

C.H. MACKINTOSH



BEWARE OF LEAVING
YOUR LITTLE ONES IN

EGYPT

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encouraging families to

“Seek first the kingdom of God...” Matthew 6:33

The Klein Family
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“To say that I am counting upon God to bring my children to Canaan, and yet all the while educating them for Egypt, is a deadly delusion.”

BEWARE OF LEAVING YOUR LITTLE ONES IN EGYPT

By C.H. Mackintosh

If there is one point above another in which Christians have failed, it is in this very point of commanding their children and household. A man who knows how to command his house is worthy of God's confidence. This is a stupendous truth. God looks upon a man's house as a part of himself, and he cannot, in the smallest degree, whether in principle or practice, disregard the connection without suffering serious damage, and also marring the testimony.

Now, I would affectionately, yet faithfully, suggest the question, whether much of the failure in practical testimony for Christ is not justly traceable to the neglect of the principle involved in the expression, "Thou and thy house." I cannot but think it has much to do with it.

One thing is certain, that a quantity of worldliness, confusion, and moral evil has crept in amongst us through our little ones having been left in Egypt. We see many who, it may be, ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago, took a prominent place in testimony and service, and seemed to have their hearts much in the work, are now gone back, lamentably, not having power to keep their own heads above water, much less to help any one else.

All this utters a warning voice for Christian parents having rising families; and the utterance is, "Beware of leaving your little ones in Egypt." Many a heart-broken father, at the present moment, is left to weep and groan

But the sum of the matter is this: The willfulness of my children reveals the willfulness of my own heart, and a righteous God is using them to chasten me, because I have not chastened myself. This is a peculiarly solemn view of the case, and one that calls for deep searching of heart. To save myself trouble, I have let things take their course in my family, and now my children have grown up around me to be thorns in my side, because I trained them not for God. This is the history of thousands. We should ever bear in mind that our children, as well as ourselves, should be "set for the defense and confirmation of the gospel." But let us not forget, that in order to subdue nature in our children, we must subdue it in ourselves.

Moreover, there must be the clearest understanding and the fullest harmony between the father and mother. Their voice, their will, their authority, their influence, should be essentially one—one in the strictest sense of that word. Being themselves "no more twain, but one flesh." They should ever appear before their children in the beauty and power of that oneness. In order to do this, they must wait much in His opening up all their hearts, and telling out all their need. Christians do frequently injure one another in this respect.

— C.H. MACKINTOSH

households of all those who form constituent parts of His house.

What is sufficient for me is sufficient for those who are part of me. And shall I be so base as to train my children for the devil and the world? Shall I minister to and pamper that in them which I profess to mortify in myself? It is a grievous mistake, and we shall find it so. If my children are in Egypt, I am there myself. If my children savor of Babylon, I savor of it myself. If my children belong to a corrupt worldly religious system, I belong to it myself, in principle. “Thou and thy house” are one; God has made them one; and “what He has joined together, let no man put asunder.”

We mourn over our lack of a broken will, and yet we are strengthening the will in our children. It is always, to my mind, a manifest proof of the weakness of parental authority, as well as of ignorance of the way in which the servant of God should rule his house, to hear a parent say to a child. “Will you do so and so?” This question, simple as it seems, tends directly to create or minister to the very thing which you ought to put down, by every means in your power, and that is, the exercise of the child’s will. Instead, therefore, of asking the child, “Will you do?” just tell him what he is to do, and let there not be in his mind the idea of calling in question your authority. The parent’s will should be supreme with a child, because the parent stands in the place of God. All power belong to God, and He has invested His servant with power, both as a father and master. If therefore the child or the servant resist this power, it is resistance of God.

over his fatal mistake in reference to his household. He left them in Egypt, in an evil hour, and under a gross delusion, and now when he ventures, it may be in real faithfulness and earnest affection, to drop a word into the ear of those who have grown up around him, they meet it with a deaf ear and an indifferent heart, while they cling with vigor and decision to that Egypt in which he faithlessly and inconsistently left them. This is a stern fact, the statement of which may send a pang to many a heart; but truth must be told, in order that, though it wounds some, it may prove a salutary warning to others.

There is, I should say, a very serious error involved in a Christian parent’s committing the training of his children to unconverted persons, or even to those whose hearts are not one with him as to separation from the world.

In the book of Numbers, “the little ones” are again introduced to our notice. We have just seen that the real purpose of a soul in communion with God was to go up with the little ones out of Egypt. They must be brought forth from thence at all cost; but neither faith nor faithfulness will rest here. We must not only count upon God to bring them up out of Egypt, but also to bring them on into Canaan.

But let us remember that the way to prove our entrance into the blessing is by fulfilling the responsibility. To say that I am counting upon God to bring my children to Canaan, and yet all the while educating them for Egypt, is a deadly delusion. My conduct proves my profession to be a lie, and I am not to wonder if, in the righteous dealings of God, I am allowed to be filled with the fruit

of my own doings. Conduct will ever prove the reality of our convictions: and in this, as in every thing else, that Word of the Lord is most solemnly true, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." We often want to know the doctrine before we do the will, and the consequence is, we are left in the most profound ignorance.

Now, to do the will of God in reference to our children, is to treat them as He does, by regarding them as part of ourselves, and training them accordingly. It is not merely by hoping they may ultimately prove to be the children of God, but by regarding them as those who are already brought into a place of privilege, and dealing with them upon this ground in reference to very thing. According to the thoughts and actions of many parents, it would seem as though they regarded their children in the light of heathens, who had no present interest in Christ, or relationship to God at all. This is, assuredly, falling grievously short of the divine mark. Nor is this question, as it is too often made, of infant or adult baptism. No; it is simply and entirely a question of faith in the power and extent of that peculiarly gracious word. "Thou and thy house"—a word the force and beauty of which we shall see more and more fully as we proceed.

Throughout the book of Deuteronomy, the children of Israel are again instructed to set the commandments, the statutes, the judgments, and precepts of the law before their little ones; and these same little ones are contemplated as inquiring into the nature and object of various ordinances and institutions. The reader can easily run through the various passages.

I now pass on to that truly memorable resolution of Joshua, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve. . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). Observe, "Me and my house." Eli . . . concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; Because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not" Here we see that no matter what the personal character of the servant of God may be, yet if he fail in the due regulation of his house, God will not hold him guiltless. Eli should have restrained his sons.

But how many parents have since trodden in Eli's footsteps! Through an utterly false idea in reference to the entire basis and character of parental relationship, they have allowed their children, from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to manhood, in the unrestrained indulgence of the will. Not having faith to take divine ground, they have failed in moral power to take even the human ground of making their children respect and obey them, and the issue has presented to view the most fearful picture of lawless extravagance and wild confusion. The highest object for the servant of God to set before him in the management of his house is the testimony therein afforded to the honor of Him to whose house he himself belongs. This is really the proper ground of action. I must not seek to have my children in order because it would be an annoyance and inconvenience to me to have them otherwise, but because the honor of God is concerned in the godly order of the