

PAWEŁ WAŃCZYK

Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

paw-wan@wp.pl

Pedagogical Instruction for Parents in *Corpus Paulinum*

Humankind's ultimate vocation is to spend eternity with God. The means allowing for the attainment of that future supernatural state is the current life on earth lived in a noble and holy way. For this reason, the continuous formation of the person is necessary. When discussing the formation of personality, one's nature, and spirituality, one must acknowledge that the first years of this process play an invaluable role. The attitudes that are formed at this time have an enormous impact on one's later life and later result either in happiness and good deeds, or they lead to one's downfall and personal lack of fulfillment. For this reason, it is worth taking a look at the Biblical advice concerning raising children and outlining how to shape relationships within the family in such a way that the young person who grows up in it has an appropriate and healthy environment for his or her development. The purpose of all this is to extract advice that can be helpful to parents and all persons responsible for the significant task of the Christian formation of young people.

In this article, the range of the undertaken exegetical research has been limited to the Pauline epistles¹ and the Letter to the Hebrews. The

¹ The author here does not differentiate between the Proto and Deutero-Pauline Letters, since the question of the authorship of St. Paul's epistles is continually under

contents of the Old Testament have been omitted; although they are exceptionally valuable (for the topic of discussion, the Sapiential Books are especially important), but for historical reasons they do not yet have the traits of New Testament perfection resulting from the revelation fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, with regards to the New Testament, it has been limited to the *Corpus Paulinum*, because it contains most of the practical instructions concerning the topic of bringing up children.

1. Pedagogical Instructions in the Letters of St. Paul

With regards to the content of the Letters of St. Paul, the most useful fragments with regards to the topic under discussion are the instructions for Christian households in Colossians 3: 18–4: 1 and Ephesians 5: 22–6, 9,² which are collections of instructions for family members on how to behave. They discuss the necessity of the subordination of wives, children, and slaves to the heads of the household; they can be incomprehensible or even offensive to the modern reader.

It must be emphasized that such an approach was the result of the patriarchal system that was dominant at the time. What's more, its harshness is lessened, so to speak, by St. Paul's pleas to men asking them to treat those subordinated to them with dignity.³ This encouragement of

study and discussion, and at the same time it does not have any greater significance for the topic undertaken in this article.

² There is also talk of the household instructions in 1 Peter 2: 13–3, 7, although this fragment does not deal with the topic of relations between children and their parents, and only the verses dealing with that topic will be analyzed in depth. The New Testament also contains other statements whose nature is reminiscent of household instructions, but they are more concise and do not constitute such collections.

³ Cf. A. Standhartinger, *The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians*, „Journal for the Study of the New Testament” 23 (2001) nr 79, p. 117–130, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0142064X0102307910>; F. Mickiewicz, *Zagadnienia etyczne*, [in:]

mutual respect and St. Paul's explanation that peaceful relations between household members are pleasing to God and imitate Christ's behavior makes the substance of these admonitions relevant still today.

Discussion about the mutual relationship between husband and wife is mentioned at the beginning of the instructions for Christian households. On the one hand, wives are to be subordinate to their husbands as the Church is subordinate to Christ, but, on the other, husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the Church (cf. Ephesians 5:22–33). In fact, it is counseled that husband and wife be subordinate to each other. The sincere mutual love between husband and wife is truly a healthy environment that their children who are born into this world should be guaranteed.⁴ Thus it is unsurprising that after discussing the topic of relations between husband and wife St. Paul presents the rules that should govern the relationship between parents and children. St. Paul implores: “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord” (Colossians 3, 20). It is worth initially noting that the appeal is directed to children, and thus it can be seen that they participated in Christian celebrations during which apostolic letters were read.⁵ The term used here, τέκνα (“children”), does not allow for the precise determining of their ages,⁶ but directing this message to them is evidence that they were sufficiently mature to understand its meaning and importance. The word used also does not suggest the recipient's sex; thus it could be said that “both boys and girls are treated as conscious and responsible persons who impact the family life of the household and understand their calling to

Teologia Nowego Testamentu, Volume 3: *Listy Pawłowe, Katolickie i List do Hebrajczyków*, red. M. Rosik, Wrocław 2008, p. 350 f. (Bibliotheca Biblica).

⁴ Cf. H. Langkammer, *List do Kolosan. Tłumaczenie, wstęp i komentarz*, Lublin 2002, p. 90 (Biblia Lubelska).

⁵ Cf. J. D. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids 1996, p. 250 (The New International Greek Testament Commentary).

