

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

November 30, 2024

'Tis God Who designed, created every child.

Neglect His own instructions – they go wild.

“Spare the rod and spoil the child” is an old proverb, going back certainly before our own time, going back at least to the Old Testament, in surprisingly many places. Eight of them are quoted here below, with comments, and there might easily be even be more. What matters is to realise that if Scripture is so insistent, then the principle comes not only from natural common sense, but ultimately from God Himself to instruct us on how human nature, specially of boys, is to be formed. Of course modern circumstances must be taken into account, for instance fundamentally wicked legislation by which a government’s so-called “social services” can take my children away from me and my wife if we dare to lay a finger on them. But the series of Scripture quotes tells us at least what to think of such “social services.”

Let us begin with Proverbs XIII, 24, an almost literal version of our familiar proverb –

He that spareth the rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him correcteth him betimes.

Proverbs XIX, 18 is an appeal to common sense. Corporal punishment is to be used justly, without excess –

Chastise thy son, despair not: but to the killing of him set not thy soul.

Proverbs XXII, 15 evokes the original sin which is the great truth behind the need for corporal punishment –

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, and the rod of correction shall drive it away.

Proverbs XXIII, 13 is another appeal to common sense: it will not kill the child to warm his backside –

Withhold not correction from a child: for if thou strike him with the rod, he shall not die.

Proverbs XXV, 20 declares how unwise it is to spoil a bad person (or naughty child) with being too nice – *As vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to a very evil heart.*

Proverbs XXIX, 15, 17 declare the good/bad effect on parents of punishing/ not punishing children –

15 The rod and reproof instil wisdom, but the child that is left to his own will bringeth his mother to shame.

17 Instruct thy son, and he shall refresh thee, and shall give delight to thy soul.

Ecclesiasticus XXII, 6 repeats the teaching of Proverbs on the value of corporal punishment --

. . . the stripes and instruction of wisdom are never out of time ("stripes" here means "beatings").

Ecclesiasticus XXX, 1–12 is a little treatise on the value of taking care in bringing up one's sons –

He that loveth his son, frequently chastiseth him, that he may rejoice in his latter end, and not grope after the doors of his neighbours. 2 He that instructeth his son shall be praised in him, and shall glory in him in the midst of them of his household. 3 He that teacheth his son, maketh his enemy jealous, and in the midst of his friends shall glory in him . . . 6 For he left behind him a defender of his house against his enemies, and one that will repay kindness to his friends . . .

9 Give thy son his way, and he shall make thee afraid: play with him, and he shall make thee sorrowful. 10 Laugh not with

him, lest thou have sorrow, and at the last thy teeth be set on edge. 11 Give him not liberty in his youth, and wink not at his devices. 12 Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat his sides while he is a child, lest he grow stubborn, and regard thee not, and so be a sorrow of heart to thee.

Do not the "child psychologists" of today teach parents rather the opposite of the Old Testament? Do not many parents of today tend to give up on disciplining or instructing their own children, rather handing them over, or letting them be taken in hand, by their godless States? And are the boys any the better for it? Judging by a mass of today's young men . . .

Kyrie eleison.