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## **RELIGION IN THE HOME**

**By John R. Church**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

It was my privilege to hear Dr. John R. Church preach the sermon contained in this book at the camp meeting held at Wilmore, Kentucky. It made a pro-found impression upon me, for the soil of my heart was ready for the good seed to fall into it and take root. I suggested to Dr. Church that he put this most opportune and sorely needed message into print so it could reach many who would not have the privilege of sitting under his ministry as he delivered it.

This word of introduction is to express my great gratification that this book will go forth on its mission, reaching thousands of homes where its message would not have gone, had it not been put into book form.

The subject of this book is "Religion in the Home." The very statement of its title will make those who read it recognize the fact that the foundations of our homes have been destroyed by the tempests of loose morals, evading of parental responsibility, the craze for amusements that are godless to the core, the lack of religious training in church and home, and most distressing of all, no altar of prayer, no reading of the Word. no line upon line and precept upon precept, to caution the innocent feet about the pitfalls that they will encounter along life's pilgrimage.

It has been decided by those who should know, because of experience in dealing with youth, that the wave of crime and juvenile delinquency is the logical result of godless homes, godless parents, godless schools and unsound teaching in our church schools, and no message from the pulpit that has been touched with a live coal from off the altar of God

The present day has ten temptations to one when we older ones were young, and there is not the strong, firm hand of wise parents to use the rod, when necessary, and to build a fence of protection around one's household. There is more truth than poetry in that old saying, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." The wisest of men said, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

I trust this book will find its way into thousands of homes, and that its truths may sink into every parent's heart until there is a return to the days when the home was the most sacred, safe place on earth, and not simply a place to sleep and eat. As was said of France, America needs mothers and fathers who will count it their greatest privilege to bring up their offspring to "fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

Yours for better homes and better children,  
Mrs. H. C. Morrison

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Scripture Lesson:  
Deuteronomy 6:4-9

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." -- Proverbs 22:6

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."  
Proverbs 13:24

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."  
Proverbs 3:11, 12

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord: neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father, the son in whom he delighteth."  
Proverbs 19:18

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."  
Proverbs 29:15

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother shame."  
Ephesians 6:1-2

"Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise." Genesis 18:19

"For I know him (Abraham) that 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."

In the very beginning of this message I want to confess that, from the standpoint of age and experience I feel very poorly qualified to deliver this particular message. Some one has said that the only people who can really tell you how to rear children are old maids and bachelors, and I imagine there is a great deal of truth in that statement. The more experience a person has in trying to rear their own children right, and the more keenly conscious they are of their failings along that line, the less inclined they are to tell other people how it should be done. I want to say, however, that it is not my purpose to speak primarily on how to rear children. I do feel led to speak to you on the general subject of "Religion In The Home," and that naturally involves the matter of the proper rearing of children.

The home is the oldest institution in the world and was the first divinely established institution known to man. God had a two-fold purpose in establishing the home. The first was that of bringing children into this world; and the second objective He had in mind was that these children should be properly taught and trained.

Though these were the purposes God had in mind in setting up this great institution called the home, many homes fail in both of them.

Of course we recognize that there are some men and women who marry and are denied the glorious privilege of having children born to them. Such people are to be pitied, for they have missed something rich and fine out of their lives. Children bring something rich and fine to a marriage and to the home where they come. So, though the couple that never have children of their own may be happy, they have missed something rich out of their lives.

On the other hand, there are many who marry and could have children that shirk the responsibility of parenthood because of selfishness or sin. I am sure that God will judge them for their failure along that line. Such a couple rebels against the direct command and will of God and they will suffer for it. The first command that God ever gave to man, was to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and, subdue it." It is God's will for children to be brought into this world, and any couple who deliberately shirks their responsibility along this line dishonors God.

These days we are hearing a great deal of talk about birth control, but it might be well for us to forget what some of the modern leaders have to say along this line and go back to find out what God's Word teaches on the subject. I have often thought about Susannah Wesley and her great family of children. No doubt some of our society leaders would feel that she was a case to be pitied and used as an example of what not to do. However, when the books are opened and the records are all in, it will be found that she has done more for the world than some of the modern-day women that spend their time running around trying to run the world and set things right. I came from a family of eight children and have often been thankful that my mother and father did

not know and practice birth control. There are two of us boys who are ministers of the gospel, and I imagine we would have been the very ones that mother and father would have decided were not needed. I was the third child, and was born less than two years after my older brother. No doubt mother would have decided that I was not needed just at that time. My other brother, who is a minister, was the seventh child born into our home. Again, human wisdom might have decided that six children were enough for a poor home like ours. But God thought differently about it. Some of the greatest leaders this world has ever known came from homes where there were a large number of children. God intended that when men and women married they should bring children into this world, and to use the marriage relationship merely to gratify the sex desire and then shun the duties of parenthood is a sin in the sight of God.

While there are some men and women who fail to bring children into the world, there are others that do bring children into this world but fail to teach and train their children as God would have them taught. This is just as great a tragedy as for people to refuse to have children. To take the responsibility of bringing children into this world means that a great duty and responsibility are thrust upon us. God has entrusted to our care and keeping an immortal soul that has infinite possibilities, and to fail to do our part for that soul is a crime of the worst sort. The greatest work that any man or woman can ever do is to so mold and teach a child that it will grow up to do God's will and live for Him. There is no greater work than the great business of rearing children for the glory of God. It is better to mold a life for God than to write a best seller. It is better to train and develop a great character than to be elected to Congress or some other public office. Susannah Wesley made a greater contribution to her day than any other woman that lived at that time. Some of her old classmates may have looked upon her with pity and felt that she had thrown away her life, but God looked upon her and smiled with approval. While other selfish women of her day have died and passed into oblivion, her name still lives today and will live for centuries to come. She gave to this world something that only a man and woman can give: she gave new lives. You can't add to the material wealth of this world, but you can add to its wealth by giving a life.

Some years ago my father had lost a considerable sum of money, and he was greatly upset about it. In talking with me about it one day he made this statement, "Well, John, I came into this world with nothing, and it looks like I am going out the same way. I guess about the only contribution I will ever make to this world is six sons and two daughter." I don't know whether my father has ever thought of the real meaning of that statement or not, but I have thought about it many, many times. Think of contributing six sons and two daughters to the world, properly taught and trained. If they live as they should and do all that God would have them do, who knows what their lives may mean to the world. It may be a greater contribution to the world than R. J. Reynolds ever made. It may mean more to the world than the millions of Henry Ford or J. P. Morgan. Only God knows what one life can mean to the world.

The great superstructure of civilization rests upon three mighty pillars. One of them is the home, another is the church, and the third one is the government. If any one of these pillars is destroyed, civilization will come crashing to the ground. It seems to me that the first and most vital of these three pillars is the home; for no church can ever rise any higher and become any better than the home life of the people of that church. And certainly no government can ever rise any higher and become any better than the home life of the people that make up that government.

It is said that Mr. Henry W Grady, the great Southern statesman and orator, on one occasion was in New York City. As he stood on Wall Street, surrounded by the great banking institutions, he said to himself, "I am now at the heart of America: I am now feeling the pulse beat of this great nation, for here it is that the business of this great nation is largely transacted." However, sometime later, Mr. Grady had occasion to be in Washington. As he stood in the capital of our nation, surrounded by the great government buildings, he said to himself, "I was mistaken. When I was in New York I was not at the heart of America. It is true that there is where the business of our nation is largely transacted, but this is the capital of our nation, here is where the laws of our land are made, and the policies wrought out that go to guide the destiny of this great nation. I believe that I have now gotten up close to the heart of the nation and have really felt her pulse beat." But sometime after that Mr. Grady was on a speaking tour in the State of Georgia. One night he delivered an address in a rural community. After he had finished his address, a humble farmer came up and invited Mr. Grady to go home with him and spend the night. Mr. Grady accepted the invitation and went home with the man. After they had enjoyed a season of fellowship together the man of the house, said: "Mr. Grady, I imagine you are tired and would like to retire and get some rest, but we make it a practice to have family prayer twice each day at our house. If you don't mind I will ask you to read the Scripture lesson and then we will pray and you may retire." Said Mr. Grady, "I took that old family Bible in my hand and saw that it had been used a great deal. I read a lesson from the book, and then that humble man of the soil got down on his knees and began to pour out his heart to God in prayer. He thanked God for the blessings of the past, both temporal and spiritual. He praised God for his wife and children and prayed for each member of the family by name. He prayed for the President and for those in authority, and asked God to guide them and give them wisdom. He prayed for me, the stranger within his gates, and then committed us all into the hands of God and said, 'Amen.'" Mr. Grady continued, "I went to bed that night with that man's prayers still ringing in my ears. I now said to myself, I was mistaken. When I was in New York I was not at the heart of America. It is true the business of our land is largely transacted there. And when I was in Washington I was not at the heart of America. It is true that is the capital of our nation and that is where the laws of our land are made, but tonight I have really gotten up close to the heart of America, and I believe I have really felt the pulse beat of this great nation; for it is such citizens and homes as this one that has made our nation what she is today. So long as our national life rests upon such citizens and such homes our nation is safe and secure. However, if the homes of our lands are disrupted and the family altar is broken down and our children are permitted to grow up without religious teaching and training, then Wall Street and Washington can never save us from chaos and ruin."

