

“Where Did We Fail?”

A mother or father tells me, “My son (or daughter) obeyed the gospel when twelve years of age. He never missed Bible class or worship, and made talks on Wednesday nights. When he went away to college and began to hear arguments on evolution and all that junk, he really stood up for the Bible. I remember the first Thanksgiving holiday he came home, he told us all about the discussion he had with his teachers. He even tried to convert his roommate. But now, the boy has finished college and is married. He never goes to church, and he won’t let us talk to him about it. Brother Turner, our boy has lost his faith.”

The dad is terribly hurt about the matter, and certainly thinks he is telling me the truth about everything. But let’s run it through again -- if we can bear the pain of doing so.

The boy (or girl) was “brought up in the church,” and from early childhood was impressed with the fact that as soon as he was old enough he would be baptized and partake of the Lord’s supper. So he did! He never missed a service, because his parents wouldn’t allow it. He “made talks” dutifully, being true to “the system,” just as he studied and recited at school. His parents, their social circle, peers of his environment, all, “believed in God and the Bible” so he thought he believed also. Evolution was “that junk” but if he ever heard it intelligently discussed it was ridiculed in specious arguments, or in labored terms he didn’t understand.

When he first met evolution, modernism, social theism, etc., as real live concepts, espoused by those he now respected (teachers), or his social peers (students), he dutifully responded (he spent an hour finding 2 Timothy 3:16-17, and was shocked at its seeming incongruity in this new setting). They didn’t even believe the Bible! Or, he sought to meet a Ph.D. on the professor’s ground, and of course was unprepared. At Thanksgiving he may have passed the questions on to his parents, and they said, “Oh, you know that is wrong.” Did he?

His bride came from this setting, or maybe a generation later; but do not blame her (he selected her, remember). The truth is, he has never had a mature faith, has never really obeyed the gospel. Inherited religion is a poor substitute for the real thing! The boy may never have seriously appraised himself, the scriptures, or the gospel. He probably blames his parents for the inner conflict he feels at times -- and yet he treats his own children the same way, with different standards of course. He tries to teach them what

he thinks is best for them, in the best way he knows how. He can't believe his father faced such situations as he has had to face.

We can't dismiss the matter by saying, "Let children grow up absolutely free to believe and act however they please." We may not teach them, but none live in a vacuum. Also, this is an abdication of responsibility, and assumes that man is an authority unto himself. Godless societies certainly do not recommend themselves upon honest investigation, even in this world.

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