⁶ Cf. M. Barth, H. Blanke, *Colossians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, New York–London–Toronto 1994, p. 439 (The Anchor Bible, 34B).

life in Christ (cf. Colossians 3 : 20b; 1 Corinthians 7 : 14).⁷ Thus the very fact of directing these words towards the youngest household members shows St. Paul's great respect for them as well as their immense recognition, which is worth emulating.

The request to "be obedient," sometimes expressed by the verb ὑπακούω, implies listening on the part of a person subordinate to someone else, someone "above" him or her. In this case, the "superiors" are, of course, above all the father and mother, although they could also be other older family members (such as grandparents), because the verb used here (γονεύς⁸) allows for such a broader translation. Such obedience on the part of children must encompass all areas of life (κατὰ πάντα; literally, "with regards to everything"). However, it must be noted that such broad authority of parents over their children does not result from any authoritarian tendencies, but rather from their greater wisdom and richer life experience, and it is given to them with the natural assumption⁹ that they desire truly what is best for their offspring.¹⁰

However, looking from the perspective of children, their obedience should also be an expression of gratitude to their parents for the gift of life as well as for the concern and care they have provided them.¹¹ Nonetheless,

⁷ B. Adamczewski, *List do Filemona. List do Kolosan. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz*, Częstochowa 2006, p. 330 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny Nowy Testament, 12).

⁸ Cf. J. Łach, *Kodeks domowy w Liście do Kolosan (Kol 3, 18–4, 1)*, „Analecta Cracoviensia” 27 (1995), p. 222 f.

⁹ Such a natural desire of parents for the good of their children is quite obvious and thus it was used in Jesus' arguments when He wanted to show the goodness of the Lord: "What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? [...] If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11 : 11–13).

¹⁰ Cf. J. D. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians...*, op. cit., p. 250. Thus this requirement of obedience towards one's parents does not concern situations in which the command of the father or mother would stand in opposition to the Divine Law, when it should be subordinated to the latter (cf. Acts 5 : 29) – cf. P. T. O'Brien, *Colossians. Philemon*, Dallas 1982, p. 225 (Word Biblical Commentary, 44).

¹¹ Cf. F. Mickiewicz, *Zagadnienia etyczne...*, op. cit., p. 351.

St. Paul does not remain at such a human level of argumentation, but he also indicates motives of a religious nature: “it is pleasing to the Lord,” and in the parallel text of Ephesians 6: 1–3 he builds up this motivation by writing: “for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother.’ This is the first commandment with a promise, ‘that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on earth.’” Young household members should thus listen to their parents, because such behavior is pleasing to God. It is the fulfillment of what is befit and what is appropriate, and above all it is the realization of the Fourth Commandment. This latter means of argumentation is significant because of the six references to the commandment to honor one’s mother and father found in the New Testament¹² it is the only example of a reference to it along with the promise.¹³ St. Paul thus wants to encourage young people to respect their parents by showing them the reward that awaits them on this earth and that will consist of a happy and long life¹⁴

After explaining to children appropriate behavior with respect to their father and mother, St. Paul proceeds to instruct the latter on how to behave: “Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they may not be discouraged” (Colossians 3: 21). In addition to its basic meaning, the word St. Paul uses, *πατέρες* (“fathers”), in this case in the plural form, could refer to both parents, as indicated, for example, by Hebrews 11: 23.¹⁵ This is evidence that the thinking of the authors of the New Testament went beyond and exceeded both the Old Testament and pagan mentality, in which only fathers were responsible for brining up children (especially

¹² In addition to Ephesians 6:2–3, the Fourth Commandment is also quoted in Matthew 15: 4; 19: 19; Mark 7: 10; 10: 19; Luke 18: 20.

¹³ By referencing the promise from Exodus 20: 12 LXX, the author consciously omits the fragment concerning the reward of the promised land of Canaan. The purpose of this undertaking is to make the message be more universally understood– cf. A. Jankowski, *Listy więzienne świętego Pawła. Do Filipian – do Kolosan – do Filemona – do Efezjan. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału – komentarz*, Poznań 1962, p. 492 (Pismo Święte Nowego Testamentu, 8).

¹⁴ Cf. A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Dallas 1990, p. 404–406 (Word Biblical Commentary, 42).

