

OUR LORD'S PREACHING

NO. 3237

A SERMON
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“The LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;
 he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted.”
 Isaiah 61:1*

[Two more Sermons by C. H. Spurgeon on the latter part of the text are #1604 and #1605, Heart Disease Curable and Jesus Knew What He Would Do. As this Sermon is so short, there is included with it an address given by Mr. Spurgeon at a prayer meeting for Sabbath schools, which is just as timely and as much needed now as when it was delivered in 1877.]

OUR Lord's anointing was with a special view to His preaching. Such honor does the Lord of heaven and earth put upon the ministry of the Word that, as one of the old Puritans said, “God had only one Son, and He made a preacher of Him.” It should greatly encourage the weakest amongst us, who are preachers of righteousness, to think that the Son of God, the blessed and eternal Word, came into this world that He might preach the same glad tidings which we are called to proclaim.

I. We may profitably note, first, HOW EARNESTLY OUR LORD KEPT TO HIS WORK.

It was His business to preach and He did preach, He was always preaching. “What,” say you, “did He not work miracles?” Yes, but His miracles were sermons—they were acted discourses, full of instruction. He preached when He was on the mountain, He equally preached when He sat at the table in the Pharisee's house.

All His actions were significant—He preached by every movement. He preached when He did not speak—His silence was as eloquent as His words. He preached when He gave and He preached when He received. He was preaching a sermon when He lent His feet to the women that she might wash them with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head, quite as much as when He was dividing the loaves and the fishes, and feeding the multitude.

He preached by His patience before Pilate, for there He witnessed a good confession. He preached from the bloody tree—with hands and feet fastened there, He delivered the most wonderful discourse of justice and of love, of vengeance and of grace, of death and of life, that was ever preached in this poor world. Oh, yes, He preached wondrously, He was always preaching—with all His heart and soul He preached!

He prayed that He might obtain strength to preach. He wept in secret that He might the more compassionately speak the words which wipe men's tears away. Always a preacher, He was always ready, in season and out of season, with a good word. As He walked the streets He preached as He went along, and if He sought retirement, and the people thronged Him, He sent them not away without a gracious word.

This was His one calling and this one calling He pursued in the power of the eternal Spirit. And He liked it so well, and thought so much of it, that He trained His eleven friends to the same work and sent them out to preach as He had done. And then He chose seventy more disciples to go on the same errand.

Did He shave the head of one of them to make Him a priest? Did He decorate one of them with a gown, or a chasuble, or a biretta? Did He teach one of them to say mass, to swing a censer, or to elevate the host? Did He instruct one of them to regenerate children by baptism? Did He bring them up to chant in surplices and march in processions?

No. Those things He never thought of and neither will we. If He had thought of them, it would only have been with utter contempt, for what is there in such childish things? The preaching of the cross—this it is which is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us who are saved, it is the wisdom of God and the power of God—for it pleases God still, “by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

Nor, at the close of His career, had our Lord lowered His estimate of preaching, for just before He ascended, He said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” His last charge in brief was, “Preach, preach, even as I have done before you.” He lived the Prince of preachers, He died and became the theme of preachers, He lives again and is the Lord of preachers. What an honorable work is that to which His servants are called!

II. Secondly, as you have seen that our Savior came to preach, NOW NOTICE HIS SUBJECT—“The LORD hath anointed me to preach *good tidings* unto the meek.”

And what good tidings did He preach? Pardon, pardon given to the chief of sinners, pardon for prodigal sons pressed to their Father's bosom. Restoration from their lost estate, as the piece of money was restored to the treasury, and the lost sheep was brought back to the fold. How encouragingly He preached of a life given to men dead in sin—life through the living water which becomes a fountain within the soul!

You know how sweetly He would say, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”—“He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” He preached the absolute necessity of a change of heart and the need of a new creation. He said, “Ye must be born again,” and He taught those truths by which the Holy Ghost works in us and makes all things new.

He preached glad tidings concerning resurrection and bade men look for endless bliss by faith in Him. He cried, “I am the resurrection and the life....and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” He gave forth precepts, too, and threatenings in their place—some of them very searching and terrible—but they were only used as accessories to the good news.

He made men feel that they were poor, that they might be willing to be made rich by His grace. He made them feel weary and burdened, that they might come to Him for rest. But the sum and substance of what He preached was the Gospel—the good spell—the glad news.

