



CHILDREN OF OUTRAGE

PRESENTED

by

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on

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Hour*

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CHILDREN OF OUTRAGE

And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house; and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7

There is probably no more pathetic picture than that of a mother holding a starving child in her arms. Recently we have seen such pictures coming out of India where fierce droughts have deprived millions of people of adequate food. To see a mother holding her child who is obviously perishing because of starvation is heartrending.

There is something about the eyes of a mother like that, that is not duplicated anywhere else. The misery of the mother herself caused by her own hunger, is compounded by the agony she feels as she witnesses her child torn from her side by famine's cruelty. The plight of her child introduces an anguish into her situation that would not be there if she were simply left to starve alone.

There is a look of appeal in eyes like that, along with a wounded sense of outrage as if the stricken mother realizes that those who view the record of her wretchedness will do so, for the most part, with adequate food and shelter. Thus her pain is infused with the suspicion that something has gone terribly wrong with the universe.

It is dangerous to suppose that there are situations that duplicate the misery of parents who watch their children starve before their eyes. It is dangerous to suppose that there might be some who would be inclined to

forget the starving. Thus, before going further in our program, let me urge you who listen not to forget the starving mother who looks a with pleading stare from out the newspaper or the TV screen. And I would urge you in the compassionate name of Christ, to use whatever agency you can to help those who die beneath starvation's heavy hand.

But it is necessary, as we exercise our sensitivities to human distress, to be aware, too, that there are other outrages around these days. And one of them is worthy of our attention now too. It is an outrage that involves parents and their children, fathers and mothers and their children, and it involves the helplessness parents feel as they see their children bent and crippled before their very eyes when there is nothing they can do about it. I would not want to suggest that the outrage of which I speak is greater than the one we have just noted. It is different. And it would probably not be accurate if we were to suggest that the magnitude of this outrage is as great as that of the starving children. But it is great and awesome, nonetheless. And it involves the mutilation of children, too. In fact, it involves the bending and corrupting of society itself in ways society will find it most difficult to recover from.

The outrage I am speaking of is that which occurs when parents are not allowed to control the formation of their children's minds. It is the outrage which is expressed when children are taken from the parents at an early age and molded in terms of patterns that contradict the parents' deepest convictions. I am speaking of the outrage which is expressed when Christian parents must send their children to schools which do not express a Christian world view. When I talk about this outrage as I sometimes

do when I travel around the country, such parents come to me and they say, "But what must we do?" They feel helpless because they know that their children are being taught ideas which they as parents cannot accept, and they know that their children are naturally inclined to believe their teachers. Thus they feel helpless because there is nothing that they can do to get their children back. And there is a look in their eye, too, as they talk about this, quite terrifying. They feel they are trapped. They are victims of a system they cannot change.

◆ This is the great outrage.

I bring this subject up right now, because I am convinced that there is something that can be done about this serious condition, and it is better to talk about it now, while our children are in many instances on vacation from school, than in September. The fact is, many of us have already surrendered our children to the control of a vast educational system over which we have little control and which we cannot easily understand. We have a sense of paralysis and fear when faced by the vastness of modern public education, and we feel that we can do little but pray that our children will not be corrupted to the point of no return. Some of us who believe that God is the Creator of all, know that our children are being taught that man and the universe are products of a chance evolutionistic process. Some of us who believe that man is the image bearer of God know our children are being taught in terms of a philosophy which says man is part of the animal kingdom. The point is this: many of us are already surrendering our children to an educational institution that contradicts the faith that God in His mercy has put into our hearts. And if you are one who is caught in

this bind, now is the time to start thinking about what can be done. Maybe you can even do something by next September. I hope so.

The first thing that we have to do is remind one another that the faith that is sustained by the Bible considers parents responsible for their children's education. The education of the young is a parental responsibility. It is not the church's responsibility. It is a state's. In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, this is stressed in chapter 6: 4-9. Listen to these sentences that describe the fullness of God's revelation and then tell how parents must

communicate this revelation to their children. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house; and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

This is a fascinating insight, isn't it? It pictures the parents of children as the primary communicators of the truth of God. The knowledge of God that comes to men through His revelation is pictured as something that fills the environment fully. It is the word on the lips of men as they sit down and as they stride through town. It is laid across the walls of the home like a huge poster. It is burned into the doorposts. Wherever one goes, he runs into the knowledge God has revealed.