¹⁵ Cf. M. Barth, H. Blanke, *Colossians...*, op. cit., p. 443.

sons). Meanwhile, the fact that the term “parents” was omitted and instead replaced with the word “fathers” could be explained by the fact that men are more inclined to raising their children in a harsh way and that this appeal is directed at them first of all.¹⁶

The contents of this admonition ask to not provoke children. It should be noted that the Greek verb used here (ἐρεθίζω) has a neutral connotation: “it means, overall, awakening, irritating, or provoking to something, both to something positive (such as rivalization, as in 2 Corinthians 9: 2) or to something negative (such as anger; cf. Deuteronomy 21: 20 or 1 Maccabees 15: 40).”¹⁷ However, in the fragment under discussion, ἐρεθίζω has a negative meaning and, in accordance with the *Polish Millennium Bible* the whole expression can be translated as “do not irritate.” This is attested to both by the parallel verse Ephesians 6: 4, in which the less ambiguous expression μὴ παροργίζετε (“do not provoke to anger”¹⁸) is used, as is the justification for such an admonition used in the latter part of the Biblical verse under discussion: “so they may not be discouraged” (Colossians 3: 21b).¹⁹ Thus this contains a warning against such an approach to a young person that would cause him or her to lose courage and fervor and would cause uncertainty or irritation that could result in future problems related to his or her future social and religious life. Therefore, when brining up their sons and daughters, parents (especially fathers) should avoid such behaviors or words that could lead to their embitterment, depression, fear or rebellion. Instead, they should be motivated by love, patience, and understanding to make possible and support their full development.²⁰

¹⁶ Cf. J. Łach, *Kodeks domowy...*, op. cit., p. 222–224.

¹⁷ B. Adamczewski, *List do Filemona...*, op. cit., p. 331.

¹⁸ Cf. T. Herrmann, *Obowiązki rodziców względem dzieci w Nowym Testamencie*, „Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 14 (1961) nr 1–2, p. 44.

¹⁹ The verb used here, “to lose one’s spirit,” is the *hapax legomenon* of the New Testament. Meanwhile, its meaning as “to lose courage, be afraid, and to be sad” is illustrated by his numerous appearances in LXX, including in Deuteronomy 28: 65; 1 Corinthians 13: 11; Judith 7: 22; cf. P. T. O’Brien, *Colossians. Philemon...*, op. cit., p. 226.

²⁰ Cf. H. Langkammer, *List do Kolosan...*, op. cit., p. 91; B. Adamczewski, *List do Filemona...*, op. cit., p. 331 f.

Thus the characteristic trait of the text under discussion is the focus on the duties of parents or of the father while simultaneously passing over the matter of parental authority and the need for disciplining children while raising them; these latter two topics were most prevalent in the ancient pedagogical texts of that time. What is striking is that they also appear in the aforementioned parallel in Ephesians 6:4²¹: “bring them [your children] up with the training and instruction of the Lord.” Therefore, in order to raise one’s children well it is worth using two resources: παιδεία (generally speaking, “bringing up, educating”), but also “reprimanding, punishment;”²² as well as νοουθεσία: “instruction, admonishment, cautioning” (etymologically, “the attitude of reason”).²³ However, in such a juxtaposition of concepts, their unequal field of meaning is intriguing: παιδεία generally means both the formation of a young person as well as educating him or her, and even disciplining him or her (including corporal punishment), while νοουθεσία describes the specific means of acting: the verbal giving of advice, caution, or admonishment. Furthermore, the first of these two terms causes another problem; namely, that it can be interpreted as physical punishment. Thus in the summons under discussion one could find encouragement of corporal punishment, but such an underlying message is in conflict with the abovementioned parallel text in Colossians 3:21 as well as with the substance of the household instructions in which the necessity of avoiding harshness by the head of the household is particularly emphasized. This problem can be resolved by another translation of the conjunction καί, not translating it as the totality of “and” but as the explanatory “that is.”²⁴ Thus the instruction under analysis would suggest the necessity of educating children “by bringing them up (ἐν παιδείᾳ) that is (καὶ) by instructing and [giving]

²¹ Cf. J. D. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians...*, op. cit., p. 251.

²² Cf. R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu. Wydanie z pełną lokalizacją greckich haseł, kluczem polsko-greckim oraz indeksem form czasownikowych*, Warszawa 1994, p. 455 (Prymasowska Seria Biblijna, 3).

²³ Cf. A. Jankowski, *Listy więzienne świętego Pawła...*, op. cit., p. 493 f.

²⁴ Cf. W. J. Larkin, *Ephesians. A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Waco 2009, p. 148 (Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament).

instructions and warnings (νουθεσία)”. Such an interpretation of these words strongly emphasizes the weight of conversations between parents and their children and shows that if a father and mother want to have influence on the bringing up of their children they must have a good relationship with them, and that is possible only by devoting time to them.

