



Getuigenissen voor de Gemeente: Deel 5 “Ouderlijke opvoeding”

“Ouderlijke Opvoeding Ned. - Parental Training Eng.”

Hoofdstuk 3 Blz. 37-43 Nederlandse uitgave

In de Ere-Dienst van Romeinen brief; S01 t/m S30

Chapter 3—Parental Training I have been shown that very many of the parents who profess to believe the solemn message for this time have not trained their children for God. They have not restrained themselves and have been irritated with anyone who attempted to restrain them. They have not by living faith daily bound their children upon the altar of the Lord. Many of these youth have been allowed to transgress the fourth commandment by seeking their own pleasure upon God’s holy day. They have felt no compunctions of conscience in going about the streets on the Sabbath for their own amusement. Many go [37] where they please and do what they please, and their parents are so fearful of displeasing them that, imitating the management of Eli, they lay no commands upon them. These youth finally lose all respect for the Sabbath and have no relish for religious meetings or for sacred and eternal things. If their parents mildly remonstrate with them, they shield themselves by telling of the faults of some of the church members. In place of silencing the first approach to anything of the kind, the parents think just as their children think; if this one or that one were perfect, their children would be right. Instead of this they should teach them that the sins of others are no excuse for them. Christ is the only true pattern. The wrongs of many would not excuse one wrong in them or lessen in the least their guilt. God has given them one standard, perfect, noble, elevated. This they must meet, irrespective of the course which others may pursue. But many parents seem to lose reason and judgment in their fondness for their children, and, through these indulged, selfish, mismanaged youth, Satan in turn works effectually to ruin the parents. I was referred to the wrath of God which came upon the incredulous and disobedient of ancient Israel. Their duty to instruct their children was plainly enjoined upon them. It is just as binding upon believing parents in this generation. “Give ear, O My people, to My law: incline your ears to the words of My mouth. I will open My mouth in a parable: I will utter dark 36 Parental Training 37 sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done.” Children are what their parents make them by their instruction, discipline, and example. Hence the overwhelming importance of parental faithfulness in training the young for the service of God. Children should early be taught the sacredness of religious obligations. This is a most important part of their education. Our duty to [38] God should be performed before any other. The strict observance of God’s law, from principle, should be taught and enforced. “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: and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.” Here is seen the great responsibility devolving upon parents. Children who are allowed to come up to manhood or womanhood with the will undisciplined and the passions uncontrolled, will generally in afterlife pursue a course which God condemns. These are eager for frivolous enjoyments and irreligious associates. They



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have been allowed to neglect religious duties and indulge the inclinations of the carnal heart, and, as a consequence, Satan controls the mind and principles. In ----- parents have given him ample room thus to work. Most of the backsliding from God that has occurred in that place has come in consequence of the parents' neglect to train their children to a conscientious, religious life. The condition of these children is lamentable. They profess to be Christians; but their parents have not taken upon themselves the burden of teaching them how to be Christians—how to recount the mercies of God, how to praise Him, how to exemplify in their lives the life of Christ. When these children enter school and associate with other students, those who have been really trying to be Christians are ashamed to act out their faith in the presence of those who have had so much 38 Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5 [39] light. They are ashamed to appear singular and deny inclination, and so they throw away their armor at the very time when it is most needed, when the powers of darkness are working through these irreligious companions to lead them away from Christ. They enter upon a path that is full of danger without the protection and support of religious principle, because they think it will be difficult or unpleasant to carry their religion with them to the schoolroom, the playground, and into all their associations. Thus they lay bare their soul to the shafts of Satan. Where are the guardians of these youth? Who have taken a firm hold of the throne of God with one hand while with the other they encircle these youth to draw them to Christ? It is just here that these children need to know the power of religion, need to be held back with a firm hand. Many of those who have so long rejected divine guidance and guardianship are rushing on in the path of levity and selfish pleasure, yea, more, into baser acts and defilement of the body. As a consequence their minds are polluted, and religion is distasteful to them. Some have gone so far in this downward course, and followed so earnestly in the path of the Sodomites, that they are today nigh unto cursing, and the voice of reproof and warning is lost upon them. They will never be redeemed, and the parents are guilty of their ruin. The debasing enjoyments for which they have made such an enormous sacrifice—health, peace of mind, and eternal life—are bitterness in the end. Parents, for Christ's sake do not blunder in your most important work, that of molding the characters of your children for time and for eternity. An error on your part in neglect of faithful instruction, or in the indulgence of that unwise affection which blinds your eyes to their defects and prevents you from giving them proper restraint, will prove their ruin. Your course may give a wrong direction to all their future career. You determine for them what they will be and [40] what they will do for Christ, for men, and for their own souls. Deal honestly and faithfully with your children. Work bravely and patiently. Fear no crosses, spare no time or labor, burden or suffering. The future of your children will testify the character of your work. Fidelity to Christ on your part can be better expressed in the symmetrical character of your children than in any other way. They are Christ's property, bought with His own blood. If their Parental Training 39 influence is wholly on the side of Christ they are His colaborers, helping others to find the path of life. If you neglect your God-given work, your unwise course of discipline places them among the class who scatter from Christ and strengthen the kingdom of darkness. I speak the things I know; I testify to you the things which I have seen when I say there is among our youth, among educated young men of professedly Christian parents, a grievous offense in the sight of God, which is so common that it constitutes one of the signs of the last days. It is so full of evil tendencies as to call for decided exposure and denunciation. It is the sin of regarding with levity or contempt their early vows of consecration to God. In a religious interest the Holy Spirit



