

EXCELSIOR NEWSLETTER

Excelsior Classical Covenantal Community

August 2008

www.excelsiorclassical.org

“The Duties of Parents” by J. C. Ryle

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

I believe that most professing Christians are acquainted with our sermon text. The sound of it is probably very familiar to your ears, like an old tune. It is likely that you have heard it, or read it, talked of it, or quoted it, many times. Is that not true?

Welcome New Families

Anthony Mathenia
Ellie (Kindergarten)
Issac (1 year old)

Nathan & Virginia
McCallum
Benjamin (2nd grade)
Jonathan
(Kindergarten)

Trey & Laura McCoy
Lee (Kindergarten)

But, despite it being a well-known Bible verse, how little do we regard its truth! The doctrine it contains appears scarcely known, the duty it puts before us is seldom put into practice. My friends, am I not speaking the truth?

It cannot be said that the subject is a new one. The world is old, and we have the experience of nearly six thousand years to help us. We live in days when there is a mighty zeal for education. We hear of new schools rising up everywhere. We are told of new systems, and new books for the young, of every sort and description. And still for all of this, the vast majority of children are clearly not trained in the way they should go, for when they grow up, they do not walk with God.

Now how do we account for this state of affairs? The plain truth is, the Lord's commandment in our text is not regarded; and therefore the Lord's promise in our text is not fulfilled.

Beginning of the Year Party

Friday, August 29th at Ballard Park
You may come directly after classes.

Pizza to be delivered at 5:30
games to follow!

More information will be sent.
Contact Laura McCoy or Jenny Smith for
more info

Parent Meeting

7 p.m., August 21st

West Jackson Baptist Church

It is imperative that all parents attend this vital meeting. We will be discussing important information for the school year, as well as handing out the students' books. Please be sure to bring enough copies of your class syllabi for each of your students (and two extra copies for the Excelsior file) to pass out at the meeting.



Friends, these things may cause you to seriously search your hearts. Permit a word of exhortation from a minister, about the right training of children. Believe me, the subject is one that should hit home to every conscience, and make every one ask himself the question, "In the matter of training children, am I doing what I am supposed to do?"

It is a subject that concerns almost everyone. There is hardly a household that it does not touch. Parents, teachers, grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters—all have an interest in it. Few can be found, I think, who might not influence some parent in the management of his family, or affect the training of some child by suggestion or advice. All of us, I suspect, can do something here, either directly or indirectly, and I wish to stir up everyone to remember this.

It is also a subject, on which everyone concerned are in great danger of falling short of their duty. This is notably a point in which men can see the faults of their neighbors more

clearly than their own. They will often raise their children in the very path which they have denounced to their friends as unsafe. They will see little problems in other people's families, and overlook major ones in their own. They will have the eyesight of an eagle in detecting mistakes everywhere else, and yet be blind as bats to the fatal errors which are daily going on in their own homes. They will be wise about their brother's house, but foolish about their own flesh and blood. Here, if anywhere, we have need to suspect our own judgment. This, too, you will do well to keep in mind.

As a minister, I cannot help remarking that there is hardly any subject about which people seem so stubborn as they are about their own children. I have sometimes been absolutely astonished at the slowness of sensible Christian parents to accept the fact, that their own children are at fault, or deserve blame. There are many persons to whom I would much rather speak about their own sins, than to tell them that their children had done anything wrong.

Come now, and let me place before you a few hints about the proper training of children. May God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit bless them, and make them timely words to everyone of you. Do not reject them because they are blunt and simple; do not despise them because they contain nothing new. You can be sure, that if you want to train your children for heaven, then the hints that that follow ought not to be lightly set aside.

Hint #1. If you want to train your children correctly, train them in the way they should go, and not in the way that they want to go.

Remember children are born with a definite bias towards evil, and therefore if you let them choose for themselves, they are certain to choose wrong.

The mother cannot tell what her tender little infant may grow up to be—tall or short, weak or strong, wise or foolish—he may be any of these things or not—it is all uncertain. But one thing the mother can say with certainty: he will have a corrupt and sinful heart. It is natural for us to do wrong. "Folly," says Solomon, "is bound up in the heart of a child" [Proverbs 22:15]. "A child left to himself disgraces his mother" [Proverbs 29:15]. Our hearts are like the earth on which we walk; leave it alone, and it is sure to bear weeds.

If, then, you want to be wise in dealing with your child, then you must not leave him to the guidance of his own will.

