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Editor: anabaptistmennonites.org.

Few of us have seen a wolf in bloodthirsty frenzy run into a pack of bleating, harmless sheep, scattering, ripping, and killing in ravenous glee. But when Jesus warned His disciples, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," the analogy was vivid. In his warning to the Ephesian elders, Paul pictured this carnage with graphic realism: "After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29).

Shepherds are responsible to watch for wolves.

But Paul warned that even shepherds would turn into wolves. Also of your own selves shall men arise" (Acts 20:30). Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Wolves take the form of erroneous literature, erring church leaders, or anyone with influence who will harm the sheep.

Since wolves will endanger God's "little flock," Paul admonishes, "Therefore watch." But how are we to watch? Are we to critique our brethren suspiciously, imagining a wolf in any who differ with us? Paul warned, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves." So we should first ask, "Could I be a wolf? Could I think that I am doing God service while opposing the truth as Saul did?" What are some telltale wolf traits?

Wolves lurk in the dark.

Do I ever disguise my true motives and attitudes? Hypocritical wolves "wear a rough garment to deceive" (Zechariah 13:4) others that they are pious. Do I carefully protect my conservative image but allow my children to follow the current fads and fashions? Those who raise a faithful posterity glorify God more than those who "garnish the sepulchres of the righteous."

If I am grateful for freedom from the evils of radio and television, do I secretly disregard the church's caution with present technology issues? Do I support the scripturally disciplined church life I benefit from, or do I erode its foundation by subtle insubordination? Sheep find rest and security in the flock.

Wolves divide and scatter the sheep.

Paul's prophecy came true. Wolves have repeatedly scattered the sheep.

But who was the wolf? When schisms occur, each side professes to carry the torch of truth, but God will be the judge. Satan uses pride, carnality, and insubordination to divide the flock. Only by prayer, humility, and strict adherence to the Scriptures can separation from a wandering flock be blessed. Since pride is the root of all contention (Proverbs 13:10), we must be open to counsel and humble in contending for the truth. Wolves "[sow] discord among brethren."

Wolves are destructive, "not sparing the flock."

The loving shepherd heart is always redemptive, even in the use of the rod and staff. But carnality expresses itself in vindictive, cynical sarcasm. Are we building up or tearing down?

Wolves feed on the sick and the weak.

Youth are disenchanted and seeking souls are disillusioned when wolves disrupt the flock. "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea" (Mark 9:42).

Wolves are greedy and selfish.

"Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (Ezekiel 34:2). Shepherds purposefully avoid robbing other folds. True shepherds do not draw men after themselves but plead, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). "Pride of will and lust of station, / Lord, I would from all be free."

The Scriptures also teach us how to relate to wolves. Every wolf is a soul in need of salvation. They are at times disillusioned or deceived sheep. Paul "[warned] every one night and day with tears." Consistent, continuous, heartfelt love and compassion may melt hard hearts. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Galatians 5:15). The grace of entreaty is often more effective than argumentative skill. Sheep do not growl—they bleat.

"In the midst of wolves: be ye ... wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). A snake's wisdom and main defense is its ability to stealthily stay out of harm's way. Harmless doves are also remarkable in their ability to evade danger. Sheep must not be frightened by the wolves but trust in the shepherd. May God spare us from wolves but, most of all, from being a wolf.

—BAS



BOAZ—A TYPE of CHRIST

The Book of Ruth opens with the tragic story of Elimelech's family and the loss of their inheritance. It further tells of Boaz, the near kinsman, who redeemed Elimelech's inheritance. God had outlined the procedures to be followed in such a case (Leviticus 25:25, Deuteronomy 25:5-12). Boaz faithfully performed this responsibility. In doing this, Boaz typifies the spiritual redemption that Jesus Christ provides for lost mankind.

