

RELIGIOUS NEWS

Meaning Of Fatherhood

It was a hot Sunday afternoon as I took my little four-year-old girl by the hand and we walked across the concert apron and up the steps of the Eastern Whisper Jet that was to fly us to Atlanta.

I was on my way to Sumter, S. C. and then after a week on to New York. My daughter was going to be met by friends in Columbia who would take her to Greenwood to spend a few weeks.

As we walked up the steps I handed the stewardess our tickets. When I did little Sandy looked up proudly and said, "He's got my tooth brush in his pocket." The stewardess said, "Oh, and who is he." And with unabashed pride little Sandy threw her arms around my leg and said, "My daddy."

Taking my seat I thought to myself, "Oh God! What a responsibility to know that there are in my home little people who trust me implicitly."

And the same is true of every home. The eyes of little children only rarely need the refracting aid of glasses with which to see clearly. They see things of which you and I are not aware. They watch things that even they are not aware of — only to interpret them years later.

Does Daddy pray? If he does not, then it must be because there really isn't anything to this business of

prayer. Does daddy think it is important to attend church as a priority in life? If not, it must be that the church really isn't very important. Does daddy ever read the Bible? Surely, as wise as Daddy is he will know which books are important.

The logic of a child is absolutely

Perspective

By

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devastating. The major premise of his syllogism consists of two words: "My Daddy." There are not two words on earth to compare with these two. Especially when uttered from the lips of a little child running to meet his Daddy who has just turned into the driveway — home from a day's work.

"My Daddy." These two words form the premise upon which the sharp mind of a little child reasons. He says with unabashed candor: "My Daddy — therefore."

Suppose a man does not profess anything. But he does. Every man does by just being alive. A man who accepts the faith and confidence of a good woman professes that he is worthy of such trust. A man who

becomes a father professes, whether he realizes it or not, that he is capable of being looked up to by his children. One may be a fraud and a fake in other relationships of life. But he must never be a fraud or a fake in the eyes of his children.

Daddy, you are the church in your home. If you put on your religion on Sunday and march your little children to church and then take it off like a coat when you have shut the front door at home, you are teaching them that this "Jesus business" is shame and hypocrisy. If you "sleep in" on Sunday morning, or take your children fishing with you on the pretext of being a "pal" on Sunday morning, you are by your example teaching them that God is unimportant and that the "God-is-dead" people are right.

Phillips Brooks once said, "What is the greatest fortune a man can leave his children? A bag of gold? No. An honorable name? No. The best fortune is a parental example which makes it easy to believe in the fatherly goodness of God. The crowning achievement of a man upon earth is to make the word "Father" so rich in memories and associations, that it brings God nearer and opens for the children the gates of Heaven."

No greater words than these — "My Daddy."