⁷

Do Punish

Punishment must be administered calmly, immediately following the conduct that has called it forth. If punishment is omitted from disciplinary procedures, the child will not learn the full significance of wrong behavior.

Before punishment is administered, the parent must explain that a mistake was made, making sure the child understands why the spanking is taking place.

Some psychologists say "never spank." But that is not what the Word of God teaches. Other punishment may sometimes be effective, and certainly there are other essentials to proper child rearing; but whipping has a distinct place, ordained of God, in the discipline and

¹⁷Princeton S. Hsu, Marriage in Christ (Hong Kong: Baptist Press, 1969), p. 102.

development of children.¹⁸

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (Prov. 13:24).

Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (Prov. 23:13-14).

The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly (Prov. 20:30).

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame (Prov. 29:15).

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul (Prov. 29:17).

These Scriptures agree that the correction of children, when administered consistently and prayerfully, will train little feet in paths of morality and righteousness, and the character thus developed will be a matter of pride and joy to the fathers and mothers who loved God and righteousness enough to rear their children according to the Scriptures.¹⁹

Incidentally, much spanking is done when the parent is angry at the child; this is dangerous. One might sum it all up by saying that the right punishment will serve the purpose of being a teaching method. For example: Johnny is accustomed to playing in front of the house. He has been cautioned time and time again that he is not to cross the street by himself because cars are likely to rush by. Suppose the mother looks out of the window and sees him running across the street. Is this not the time for spanking? In a way that nothing else will, a

¹⁸John R. Rice, The Home, Courtship, Marriage and Children (Murfreesboro, Tennessee: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1974), p. 202.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 203.

firm spanking on his buttocks on such an occasion will bring Johnny to the realization that he is not to cross the street. Once he understands that his mother demands certain behavior from him, not just because she is bigger and stronger than he is and can enforce her demands, but because her love for him and her understanding of his needs are the basis of all her demands, he will no longer require spankings.

As the child grows older and his life becomes more complex, his mistakes must be pointed out; in each case the reason why there is an error is explained, the better way shown, and the child's questions answered with clarity and in good nature. Errors must never go unnoticed.²⁰

Do Be Firm

Don't be afraid to be firm. Parents certainly do not want to let their children rule their home because they are afraid to put any discipline into practice.

Children are smart. One can easily see that if children learn to "work" their parents, they will continue to use this tool just as long as it gets what they want.

Take music lessons, for example: When a child plays a musical instrument, his parents will, sooner or later, hear complaints about practicing. He will bargain and argue about not practicing. Unless the parents are firm and know where they stand, their child will never learn to play an instrument. In many a home the child decides whether or not to practice. He plays when he feels like it, and keeps cancelling

²⁰T. W. Chow, Friendship and Marriage (Hong Kong: Christian Witness Press, 1967), p. 132.

lessons according to his desire.

The writer uses schedules for her children's daily piano and violin practicing and is very firm about the matter. This schedule becomes the daily routine. The children practice their music accordingly and there is no fussing or bargaining. Each child progresses quickly and beautifully. This training can begin as early as age three. The main purpose of music education in childhood is to provide an effective outlet for feeling. It will also help to shape the child's character--self-discipline and love of good music.

A word of caution about music lessons. Not every child can be a musician. Parents must be as objective as possible looking carefully into their own feelings and ambitions for their child. Too many parents, without being aware of it, try to satisfy their own ambitions through their children.

The parents' job is to find a teacher who is kind and considerate--one who knows his pupils as well as his music. The parents should allow their child to take lessons for a period of time; then, they may discuss with the teacher about the child's ability. If he has no interest or talent in music, it is better for the child to quit taking music lessons than to be made miserable by continuing. In too many homes, the parents' message is loud and clear: "We pay--you play." The child's tears accompany his parents' nagging. Under these conditions a child may or may not achieve musical proficiency, and still the whole enterprise may be quite costly. Thus, the price is too high if the results include prolonged disturbed relations between parents and child.

Do Give Compliments

A good way to help create a good atmosphere in the home is by praising children for the things that they have done well. Children of all ages love to be praised. It inflates their egos.²¹ Praise not only gives them a feeling of satisfaction but also, more importantly, adds to their feeling of security and self-confidence.

In addition to praise, simple little gifts are good rewards for children. However, some parents have found, after they have used the reward method over a period of time, that their children have turned into regular little bargainers. They do not want to do the simplest task without first knowing what the reward is going to be. Giving rewards too easily weakens the authority of the parents, and one of the basic principles for maintaining discipline is that authority, which in a loving fashion, is to be maintained at all times. Perhaps the best possible reward for children is to let them sense their parents' love and approval.²²

Do Teach Good Manners

Good manners stimulate good character, because they express consideration for others and respect for oneself. Good manners spring from kindness, call out gentleness, and make for unselfishness.²³ Children should be taught how to use their speech so as to make things easier for themselves and for other people.

²¹Ibid., p. 138.

²²Koh Tau Yong, Chinese Family Life (Amoy: Siong Bu Press, 1928), p. 98.

²³Ibid., p. 100.

A boy enters a room where his mother is entertaining a visitor. His cap is on the back of his head, and there it stays. He is whistling loudly. The mother says, "Mrs. Smith, this is my son, John." He nods at the far side of the room and says, "Anything to eat in the house?" and goes out slamming the door.

That boy has said to the guest, "I am an ill-bred boy--selfish, stupid, and with little respect for myself, my mother, or anyone else." That word will be passed around.

Another boy enters a room where his mother is entertaining a visitor. He stands for a moment, looks at his mother, and smiles. When she says, "Come on in, Son. Mrs. Smith, this is my son, Joe" he takes a few steps toward the lady, smiles and says, "Mother has told me about you. It is so nice to meet you." Then he asks his mother if there is anything he can do.

That boy has said clearly, "I am a well-mannered boy, reared by a fine mother. I want to be friendly and helpful." That word also will travel fast and far.

Few children under twelve have manners acceptable to adults. They push in front of people, forget to hold doors, talk loudly in the house, and at the table, interrupt, and forget to say "please" or "thank you." They are crude to the point of ignorance. An old Chinese saying goes, "The parents are to blame for the bad behavior of their children."²⁴ How true it is!

Parents teach children manners day after day, hour by hour, only to say once more, "What do you say? What do you do when an older person enters the room?" And it seems all useless until one day a friend

²⁴Chow, Friendship and Marriage, p. 132.

says, "However did you teach Jim such lovely manners? When he was at the house the other day, everybody commented about them." He had been growing all the time, and at the right time, the growth blossomed into action.

It is important that children write thank-you letters for their Christmas and birthday remembrances. Children usually do not write such notes unless they are pressed into doing so. They likely will say, "I don't know what to say. What shall I say?"

They should be told what to say. The younger ones may really not be able to organize their thoughts well enough to get them on paper. The letter itself is not too important; what is important is the act of expressing thanks and affection. Ingratitude, careless taking without thought of the giver, is a poor attitude for any child to have. It is bad for character--taking without thought of giving. A child must be taught that when he accepts a gift, he accepts an obligation along with it. If he learns that lesson when he is young, he will not be caught in embarrassing positions when he is old.

The little inconvenience a child must have of writing a thank-you note, or of paying a personal call, and expressing his gratitude for kindness shown him, will make him thoughtful about accepting gifts and favors. When he learns to give as he gets, he acquires wisdom. He also gains friends, which is no mean consideration at any time.²⁵

Do Set Good Examples

Children pick up a great deal from their parents indirectly, by virtue of the kind of people they are, or as a psychologist might say, by virtue of how the parents function in their capacity as "role models."

²⁵Koh, Chinese Family Life, p. 123.

Especially in the early years, the child learns a lot from his parents. But throughout childhood and even into adult life, the child will consciously and unconsciously model his behavior in innumerable situations on the example the parents have set for him.

Don't Frighten a Child

Do not frighten a child in order to reduce him to submission and quiet. Do not tell a small child that the bogey-man will get him. That lays the basis for future hysterics. A child must never be shut in a closet. Being shut in brings on the blackest kind of fear and sets the stage for hysterics and mental illness. That in itself is enough to deter any sane person from making such a mistake. Besides that, the child might be forgotten, or left too long, with disastrous results.

It certainly is not wise to confirm a child's fear by threatening to withdraw affection. Ultimately he needs to distinguish between loss of parental love and mere disapproval.²⁶

Don't Be Afraid to Say "No"

Don't be afraid to say "no." When a child is refused permission to do something he wants to do, he likely will not accept the first "no" as final, but will continue to plead for the "yes" that will give him freedom and a clear conscience to go his way. To avoid this problem, parents must say, "When I say 'no', all the begging in the world won't change my mind. Now that's settled."