The name Boaz means "strength is in him." Boaz had resources for meeting the needs of others (Ruth 2:1). The weak, the lost, or the stranger could present themselves to Boaz and find strength, direction, or welcome. Is not this the picture of our Redeemer? Isaiah prophesied many years before His arrival on earth that "His name shall be called . . . The mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6). Later Jesus testified, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Today He sits at the Father's right hand "upholding all things by the word of his power," and to all He invites, "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Boaz was "near of kin unto" Naomi (2:20). This fact gave Naomi hope that indeed the Lord had not forsaken her. Boaz remembered her lost husband and sons and was willing to redeem her husband's land and continue the family line. Our Lord "is not ashamed to call [us] brethren" (Hebrews 2:11). It is through our relationship with Him that we have "hope ... as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:19).

Boaz was "a mighty man of wealth" (2:1). Our Lord has redeemed us "according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). We partake of the "unsearchable riches of Christ" and enjoy the "riches of the full assurance of understanding." We anticipate "that in the ages to come he [will] shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us" (Ephesians 2:7).

Boaz took knowledge of Ruth (2:10). Ruth needed a place to glean; Boaz said to glean only in his fields. When Ruth was alone and vulnerable, Boaz instructed his men not to touch her. Ruth became hungry and thirsty, so Boaz gave her bread and water. Ruth gave up her family and her home, but Boaz invoked God's blessing on her commitment and gave her a home. Our Redeemer understands our needs too. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that ... he might destroy him that had the power of death, . . . and deliver them who ... were all their lifetime subject to bondage." In addition, "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a mer-

ciful and faithful high priest.... For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:14-18).

Naomi instructed Ruth, "Thou shalt go in.... and he will tell thee what thou shalt do"(3:4). Ruth did not need to understand what all this might mean. Neither did she need to take any assets with her. She needed only to present herself to Boaz. He knew what she was asking. He could assure her that he would meet the need she brought to him. Indeed, God could bless her for her willingness to present herself humbly to him. Jesus' mother made a similar statement—"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5). Like Ruth, we find rest when we present ourselves to Jesus and express our need. Never does He turn us away. Always He accepts our requests and bestows His blessing on our lives.

"Boaz measured six measures of barley" (3:15). Six is a number of incompleteness. Boaz had answered Ruth's request, and now he gave her provision from his abundance. However, Ruth's redemption was not complete. Work still needed to be done. This typifies Christ's provision for those who present their need to Him, accept His direction, and partake freely of His abundant store of resources. Yet there is much more to come! Someday the believer will experience an even greater degree of rest when he is completely redeemed from the earthly and safe in the presence of Jesus.

Naomi told Ruth, "He will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing" (3:18). Boaz committed himself to the responsibility of meeting Ruth's need of a kinsman-redeemer. This illustrates the commitment of our Redeemer. "The works [plans for our redemption] were finished [put in place] from the foundation of the world" (Hebrews 4:3). At the appointed time He came to earth and revealed Himself as the long-looked-for Redeemer. Near the end of His earthly ministry, He reported to His Father that "I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do." He sits now on the right hand of God.

Boaz reclaimed everything (all of Elimelech's, Chilion's, and Mahlon's inheritance) that had been lost because of their deaths. "I have bought all" (4:9). Our Redeemer is also able to save all. No one is too lost. No one has too many sins or has needs too great for Christ's ability to redeem. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Hebrews 7:25).

Boaz "took Ruth, and she was his wife" (4:13). From this marriage came a son, Obed. This redemptive act of marriage brought Ruth into the lineage of Jesus Christ. Through her relationship to Christ, she participated in eter-

nal blessings for the human family. Today the church is the bride of Christ. She awaits the time when "the marriage of the Lamb is come," for she "hath made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7). "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." For then God "will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." In heaven the redeemed will enjoy a perfect, eternal rest.

Brother Jason.



The Biblical View of Predestination

A Biblical view is a perspective based on the understanding of God's Word. It is the part of God's infinite view that He has seen fit to reveal to man. Since our knowledge is limited, our understanding is also limited. However, we can rest assured that God has revealed as much as He desires us to know.

Predestination implies something being determined beforehand. What is determined beforehand? Is it, as some teach, the eternal destiny of individuals? Notice what is predestined from the following Scriptures. Jesus' suffering and crucifixion were "determined before" (Acts 4:28). Saints are predestinated "unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself" (Ephesians 1:5). "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29). God has predestinated the earth and its creatures to "times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:20, 21) and "[deliverance] from the bondage of corruption" (Romans 8:20, 21). Various other Scriptures refer to the "determining before" of people, places, and events.