Both analyzed concepts (παιδεία and νουθεσία) are defined precisely by the word κυρίου (“of the Lord”), which indicates that such a formation could be described as Christian pedagogy (“in the way of and in the name of Christ”)²⁵, because it is Him who St. Paul refers to as κύριος – (“the Lord”). There is no lack of other interpretations defining education precisely with the help of the word “The Lord.” Among them, it is worth noting the one that says that the important thing is for children to be taught about Jesus and His teaching. This presents the truth that the very meeting of the community of Christians for celebration and catechesis is not enough, because a religious atmosphere in the family home is also necessary.²⁶

The practical realization of the latter thought from the household instructions can be seen in the Epistles to Timothy. They contain fragments describing the circumstances in which their addressee found himself and that led him to the faith, the faith that “first lived in [his] grandmother Lois and in [his] mother Eunice (2 Timothy 1, 5). St. Paul praises the attitude of those two when, considering that Timothy’s father was a pagan, it was they who had to undertake the task of bringing up their son and grandson as a Christian and who did this task well. Thus it can be seen that even when only one parent is a disciple of Christ then his true religiosity leads to the appropriate education of the child. Setting aside the peculiar situation of this specific family, one can broadly say that the true source of children’s faith is the vital and authentic faith of the parents.²⁷ However, it should be added that in addition to the life example set by the parents, it is also important to teach youngsters about the substance of the faith. This is attested by the apostle’s following words directed

²⁵ A. Jankowski, *Listy więzienne świętego Pawła...*, op. cit., p. 494.

²⁶ Cf. A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians...*, op. cit., p. 408.

²⁷ Cf. T. Herrmann, *Obowiązki rodziców...*, op. cit., p. 47.

towards Timothy: “But you remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known (the) sacred scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3: 14–15). In addition to the thoughts apparent in the *Polish Millennium Bible* that the transmitted substance of the faith as well as the message of the Sacred Scriptures make man wise and strengthen his faith, leading to his salvation, it is also worth mentioning that the express “because you know from whom you learned it” could be translated more literally as: “knowing from whom you have learned it” (εἰδὼς παρὰ τίνων ἔμαθες). Such a translation allows one to notice that at least several people had a significant impact on Timothy’s faith.²⁸ In addition to St. Paul himself, they must have included his aforementioned mother and grandmother, since the subsequent verse says: “from infancy²⁹ you have known (the) sacred scriptures.” Because Timothy had known them already at a young age, one can suppose that it was the women who looked after him who took care of his Biblical education.³⁰ Thus Christian parents, aware of the fact that the Word of God is what should direct a person’s life, should gradually lead their children into knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures starting at an early age.

In the Pauline epistles one can also find a message regulating the material dimension of the relationship between a father and mother and their offspring. In writing to the Corinthians that he would like to visit them once again but did not want to be supported by them during this stay,

²⁸ Cf. R. F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. A Commentary*, Louisville–London 2002, p. 262 (The New Testament Library).

²⁹ The Greek expression ἀπὸ βρέφους (“since infancy”) is a hyperbole whose purpose is to indicate that Timothy’s Biblical education began at a very young age. Thus this expression can also be translated as “from the earliest years.” – cf. R. Popowski, M. Wojciechowski, *Grecko-polski Nowy Testament. Wydanie interlinearne z kluczem gramatycznym, z kodami Stronga i Popowskiego oraz pełną transliteracją greckiego tekstu*, Warszawa 2014, p. 1146 (Prymasowska Seria Biblijna, 40).

³⁰ Cf. J. Szlaga, *Spoleczne i teologiczne aspekty biblijnego spojrzenia na dziecko*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego” 23 (1980) nr 3, p. 56.

St. Paul argues using the following maxim: “Children ought not to save for their parents, but parents for their children” (2 Corinthians 12: 14). For the apostle, it is natural that parents should ensure their sons’ and daughters’ material needs, but what is more, they should manage their estate in such a way that they may later help them when they will enter into independent adult life.³¹ However, as other New Testament uses of the verb *θησαυρίζω* (“store up for yourselves treasures”) as well as the related noun *θησαυρός* (“treasury, treasure, resource,”³², cf. Matthew 6:19–20, Luke 12:21, 33) indicate, this can not only refer to the pursuit of riches and earthly goods but also non-material values, such as showing devotion and love to children or giving them spiritual support and praying for them.

