

THE SOWER

Weekly Department of Religious and Secular Thought Contributed BY 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 totalitarianism that 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 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 realm because he had been told that a child had been born there who might, in the years to come, be a successor to the rival of his for the throne upon which he sat. Herod was an ancient tyrant who ordered purges in order to "oust" any possible opposition to his infamous and detestable ambitions—but in this purge of the children he failed to "get" the little one who was to eventually, in the years to come, put an end to all of his inhumanity, 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 demonic, godless, hell-spirited, and godless 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 to 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. The helpless little thing would there 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 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 morose stupidity and physical and mental degeneracy, and then starve them of education, of clean, good times, culture, respectability, hope, future, and every good thing that a child has a right to have in life. Or, we drive them up in sweat shops, or damn them in enforced child labor, in order to grind



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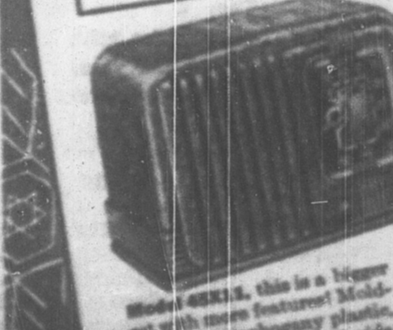
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their flesh and blood into dollars to defile the greed and avarice of inhuman monsters of profit. Or, we divert taxes from the support of schools to the building of battleships and the manufacture of war munitions, and send the young people out to pound the streets for unskilled 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 then keep them forever in the low brackets of cultural existence where they become nothing but morose, stupid wretches that don't know a store what all this thing of living and laboring and suffering is about.

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 postoffice at these communities for stamp cancellation.

In democracy, that they will derive its strength and enlarge democratic methods, that they will be active partners of God, practicing a high ethic and being generous, fair, firm, tolerant, calm, courageous. What kind of history of tomorrow are we writing in the lives of our children today?

Jesus' figure 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 figure is there.

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