Who has determined? God has determined. When? "Before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). Is any part of God's sovereign moving exempt from predestination? No. "The works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Hebrews 4:3). Several times the Scriptures refer to God repenting. Does this mean that God's plan changed? No. This was part of the foreordained plan according to His foreknowledge.

Predestination reveals God's sovereignty (Romans 8-11). God also desires that "all men [may] see what is the fellowship of the mystery" and that "now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:9, 10). Human reasoning is uncomfortable with the concept that God would create

men who He knew would reject Him. However, the apostle Paul reasons that faith can triumph over this discomfort by understanding that God is just, wise, and righteous in all that He has done (Romans 9).

We also struggle to reconcile the truth of man's power to choose with the truth that God had predetermined to love Jacob and hate Esau (Romans 9:10-13). However, the doctrine of predestination focuses more on the placement of people in time and nation according to God's divine purposes; it never ignores an individual's choice in determining his own eternal destiny. Man's choice is not what is predetermined, but rather his placement in the world according to God's foreknowledge of his choice. God's foreknowledge and His predestination are not the same: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate" (Romans 8:29).

Predestination is part of the things that "work together for good to them that love God"—foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification (Romans 8:28-30). The Book of Romans is an exposition on God's purpose of grace by faith.

Man has a universal need (chapter 1). God has an answer to the need—salvation through faith. Because of differing backgrounds, the path to faith is different for the Gentile than it is for the Jew. But all need to enter by the same door—faith (chapters 2-4). The blessings of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ are abundant and are evidence that God desires that all men would be delivered from bondage to liberty (chapters 5-8). God used the example of the predestination of Jacob and Esau to illustrate His predestination of the rejection of Israel to open the door to the Gentiles in a new way (chapter 9). He also makes clear that, despite the rejection of a people or nation, every individual has the opportunity to call upon the Name of the Lord and be saved (chapter 10). The salvation of the Gentiles was predestined to provoke Israel to jealousy so that they too would discover their Messiah in Christ (chapter 11).

God foreknew that the children of Israel would not be ready to receive Christ. And since God desired that all men be saved, He planned to redeem the Gentiles who were ready to receive Him. He justified them and glorified them. What is the glorification? Is it not the display of grace that is designed to provoke jealousy? Since the children of Israel would not enter directly by the promises, God chose to save the Gentiles to bring the Jews in by provocation.

So, in summary, the predominantly Gentile church has been predestinated and called to be conformed to the image of Christ and accepted into His family as children of Abraham by faith. This is according to the purpose of

God to provoke the Jews to jealousy so that they also will receive Christ by faith and can be His brethren, not only in the flesh but also in the Spirit. What a wonderful plan to increase the number of Jesus' brethren "that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"!

Even though God foreknew that some would reject His mercy, we laud Him for extending mercy and grace to all. Those who receive salvation through Jesus Christ will be the showpiece and praise-givers of all eternity and, in this sense, bring Him the greatest glory (Romans 8:31-39).

What shall we say to this Biblical insight into the predestination program of God? Do we find it glorious? Can we, as the vessels, have anything to say against the sovereignty of the Potter? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Our responsibility as Gentiles, grafted into His family, is to fear. Only by God's goodness has our belief abounded to our salvation. Just as God cut off the children of Israel for their unbelief, so He will cut off the nominal Christians for their lack of faith.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:33-36).

Brother Carey



The Wedding Trip

The practice of newlyweds taking a trip immediately following the wedding is a custom that is considered appropriate and acceptable. However, as in all the wedding activities, this activity needs to be regulated by Bible principles.

The Purpose of the Wedding Trip

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife" (Mark 10:7). Taking a wedding trip marks the beginning of leaving father and mother. A trip provides an opportunity for the couple to adjust to the new relationship of leaving and cleaving without being disturbed by close friends and relatives.

In the Old Testament, the newly married bridegroom was not to be charged with any other business, but was to be free to cheer up his new wife (Deuteronomy 24:5). By taking a trip, a couple is free from job re-

sponsibilities and other demands, making it possible to be together constantly. This enables them to learn to know each other in new ways and gives opportunity to make decisions together and broaden their horizons before the pressures of married life bear down on them.