Brothers, *our divine Lord always preached upon that subject*, and He did not stoop to secular themes. If you notice, though, He would sometimes debate with Pharisees, Herodians, and others as needs must be, yet He was soon away from them and back to His one theme. He baffled them with His wisdom and then returned to the work He loved, namely, preaching where the publicans and sinners drew near together “to hear Him.”

Our business, since the Spirit of God is upon us, is not to teach politics, save only in so far as these immediately touch the kingdom of Christ, and there the Gospel is the best weapon. Nor is it our business to be preaching mere morals and rules of duty—our ethics must be drawn from the cross—and begin and end there. We have not so much to declare what men ought to do as to preach the good news of what God has done for them.

Nor must we always be preaching certain doctrines, as doctrines, apart from Christ. We are only theologians as far as theology enshrines the Gospel. We have one thing to do and to that one thing we must keep. The old proverb says, “Cobbler, stick to your last,” and depend upon it, it is good advice to the Christian minister to stick to the Gospel and make no remove from it.

I hope I have always kept to my theme, but I take no credit for it, for I know nothing else. And like the apostle Paul, I have determined not to know anything among men, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Indeed, “necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.” I would fain have but one eye, and that eye capable of seeing nothing from the pulpit but lost men and the

Gospel of their salvation. To all else one may well be blind, so that the entire force of the mind may center on the great essential subject.

There is, certainly, enough in the Gospel for any one man, enough to fill any one life, to absorb all our thought, emotion, desire, and energy—yea, infinitely more than the most experienced Christian and the most intelligent teacher will ever be able to bring forth. If our Master kept to His one topic, we may wisely do the same. And if any say that we are narrow, let us delight in that blessed narrowness which brings men into the narrow way.

If any denounce us as cramped in our ideas and shut up to one set of truths, let us rejoice to be shut up with Christ and count it the truest enlargement of our minds. It were well to be bound with cords to His altar, to lose all hearing but for His voice, all seeing but for His light, all life but in His life, all glorying save in His cross. If He who knew all things taught only the one thing needful, His servants may rightly enough do the same. “The LORD hath anointed me,” says He, “to preach good tidings”—in this anointing let us abide.

III. But NOW NOTICE THE PERSONS TO WHOM HE ESPECIALLY ADDRESSED THE GOOD TIDINGS.

They were “the meek.” Just look at the fourth chapter of Luke, and the eighteenth verse, where our Lord was reading this passage in the synagogue at Nazareth, and you will read there, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.” The poor, then, are among the persons intended by the term, “the meek.”

I noticed, when I was looking through various comments upon this passage, that the Syriac renders it “the humble,” and I think the Vulgate renders it “the gentle.” Calvin translates it “the afflicted.” It all comes to one thing. “The meek”—a people who are not lofty in their thoughts, for they have been broken down. A people who are not proud and lifted up, but low in their own esteem. A people who are often much troubled and tossed about in their thoughts.

A people who have lost proud hopes and self-conceited joys—a people who seek no high things, crave for no honors, desire no praises, but bow before the Lord in humility—they are fain to creep into any hole to hide themselves, because they have such a sense of insignificance, and worthlessness, and sin. They are a people who are often desponding and are apt to be driven to despair.

The meek, the poor—meek because they are poor—they would be as bold as others if they had as much as others, or as others think they have. But God has emptied them and so they have nothing to boast of. They feel the iniquity of their nature, the plague of their hearts. They mourn that in them there dwells no good thing and oftentimes they think themselves to be the offscouring of all things. They imagine themselves to be more brutish than any man and quite beneath the Lord's regard—sin weighs them down, and yet they accuse themselves of insensibility and impenitence.

Now, the Lord has anointed the Lord Jesus on purpose to preach the Gospel to such as these. If any of you are good and deserving, the Gospel is not for you. If any of you fancy that you are keeping God's laws perfectly and hope to be saved by your works, I have to tell you that the whole have no need of a physician, and that the Lord Jesus did not come upon so needless an errand as that of healing men who have no wounds or diseases.

But the sick need a doctor and Jesus has come in great compassion to remove their sicknesses. The more diseased you are, the more sure you may be that the Savior came to heal such as you are. The more poor you are, the more certain you may be that Christ came to enrich you. The more sad and sorrowful you are, the more sure you may be that Christ came to comfort you.

You nobodies, you who have been turned upside down and emptied right out, you who are bankrupts and beggars, you who feel yourselves to be clothed with rags, and covered with wounds and bruises and putrefying sores—you who are utterly bad through and through, and know it, and mourn it, and are humbled about it—you may know that God has poured the holy oil without measure upon Christ on purpose that He might deal out mercy to such poor creatures as you are.