My friends, I believe Mr. Grady was right in his judgment. I am frank to confess to you that I do not fear the armies of Germany or Russia half as much as I fear the godless influences that are sweeping across this nation today -- those that are eating at the very foundations of our homes. I do not fear the navies of Japan half as much as I do the sin and wickedness that are wrecking the lives of our boys and girls. If this nation ever goes down in defeat and ruin, it will not be because of some great invading army or navy; it will be because we have turned away from God and have permitted the family altars to decay. It will be because we raised a generation of boys and girls that were not properly taught about God and religion. Surely one of the greatest needs of this day and time is a revival of religion that will bring the family altar back into the home, a revival that will cause the fathers and mothers of this nation to see their duty about training their children in such a way that they will grow up to be Christian men and women. Such teaching and training is

the surest safeguard for the future of our nation and civilization. May God grant that it may soon come.

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## THE HOME IS THE GREATEST TEACHING AGENCY IN THE WORLD

When I make this statement I do not make it hastily and without due consideration as to what I am saying. I am not unmindful of the billions of dollars worth of fine equipment of various kinds. I am not unmindful of the hundreds of thousands of men and women that are giving of their time and talent to the teaching and training of the youth of our nation. I do want to say, however, with all the earnestness of my heart, that there are some things that can and must be taught in the home. If they are not taught in the home, then they will never be adequately taught in our public schools and colleges.

I rejoice in the fine program of religious education that is being put on today by our churches, all up and down this land. I rejoice in the fine buildings and other equipment that we have in our Church Schools and Colleges. I am also happy over the fact that we have so many fine Christian men and women that are willing to give of their time and talent to teach the Bible in our Church Schools and our Daily Vacation Bible Schools. But I am saying to you that there are some things that can and must be taught in the home; they can never be properly taught anywhere else. The Sunday school teacher has our child about one hour out of each week only, and we have him seven days out of the week. We also have our children at the time when their wills are most pliant and their minds are most impressionable to their training and the example set before them. The parents can teach children things that the schools can never completely counteract. The child, therefore, is largely what the home makes it. As a twig is bent, so it will grow. No one can completely eradicate the influences of his father and mother and the teaching they give to their child.

The Constitution declares that all men are born free and equal. That is doubtless true from a political standpoint, but it is certainly not true from a moral and religious point of view. I believe that from birth I had a better chance to succeed and amount to something in this world, than many of the boys I grew up with. It was my good providence to be born and brought up in a devout, Christian home. My mother was one of the godliest women I have ever known. I cannot remember the first time I ever heard her pray. As far back in my recollection as I can go, I remember kneeling at my mother's knee and lisping that little prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray Thee Lord, my soul to take," etc. Some of the fondest recollections of my childhood were of those times when mother had finished washing the supper dishes and got down the old Bible, or Aunt Charlotte's Bible Stories, and read to us. She talked to us about God and our souls. I have gone to bed many nights with my head wet with mother's tears, and with her prayers ringing in my ears, begging God to keep my feet in the straight and narrow way.

How I do thank God that He did not give me a cigarette-smoking, card-playing, cocktail-drinking mother. No, she did not hunt for her pack of cigarettes or a deck of cards at night. She did not gad around all over the country at night, attending all kinds of meetings and shows. She

stayed at home with us children and taught us about God and religion. How I do thank God for such a mother and for the teaching and training she gave me! I could never be what I am today if it had not been for her piety, her teaching and training. God knows we need some more mothers like her today.

My parents did not believe in sending children to Sunday school. Neither do I. I believe the parents should get up on Sunday morning, get ready, and take their children to the house of God. That is exactly what my mother and father did. My parents were, poor people, my mother had to do her own cooking, washing and ironing. She had eight children; but on Sunday morning she would get up and get all eight of us children ready and take us to Sunday school. From the time my baby sister was five weeks old until she was a little over five years of age, my mother never missed a single Sunday at Sunday school during those five years. How in the world she ever did it, I don't know! I know strong, able-bodied women of today that can't get up and get themselves ready or get one child ready, but my mother got up and got eight of us ready and went with us to Sunday school. Of course my father co-operated with my mother in that undertaking, just as every true husband should do. My father was a horseman, working with horses nearly all of his life. For twenty-five years he was employed by the Crystal Ice and Coal Company in Winston-Salem. It was his job to look after their horses and mules. I can remember when he had from forty to sixty head of horses to water and feed every morning. But he would get up one hour earlier on Sunday morning than any other morning in the week, and would go to the barn to water and feed. Then he would rush home, change clothes, and go with mother and us children to Sunday school. Though sometimes he had to go without his breakfast in order to make it in time, he always went with us. When father closed and locked the front door at home on Sunday morning it meant that the family was ahead of him on the way to church.

Then when Sunday school was over my parents did not turn us children loose to run the streets or permit us to go home and read the funny papers. We all stayed for the eleven o'clock preaching service. In the old Salem Methodist Church, where I was converted and grew up, we had three different rows of benches. The second pew of the center section was known as the "Church" pew. We did not have it rented, but it was generally understood that the Church family would occupy that pew at all the religious services. The family sat together. Usually my father sat on one end of the bench, with my mother on the other end: the eight little "Churches" sat in between. We not only stayed for preaching service, but we also behaved ourselves. If one child got a little rowdy all my father would have to do would be to eye down the line and catch the eye of that child. That child knew exactly what was meant. That glance meant, "Young fellow, you had better be quiet and behave yourself. If you don't, then there will be an extra session for you in the woodshed when we get home." I do thank God that I had such teaching and training as that! I thank God I grew up in a home like that! Sad to say, there are millions of children in our nation today who are not getting such teaching and training. Yes, there are millions of children today that are not getting any kind of religious teaching and training from their parents. They never hear prayer offered in their home, except on those rare occasions when the minister comes for a visit and offers prayer for the family. Millions of children never see their parents on their knees in prayer. Many of them never hear religion discussed in their homes, unless it be in a critical manner that would cause them to sneer at religion and a belief in God. Many of them never hear the name of God mentioned, except in some profane or frivolous manner. Many of them are never taken to church and Sunday school; and so far as the influence of the Church is concerned, they might as

well have been born and brought up in the dark jungles of Africa, or in any other heathen land. They are not getting any kind of religious teaching and training in their homes.

Many judges of Juvenile Courts testify that they seldom ever have boys and girls come before them who have been brought up in Christian homes, and have been taught to go to Sunday school. The young boys and girls today that are giving so much trouble are those that come from godless homes and have had no Christian training. When you stop to think of how the homes are falling down at the task of reaching and training the children for God, it is not surprising that we are having such a great wave of juvenile delinquency today. We need a revival of religion in the home that will re-establish the family altar, and that will cause parents to see their need for teaching their children in the ways of the Lord. And if we do not have such a revival, it looks as if we might be headed for the rocks. Our nation cannot long survive unless something is done that will bring religion back into her homes. The home is the foundation of civilization and civilization cannot long outlive unchristian homes. This is one of the greatest needs of the day and age in which we live.

