



The Soul-Winner's Secret

Chapter 15 – The Soul-Winner's Commission To The Children

"Lovest thou Me? Feed My lambs."

Rough and ready Peter, that horny-handed old fisherman, thought he was cut out for and best fitted to be a prime minister or secretary of state, a bishop, a colonel, or a commander, and it seems had several disputes with the other disciples as to whether he should not be the greatest among them (Mark 9:34; Luke 9:46). How big must have been his surprise then when he got his commission from Jesus as a Junior worker, and received orders to feed the lambs! What a mighty argument he could have made to prove that he was not fitted for work with the children! To be sure, he had at least one boy of his own (see 1 Peter 5:13), and maybe several others, but then, he was a fisherman, and the care of the children was left to his wife. In fact, he had no fitness either by nature or training, for that kind of work; all his associates had been with the big, burly men of the sea, and what did he know about talking to children? All his thoughts and desires and ambitions ran in another direction, and was he not too old and set in his ways to change now?

But when Jesus, with infinite knowledge and wisdom and tenderness, looked straight into his eyes and asked him that searching question, 'Lovest thou Me more than these?' and then in reply to his answer, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," said, "Feed My lambs," what could Peter say? So Peter was first commissioned to be a Junior worker.

"But," you say, "did not Jesus mean young converts, when He said, 'My lambs'? and might they not be men and women who were only newly converted?" True, it is probable that Jesus meant new converts, but new converts include children, for the children are often converted, too, and did not Jesus say, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"? So any way we may explain the text, we cannot escape the fact that Peter was commanded to work with and for the children. And if Peter, why not you and I, my comrade officers? Are we not commanded to look well to the flock over



which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers? (Acts 20:28) and was there ever a flock in which there were no lambs? If so, it was a flock doomed to speedy extinction.

Are we not commanded to do with our might what our hands find to do? And do we not find multitudes of little ones unshepherded, unloved, untaught, and for whose tender little souls no man cares, nor prays, nor weeps before the Lord, and whose little hands are stretched out towards us, saying "Come, and help us"? Shall we wait till they are old in sin and hardened in wickedness and fixed in unholy habits and bondslaves of the devil before we work and plan and pray for them and seek their salvation? Is it possible that we have a call to the work of saving souls and yet have no commission for the children? No, no, no! To every worker who says to Jesus, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," in answer to His question, "Lovest thou Me?" Jesus says, "Feed My lambs." The worker may feel that he has no fitness, no tact, no skill, no gifts for that kind of work, but the commission lays upon him the responsibility to study and think and watch and pray and love and believe and work himself into fitness; and by beginning with just such poor, feeble, untrained gifts as he has, and making the most of every opportunity, and by being diligent and faithful, by courage and pluck and good cheer and faith, and by seeking God's blessing day by day, this fitness can surely be attained.

The poor, thick-headed numskull who never dreamed he had any music in his soul or in his fingers till he got converted at The Salvation Army penitent-form, but who set himself to it and patiently thrums away at a guitar or blows at a cornet for six months or a year until he can play fairly well, can with equal diligence and patience and determination and attention, learn to interest and bless and help the children; but he must put his heart and soul into it.

I read some time since of a minister who was sure he was called and fitted only to preach big sermons to big folks, but one day he heard a brother minister talk so instructively and entertainingly to the children that he determined to acquire that gift, and by thought and prayer and practice he, too, became a powerful children's worker.

Go thou, my brother, my sister, and do likewise. Do you ask, "How can I become such a worker?"



1. Make up your mind that you ought to do so, and that by God's grace you will; then, make it a matter of daily prayer and thought and meditation. Above all, seek help from God.
2. Get all the help you can from others. Study their methods, but don't become a vain imitator of anyone. Be yourself.
3. Study the best books you can find on the subject. There are many bright books that will greatly help you which you can get at Headquarters.
4. Try to put yourself in the place of the child, and ask what would interest you. Make things very plain and simple. Watch for illustrations that the children can understand, and that will interest them.
5. But above all have a heart full of tender love and sympathy for the little ones, and you will be interesting and helpful to them whether you can talk much or not. They will feel your love and respond to it, and so you can point them to Jesus and help them in their first timid steps toward Heaven.

In the words of Paul, "Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy progress may be manifest unto all." (1 Tim. 4:15, R. V.)