The declaration “children ought not to save for their parents, but parents for their children” shows a certain natural correctness that is present in society, that usually the father and mother help their offspring. However, this declaration cannot be interpreted as a principle freeing children from the duty of helping their children, especially, when the former need it.³³ This is confirmed by St. Paul’s admonishment to Timothy, the bishop of a community who had to support many widows without any resources necessary for life. The apostle’s numerous instructions include: “But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let these first learn to perform their religious duty to their own family and to make recompense to their parents, for this is pleasing to God” (1 Timothy 5:4).³⁴ From a very young age, children should be formed in the spirit of service so that they may be capable of noticing the needs of others and take care of others as appropriate to the existing situation; from a later perspective, they should also take care of their elderly, decrepit parents. St. Paul’s recently referenced

³¹ Cf. C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 2000, p. 396 (Prymasowska Seria Biblijna, 16).

³² Cf. R. Popowski, *Wielki słownik grecko-polski...*, op. cit., p. 281 f.

³³ Cf. R. P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Dallas 1986, p. 441 f. (Word Biblical Commentary, 40).

³⁴ Cf. H. Langkammer, *Listy pasterskie. Pierwszy list do Tymoteusza. Drugi list do Tymoteusza. List do Tytusa*, Lublin 2006, p. 60 f. (Biblia Lubelska). In the early Church, widows devoted to God created something of a separate state.

teaching discusses precisely this situation. In conclusion, it is worth noting that this is a fragment dealing with the topic of forming adults.³⁵ Thus the education of young people does not end at the moment when they attain maturity, but it should occur throughout their adult lives; however, at that point that should happen more through counseling, encouragement, and persuasion while respecting their freedom.³⁶

2. Pedagogical Instructions in the Letter to the Hebrews

In the latter part of the present article it is worth studying what the Letter to the Hebrews says on the topic of education. To a large degree, this text deals with topics in the field of Christology;³⁷ however, in the final parenetical part the pericope Hebrews 12:4–11 appears, which is the longest fragment of the New Testament dealing with the topic of bringing up youths or, more strictly speaking, the topic of God's pedagogy explained by comparing it to human educational methods.

Being aware of the various difficulties (including the hostility of the surroundings and the danger of persecutions) and seeing the weakening of faith of the addressees of the epistle caused by them presents these contradictions as God's pedagogy, or activities whose aim is to shape their thinking and actions in such a way that they may be faithful and

³⁵ Cf. C. S. Keener, *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy...*, op. cit., p. 476.

³⁶ Another New Testament text discussing the admonishment of adults in the following summons to older women: "Similarly, older women should be reverent in their behavior, not slanderers, not addicted to drink, teaching what is good, so that they may train younger women to love their husbands and children." (Titus 2:3–4). An explanation of the subordination of wives to their husbands can be found in the earlier fragment of the article.

³⁷ Cf. A. Tronina, *Chrystologia Listu do Hebrajczyków*, „Częstochowskie Studia Teologiczne” 25 (1997), p. 23.

obedient children of God.³⁸ However, this admonishment begins with the formulation of an accusation based on an Old Testament quote from Proverbs 3: 11–12: “You have also forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons: ‘My son, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord or lose heart when reproved by Him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines; He scourges every son He acknowledges (Hebrews 12 : 5–6). The words used here, the noun παιδεία and the verb παιδεύω, mean “educating, teaching,” but also “corporal punishment,” which in the ancient world was an ordinary, commonly used educational method. It was precisely in this meaning that the term was frequently used in Jewish sapiential literature to describe God’s harsh, but wise and educational approach to humanity.³⁹

For the contemporary person, the message of the cited Old Testament fragment, which implies that the effect of God’s love is punishment and that the result of recognizing him or her as a son or daughter is whipping by God, while each of these disciplinary methods portrays unpleasantness and difficulty that humans experience, may cause certain difficulty to the modern reader. Thus in order to explain this type of admonishment it is worth recalling the following verses of the text under discussion: “God treats you as sons. For what ‘son’ is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are without discipline, in which all have shared, you are not sons but bastards” (Hebrews 12, 7b-8). Here there is an argument resulting from observation of contemporary social life, which indicated that not only “bastards” were subject to punishment. The term νόθοι used here means “illegitimate children conceived as a result of the sin of adultery,” who as a result of their shameful origin were usually not acknowledged by their fathers, who were uninterested in them, and as a result of which they expressed no concern about raising them.⁴⁰ However, things

³⁸ Cf. R. Brown, *The Message of Hebrews. Christ above All*, Leicester 1982, p. 231.

³⁹ As a result of the Old Testament use of the term παιδεία, *The Polish Millennium* more frequently translates it as “punishing” and “disciplining” than as “education” cf. P. Wańczyk, *Wpatrzeni w Jezusa. Życie chrześcijan w świetle Listu do Hebrajczyków*, Kraków 2015, p. 34 f.