The parents' "no" can be as firm and as definite as it has to be. They must stick at it until the child gets the meaning. When he is

²⁶Iren Milliken Josselyn, The Happy Child (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 270.

flailing out to find some limits, they will be a pillar: "This is as far as you can go, but no further."

This will spell love to the child because it will be a sign that someone cares. Children also get concerned about being loved. One proof that a child is loved is when he is stopped. Then he knows someone cares about him. But if he can do anything he wants to--it doesn't matter how many presents he gets or how much time people spend with him--he is never fundamentally sure that they have a deep concern for him.²⁷

Some youngsters who have had too much freedom are hungering for someone to say "no" to them. That will relieve them a little of what has been called "the awful responsibility" of freedom. It will be a proof that parents are concerned about them.

Don't Avoid Their Friends

The child is a member of two worlds: the world of adults and that of his peers. His experiences in each of these worlds are crucial aspects of his daily living and are significant agents in molding his subsequent development.²⁸

Make their friends welcome. Invite their friends to the house and learn to know them casually. It is much better to have them bring friends home than to get rid of the children and not know where they are going.

It is very important to know what kind of friends the children are interested in, because they are the ones who will influence them

²⁷James L. Hymes, Jr., Understanding Your Child (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 85.

²⁸Martin L. Hoffman and Louise W. Hoffman, Child Development Research (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964), p. 289.

greatly.

Don't Overlook the Television

Beware of the TV programs. One person, Lewise Mumford, made a wise observation concerning the care which should be administered to children who watch television. He said:

And shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales which may be advised by casual persons, and to receive in their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown up?

American children, who, on situational evidence, spend from three to six hours a day absorbing the contents of television, whose nursery songs are advertisement...will be able only by heroic effort to disengage themselves from this system sufficiently to recover some measure of autonomy.²⁹

Given the widespread popularity of TV by the late 1950's concerned professionals and laymen began to question the effect of TV content upon children. Of particular interest was the effect of violence so prevalent in commercial TV. Systematic content analyses of prime times network programs in the late 1960's showed that physical violence occurred in 80% of the programs shown with an average of five violent episodes per program hour. During children's cartoons, the average number of violent episodes was 25.1 per hour (Gerbner 1972). Clearly, most American children are exposed to vast amounts of physical violence on TV. What effect does this exposure have on them? Are there some types of children who are more affected than other? Are children affected differently at different ages?³⁰

²⁹Mark Gerzon, A Childhood for Every Child (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1973), p. 142.

³⁰Robert R. Sears, Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 38 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 4:1.

Since every idea tends to work itself out into action, the consequences of the children's being introduced to such ideas of violence heightens the possibility of their later expressing these ideas in deeds of crime.

Recognizing TV's achievements should not mean ignoring the immense power its entertainment and news programming possesses for all members of society. Through the '50's and '60's, children from six to sixteen spent on the average 22 hours per week in front of the TV, over 50% more time than British children spent in the same occupation. For sixth graders, the average was 28 hours per week - almost as much time as that spent in school. Although adults may glorify the world-shrinking wisdom of Zenith and RCA or admire the sales power of Saturday cartoons, children may experience less than edifying effects from this electronic magic box. For the child, reality and fantasy are hard to separate in this flickering environment. Must we confine ourselves to asking how we can improve the quality of programming that our children watch bleary-eyed, for two, three, or four hours a day? The average child, by the time he reaches sixteen, has watched from 12,000 to 15,000 hours of television.³¹

Too many parents who see their children flock to the television do not ask if it is indeed best for the child. Too many parents supply their children with a TV--the child's very own in his bedroom. How does one expect a child to concentrate on his studies in this kind of an atmosphere?

Evidently, the child's opportunities to concentrate and dis-

³¹Gerzon, A Childhood for Every Child, pp. 147-165.

cipline himself are greatly lessened by having such a temptation within the confines of his room. Therefore, this and all related matters concerning the control of a child's access to the television are other important areas in which the parents must exercise their authority.

Modern-day psychologists have actually incorporated the timeless rules concerning parental authority and responsibility towards children in these do's and don'ts. Presenting the importance of the knowledge and wisdom which parents must have is again emphasized through clearly defined rules and examples and lessons portrayed by parents who succeeded and parents who failed.

But the examples which parents of today must set for their children must be constantly stressed, and the parents, like their children, must be continually instructed in order to make both parts better for the whole of the God-ordained family to which they belong.

PART III

FAMILY

CHAPTER VII

FAMILY AND THE BIBLE

The Bible uses several terms to express the idea of family. The most common is "house;" in the New Testament, related words are oikia (family) and oikiakos (relatives--members of the family group). The Old Testament uses a second term with the meaning of "clan" or "family." In several of these terms, one may observe that the idea of "house" or "household" stands out.¹

Since marriage was patriarchal--father-centered--among the people of the Bible, the family was a community of persons, related by ties of marriage and kinship, and ruled by the authority of the father. The Biblical family was large. It included the father, mother, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, grandparents, other kinsmen, as well as servants, concubines, and aliens. The family grew both by birth and by covenants made with other groups and individuals. The solidarity of the family was maintained by its organization around the father figure and by the application or retributive justice in terms of corporate (family) responsibility.²

When young Jacob went to his uncle Laban in Haran to find a wife,

¹Emory Stevens Bucks, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 238.

²Ibid.

Laban, in acknowledging him as a member of his family, said to Jacob, "Surely thou art my bone and my flesh (Gen. 29:14). This figure, so typical of Biblical style, was commonly used by the people of the Bible, and it answered the factual reality. In Bible times, the family was the essential basis of society--the cornerstone of the entire building. Its members really did feel of the same flesh and blood; and to have the same flesh meant having the same soul.³

The example of Joseph who forgave his wicked brothers for having tried to kill him, and, on becoming Pharaoh's right-hand man welcomed them and established them in the land of Goshen shows the strong family ties. That was how a true Israelite ought to behave; nothing could break the tie of blood, and everybody benefited from it.⁴

Families have survived longer than any other human institution. God designed men to live in families. The unhappy marriages and unfortunate family situations mentioned in the Bible are the results of not following the original design of God. But indications of happy families and references to ideal unions in the Bible are not uncommon. Psalm 128 is one such descriptive portrait of an ideal family. The man of the house is "one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways." His wife and children are spoken of thus: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table."

The olive branch in the Scriptures is the emblem of peace, and

³Patrick O'Brian, Daily Life in the Time of Jesus (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1962), p. 134.

⁴Ibid.

olive oil is the emblem of grace.⁵ Peace and grace are lovely features in a child, and when peace and grace take possession of the heart of a whole family, "The Lord shall bless thee . . . thou shalt see thy children's children . . ." (Ps. 128:6).

Role of Family Members

The Father

The authority of the father stands out in the pages of the Scriptures. A father has the right to offer his son as a sacrifice (Gen. 22); he must teach his sons (Prov. 1:8); he can destroy members of his family if they entice him from his allegiance to God (Deut. 13:6-10); and his compassion for his children is used to describe the divine mercy (Ps. 103:13; Lk. 16:24; Jn. 4:53).

The Mother

Although her primary function is that of producing children, the mother has considerable authority over the family's life. Sarah, for instance, directed Abraham to cast out Hagar (Gen. 21:10), and the Lord told Abraham "hearken unto her voice" (Gen. 21:12). Another example of a respected mother was Rebekah, who advised and abetted her son Jacob in his theft of the blessing from his brother Esau (Gen. 27:11-17). Respect and obedience were also demanded toward the mother (Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:3; Prov. 6:20). (For more detail on the roles of the parents and the role of children towards parents see Chapter IV).

⁵Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Psalms V, p. 214.

Grandparents

The love given and received by grandparents was exemplified in Jacob's joy when he was told that Joseph and his sons were coming to see him. Though he was dying, yet he "strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed" (Gen. 48:2), when his two grandsons, Manasseh and Ephraim, were brought to his bedside. Jacob adopted them as his own, these two sons of his beloved Joseph. The grandfather was not too old to know to which grandson to give the greater blessing with his right hand; for he "stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn" (Gen. 48:14). Then Jacob blessed Joseph and his sons with these words:

God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth (Gen. 48:15-16).

There are several more instances in the Bible where rejoicing in grandchildren is spoken of:

Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers (Prov. 17:6).

A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children (Prov. 13:22).

God blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning. He "saw his sons, and his son's sons, even four generations" (Job 42:16).
What a supreme happiness!

Siblings

The Bible contains lovely pictures of the closeness among siblings. Their affection and loyalty to one another are unforgettable.

Rebekah and her brother Laban--When Rebekah was leaving home on

her marriage journey, her brother blessed her with a beautiful blessing: "Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them" (Gen. 24:60).

