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The Obligation of Parents to Teach Their Children

By Jason Frizzell

On several occasions I have had this remark made to me: "I just don't believe in cramming religion or the Bible down my kid's throat. They will learn, and make up their own minds about the Bible and religion when they are old enough to understand."

Isn't this a very strange statement from parents who are supposed to be Christians? Isn't it strange that parents will take this attitude about the Bible? Most parents do not give their children a choice of what they eat, what they wear, when to go to bed, when to get up, the kind of language they allow, when or whether they will go to school or what school they will attend, what subjects they will take in school, when or whether they will take a bath, or the attitude the children have about their parents.

In my experiences of working with young people, for the greater part of my life, I have found that some parents do not care who, when, where, or what their children do, as long as it pleases the child. This attitude is in direct opposition to the teaching of the Bible. Why is the Bible, for the most part, singled out as the one choice that a child can wait until he is grown, to make up his mind about what to believe? Why not wait until the child is grown to see if he wants to take a bath or not? or to attend school? I am convinced that this attitude is the reason that many of our young people do not attend Christian colleges.

As you may have already guessed, I have a very strong opinion about this matter. But, as you may also know, my opinion is worth very little. The Bible is the deciding standard. Let us go to God's word concerning this matter to determine if a child should be allowed to wait and make his own choice about religion before his parents begin to teach him.

First, the Old Testament serves as an example in principle for us today. Rom. 15:4 states, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

Let us begin with Abraham. Abraham was chosen to be the father of a great nation (the Israelites). One of the reasons that he was chosen is stated in Gen.

18:19, "For I know him, and he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Did Abraham wait until his children were grown to teach them the way of the Lord? Did he wait for his children to choose the religion they wished? No. Abraham was to COMMAND them! And they would KEEP the way of the Lord. He was to TEACH them of God, so the children had no choice in the matter.

How often were the children to be taught under the law of Moses? "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest in the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. 6:7.) This was again stated in Deut. 11:19. Do these Scriptures seem to give the children a choice? Does this seem like cramming it down their throats? This was God's way at that time, and we will now learn that we must do the same.

God has a reason for parents teaching their children of His way. Prov. 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This gives the reason. We are not to wait until he is old to teach him.

The earthly parents of Jesus brought him up to keep the "Custom of the law" (Luke 2:27). Luke 2:52 states, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor of God and man."

From 2 Tim. 1:5 we learn, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded in thee also." What if Timothy had waited until he was older to make up his mind about the Scriptures? Do you suppose that he had the word of God crammed down his throat? If he had no choice in the matter, why didn't he rebel when he was grown? He knew the Holy Scriptures from a child (2 Tim. 3:15). This stresses the need for a child to know the Scriptures early in life, which will make him wise unto salvation. What better reason could a parent have to

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What Is Conversion?

By Coy Walters

During the ministry of Jesus, his disciples came to him and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" In reply Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst of the disciples and said, "Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:1-3.) This answer was one not anticipated by the disciples. Only a few days prior to this, Jesus had promised Peter the keys of the kingdom. (Matt. 16:19.) On another occasion He selected Peter, James, and John in preference to the other disciples, to go with Him into the mount, where He was transfigured before them. Probably pride and envy had prompted them to ask, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

The most thought provoking thing about this message is that Jesus told his own disciples that they needed to be converted. He was not speaking to the world, or a multitude of Jews, but to those who had already given their allegiance to Him. Is there a message here for those of us who are following Christ today? Does this show the necessity of continually examining our motives?

The term converted comes from the Greek word 'epistrepho'. It means literally to turn around, or to turn back. Figuratively it means a change of mind or of a course of action. It includes not only turning from something but the turning to something else. In Acts 14:15 the word 'epistrepho' is used in this way: Paul taught those at Lystra to turn from vanities unto the living God. In 1 Thess. 1:9 the term is used again in this sense; "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned (epistrepho) to God from idols." It is not enough to turn away from the immoral things in life. Sometimes people use Christianity as a means of strength to help them stop living sinful lives. This is good, but it is not real conversion. We must not only turn from a sinful life, but we must so turn to God that we are willing not only to stop serving sin, but also to start bearing fruit for God. (Matt. 13:23).

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SELF-DECEPTION

By Ordell Heavin

One of the most startling, piercing, and impressive statements in the Book of God is this: "Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7.)

Man recognizes this truth in nature, and yet seems slow to believe it applies to words and deeds just as it does to sow seed in a field or garden. Another passage that strikes with force is James 1:22, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving your own selves."