What a blessing this is! How we ought to rejoice in the anointing of Jesus, since it benefits such despicable objects! We who feel that we are such objects ought to cry, "Hosannah! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD."

IV. We must now CONSIDER OUR LORD'S DESIGN AND OBJECT IN THUS PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR AND THE MEEK.

It was, you observe, that he might bind up the brokenhearted. "He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted."

Carefully give heed to the text, so that you may see whether this message applies to you. Are you brokenhearted because of sin—because you have sinned often, foully, grievously? Are you brokenhearted because your heart will not break as you would desire that it should break—brokenhearted because you repent that you cannot repent as you would, and grieved because you cannot grieve enough?

Are you brokenhearted because you have not such a sense of sin as you ought to have, and such a deep loathing of it as you perceive that others have? Are you brokenhearted with despair as to self-salvation? Brokenhearted because you cannot keep God's law? Brokenhearted because you cannot find comfort in ceremonies? Brokenhearted because the things which looked best have turned out to be deceptions?

Brokenhearted because, all the world over, you have found nothing but broken cisterns which can hold no water, which have mocked your thirst when you have gone to them? Brokenhearted with longing after peace with God? Brokenhearted because prayer does not seem to be answered? Brokenhearted because when you come to hear the Gospel, you fear that it is not applied to you with power? Brokenhearted because you had a little light and yet slipped back into darkness?

Brokenhearted because you are afraid you have committed the unpardonable sin? Brokenhearted because of blasphemous thoughts which horrify your mind, and yet will not leave it? I care not why or wherefore you are brokenhearted—Jesus Christ came into the world, sent of God with this object—"to bind up the brokenhearted."

It is a beautiful figure, this binding up—as though the Crucified One took the liniment and the strapping, and put it around the broken heart, and with His own dear gentle hands proceeded to close up the wound, and make it cease to bleed. Luke does not tell us that Jesus came to bind up the brokenhearted. If you examine his version of the text, you will read that he came *to heal them*. That is going still further, because you may bind a wound up and yet fail to cure it, but Jesus never fails in His surgery. He whose own heart was broken knows how to cure broken hearts.

I have heard of people dying of a broken heart, but I always bless God when I meet with those who live with a broken heart because it is written, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." If you have that broken heart within you, beloved, Christ came to cure you. And He will do it, for He never came in vain—"He shall not fail nor be discouraged."

With sovereign power, anointed from on high, He watches for the worst of cases. Heart disease, incurable by man, is His specialty! His Gospel touches the root of the soul's ill, the mischief which dwells in that place from whence are the issues of life. With pity, wisdom, power, and condescension, He bends over our broken bones, and ere He has done with them, He makes them all to rejoice and sing glory to His holy name.

Come then, you troubled ones, and rely upon your Savior's healing power. Give yourselves up to His care, confide in His skill, rest in His love. What joy you shall have if you will do this at once! What joy shall I have in knowing that you do so! Above all, what joy will fill the heart of Jesus, the Beloved Physician, as He sees you healed by His stripes!

“DO NOT SIN AGAINST THE CHILD”

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

AT A PRAYER MEETING FOR SABBATH SCHOOLS IN THE YEAR 1877

“And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.”

Genesis 42:22

[A Sermon by C. H. Spurgeon upon the same text is #840, also entitled Do Not Sin Against the Child. It was delivered as a preface to a series of services for children conducted in the Tabernacle in the year 1868, by the late Mr. E. Payson Hammond.]

You know how Joseph's brethren, through envy, sold him into Egypt and how ultimately they were themselves compelled to go down into Egypt to buy corn. When they were treated roughly by the governor of that country, whom they did not know to be their brother, their consciences smote them and they said one, to another, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.”

While their consciences were thus accusing them, the voice of their elder brother chimed in, saying, “Said I not unto you, Do not sin against the child?” From which I gather that if we commit sin after being warned, the voice of conscience will be all the more condemning, for it will be supported by the memory of disregarded admonitions, which will revive again, and with solemn voices say to us, “Said we not unto you, Do not sin against the child?”

We who know what is due to children will be far more guilty than others if we sin against their souls. Wiser views as to the needs and hopes of the little ones are now abroad in this world than those which ruled the public mind fifty years ago—and we shall be doubly criminal if now we bring evil upon the little ones.