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**THE HOME SHOULD TEACH THREE THINGS THAT CANNOT BE ADEQUATELY AND PROPERLY TAUGHT ANYWHERE ELSE.** If these three things are not taught in the home, our children can never hope to be the kind of citizens they ought to be. In the rest of this message I want to mention these three things. May God help me as I try to present these great truths, and may God help the readers to see the vital importance of these in the life of the child!

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#### **THE HOME SHOULD TEACH DISCIPLINE**

Did you notice that the text says, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." When God selected Abraham and called him out, He did it because He was not only interested in Abraham as an individual. He was also interested in his son, and his grandchildren. and generations yet unborn. God was planning to raise up a nation through which to bless the world, and He wanted a man that could be relied upon to teach His children the right way. If Abraham had failed in the training of his family, then God would have been thwarted in His plans and purposes. God, therefore, selected a man that could be relied upon to command his children and his household after him. The same thing is true with us today. God is not only interested in us as individuals; He is also concerned about our children and our children's children. The future of the Church and civilization rests upon the youth of today. The boys and girls of today will be the leaders of tomorrow, and it behooves us to see that they are properly taught and trained for the duties that shall come to them in the future.

It may seem strange to you that I should mention discipline as the first thing that must be taught a child if it is to be religious. This is the very place we must begin, however, if we expect to develop the kind of character our children should have. We cannot develop the right kind of



character in any child unless we first teach him discipline, obedience and self-control. This is the very foundation for the development of Christian character. Without this, all other things will fail.

Susannah Wesley said that the first principle in training a child was to conquer the child. She claimed that you must teach that child that you are the master and when you say "no," you mean "no;" and when you say "yes," you mean "yes." Now, I am well aware of the fact that this is not according to the teaching of many modern teachers of psychology. They sneer at the idea of correcting a child and teaching it to obey you. They contend that you must not suppress your child, nor correct it. They have been teaching that you must let him have his way and give expression to himself. If little Johnnie or Mary wants to climb up on the dressing-table and take a hammer and break the mirror, let him or her go ahead and do it. By all means don't suppress them; for if you do, you may be suppressing some artistic instinct in the child. But if you let him go, then he may grow up some day to be a house-wrecker. Usually that is just exactly what he grows up to be. He not only gets to be a housewrecker but he also makes a home-wrecker and a life-wrecker. He not only wrecks the nerves and lives of all the people around him; he also wrecks his own life.

One of the most destructive things that we have had in the past twenty-five years, to my mind, is this very teaching from some of these so-called authorities on child training. They have done much more harm than they realize. Many young parents have followed this false teaching and ruined their children. The world is filled with young outlaws who have no regard for law or anything else. Their chief concern is to have their own way and do as they please. Our penal institutions are filled with young people who are hardly out of their teens. They are outlaws, and they were made outlaws by indulgent mothers and fathers who had no conception of their proper duty to their child. This one thing we all know: the old plan of our fathers and mothers worked. Under the old pattern they really produced characters who were a blessing to the world. The new system has proved that it is wrong. By their fruits ye shall know them. We need a return to the tried and proved method of teaching children to obey and respect their parents. In fact, this is one of the basic principles laid down in the Bible, that parents must teach and train their children in such a way the child will grow up to obey and respect his parents. When anyone violates this great principle, he defies one of the greatest principles in religion and he is bound to fail.

We must recognize the fact that we live in a world of law and order. There are great moral and spiritual laws in this universe that must be obeyed. Obey, or you suffer the consequences. There are great physical laws in this universe that must be obeyed. Again, we must obey them, or suffer the consequences. There are great civic laws in this world that must be obeyed. To violate them means to suffer the consequences. Our children are going out to live in such a world of law and order. If we do not teach them, therefore, the great basic principle of discipline, and obedience, we are doing them great injustice. We are disqualifying them for life. Thus our land is filled with fine young men and women who have bright minds and could have wonderful personalities, if they had been properly taught in their childhood and youth. But sad to say, many of them are misfits and cannot hold down a job and do not know how to play the game of life. The reason for this may be found in the fact that they were not taught this great basic principle in their childhood. With the right kind of training they could have made a great success in life and would have been happy in this world. As it is they are misfits, and have turned sour and have become cynical about the whole thing. Much of this can be traced to the fact that they were brought up by indulgent fathers and mothers who failed to teach them discipline, obedience, and self-control.

Many indulgent parents have the mistaken idea that they are being good to their child and doing it a favor, when they give in to it and let it grow up to do as it pleases. I want to say that you are not being good to your child when you humor and pet him, and let him grow up to do as he pleases. The truth of the matter is, you are doing your child an irreparable damage. You are disqualifying your child for success and happiness in this world. You are sending your child out into life with a serious handicap which he may never be able to overcome.

Anyone that knows anything about the training of animals knows that the first principle in training an animal is to let it know that you are the master and that your wishes must be obeyed. I grew up with horses and I love them. I have had the privilege of training some real good saddle horses, and I learned many years ago, that if I was going to train and develop a colt, I must first conquer that colt. It was not necessary to be harsh and cruel in doing this. In fact, one must not be harsh and cruel either with an animal or a child, but a person certainly does have to be firm and let them know you mean business. Any man that has ever had any experience with a bird dog knows that you can buy the finest bred puppy in the world, with the finest blood that ever ran through a dog's veins, but unless he teaches that pup to obey him and do what he wants it to do, the dog won't be worth the shotgun shell that it would take to blow its brains out. If this is true of horses and dogs, then it is a thousand times truer of boys and girls. We need to recognize that there is a nature in our children that must not be expressed. They need to be taught and trained to give expression to the highest and best there is in them, rather than doing what they please. The thought that a two or three year old child has sense enough to choose the right way and know what is best for him, is one of the most preposterous ideas that any one could ever advance. If children had sense enough to develop their own character, God would never have provided for them the home and parental teaching. The animals of the woods may know by instinct what to do, but certainly this is not true of children. They need guidance and teaching, and they need parents that have will power enough to guide and teach them according to God's plan and purpose.

Some one has said that today there is just as much authority exercised in the home as ever. The only difference is that the children exercise it today, whereas the parents used to exercise it. That is true in far too many instances.

Dr. George Stuart tells of going to a large city church to preach. After he had finished his message a prominent banker came up and told him this story: "Dr. Stuart, we have one son in our home. He is a grown young man now and works in the bank with me. He is the pride and joy of our hearts and lives. When he was first born, however, being the only child, we loved him so much and were so proud of him that we humored and petted him. We gave in to him and let him have his way. We never corrected him or denied him anything he wanted. He grew up to be a willful and rebellious child. When it came time for him to start to school we sent him to the public school. He had only attended a few days when he came home one evening with a note from the teacher. In this note the teacher said I would have to send my child to some other school, since they could not do anything with him. She said he would not obey the rules, and interfered with the whole program of the school." The banker continued, "I complained against the teacher and the school, but finally sent my son to a private school. He had only gone a few days to this school when he came home with a similar note from the teacher, saying they could do nothing with my son. To make a long story short, I sent that boy to five different schools and each time they sent him home saying they

could do nothing with him. They said he would not obey the rules and broke up the classes. Each time he was sent home I complained about the teacher and the schools." "Finally," he said, "My wife got enough of it, and she stood before me and said, 'Now, hush! There is not a word of truth in that! It is not the teacher's fault, and it is not the fault of the school. It is your fault. Ever since that child has been in the world, you have humored and petted him. You have always let him have his way. You have never made him mind you, and you have never corrected him. You have given in to him and have never permitted anyone else to correct him. In other words, you have made an outlaw of your son, and now when he has to go out into life and must play the game according to the rules, he does not know how. You are to blame for it. You have disqualified your son to live with other people. Yes, you are to blame for it!'