Stewardship Principles to Keep in Focus.

Since God is the one "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17), newlyweds need to make wise use of their time and money on the wedding trip. Even if funds are available for an expensive trip, newlyweds that are stewardship conscious will do what they can to keep costs down. Just because this trip is a once-in-a-lifetime experience does not justify the couple splurging on themselves and wasting money at fancy restaurants, elaborate motels, and exotic tourist attractions.

One way to keep costs down is to take an ice chest loaded with sandwich and drink items. This will eliminate the need to stop at restaurants and fast food places for every meal. Also, rather than spending every night in a motel, some time should be scheduled to visit in the homes of Christian friends and relatives. This will provide an opportunity for spiritual refreshment, and the hosts will feel honored to provide a room for the night.

Newlyweds need to beware of tourist attractions and traps where money can easily be wasted. Instead of participating in attractions and activities that cost hundreds of dollars and are geared more for entertainment and thrill, they could take a hike through some natural wonder or park to quietly observe God's creative handiwork. Historical sites and museums are also splendid places to visit, but discernment needs to be exercised at these places in the purchasing of souvenirs so that money is not wasted on items that have no practical value.

Keeping the Trip God-honoring

The Bible says, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Newlyweds honor God by attending a conservative church somewhere the first Sunday following the wedding. Are we honoring God when we put forth painstaking effort to find the perfect place for the first night, but then fail to get to a place of worship the first Sunday morning? What better way is there to honor God the first Sunday following the wedding than by going to the house of worship to thank and praise the One who instituted marriage! Skipping the Sunday morning worship or even worshipping with others who do not have "like precious faith" (2 Peter 1:1) represents wrong priorities.

Newlyweds honor God on their trip by dressing according to church standards. The wedding trip is not a time to lower standards and live like

the world. Young couples must resist the temptation to dress casually. Separation in attire helps us in two ways: We will likely have more opportunities to testify for Christ in response to inquiries of who or what we represent, and we will feel uncomfortable being in places we should not be and doing things we should not do.

Newlyweds honor God by refusing to put marital intimacies on public display. Sitting close together in the car, holding hands while walking in public, hugging, and putting arms around each other are not pure public behavior. Taking photographs of such behavior that others will see is not conducive to pure thoughts. We do not want to be responsible for planting seeds of impurity in others' minds. "Whatsoever things are pure.... think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Newlyweds honor God by honoring their fathers and mothers (Ephesians 6:2). Yes, they are to leave father and mother, but that does not mean they are to cut off all communication while on the trip. In the event of an emergency, parents will want to have some way to reach the new couple. Cell phones make it easy for the couple to call one set of parents each day just to keep in touch with home and let them know a little of their whereabouts. Sending a post card or short note is also a way to keep parental homes informed as to what places they are enjoying together.

Newlyweds honor God by testifying for Christ while on their trip. Most likely the couple will meet people who have never seen Biblically separated Christians. Newlyweds need to be ready to give an answer to those who ask questions (1 Peter 3:15). They should give out tracts and should take along cassette tapes or CDs to give to interested persons. Above all, the couple should have the joy of the Lord in their hearts and allow that joy to radiate from their faces. "Let your light so shine" (Matthew 5:16).

May God continue to bless us with youth who desire to honor and glorify Christ, not only on their wedding day but also on their wedding trip.

Brother Marvin



Minutes of the Conferring Fellowship Meeting (Edited) Held at the Ashland Bible School September 27, 2012.

Brother Daniel moderator for the morning session, opened with a welcome to the group, after which Brother Nathan led us in singing "Lord of Our Life" and "How Firm a Foundation."

Brother Christ B. then led us in a devotional meditation from Ezra 7 and 8,

focusing especially on the verses that speak of the hand of God being upon Ezra. These references show Ezra to be a leader skillful in the Law, a well-supplied leader, a prepared leader ready to seek, to do, and to teach the will of God. Further references show him to be thankful, prayerful, and, finally, successful.

