

This does not take much effort on the baby's part but it is all he can do at first. As soon as he is able to do more, more must be required.

Love is service, and the greater the service the greater the love, usually.

The love at first is unconscious. The child has known nothing else; but as he sees his own life reflected in that of others, it becomes conscious.

For example, he sees, perhaps, the mother hen caring for her chicks or the dog looking after its puppies, and there dawns upon him (not in so many words, but it comes), "*My mother takes care of me.*" As these illustrations are multiplied the conception grows until it becomes a conscious thought.

This is one of the reasons why it is good that children should be brought into contact with nature, whether through pets or otherwise. If you can show the little one a pair of birds preparing their nest and watch with him, until the young birds have flown, the object lesson will have great value in the formation of his character. But to recognize love and not to exercise it would be almost as bad as not to have known it.

We have said that the greater the service the greater the love; but great service, especially if it takes the form of self-sacrifice, must not be expected nor permitted in a young child, at first. It must come by degrees lest he grow discouraged.

For instance, suppose your little boy has an orange. To require him to give it to his sister, unless there was some very strong reason which the boy was capable of understanding, would tend to cause dislike for her rather than love. To share, would be another thing, though perhaps it might be only a very small piece the first time. Also, if he always did the giving up with no return on the sister's part, it would be liable to work adversely. As the little ones learn to take pleasure in another's enjoyment, the little acts of self-sacrifice become loving service which increases with each performance.

All who would incite and retain the love of a child, must prove themselves worthy of trust.

Until he is disillusioned a child trusts implicitly. If a promise is made to him he looks

for literal fulfilment. A mother was laughed at for standing in the sun, when by going a short distance she might have had shade. She said, "When Bobbie went back for his spade I promised to stay right here." It need not be said that this mother retained the respect and love of her son as long as she lived, which was until after the son was himself a parent.



Saying Prayers versus Praying

The mother tucked her little son away in his white bed and then sat down to think things over.

"Little son is two years old," she mused, "old enough to learn a prayer to say at night when he goes to bed."

Then she thought of her own childhood prayers: "Now I lay me," "God bless papa, God bless mamma," etc., hurried through in parrot fashion, regardless of why or how or to whom she said them. She even remembered kneeling at her mother's knee and beginning, "One, two, three, four, five," only stopping then because her parent's shocked exclamation recalled her wandering wits.

"That was not praying at all," thought the mother, "far from it. I hope the dear God has forgiven me for taking his name in vain."

"And yet," she went on to herself, "a child is naturally religious. There must be some means of communion between him and his heavenly Father, some message suited to his baby mind from the heaven which is his home. When the race was in its infancy, it had holy men and priests to do its praying. Why cannot I act as priest for my little son until he comes himself into the knowledge of God?"

Accordingly, the next night, after the candle was blown out and little son tucked in and kissed in, his mother said, "Mother is going to pray, little son. Close your eyes and keep quite still." Then with her hand on his head she prayed softly, "Thank you, God, for taking care of little son all day." "Pray again," said the baby voice, and the mother repeated the words, conscious as she did so of a quick thrill of sympathy and understanding passing between her child's soul