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moved upon them to take their stand wholly under the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel. But the parents were so far from God themselves, so busily engaged in worldly business, or so filled with doubts and dissatisfaction in regard to their own religious experience, that they were wholly unfitted to give them instruction. These youth, in their inexperience, needed a wise, firm hand to point out the right way and to bar with counsel and restraint the wrong way. A religious life should be shown to be in marked contrast to a life of worldliness and pleasure seeking. He who would be the disciple of Christ must take up the cross and bear it after Jesus. Our Saviour lived not to please Himself, neither must we. High spiritual attainments will require entire consecration to God. But this instruction has not been given the youth because it would contradict the life of the parents. Therefore the children have been left to gain a knowledge of the Christian life as best they could. When tempted to seek the society of worldlings and participate in worldly amusements, the fond parents, disliking to deny them any indulgence, have—if they have said or done anything in the matter—taken a position so indefinite and undecided that the children have judged for themselves that the course they desired to pursue was in keeping with the Christian life and character. Having once started in this way, they usually continue in it until the worldly element prevails and they sneer at their former convictions. They despise the simplicity manifested when their hearts were tender, and they find excuse to elude the sacred claims of the church and of the crucified Redeemer. This class can never become what 40 Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5 they might have been had not the convictions of conscience been stifled, the holiest, tenderest affections blunted. If in after years they become followers of Christ, they will still bear the scars which irreverence for sacred things has made upon their souls. Parents do not see these things. They do not foresee the result of their course. They do not feel that their children need the tenderest culture, the most careful discipline in the divine life. They do not look upon them as being in a peculiar sense the property of Christ, the purchase of His blood, the trophies of His grace, and as such, skillful instruments in God’s hands to be used for the upbuilding of His kingdom. Satan is ever seeking to wrest these youth from the hands of Christ, and parents do not discern that the great adversary is planting his hellish banners close by their sides. They are so blinded they think it is the banner of Christ. By ambition or indolence, skepticism or self-indulgence, Satan allures the young from the narrow path of holiness cast up for the [42] ransomed of the Lord to walk in. They do not generally leave this path all at once. They are won away by degrees. Having taken one wrong step, they lose the witness of the Spirit to their acceptance with God. Thus they fall into a state of discouragement and distrust. They dislike religious services because conscience condemns them. They have fallen into the snare of Satan, and there is only one way of escape. They must retrace their steps and with humility of soul confess and forsake their halfhearted course. Let them renew their first experience which they have made light of, cherish every divine aspiration, and let those holy emotions which God’s Spirit only can inspire, reign in their souls. Faith in Christ’s power will impart strength to sustain, and light to guide. This practical instruction in religious experience is what Christian parents should be prepared to give their children. God requires this of you, and you neglect your duty if you fail to perform this work. Instruct your children in regard to God’s chosen methods of discipline and the conditions of success in the Christian life. Teach them that they cannot serve God and have their minds absorbed in overcareful provision for this life; but do not let them cherish the thought that they have no need to toil, and may spend their leisure moments in idleness. God’s word is plain on this point. Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, has left an