The opening message of the day was brought by Brother James who titled his message "The Prophecy of This Book," words found several times in Revelation 22. The burden of his message was to strengthen younger ministers in their understanding of Biblical prophecy.

1. Prophecy in the Bible. Perhaps one-fourth of the Bible consists of prophecy, much of which has been fulfilled. These prophecies were given to the body, not to individuals (2 Peter 1).

2. Prophecy in the Book of Revelation. A special blessing is given to those who read the Book of Revelation. This book is not difficult to understand; it opens up like a feed bag if the reader pulls the right string. The three-part outline given in Revelation 1:19 readily opens the book.

3. Prophecy and the return of the Jews. The prophecies concerning the return of the Jews to their homeland have been fulfilled in our lifetimes.

4. Prophecy and the signs of the times. Brother James reviewed various signs of the times, especially as given in Luke 21 and Hosea 6.

5. Prophecy and the wrath of God. The terrible judgments predicted show us God's attitude toward sin and assure us that He will finally settle all accounts.

6. Prophecy and the imminent return of Christ. The hope of the imminent return of our Lord has inspired saints through the ages. What a day that will be!

Brother Richard brought the second message of the day: Article IV of the Schleithem Confession of Faith (Separation From the Abomination). He began by reading testimonies to the separated life of early Anabaptists, as reported by their contemporaries. Maintaining separation is difficult because it is hard to determine where the lines should fall, because we live in the world and must face its influences, and because the young and weak fear the persecution that comes with being different from the surrounding culture.

Separation began at Creation, has continued through time as seen in many Bible stories, and will continue eternally. "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Not just the thing itself; but the esteem in which it is held may make a thing an abomination.

The true believers separate themselves from that which is not of Christ,

but is abomination. For the early Anabaptists and for us, this means separation from false religions and the halfway committed. For if we are not worshipping "in spirit and in truth," we are not worshipping at all.

After the message we sang two verses of "People of the Living God."

The third message of the morning was brought by Brother James on the subject The Doctrine of Election. He began by noting that difficult passages like Romans 9 must be harmonized with plainer passages showing the free will of man and God's will for the salvation of all persons.

I. Things to remember about God's nature

- A. He loves all and wills their salvation.
- B. He is no respecter of persons.
- C. He is righteous in all His ways.
- D. He is faithful to His Word and His nature.
- E. He is sovereign and omniscient.
- F. He gave man free will without losing any sovereignty.

II. Understanding Romans 9

- A. This chapter deals with the question of how Israel fits into the New Testament.
- B. Through the generations, God made choices to produce a chosen people.
- C. Because God is sovereign, none could challenge His choices.
- D. The purpose of God's choices (elections) was to bring the Messiah, the Savior.
- E. Israelites were sure they would be God's chosen people forever, because their fathers were the elect, but the godly line runs by faith, not by birth.
- F. Romans 9 was written to defend God's sovereign act of setting Israel aside because of unbelief and electing the Gentiles on the basis of their faith. This chapter concerns the election of nations rather than of individuals.

III. Basic truths about election

- A. Election is in Christ. Those in Him are the elect.
- B. Election is corporate rather than individual. God elects the body of the believing; we elect to be part of the body.
- C. Individuals are elect as they identify with the elect body.
- D. The provision for election is universal.
- E. God elects for a purpose—that we should "be conformed to the image of his Son."

The moderator for the afternoon session, Brother Alvin called on Brother Kevin to lead in two opening songs. We sang "Lift Your Glad Voices" and

"God, My King."

Brother Paul then conducted the opening devotional meditation, reading 1 Peter 1:13-25 slowly and meaningfully with little comment. This passage prepared us to hear the Word preached and God's call to holiness.

Brother Elmer brought the opening message of the afternoon on the subject A Sound View of Social Life for Youth.

I. How are views of social life formed?

- A. The renewed mind
- B. Bible teachings of nonconformity and stewardship
- C. Frame of reference
- D. Church teaching
- E. Historical record of Mennonites and sports

II. What is a sound view of social life for youth?

- A. The primary calling of the church is to minister to the spiritual needs of the members rather than the social needs.
- B. The desire of youth for social life is normal.
- C. Young people need guidance to have proper social life.
- D. Social guidance is the responsibility of parents, not the church.
- E. Home life should provide most of the social life of youth.
- E Outside-the-home social life should center on church life.
- G. Youth tend to desire more social life than they need.
- H. The church should not plan to create social opportunities for youth. This led the church astray in the past.
- I. Families should blend together without cliques to provide social life with various age groups.
- J. Playing together as a youth group militates against spiritual well-being.

