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Newport Mission**

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The belief of the disciples in the resurrection, according to the New Testament, was due simply to the fact of the resurrection. Those disciples came to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead for the simple reason that Jesus had risen from the dead.

—J. Gresham Machen



March 25, 1948

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On Being a Christian Mother

By MRS JOHN J. DeWAARD

THE privileges and duties of a mother are very important. More than any other person in the family she has the opportunity, by her training and influence, to form the lives of her children. What these little ones will be as men and women depends to a large extent upon the mother. It may or may not be true that the mental and spiritual life of the mother affects even her unborn children, but it certainly is true that her views of life and her way of living affect the children growing up around her. The children will be, though not exclusively, yet largely, what mother makes them. They are in her care and keeping during the most impressionable period of their lives. The mother's position is so important that no woman can have a greater honor or a place of more worthwhile influence.

It is, however, in the Christian faith that a mother comes into her own. No mother is the mother she can and ought to be without the Lord Jesus Christ. For the mother who is not a Christian will not and cannot know what is most truly important for her children. She cannot think of them as the gift of God. Her ideals and desires for them must necessarily be confined to this life. But the Christian mother, having been taught by Christ, knows that the greatest good for her children is the knowledge of God. She knows that these little ones are not her own, but belong to God in the covenant of His grace. It is her first desire and deepest concern to teach the children the fear of the Lord. And as the Christian mother seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, the children growing up around her will not fail to recognize that fact. So it is in the Christian faith that a mother attains her highest place as mother, and her greatest honor before God and men.

Mother as a Christian

Since the word "Christian" is used so carelessly and with so many shades of meaning in our day, it is necessary that I say what I mean by the term. A Christian mother is one who joyfully acknowledges in her heart that Jesus

Christ her Savior is the only true teacher. He is the light of the world. It is from Him through His word that mother learns to know what a true mother is in God's sight. A Christian mother according to the teaching of the Lord Jesus, ever seeks to glorify and enjoy God in all her work. As she goes about her tasks, she grows in the grace and knowledge of Christ, realizing each day more fully the greatness and glory of God. Jesus Christ as her only teacher gives her increasingly a fuller understanding of the goodness and mercy of God.

The Christian mother accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as her only Savior. She is fully convinced in her own heart that He and He only brought an offering for sin, which is accepted of the Father. The mother who taught her children the meaning of Christ's death by that poem which begins: "There is a green hill far away", certainly could not have done this if she in her heart did not believe that Jesus did pay it all. As a mother purchased by the blood of Christ she offers herself to her family. By her life and work she ever tries to express gratitude to her Savior for the salvation freely given her. She thinks of no service in her home as humble or mean. All that she does is done in gratitude to her Lord. The fountain of her life is the love of God for her. It controls her thinking and her work.

The Christian mother obeys the Lord Jesus Christ as her only King. He rules in her heart. His authority is not questioned in her mind. She knows what her King would have her think, and what He would have her do. She knows and feels in her soul that she is a person under authority. When the King says, Go, she wants to go; when he says, Stay, she wants to stay. It is her distress to realize, as she often does, that she cannot obey as quickly and as instantly as she wants to. Yet her evident desire to be found always obedient to her King does not, because it cannot, go unnoticed in her family.

The Christian mother has embraced the Lord Jesus Christ as He is freely offered to her in the Word of God. She has found in Him the satisfaction of her deepest need.

Mother's First Duty

Mother has many duties, but clearly her first and most important duty is to train the children in the truth God has made known in His Word. By speech and example she must set before them the grace and beauty of the Lord Jesus. These children are members of the covenant. They belong to that covenant of grace which God has made with His chosen people. Since these children belong to God, it is her first and most important duty to train them in the way everlasting. She will use every available means to the accomplishment of this end. She will encourage the children to go to Sunday school where the Word of God in its purity is taught by those who also love the Lord. She will insist that they go to the Christian day school if this is at all possible, counting no cost a sacrifice she will not gladly give. She will go with the children to the house of God on the Sabbath day, even though they may be too young to follow the services. Thankfully using all the assistance available, she will ever remember that it is her privilege and responsibility to be the teacher of her children by word and by her manner of life.

Of course this is not the only duty of the mother. It is also her duty to protect the health of her children. She must prepare for them the proper food. She must see that they get the necessary amount of sleep. She must see that they are properly dressed. But important as they are, these are not her first duty. Mothers are sometimes more concerned about the purity of the water which the children drink, than about the purity of the thoughts they think. Purity of life and conduct is more important than purity of food, however important the latter may be. And of course the mother who deep in her heart considers it her first duty to teach the children the truth, will not be negligent in the other matters. These are also requirements of the Lord, but she will keep first things first.

