

The Salvation Of Children

(Abridged)

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Every one working with children, whether it be the school teacher, the social worker, or the Sunday-school teacher, knows that a serious condition prevails in connection with the moral and spiritual welfare of children. It is common knowledge that suicide among children is increasing at an alarming rate. Upon investigation the causes for this condition are laid to intolerable home life, faulty educational methods, mental derangement, and child marriages.

The majority of crimes today are committed by boys under twenty-one years of age. The average home is nothing more than a place in which to eat and sleep because it has ceased to be a shrine for moral and religious training.

The ignorance of boys and girls concerning the Bible is appalling and one's heart is made heavy when reading the reports of experiments conducted by teachers relative to a child's understanding of simple Biblical facts to say nothing of divine truths. It has been discovered that American children are deplorably unfamiliar with the features of the Saviour as represented in religious art. It is not a matter of stupidity, for it is noted that the same children instantly recognize the features of well-known movie people and other famed public entertainers.

One college professor took time to test a number of children in connection with Leonardo de Vinci's "Last Supper" generally admitted to be the most famous religious picture in existence. He made many interesting observations, but far overshadowing all the rest in significance was the discovery that not one of the children of a fourth grade class could identify the central figure in this most famous painting as that of the Founder of Christianity. They were equally ignorant of the identity of all the twelve apostles surrounding the Christ.

Let us think of

THE SALVATION OF THE CHILD

So far as infants are concerned there need be no worry on the part of the parents as to their saved estate. Every baby born into the world possesses a carnal nature for which it is not responsible. When the Lord Jesus died upon the Cross, He answered for this nature in every one of us. Do we not recall how John the Baptist cried out and said, ". . . Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)? We must keep in mind the difference between sin and sins. When a child reaches the age of accountability, which is a variable age, and comes to know the reality of his sins and especially so in relation to God, then that child must seek divine forgiveness for his sins at the hands of the Saviour.

There is in the Book of Job a pertinent question, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job 14:4). And David bore this witness, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). Because of this condition even children need to come to Jesus Christ and find regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit. The plan of salvation is as much for them as for any adult. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

I sat in a Billy Sunday meeting one night when he tested an audience of six thousand as to the age when the Christians present were converted. A vast majority of that

number found Christ before they had reached their twentieth year. When he asked how many found Christ after they had reached sixty, only three stood to their feet. Surely we must appreciate the fact that if children are not converted as children, many will never be converted. There are in our cities at this moment thousands of children who, if not reached soon, will grow up with hardened hearts and will spend in all likelihood an eternity in hell. It is a known fact that if they come to maturity without Christ, the probability is few of them will ever find Him.

The boy Isaac was never safer than when he was bound on the altar of God. God develops and keeps and never destroys youth who are bound to His altars. The editor of a great secular magazine, when dealing with the subject of juvenile delinquency, wrote, "The girl who goes to a strange city to work will find that her best safeguard against being thrown into company of young male companions who would entice her from virtue's path is the church of God." Increasingly men of the world recognize the value of that which the church represents, namely, the Gospel.

After a child has found Christ as personal Saviour, too many parents seem to question the child's sincerity rather than rejoice in the little one's decision. While it is true that some children may be swept along with the tide and unite with the church simply because their companions do so, this in no wise justifies indifference to the decision to accept Christ on the part of a child who has been taught clearly the way of salvation. Let us give some credit to the operation of the Holy Spirit in a child's heart when the Word is taught him. Christianity is not a childish thing, but it is a power intended of God to reach children.

Let us remember that every year a child remains away from Christ as Saviour after he is six or seven years of age, he becomes more entangled in sin and worldliness, and every passing year finds it more difficult for him to break away.

Instead of doubting young converts, we should encourage them and make certain that they have been properly taught the way of life and then trust God to own and bless His Word in their young hearts. Concern about their spiritual welfare should burden us if they do not make a decision early in life.

"Are they all in?" was the question which came again and again from the lips of a dying mother. In her delirium she had slipped back through the years and once more was "tucking in" her family. Had Mary returned? Was John in bed? Where was Tom? The mother heart could not rest until her brood was safely tucked in under the sheltering wing of her mother love. Thus, the anxious query, "Are they all in?"

The Book of Job gives to us the picture of a father truly burdened about the spiritual welfare of his children. "And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually" (Job 1:15).

The marginal rendition of "continually" is all the days." This father had a continual burden upon his heart in relation to the spiritual welfare of his sons. Daily he made offerings unto God in their behalf. How many of us as parents have labored with God "all the days" in behalf of the spiritual condition of our children? Oftentimes we never utter a word of prayer for them until they fall sick or are nigh unto death. Sometimes it is only when they have fallen into mischief that we cry to

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