Years later, ". . . when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house . . . And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh . . ." (Gen. 29:13-14).

Dinah and her brothers--The rape of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah (Gen. 34), was committed by Shechem in the central hill country of Canaan.⁶ Jacob's behavior on first hearing the news was:

And Jacob heard that he (Shechem) had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come (Gen. 34:5).

In other words, whatever Jacob heard had not been such as to make him want to do anything himself immediately; whatever his intentions, he decided to wait for his sons to return, because if any action were to be taken, it would be taken by them rather than by him.

And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done (Gen. 34:7).

There, fully stated, is the revenge executed by Dinah's brothers, for the wrong done against their sister.

Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males . . . The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister (Gen. 34:25, 27).

It was a complete conquest for the sake of their sister. However in Gen. 49:5-7 is shown God's condemnation of their cruelty.

⁶Napier, From Faith to Faith, p. 92.

Joseph and his brothers--Despite the wicked deed his brothers committed against him--selling him into slavery--Joseph forgave his brothers, and said to them, "fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them" (Gen. 50:12). The story of Joseph, of his weeping as he revealed his identity to the brothers who had wronged him, is one of the most heart-moving stories in the Bible.

Moses, his sister Miriam, and brother Aaron--At an early age, Moses' sister Miriam helped their mother Jochebed by hiding among the reeds near her baby brother's ark to guard him from harm; she was brave enough to introduce her mother to Pharaoh's daughter as Moses' nurse (Ex. 2:1-9). Thus she helped her mother save Moses for his historic role.⁷

Moses' brother, Aaron, became his right-hand man when Moses was called to deliver the Israeli people out of Egypt. For this, Aaron was "glad in his heart" (Ex. 4:14).

Peter and Andrew--These two brothers were business partners in the fishing industry in Galilee. Andrew found Christ first and immediately he brought his brother Peter to meet Jesus:

He first findeth his own brother, Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonah: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone (Jn. 1:41-42).

⁷Edith Deen, The Bible's Legacy for Womanhood (New York: Garden City, 1969), pp. 22-23.

Andrew's conversation was inspired by brotherly love, and the phrase, "his own brother," is indicative of a close, warm friendship.⁸

James and John--This pair of brothers worked together with their father Zebedee in the fishing business before they became disciples of Jesus (Mk. 1:19-20). Even after they became important followers of the Lord, these two brothers remained close in their relationship to each other. Salome, realizing her sons' inseparable natures, and herself overly ambitious, boldly and perhaps brashly asked Jesus, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom" (Mt. 20:21).

Martha, Mary, and Lazarus--The loving home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus at Bethany was a place that Jesus liked to visit. One day when Jesus was teaching on the banks of the river Jordan, Martha and Mary sent a messenger to Jesus with the sad news about Lazarus: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick" (Jn. 11:3).

Martha and Mary were joined in their sisterly love for their brother Lazarus. When Jesus arrived in Bethany, Martha was the first to go forth to meet Jesus, saying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (Jn. 11:21). Martha, however, believed and declared earnestly, "But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee" (Jn. 11:22). Martha and Mary had faith that life could overcome death. These were the intangibles which Jesus valued most highly--the replacement of anxious concern with relief and of sorrow with joy--and of these the two sisters received a full share.⁹

⁸Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, John I, p. 118.

⁹Lisa Sergio, Jesus and Woman (McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, Inc., 1975), p. 66.

In-Laws

Naomi and Ruth--The story of Naomi and Ruth is the loveliest of all love stories. The Bible's vivid description of the love between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law surely sets an example for all.

The first five verses of the Book of Ruth set the stage for this stirring story. Years before, Naomi, her husband, and their two sons had left their home in Bethlehem, during a time of famine, to live in the land of the Moabites. Naomi's husband died. Not long afterwards, her sons--who had married Ruth and Orpah, two women of Moab--also died. The story properly begins in the first chapter with a description of Naomi ready to start out on her long journey home, telling her daughters-in-law to return to their homes.¹⁰

Orpah turned back, but Ruth refused, saying:

Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me (Ruth 1:16-17).

No doubt, Naomi must have been a wonderful mother-in-law, for she was capable of inspiring such love and devotion in her daughter-in-law that the young woman could not bear to leave her. Naomi represented her country, her people, and her God to Ruth. Her life had influenced Ruth so much!

To start with the name Naomi meant not pleasantness, but bitterness. Ruth was nevertheless willing to suffer what she expected would be loneliness, homelessness, and perpetual widowhood, against the desires of those she left, without the wishes of those to whom she was

¹⁰Ruth 1:1-5.

going, ready to work, to beg, to die if need be, for her mother-in-law.¹¹
Her decision was settled.

Ruth took care of her mother-in-law; she went to the fields to provide bread for herself and Naomi:

And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter . . . So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed (Ruth 2:2, 17-18).

Ruth trusted her mother-in-law implicitly. She looked upon Naomi as a guide through a maze; she respected Naomi's judgment upon every subject as better than her own. She said meekly, "All that thou sayest unto me I will do" (Ruth 3:5). And she carried out Naomi's instructions to the letter.¹²

Ruth was a virtuous woman. Before she became the wife of Boaz, a wealthy landowner, he had commended Ruth, then a widow, because she "followedst not young men, whether poor or rich" (Ruth 3:10). She had shown herself to be a "virtuous woman" (Ruth 3:11), and because she was, Boaz asked her to be his wife.

As a result, David's father Jesse was Boaz and Ruth's grandson, and the Messiah who descended from King David thus was part of their lineage!

Naomi enjoyed her old age with Ruth's son, and the women said to Naomi, upon the birth of Obed, Boaz and Ruth's son, "And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than

¹¹Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Joshua-Ruth, p. 28.

¹²Norah Lofts, Women in the Old Testament (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950, p. 94.

seven sons, hath borne him" (Ruth 4:15).

Jethro and Moses--Moses respected his father-in-law and followed his advice:

"So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens" (Ex. 18:24-25).

Moses acted upon Jethro's advice, and benefited by doing so.

Thus, with a father-in-law's help, Israel's government was well organized.

Simon Peter's Mother-in-law--Peter cared for his mother-in-law:

"And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them" (Lk. 4:38-39).

Apparently Simon's mother-in-law stayed at his house, and when she was sick, "they besought him for her." The family of Simon Peter shared his concern for his mother-in-law, and, like him, wanted the best for her. That is why they entrusted her to Jesus, who healed her! And "immediately she arose," and ministered to Christ and His disciples. Her actions showed that she knew the place quite well--she was not just a guest, but a member of the family.

The Function of Religion in the Family

In ancient Israel, religion played a positive role in the determination of family solidarity, with respect to the function of the father. Under the impact of Canaanite culture, Israel's faith, through the consolidation of family ties sought to survive in terms of the old pastoral ideal.¹³

¹³Bucks, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, p. 240.

The family was not merely a social entity but also a religious community. From the first altars to the religious festivals, one can clearly see the Biblical families united together in worship.

Altars of Patriarchal Families

Noah's Altar--The altar of Noah was a family altar:

And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; (Gen. 8:20-21).

The altar of Noah was a family altar. Noah required his family's presence before the throne of grace. He persuaded them to assist in praising God, and in making a covenant by sacrifice. A family altar is a family blessing. With Noah, the worship of God was the first business to which he attended.¹⁴

Abraham's Altar--Abraham built altars wherever he went:

And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Ha-i on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord (Gen. 12:7-8).

Abraham's act expressed his acknowledgment of the fact of Divine guidance in his life. He found it a joy to be under the leadership of God and built the altar to express his gratitude. The altar was also a token of Abraham's faith, setting up his testimony in the midst of his people and making them sharers of a common worship.¹⁵

¹⁴Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Genesis I, p. 462.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 551-552.

Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord (Gen. 13:18).

Abraham and the patriarchs were emigrants; they left for the honor of God. Abraham's altar at Mamre was intended to serve as a public profession of religion in the midst of enemies, as a constant memorial of God's presence, as a tribute of gratitude for His mercies, as an expression of a sense of obligation to His love and a desire to enjoy His presence, and as a sign of his determination to be fully dedicated to God.¹⁶

Isaac's Altar--Isaac built an altar at Beer-sheba:

And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well (Gen. 26:25).

Jacob's Altars--Jacob rebuilt an altar at Shechem (Gen. 33:20). By calling the altar "El-Elohe-Israel," or God the God of Israel, he was virtually saying, "I erect this altar for the worship of my family, to the God with whom I have prevailed in supplication, and who has proved Himself the hearer of my prayer."¹⁷

Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you . . . And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went (Gen. 35:2-3).