Medieval Festival

Our Medieval Feast is planned for November 22. It would be wonderful if everyone (including parents) would come in costume. Start making plans now to make, buy, or borrow your favorite costume. We look forward to seeing knights, jesters, troubadours, lords, ladies, kings & queens.

Heather Duley has offered to make costumes for this special event. She has several patterns that you may choose from that she will bring to the parent meeting. The fee will be \$40 per costume plus materials.

Kindly & Gently

Sign-Up List

The following people have signed up to assist in the following areas:

Medieval Festival

Heather Duley
Nichole Hardin
Jenny Smith

Ministry/Outreach

Heather Duley

Fellowship

Park Days-

Jenny Smith
Laura McCoy

High School Get Together-

Kathy Strevel

Mom's Night Out-

Movie Night-

Shakespeare Nights

Danette Becker
Rachel Green

Field Trips

Science-

Nichole Hardin

Renaissance Art Exhibit-

End of the Year Program/Party

Administrative

Newsletter

Christmas Brunch

The following families have not yet signed up for a committee:
Crowe, Dye, Hill, McCallum, Morris, Ramsey, Tate, Thompson

Think for him, judge for him, act for him, just as you would for one who is weak and blind; but for pity's sake, do not allow him to pursue his own unruly tastes and inclinations. It must not be his tendencies and wishes that are favored. He

does not yet know what is good for his mind and soul, any more than what is good for his body. You do not let him decide what he will eat, and what he will drink, and how he will be clothed. Be consistent, and deal with his mind in the same manner. Train him in the way that is scriptural and right, and not in the way that he thinks is right.

If you cannot agree with this first principle of Christian training, then it is useless for you to listen any further. Self-will is almost the first thing that appears in a child's mind; and it must be your first step to resist it.

Hint #2. Train your child with all tenderness, affection, and patience.

I do not mean that you are to spoil him, but I do mean that you should let him see that you love him.

Love should be the golden thread that runs through all your actions in dealing with the child. Kindness, gentleness, tolerance, patience, sympathy, a willingness to enter into childish troubles, a readiness to take part in childish joys—these are the cords by which a child may be led most easily—these are the clues you must follow if you would find the way to his heart.

Most persons, even among grown-up people, are more easily led than they are to be pushed. There is that

in all of our minds which rises up against compulsion; we

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.

straighten up our backs and stiffen our necks at the very thought of a forced obedience. We are like young horses in the hand of a trainer: handle them kindly, and they will learn quickly, and in time you may guide them with a piece of thread; but treat them and use them roughly and violently, and it will be many months before you get mastery over them—if at all.

Now children's minds are cast in much the same mold as our own. Sternness and severity of manner causes them to be unresponsive and to back away. It shuts up their hearts, and you will wear yourself out trying to find the door. But only let them see that you have an affectionate feeling towards them—that you really desire to make them happy, and do them good—that if you punish them, it is intended for their good, and that, like the pelican, you would give your heart's blood to nourish their souls; let them see this, and they will soon be yours to mold and shape. But they must be wooed with kindness, if you ever hope to win their attention.

And surely reason itself might teach us this lesson. Children are weak and tender creatures, and, as such, they need patient and considerate treatment. We must handle them delicately, like frail objects, lest by rough handling we do

more harm than good. They are like young plants, and need gentle watering—often, only a little at a time.

We must not expect everything at once. We must remember what children are, and teach them as they are able to bear. Their minds are like a lump of metal—not to be forged and made useful all at once, but only after a succession of little blows of the forger's hammer. Their ability to understand what we are teaching them is like the small opening of a wine bottle: we must pour in the wine of knowledge gradually, or else most of it will be spilled and lost. Our rule must be, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, a little here and a little there." The hard stone used to sharpen knives does its work slowly, but frequent rubbing will bring it to a fine edge. Truly there is a need of patience in this training of a child, for without it nothing can be done.

Nothing will compensate for the absence of this tenderness and love. A minister may speak the truth as it is in Jesus, clearly and with all authority; but if he does not speak it in love, few souls will be won. Likewise, you must set before your children their responsibilities to God—you can command, threaten, punish, and try to reason with them—but if love is missing in the way you treat them, then your labor will be all in vain.

Love is the one great secret of successful training. Anger and harshness may frighten them, but they will not persuade the child that you are right; and if he often sees you angry and harsh, you will soon cease to have his respect. A father who speaks to his son as Saul did to Jonathan, saying, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you?" [1 Samuel 20:30], that father who speaks like this cannot expect to retain his influence over that son's mind.