The advice of Reuben may well be given to all grown-up persons, “Do not sin against the child.” Thus would I speak to every parent, to every elder brother or sister, to every schoolmaster, to every employer, to every man and woman, whether they have families or not, “Do not sin against the child.” Neither against your own child, nor against anybody's child, nor against the poor waif of the street whom they call, “nobody's child.”

If you sin against adults, “do not sin against the child.” If a man must be profane, let him have too much reverence for a child to pollute its little ears with blasphemy. If a man must drink, let him have too much respect for childhood to entice his boy to sip at the intoxicating cup. If there is anything of lewdness or coarseness on foot, screen the young child from the sight and hearing of it. O you parents, do not follow trades which will ruin your children, do not select houses where they will be cast into evil society, do not bring depraved persons within your doors to defile them!

For a man to lead others like himself into temptation is bad enough—but to sow the vile seed of vice in hearts that are as yet untainted by any gross, actual sin, is a hideous piece of wickedness. Do not commit spiritual infanticide. For God's sake, in the name of common humanity, I pray you, if you have any sort of feeling left, do not play the Herod by morally murdering the innocents. I have heard that when, in the cruel sack of a city, a soldier was about to kill a child, his hand was stayed by the little one's crying out, “O sir, please don't kill me. I am so little!” The feebleness and littleness of childhood should appeal to the worst of men and restrain them from sinning against the child.

According to the story of Joseph, there are three ways of sinning against the child. The first was contained in the proposition of the envious brothers, “*Let us slay him...and we shall see what will*

become of his dreams." "Shed no blood," said Reuben, who had reasons of his own for wishing to save Joseph's life. There is such a thing as morally and spiritually slaying boys and girls—and here even the Reubens unite with us—even those who are not so good as they should be will join in the earnest protest, "Do not sin against the child"—do not train him in dishonesty, lying, drunkenness, and vice.

No one among us would wish to do so, but it is continually done by bad example. Many sons are ruined by their fathers. Those who gave them birth give them their death. They brought them into the world of sin and they seem intent to bring them into the world of punishment—and will succeed in the fearful attempt unless the grace of God shall interfere.

Many are doing all they can, by their own conduct at home and abroad, to educate their offspring into pests of society and plagues to their country. When I see the number of juvenile criminals, I cannot help asking, "Who slew all these?" And it is sad to have for an answer, "These are mostly the victims of their parents' sin."

The fiercest beasts of prey will not destroy their own young, but sin makes men unnatural, so that they destroy their offspring's souls without thought. To teach a child a lascivious song is unutterably wicked—to introduce him to the wine cup is evil. To take children to places of amusement where everything is polluting—where the quick-witted boy soon spies out vice and learns to be precocious in it—where the girl, while sitting to see the play, has kindled within her passions which need no fuel—to do this is to act the tempter's part.

Would you poison young hearts and do them lifelong mischief? I wish that the guardian of public morals would put down all open impurity, but if that cannot be, at least let the young be shielded. He who instructs a youth in the vices of the world is a despicable wretch—a panderer for the devil, for whom contempt is a feeling too lenient. No, even though you are yourself of all men most hardened, there can be no need to worry the lambs and offer the babes before the shrine of Moloch.

The same evil may be committed by indoctrinating children with evil teachings. They learn so soon that it is a sad thing to teach them error. It is a dreadful thing when the infidel father sneers at the cross of Christ in the presence of his boy, when he utters horrible things against our blessed Lord in the hearing of tender youth. It is sad to the last degree that those who have been singing holy hymns in the Sabbath school should go home to hear God blasphemed, and to see holy things spit upon and despised. To the very worst unbelievers we might well say—Do not thus ruin your child's immortal soul. If you are yourself resolved to perish, do not drag your child downward too.

But there is a second way of sinning against the child, of which Reuben's own proposition may serve as an illustration. Though not with a bad motive, Reuben said, "*Cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him.*"

The idea of many is to leave the child as a child, and then look him up in after days and seek to deliver him from destruction. Do not kill him, but leave him alone till riper years. Do not kill him—that would be wicked murder—but leave him in the wilderness till a more convenient season, when, like Reuben, you hope to come to his rescue. Upon this point I shall touch many more of you than upon the first.

Many professing Christians ignore the multitudes of children around them and act as if there were no such living beings. They may go to Sunday school or not—they do not know and do not care. At any rate, these good people cannot trouble themselves with teaching children. I would earnestly say, "Do not sin against the child by such neglect." "No," says Reuben, "we will look after him when he is a man. He is in the pit now, but we are in hopes of getting him out afterwards."

That is the common notion—that the children are to grow up unconverted—and that they are to be saved in after life. They are to be left in the pit now and to be drawn out by and by. This pernicious notion is sinning against the child. No word of Holy Scripture gives countenance to such a policy of delay and neglect. Neither nature nor grace pleads for it.

It was the complaint of Jeremiah, "Even the sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness." Let not

such a charge lie against any one of us. Our design and object should be that our children, while they are yet children, should be brought to Christ. And I ask those dear brothers and sisters here present who love the Lord not to doubt about the conversion of their little ones, but to seek it at once with all their hearts. Why should our Josephs remain in the pit of nature's corruption? Let us pray the Lord at once to take them up out of the horrible pit and save them with a great salvation.

There is yet a third way of sinning against the child, which plan was actually tried upon Joseph—*they sold him*—sold him to the Midianite merchantmen. They offered twenty pieces of silver for him and his brothers readily handed him over for that reward. I am afraid that some are half inclined to do the same now.

It is imagined that now that we have School Boards, we shall not want Sabbath schools so much, but may give over the young to the Secularists. Because the children are to be taught the multiplication table, they will not need to be taught the fear of the Lord! Strange reasoning this! Can geography teach them the way to heaven or arithmetic remove their countless sins? The more of secular knowledge our juveniles acquire, the more will they need to be taught in the fear of the Lord.

To leave our youthful population in the hands of secular teachers will be to sell them to the Ishmaelites. Nor is it less perilous to leave them to the seductive arts of Ritualists and Papists. We who love the Gospel must not let the children slip through our hands into the power of those who would enslave their minds by superstitious dogmas. We sin against the child if we hand it over to teachers of error.

The same selling of the young Josephs can be effected by looking only to their worldly interests and forgetting their souls. A great many parents sell their children by putting them out as apprentices to men of no character, or by placing them in situations where ungodliness is the paramount influence. Frequently the father does not ask where the boy can go on the Sabbath day, and the mother does not inquire whether her girl can hear the Gospel when she gets out—but good wages are looked after and not much else.

They count themselves very staunch if they draw a line at Roman Catholics, but worldliness and even profligacy are not reckoned as barriers in many cases. How many there are of those who call themselves Christians who sell their daughters in marriage to rich men! The men have no religion whatever, but “it is a splendid match,” because they move in high society. Young men and women are put into the matrimonial market and disposed of to the highest bidder—God is not thought of in the matter.

Thus the rich depart from the Lord and curse their children quite as much as the poor. I am sure ye would not literally sell your offspring for slaves, and yet to sell their souls is by no means less abominable. “Do not sin against the child.” Do not sell him to the Ishmaelites. “Ah!” you say, “the money is always handy.” Will you take the price of blood? Shall the blood of your children's souls be on your skirts? I pray you, pause awhile ere you do this.

Sometimes, *a child may be sinned against because he is disliked*. The excuse for undue harshness and severity is, “He is such a strange child!” You have heard of the cygnet that was hatched in a duck's nest. Neither duck, nor drake, nor ducklings could make anything out of the ugly bird, and yet, in truth, it was superior to all the rest.

Joseph was the swan in Jacob's nest, and his brothers and even his father did not understand him. His father rebuked him and said, “Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?” He was not understood by his own kin. I should fancy that he was a most uncomfortable boy to live with, for when his elder brothers transgressed, he felt bound to bring unto his father “their evil report.”

I doubt not that they called him, “a little sneak,” though, indeed, he was a gracious child. His dreams also were very odd and considerably provoking, for he was always the hero of them. His brothers called him “this dreamer,” and evidently thought him to be a mere fool. He was his father's pet boy and this made him even more obnoxious to the other sons.

Yet that very child, who was so despised by his brothers, was the Joseph among them. History replicates itself, and the difference in your child, which now causes him to be pecked at, may perhaps arise from a superiority which as yet hasn't found its sphere. At any rate, "do not sin against the child," because he is singular, for he may rise to special distinction.

Do not, of course, show him partiality and make him a coat of many colors—because if you do, his brothers will have some excuse for their envy. But on the other hand, do not suffer him to be snubbed and do not allow his spirit to be crushed.

I have known some who, when they have met with a little Joseph, have *sinned against him by foolish flattery*. The boy has said something rather good, and then they have set him upon the table so that everybody might see him and admire what he had to say, while he was coaxed into repeating his sage observations. Thus the child was made self-conceited, forward, and pert.

