

# EXCELSIOR NEWSLETTER

Excelsior Classical Covenantal Community

September 2008

www.excelsiorclassical.org

## “The Duties of Parents” by J. C. Ryle

Hint #4. Train with this thought continually before your eyes—that the soul of your child is the first thing to be considered.

Precious, no doubt, are these little ones in your eyes; but if you truly love them, then often think about their souls. Nothing should concern you as greatly as their eternal destiny. No part of them should be so dear to you as that part which will never die. The world, with all its glory, will pass away; "The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare." But the spirit which dwells in those little creatures, whom you love so well, will outlive them all, and whether they spend eternity in happiness or misery will depend a lot on you (speaking from man's perspective).

This is the thought that should be uppermost on your mind in all that you do for your children. In every step you take about them, in every plan, and scheme, and arrangement that concerns them, do not leave out that mighty question, "How will this affect their souls?"

To love the soul is to really love. To pet and pamper and indulge your child, as if this world was all he had to look forward to, and this life the only period of happiness—to do this is not true love, but cruelty. It is treating him like some beast of the earth, which has only one world to look to, and nothing after death. It is hiding from him that grand truth, which he ought to be made to learn from his very infancy—that the number one goal of his life is the salvation of his soul.

A true Christian must not be a slave to what's currently "in-fashion," if he wants to train his child for heaven. He must not be content to teach them and instruct them in certain ways, merely because it is customary, or to allow them to read books of a questionable sort, merely because everybody else reads them, or to let them form bad habits, merely because they are the habits of the day. He must train with an eye to his children's souls. He must not be ashamed to hear his training called odd and strange. What if it is? The time is short—the customs of this world are passing away. He that has trained his children for heaven, rather than for the earth—for God, rather than for man—he is the parent that will be called wise in the end.

Hint #5. Train your child to have a knowledge of the Bible.

You cannot make your children love the Bible, I admit. No one but the Holy Spirit can give us a heart to delight in the Word.

But you can make sure that your children are acquainted with the Bible; and remember

### Correction:

The website used to download this sermon for the previous newsletter contained an error. It quoted Mr. Ryle as saying "Hint #3. Train your children with a lasting conviction in your mind, that most of it depends on you." However, he actually said, "Train your children with an abiding persuasion on your mind that much depends on you."

### September Clean-Up

**September 5th** - Crampton family

**September 12th** - Crowe family

**September 19th** - Dye family

**September 26th** - Fradenburg family

### PSAT Testing

Reminder for our 10th & 11th graders. This year's PSAT test will take place on **Wednesday, October 15** at Tupelo High School. You must sign up by the end of September.

**10th graders** can take the test for practice.

**11th graders** can take the test **this year only** to qualify for National Merit and compete for extensive scholarships.

Contact Ms. Harris at THS at 662-841-8980. There is a \$13 fee to sign up which must be paid at the high school.

that they can never become acquainted with that blessed book too soon, or too well.

A thorough knowledge of the Bible is the foundation of all proper views of true religion. He that is well-grounded in the Bible will not generally be found to be a person who wavers in his beliefs. He will not be blown and tossed by every wind of new doctrine. Any system of training which does not make the knowledge of Scripture the first priority is unsafe and unsound.

You need to be very careful on this point, for the devil is in the world, and false doctrine abounds. Some are to be found among us who wrongly give to the Church the honor that is due to Jesus Christ. Some are to be found who make "rituals and forms" into saviors and passports to eternal life. And some are to be found in like manner who honor a catechism more than the Bible, or fill the minds of their children with miserable little story-books, instead of the Scripture of truth. But if you love your children, let the simple truths of the Bible be everything in the training of their souls; and let all other books take second place.

Do not care so much for your children being mighty in the catechism, as for them being mighty in the Scriptures. This is the training, believe me, that God will honor. The Psalmist says to God, "You have exalted above all things Your name and Your word." [Psalm 138:2] and I think that He gives a special blessing to everyone who tries to magnify His Word and His Name among children.

See that your children read the Bible reverently. Train them to look upon it, not as the word of men, but as it truly is, the Word of God, written by the Holy Spirit Himself—all true, all profitable, and able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

*"Christian education, more than anything else, has prepared a large body of the people for a wide rejection of Hinduism, and for a reception of Christ as the Saviour, should it please God graciously to pour out His Spirit from on high on this land. All history proclaims that this is the way in which God generally works. There are long seasons of preparation; the truth is spread; obstacles are removed out of the way, and then God comes in His power and turns the people to Himself. A nation is then born in a day; a little one becomes a thousand; and a small one a strong nation."*

*--Missionary Alexander B. Campbell, in a letter written from Madras, India to the Scottish Free Church Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1861 to explain the tremendous resources devoted to establishing truly Christian schools.*

See that they read it regularly. Train them to regard it as their soul's daily food—as something essential to their soul's daily health. I well know that you cannot make this anything more than a form; but there is no telling the amount of sin which a mere form may indirectly restrain.

See that they read it all. You need not shrink from bringing any doctrine before them. You need not assume that the leading doctrines of Christianity are things which children cannot understand. Children understand far more of the Bible than we are apt to suppose.

Tell them of sin, its guilt, its consequences, its power, its vileness: you will find they can comprehend this.

Tell them of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His work for our salvation—the atonement, the cross, the blood, the sacrifice, the intercession: you will discover that it is not beyond them to understand.

Tell them of the work of the Holy Spirit in man's heart, how He changes, and renews, and sanctifies, and purifies: you will soon see they can follow your teaching to some degree. In short, I believe that we have no idea how much a little child can take in of the length and breadth of the glorious gospel. They understand far more of these things than we suppose.

As to the age when the religious instruction of a child should begin, no general rule can be laid down. The mind seems to open in some children much more quickly than in others. We seldom begin too early. There are wonderful examples on record of what a child can attain to, even at three years of age.

Fill their minds with Scripture. Let the Word dwell in them richly. Give them the Bible, the whole Bible, even while they are young.

Hint #6. Train them to have a habit of prayer.

Hint #7. Train them to be faithful and regular in attending church and the Lord's Supper.

Hint #8. Train them to have a habit of faith.

Hint #9. Train them to have a habit of obedience.

Hint #10. Train them to have a habit of always speaking the truth.

Hint #11. Train them to have a habit of always redeeming the time.

Hint #12. As you train your children, make sure that you maintain a constant fear of being an over-indulgent parent.

Hint #13. As you train your children, continually remember how God trains His children.

Hint #14. Train them, remembering continually, the influence of your own example.

Hint #15. Train them, remembering continually, the power of sin.

Hint #16. Train them, remembering continually, the promises of Scripture.

Hint #17. Lastly, train them with continual prayer for a blessing on all you do.

Lunch info TBA.

Lunch