The religion of the Bible is a religion for the home, and it is expressed most fully and wonderfully within the home. It is the natural conversation of parents and children, of parents with their children. This is a beautiful picture! It is the picture of a fully integrated world.

And this picture persists throughout the Bible. Even as the grand knowledge of God and of His world unfolded within the Bible, the message was still communicated from parents to children. By the time the last part of the Bible was written the message had assumed an astonishing dimension: it was the message of God's creation. It was the message of God's salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ who died on Calvary's cross to redeem that creation. And it was the message of a Savior who was coming again to judge all men. And this message has major implications for all of learning. For at its center is the Lord Jesus Christ in whom are found all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

If a parent is a Christian it is immoral to take the child of such a parent away from that parent and teach that child in a way that contradicts the clear teaching of the Word of God. But this is being done all the time. Large, general educational systems in the leading countries of the world are dominated by philosophies that deny God's creative work, that deny the Lordship of Jesus, and that deny the authority of the Bible.

Now, we cannot expect everyone to be a Christian, and we cannot expect the general schools to teach Christianity. But provisions must be made for the children of parents who believe the Word of God. To take such children away from their parent's control and bend them in directions that contradict their parent's po-

s'it10is immoral in the extreme. This is the great outrage.

And the first thing you do if you want to get out of this bind with your own children, is understand that you are responsible that your child be educated in a system that does not contradict your own faith. This is your responsibility. Don't let anyone tell you it's not. And don't let anyone tell you that what is being taught in the schools has nothing to do with religion. It has everything to do with religion. It is based on a non-Christian religion. A religion that says that evolution is the explanation for everything, man's rationality is the ultimate authority, and values are relative. If you are a Christian, you are responsible to see to it that your child is taught in the light of Jesus Christ, the Word of God.

The second thing that must be done is that parents who really believe the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and who know that they are responsible for their children's education must not rest until they have provided Christian schools for their children. Now before you throw up your hands in dismay, let me explain what a Christian school is. And then let's talk about whether or not they are possible.

I will confine my remarks to one kind of Christian school, parentally controlled Christian day schools. And I do this because I believe these schools are possibilities for parents who believe in Christ and who want their children taught in terms of their faith. I have found schools like these in the United States, in Canada, and in Australia. They are united in large associations. Two such associations are the National Union of Christian Schools, and the National Association of Christian Schools. There are others, too.

In any case, these schools are formed when Christian parents, who are united by a common conviction that they must educate their children in the fear of the Lord Jesus Christ, put together a school organization to make such an education possible. They elect a school board. The school board hires a Christian principal and Christian teachers, and the school board, the principal, and the teachers all work hard at making a school acceptable by state standards. The parents send their children to these schools and open the doors to any other parents who want to see their children educated in a Christian context.

I have had opportunity to see such schools operate at close range and they are often extremely good for everyone involved. There are times when people assume that just because such a school has the name *Christian* somewhere in its constitution, it will naturally be a good school. When such assumptions operate, the school is often ineffective. But when such schools are conducted on a high professional level, in accordance with the standards of the state, they provide an exciting alternative to the forms of education which, though public and low cost, are promoting views of man and of his world that are non-Christian.

Now the thing about these schools is that they actually do represent the kind of situation we read about a few moments ago from the book of Deuteronomy. You will remember that those sentences from the Old Testament depicted a situation in which the truth of God was everywhere in one's environment. It was posted on the walls and the doorposts, and the parents spoke of it naturally when they were with their children. Well, a Christian school at its best is able to duplicate that situation.

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It is an extension of the Christian home, and the knowledge of God is found everywhere within it.

There are, of course, special religious events that are a normal part of the day. Schools are opened with prayer and closed with prayer. The children lead one another in prayers of thanksgiving as they eat their meals together. Such schools also provide students an opportunity to develop an in-depth knowledge of the Bible. And parents are often amazed how much knowledge of the Scripture their children develop in school. It is a wonderful thing when children can discuss passages of the Bible with their parents, passages which they learned in school. Sometimes the evening meal can be a time when the children recite memory work they have learned from the Bible.

But this, believe it or not, is not the most exciting thing about a Christian school—the prayers and the study of the Bible. The most exciting things that within Christian schools like this, the teachers are earnestly striving to teach every subject in the light of the Word of God. There is a unity in the curriculum that is sustained by a common understanding that Jesus is Lord of all of life. And so the school is not first of all a place where the children have worship during the day at times of special Bible reading and prayer. It is a place in which every act of learning becomes an act of worship. Throughout the day, students and teachers say, "This is my Father's world; we are here for Jesus' sake; come Holy Spirit, heavenly dove," and at the end of the day, students and teachers can offer up their day's activity as a sacrifice to their Lord.

A Christian school is a place where the children of Christian parents can learn in an atmos-

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phere that does not contradict their home and church. The classroom becomes a place where God is worshiped in terms of His great work of creation.

The real question, after all, of this, is this: are such schools a practical possibility? Aren't they really undemocratic? Well, is it democratic to take the children of Christian parents and subject them to an educational experience that contradicts their home and the church on many important points? Is that freedom?

But don't such schools often become less than ideal in terms of the attitudes that are found in them? Don't they become snobbish and self-centered? They can become this way. Just as any other educational institution has to be on its guard against certain attitudes that are detrimental to good education, these schools, too, must be on their guard.

But aren't these schools just too expensive for common people? How can people afford them? Now there's a question that needs an answer before anyone is going to make a move in the direction of schools like these.

First of all, let's admit that there are people in our society who just couldn't afford to support schools like these even if they wanted to. Such schools must be bought and paid for by the parents, and the teachers must be paid by the parents, too. And this takes money, money that could be used for many other things. Thus, there are some Christian parents who could never afford a Christian school for their children. That has to be said with great sadness, and many of us are hoping that this sad situation will be changed in the future.

But many people could afford them. You would be surprised how economically these

schools can be run. You would be surprised at how economically they can be built. I heard a leonator in Alberta, Canada, tell once of the great difference in square footage costs between the Christian schools he had observed and the public schools. And teachers who work in such schools do so out of a sense of purpose and mission, and you would be surprised how much they are willing to give of themselves. Investigate this one and you will find, am sure that the costs will be much lower than the cost of comparable education in other schools.

And another thing to remember when we talk about affording schools like these is the rule of *first things first*. This is a matter of priorities. For the Christian, is it more important that his children are educated in a context that honors God and fortifies faith, or that he live in the latest house, drive the latest car, enjoy expensive vacations, and have other luxuries besides? What is more important? If a man has cancer, he does absolutely everything necessary to find a cure. He will mortgage his house, and spend his last cent to be cured. And when your children are being taken away from you and being brainwashed with ideas that you reject, are you just going to sit by and let this happen?

We can always afford this if we are convinced we need. And those who know Jesus as their Savior and who know that Jesus is the great creator of all and He must be honored in our thoughts, should understand that they need this kind of education for their children more than they need anything else in the world. This is worth sacrificing for.

And I want to share a secret with you. You ought to know this if you are a Christian par-

ent, and you ought to know it if you are a Christian leader. You know sometimes Christian leaders are reluctant to push Christian education because they think that people will stop supporting the church if they start building their own Christian schools. The secret is this: apparently, God has a way of supplying the needs of Christian people who understand that their children must have this kind of education. In Psalm 37 there is this statement: "I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging bread." (v. 25) And that's the way it is. God never abandons His people who put first things first. He takes care of them. Maybe they don't become rich, but what good are riches anyway if your children do not fear the Lord, and you know they don't because you have turned them over to a God-dishonoring educational system?

The great outrage—when the children of Christian parents are taken away from them and educated in a way that contradicts the basic thrust of the Christian faith. And it's happening ... all the time.

Who's to blame? Many parents know who is most to blame. Christian parents are, Christian parents who don't really understand that they are responsible to educate their children in the fear of the Lord and who refuse to work at providing them with Christian schools.

Christian parents who surrender their children to non-Christian educational systems without question are now the greatest single factor that impedes the growth of the Christian day school movement.

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