Jacob directed the worship of all of his family as he started back to Bethel. He commanded his household to clean up themselves and get ready for the worship!

¹⁶Ibid., p. 580.

¹⁷Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Genesis II, p. 323.

The Passover

This festival had to be celebrated in the family, in which the father was the celebrant while all the members took part.

Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house . . . And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover (Ex. 12:3, 11).

The Passover Feast has been eaten ever since, year after year, and the story of deliverance has been told and retold by the father of every family as he stands at the table surrounded by his family.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHINESE CONCEPTS OF FAMILY

Traditional Chinese civilization was based on the family system. The sanctity of the family was the cornerstone of Confucian teaching. It extended to elaborate rites connected with marriage and death, the maintenance of ancestral halls, family reunions at fixed seasons and countless other symbolic acts.¹

Chinese Family Pattern

When a Chinese mentions his family, he does not just mean his parents, brothers and sisters; he includes his grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws, and all his ancestors. The Chinese family is like a corporation with those who have gone before following the family's ups and downs, much like a shareholder watches the earnings and losses of a company he has invested in. Neither a man's home nor his farm--not even his body--belongs to him alone. His ancestors own shares in them also, as part of the family heritage.²

Throughout the written history of China, in eloquent and forceful prose, philosophers, judges, and rulers have insisted on the absolute authority of the father or grandfather and the deference to be paid to

¹Pang, Chinese Family, p. 77.

²Liva Baker, World Faiths - A Story of Religion (New York: Abelard-Schuman Limited, 1965), p. 23.

those who are older or of an older generation. The father had absolute authority over the family's property, and even adult children could not live apart from their parents without permission. Only a male could be a family head, but an adult son was supposed to continue to obey his mother.³

The elders were indeed a repository of wisdom and useful lore. Not only did they know Chinese custom, but they also knew the solutions to mundane problems such as irrigation, planting, and commerce. As a result, religious, philosophical, legal, and economic forces were in relative harmony. The elders directed and the young obeyed. The young owed everything to the old, a debt that was never completely discharged. The care that parents gave to their children did not belong to the children by right, but was a payment by the parents to their ancestors who had cared for them earlier. The duty of children to care for and support parents in their old age is to be distinguished from the form of respect for the aged which made children the property of their parents.⁴

After the Communists took over China, they began their attempts to reduce the control of the family in favor of the state. Many influences were at work in Red China to destroy the traditional structure of Chinese society. However, there are millions of Chinese who live outside of Red China that are still following the traditional family ties.

Pearl S. Buck, who knew China so well, wrote:

The most important unit in the Chinese society at the time of the Mings was the greater family or clan, which was

³Tung-Tsu Chu, Law and Society in Traditional China (Paris: Mouton, 1961), pp. 21-22.

⁴Francis L. K. Hsu, Under the Ancestor's Shadow (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 258.

comprised of all branches of a family. The whole life of China centered around the family system, and it was from ancient time highly paternalistic, so much so that the emperor required the heads of families to maintain order within their clans, and it was these heads of the clan who recommended persons for official positions in the government proper.⁵

To the Westerner, the Chinese conception of the family is almost inexplicable. Westerners can hardly compass the group loyalty and self-sacrifice that the Chinese ideal involves. This primacy of the family calls not for self-negation but for self-development--self-development for the good of the family rather than of the individual.⁶

It is a well-known fact that Chinese lives are organized on the basis of the family system. This system determines and colors the entire Chinese pattern of life.

The Family System As A Social Group

The family system became the social group in which man grew up and learned his first lessons in life--lessons which he continued to operate throughout his life. The family provided the sense of security. If a woman became a widow, the family took care of her; if a child became an orphan, the family gave him food and shelter; and above all, when a man grew old he could comfortably look forward to a life of ease and leisure and respect without ever having to trouble about economic support.⁷

A Chinese thought of the interests of his family as the basis

⁵Pearl S. Buck, China As I See It (New York: The John Day Company, 1970), p. 26.

⁶Baber, Marriage and the Family, p. 61.

⁷Lin Yutang, From Pagan to Christian (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1959), p. 11.

for all his judgments and decisions. What was advantageous and good for the family was permitted; what was disadvantageous and bad for the family was prohibited. The individual thought of himself as a member of a family, and he was viewed by others in the same light. The success or failure of an individual reflected upon the family and increased or decreased its prestige.⁸ The family was responsible for the acts of its individual members and was held accountable for them by the community and the government. In this sense, traditional China was composed of a large number of families rather than of individuals.

Pearl Buck in her book, My Several Worlds, wrote:

And the Chinese people were quite capable of self-government. Their traditional family system, wherein every individual man, woman and child belonged to a clan and each clan was responsible for all individuals in it, was a sound basis for a new kind of modern democracy. It is hard for Americans to realize the soundness of the family clan as the unit for democratic government, but indeed it is so. In China before Communism began its destructive work on the family system, there was no need, for example, for the expense of institutionalism which lies so heavily upon our own democracy. There were no orphanages, for no child was orphaned, since the family as a whole continued responsibility for the care of the child who had lost his immediate parents. There were no insane asylums, for the family cared for its insane. As a matter of fact, there were very few insane, for the family system provided individual security without disgrace and thus removed one of the main causes for modern insanity, the lost individual. There needed to be no relief rolls, for again the family as a whole cared for its members who were jobless. Only in times of widespread famine and catastrophe did there have to be outside help, and even then the family stayed together. Nepotism, it is true, tended to be a problem, since it was natural that a man would try to get jobs for his relatives. Yet I do not see the difference between family nepotism in China and political nepotism in the United States, and of the two, family nepotism in China seems the less dangerous to society because the family still remained morally responsible for each of its

⁸Hsu, Chinese Family, p. 108.

members, and the disgrace of any member was a family disgrace.⁹

Confucius is reputed to have provided the philosophical foundation for the family system as the basis of all social and political life, with tremendous emphasis both on the husband-wife relationship as the foundation of all human relationships and on filial piety toward parents.¹⁰

Pearl Buck summed up the importance of the Chinese family as a component in society--a wonderful society because it was made up of wonderful units of family systems.

Family Relationships

In days gone by, the Chinese provided for parents to have complete authority over their children; society sanctioned whatever steps parents took to enforce their commands, and public opinion permitted harsh and prolonged physical punishment when the children rebelled against parental edicts. But according to Chinese teaching, even now both parents share the same broad goals in the training of their child. They want him to become a strong, healthy adult who is obedient, respectful, and capable of supporting them in their old age. They want a son who will not embarrass them by his excesses, who will maintain if not increase their standing in the community, who will handle relations with outsiders skillfully, but at the same time keep them at a polite distance.¹¹

A father's relationship with his sons is both affectionate and

⁹Pearl S. Buck, My Several Worlds (New York: The John Day Company, 1954), pp. 122-123.

¹⁰Lin, The Importance of Living, p. 184.

¹¹Maurice Freedman, Family and Kinship in Chinese Society (Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press, 1970), p. 40.

informal until the boy reaches the age of six or seven. When the boy gets older as their interaction becomes more and more formal and the father-son conversation deteriorates into paternal lectures, the father's dignity becomes more impressive and more impregnable. A Chinese father wants respect and obedience, even at the price of fear, if he is to maintain his authority over the household.¹²

Children are likewise devoted and obedient to their mothers. The respect of motherhood is so essential to the Chinese.¹³ (For more discussion on this subject, see Chapter Five).

The Chinese consider unbrotherly conduct as second only to unfilial conduct in baseness. The greatest respect and love are to be manifested at all times by the younger brother (or sister) for his elder brothers. Indeed, unfilial and unbrotherly conduct is considered worse than outright crime.¹⁴ There is awe for the elder brother in the Chinese family.

The grandparents usually live with their sons. In many families the grandfather retained headship of the family. Others in the older generation, such as uncles and aunts, were also in a position to supervise the family. The aged were revered and their wishes and desires granted whenever possible.¹⁵

In traditional China one of the strictest and most important filial obligations was the support of parents in their old age. There

¹²Ibid, p. 41.

¹³Meh, Problems of Change of the Chinese Family, p. 200.

¹⁴Baber, Marriage and the Family, p. 73.

¹⁵Pang, Chinese Family, p. 98.

the aged were valued even over children, because more children could be born, while the aged could not be duplicated. The most important birthdays in an individual's life were at the ages of sixty, seventy, eighty, and on up. To reach the age of one hundred was the crowning achievement for both the person and the family.

The Chinese live in anticipation of old age, because growing old is pleasant. Age is respected. It is a time of leisure and of little responsibility. There is no superior over the aged. Members of the family owe grandparents (or great grandparents) respect, obedience, and support.¹⁶

Other Aspects of Chinese Ways of Life

Mourning

The Chinese have always been very punctilious in their observance of mourning. The whole family (with all the relatives included) participates in the funeral ceremony.