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example for the youth. He toiled in Parental Training 41 the workshop at Nazareth for His daily bread. He was subject to His parents, and sought not to control His own time or to follow His own will. By a life of easy indulgence a youth can never attain to real excellence as a man or as a Christian. God does not promise us ease, honor, or wealth in His service; but He assures us that all needed blessings will be ours, with “persecutions,” and in the world to come “life everlasting.” Nothing less than entire consecration to His service will Christ accept. This is the lesson which every one of us must learn. Those who study the Bible, counsel with God, and rely upon [43] Christ will be enabled to act wisely at all times and under all circumstances. Good principles will be illustrated in actual life. Only let the truth for this time be cordially received and become the basis of character, and it will produce steadfastness of purpose, which the allurements of pleasure, the fickleness of custom, the contempt of the world-loving, and the heart’s own clamors for self-indulgence are powerless to influence. Conscience must be first enlightened, the will must be brought into subjection. The love of truth and righteousness must reign in the soul, and a character will appear which heaven can approve. We have marked illustrations of the sustaining power of firm, religious principle. Even the fear of death could not make the fainting David drink of the water of Bethlehem, to obtain which, valiant men had risked their lives. The gaping lions’ den could not keep Daniel from his daily prayers, nor could the fiery furnace induce Shadrach and his companions to fall down before the idol which Nebuchadnezzar set up. Young men who have firm principles will eschew pleasure, defy pain, and brave even the lions’ den and the heated fiery furnace rather than be found untrue to God. Mark the character of Joseph. Virtue was severely tested, but its triumph was complete. At every point the noble youth endured the test. The same lofty, unbending principle appeared at every trial. The Lord was with him, and His word was law. Such firmness and untarnished principle shines brightest in contrast with the feebleness and inefficiency of the youth of this age. With but few exceptions, they are vacillating, varying with every change of circumstance and surroundings, one thing today and another tomorrow. Let the attractions of pleasure or selfish gratification 42 Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5 be presented, and conscience will be sacrificed to gain the coveted indulgence. Can such a person be trusted? Never! In the absence [44] of temptation he may carry himself with such seeming propriety that your doubts and suspicions appear unjust; but let opportunity be presented, and he will betray your confidence. He is unsound at heart. Just at the time when firmness and principle are most required, you will find him giving way; and if he does not become an Arnold or a Judas, it is because he lacks a fitting opportunity. Parents, it should be your first concern to obey the call of duty and enter, heart and soul, into the work God has given you to do. If you fail in everything else, be thorough, be efficient, here. If your children come forth from the home training pure and virtuous, if they fill the least and lowest place in God’s great plan of good for the world, your life can never be called a failure and can never be reviewed with remorse. The idea that we must submit to ways of perverse children is a mistake. Elisha, at the very commencement of his work, was mocked and derided by the youth of Bethel. He was a man of great mildness, but the Spirit of God impelled him to pronounce a curse upon those railers. They had heard of Elijah’s ascension, and they made this solemn event the subject of jeers. Elisha evinced that he was not to be trifled with, by old or young, in his sacred calling. When they told him he had better go up, as Elijah had done before him, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. The awful judgment that came upon them was of God. After this, Elisha had no further trouble in his mission. For fifty years he passed in and out of the gate of Bethel, and went to and fro from city to city,



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passing through crowds of the worst and rudest of idle, dissolute youth, but no one ever mocked him or made light of his qualifications as the prophet of the Most High. This one instance of terrible severity in the commencement of his career was sufficient to command respect through his whole life. Had he allowed the mockery to pass unnoticed, he might have [45] been ridiculed, reviled, and even murdered by the rabble, and his mission to instruct and save the nation in its great peril would have been defeated. Even kindness must have its limits. Authority must be sustained by a firm severity, or it will be received by many with mockery and contempt. The so-called tenderness, the coaxing and the indulgence, Parental Training 43 used toward youth by parents and guardians is the worst evil which can come upon them. Firmness, decision, positive requirements, are essential in every family. Parents, take up your neglected responsibilities; educate your children after God’s plan, showing “forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” * * * * *