Again it is mother's duty to make her home attractive, keep it clean and have it restful. But she is not called on to make the home beautiful for the sake of beauty. Chippendale furniture and oriental rugs, pleasing and desirable though they may be, may yet feed the pride of the woman's heart and make the home a place of misery for the children. It is far more important to have the minds of the children fur-

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nished with the truths of the gospel than it is to have the home furnished with the latest and most modern equipment. The effort involved in keeping her home clean, and the many other duties which clamor for her time, have a tendency sometimes to make mother forget her most important work. Cleanliness and beauty of soul in her children is even more important than cleanliness and restfulness of her home. But these are not in conflict. Normally, they go together.

The mother conscious of her first and most important duty, finds in the doing of it her chief delight. By her thankful obedience to her Lord she teaches the children the valuable lesson of obedience. She requires also that the children shall obey their earthly parents. They must have a deep respect for that authority which God requires in the fifth commandment. They must learn by their obedience to express their love for the whole Word of God. It will give the mother a deep joy to teach these children by the subtle influence of her own life. She knows that all her words, however true, can be made of little or no effect by an evil example. Her secret prayers, and her private devotions, though unobserved by the children, yet have their influence also. And in the doing of her most important work, she worships her God.

Mother's Reward

If a cup of cold water cannot be given in the name of the Lord without one receiving a full reward, the mother who does her duty with joy shall in no wise lose her reward. God is faithful. Christ keeps His promise. The mother who has been sowing shall harvest in due time. Only a mother can know the joy of that hour when the newborn baby is first placed in her arms. This is the beginning of the reward of motherhood. From this point on, as mother does her work well, her reward steadily increases. To be mother and to live as mother in a family is indeed a blessed experience.

Mother learns from her children. She grows in true motherhood. As she takes her first duty seriously and works intensely in the doing of it, she discovers that the children too are helping her grow to be a mother indeed. And as she increases in the knowledge and ability to be a real mother, she finds a rich blessing. Faith in the Lord Jesus is the most precious gift God gives.

Children, also the gift of God's love, are only a little less precious. They teach the mother, train her and help prepare her for the Father's house. It is in a rich and deep sense true that children make mothers.

There are other blessings and rewards. The children shall rise up and call her blessed. The day will come when the children, reflecting on all that mother means to them, will bring her offerings of praise. It will indeed be a happy time when she hears her children giving thanks to God for the mother He has given them. In the pre-

sent world there is perhaps no greater reward than this.

There is another, greater reward in the life which is to come. For then they who trusted in the Lord and have patiently waited His coming shall receive His benediction. And then the mother will hear, as it were, the Lord Jesus saying unto her,—“You have indeed suffered these little ones to come unto me”. To see her own family gathered into His eternal kingdom,—that is a reward greater than which a Christian mother cannot seek, desire or imagine.

Infallible Word Well Received

Westminster Book Impresses Readers of Various Faiths

THOSE who hold to the orthodox Presbyterian faith base their stand on the teachings of the Holy Scripture, which they hold to be the very Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

In maintaining this position, orthodox Presbyterianism opposes and is opposed by two general classes of religious thought. On the one hand there are those who profess to accept, even as orthodox Presbyterians do, the Scriptures as the infallible and inerrant Word of God. But this group finds itself compelled to interpret those Scriptures in a non-Presbyterian fashion. Included are, for example, many Lutherans, and many others customarily described by the general term “Fundamentalists”. Orthodox Presbyterianism can recognize a significant measure of Christian unity with these people, though it disagrees with them on many important doctrines, because at the bottom they stand on a common starting point, an authoritative and objective rule of faith.

On the other hand, there are those who reject the Scriptures as the Word of God, and consider the book as only a human composition. Some of these would accept its spiritual contents, but reject its historical records. Some would simply remove the miracles and supernatural elements. Some would view it as expressing an underlying religious concept common to all mankind. And

some, on the basis of allegedly critical and scientific studies would rewrite the book, or have us believe that it comes to us today as the result of extensive rewriting by editors of various centuries and various climates.

With those who reject the Scriptures in this fashion, orthodox Presbyterianism can have no true spiritual fellowship, for there is no common foundation or starting point from which such fellowship can proceed.

From this analysis it follows that there are two lines of positive action which orthodox Presbyterianism must take, in order to promote the cause it represents, which it believes to be truly the kingdom of God upon earth.

First, it must justify its position regarding Scripture. It must show that, even in this 20th century, the doctrine upon which it is really based not only does not go counter to sound and solid Christian thinking, but rather is supported in a most remarkable fashion by scientific, critical, philosophical and even historical evidences. Such a course of argumentation, obviously, will not convince one who has already set his mind in the opposite direction, but it will serve to confirm the faith of God's elect, and will help take the ground from under the self-confident non-believer.

Secondly, orthodox Presbyterianism must devote no small measure of its energies to establishing, by principles