



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Corporal punishment of children

European Court of Human Rights says NO, God says YES



The European Court of Human Rights has ruled in favour of a nine-year-old boy whose step-father had beaten him with a cane. The step-father had been tried and acquitted on a charge of causing actual bodily harm some five years ago in a British court. The court decided that the step-father's actions were reasonable and allowed by a law dating back to 1860. The boy was described in that trial as difficult to handle and unresponsive to school discipline. He was beaten on one occasion for threatening his brother with a knife.

The ruling by the ECHR has brought an immediate promise by the British Government to change its law in order to make such punishment illegal.

It says that "smacking" within the home will remain legal.

Anti-corporal punishment groups, who have campaigned against corporal punishment, have heralded the decision as signalling the end of corporal punishment of children.

What saith the Holy Scriptures??

Just what the Bible has to say on the matter of child discipline and corporal punishment is all important to a Christian. Today, disobedient children have become a major social problem. The reason for that is that there has been a departing from the teaching of God's Word on this matter, as in so many other matters. The Bible is plain in its teaching as a few verses will demonstrate.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes, Proverbs 13:24. Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him, Proverbs 22:15. Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell, Proverbs 23:13-14. The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame, Proverbs 29:15.

It is clear that the same standards of discipline were taught in the New Testament.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby, Hebrews 12:9-11.

Above all, the Lord employs the rod of chastening upon his wayward people.

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation, Isaiah 10:5. Who is man to challenge the teaching and practices of the Almighty?