

PREFACE

“I like to thank God for the presiding leadership of the Holy Spirit upon the man of God to preach a topical sermon from the book of Proverbs rather than giving us an overview on the book of Job. By the composition of the June conference audience, it is difficult to find a message to cater to all. Pastor has great concern for the souls of our youths. At the same time, the conference is to nourish missionary pastors and overseas leaders who have returned back. How to preach to both groups? Thank God that the Sabbath sermon addressed to one and all—the children, the parents, and the shepherds. Moreover the subject matter is in line with the issue on the application of the law and preparatory work. It is very beautiful as pastor presented to us the biblical philosophy advocating the application of the law. The man of God confined himself to the book of Proverbs and established his case about the legitimacy of applying the rod on a child right from young. The number of references he showed us is staggering. This shows that this is the way of the Holy Scriptures. He showed us we need to apply the law strongly, early and frequently. The questions that pastor asked at the beginning were aptly answered. Thank pastor for his pastoral burden to preach on this topic. The preacher showed us the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures which is the wisdom of God. It is in total conflict with the wisdom of the world which is the wisdom of flesh and of Satan. It contests against secular philosophies that counsel us to stop applying the rod, saying there are other better ways. The man of God reminded us of the manifestation of the battle of Gog and Magog. In many countries, especially in developed nations, it is almost a crime to use the rod. Hence, children in our times have become prouder and prouder, stubborn, rebellious, beastly and demon-like. The sad thing is that many Christian professors are abandoning the philosophy of the Word of God for the philosophy of the ungodly. Pastor has reiterated the maxim in the prefatory psalm, Psalm 1, ‘Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the ways of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.’ This is a stumbling block to many who first come into the ambit of the ministry of the man of God. Being indoctrinated with the philosophy of the world, they find it uneasy and unacceptable. There are a lot of doubts and opposition within their minds and hearts. I thank pastor for not budging, but still standing firm upon the wisdom of God. This is the way he has brought up his family and the families of God across the 127 provinces. I thank pastor for showing us the wisdom of God on how to practically practise the principles advocated in the Scriptures touching on the upbringing of children. In the sermon, pastor has evinced the rationale and reason why there is the imperative need for the strong application of the law to a child. Right at the bottom-line is the utter depravity of the heart. Some children are smarter to conceal it and undiscerning parents are easily deceived by their outward appearance, by their cuteness (Oh, how adorable they are!), by their abilities to sweet talk and outward obedience. But you cannot escape the discerning eyes of the man of God. It is scary to hear pastor making comments that children can be very crafty and conceited. The depths of their depravity are shown through their levels of conceitedness. The root problem is latent and deep within the depraved heart. The preacher showed us that the solution is to apply the law strongly for the depravity to surface. I remember a couple that came to our midst years back. When they saw the way pastor applied the law (of correction) on the children, they were censorious and said it is the wrong way to bring up children. They thought our children were naughty but their children were angels. They followed the wisdom of the world that sweet-talks with their children. When their children grew up, they became monsters. This man died in his sin. I remember also when Jeremiah Ng came back to the church after 17 years, he brought along the high-minded and conceited Elias who tried to criticize our children. The boys then in our midst were not able to hide their sins and the smart Elias came to pinpoint their sins. Pastor gave Elias a piece of his mind. That was when the real Elias surfaced. The depravity of the heart is so hard to tackle but thank God for this means of grace given to the leaders and parents to save those under their charge. The purposes in the application of the law were brought out in the sermon. Some of them, as pastor enlightened us with, are for the development of character, the instilling of good working ethics and bringing down arrogance and pride in a child. It is easy for a child to be high-minded. When you overly praise a child, you groom him up to be like Lucifer. Pride is hard to overcome so it is important to bring a child’s pride down from young. Only when he knows his depravity, then he does not walk in pride. In the ministry of the man of God, we can find these things. But in the outside world, and in the sphere of the False Prophet, especially in their worship place, the children would run wild and make the sanctuary of God a playground and market place. Their young leaders are generally cocky, boastful, and fleshly-confident. There is no attempt to puncture their pride. Rather it is inflated. This is the way of the False Prophet. They know nothing about humility and the beauty of humility. When pastor spoke of his personal life, it was very touching. Pastor spoke of how cocky he had been till he came across a book extolling the beauty of humility. When pastor heard the preaching of Isaiah 53 on the beauty of the uncomely Christ, he was deeply convicted and his ardent desire was to become Christlike. This is what the man of God is trying to work on us.” Zephaniah Soh’s response to pastor’s message

on 'The Upbringing Of Children In The Fear and Admonition Of The Lord' from the book of Proverbs, Part 1, Cameron Highlands, Malaysia; 15 June AD 2014