

# ... the King's Speech to His Daughters

## GENESIS 1 and 2

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We open our Bible to the beginning (the opening of our wounds): Genesis 1:27. So God created man in His own image. . . male and female created He them. Here we learn that not only the man, but also the woman, was created by the Hand of God. I

say *also* because we read in Genesis 2 verse 18 that, when it was declared "not good that the man should be alone," God then accomplished His goodness to Adam by forming from him woman, to be his fulfillment physically, mentally, and emotionally. Thus Adam had completeness.

Continuing now in Genesis one, we read in verse 28 that God blessed them, and said unto them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it. . . ." God blessed them; and this blessing of God may be regarded as the source from which the human race has flowed. Surely God could have covered the earth with a multitude of created people, but, as Calvin posits this truth, it was His will that we should issue from this one fountain, Adam and Eve.

As we are considering exclusively the woman's role as wife and mother, I ask you to recall that Adam named his wife Eve, meaning "life as mother" (Gen. 3:20), for she, with him, was created also for the production of offspring, in order that man might replenish the earth.

God intends the human race to be multiplied by generation, yet not as brute beasts, which have intercourse promiscuously. See here that in Genesis 2:22 we read that God joins Adam to his wife — forming and bringing her to him.

This is the institution of marriage, within which they might produce a legitimate seed. God gives His benediction upon marriage as the pure and lawful method of increase.

Perusing the first chapters of Scripture, and studying these historical events, we may be inclined to ask, "Why doesn't this blessing nullify the chastisement inflicted on the repentant, believing woman?" Unto the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:19).

We must know, we must understand, that this sentence is not a curse given to bring us to ruin. Indeed not! It is exactly what the word chastisement means, namely, applied affliction and pain, given in love, in order to recall to duty, or bring to repentance. And this, in turn, is coupled with the truth found in I Timothy 2:15: "Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." Does this mean that the believing woman is saved when she becomes pregnant and delivers a child? Of course not! It doesn't even mean that she has knowledge of and enjoys her salvation only, or for the first

time, when she becomes a mother. Rather this (having children, with all that is inclusive) is the ordinary way of life in which God maintains and enriches the spiritual sensitivity and perception of the Christian woman.

We mothers have experienced (oh, yes, we know as well as the unbelieving feminist) that children are expensive — they are demanding of our energy and time, they're not always so lovable, and, more often than we like to admit, they're unthankful. They even can be a bitter disappointment, and so we grieve. What shall we do when the burden and frustrations of motherhood threaten to overwhelm us, when the multiplied sins cause sorrow and pain? Do we throw up our hands in despair and abdicate our given position as daughters of the Heavenly King, daughters who are privileged to bring forth and nurture the church of tomorrow? Here we confess, to our shame and added sorrow, that we at times even do reject the chasten-

ings of the Lord and so become impatient, complaining that His way is too difficult, too unbearable — which in turn leads to self-pity and depression.

Well, where is the remedy? Where must we go? *Run* to His word of Promise for strength, for encouragement, for guidance. Pray that the ears of your heart may be opened by His gracious Spirit. Listen and believe, dear daughter!

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward. "The promise (i.e., our Savior, our salvation) is unto you and your children." And then there's this most beautiful, exquisite, even humbling testimony, spoken to *us* in Mark 9:37: "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth *Me*."

Believing this truth, Jesus Christ *in* our children, we are assured and confident that our lives as mothers in our homes are neither wasted nor fruitless.

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by Carole Reitsma

#### TITUS 2:3-5

The Apostle Paul in the book of Titus instructed Titus to choose elders in the church and

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to teach good works, obedience, and brotherly love to the Christians at Crete. This was the makings of sound doctrine. This morning we will discuss the characteristics of the older woman and what her duties are as stated in Titus 2:3-5.

Who is an older woman? Must her hair be gray? Should she be 60, 50? An older woman has no specified age, no definite appearance. She is one who is full of life and the experiences that life brings. She may be a 70-year-old grandmother or a 30-year-old widow. She is a woman who is wise in the ways of her Lord and has received grace to apply the ways of the Lord to her life.

What does Paul want us to learn about the proper character of the older woman? First, that her behavior must become holiness. What does this mean? Holiness implies separateness, purity, and righteousness. A separation from the world; a seeking of the things of the kingdom — we are talking about her walk. She must walk as a woman who loves the Lord. The younger women must see her love of the Lord and the grace that her Heavenly Father works in her life.

And, how does she acquire this holiness? Our bodies need daily food — good nourishing food. We would not neglect this. To grow spiritually we must be fed from God's Word daily. How much more is it true that we should not neglect this food for our souls! Spiritually we can give no more than we give ourselves. Unless we are grounded in the Word we have nothing to give away. Galatians 5:22-23 says to us, "But the fruit of the Spirit is

love, joy, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These fruits of the Spirit the older woman must exemplify. God must be first in her life.

Another characteristic is that she must not be a bearer of tales. She cannot be a gossipier. The vicious poison of gossip has ruined many friendships. In Proverbs 11:13 we read, "a talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." She must not falsely accuse others. The heart of the younger woman must be able to trust in her.

Titus 2:3 tells us that the older woman must not be given to much wine. In the Apostle Paul's day it was not uncommon for a Roman woman to have many slaves. Because of this she had many idle hours. These idle hours were often spent in drinking too much. Paul took this opportunity to warn the Christian woman against this sin.

We may apply this to our lives also. We have no slaves, but modern conveniences have made our work much easier, giving us more free time. It is not likely we would fall into the trap of drunkenness, but we have other temptations to waste our time. The older woman must be an example to the younger women in showing them the proper use of their time.

We have learned some very important facts about the older woman. She must show behavior that becomes holiness; she must not gossip or falsely accuse others; she must show good use of her time; and she must be a teacher of good things. The

failure of the older woman to be a teacher of good things is a very serious error. When this happens it becomes a great handicap for the younger women. The younger women need the spiritual, biblical instruction of the older women.

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## Book Review

*The Christian School: An Introduction* by Noel Weeks. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988. 204pp. \$11.95 (paper) [reviewed by Gary VanDerSchaaf]

I have long wished that Protestant Reformed School boards would require new teachers, as well as parents who are enrolling their first child, to sign a statement saying, "I have read Prof. D. Engelsma's book *Reformed Education*. I understand it and agree with it, and will do my best to teach or support the school according to the principles and practices described therein." With certain reservations, I would recommend that *The Christian School* be added to that imaginary mandatory reading list.

The book has many strengths, not the least of which is its lucid style. Dr. Weeks is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Sydney, Australia, and holds a number of academic degrees. I feared that the infamous "In-

verse "Understandability" law would be in effect; that is, "The more letters a person has behind his name, the less easy it is to understand what he says." Dr. Weeks is a happy exception to that sad rule; his writing is clear and forceful, and is completely free of "educationaleze."

And his ideas are not only well-stated, they are well-balanced. Dr. Weeks, speaking from his experience as both teacher and Christian school board president, addresses his remarks to the teacher in the classroom and to the parents whose labors provide the means to place and keep that teacher there. For instance, while teachers are warned that overmuch homework should not rob children of time for family fellowship and responsibilities, he also cautions parents, saying, "Parents who want a school which will just take care of their children, but not interfere in their private lives, should not choose a Christian School" (p. 102). Further, in stressing the need for communication and mutual understanding among