Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/urea20>

The Primary Educational Responsibilities of the Home

Professor Waldo S. Pratt Mis. D. ^a

^a Hartford Theological Seminary

Published online: 10 Jul 2006.

To cite this article: Professor Waldo S. Pratt Mis. D. (1907) The Primary Educational Responsibilities of the Home , Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association, 2:4, 151-153, DOI: [10.1080/0034408070020406](https://doi.org/10.1080/0034408070020406)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0034408070020406>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

The Primary Educational Responsibilities of the Home*

PROFESSOR WALDO S. PRATT, M.S. D.
Hartford Theological Seminary

The home has certain functions in religious and moral education which can be performed by the school and the church only imperfectly or not at all.

The first function is incident to the fact of parenthood. The child becomes conscious of its mother as soon as it does of itself, and presently of its father as well. These are normally the first personalities to come within its ken. If there are others, they are *in loco parentis*. The essential point for us in this relation of child to parent lies the basis for the child's idea of God. The parent stands *in loco Dei*, with all the rich opportunity and fearful responsibility of that relation. The child's conception of what God is is normally derived from what father and mother are; and this is even corroborated by the cases in which its instinct forces it to conceive of God as what father and mother are not.

The school and the church may reasonably expect that the home will supply in forcible illustration the parental truth, justice, authority, tenderness, fidelity and self-devotement that shall become irresistible symbols of divine attributes; that the home will present these in such ways that the child's responses in humility, obedience, rectitude, loyalty and joyful service shall be manifested toward its parents first, and be led onward through habits of speech and action into a constant and genuine attitude toward God as the supreme Father; and that in all specific parental teaching about religious and moral matters the substantial identity of the earthly symbol and the heavenly reality shall be explained and exalted as well as exemplified.

This is the most stupendous burden of parenthood. It is one that in the nature of things can never be fully and perfectly carried. But it is one that cannot be neglected or shirked without

*A paper read at the meeting of the Council of Religious Education held at Niagara Falls, N. Y., July 2nd and 3rd, 1907; answering the question: "What should parents hold themselves responsible for in home education, and what relations should they establish with the school and the church?"

penalty. It cannot well be transferred to any deputy. Even though teacher or pastor may come to share the high office of the parent, he cannot do so fully, if for no other reason, because of the lack of daily and hourly contact.

The germ of religious experience is normally latent in the natural relations of the home, and the school and the church have the right to press upon parents the duty of seeing that children's thoughts, feelings and volitions are so started, developed and established that the whole range of essential theological ideas and religious habits shall seem but an inevitable enlargement of the daily practice of the home.

The second function is incident to the fact that the family is a social organism. The child becomes aware of the interplay of personalities which is "society" by entering into the give and take of home-life. Whether the circle be small or large, it is a sample of social relations, where all have rights and duties and where, therefore, moral principles must be exemplified. By this experience the child is fitted to understand and take part in the more strenuous and complicated relations of the neighborhood, the community, the nation and the world at large. If the household be one in which life is permeated by religious sentiment and ruled by religious conviction, normally wrought out into practice, he grows up in a more or less ideal society, with moral principles and habits that are capable of indefinite expansion to meet other conditions.

The school and the church may reasonably expect that the home will supply not only an experiment-ground for social and therefore moral procedures, but a positive influence in forming the elemental moral habits of veracity, self-control, purity, fairness, honor, unselfishness, gentleness, pity for suffering, scorn of vileness and malignity, joy in all that is noble. The obligation to these the home should inculcate as lessons due to each of the members entrusted to its keeping.

This is the second great burden of parenthood, one that it is impossible fully to sustain, but which cannot be avoided. But the amount of system in the social life of the home, and, above all, the quality of motive emphasized in it, vary indefinitely. The home is society in miniature, and its constant problems are those

of constructive sociology. Hence the need of system and thoroughness. But it is like society in general in that no system works automatically. There must be motives, and these may be low or high, feeble or powerful, contradictory or harmonious. The ideal motives to moral action can never be rightly secured except as a part of religious experience and by deduction from religious incentives.

To all this it may be objected that it amounts to saying that the school and the church have a right to expect everything of the home. I think that this is substantially true. School and church are supplemental agencies, designed to supply intensively and extensively certain intellectual, emotional and inspirational influences that can be given by home only rudimentally and partially. But ideally the home ought to be able to do what is strictly necessary even where school and church do not exist or are defective.

The two great functions of the school and the church are (1) to broaden and deepen the religious and moral work of the home by presenting more exact and copious intellectual discipline, with wider opportunities for mental development through the skillful massing of the objects of thought and sentiment; and (2) to work upon those who come to them for education by the subtle influences of a larger and more varied social environment. But neither can be a satisfactory substitute for a good home, nor expect to do much more than supplement what the home ought to do.

Treasurer

At the regular meeting of the Executive Board, held May 23rd, Mr. Charles Lawrence Hutchinson, President of the Art Institute of Chicago and Vice-President of the Corn Exchange National Bank, was elected to the office of Treasurer of the Association, to succeed Mr. James Herron Eckels, who died April 15th.

The Special Debt Fund

In response to the appeal made early in the year for a large number of small gifts to defray the old standing indebtedness, the sum of \$1,006.94 has been received.