⁴⁰ Cf. R. Bogacz, *Misja Chrystusa w świetle hapax legomenów*, Kraków 2006, p. 559 f. (List do Hebrajczyków, 2).

were different with children conceived in marriage; they were subject to formation (which took place through punishment) so that in the future they would become wise, good, and respectable citizens and at the same time be a source of pride for their parents.⁴¹ Thus disciplining and whippings at the hands of the loving God the Father are an indication that God is not indifferent to His children, or those who believe in Him. He does not abandon them, but instead forms them for their good and for their future happiness.⁴² In this spirit, it could also be said that for the education of children by their earthly guardians to be indeed effective, παιδεία understood not necessary as corporal punishment, but above all as the demanding of certain standards and second of all as censure or giving (non-physical) punishments when children misbehave and regular admonishments do not work, is necessary.⁴³

These conclusions are confirmed by St. Paul's next words to the Hebrews: "Besides this, we have had our earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not (then) submit all the more to the Father of spirits and live?" (Hebrews 12:9). Wanting to emphasize the legitimacy of accepting and carrying the burdens that God sends on man, the hagiographer refers to the addressees' experiences. He presupposes that practically every adult person has had to remember a situation in which harshness expressed by his or her parents was something very unpleasant for the child but ultimately brought forth unexpectedly useful effects.⁴⁴ What's more, as often turns out after many years, such a situation not only did not lead to the questioning of a father's or mother's authority, but it even resulted in an increase in respect for him or her. Thus there is a moral for parents that when raising children there sometimes are times when they will behave inappropriately, more or less consciously, and then for their good and true happiness the guardians who truly love them would

⁴¹ Cf. A. Paciorek, *List do Hebrajczyków. Tłumaczenie wstęp i komentarz*, Lublin 1998, p. 146 (Biblia Lubelska).

⁴² Cf. R. Bogacz, *Dzieło zbawienia w ludzkiej Krwi Jezusa według Listu do Hebrajczyków*, Kraków 2007, p. 198 (List do Hebrajczyków, 3).

⁴³ Cf. T. Herrmann, *Obowiązki rodziców...*, op. cit., p. 46.

⁴⁴ Cf. W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, Dallas 1991, p. 423 (Word Biblical Commentary, 47B).

have to be unpleasant and firm. However, an extremely important thing is being able to discern when such an attitude of harshness is necessary.

This appropriate judgment as well as the related selection of disciplinary methods is anything but easy, as the following verse of the analyzed fragment indicates: “They disciplined us for a short time as seemed right for them, but he does so for our benefit, in order that we may share His holiness” (Hebrews 12:10). In His omniscience and omnipotence, God raises people through experiences that unfailingly lead them to the highest good and advantage that is holiness. This goal should also guide Christian spouses in forming their offspring. As the text says, earthly raising of children occurs “in accordance with their⁴⁵ will” (κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτοῖς), which should be translated more literally as: “what would seem [good] to them,” “as they see fit.”⁴⁶ Here there is the possibility of committing errors resulting possibly from a false evaluation of reality, desire for domination, human selfishness, or other results of being marked by original sin. However, despite this human imperfection parents should strive for being able to correctly discern what in raising their children should be uplifting to them. Such an ability can be attained by living in grace, but also through one’s own spiritual and intellectual formation.

It should be added that these formation attempts of fathers and mothers literally took place “for a short time” (πρὸς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας; *Polish Millennium Bible*: “over the course of a few days”). As some commentators say, this expression suggests that the efforts of those who raise children influences not only life on this earth or, as others suggest, that they have influence only when young people are formed in their family home, and thus until the moment when they attain adulthood. However, God’s pedagogy lasts throughout one’s entire life, and its consequences also impact one’s future life in heaven. Thus this casts light on the relativity of

⁴⁵ The pronoun that appears in the Greek text refers to the word πατέρας (“fathers”; cf. Hebrews 12:9), although, as has been mentioned in the first part of this article, the plural form of the term πατήρ could refer to both parents.

