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Child Abuse !!! a Biblical Perspective



The substance of a lecture delivered by Rev. Ivan Foster at the 14th Annual Teacher Training Seminar in Whitefield College of the Bible, August 13th-17th, 2001.

Child abuse, that treatment of children which results in either spiritual, mental or physical suffering, has become familiar to us, as cases are reported in the press with increasing regularity.

It is a crime that is not limited to any one stratum of society or any particular region of the country. It is a plague that has been discovered in the dwellings and habitats of the rich and famous as well as the less well-off and the unknown. It has chiefly featured in the religious institutions within the apostasy with very many Roman Catholic priests being convicted of crimes against children. Many £millions have been paid out by Rome to its victims. The consequences of this sin amongst the ranks of Canadian Episcopalian ministers have all but bankrupted that church. Its own website, dedicated to explaining the issues surrounding the ongoing litigation, states that \$100,000 per month is being spent by the General Synod on "litigation costs and related matters." The Synod expects to run out of liquid assets by the end of this year. The sale of various assets is currently under consideration. The website states that there is the possibility that the General Synod may even cease to exist!

The public disclosure of the wickedness of Roman Catholic priests in the courts of USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland and other locations, has resulted in a crisis of confidence in many Roman Catholic hearts. This sin has resulted in more people leaving the fold of Rome than any other. Sadly, it has generally resulted in the disillusioned turning to further darkness rather than to the Bible for the truth.

Child abuse is the starkest evidence of man's wickedness. It shows just how evil the human heart is. The Lord Jesus Christ was not exaggerating (not that the Saviour is capable of such) when He said: For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, Matthew 15:19. Nor was Jeremiah overstating the case when he said (for did not he speak by inspiration?): The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9. The truth of human depravity cannot be overstated nor the evil condition of the natural heart exaggerated.

I. THE HISTORY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR REVEALS THE ANTIQUITY OF CHILD ABUSE.

It is not a 20th century phenomenon! The evil treatment of children is no new thing. When man breaks out from under the divine restraints that God has placed upon humanity, then all suffer but none more than children.

1. In the days of Noah, we are told that violence of every sort filled the earth. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, Genesis 6:12. Notice the statement, "for all flesh had corrupted his way



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upon the earth.” The word corrupt carries the meaning of moral corruption. Morally, the population of the earth had trampled over the boundaries set by God. No boundaries remained intact as a result of this rebellion. There was no sin that was not committed. I am sure that child abuse was rife. Verse 11 of Genesis 6 states: *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.* The word *corrupt* means *the casting off of moral restraint*. The word *violence* is elsewhere translated *cruelty* on occasions. Psalm 74:20 is an example. *Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.* The casting off of God’s restraints leads to cruel treatment of the most vulnerable in society. What habitations of cruelty have been revealed in recent child abuse cases. Orphanages, schools, churches — all have been places of cruelty toward little children. So it would have been, I believe, in the dark days before the universal flood.

2. The depravity of the Canaanite nations before Israel’s invasion would have included this sin. Remember, it was to serve the purpose of God in judgment that Israel was commanded to destroy the Canaanitish nations. *But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full,* Genesis 15:16. This is a reference to Israel being brought by God out of Egypt to act as His instrument of judgment against the Amorites. In the same way, they were an instrument of judgment against the inhabitants of Canaan. The sins of the Canaanites were most gross. They most certainly abused children. Consider 2 Chron 28:3. *Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.* This abuse of children was one learned from the Canaanites.

3. The dark days of apostasy in the kingdom of Judah witnessed the return of this evil. The verse already quoted, 2 Chron 28:3, shows that children were greatly and unbelievably abused in those times. They were offered as living sacrifices to the god, Molech. It became a thing excusable on the basis of religious activity. There have been cases where child victims of perverted priests and ministers have spoken of their abusers telling them that what they were doing was permissible in God’s eyes and it was a holy thing. How wicked are those who would seek to use God and His holy name to excuse their depravity!

4. Such practices were still evident amongst the heathen nations at the beginning of the apostolic age. Paul the apostle wrote: *For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret,* Ephesians 5:12. The secret practices of the heathen world were, and indeed remain, unmentionably wicked. Undoubtedly, the mistreatment of children would have taken place. Contemporary records from the Greek and Roman empires clearly indicate the crimes committed against children.

II. CHILD ABUSE IS THE HARVEST OF SPIRITUAL DARKNESS AND IGNORANCE.

Just as owls and bats, both unclean creatures according to the Levitical law, Leviticus 11:13-19, emerge under cover of darkness, even so the depraved practices of mankind best flourish in the darkness of apostasy. For this reason, the city of Babylon, the seat of man’s final rebellion against God, is called *the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird,* Revelation 18:2. That will be the world’s darkest hour when evil will flourish as never before. This will be just before the dawn of Christ’s millennial reign. Who can doubt that amongst the chief victims of that evil time will be the children of the nations? Surely the increasing problem of child abuse today



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is but the dark harbinger of that time of universal wickedness!

III. MAN HAS SHOWN A WILLINGNESS TO JUSTIFY THE LIFESTYLES WHICH RESULT IN CHILD ABUSE.

The sexual abuse of children is an offshoot of the lusts to which the ungodly give way when once the restraint of God is cast off. The unlocking of the door that men believe takes place, by the overthrowing of the law and gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and which they fully expect will lead on to liberty and unrestrained delights, in truth, releases the monster of human depravity.