If the old one--grandmother or grandfather--dies, people from the branches of the clan come for the funeral. In pagan homes, the big casket is placed in the ancestral worship hall, candles are lighted, and incense is burned. But funerals are always most sad occasions. Mourners are clothed in coarse sackcloth, while the sons and daughters and nearest kin wear caps of the same. Mourning, especially deep mourning, is not graceful in China.

There are five degrees of mourning: the first, for parents, sackcloth without hem or border; the second, for grandparents and great-grandparents, sackcloth with hem or border; the third, for brother or sister;

¹⁶Meh, Problems of Change of the Chinese Family, p. 188.

the fourth, uncle or aunt; the fifth, distant relatives, small pieces of sackcloth are placed on certain parts of the garment. For a parent, the period of mourning is nominally three years, and for all the time no silk or make-up can be worn.¹⁷

Traditionally, when the casket was finally taken from the ancestral worship hall, and after a period of seven times seven days was observed in mourning, with funeral rites being performed on each seventh day, the long line of mourners was formed to march to the cemetery. Members of the family held the same long, white, unbleached cloth streamer that was attached to the casket which they carried.¹⁸ At this time the mourners' weeping, crying voices were heard loud and far. Often the mourners--the widow, sons or daughters--would pass out during the funeral march to the cemetery, because of grief and the lack of sleep over the period of mourning.

But there was another kind of death. The Chinese usually died a happy sort of death in which they planned the end of their lives. As age came on, old men and women ordered their coffins early and had them made exactly as they wanted them. Nearly all the homes which housed old grandparents had a coffin or two ready for these the oldest members. They were made of a very heavy special wood, perhaps cypress, varnished a bright black. The enormous lid fitted tightly, making the whole thing a handsome piece of furniture, which everybody grew used to, tenderly thinking of it as familiar as a bed that the old one was to sleep in as his last. And, indeed, the old one grew attached to it, fond of its presence, and

¹⁷Ball, Things Chinese, pp. 403-405.

¹⁸Irma Highbaugh, Family Life in China, (New York: Agricultural Mission, Inc., 1948), p. 105.

shouted at a careless child who scratched it in play. It gave him a feeling of security and continuity with the family. When he died one day, any day, he would simply lie quietly there, the lid sealed, and for days, perhaps even months, the family life would go on about him as it did now. There would be no sudden burial. On some chosen lucky day he would be taken to the family plot and buried in his proper place among the ancestors.¹⁹

Food as an Important Part in Chinese Family Life

The root of the difference between the way the Chinese and the Westerner eats is that the Chinese does not pretend that eating is not a serious business. He does not try to hide it or cover it or act as though it were just a necessary thing to be endured. The Chinese openly acclaim eating as one of the few human joys of this life. The question of attitude is very important; for unless people are honest about it they will never be able to lift eating and cooking to an art.

To the Westerner it would be preposterous to name a dish after a poet, or a stew after a playwright. The Chinese openly name certain cuts of meat after great artists. They go further than this. They write poems about a certain vegetable soup and relate the details of entire menus at the crucial point of a story, for they believe that the good soup honors a man's name and that menu, too, is crucial in the development of the story.²⁰

Chinese cooking may not be a study in vitamins or a balanced diet,

¹⁹Pearl S. Buck, Pearl S. Buck, A Biography (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1969), p. 71.

²⁰Lin, The Importance of Living, p. 342.

but it is an art. It pleases the palate and the stomach, and the whole being of man; that is what the artist at cooking strives for. Is not the smock of the artist bespattered with paint, and are not the fingers of the writer besmudged with ink? The Chinese say that the sign of a good cook is a dirty apron, too. Why be ashamed of it since he is an artist as well?²¹

Chinese use food for special occasions in family affairs. For example, in the ninth month, when chrysanthemums are at their height, many a family will gather together all dressed for the occasion to celebrate the Chrysanthemum Festival in their own family garden. They first walk around enjoying the varieties of color, size and form of the flowers that have grown. Then the family sits down, in their back yard, each with his own tea pot, and eats steamed crabs. Everyone has a board, a tiny hammer, a pick and a hook to crack the shells and extract the delicious meat. In the meantime, the cook is busy at a great caldron of boiling soup. Into it he drops bits of fish, chicken, mushrooms, leeks, cabbage, water cress and other delicacies. Finally he puts in a bowlful of pure white chrysanthemum petals. The family then drinks this broth called "Chrysanthemum Pot."

When the eating is over, they all sit in silence while each one composes a short poem for the occasion. They read them in turn, and the father will award the honors. In this way they carry out the ancient tradition of Chinese poets.²²

The Old Chinese New Year of the lunar calendar is the greatest

²¹Cornelia Spencer, Made in China (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), pp. 200-206.

²²Tsai, Queen of the Dark Chamber, pp. 33-34.

festival in the year for the Chinese families. Every household--from the very rich to the very poor--makes tremendous preparations for the big celebration. Everyone has to be dressed in new garments from head to foot.

Everyone who can possibly go home does so--"home" in this sense being the dwelling place of the head of the family--for the family reunion.²³

The New Year's dinner is also called the "Reunion Dinner." Masses of food have to be prepared in advance, dinner itself consisting of a large variety of fishes. New Year is also gift-giving time, mainly baskets of food.

New Year is also the time when all family quarrels are supposed to be made up so that everybody can greet the New Year fair and square and clean-swept.²⁴ Everybody sits up to welcome the dawn of the new year's first day. Everyone wishes one another contentment, prosperity and long life.

There are many other festivals during the year. They are made family-centered, thus to draw the family close to one another.

²³Pang, Chinese Family, p. 103.

²⁴Meh, Problems of Change of the Chinese Family, p. 44.

CHAPTER IX

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY

The word "family," unlike the word "relative," is often used by Western inhabitants in the sense of "the immediate family." The Chinese, however, refer to all their relatives as "the family."

The Western family unit containing father, mother, and child is referred to as the nuclear family.¹

In the United States, the typical family is the conjugal family in which the basic relationship is between husband and wife. They and the children who are still living at home form the family. The strongest family tie in the United States is the legal contract of marriage between husband and wife.²

The usage of the term "family" in this chapter not only refers to the nuclear family, but covers all close relatives as well.

Attitudes Among Family Members

The important basis of the God-ordained institution of marriage is in the holy union of husband and wife, where the husband loves his wife and the wife submits to her husband. Likewise, the important re-

¹Floyd Mansfield Martinson, Family in Society (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1970), p. 3.

²Ruth Shonle Cavan, The American Family (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969), p. 9.

relationships between parents and children have been previously described expressly through discussing the far-sighted planning and the do's and don'ts necessary for careful child-rearing, as well as the piety due and gratitude expected of all children, young or old, to their parents. In summary, these relationships are to be based on love, discipline, and respect.

Siblings

Another important aspect of family life is the quality of the relationship which exists between siblings.

An early account of sibling relationships in the Bible is the bitter jealousy between Cain and Abel, which led to murder. Joseph's relationship with his half-brothers is an account of the interplay of family relationships. Their jealousy of his coat of many colors given him by a father who showed too much partiality toward this his favorite son led to their sale of Joseph into bondage.

These relationships require insight on the part of parents. The nature of the sibling relationship is of life-long importance. Parents cannot hope that children will be alike in temperament, disposition, or lovability. However, parents can do much to keep down the jealousy and bitterness between children in the family, but wisdom, understanding, and a great deal of patience are required.

Grandparents

Grandparents are part of the family. In Chinese homes grandparents are respected most highly. They are revered and honored by their children and grandchildren. Grandparents are often turned to for guidance in family decisions, in recognition of their greater experience

and wisdom.

There was a time in America when grandparents were an intimate part of the family circle. However, times have changed and grandparents no longer have the central place in modern-day families. In fact, a good many people fallaciously assume that the family is made up by the man and his wife and their children, with little recognition of the roles played by members of the older generation.³

Today's family should put grandparents back in the family circle.⁴ They can make valuable contributions to a child's happiness and emotional health. A grandparent may be the only one who has time to listen to a youngster's experience or problem. Eugene Field's poem of Old Man Shuffle-Shoon and Little Boy Amber-Locks is a beautiful picture which every family ought to have:

Shuffle-Shoon and Amber-Locks
 Sit together, building blocks;
 Shuffle-Shoon is old and gray,
 Amber-Locks is a little child,
 But together at their play
 Age and Youth are reconciled,
 And with sympathetic glee
 Build their castles fair to see.

