

A WORD FOR PARENTS

C.H.M

The following was excerpted from a classic pamphlet by C. H. Mackintosh by a respected brother, Paul M Hadley, in our local assembly and I felt it might be of help to parents and grandparents who read it on these forums.

Your servant, for Jesus' sake,

Dick Gorgas

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Excerpted from *Jehovah's Demand and Satan's Objections*

Very many Christian parents, through an utterly false application of the doctrines of grace, have allowed their children to grow up round them in wilfulness and worldliness; and while so doing they have comforted themselves with the thought that they could do nothing, and that in God's time their children would, if included in the eternal purpose, be gathered in. They have virtually lost sight of the grand practical truth that the One who as decreed the end has fixed the means of reaching it, and it is the height of folly to think of gaining as the end while neglecting the means.

...

What, then, is involved in the weighty expression, Thou and thy house?

There are two things involved in it. In the first place, there is a most precious privilege; and in the second place, a deep responsibility. It is unquestionably the privilege of all Christian parents to count on God for their children; but it is also their bounden duty .to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

And what does this bringing up involve? ... It is to be feared that very few of us indeed really understand what Christian training means, or how it is to be carried on. One thing is certain, namely, that Christian training means a great deal more than drilling religion into our children, making the Bible a task -book, teaching our children to repeat texts and hymns like a parrot, and turning the family circle into a school. No doubt it is very well to store the memory of a child with Scripture and sweet hymns. No one would think of calling this in question. But is it not too frequently the case that religion is made a weariness to the child, and the Bible a repulsive school -book?

This will never do. What is really needed is to surround our children with a thoroughly Christian atmosphere, from their earliest moments; to let them breathe the pure air of the new creation; to let them see in their parents the genuine fruits of spiritual life —love, peace, purity,

tenderness, holy disinterestedness, genuine kindness, unselfishness, loving thoughtfulness of others. These have a mighty moral influence upon the plastic mind of the child, and the Spirit of God will assuredly use them in drawing the heart to Christ —the center and the source of all these beautiful graces and heavenly influences.

But, on the other hand, who can attempt to define the pernicious effect produced upon our children by our inconsistencies, by our bad temper, our selfish ways, our worldliness, and covetousness?...

...

And, while on this subject of training children, we would, in true brotherly love, offer a suggestion to all Christian parents as to the immense importance of inculcating a spirit of obedience...

Are we then to be continually chucking the reins and brandishing the rod? By no means. This would be to break the spirit of the child, instead of subduing his will. Where parental authority is thoroughly established, the reins may lie gently on the neck, and the rod be allowed to stand in the corner. ...

The real secret of successful training lies in the proper adjustment of firmness and tenderness. If the parent, from the very beginning, establishes his authority, he may exercise as much tenderness the most loving heart can desire or display. When the child is really made to feel that the reins and rod are under the direct control of implicit sound judgement and true affection, and not of a sour temper and arbitrary will, there will be little difficulty in training him. In a word, firmness and tenderness are the two essential ingredients in all sound education; a firmness which the child will not dare to question; a tenderness which takes account of the child's every real want and right desire. It is sad indeed if the idea which a child forms of parental authority be that of an arbitrary interference with, or a cold indifference to, his little wishes and wants. It is not thus that our heavenly Father deals with us; and He is to be our model in this as in all beside. If it is written, and it is written, Children, obey your parents in all things; it is also, in a beautiful adjusting power, written, Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged. Again, if it be said, Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right; it is also said, ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In short, the child must be taught to obey; but the obedient child must be allowed to breathe an atmosphere of tenderness, and walk up and down in the sunshine of parental affection. This is the spirit of Christian education.

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