Those are two ways of saying, if you think you can disobey God's laws and get by with it, you aren't fooling anybody except yourself. Someone has said that people like to be humbugged. That must be true, or we wouldn't find people humbugging themselves. We may deceive others temporarily, but sooner or later the deception will be discovered. The statement, "God is not mocked" is one of the many indisputable proofs that we can't deceive God at all, and that we can never ridicule God by tampering with His commandments. We cannot set aside or make void a single one, in either the natural or spiritual realm. You can't sow rye and reap wheat.

SOWING TO THE FLESH:

Sowing to the flesh means to give away to the lust of the flesh. Adultery, fornication, and uncleanness are on the increase. Broken homes, juvenile delinquency, illegitimate children, feeble-mindedness, murders and a host of evil results form a part of the crop harvested in this life. Diseased bodies, actually given over to corruption, presents a picture of the price being paid by thousands (Gal. 5:19-21). But the final reaping is the most terrible-eternal punishment in a "Lake that burns with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 19:20). "Careless souls, O heed the warning, prepare to meet thy God."

SELF-DECEIVED PARENTS:

Parents, who during their children's most plastic years, put everything ahead of the Lord and His church, and think that they can reap Christian children, and will have a Christian home, are only deceiving themselves. Our children know more quickly than we realize it if religion is just a pretense and a sham with us. May God pity the children who are brought up in a home by parents who drink, dance, gamble, and are immoral. By parents who are not caring for the future of their children. No wonder crime is increasing! Paul said in Eph. 6:4 that we are to bring our children up in the Lord. Don't forget,

that, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. God be thanked for fathers and mothers who are interested in their children and have a happy Christian home. Their reaping will be joyous.

HEARERS AND NOT DOERS:

This may not be a vicious class, but just the same, James said that those who hear and do not obey are self deceived. The class spoken of by our Lord in the closing part of His Sermon on the Mount is one composed of do-nothing hearers. He compares them to a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The foolish man evidently deceived himself into thinking the house would stand, but "The rain descended and the floods came, the wind blew, and beat upon the house, and it fell." (Matt. 7:26-27.) Just the opposite to the one built on the rock, whose house stood. Jesus further made it clear that he wanted workers in His vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16.) In the closing chapter of the Bible we are encouraged to be obedient with these words, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:1-4.) In Gal. 6:3 Paul said, "If a man thinketh himself to be something, and is nothing, he deceives himself." They that think they can reap a good harvest from a wicked sowing will find a sad awakening at the last day. "He that soweth to the spirit, shall reap life everlasting." Believe, obey, worship, and work as the new covenant directs, and avoid self-deception and condemnation.

WHAT IS CONVERSION (Cont.)

The initial steps of conversion begin when one obeys the commands of Christ (Heb. 5:9) from an honest and good heart (Luke 8:15). Those initial steps include believing that Jesus is God's Son (John 8:24), repenting of sins (Luke 13:3), confessing the name of Christ with one's life as well as with one's mouth (Matt. 10:32, Rom. 10:10), and being immersed for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38). When one completes these steps, does this conclude conversion? Is he home free?

A friend once remarked to me that he became a Christian while a teenager, but wasn't converted until he was in the Army. John L. Lincoln said, "The time when I was converted was when religion became no longer a mere duty, but a pleasure." It seems that in the mind of these two individuals conversion is an onward process. Jesus told his disciples to teach all nations and to baptize them. But he also told his disciples to teach them to observe all things that he had commanded (Matt. 28:19-20). This passage teaches us that conversion does not stop with the initial commands of Christ. My friend had recognized his need to be saved from sin, so he obeyed Christ and stopped serving sin. Later he saw the need to turn his whole life over to God. How many do you suppose there are who have never developed enough in their Christian life to really be converted to the cause of Christ? Have you? Why not?

The congregation that is growing and doing the most for the Lord is not necessarily the one with the best preacher, best building, largest membership, largest parking lot, etc. But it is the one with a converted membership. It is the one whose members have turned to God to bear fruit and they put this above all else.

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The Indwelling of the Spirit

By Harold Turner

Does the Holy Spirit actually dwell within us? If so, when, why, and how does he dwell within us? These are but a few of the questions that intrigue us as we endeavor to learn more about our relationship with God.

Certainly the Bible is the only source of information to which we may go for the true answers to these questions. Some may tell us of their experiences, which they feel sure are evidences of the indwelling of the Spirit; however, such experiences do not provide us with the proof we seek. Satan is still active, and could use such experiences to deceive us. Paul wrote of such deceitful powers in 2 Thess. 2:9-10. The warning given here impresses upon us the need for a more sure source of information than personal experiences. We are taught to "Prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21), and in doing so we are admonished, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Peter 4:11.)

