

The Children's Sermon.

The paramount issue of a more thorough education of children in religion has led many pastors to make the children's sermon a regular feature of the church preaching-service. On this important subject the *Biblical Review* (January, 1921) remarks: "Rightly handled, this should be a very real contribution to the Church's care for the spiritual welfare of the child. If it is merely a sort of entertainment feature, thrown in by way of bribing those children who lack parental supervision to remain at least a part of the service, it will not amount to a great deal. But if it be made a simple and attractive, yet serious and dignified presentation of Christian truth, with some passage of Scripture as a text, it may become indispensable. It is not necessary that the preacher play the clown or juggler to keep the attention of the little folks, whose hearts and minds are far more ready to absorb fundamental lessons than their elders often realize. Anecdote and illustration there must be, but the tactful preacher knows how, in such addresses, to maintain an atmosphere suggestive of both reverence and earnestness, instilling in his juvenile audience from Sabbath to Sabbath a sense of the hallowed nature of the place and the occasion. But there may come also an unexpected result, thus referred to by the *Expository Times* in commenting upon a book of texts for children: 'Virginibus Puerisque' has been a feature of the *Expository Times* for some years. No part of the magazine, unless perhaps the Introductory Notes, has been more appreciated. But the demand has been always greater than the supply. For the children's sermon is now almost everywhere a part of the regular service; and it is often the most interesting part. In the Highland parish already referred to there is a succession of great preachers throughout the summer months, and the people have got into the way of comparing one preacher with another; this year we were struck with the fact that it was the children's sermons that were compared and that were most *vividly remembered* (italics our own)." To this may be added the following facts: 1) Children attending parochial schools are usually found to be very willing to attend public worship. 2) Children attending parochial schools are usually found capable of following and understanding the regular sermon preached to the congregation. 3) The tendency of Sunday-school children to leave for home, immediately after the close of Sunday-school, without attending public worship, is due to a defective system of religious education, which because of its superficiality does not inculcate in the heart of the child a proper appreciation of the Word of God.

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