

The lullaby or cradle song is met with in every nation. All kinds of mothers sing many kinds of lullabies, and why? Because the rhythmic instinct might be called almost the first awakening of the intellectual life. Mothers who would train their little ones for God, should sing as cradle songs the most melodious and tender of so-called "church music." From infancy, and through earliest years, children should hear great anthems and oratorios, great bursts of impassioned harmony, which, without explanation, will make impressions upon them.

In this light, the songs selected for the Primary Class in the Sunday School should be chosen and taught with wise judgment. Classical selections from such productions as the Messiah or Elijah played in the hearing of the children, will have noble effect. In a Sunday School class one day, when a lesson had been given in Elijah, the teacher sat down at the piano, saying that she was going to show them how this story was told in music, and perhaps they could tell by raising their hands when she came to the part about Elijah being taken up to heaven. Just at the right place, a whole forest of little hands went up.

But to return to first principles, to teach a child to pray is usually the first step taken in the religious culture of the child. Now, reverence is a vital part of prayer, and it can perhaps best be taught to the very little child without a form of words. Let the first act of prayer be to kneel with the mother, and with folded hands and bowed head to repeat God's name, and the child's own name. When words become a necessity to express ideas which the child thus gains of his relationship toward God, a form of prayer may be taught, but not to exclude the child's own prayer. He should early be taught that he can talk with God as with his earthly parents. He would not be satisfied to address them always in some set and the same expression.

As to forms of words, such as the time-honored, "Now I lay me down to sleep," and the Lord's Prayer, two of the first prayers usually taught to children, it is

well to keep in mind the familiar couplet,

"To say my prayers is not to pray,
Unless I mean the words I say."

The form of words must not be taught too early, and care should be taken that the child understands what he is taught to say, for even little children should pray with the understanding as well as with the heart.

Next, in the religious development of the child, we come to how he shall be taught what is in the Bible, and how he shall become a member of the Sunday School.

Amongst the first texts of Scripture which a child should commit to memory should be those associated with nature. "Nature lessons" so called, without God in them, are a hindrance to religious development, and tend toward a confusion of ideas, as for example, one little child said to another, "I know lots of folks in heaven, God and Jesus and Mother Nature."

As to the little child taking his place in the Sunday School, if his mother can be induced to become a member of the Home Department he might be made a "cradle roll" member. He might even be put on the "cradle roll" with the expectation of gaining his mother, or indeed both parents, as members of the Home Department. But let this end be persistently sought by the teacher, to guard against the responsibility of the religious training of the child being placed upon the Sunday School rather than upon the home, where God has placed it. The home is the child's first and best school.

When the child really becomes a little learner in the Sunday School, the teacher must "move on softly," according to the law of development which God has put into the child, adapting the instruction given to his several stages, as the rhythmic, the imaginative, the emotional, using songs, stories, pictures, without really expecting him to memorize very much until he has reached that period when he expresses himself in words rather than in action.

The child is in need of ideals upon which to build his character, as the vine needs a trellis upon which to fasten itself and climb.