Does the Bible teach that the Holy Spirit actually dwells within us? In 1 Cor. 3:16 Paul wrote, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" In 1 Cor. 6:19 he wrote, "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" In Rom. 8:11 he wrote, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Each of these statements teach that the Holy Spirit does dwell within the Christian. We will observe other Scriptures that also teach this as we answer other questions.

When does the Holy Spirit begin dwelling within us? In Acts 2:38 the apostle Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In Acts 19:2-3 Paul asked certain disciples, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism." From these two Scriptures it would seem that the Holy Spirit is given when one is baptized for the remission of his sins. In Gal. 4:6 we learn that because we are God's children he sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. The Holy Spirit is not given to make us children of God, but because we are his children. When we obey God (Acts 5:32) in becoming a Christian, we are promised

the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Why does the Spirit dwell within us? In Eph. 2:18 Paul shows that we have access to the Father by the Spirit. In Rom. 8:26 he wrote, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." John shows that the Spirit helps us to overcome the world; "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4.) Paul wrote in Phil. 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." In Rom. 8:13 he wrote, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." In Eph. 3:16 Paul tells us that we may "Be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." The Spirit is given to assist us in prayer, to help us in overcoming the world, to strengthen us, and to help us in living as we should. The Spirit is not given to empower us to work miracles. Miracles have served their purpose in confirming the word (Mark 16:20, Heb. 2:3-4), and are no longer given (1 Cor. 13:8-13).

The question that seems to arouse us most is how the Spirit dwells within us, and how we can know that he dwells within us. We have already shown that we cannot know by some personal experience, such as; dreams, visions, feelings, etc. But if he doesn't show his indwelling by some strange experience, or by empowering us to work miracles, how then can we know of his indwelling?

In Acts 2:38 the Holy Spirit is promised in conjunction with the remission of sins. How can one know he has remission of his sins? By feelings? In Matt. 7:21-23 there were some who believed they were saved, but Jesus said "I never knew you." The only way we can know is by obeying the commands and trusting God to do what he promises. Feelings are a result of belief in and response to some testimony, either true or false. Feelings and personal experiences are not reliable.

How the Spirit dwells within us is in some ways a mystery, just as is the indwelling of our "inward man". We know that our spirit dwells within us by obvious evidences. We also know the Holy Spirit dwells within us by certain evidences. First, we know that He dwells within us when we do God's will. As we begin living the Christian life we find the promises of the Spirit's help becoming a reality. We find Him helping to strengthen us, and helping us to overcome

the forces of this world. This does not happen in some miraculous way, nor is it accomplished apart from our own efforts. Neither does it exclude the written word of God. The Spirit uses the word to help us grow stronger and build ourselves up. He uses the word to instruct, lead, and guide us in the right way. Yet this in no way implies that God has just given us the word and withdrawn all personal attention and help from us. The word is the instrument that helps us in many ways. Without it we could never know for sure we were doing right. However, the Spirit is also present to help us in many ways. This is not guess work. We can know just as surely as we can know that our sins are forgiven. We have the promise of God. And as we live day by day we will see the evidences of the "Fruit of the Spirit" (Eph. 5:9, Gal. 5:22-23) growing in our life. We will experience help with problems that we could not solve by ourselves. We will experience the answer to our prayers, which assures us of the Spirit's help. There may be other things to consider, but these should suffice to show us that we have help in living the Christian life.

The Spirit is promised only to the obedient (Acts 5:32). "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8:9.) God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of his children (Gal. 4:6). The Spirit will help us to live a victorious life, if we will always trust and obey the will of God.

THE OBLIGATION OF (Cont.)

begin to "cram" the knowledge of God's word into the mind of their children.

God's word commands us, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4.) Children begin learning at birth. Teaching and bringing them up in the way the Scriptures teach will not provoke them to wrath. This passage does not command us to "Send them up in the Lord" but to bring them up. This involves you being in the Lord leading them.

The problem we face with our children and grandchildren is not because we teach them the word of God, but because we do not teach them. We must teach or cram the word of God into their minds and hearts with love, patience, kindness, and longsuffering to help them make the right choices when older.