"When I grow to be a man"
 (So the wee one's prattle ran),
 "I shall build a castle so--
 with a gateway broad and grand;
 Here a pretty vine shall grow,
 There a soldier guard shall stand;
 And the tower shall be so high
 Folds will wonder, by and by!"

Shuffle-Shoon quoth: "Yes, I know;
 Thus I builded long ago!
 Here a gate and there a wall,
 Here a window, there a door;

³Duvall, Faith in Families, p. 134.

⁴Pang, Chinese Family, p. 98.

Here a steeple wondrous tall
 Riseth ever more and more!
 But the years have levelled low
 What I builded long ago!"

So they gossip at their play,
 Heedless of the fretting day;
 One speaks of the Long Ago
 Where his dead hopes buried lie;
 One with chubby cheeks aglow
 Prattleth of the By and By;
 Side by side, they build their blocks--
 Shuffle-Shoon and Amber-Locks.⁵

What a beautiful picture! The satisfaction of their companionship is beyond what language can describe!

Nevertheless, adolescents of today think of Grandmother and Grandfather as even more stuffy and foolish and old-fashioned than their own parents, for it takes a lot of maturity to appreciate maturity! Chinese regard a white-bearded old man or white-headed old lady as symbols of wisdom. The younger generations must show honor and respect to them.

The Bible teaches, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man" (Lev. 19:32). The very appearance of age is calculated to soften one's heart and to call forth his respect, because the aged represent mature wisdom, the aged record long years spent in our service, the aged demonstrate God's providential care, the aged suggest nearness to eternity, the aged exhibit the richest fruits of grace, and the aged mark the line of God's covenant blessings for descendants.⁶ Therefore, Christian parents must teach their children

⁵Edith M. Stern, You and Your Aging Parents (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 108-109.

⁶Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Leviticus-Numbers, pp. 249-250.

to venerate the aged, but the parents must set a good example for the children to follow.

When help for the aged grandparents involves financial support, all the children deserve to share according to their ability.

Kinship

"Who was that person you were just talking to?"

"A relative."

"What sort of relative?"

"I am not quite sure; she is connected with my parents, I know that for sure. I think she is some sort of cousin. She used to come and visit Mom when we were kids; Auntie Mabel, we used to call her. Of course, she wasn't our Auntie, that is, not really. But she's definitely related--not close, of course--but a relative."

The writer has heard this sort of conversation many times. These conversations constitute expressions but not the feelings of sentiments. If one examines this conversation further, he can see that the speaker is not at all sure how Aunt Mabel is related to him. Hence Mabel's exact relationship to him is of small importance compared with the fact that she is related. In addition, the speaker cannot be sure whether that relationship is through the mother or the father.

Chinese genealogical categories are very distinctive and clear.⁷ For example; there are several distinguishing terms for the word "aunt" telling whether she is the father's sister, the mother's sister, or an uncle's wife, on the mother's side of the family or on the father's side of the family.. Likewise, there are many terms for uncle and cousin that

⁷Koh, Chinese Family Life, p. 202.

are most distinctive and clear of the relationship.

"Kin" is often used as a shorter word for relatives. Everyone should be taught to know his relationship to his kin, that is, to love all of his kinsmen, and be ready to help them whenever one is called upon.

In-Laws

In a happy marriage, a better relationship towards family members on both sides of the family exists. Too many jokes and stories are being told on the TV screen about mother-in-law problems. Many of these stories are not only fictitious but are also harmful.

Dr. Evelyn Millis Duvall, in her book, In-Laws: Pro & Con, gives the rank order of the in-laws named most difficult to get along with by 1,337 persons participating in the group interview phase of the study. The results are as follows: Mother-in-law 36.8%, sister-in-law 20.3% (Sisters-in-law rank second only to mothers-in-law, because they seem to have the same difficulty as their mothers in letting their brothers go; the wife's sister is rarely mentioned in this connection), brother-in-law 5.4%, father-in-law 5.0%, daughter-in-law 2.8%, other female-in-law 2.8% (aunt-in-law, etc.), "all-in-laws" 1.5%, son-in-law 0.7%, other male-in-laws 0.1%, no difficulty-in-laws 25.8%.⁸

A famous in-law myth in the Western society is "No man can get along with his mother-in-law." (Orientals would say, "No woman can get along with her mother-in-law"). The main reason for in-law difficulty is that instead of mutual acceptance, respect and love, there is jealousy, rivalry and resentment!

⁸Evelyn Millis Duvall, In-Laws Pro & Con (New York: Association Press, 1964), pp. 188, 241.

Dr. Robert O. Blood, Jr., of Pendle Hill, Pennsylvania, in his survey, "Are In-Laws Really a Problem?" concluded that, "people who can't get along with their relatives may not be able to love their marriage partner either."⁹ Mutual respect and acceptance is the key to harmony in the in-law relationship.¹⁰

When one tries to be a good in-law, he likely will get the same thing in return. Dr. Duvall recorded a case study in her book, In-Laws:

Pro & Con:

When I married 45 years ago, I decided that I would do my best to be as good and nice a daughter-in-law as possible and it paid good dividends, since my mother-in-law was very nice to me. On the other hand, my own darling mother who had likewise entered the ranks of mother-in-law became greatly enriched by the added blessings in the devotion and respect she received from my husband.

As my three sons grew into manhood, I realized that some day they would probably be marrying and that I must begin to think about the prospects of being a good mother-in-law.

Now my two older sons are married, each to a darling girl and I love each of them dearly. They had the sorrow of losing their mothers before they were married, so I realize that I had a greater responsibility to them than being just a mother-in-law. And great has been my reward, for they are both wonderful to me.

All this brings to my mind an occasion when my own mother many years ago, received a birthday card on which was written an original verse which I have always remembered. It was as follows:

It really sounds formal, it fill me with awe,
To say "Happy Birthday" dear mother-in-law.
So instead of that title, I'll choose one better
above
And say "Happy Birthday" dear mother-in-love.¹¹
(Mrs. A., Massachusetts)

⁹Robert O. Blood, Jr., "Are In-Laws Really A Problem?" Family Financial Planning (December 1965): 1.

¹⁰Lou, Problems of the Chinese Family, p. 104.

¹¹Duvall, In-Laws: Pro & Con, pp. 184-185.

The beautiful story of Naomi and Ruth has already been discussed in chapter seven. The love between the two women was so sincere and genuine; what fault could come between them? To begin with, Naomi was a wonderful mother-in-law; therefore, she got a wonderful daughter-in-law. Likewise, since Ruth was a good daughter-in-law, she had a good mother-in-law; for this is a two-way street. Any daughter-in-law who has the love and devotion for her mother-in-law that Ruth did will be able to change her "mother-in-law" to "mother-in-grace!"¹²

Therefore, it is obvious that with a mother-in-law, or any other in-law, for that matter, there is a two-way street. Kindness from one is returned by the other, and the opposite is also true. Thus, the common bond of love on which marriage is based should stretch further to include the family of the beloved spouse, making them, too, beloved.

The Art of Living Together

"And so they were married and lived happily ever after!" Such is the conventional ending of most love stories. In life, however, the real love stories do not end with marriage. Instead they begin with it. Marriage assumes an arrangement of various roles between a husband and wife. A husband will also probably be a son, a father, a grandson, a brother, a brother-in-law, an uncle, a nephew, the breadwinner, a friend, and a member of the community. There is no way of avoiding the fact that when one marries, he wears the roles of many different people all within the same body.

¹²Chow, Friendship and Marriage, p. 142.

Necessity of Respect

To the Chinese, who often have five generations living together under the same roof, the secret of this art is respect. Lack of respect indicates the lack of confidence and encourages a person to interfere with the integrity of his partner's personality.

If respect is lacking in marriage, it is practically impossible for the couple to live together. How can one honor someone whom he does not respect? How can one thus love, obey, and cherish?

Mutual respect in marriage is primarily enhanced by self respect. Because of the human tendency to judge others as they judge themselves, people are likely to respect others who respect themselves.

In Japan, the whole family bows the husband out the door and in again at night. The daily good-by and hello-again kiss is the most widespread ritual of all. Farewell and welcoming rituals symbolize the daily disruption and re-establishment of personal relationships. The regularity of rituals is crucial. For rituals add strength to relationships by providing structured opportunities for interaction.¹³

Necessity of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is much needed in every family. The strains and conflicts have to be met, not evaded. Some acts can be discussed and changed so that they are not matters of giving in by one or the other, but rather make way for new solutions which include the values everyone holds precious. Some acts cannot be forgiven through discussion alone: wounds caused by careless or angry words about the loved relatives of

¹³Blood, "Are In-Laws Really A Problem?", p. 337.

the other; sneers concerning some hated physical disability; feelings of utter humiliation and burning hate resulting from the angry words; disloyalty of one partner to the other. Discussion alone can seldom heal, but in the forgiveness of God in Christ there are no hurts, however deep, which cannot find healing.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also (1 Jn. 4:20-21).