III. What areas of youth social life need our attention?

- A. Some parents defy church direction on social activities for youth. This defiance does more damage than the youth social activities.
- B. Excessive desire for social life indicates a spiritual need that must be helped.
- C. After-wedding social activities require guidance.
- D. Socializing in public restaurants must be curbed.
- E. Term gatherings and sendoffs create a problem.

Following this message, there was an open discussion period. We spent some time discussing each of the sermons of the day. Most of the discussion centered on the doctrine of election, addressing such questions as the reconciliation of free will with God's sovereignty and the relation of fore-

knowledge and election. Questions were raised about socializing on cell phones and youth taking coast-to-coast trips together.

The concluding message of the day was "Be Not Weary in Well Doing," brought by Brother Larry. He began by observing that our humanity sometimes gets in the way of doing good.

I. The command

A. The command must be obeyed to carry out our baptismal vows and ordination vows.

B. The command inspires our vision of the work—the stewardship of the Gospel.

C. The command brings an accountability.

II. The crisis

A. Unwearyed ministry is critical to the well-being of the church.

B. Jesus became weary in the work but not weary of the work.

C. Being weary of the work leads to despair, compromise, putting things off, self-pity, anger with God, and sin.

III. The cause

A. We need to do good to all men, especially to those of the house of God.

B. We need to prepare all souls in our care to meet God.

C. We need to restore the fallen, count him as a brother, and not stop too soon.

D. We need to bear the burdens of youth and widows.

E. We need to prove our integrity with consistent faithfulness that gives moral authority, instead of the demands and threats of "lords."

IV. The comfort

A. Not all will respect our efforts, but some will.

B. We need to take comfort in the faithful.

C. Faithful efforts will bear fruit and bring reward.

Following the message, Brother Larry led in a kneeling prayer. We then sang "Go, Labor On," and Brother Elmer pronounced the benediction.

Submitted by the secretary.



The Dignity of Discipleship Blessings of Home (Part 5)

The Greek philosopher Socrates observed that while most men could train a mule, few could train a child. Apparently, the world's success in child rearing has changed little in twenty-four hundred years. Because

adults lack the personal discipline and steady perseverance so necessary for child training, the world has dangerous youth and distraught parents. This does not surprise us: "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15).

Before a child grows out of the physically weak state in which he is born, God expects his parents to bring his will into subjection and cultivate positive virtues. Before he has the physical strength to act upon his evil nature, he must be trained to have moral strength to resist it. In other words, understanding cause and effect must happen at a tender age. A disciplined home has established and expected lines of conduct. Infractions incur pain. Children should sense what is expected of them before they receive a painful punishment. This is a time-consuming, initial step in child training. Sufficient training will reduce the number of spankings needed. When a two- or three year-old is first detected telling an untruth, he should receive a simple explanation on the wrong of lying. The spanking he later receives for a lie will be comprehended better. Children are born not knowing that pages are not to be torn from books, bobby pins are not to be poked into receptacles, and the cat's tail was not made to pull. Such rules need not be oft repeated, but, before punishment, the child must recognize what he did as a misdemeanor.

Willful disobedience must incur consequences. God clearly indicates that the rod is to be used to help a child submit his will to the will of authority. "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:13, 14). Punishment should be measured according to the offense. If corporal punishment is used consistently when a child is young, restrictions, added duties, or taking away privileges may be effective as he matures. Whatever measures are used, we are not finished until behavior has changed. Christian parents discipline with love and self-restraint.

Well-disciplined children speak respectfully about God and sacred things. To direction, they respond promptly and unquestioningly. They take personal responsibility in their sphere of duties. They are socially adjusted, humble in their manner, and willing to do with less than the best or even without for another's benefit.

Diligent home administration allows children to "[lay] up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:19).

—*Brother Harold*