

## CHAPTER 30: HEALTH

1. Are parents responsible for the health of their children?

Yes, they are, and consequently either the parents, or whoever are placed in charge of the children, must use all necessary means to develop and strengthen them physically. They must do this:

(1.) In order that the children may have a long and vigorous life in the service of the King. It should be borne in mind by parents that health of body, quite as much as health of soul, depends on early training and management. