

THE SOWER

Weekly Department of Religious and Secular Thought Contributed by REV. JAMES A. TURNER, Pastor, M. E. Church, Patton, Pa.

CHRISTMAS — THE CHILDREN'S MAGNA CHARTA.

Christmas is pre-eminently the high festival of the children,—for on that day we celebrate the birth of a baby who was, in his adult years, to utter what may appropriately be thought of as the Children's Magna Charta.

Jesus was born in a country that was being misruled by a totalitarian dictator who cared for nothing but his own self-aggrandizement, and who, in order to advance his own selfish interests, murdered the members of his own family, his closest of kin, his relatives, his courtiers, his rivals, his countrymen, and finally, massacred all the children under two years of age in one of the towns of his empire because he had been told that a child had been born there who might, in the years to come, be a successor to, or a rival of his for the throne upon which he sat. Herod was an ancient Orientalist who ordered purges in order to "liquidate" any possible opposition to his infamous and detestable ambitions—but in this purge of little children he failed to "get" the little one who was to eventually, in the ages to come, put an end to all of his loathsome breed,—the breed that destroys little children with the sword, with liquor, poverty, under-privilege, starvation wages, exploitation, slums, sweatshops, ignorance, and every other hellish thing that stands like a vicious demon in the paths of those little ones on their way to adulthood, decency, success and to God.

Growing up in the midst of conditions which tolerated war, graft, exploitation, poverty, hate, ignorance, and all the rest of that dogmatic spawn of hell aforementioned, and seeing what it was doing to children, and, though them, to the race of man, Jesus "called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of his disciples who were quarreling as to who was to be the greatest in the Kingdom of God, and said: Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of God. And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his

neck, and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea. Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come to me; for so such belongeth the Kingdom of God."

Perhaps of all the verses in the Bible the boys and girls should love these the best, for it marks the beginning of a new day for them. When Jesus took that little child and set him in the midst He did something for the children of the world that had never been done before. He gave children a position of importance that day, so that ever since they have received special care and love.

Before Jesus came, children were not put in the midst at all. Indeed, they were often cruelly treated. For example, in ancient Rome if a little baby came to a home where it was not wanted, or if the parents thought they had enough children to look after, they would carry it out to a cross road and there they would leave it down on the ground and go away. There the helpless little thing would cry until its strength was exhausted and it died, or until someone came along and picked it up to make a slave of it, or until a wild dog or a wolf came along and ate it.

In ancient Carthage there was a great metal idol with hands that were stretched out and sloping downwards, and so were always empty and waiting for someone to fill them. This great idol was heated by a fire kindled near it. Then they brought little children as sacrifices and put them into its red hot hands to fall down frizzling at its feet. One day two hundred children suffered that cruel fate.

In China newly-born baby girls were thrown into a stone building where they were left to die, if their parents did not want them. In India there are thousands of little children and girl widows very badly treated, so that they would rather die than live. And in Africa there are tribes that have never heard of Jesus and are leaving little children out in the forest to be eaten by wild beasts and to die on ash heaps and garbage dumps, just as the Romans left them at Cross Roads long ago.

Today we don't do those sins against children in such a bald fashion. Instead we put guns in their little hands and teach them to goose-step and spit venom at people of another race and country. Or, we sell to their parents, for a profit, of course, alcoholic liquors that make beasts of them so they will conceive and beget their children in moronic stupidity and physical and mental degeneracy, and then starve them of education, of clothes, good times, culture, respectability, hope, future, and every good thing that a child has a right to have in life. Or, we shivel them up in sweat shops, or damn them in enforced child labor, in order to grind



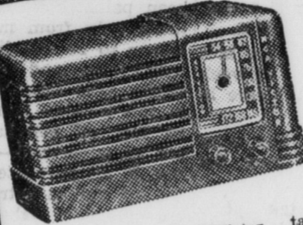
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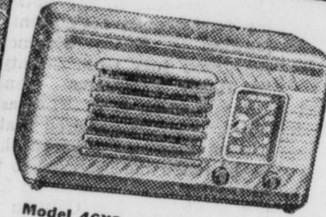
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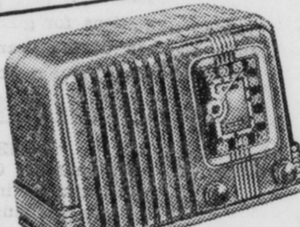