Children who are much exhibited are usually spoiled in the operation. I think I hear the proud parents say, "Now *do* see—*do* see what a wonderful boy my Harry is!" Yes, I do see. I do see what a wonderful stupid his mother is. I do see how unwise his father is to expose his boy to such peril. Do not sin against the child by fostering his pride, which, as it is an ill weed, will grow apace of itself.

In many cases, *the sin is of quite the opposite character*. Contemptuous sneers have chilled many a good desire and ridicule has nipped in the bud many a sincere purpose. Beware of checking youthful enthusiasm for good things. God forbid that you or I should quench one tiny spark of grace in a lad's heart, or destroy a single bud of promise! We believe in the piety of children—let us never speak, or act, or look as if we despised it.

"Do not sin against the child," whoever you may be. Whether you are teacher or parent, take care that, if there is any trace of the little Joseph in your child, even though it be but in his dreams, you do not sin against him by attempting to repress the noble flame which God may be kindling in his soul.

I cannot just now mention the many, many ways in which we may be offending against one of the Lord's little ones, but I would have you recollect that, if the Lord's love should light upon your boy, and he should grow up to be a distinguished servant of the Lord, your conscience will prick you and a voice will say in your soul, "Said I not unto you, Do not sin against the child?"

And if, on the other hand, your child should not become a Joseph, but an Absalom, it will be a horrible thing to be compelled to mingle with your lamentations the overwhelming consciousness that you led your child into the sin by which he became the dishonor of your family. If I see my child perish and know that he became a reprobate through my ill teaching and example, I shall have to wring my hands with dread remorse and cry, "I slew my child! I slew my child! and when I did it, I knew better, but I disregarded the voice which said to me, 'Do not sin against the child.'"

Now, dear Sunday school teachers, I will mention one or two matters which concern you. "*Do not sin against the child*" by coming to your class with a chilly heart. Why should you make your children cold towards divine things? Do not sin against them by coming too late, for that will make them think that punctuality is not a virtue and that the Sunday school is of no very great importance.

"Do not sin against the child" by coming irregularly and absenting yourself at the smallest pretense, for that is distinctly saying to the child, "You can neglect to serve God when you please, for you see that this is what I do." "Do not sin against the child" by merely going through class routine, without really teaching and instructing. That is the shadow of Sunday school teaching and not the substance—and it is in some respects worse than nothing.

"Do not sin against the child" by merely telling him a number of stories without setting forth the Savior, for that will be giving him a stone instead of bread. "Do not sin against the child" by aiming at anything short of his conversion to God through Jesus Christ the Savior.

And then, you parents, "*do not sin against the child*" by being so very soon angry. I have frequently heard grown-up people repeat that verse, "Children, obey your parents in all things." It is a very proper text—a very proper text—and boys and girls should carefully attend to it. I like to hear fathers and

mothers preach from it, but there *is* that other one, you know. There *is* that other and—"Likewise, ye fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged!"

Do not pick up every little thing against a good child and throw it in his or her teeth, and say, "Ah, if you were a Christian child, you would not do this and you would not do that!" I am not so sure about that—you who are heads of families do a great many wrong things yourselves—and yet I hope you are Christians. And if your Father in heaven were sometimes to be as severe with you as you are with the sincere little ones when you are out of temper, I am afraid it would go very hard with you. Be gentle, and kind, and tender, and loving.

At the same time, *do not sin against any child by over-indulgence*. Spoiled children are like spoiled fruit—the less we see of them the better. In some families, the master of the house is the youngest boy, though he is not yet big enough to wear knickerbockers. He manages his mother, and his mother, of course, manages his father, and so, in that way, he rules the whole house.

This is unwise, unnatural, and highly perilous to the pampered child. Keep boys and girls in proper subjection, for they cannot be happy themselves, nor can you be so, unless they are in their places. Do not water your young plants either with vinegar or with syrup. Neither use too much nor too little of rebuke. Seek wisdom of the Lord, and keep the middle of the way.

In a word, "do not sin against the child," but train it in the way it should go, and bring it to Jesus that He may bless it. Cease not to pray for the child till his young heart is given to the Lord. May the Holy Spirit make you wise to deal with these young immortals! Like plastic clay, they are on the wheel. Oh, that He would teach us how to mold and fashion their characters! Above all, may He put His own hand to the work—and then it will be done indeed!

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.