"Doctor," said the banker, "It cut like a knife, but I realized my wife was telling the truth and I suddenly saw that I had failed my son. I took the lad by the arm and said, 'Son, let us go for a walk. We walked out into a large clump of woods where I thought we would not be seen nor disturbed. Then I turned and looked my son in the eyes and confessed to him that I had failed in my duty to him and to God. I asked my son to forgive me for my failures of the past, and promised him that I would do better in the future, by the grace and power of God. Then I told him to remove his coat. He looked at me in surprise and asked me why I wanted him to take off his coat. I said, 'Son, I am going to give you a good whipping this morning. You have needed it many, many times before but I have been too spineless and sentimental to do my duty toward you. But from now on I am going to try and be the kind of father you have a right to have.' My boy threw his head back and laughed in my face, and said, 'Dad, you can't whip me. I am too big to be whipped.' I informed him that I would either whip him or he would leave me dead in those woods. When he saw I meant business, he took off his coat and I gave him a sound thrashing. Then we got down on our knees and had prayer together. When we got up and started back to the house I put my arm around my son and said, 'Son, I love you. I love you better today than I have ever loved you in my life; but I want you to know that from now on we are turning over a new leaf, and things are going to be different at our house. From now on you are going to obey me and you are going to obey your mother. In the morning you are going back to the public school and you are going to obey the teacher and behave yourself. If you don't, then I am going to cut the skin on your back when you get home.'

"Dr. Stuart, I never had any more trouble with my boy. He saw that I meant business, and now realized that he must obey his parents. He has grown up to be a dutiful and obedient son, and he is the pride and joy of our hearts today." Then, with tears in his eyes and a choke in his voice he said, "Doctor, you know I came very near waiting too long. I nearly missed my last chance with my son."

May I say, with all earnestness of my heart, that it is possible to wait too long. You can let your child go so far and become so set in his ways that it is impossible to do anything with him. There is a time in the life of a baby when it naturally looks up to you and expects you to be the master. By firmness at that time, you can teach that child to respect and obey you and he will grow up to reverence and respect you, and will be the pride and joy of your heart. When he reaches manhood he will rise up and call you blessed and will bring joy to your heart. You can give in to that child, however, and let him have his way and let him ride rough-shod over your wishes. But he will grow up to despise you, and have nothing in his heart but contempt for you. He will grow up to be rebellious and headstrong, and will go out to wreck his own life and bring gray hairs to your

head. Today there are literally thousands of children that are doing just that very thing, and in many instances the parents are to blame for it. They have failed in their duty of teaching their children discipline, obedience, and self-control. One of the great failures of this day and age is right at this point. No one knows how much harm has been done by the foolish teaching that children are not to be corrected, but must be permitted to have their way. I am not contending for cruel treatment for children. That is not what I have in mind at all. In fact, I recognize that much harm has been done by harsh parents who were too ready to use the rod every time the child did not please them. There have been some parents that have used the rod not so much for the good of the child as they have used it to give expression to their anger and displeasure. Whenever that is done, of course it does more harm than good. In fact, there are many children that can be handled better by firm, kind talking than by the use of the rod. I am not contending just for punishment. That is secondary. The main thing is to be firm and teach your child to obey and respect you. My father never did use the rod much. In fact, he only whipped me three times in my life. However, my father was firm with us children and we grew up to respect and obey him. While he did not whip much, we all knew he would whip if it was needed. We loved and respected him and knew his word was law. There was no slavish fear at our house, but there was wholesome respect for parental authority, and I thank God that I was brought up that way. You will find that the men and women of the past who have amounted to something in this world, were brought up under the same kind of training; and any child of today that misses such training has missed something very vital out of his early life.

It may be that you think I am cranky on this subject, and have gone too far in my contention for the teaching of discipline and obedience, but I am convinced in my own mind that too much stress cannot be put on this point. I travel so much and have the chance to see the evil effects of letting children do as they please. If you could see it as I do, you would surely feel the same way about it.

Not long ago I was holding a meeting in a certain town and was being entertained in the home of the pastor. In that home they had one little girl, about three years of age, who, when she was in a good humor, was as sweet as an angel. However, when she got mad and flew into a fit, it was painful to be around. She would go into a tantrum, yell, kick and scream at the top of her voice until her parents let her have her way. They lived in constant fear and dread that something would go wrong and upset the child. They humored and petted her all the time. Even then she would have mad fits every now and then. I remember one morning we were at the breakfast table when something went wrong that displeased the child. She jumped up and down in her high chair and beat her cereal bowl on the tray of the chair, and finally threw it on the floor. Then she grabbed the corner of the tablecloth and snatched it off the table, taking with it all the china and silver. She broke several of the dishes, and that spineless mother and father just stood there and watched her do it. Finally, the mother started wringing her hands and calling out, "Honey, don't do that! Honey, don't do that! Now, look what you have done! You have broken mother's nice new china that Daddy gave her for her anniversary present. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? I just know you are going to break your poor old mother's heart! You ought to be ashamed of yourself for treating your mother and father like that!" I sat there and looked on and felt like saying to that mother and father, "Be ashamed of yourself for treating your child like that! You both ought to be whipped for failing to teach your child any better than that!"

One night while I was staying in that home, we came home from church and that three-year-old child walked in and proceeded to take a fine, expensive Bible off the table, sat down on the floor and tore pages out of it and threw them at her father and mother. That mother spent nearly an hour begging and pleading with that child to try and get her to agree to give up the Bible and go to bed. Finally that empty headed little mother turned to me and said, "Oh, Brother Church, patience is a virtue when you are trying to rear children these days!" Virtue nothing! That is an abomination in the sight of God! That is enough to make angels weep! It does seem that any mother would have more sense than that! In the first place, that mother ought to have known that every time that child had a mad fit and went into a tantrum she was shooting her whole system full of poison. Any doctor will tell you that an angry fit fills the stomach with a poison that upsets the whole digestive system. When a child is permitted to have such fits at frequent intervals, she is almost sure to grow up with chronic indigestion and will become a neurotic. It seems that any sensible person ought to be able to see that a child brought up like that is being disqualified to go out and make a success in life, and live happily with other people. We ought to be able to see that our children can't have their way all the time. If they are taught no better than that, their lives will be wrecked.

Now just imagine that little girl growing to womanhood and acting like that. Each time she is crossed or can't have her way she flies into a rage and has a mad fit. Then some day a poor, unsuspecting young man comes along and falls in love with that young lady. After the honeymoon is over and they have settled down to life, something comes up that she does not like. If she can't have her way now, and if the young man won't give in to her, then she will throw a fit and go into a tantrum. If she can't have her way she will grab her compact and week-end bag and go trotting back home to mother, for she knows that mother will let her have her way. Mother will give in to her and pet her. Another marriage has gone on the rocks. My friends, you let a girl reared on those principles marry a boy that has been reared the same way and you might as well play "The Fight Is On," for a wedding march; for, as sure as you are born, it is on. No couple can live together and meet the problems of married life and both of them have their way all the time. One or the other is going to have to know how to give in, if they are to live together in peace. One or the other will have to know how to bite their lips and hold their tongue, or the frail barque of matrimony surely will go on the rocks. If children are not taught these things in the home by the parents, where in the world will they ever learn them? You know our courts are filled today with cynical and disillusioned young men and young women that started out a few weeks or months ago on the sea of matrimony with high hopes and beautiful dreams. Today those dreams are shattered and those hopes are dashed to the ground. Those hearts are filled with bitterness and the outlook is one of cynicism and disgust. They have made a failure of marriage, and many times you could trace the whole trouble back to the fact that those young people did not get the right kind of teaching and training in their homes. They were allowed to grow up to do as they pleased, and were never taught the great basic principles of discipline, obedience, and self-control. If they had been properly taught along that line, they would be happy today and their hearts would be filled with joy.

Our courts and penal institutions have many boys and girls that are not yet out of their teens. They are outlaws, and many of them were made outlaws by spineless mothers and fathers that failed to teach their children obedience. You can't develop great character without this foundation

teaching. Discipline is the basis upon which character is built. If the foundation is not there, the whole structure will fall of its own weight. May God help us to see this.

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## THE HOME IS SUPPOSED TO TEACH IDEALS AND PRINCIPLES

The second thing that cannot adequately be taught anywhere outside the home is proper ideals and principles. I mean those great basic conceptions of right and wrong, sobriety and honesty, that prove to be the stars that guide the frail barque of human life across the tempestuous sea of time.

The home should give to the child those great moral conceptions that will hold the life steady in its stress and strain, and will act as anchors to the soul.