Therefore, if one loves God, he should forgive others as God has forgiven him.

Necessity of "Perfect Love"

A successful marriage and a happy family depend largely upon the art of living together. The art is the "Perfect Love" the Apostle Paul described in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him . . . love goes on forever (1 Cor. 13:4-8, The Living Bible).

1. Love is very patient. Love does not demonstrate irritation or reflect anger or have a quick temper. In love is the full acceptance of the characters of one's life partner and all others in the family.

2. Love is never jealous. It is able to recognize needs. In love are discovered successful methods or improving or contributing to each other's lives.

3. Love is not possessive. Love does not allow exclusive

control where one is given little or no freedom to fulfill himself apart from his mate.

4. Love is never boastful. Love does not seek to create an image for personal gain.

5. Love is never haughty. It is not self-centered. It has the ability to change and to accept change. It is flexible.

6. Love does not demand its own way. Love has respect for others which results in a set of Christ-centered standards.

7. Love is not selfish. The primary concern of one who loves is not personal pleasure or social status but concern for his mate and the families involved.

8. Love is not touchy. Love is not easily hurt. Love does not take things too personally. Love is not emotionally involved with personal opinions.

9. Love does not hold grudges. It does not review wrongs which have been forgiven. Love does not dwell on past evil.

10. Love is never glad about injustice. Love does not compare himself with others for self-justification. Love does not use other's evil to excuse personal weakness.

11. Love will rejoice whenever truth wins.

12. Love does not count the cost.

13. Love is trust. It believes in a person without question. It has no reason to doubt his integrity.

14. Love is hope. Love gives a person perfect peace and confidence that God is concerned and in control in his situation.

15. Love goes on forever. It is able to outlast anything. It is able to endure all obstacles and even love in the face of unreturned

love.¹⁴

Necessity of Cooperation

The desire for a happy home is the desire of cooperation. If every member of the family is seeking to function independently, the result must be disintegration of the family exactly as explosion results when the elements of an atom decide to be rid of each other's influence. Trying to be free from each other is contrary to the very purpose for which the marriage was undertaken.

To cooperate is to accept the difference between two or more persons in a family. Medical studies of healthy individuals of all age groups and both sexes find that some persons are morning individuals, who wake up fast, do their best work in the early hours of the day, tire easily, and want to retire earlier than others in the family who are geared to an evening peak of vitality. These "owls" are slow to waken, build up steam slowly, get into their best work in the afternoon, and then are up until all hours at night. Being an owl or a lark is programmed into a person by habit and by a personal physiological clock that regulates basic body functions. Heartbeat, respiration rate, and temperature are measurable metabolic indicators of the peaks and sloughs of physical alertness. There is nothing the matter with being either an owl or lark, or perhaps a bit of both, or neither. But it is something of a problem when an incompatible combination lives in the same household.¹⁶

¹⁴Personal notes from seminar of Bill Gothard, Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, California Bay Area Seminar, February 1973.

¹⁵Lou, Problems of the Chinese Family, p. 130.

¹⁶Duvall, Faith in Families, p. 79.

Recognizing that each person has to be different in order to establish his own autonomy is a first step toward cooperation in the family. Basically everyone wants to be part of a cooperative effort. "I can't cooperate" is the emotional equivalent of, "I am in pain." The best teaching of this subject is found in the Bible:

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. . . .And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it (1 Cor. 12:14-18, 26).

What a beautiful description of cooperation! The Biblical Illustrator similarly spoke of the beauties of cooperation in quoting J. Spencer, who said:

I stood a while ago and looked at a drinking-fountain. A marble angel, beautifully sculptured, stood pointing to heaven. Then came polished granite inscribed with gilt letters, and massive slabs of stone. But I noticed that the water came through a small brass pipe and iron cup. Think if the pipe had said, "If they do not make me of gold I will not belong to the thing;" or if the cup had said, "I must be of silver, or I shall be shamed to be there at all." No, I thought I heard the music of the three--common water, common cup, common pipe--all cooperating to furnish the refreshing draught.¹⁷

It is just thus in a home; when everyone knows his station and keeps his due rank, there is a harmonious atmosphere of comfort and contentment in that home.

¹⁷Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, 1 Corinthians II, p. 190.

Necessity of Financial Management

Most couples, in the early years of marriage, look forward to a day when they can have anything they want. The day never comes, for wants multiply more rapidly than resources. One of the most certain things about the money aspect of marriage is that there is never enough money.

Here are some suggestions which can be of great help in meeting the financial needs of marriage and family life:

1. Live within the limits of income--In many parts of the world it is considered a disgrace to be in debt; but in the United States, and also other countries, this financial state has become respectably accepted. Truly there are exceptional items, necessities which often cannot be paid for when they are needed, such as a house or a car. Also, there are unanticipated times of crisis when borrowing money is the only sensible thing to do. But as a general rule, it is a good policy for a family to pay its way and keep out of debt.¹⁸

2. Use money wisely--When buying food, clothing, or furniture, wise planning should be made in advance, so that needs are adequately met. Shopping must be thrifty; yet quality should not be sacrificed. Comparisons should be made among products and their quality carefully analyzed. Especially in the buying of furniture, attention paid to reports from consumers' organizations is found to be most beneficial.¹⁹

3. Insurance Needs--The primary purpose of insurance is to

¹⁸Wilfred Tyler and Frances Tyler, The Little World of Home (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949), p. 32.

¹⁹Norman E. Hines, Your Marriage (New York: Rinehaet & Company, Inc., 1955), pp. 223-225.

protect dependents, usually a wife and children, in case of the premature death of the breadwinner. Life insurance provides a way of saving money and of protecting the family at the same time.²⁰

4. Saving is Important--Some families have very good annual income, yet say that it is absolutely impossible for them to save a cent, because they have squandered money earlier on needless luxuries. Many elderly people end their days in tragic squalor because in their carefree youth, they took no thought for the morrow.

A savings policy is an investment policy. What families need here is the advice of a well-informed person who is not going to sell anything. The man with something to sell will naturally wish to direct thoughts toward the merits of his product.²¹ The average family will need during their lifetime to plan savings for four purposes: (1) They should aim at owning a home of their own someday; (2) They need to provide their children with a good education; (3) They will need resources for their retirement years; and (4) They need to be prepared for emergencies.

All that has been previously mentioned in this chapter is very important in overcoming both immediate and long-range problems. And, consequently, in overcoming these problems the family can live together more harmoniously.

²⁰Kathleen Rhodes and Merna A. Samples, Your Life in the Family (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1964), p. 420.

²¹David R. Mace, Getting Ready for Marriage (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 96-97.

"Christ is the Head of This House"

A famous motto goes, "Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation." If a family creates their home intending for the Lord to dwell with them, their home will be a peaceful one, because Christ is the Prince of Peace.

Daily Bible Reading

Daily Bible reading is an integral part of the Christ-centered home.

Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Man's real life is fed by communications of divine grace.²²

Parents should teach their children the Word of God as early as possible. Then as soon as the child can read the Bible himself, he must be taught to read the Bible daily. Certainly Timothy was exposed to the Scriptures from the very early years of his life. Paul wrote, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15), and he spoke of more than mere rote teaching. For the words "hast known" indicated that Timothy was led to appreciate the Scriptures' meaning and to incorporate them into his own daily living.²³

Modern psychologists speak of not forcing religion on a child. There is a difference in forcing and guiding or leading. Does a parent follow this same theory of "not forcing" with respect to his child's diet? Does a parent let his baby choose for himself between dog food or

²²Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Minor Prophets I, p. 98.

²³Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, II Timothy-Philemon, p. 297.

pabulum? Or is his five-year-old allowed to choose between candy and a well-balanced meal? What about school? Does a parent permit his child to lie in bed on Monday morning because he does not choose to go to school?

Of course, a parent who loves his child will not do these things. Why, then, should one assert parental responsibility in material things and yet avoid his duty in the infinitely more important things of the spiritual life? Parents are the child's first teachers. What they teach or do not teach their child will color the remainder of his life.

Thus, children should learn the very words of Scripture, even though they cannot fully understand them. These verses will have their use some future day. For the Bible teaches, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). With the Word of God hidden in one's heart, lovingly treasured, he shall find a preservative against temptation, as did our Lord.²⁴

However, parents must set the examples for their children to follow. This must be done through the parents' private daily Bible reading. Certainly the neglect of Bible reading in the home is the chief cause of the starved and dwarfed spiritual lives of homemakers.