It is not a coincidence that the age of modernistic rejection of the Word of God and the overthrowing of the old-time religion in many denominations, is also the time of increasing immorality and the descent into the depths of degradation. It is not coincidence, I say, but rather a direct consequence. What we see today is the beginning of the harvest of darkness. Man will arrogantly deny this and blame the gospel for our ills. Because many individuals from religious institutions have been convicted of child abuse, the gospel of Christ is blamed by those anxious to grasp every opportunity to denigrate Christ and His Word.

But the DEPARTURE from the gospel is the true cause of such wickedness. Almost without exception, those religious establishments whose members have been convicted of crimes against children, have been in the ecumenical, modernistic camp. The rare exceptions to that rule have been dealt with swiftly by the disciplinary courts of the institutions and handed over to the authorities for prosecution. In so many instances, the crimes of guilty priests have been ignored or swept under the proverbial carpet and the priest moved on to some other parish to continue his iniquitous activities.

The common psychological excuse for man's depravity is based upon the lie that the restraints of Bible religion have resulted in suppressed emotions, which in turn have given rise to the debased and perverted practices common today. This is just so much devilish rubbish since the vast majority of those who engage in the vile practices of today never once so much as perused one page of a Bible, let alone placed themselves under its restraints!

God gives us the true source of such perversity. *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves,* Romans 1:24. The source is the "lusts of their own hearts." Man's depraved nature being allowed free rein is the fountain of child abuse.

For all the furore of the press and parliament, there is no real and genuine condemning of the evil of perverted sexual practices openly espoused today. The most popular entertainers and parliamentarians are openly acknowledged sodomites. There is no reproach or public odium linked to the evil practice of sodomy. Indeed, society has hedged about the practices of such brutishness with protective laws so that you become an offender under the law to condemn these evil activities as they ought to be condemned. You become guilty of promoting and inciting hatred.

God's Word describes society's attitude today. *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleas-*



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ure in them that do them, Romans 1:32. Men know the evil of the underlying perversion that promotes the sexual abuse of children, but, nevertheless, they think well of those who avow such sexual deviance, for that is the meaning of the word *pleasure* in Romans 1:32.

Consider the standing of the Church of Rome, despite the repeated evils of her priests and the many attempted cover-ups by her senior clerics of the crimes against children committed under her roof. Who dare condemn her? She is still courted as an institution by the leaders of the world's nations. President George Bush, a professed Christian, we are asked to believe, is the latest to scrape and slabber over the Pope's slippers!

The condemnations by the world of those who abuse children are not of any great depth or else they would see the link with sodomy and condemn it and every place it is given a refuge, as the source of the evil abuse.

IV. THE ONLY PROTECTION FOR SOCIETY IS FOUND IN THE GOSPEL.

1. The Lord Jesus was a protector of the young. It was He who uttered those immortal words: *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God*, Mark 10:14. The disciples, good men that they were, nevertheless, on this occasion, showed a tendency to undervalue children. They felt that the Saviour would not wish to have His time to be taken up with mothers, anxious to have Him bless their offspring. The mothers were wiser and were engaged in that which pleased the Lord as His angry response demonstrated. *But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased*, Mark 10:14.

2. Wherever His gospel has spread, it has promoted child care. The gospel taught fathers to care for their children and to discipline them with wisdom and love. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, Ephesians 6:1-4. Here is grace that only the Bible promotes. Today, many campaign against the method of discipline advocated by the Bible and call it child abuse. Organisations, such as the **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children**, have campaigned vigorously for the outlawing of biblical methods of discipline. Yet, in truth, it is they who are guilty of child abuse. An undisciplined child is a *spoiled* child. Eternity alone will disclose the extent of the spoiling that modern views on discipline have caused. *Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell*, Proverbs 23:13-14. These words detail the method of discipline God advocates, the objectives of true discipline and the tragic results of failure. Far from the gospel being the cause of tyranny in the experience of children, the opposite is true. The Sunday School, the orphanage, the hospital — every institution that has benefitted the child, has sprung from the gospel of Christ.

STATE EDUCATION

Every individual and every institution that would remove the gracious influences of the gospel from the life of the child are, in truth, guilty of child abuse. The Saviour's condemnation of those who would stand between Him and children is a very strong one indeed. *And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him*



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that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea, Mark 9:42. Today's diet of evolution, ecumenism and Christ-denying "multi-faithism" does place an offence (literally, a stumbling block) in the path of children brought up to believe the Bible's teaching about the Saviour. The state system of education in this land operates a regime whereby the gospel is FORBIDDEN to the state school pupil. I do not say religion is forbidden. Indeed, it is liberally apportioned to children but it is not the religion of Christ but a blend of Romanism, apostate Protestantism with a peppering of inputs from the increasing variety of pagan beliefs present in society today. Multi-faithism, the "in" religious thing at present, is what children are presented with and no teacher, be they Free Presbyterian or otherwise, dare stand up in a state school classroom and systematically teach children that Jesus Christ is the ONLY way to God and that all other religions are false and will lead to hell. To deny children the privilege to hear the full and unedited message of Christ is child abuse indeed. That privilege is officially denied to children in the classrooms of the state system of education in Northern Ireland. Any teacher who presents Christ in His fulness to their pupils with a view to seeing them converted and coming to personal faith in the Lord Jesus, does so in defiance of the official guidelines under which they are employed.

3. Sad is that day when the sunshine of the gospel begins to diminish. It will lead on to that darkness that ushers in misery for all men, not least of all, children. It ought to be our constant prayer that God might visit our land with an outpouring of His Spirit. It is only by the advancing of the gospel truth under His gracious influences that the evil of child abuse may be checked.