We send our children to school and there they learn many fine things, but we have no right to expect our school teachers to give our sons and daughters those great basic principles that will prove to be the foundation upon which they can build their lives. It is impossible for the teacher alone to give the children these conceptions of right and wrong. They may try to do this and no doubt they can help the child along that line, but the child will get his strongest convictions and deepest impressions along this line, from his parents at home. No teacher can completely overcome the ideas and conceptions that the child gets from the parents. There is no one that can make as strong an impression on the heart and mind of a child as his father and mother. Children are constantly learning from their parents. In fact, the very atmosphere of the home makes a strong impression upon the heart and mind of the child. That is why it is not enough for the parents to say to the child, "Don't do as I do, but do as I tell you to do." That will not do; for the child will come nearer doing what you do, than doing what he is told to do. We learn much more by example than we do by precept. I have forgotten many things my father and mother said to me, but I can never forget how they lived. The influence of their example will follow me to my grave.

Some years ago, while still a pastor, I had a man in my church who was a lawyer. In fact, he was the Chairman of my Board of Stewards. This man said to me one day, "Brother Church, the greatest lesson on honesty I ever learned was from my father. I was but a small lad. We lived on a farm about five miles out from the town of S\_\_\_, and one day my father let me go to town with him in the two-horse wagon. We did some shopping and had some grinding done at the mill. Late in the afternoon as we were on our way home, I was driving the team and father had his wallet out counting his money and making some mental calculations. Finally he turned to me, and calling me by name, said, "That man up there at the mill gave me six cents too much money in change." I replied, 'Well, father, the next time you go back to town you will have to return the six cents to the man at the mill.' My father reached over and took the lines out of my hands and stopped the team. Then he looked at me and said, 'R\_\_\_, I am an old man and the doctors say I have a very bad heart. In fact, they say I am liable to drop dead at any time, or I might die in my sleep. I would hate mighty bad to die in my sleep tonight and have money in my pocket that did not belong to me. That man up there at the mill might have a bill to pay in the morning, and he may lack just six cents having enough to pay his bill. I sure would hate for that man to be unable to meet his obligations or be embarrassed just because I had his money. No, you go on home and take care of the team and do

up the chores and I will go back and return the six cents to the man while I am able.' I drove down the road that afternoon," the lawyer continued, "and looked back many times at my old stoop-shouldered daddy, as he trudged back up the road to return six cents that did not belong to him. I knew that he would have five miles to walk after he had returned the six cents. That made an indelible impression on my heart and mind, one that I have never been able to get away from. There have been times when I have had temptations, and there have been times when I could have cut the corner and taken advantage of my fellow man and could have made a large sum of money. But the vision of my honest old father would always rise before me, and I could not get the consent of my mind to go against the example of my father's honesty. His life and example have done more to hold me steady than all the teachings of other people." Happy is the boy that has had such a father, and has had such an example as that set before him.

I shall never forget an experience that I had when I was about eighteen years of age. I had gone into the market business in Winston-Salem and needed some money to enlarge my business. At eighteen years of age I was very boyish looking. On Monday morning I walked into the office of Mr. Henry Shaffner, who at that time was President of the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company in Winston-Salem. I said, "Mr. Shaffner, I came up this morning to see if I could borrow a thousand dollars for about ninety days. I need it to enlarge my business." Mr. Shaffner was a rather gruff, short-spoken man, and he looked me over from head to foot and finally said, "How old are you, son?" I replied, "I am eighteen years of age." He looked at me and said, "No! You can't borrow a thousand dollars from this bank. Don't you know that you are a minor and your name is not worth the paper you would write it on? We can't do business with minors. Who are you, anyway?" I said to him, "Church is my name, John Church." He looked me over again very closely and said, "Which one of the Churches is your Daddy?" I said, "My father's name is Bill Church. He works for the Crystal Ice and Coal Company." He wheeled around to his desk and filled out a note for one thousand dollars for ninety days and then handed it to me and said, "Go down there to the barn and get your Daddy to put his mark on that note and then come back and get your money. Bill Church's boy can borrow money from this bank if he is not but twelve years old." Friends, I walked out of that bank that morning with my head up, my chest out, and the joy-bells ringing in my heart. I had rather for that man to have said what he did about my father, than for him to have given me a thousand dollars and said that my father's name was not worth the paper it was written on. You know, my friends, there are some things that are better than silver and gold. There is an inheritance that you can leave to your children that is finer than stocks and bonds, or houses and lands. "A good name is more to be desired than great riches," and to live in such a way that your children can walk through this world with their heads up and will have no reason to be ashamed of the way their parents have lived, is one of the finest heritages that anyone can leave.

Some time ago a farmer came into Winston-Salem on business and he brought his little five-year-old son with him. They walked down Trade Street in Winston-Salem and turned into a cafe. The man placed his small son on a stool and then took the stool next to the boy. The waiter behind the counter said, "And Mister, what will you have this morning?" The man said, "I believe you can give me a good, cold bottle of beer, if you please." Then the waiter said, "And what will the little man have this morning?" The little boy with bright shiny eyes said, "I believe I will take the same thing that Daddy takes. You can give me a bottle of beer too, if you don't mind." The father said, "Wait a minute! Hold on! If my boy is going to take what I take, I don't want beer! I don't want my son drinking beer! You can give me a glass of water, please.

Fathers, if you don't want your boy to drink beer you had better not drink it. If you don't want your boy to curse or smoke, you had better not curse or smoke before him. If you want your son to be sober honest and religious, it would be wise for you to set the right example for him to follow. Mothers, if you don't want your daughter to smoke, curse, and drink then you had better not do these things before her. If you want your daughter to be pure and live a Christian life, it would be best for you to do these things before her so that she will have the right kind of example. Some time ago a little girl of sixteen was brought in at two o'clock in the morning. She was as drunk as she could be and had been out until that hour with a young man that was a drunkard and lived in immorality. When some one spoke to her about it and asked her what she thought her mother would say about such conduct, she replied, "Mother had better not jump on me about the things I am doing, for I happen to know how she is living, and she is doing a lot of things that are worse than what I do." What a tragedy it is for children to have such examples set before them by their parents! Some one has said that the real problem of today is not the children but the parents. I fear that this is true in far too many instances. We cannot expect any better of our boys and girls if their parents set such an example before them. It is perfectly natural for a boy to think his father is the greatest man in all the world. It is natural for a son to feel that what his father does is all right for him to do. It is perfectly natural for every child to feel that his mother is the greatest woman in all the world, and to feel that what mother does is right for him to do. Indeed, it is hard to overcome the influence of the parents over their children.

I shall never forget, some years ago while I was still in the pastorate, I walked into my study one morning and there on the floor I found a slip of paper that some one had clipped from the newspaper. As I sat there reading it, my wife walked in, looked over my shoulder and saw what I was reading. She said to me, "Do you know where that came from?" I said, "No, I don't know where it came from, but, I wish I did know." She said, "John Jr. cut that out of the newspaper and has been carrying it in his school books now for sometime." (John, Jr. is our only living son and is now over twenty-five years of age). This is what I read on that slip of paper:

#### IF I CAN BE LIKE MY DADDY

"If I can be like my daddy,  
If I can say the things he said,  
If I am always thoughtful and good,  
Then I'll have nothing to dread.

"If I can be like my daddy,  
I'll love suffering humanity,  
And try to lighten their burdens,  
With sympathy sincere and true.

"If I can be like my daddy,  
I'll give all a chance to live,  
And though no money repay me,  
My services again will I give.



"If I can be like my daddy,  
If I can be faithful and true,  
I'll do all I can for my Master,  
And never regret what I do.

"If I can be like my daddy,  
Twill always be my very best,  
I'll learn to hope, to live, and die,  
Giving my days to help the rest.

"If I can be like my daddy,  
If I can run the course he ran,  
When the time comes for my life to end,  
I'll be known as a real man."

(Author Unknown to me).

I am frank to confess to you that I have had many compliments paid me that I have appreciated a great deal, and I have had honors bestowed upon me that I have prized very highly. Some years ago I stood in the Hughes Memorial Auditorium at Asbury College and had the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity bestowed upon me. I did not feel worthy of this great honor, and do not now feel that I am worthy of it. I appreciated it more than words can tell. However, I do not prize that honor, nor any other that has ever been bestowed upon me, half as much as I do the honor that my own son bestowed upon me when he picked me out and said in his heart that he would like to be that kind of a man. As I go up and down this land preaching the gospel to other people's sons and daughters and trying to win them for Christ, I always keep in my mind the fact that down there in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, there is a young man that has picked me out as his ideal, and has said in his heart, "If I can live that kind of life and be that kind of man, I will be all right." I have written that little poem on the flyleaf of my Bible and my Testament, and many times when I am far from home I read it. I go then to my knees in prayer, asking God to help me live in such a way that it will be safe for my sonto follow in my steps. May God help each and every one of us to so live that it will be safe for our children to follow in our footsteps. This is truly the greatest heritage that we can hand down to our children. I may never be able to leave my son houses and lands, but I can, with the help of God, live such a life and set before him such an example, that he will feel rich beyond compare when he thinks of the life of his father. It is my earnest desire to do just that very thing. May God help all of us to so live that it will be safe for our children to take the same things we take and walk in the same path that we have traveled.

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## THE HOME IS SUPPOSED TO TEACH RELIGION

But it is not enough that the home should teach only discipline and ideals. If it goes no farther, it has still not fulfilled its divine mission. There are many parents today that are doing a very good job of teaching discipline and ideals, but they are failing miserably when it comes to

teaching religion to their children. The truth of the matter is this: some parents seem to feel that their children are animals to be fed and clothed, and intellectual creatures to be educated. These same parents seem to have no burden or concern about the soul needs of their children. I have seen many parents that were greatly concerned about the physical well-being of their children. If the child was sick, they were worried. They were perfectly willing to sacrifice and slave for the physical needs of the child, but they seemed to be utterly unconcerned about his spiritual well-being. I have seen fathers and mothers that would make all kinds of sacrifices to send their children to school and to college, but did not turn their hands to try and win their children for Christ. I have seen mothers that would wear the same old dress and hat for several seasons so that their child could go to college and be dressed well, but they did not seem to be the least bit concerned over the fact that the same child was not a Christian. However, we need to see that our children are more than animals to be fed. They are more than intellectual creatures to be educated. Our children are spiritual beings. They have souls that need to be saved. It would be far better for them to be sick in body and have soul health, than for them to be physical giants and yet be dwarfed and sick in soul. Yes, it would be far better for our children never to see the inside of a college and yet to know Jesus Christ (whom to know aright is life eternal) than for them to graduate from college with the highest honors and still lose their souls, or have their lives wrecked and blighted by sin. There are thousands of fine young men that have gone into the armed service of this nation that will never come back home again. Many of them have already died on the battlefield, and still others will die before this awful war is over. Many of those boys went to college and their parents rejoiced in the fine grades they made. No doubt those parents dreamed of the place those sons would occupy in the social and business world, but those dreams will never come true now. Those boys have died for their country. I want to say to you that when you receive that notice from the government, saying that your son has been killed in action, then you will prize the knowledge that he was a Christian and died in the faith, more than all the diplomas and medals that may have been awarded to him either by the schools or the government. To know that he is safe in heaven and that some day you will meet him there, will be the most precious thing in all the world to you. What shall it profit a father, if he makes his millions of dollars, and yet loses his own son or daughter to sin and Satan? What shall it profit a mother, if she is the most popular woman in the town, winning the high bridge prizes, and yet loses her own children to shame and eternal disgrace? There are many things of this world that people are greatly concerned about, but all of them look mighty small in comparison with the value of the soul of your own child. We can well afford to miss some things and make some sacrifices, if we can only help our children into a vital Christian experience. When we are facing death and the judgment, many of the things that people have given their time and attention to will look mighty little, in comparison with the fact that their children have been lost and will be banished into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. It behooves us to look after the spiritual welfare of our children and see that they are given some religious teaching and training. Any sacrifice we may have to make in order to win our own children to Christ will not be too great for the dividends it will pay in soul-peace and satisfaction.

Sometime ago I held a meeting in a small city, and one day the pastor and I were driving down through the best residential section. As we drove along we passed a big mansion. It was the finest house in that city. The pastor turned to me and said, "Brother Church, the man that lives in that house is the richest man in this county. They claim he is worth over three million dollars. Many people look upon him as a great success, but to my mind he is the most miserable failure that

I have ever seen in all my life. That man has six children, three sons and three daughters. One of those daughters is a harlot in a red-light district of Chicago. At least, she was there the last time they heard from her. They read in the paper where a 'bawdy' house had been raided and their daughter was one of the women taken in the raid. Another one of those daughters left this town with another woman's husband, and has never been heard from since. The third daughter in that home is now dying of venereal disease." (And she did die while I was there in that meeting). He continued, "All three of that man's sons are drunkards and two of them are dope fiends." Think of it! A man worth three million dollars, and yet his whole family of children wrecked and blighted by sin! What satisfaction can three million dollars bring to a man when his own flesh and blood are lost in sin? When that man is dead and gone, what good will three million dollars do those children when their lives are already cursed and blighted by sin? His money will only be the means of sending them deeper into shame.

Friends, we may not be able to leave our children a great deal of this world's goods, but we can at least give them the advantage of a Christian home and Christian training. You may never be able to send your child to college, but you can at least give him the privilege of having a Christian mother and father. There may be many other things you will not be able to give your child, but you can leave him the heritage of a Christian home and a vital Christian experience. And when you have passed on to your eternal reward they will prize that more highly than stocks and bonds. The world may rob them of their wealth, but nothing can take their spiritual heritage from them.

While I was still in the pastorate, I served one church in the mountain section. While I was there the people told me about a family that used to live just across the mountain in another county from where I lived. The father and mother in this home were poor people with a large family of children. However, they were very devout, consecrated Christian parents. When the first World War came on, their two oldest sons went into the army. They went across to France and stayed until the war was over. But while these boys were in France, both parents died. The other children married and left home. The old mountain farm was left to grow up in weeds and briars. When the two sons were released from the army, they decided they did not want to go back to the old home place. One of them got a job in New York City and the other one drifted across the nation, finally landing in California, and there spent several years. These two boys kept writing to each other and finally they agreed they would take their vacation at the same time. They decided to meet in Asheville, N. C., and go out to the old home community and visit their relatives and friends. They met, and caught the train that bore them out to the old home community. Some of their relatives met them at the station, and they spent several days visiting among their relatives and friends. They finally decided they would make one final visit to the old home place. So they got in their car the next morning and drove as far up into the mountains as they could drive. When the road became impassable, they got out and walked the rest of the way. They passed the old swimming hole, where they had gone in swimming as boys. As they stood there, they talked of the good times they had as boys around that old swimming hole. As they walked up toward the old log cabin in the head of the cove, they reminded each other of incidents that had taken place many years before. They were having a good time living over again in their memory the days of their childhood. Then they came to the house where they had been born and had grown up. The yard was grown up with weeds and briars. The window lights were all broken out, the door had given way and was sagging toward the ground. Everything was looking dilapidated and forsaken. Yet it was a

precious place to them, for it was HOME; and after all, "Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home." For sometime they stood there, and neither one offered to go into the house. Finally, one of them opened the door and walked in. As he stood there in the door he pointed to a little ladder that went from the first floor into a little attic-like place under the roof. As he pointed to the ladder he turned to his brother and said, "Do you remember the ladder? Do you remember how we used to pull off our shoes and stockings down by the fire and get our feet good and warm and then race to see, who could get in the bed first upstairs?" His brother said, "Yes, I remember. And do you remember what good times we used to have scuffling and playing after we did get into bed? Do you remember how 'Paw' used to have to yell and threaten to come up and whip us if we did not get quite?"

Then they both walked across the room and stood by the old hearthstone. It was a crude, rough chimney built out of some rock that had been gathered out of the fields and daubed together with lime and mud. The hearthstone was a big flat stone that had been brought in out of the field and laid down for this purpose. It was all a very crude affair, and yet to these boys it was a very hallowed and sacred spot. This had once been the center of the world to them. They had learned to crawl around that old hearthstone. They had taken their first toddling steps here. In fact, everything that life meant to them had once centered around this spot. As they stood there both of them were deeply moved with emotions as they thought of the precious days of the past. One of them finally pointed to a hole in the chimney, where a rock had been left out, and turning to his brother, said, "Do you remember that place? That is where 'Ma' used to keep her Bible and her specks. I can almost see her now as she sits there by the window with the sun streaming over her shoulder, her Bible open in her lap and the tears running down her cheeks. She was a wonderful mother! No boys ever had a better mother than we had." The other boy, with a choke in his voice and with tears in his eyes, said, "Yes, I remember that. Do you remember this place right here? Here is where 'Paw' used to kneel when we had family prayer. I can see him now with his head thrown back and his face lifted toward Heaven. I can almost hear his voice as he calls on God in prayer. I can almost hear him call our names and tell God all about us, and ask God to help us be the kind of children we ought to be. You know 'Paw' and 'Ma' prayed enough for us to have saved the world." They were both deeply moved by this time. Now, one said to the other, "You know, I wish I was a Christian like 'Ma' and 'Paw.'" The other said, "I wish I was too, and some of these days I am going to become a Christian and serve God like they did. When I was in the trenches in France I promised God that if He would let me live and get back home, I would become a Christian. But I got busy, and never have done anything about it. I tell you what let's do. Let's get down here right now, where 'Ma' and 'Paw' used to pray and let's give our hearts and lives to God." They both knelt there in the dust, surrounded by dirt and cob-webs, but also surrounded by the influence and prayers of a godly father and mother, and gave their hearts to God. Truly, there may be many things that we can never give to our children. We may be too poor to give them many of the advantages that other parents give to their children, but no matter how poor we may be we can at least give them a Christian home, and the privilege of having Christian training. Surely, we can do that. None of us ought to be satisfied to do less than that; and after all, that is the richest inheritance that any of us can leave to our children. If we do that, they will rise up to call us blessed. May God help us not to fail our children.

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## SOME PRACTICAL WAYS TO TEACH RELIGION IN THE HOME

The wave of juvenile delinquency that is sweeping over our nation today has assumed such vast proportions and has become so general that it has become a matter of grave concern to all thinking people. Our judges, ministers, teachers, civic leaders, and social workers realize that something must be done. There are many things that have contributed to the conditions that now exist. The sacredness of the marriage vows and the home have been seriously endangered by the wave of divorce that has been sweeping our land for sometime. Homes are being broken up, and many children are being left half-orphaned by such procedure. Since the war has come on, many mothers have forsaken the home and the responsibility of motherhood and have taken jobs in defense plants. Their children are turned loose to run the streets and get into all kinds of mischief. Many men and women seem to have lost all sense of their responsibility to teach and train their children, and seem to be pleasure mad. They are bent on having a good time, regardless of what may happen to their children. If something is not done about these things, the future of our nation is dark indeed. We need a revival of religion that will re-establish the sacredness of marriage and of the home. Parents must be brought to see that one of the most serious responsibilities they have is that of the proper teaching and training of their children.

Now, I am ready to admit that the times in which we live make it very difficult to train children right. We are living in a very complex age, and there are forces at work against the home that were not known when I was a boy. The parents of today have many more things to contend with than my parents had. The movies, road-houses, taverns, automobiles, and many other things are taking our children out of the home in ways that were not even thought of in my childhood. Even the schools are demanding more and more of the time of our children, and in the average community there are many things to take our children out of the home and away from the care and teaching of the parents.

When I was a boy, life was much simpler than it is today. I recognize that my parents did not have as many things to cope with as have the parents of today. When I was a child, there were not so many places to go and not so many things to call for the time of children as there are today. In fact, in my boyhood it was the usual thing for the whole family to be together for evening meal and spend our nights at home. The rule at our house then was that every child was to be at home when the street lights were turned on at night. It was a comparatively easy matter for mother to get the family Bible and read and talk to us about God. I remember we had an old organ at home, and my oldest sister could play some of the old hymns of the church. We would have a good time together singing the old hymns and talking about religious subjects. Even on Sunday afternoon the children of the community would gather at our house and we would spend the afternoon around the old organ singing and talking. I really believe we had a better time in that day than many young people have today. Many people grew up out on the farm, and in the days of their childhood the whole family could gather around the altar for prayer and the worship of God. It was a very easy matter to have a family altar then, for the family were all there for it.

However, the times are entirely different now. In many homes the family seldom ever get together for such seasons of fellowship. In many instances the home has become a place to run in and change clothes, so that each member of the family can run to meet some other engagement. There are many homes today that have very little fellowship in the family. A part of the family is

out at one time, while the other part may be asleep. Then this part of the family may be asleep while that other part is gone to some place of work or pleasure. Many parents seldom see their children except at meal time. It is not such an easy matter to teach religion to our children today. Children have so many things demanding their time and attention that the parents do not get much chance to teach them. The extra-curricular activities of the schools are monopolizing their time. It seems to me that there must be a plan worked out whereby the parents can at least have a chance to give their children some teaching at home. The parental teaching is just as vital and important as the school teaching.

Now, after saying these things and recognizing the many obstacles in the way of teaching religion to our children today, I want to say that if we cannot do it as our parents did, then we must find some way by which we can teach and train our children as they should be taught and trained. If we cannot do it as our fathers and mothers did, then we must find some other way by which it can be done. After all, our children are our most valuable possessions and we cannot afford to fail them. If we miss out on giving them the proper teaching and training, nothing else will count. Even if we win the war and lose our children to sin and Satan, we have lost the real battle. Something must be done about the youth of our nation. The home must find a way to fulfill its mission. May God help us not to fail at this point.

Still recognizing the many difficulties that we face today in teaching and training our children, I want to say that there is a plan that will work. There are some things we can do to remedy the situation. In this brief lesson we read from the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy we have some practical suggestions as to how religion can be taught in the home regardless of what age we may live in. Conditions may change, but these principles will work in any age. I want to suggest some of these things that are brought out in this passage of scripture.

1. We must have these things written in our hearts.

The parents cannot hope to teach their child to be religious if they are not religious themselves. The influence of example is more powerful than any teaching which may be given otherwise. So if we are going to teach our children we must first of all give our hearts and lives to God and become really Christian ourselves. As has already been said in the first part of this message, it is perfectly natural for the child to follow the example of the parents. If the parent is Christian then half the battle is won toward winning the child for Christ and giving it the right kind of teaching. The unconscious influence of a Christian parent cannot be estimated. I have seen many boys and girls that could not be won for Christ because their parents were not Christians. And again, I have seen the father come to the altar to seek Christ and his son come right along behind him.

Some years ago I was asked to baptize a baby. The next week the father of that child came to me on the street and said, "Preacher, I am going to have to get religion." I said, "Well, that is fine! What ever made you decide to take such a step as this?" He said, "My wife has been insisting for sometime that we must dedicate our child to God by baptism. I finally agreed to have it done in order to please her, but I had no idea the vows, I would be called upon to take when my child was baptized, contained what they do. When I stood there before the altar and you began to fire those questions at me I did not feel that I could back down. The only thing to do was to go through with it

and take the vows. But I am not fit to carry out those vows in the condition I am now in. I can't hope to teach my child to love the Lord, live religious, and renounce the world and sin, if I have not done so myself. I am going to have to get religion so that I can teach my child as I promised to do." I would to God that many other fathers and mothers could be brought to feel the same way about their children.

2. We are to teach these things unto our children by talking about them.

Our conversation with our children has a great deal of weight with them. They pay a great deal more attention to what we say than we imagine. Sometime ago a good friend of mine told me of using a bad word in the presence of his only son. In just a minute or two the child used the same word. That father told me that he learned a lesson right there. Yes, children listen to us talk and come to us with questions about many things. This gives us an excellent opportunity to teach religion to them in the most simple and unassuming way. Many times they will ask us to tell them a story. When they do this we could tell them a religious story that has some vital truth in it, rather than tell them some ghost story or some myth or fable. Instead of telling them about Goldilocks and the three bears, we could tell them about Daniel in the lion's den. We could tell them about Samuel, Joseph and the three Hebrew children in the furnace of fire. We could tell them about the little child, Jesus, or the boy Jesus in the temple. We could tell them about the boy that gave his lunch to Jesus to feed the multitudes. There are many such good stories that could be told to small children in a simple way, and they will remember them throughout their life. I shall never forget some of the beautiful stories my mother told me when I was a child. They are a part of my very life and have meant more to me than I could ever tell.