⁴⁶ P. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids 1993, p. 655 (The New International Greek Testament Commentary).

human formation and informs the father and mother that on this earth they are only God's substitutes.⁴⁷

At the end of the comparison between human pedagogy and God's pedagogy, St. Paul brings up the topic of those people who were subject to a harsh upbringing: "At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it" (Hebrews 12:11). This contains the obvious thought that discipline is unpleasant to those who are subject to it, but it is also worth adding that its necessity also is not something simple or pleasant for loving parents.⁴⁸ However, this should be seen from a broader perspective, which is the award the in the *Polish Millennium Bible* has been illustrated as the blissful harvest of justice," or, more precisely according to the Greek text: καρπὸν εἰρηνικὸν [...] δικαιοσύνης – "the fruit of peaceful justice." Thus these positive future effects of pedagogical formation are peace of spirit and heart as well as justice and integrity,⁴⁹ and above all attainment of the most important purpose that is eternal life, because that is what the expression "the harvest of justice" means in the Bible.⁵⁰

Thus concluding discussion of the pericope from the Letter to the Hebrews, it should be said that raising a child is a long, albeit transitory process during which children must experience both pleasant things as well as those unpleasant reactions of their parents that are incomprehensible for them at the time. However, the latter should take place only when their aim is to make children that are brought up to be upstanding people obedient to God and bringing them to true joy and peace; ultimately to their salvation. These are the rules that God uses in His pedagogy towards

⁴⁷ Cf. S. Łach, *List do Hebrajczyków. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału, komentarz – eskursy*, Poznań 1959, p. 275 (Pismo Święte Nowego Testamentu, 10).

⁴⁸ Cf. A. C. Mitchell, *Hebrews*, Collegeville 2007, p. 273 (Sacra Pagina Series, 13).

⁴⁹ Cf. E. McKnight, Ch. Church, *Hebrews – James*, Georgia 2004, p. 293 (The Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, 28).

⁵⁰ Cf. K. Romaniuk, A. Jankowski, L. Stachowiak, *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, vol. 2, Poznań-Kraków 1999, p. 471.

His human children, and it should be a model for fathers and mothers in bringing up their children.⁵¹

Conclusion

The instructions related to bringing up children that are found in the *Corpus Paulinum* are not especially numerous, which allows one to say that the topic under discussion is not one of the most important Biblical motifs. However, this does not diminish the significance of the admonishments analyzed in this article. Among them, the most valuable is that of the household instructions found in the Letter to the Colossians and Letter to the Ephesians. They demonstrate how important the matter of appropriate relations between family members is. Parents should express interest in their children and devote them time, and they should approach them with respect and understanding. However, sons and daughters should express to their parents obedience resulting from gratitude for the gift of life and of being raised by them, but above all because such behavior is pleasing to God. Raising children in the faith and in true religiosity plays a key role in forming the person in holiness. The example of the father and mother's deep religious life have great significance in this respect, as does teaching children the contents of the faith and familiarizing them with the Bible at an early age. It is also essential to meet the material needs of young people, which should go hand in hand with making them sensitive to the need to help others. However, in addition to these positive pedagogical methods, in order to indicate to children that their choice of behavior is wrong, guardians should react in a more decisive and harsh way in situations when a son or daughter misbehaves.

The abovementioned instructions came from the pen of St. Paul or persons strictly under the influence of his thinking. They present a way of sanctification both for parents and children, in whose case formation undertaken in youth will bear fruit in adult life. The motivation for fulfilling

⁵¹ Cf. A. Paciorek, *List do Hebrajczyków...*, op. cit., p. 147.

these instructions is faith in God, which for Christians is the most important point of reference. Thus putting these teachings into life is simultaneously the realization of St. Paul the Apostle's beautiful summons: "whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Abstract

Pedagogical Instruction for Parents in *Corpus Paulinum*

The Bible first and foremost focuses on spiritual issues, but also deals with matters related to everyday life. The upbringing of children belongs to the latter category. Despite the fact that it is a mundane activity, it has great significance, both worldly and supernatural, for the future life of a young person. This truth has become a stimulus for the author to undertake exegetical research concerning the pedagogical directions that are contained in the Pauline epistles, as well as in the Letter to the Hebrews. The analysis of selected passages emphasizes how important it is to take care of proper family relationships that are based on concern, respect, mutual understanding, and children's obedience to their parents. It is vital to secure the material needs of sons and daughters, but also to make them empathetic and to encourage them to help people in need. What is more, when children behave inappropriately, parents should be strict and react immediately in order to make them aware of their wrong behavior. All of these suggestions stem from the faith in God, which for Christians should be the main point of reference in their lives. It is only natural then that in St. Paul's letters we can find verses appreciating the importance of early religious and Biblical education.