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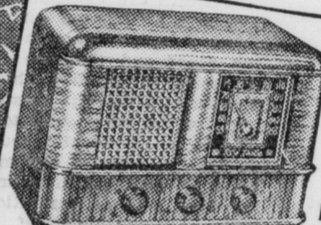
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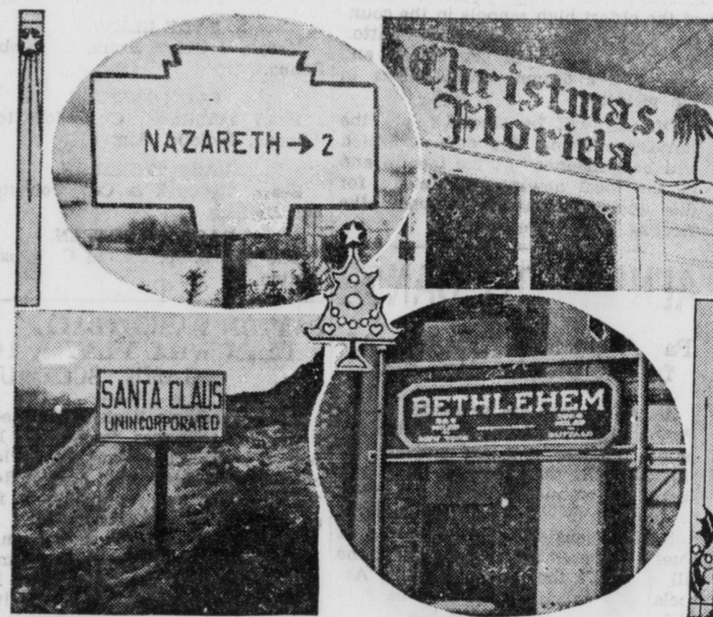
their flesh and blood into dollars to satiate the greed and avarice of inhuman monsters of profit. Or, we divert taxes from the support of schools to the building of battleships and the manufacture of war munitions, and send the young people out to pound the streets for unsecured jobs for which they are not prepared, because there was no money to educate them. Or, we destroy the morale of their parents by keeping them out of work, or underpaying them if they have work, and thus keep them forever in the low brackets of cultural existence where they become nothing but moronic, stupid serfs that don't know or care what all this thing of living and laboring and suffering is about.

No, we are not so crude and obvious about destroying children as the ancients were. We don't throw them into little stone houses to die, or leave them out in the elements to perish of exposure or be eaten by the wild beasts. We don't throw them out on the dump heaps and abandon them to their fate,—we go about the business of doing away with them by raising them to be cannon fodder, or, better yet, we load them into our fine modern sedans and take them out into the country for a ride or a visit on Sundays, away from Sunday School and Church, and teach them to scorn and make light of such sacred obligations and duties, and thus shrivel up their souls into mean and contemptible proportions, and, while we saturate them with carbon monoxide gas, we direct their attentions and interests to material concerns and transient pleasures and sports and amusements of dubious value so that in the end we have slaughtered the innocents as effectively as and with more disastrous results than did the brutal Herod of two millenniums ago.

Erika Mann, in her brochure, "School for Barbarians," relates how the life of the German children has been invaded by the state until all tenderness sin them is dead; force, battle, war, conquering are all they will know.

Dr. Frank D. Slutz warns that "We Christians should recognize that our children that our children are so educated that they will keep their faith

Signs of Christmas



It's Christmas the year around where these pictures were taken: Christmas, Fla.; Bethlehem, Pa.; Nazareth, Pa., and Santa Claus, Ind. Each year thousands of Christmas cards are forwarded to postoffices at these communities for stamp cancellation.

in democracy, that they will desire to strengthen and enlarge democratic methods, that they will be active partners of God, practicing a high ethic and being gracious, fair, firm, tolerant, clean, courageous. What kind of history of tomorrow are we writing in the lives of our children today?"

Jesus knew that any kingdom of heaven must have a solution for the problems of childhood before it could solve the problems of manhood," says Dr. Roy L. Smith, and then goes on to say: "Indeed, when the problems of childhood are solved the problems of all the rest of life are solved. Give the child the assurance of food, clothing and shelter; a world in which

he shall have justice and opportunity—an outlook on life that is wholesome and happy, and you have eliminated the causes of war, poverty, disease and wretchedness.

Jesus set the little child in the midst of the Kingdom because the child's interests are the focus of the Kingdom's interests. There is no kingdom of heaven that does not provide a heaven for little children. Jesus declared that drowning was better for a man than that he should become the agent of a child's disaster. Christmas is an appropriate time to consider the terrible millstone being hung around the neck of little children by the liquor traffic. Into millions of homes at this Christmas

season liquor is being carried to provide "Christmas Cheer," but it is safe to say that there is not a child in the world who is happier because the liquor is there.

Read the columns of the daily papers and note the tragedies that are coming into the lives of little children through alcohol. What millstones are being hung about the necks of little children by the war system! Debts, hatreds, feuds, animosities, scars, poverty, disease—what a terrible load the little children stagger under!

Think of the millstones they must carry because of race prejudice! Babies are born on Christmas day against whom the door of opportunity is shut before they are born for no other reason than that they were born of a despised race, an ostracized color, or a declassified economic group. All these millstones about the necks of little children were hung there by adult sinners."

Someone relates this significant incident: "Two men were discussing a weighty matter in the presence of the young son of one of them. Embarrassed somewhat by the endless question of this boy, the father gave him a picture puzzle on the face of which was a map of the world. The boy was intrigued by the puzzle and immediately set about to solve it. The father thought that he would be relieved of bother for some time and continued his conversation with his friend. To his amazement, freedom from annoyance was very brief, for in two minutes the boy had the picture put together again and once more was disturbing the father. 'How in the name of heaven did you get the world together in so short a time?' asked the father. 'Oh, that was easy,' said the boy. 'There was a picture of a man on the back of it and if you put the man together right, the world will take care of itself.'

The boy spoke more wisely than he knew. The making of a Christian world is the inspirational and educational task of training children in the qualities which characterize the Christmas spirit.

"The road to Bethlehem runs right through the homes of fowls like men and you."