May I ask, dear reader, what do you talk to your child about when you are with him? Do you ever talk to him about God and religion? There are many children today that know a great deal more about football players, baseball players, prize fighters and movie actors and actresses than they know about the great characters of the Bible. They can tell you a great deal more about Tom Mix or the Lone Ranger than about Jesus Christ. It is really pathetic how little some of our children do know about Christ and God. Their parents never talk to them about such things.

I have been called upon to conduct the funeral of men and women who had reared a large family of children to manhood and womanhood. In fact many times these children were married and had children of their own. When I would go to the home to get the facts about the life of the person that was dead, the children could tell me all about their parents except when they were converted and joined the church. Think of it! They had lived with their children for all of those years and told them other facts about their life, but had never talked enough about their own personal experience in Christ for their children to know when and where it happened. I firmly believe that if many parents who profess to be Christian, would just sit down and tell their own experience and how they came to be converted; if they would spend a little time in talking to their children about how and why they became Christians and what it has meant to them -- it would put their children under conviction and it might precipitate a revival of religion in many homes and communities. We need to talk more to our children about such things. It will mean a lot to them. It is one of the finest ways in the world to teach religion to our children.

Some parents go to church on Sunday, and after coming home from church, they sit around the dinner table and begin picking the preacher to pieces and spend their time finding fault with him and his sermon.

Then these same parents wonder why the pastor does not have any influence with their children, and why he can't win them for Christ. I can tell them why. They have destroyed the confidence of their child in the minister. They have so discredited him in their eyes that his hands are tied when he comes to deal with the children. A great deal depends on the attitude taken about such things.

The old Jews had a wonderful system for teaching religion to their children. Each year they would make trips to Jerusalem for the purpose of attending the feasts and offering sacrifice to God. They took their children along with them on these long trips. As they walked along during the day they would point out places of interest to their children and tell them of things that had happened there in the past. They would tell of how God had dealt with their fathers in days past and gone. Their land was filled with many historic spots and they taught their children the history of them. At night as they sat by the camp fire they would talk of God's dealings with His people in the past. Can you imagine what an impression that would make upon the mind of a boy or girl? They would remember those things as long as they lived. In this way they taught religion to their children.

While we do not take such trips today with our children, there are things in our lives that lend themselves to the same purpose, if we will but use them in the right way. We have Christmas time, when we celebrate the birth of Christ. We could use this time to talk to our children about Him and why He came into the world. We could tell them of the love of God, and how He gave His Son to come and die for us. We could teach them in that way, and it would be far better than the way some people celebrate this event. Easter and the other seasons lend themselves to be used in a similar way, if we will but use them aright. We must talk to our children along the way. The time we do have with them can be used in such a manner that it will make a lasting impression upon their hearts and minds. The mother of Moses did such a good job of teaching her son that when the time came for him to make his choice in life, he turned his back upon a great kingdom and chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. If she could do that with her son, certainly we ought to be able to do something for our children. Just remember, you will only have them for a few short years and then they will be gone from you. If you do not use the time and the opportunity that you now have, it will be gone forever. What we do must be done quickly. Just a few years, and the chance is forever gone. In those few years that you do have, you may be able to instill ideas and truths that will decide the eternal destiny of your child. God help you not to miss it. It would be too bad if you missed out with your child and he should be lost forever. God has given him to you, and you can mark impressions on his heart and mind that can never be completely erased.

### 3. Write them upon your door-post and on your house.

This suggests that there is to be something about your home that should impress your child with the idea that it is a Christian home. Is there anything about your home that would so impress your child or other people that happen to come there? What about the books and the magazines on your tables? What about the pictures on your walls? Is there anything there that would suggest the idea of God and religion to your child? As a small boy, I remember a picture of Christ on the cross



that hung right at the foot of my bed. That picture was the last thing I saw when I went to bed and it was the first thing I saw when I awoke in the morning. I was not conscious at the time of the effect that picture was having on me. However, since I have grown up it seems that I can close my eyes and see that picture just as plain as I saw it when I was a boy. I don't know whether my mother and father ever thought of the impression that picture would have on me or not, but I want to say to you that it can never be erased from the canvas of my memory. When my mother died a few years ago and we came back from the cemetery, my father asked me if there was anything at home that I would especially like to have as a keep-sake. I told him I would like to have that picture of the crucifixion, so that I could hang it in my son's room. I hung it there with the hope that it would have the same kind of effect on my son as it had on me.

I go into many homes today and look at the calendars on the walls. I look at the pictures that are hung there before the eyes of their children, and I cringe to think of the impression some of those pictures will make on the minds of the children. The magazine covers that lie on the tables, the pictures on the walls, and the books that are being read in many homes would make you think you were in a bawdy house instead of in a Christian home. You may never have thought about these things as having any effect on the mind of your child, but they do as certain as anything in the world. They are speaking to the mind and heart of your child in a way that will make a lasting impression upon them. We remember what we see a great deal longer than anything we read. One fine way to teach religion to your child is by wise selection of pictures to go on the wall. Be careful about the magazines you have come to your home. Try to do all you can to have good religious reading matter handy so your child can find it. You could well afford to make some sacrifice to subscribe to good religious papers and periodicals, and have them come into your home. Encourage your children to read the right kind of books. Many boys and girls like to read and they are going to read. If they don't have good reading matter they will read the wrong kind.

You may think it foolish advice, but it would pay you to buy good wall mottoes to hang around your house where the eyes of your child can fall upon them from time to time. They will make lasting impressions on the minds of your children. They will also give the world to understand that your home is a Christian home. I can walk into some homes and glance around at the pictures, mottoes and magazines and tell that religious people live there. Is that true, of your home? Write these things on the gates of your house and on the door-post, and they will help you in teaching your children in the right way. Don't be afraid to let your child and the world know that you stand for something. Make your home different from the dives of worldliness and sin. If you will do this, it will pay great dividends.

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**GOD COULD DEPEND ON ABRAHAM TO COMMAND HIS CHILDREN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD AFTER HIM TO DO JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT. CAN HE DEPEND ON YOU?**

Just about the time I finished the manuscript for this booklet I was holding a revival in the Central Y. M. C. A. in Brooklyn, N. Y. During this meeting as I was reading one of the New York papers. I came across such a timely article, written by Mrs. Walter Ferguson, who is a staff writer for the Scripps-Howard papers. In this article she said some things that bear upon this subject and said them in such a fine way, that I wrote and asked her for the privilege of quoting her article in

this booklet. I give it below and feel that it is a fitting climax for what I have tried to say in this booklet. May God bless this article to all who read it.

## BACK TO DECENCY MOVE URGED

By Mrs. Walter Ferguson  
Scripps-Howard Staff Writer

War is harder for our youngsters because they've been taught everything about the facts of sex and nothing about the facts of life. In spite our boasting this generation has not supplied children with the knowledge they must have for being good husbands and wives. And without good husbands and wives society declines.

We've left most of that kind of education to the movies and fiction writers, with the result that the sex angle has been tremendously exaggerated and spiritual qualifications ignored.

Then all of a sudden after their sentimental rearing, these children were called upon to tackle the basest of realities -- war. Their dream worlds were shattered. Morally naked they stepped into a conflict more gigantic than any before.

Everyone knows that war can result in moral collapse. It's my opinion the people of our nation shall have to fight harder to head it off here at home than we've fought to lick the Germans and Japs. Everybody -- movie producers, magazine editors, the radio and the press, as well as homes and schools -- must start a "Back to Decency" movement, if we do.

Surely by this time we can see that the wanton, obscene trends must end. Our books should be purged of filthy language -- and our moving picture industry bring other inspirations than those of glamor and sex to its audiences.

The era between the two world wars, was a carnal era. Our flight from Victorian prudery took us straight back to eroticism. And the shoddiest fact in the whole shameful story is that our children have been polluted so somebody could make money.

It's time the decent men and women of the United States moved in on the ranks of the exploiters, demanding changes, for the post-war years will be fateful ones, and we can't afford to go into another and worse moral tailspin.

I want to express my deep appreciation to Mrs. Ferguson for permission to use her fine and timely article.

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THE END