Daily Prayers at Home

Although parents may not be able to do much about the absence of Bible reading and prayer in the public schools, parents are responsible for the spiritual matters of their home. It has been said, "The family that prays together stays together." Family prayer is the tie that binds the spiritual growth of the family.

²⁴Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Psalms V, p. 13.

Prayer is communication with God. To stop praying, therefore, is to break the connection. The Bible teaches, "Pray without ceasing" (I Thes. 5:17). A man must breathe without ceasing because his physical system must be kept in right relations with the atmosphere. Likewise, Christians depend upon communication with God.

Prayer at home should be frequent. Daniel set apart three times a day for this exercise, ". . . he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Dan. 6:10).

Morning prayer is important. Our Lord set an example for us, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mk. 1:35). Christians often have to choose between the indulgence of a little more sleep and cutting short the time of prayer with scant and hurried devotion, or a little self-denial in sleep and the freshest and best hours of the day given to God.²⁵

Grace at meals is the most frequent religious ritual.²⁶ Grace before meals may take many valid forms. Do not assume that vocal prayer should be limited to the father or the mother. Young children can learn to share beneficially. The table is the central meeting place of the home. Ordinarily there are many beds, but only one dining table. The idea that a meal may be a sacred occasion is so deeply rooted in many religious traditions that it cannot be accidental or of passing significance.²⁷ Thus, the table is an ideal place for the family altar. For two or three times a day, the father gathers at the table. Here then, are great opportunities for

²⁵Exell, The Biblical Illustrator, Mark, p. 47.

²⁶Blood, Marriage, p. 237.

²⁷Elton Trueblood and Pauline Trueblood, The Recovery of Family Life (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1953), p. 119.

the parents to draw the children closer to God.

Bed-time prayer is an important element in the Christian home. Christian parents should take time to pray with their children at bed-time. Even the tiny infant in a sense absorbs the spiritual atmosphere when his mother kneels and prays by his cradle. The Heavenly Father hears the prayer of the godly mother; "for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

Someone described a mother as being one who combines the practical and the spiritual into a way of life. To pray with her children at their bedside is one of the most important duties of a Christian mother.²⁸ After putting their children to sleep, the parents should pray together before retiring for the day. Christian parents should also be prayer partners.

When a family begins and ends the day with prayer, that family can hardly go wrong! A happy family is always founded on its members' right relationship with each other and their close fellowship with the Lord. No home can be a failure when Christ is its head.

²⁸Hsu, Marriage in Christ, p. 104.

CONCLUSION

In the well-known song "Home Sweet Home," John Howard Payne accurately wrote, "Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam, Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home. A charm from the skies seem to hallow us there, which seek through the world, is never met with elsewhere." Obviously, he must have had in mind not merely a house, but a home--a family.

General Summary

All the aspects in which the family was viewed in this dissertation center around the importance of the family. This God-ordained institution is the most basic in any society, and the success or failure of society rests upon this structure. Seen in the eyes of the Chinese, clergy, psychologists, and the Bible, the significance of the family cannot be denied.

Presented in the first chapters of each section in this dissertation are the timeless truths of the Bible, the supreme authority which stresses again and again the importance of marriage, parenthood, and family life. Through various accounts of parenthood and family life, the Bible gives lessons which are both interesting and instructive and which serve as both examples and warnings to everyone. In forms other than narrative, the Bible, God's Word, truly contains a wealth of priceless teachings on the subject of family life. Through loving teachings, promises, and warnings, this precious Book serves as a flawless guide for

a successful marriage, parenthood and family.

Furthermore, much of the wisdom stored in the treasurehouse of over 4,000 years of Chinese history has been presented in the middle chapters of each section to provide even more insight into the raising of families. In the portions of Chinese traditional ways presented, new understanding--at least to contemporary Americans--of family life is made available. In the lives of the Chinese philosophers and teachers mentioned in this dissertation can be seen not only the wisdom of great men but also evidence of wonderful parents who, authoritatively yet gently, led these men to successful positions of such great respect. The stress which the Chinese put on honoring parents and respect of elders is another prominent fact to be observed, showing the similarity of Chinese teachings to those teachings found in the Bible. Thus, because of the undeniable importance of these topics, the relevance of such Chinese teachings in today's world cannot be minimized.

Supported by these traditions and experience-enriched teachings, even more information of practical value to families today is found in the last chapters of each section of this dissertation. The findings of pastors, psychologists, and laymen presented in each of these chapters do not fail to support both Biblical and Chinese teachings on the steps to successful marriage, parenthood and family life.

Similarities Between Biblical and Chinese Teachings

The facts presented throughout this dissertation indicate the similarity between Chinese concepts of family life and those concepts of the Bible. These parallels between Chinese and Biblical truths concerning the family are noteworthy. That these teachings are similar serves to stress their importance; truly, the significance of family life can-

not be overemphasized.

Oneness of Marriage

The first marriage took place in the Garden of Eden. This God-ordained institution of marriage was prescribed in the second chapter of Genesis: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help-meet for him. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:18, 24). And from the beautiful pairing of Adam and Eve, marriage was planned by God to be a blessed, holy union whose sharing, giving, and unselfish loving has been the means of propagating mankind. Furthermore, the oneness of mind, body and soul which must constitute marriage fulfills directly God's holy plan.

A similar oneness is the basis of the Chinese concept of marriage. To the Chinese, marriage is symbolized by water and clay. Water represents woman, while man is represented by clay. While the water molds the clay, it is the clay which gives the water its substance, within which it moves and has its full being. Yet without the water, the clay dries and falls to pieces. For they are not two, but one.

The Absolute Authority of Parents

The outstanding Biblical example of the authority prescribed to parents can be seen in Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac (Gen. 22). Abraham again exercised his absolute authority in later arranging completely the marriage of his son (Gen. 24).

Likewise, the authority of Chinese parents is absolute in the disciplining, teaching and punishing of their children. For example, in the area of planning their child's marriage, wise parents are careful in

the selection of the life partner of their child. For the Chinese believe that a man's life, particularly his home life is made or unmade by the wife he marries, and the entire character of the future family is determined by her (or him). Therefore, parental decision is final.

Filial Piety

The honor and obedience of children towards parents constitutes a very close similarity between Biblical and Chinese teachings. Stressed throughout the Bible is the importance of such filial piety (Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:3; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20). But more than create strict demands upon children, these Biblical commands also assure heavenly blessings upon obedient children. Eph. 6:2, 3 clearly states "Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise:) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

Similarly, the filial piety and obedience given parents by strictly-reared children are also responsible for the favorable fulfillment of the Chinese philosophy that filial duty is the root of virtue. Chinese children are taught from their early childhood to honor and obey their parents. Indeed, China, a nation which has remained standing while the world's greatest empires--Assyria, Babylon, Greece and Rome--grew, rose and fell, owes its longevity to the account of Eph. 6:3. Thus, such a blessing from God applies not only to an individual but also to a nation as well!

Respect of Old Age

The Bible teaches, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man" (Lev. 19:32). The very appearance of age calls forth one's respect. Again, God's Word says, "Hearken

unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old" (Prov. 23:22). Jacob, for example, blind and very old, received much affectionate care from his son, Joseph.

Moreover, old age is the most honored period of Chinese life, because the old are respected for their knowledge, wisdom and experiences. For the Chinese believe that "the old men certainly have crossed more bridges than the young have crossed streets!" Therefore, in Chinese society, with an increase in years a person also gains increasing deference. Naturally, in Chinese homes, grandparents are respected most highly. Thus, it is not difficult to understand why most Chinese people look forward to the day they are considered old. Dr. Lin Yutang, a well-known Chinese writer, summarized Chinese thought well by saying, "The symphony of life should end with a grand finale of peace and serenity and material comfort and spiritual contentment, and not with the crash of a broken drum or cracked cymbals."

Relevance to Twentieth-Century Christians

The writer emphasizes very strongly the call of twentieth-century Christians back to the Bible to save them from ruin and the ultimate destruction of the home. The home is the first school of the child. There, the resources of religion are first brought to bear upon human need. The only way to have a better world is to have better people in it. The only way to have better people is to do a better job of bringing up children by going back to the fundamental teachings of the Bible, using God's Word to teach children, discipline them, and establish Christian education in the home. If Christians could give one complete generation the right bringing up, they would not only rebuild society--because what is done for the family is done for all society--

but they would actually bring about a much better world in which to live.

It is quite evident from Scripture that, after God Himself, the home is the basic unit in human society. He established a home before He made other institutions. And so long as God is heard and heeded, a home is a haven of beauty and love. But when God is crowded out, all that is ugly and harmful enters into that home. Therefore, marriage, parenthood, and family life will all be successful if God is put unconditionally at the head and the Bible, God's Word, is followed as the absolute authority.

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