Keywords

Upbringing; pedagogy; formation children; youth; parents; father; mother; family; family relations

References

- Adamczewski B., *List do Filemona. List do Kolosan. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz*, Częstochowa 2006 (Nowy Komentarz Biblijny Nowy Testament, 12).
- Barth M., Blanke H., *Colossians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, New York-London-Toronto 1994 (The Anchor Bible, 34B).
- Bogacz R., *Dzieło zbawienia w ludzkiej Krwi Jezusa według Listu do Hebrajczyków*, Kraków 2007 (List do Hebrajczyków, 3).
- Bogacz R., *Misja Chrystusa w świetle hapax legomenów*, Kraków 2006 (List do Hebrajczyków, 2).
- Brown R., *The Message of Hebrews. Christ above All*, Leicester 1982.
- Collins R. F., *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. A Commentary*, Louisville-London 2002 (The New Testament Library).
- Dunn J. D., *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids 1996 (The New International Greek Testament Commentary).
- Ellingworth P., *The Epistle to the Hebrews. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids 1993 (The New International Greek Testament Commentary).
- Herrmann T., *Obowiązki rodziców względem dzieci w Nowym Testamencie*, „Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny” 14 (1961) nr 1–2, p. 43–52.
- Jankowski A., *Listy więzienne świętego Pawła. Do Filipian – do Kolosan – do Filemona – do Efezjan. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału – komentarz*, Poznań 1962 (Pismo Święte Nowego Testamentu, 8).
- Keener C. S., *Komentarz historyczno-kulturowy do Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 2000 (Prymasowska Seria Biblijna, 16).
- Lane W. L., *Hebrews 9–13*, Dallas 1991 (Word Biblical Commentary, 47B).
- Langkammer H., *List do Kolosan. Tłumaczenie, wstęp i komentarz*, Lublin 2002 (Biblia Lubelska).
- Langkammer H., *Listy pasterskie. Pierwszy list do Tymoteusza. Drugi list do Tymoteusza. List do Tytusa*, Lublin 2006 (Biblia Lubelska).
- Larkin W. J., *Ephesians. A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Waco 2009 (Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament).
- Lincoln A. T., *Ephesians*, Dallas 1990 (Word Biblical Commentary, 42).
- Łach J., *Kodeks domowy w Liście do Kolosan (Kol 3, 18–4, 1)*, „Analecta Cracoviensia” 27 (1995), p. 219–231.

- Lach S., *List do Hebrajczyków. Wstęp – przekład z oryginału, komentarz – ekskursy*, Poznań 1959 (Pismo Święte Nowego Testamentu, 10).
- Martin R. P., *2 Corinthians*, Dallas 1986 (Word Biblical Commentary, 40).
- McKnight E., Church Ch., *Hebrews – James*, Georgia 2004 (The Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, 28).
- Mickiewicz F., *Zagadnienia etyczne*, [in:] *Teologia Nowego Testamentu*, vol. 3. Listy Pawłowe, Katolickie i List do Hebrajczyków, red. Rosik M., Wrocław 2008, p. 307–373 (Bibliotheca Biblica).
- Mitchell A. C., *Hebrews*, Colledgeville 2007 (Sacra Pagina Series, 13).
- O'Brien P. T., *Colossians. Philemon*, Dallas 1982 (Word Biblical Commentary, 44).
- Paciorek A., *List do Hebrajczyków. Tłumaczenie wstęp i komentarz*, Lublin 1998 (Biblia Lubelska).
- Popowski R., *Wielki słownik grecko-polski Nowego Testamentu. Wydanie z pełną lokalizacją greckich haseł, kluczem polsko-greckim oraz indeksem form czasownikowych*, Warszawa 1994 (Prymasowska Seria Biblijna, 3).
- Popowski R., Wojciechowski M., *Grecko-polski Nowy Testament. Wydanie interlinearne z kluczem gramatycznym, z kodami Stronga i Popowskiego oraz pełną transliteracją greckiego tekstu*, Warszawa 2014 (Prymasowska Seria Biblijna, 40).
- Romaniuk K., Jankowski A., Stachowiak L., *Komentarz praktyczny do Nowego Testamentu*, vol. 1–2, Poznań–Kraków 1999.
- Standhartinger A., *The origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians*, „Journal for the Study of the New Testament” 23 (2001) nr 79, p. 117–130, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0142064X0102307910>.
- Szlaga J., *Społeczne i teologiczne aspekty biblijnego spojrzenia na dziecko*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego” 23 (1980) nr 3, p. 51–61.
- Tronina A., *Chrystologia Listu do Hebrajczyków*, „Częstochowskie Studia Teologiczne” 25 (1997), p. 23–29.
- Wańczyk P., *Wpatrzeni w Jezusa. Życie chrześcijan w świetle Listu do Hebrajczyków*, Kraków 2015.

