



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

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“If smacking works, why do we have to keep on doing it?”



NSPCC cartoon

The above question is asked on the NSPCC website and doubtless is intended to be a devastating rebuff to those who advocate the use of physical punishment as a means of discipline. In truth, if such logic were applied to other matters in life, we would see society brought to chaos! We would cease from the use of all medicine that needs to be repeated, since obviously (at least to the philosophers within the NSPCC) it cannot be working. We would close all prisons since many prisoners are re-offenders and it must not be working. Life is full of effective cures that need repeating. Proper discipline is one of them.

It has to be said, that there is no method of discipline which, after one application, works so that discipline is never needed again. I am sure that the alternative methods of discipline put forward by the NSPCC are not intended to be “one application” cures for ill-behaviour! That being so, we could turn the logic of their cartoon against themselves.

The Lord certainly does not make that claim for His method of discipline. The Bible says: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” Hebrews 12:6. The word “chasteneth” suggests an ongoing process. What Christian would deny that they require continual chastening for they continue to sin?

It is the existence of that sinful nature within us and its tendency to continue in rebellion that necessitate continued chastening.

It may also be said, that a child properly disciplined in the Biblical fashion requires a diminishing level of chastening as they learn the lesson.

Speaking from personal experience, I found that one solemn, sharp encounter with the rod of correction meant that a little “topping up” was all that was required, on a few later occasions. Again, this is what the Bible states: “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” Proverbs 13:24.

It is not a daily clouting but a proper and loving administration of discipline which serves to establish the standards within the home and which results in lasting good. Those who “clout” repeatedly, are not administering discipline as God would have us do. It is therefore wrong of the NSPCC to use the practice of such to condemn all who obey the Bible in this matter.