The Cause Of Christ

By Frank L. Cox

The cause of Christ consists not in pompous parades, in the flying of flags, in the blowing of bugles. It consists not in honors bestowed by men or the institutions of men. It is not to be identified with an illustrious ancestry, with an elaborate ritual, with magnificent structures. The cause of our Lord should not be confused with a policy of appeasement with evil in any form at any price for any purpose. It does not pose as an impartial judge when truth is ravaged; neither does it seek a position of neutrality when innocence is on trial. It is not to be confounded with big speeches, with fine argument, with intellectual acumen. The cause of Christ is not to be identified with the disposition of that man who trusts in himself that he is righteous, setting others at naught. It is not to be confused with an inordinate desire to ferret out the faults and failings of others, to drag the fallen before public gaze, to crust the outcast. No, the cause of our Lord is not to be identified with any of these things.

The cause of Christ is the cause of truth, the cause of righteousness, the cause of mercy. It is to be identified with the spirit of evangelism--the unconquerable urge to proclaim the story of redeeming love in those places where the Savior has not been named. It is to be found in the open hand of charity, in the tender arms encircling children, in the soul of the compassionate stranger bending over the lacerated form of an unfortunate victim. The man who loves the cause of Christ deals tenderly with mothers and little ones. The cause of our Lord cannot be divorced from the cause of personal purity, the unstained garment of the risen life. It cannot be separated from that sincere soul who seeks to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

In the broken and contrite heart, in the plaintive voice crying, "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner," is the cause of Christ to be found. In the soul of that man who says to the fallen, "I do not condemn thee; go thy way; from henceforth sin no more," is the cause of our Lord to be found. In the soul of him who defends God's truth in the spirit of meekness, who gains victories and yet retains the grace of humility, is the cause of Christ found. In the mind of that man who stands for righteousness first, then peace, knowing that true and lasting peace must have righteousness as its basis, is the incomparable cause of our Savior found.

"And what more should I say? for the time will fail me" if I say all that could be said and should be said. But let this final

Some Basic Facts About God No.1

By Leslie Leonard

All religious people want to please God, and it is natural for them to wonder which way is the best way. Seeking for an answer to this problem, they may ask various people questions, and personally study the Scriptures because they realize that the answer is important.

If you were to go to several theologians (persons who are students or authorities on theology, which is a study of God and of the relations between God and the universe) and ask questions about God you would get a variety of answers to your questions. But for you to please God you must find reliable answers to your questions, and the only safe way you can determine anything about God is to go to His revelation, the Bible, and let Him tell you about himself.

This revelation, the Bible, relates various incidents that tells us how God has reacted under various circumstances in the past. By studying these incidents which are recorded "For our learning" (Rom. 15:4) we can determine how God feels and thinks about things we do today. A study of these incidents should give us the basic facts necessary to establish and maintain a safe relationship with God.

For example, an examination of the incident in the Garden (Genesis 3) should teach us that God expects belief, trust, and obedience from us. If He is to be our God, then we must believe what He says, trust His judgment in everything, and obey His commandments. The tree, called, "The tree of the knowledge of good and evil" served as a test for Adam and Eve's belief in God, their trust, and willingness to obey Him.

We're not told what kind of tree this was, but that really doesn't matter. The question that Adam and Eve had to ask was whether they loved God enough to do what He asked, whether they believed Him enough to trust and obey Him. It was simply a test of their faith. We know the result was that when Eve was tempted by the serpent she was deceived into eating the forbidden fruit, and that she gave it to her husband to eat.

We may wonder what was wrong with eating the fruit if it did not harm them.

That's the way we often think today. We find a command in the Scriptures and reason that if we don't see anything wrong with doing what it forbids, or in not doing what it commands, then there isn't anything wrong with doing or not doing what it teaches. I doubt that there was anything wrong with the fruit of that particular tree. It probably was perfectly good fruit; yet Eve's unwillingness to take God at his word and to do what he had asked revealed much about her. For one thing, she didn't believe that God meant what He said, and that would be calling Him a liar. Then, she didn't believe that He had the right to require that certain things be done. Next, she didn't trust His judgment. And finally, she didn't consider it necessary to obey Him.

So, from this we can learn some basic facts about God as we find Him calling them to account for their actions. We find that He demands that we believe Him, trust Him, and obey Him. We may not understand His reasons for doing certain things, but for us to refuse to obey Him, question His wisdom, authority, and the right to be God.

"Satan tempts for evil purposes, that we might sin and fall. God proves for benevolence and beneficent ends, that we might stand and conquer."

"Stopping on third base adds no more to the score than striking out."

word be spoken: The cause of Christ is identified with a crown of sharp thorns, with a path sprinkled with tears and blood, with an old rugged cross, with a willingness to die that others may live, and, praise God, with a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

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