



The Soul-Winner's Secret

Chapter 14 – The Soul-Winner And The Children

Not only did Jesus say, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," but He gave to Peter the positive command, "Feed My lambs," and in that command laid a responsibility upon soul-winners for the children, for "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," and in no other field and among no other class can they work with such immediate success, and such far-reaching results.

Children are not hard to reach with the Gospel, if the soul-winner will but be simple and use common sense in dealing with them. They are not hardened in sin, their consciences are tender and their hearts open, their minds receptive, their wills pliable, their faith simple; they are keenly alive to the love of Jesus, the glories of heaven, the terrors of hell, and the omnipresence of God. They learn readily to pray in faith about everything, and to cast all their care upon God. No eyes are so keen as theirs to see the Light that lighteneth every man, and no hands are so ready to do His bidding, and no feet so ready to run in His ways.

And yet effort must be put forth ceaselessly to win them and keep them after they are won, for the corruption of their own natures and the evil example and teaching of a hostile world and the wiles of the vigilant and tireless enemy of all souls will soon blind their eyes and harden their hearts and utterly ruin them, if they are not soon won to Jesus and filled with His love. You may feel yourself unfitted for this task, but it is your business to fit yourself for it, if God has called you to be a worker for souls. The first thing necessary is to believe in the possibility of the conversion of the children; and certainly the plain teachings of Jesus, the examples found in the Bible, and the multitude of examples that anyone can see with his own eyes if he will open them and look, ought to convince the most skeptical of this possibility.

Almost from babyhood the Lord spoke to Samuel, and filled his heart and mind with wisdom, so that none of his words fell to the ground (1 Sam. 2:26, and 3:1-21) From a child God ordained



Jeremiah a prophet unto the nations, and filled him with His Spirit (Jer. 1:5-10), and if this was possible under the law, how much more gloriously is it possible under the Gospel?

Jonathan Edwards, in one of his works, tells of a wee girlie, only five years of age, going to and from her bedroom looking most sad and disconsolate. Her mother asked her what was the matter, and the little thing replied, "Mamma, when I pray God doesn't come."

The mother tried to comfort her, but her little heart was filled with hunger which only the Comforter Himself could satisfy, and she still continued to go disconsolately to her bedroom. But one glad day she ran from her room, leaped into her mother's bosom, threw her arms around her neck and cried, "O mamma, mamma, when I pray now, God comes!"

And up through the years of her childhood and youth and womanhood she lived such a life of Christian humility and grace and truth as was the wonder of all who knew her.

Secondly, since they can be won, you must make up your mind that you will win them; you must put from your mind forever the thought that "anything will do for the children." It will require much prayer, and patience, and love, and tact, and divine wisdom to win them to the Saviour, and to keep them after they are won. They must have "line upon line, precept upon precept." If one teaching of the lesson is not sufficient then they must be taught it again and yet again. "Why do you tell Charles the same thing twenty times over?" asked the father of John and Charles Wesley of the mother. "Because nineteen times won't do," replied the wise and particular mother.

"Hear, O Israel," said the Lord; "the Lord is one God, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and these words which I command you this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house and when thou walkest by the way and when thou liest down and when thou risest up, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand and they shall be for frontlets between thy eyes, and thou shalt write them on the posts of thine



house, and upon thy gates." This was the way that the children of the old Israelites were to be taught, and this must be the standard the soul-winner sets for himself and for his people today.

The children should be noticed; and I am increasingly convinced that in every meeting where there are children present something should be said that is suitable to them, and the invitation to come to Jesus should include them.

When they do come, they should be dealt with most thoroughly, their little hearts should be probed, their sins searched out and thorough repentance required. Their fears must be tenderly removed by showing them the fullness of God's love, and the certainty of salvation when they give up sin. Their thought should be turned to Jesus and their faith fixed on Him and grounded in His Word.

Give them His sure promises, such as, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Above all you must be simple and make things very plain for the children. They do not know the meaning of many big words that you understand quite well, therefore you must take pains to make yourself understood.

The other day I was talking to some juniors, and I gave them this text, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." I asked them if they knew what the word "Creator" meant, and none of them knew, neither did they know what the word "youth" meant. So I had to explain that the text meant that they were to remember and think about God and love Him while they were little boys and girls.

Again I gave them the text, "Behold how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." But none of them knew the meaning of the word "unity."

One said that meant home, and that was a pretty good guess, but I had to explain that the text meant that it was good and pleasant for little brothers and sisters, and big ones, too, to live



together in peace, without quarreling and fighting, and they understood that.

The following story from a Boston paper will illustrate my meaning further: "The songs which were sung for Dewey by the school children included so many references to Columbia that a teacher in a certain South End public school thought that she would find out how many of her pupils understood what the word Columbia meant. She put the question and received these answers among others:

"A ship." "A man that came over from Spain and discovered our country." "A bisikkel." "A captain"

But not one pupil in the class (seventh grade) knew that Columbia was another name for the United States of America.

You will have to put on your thinking caps, and set your brains to work to make your teaching simple for the children; but love will help you.

Some time ago I heard a Junior worker singing lustily to a lot of juniors:

Get your baggage on the deck And don't forget to get your check, etc., but he didn't explain that it simply meant that they were to give themselves to Jesus, and throw away their sins, and be sure and get His love in their hearts. So when he got through I felt sure that there was nothing but a confused rattle of "baggage, deck, check, quick," in the ears of the juniors, with no useful or saving idea in their little heads and hearts.

If you will pray to God for wisdom and love He will help you to make the deepest spiritual truths plain to the children.

Through simplifying my talks God gives me the joy of seeing many juniors seeking Him for salvation, and occasionally I have seen some gloriously sanctified.



Some time ago, in one of my Sunday afternoon meetings, I had a penitent-form full of juniors, with each of whom I dealt personally. I asked one little fellow:

"What are you here for, darling?" "To get saved," said he. "Get saved from what?" I inquired. "From my sins."

"And what are your sins?"

"I fight," and then he broke down and cried.

"And what are you here for?" I asked a little girl.

She too, was there to get saved, and I asked what her sins were. She hesitated a little and then said: "I'm cruel to my sister and brother;" and then she broke down and cried.

Another little girl swore, and another disobeyed her mother. One little boy told lies, another smoked cigarettes, and another was disobedient to his teacher; and so they told of their sins and broke down and wept and prayed and asked God to forgive them and make them good, and I have hope that most of them got saved.

In one of my meetings a little girl of ten got saved and sanctified and lived a holy life for about three years and then died happy, sending me word that the Lord still sanctified her and kept her to the end.

But after we have done all, we must remember that they are only lambs, and not sheep; that they are growing children, not grown men and women; that they are in the formative state, tender and inexperienced; that life and the world are full of interest to them; that they have a personality and individuality of their own, and are not always willing to take the simple word of their elders, nor to yield to admonition and instruction, but desire to prove their own powers, and to taste and see all things for themselves. Therefore, it will be necessary not only to talk much to them about God, but to talk even more to God about them, and to depend upon the



mighty, constant co-operation of the Holy Spirit in securing their salvation, and keeping them in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must show all diligence in our efforts until, if possible, we can at least say with Paul to Timothy, that "from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."