Try hard to maintain your child's affections. It is a dangerous thing to make your children afraid of you. Anything is almost better than the coldness and bitterness that will come between you and your children, because they are afraid of you. Fear puts an end to openness between the parent and child—fear leads to concealment—fear sows the seed of hypocrisy, and leads to many lies. There is a great deal of truth in the Apostle's words to the Colossians: "Fathers, do

not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. [Colossians 3:21] Do not ignore his advice.

Hint #3. Train your children with a lasting conviction in your mind, that most of it depends on you.

Grace is the strongest of all principles. See what a great change grace effects when it comes into the heart of an old sinner—how it overturns the strongholds of Satan—how it throws down mountains, and fills up valleys—makes crooked things straight—and newly creates the whole man. Truly nothing is impossible for grace.

Nature, too, is very strong. See how it struggles against the things of the kingdom of God—how it fights against every attempt to be more holy—how it keeps up an unceasing warfare within us to the very last hour of life. Indeed, nature is strong.

But after nature and grace, undoubtedly, there is nothing more powerful than education. Early habits are very important. We are made what we are by training. Our character takes the form of that mold into which our first years are cast. It has been said, that, "Education has a tremendous effect on men's opinions and thinking habits. What children learn in the nursery, will be displayed throughout their lives."—Cecil.

We heavily depend on those who bring us up. We get from them a taste and a bias which clings to us most of the days of our lives. We learn the language of our mothers and fathers, and learn to speak it almost without thinking, and unquestionably we catch something of their manners, ways, and mind at the same time. Time will tell, how much we all owe to early impressions, and how many things in us may be traced back to the seeds sown in the days of our infancy, by those who were around us. A very educated Englishman, has gone so far as to say: "That of all the men we meet with,

nine out of ten are what they are, good or bad, useful or not, according to their education"—Locke

And all this is one of God's merciful arrangements. He gives your children a mind that will receive impressions like moist clay. He gives them a disposition at the starting-point of life to believe what you tell them, and to take for granted what you advise them, and to trust your word rather than a stranger's. He gives you, in short, a golden opportunity of doing them good. See that you do not neglect such an opportunity. Once you let it slip, it is gone forever.

CHENM Support Group
Any family not currently a member of the larger home school support group should consider joining. CHENM offers graduation ceremonies for kindergarten, 8th grade, and seniors. It also offers a yearbook, father-daughter banquet, mother-son dinner, fields trips, picnics, and many other opportunities. Membership is \$20. If you're interest in joining, call Suzette Potts at 869-2823.

Beware of that miserable delusion into which some have fallen—that parents can do nothing for their children, that you must leave them alone, wait for grace, and sit still. These parents would like their children to die the death of the righteous person, but they do nothing to help them live a righteous life. They have great hope, but they receive nothing. And the devil rejoices to see such thinking, just as he always does over anything which seems to excuse laziness, or to encourage neglect.

I know that you cannot convert your child. I know that they who are born again are born, not of the will of man, but of God. But I also know that God specifically says, "Train a child in the way he should go," and that He never gave a command to men and women which He would not give them the grace to perform. And I also know that our duty is not to stand still and dispute the command, but to go forward and obey it. It is only when we move out in obedience that God will meet us. The path of obedience is the way in which He gives the blessing. We only have to do as the servants were commanded at the marriage feast in Cana, to fill the water-pots with water, and we may safely leave it to the Lord to turn that water into wine.

Article to be continued in next month's newsletter

Preparing for the New Year...

Budget Request

Teachers, we need you to let us know right away what your proposed budget will be for the school year! This will include fees for copies, books, or any other materials you might need for your classes. If you do not request a budget, we can not factor one into our family fees.

Syllabus

Don't forget that your syllabus is due at the parent meeting, August 21st for each of your classes. Please make a copy for each student in your class, and two extra copies for the Excelsior files.

'08-09 Calendar

August 21st-	Parent Meeting
August 29th-	First day of Excelsior classes
November 22nd-	Medieval Festival
November 28th-	Thanksgiving break
December 12th-	Last day of semester
January 9th-	Classes resume
March 20th-	Spring break
April 10th-	Easter break
May 15th-	Last day of classes

Work Day:

We have planned two work days at West Jackson Baptist Church. We will be painting, organizing, and doing general clean-up of the building that W. Jackson is graciously allowing us to use. We would appreciate all the help we can get (including dads). The dates are August 9th & 12th from 9 a.m. until we're done!

We would appreciate it if you would bring only older children that are able to work, as we do not have a nursery or a playground area for the younger children.

We are in need of paintbrushes (including the detail ones), rollers, and drop cloths. Please contact Nichole Hardin or Danette Becker if you have specific questions.

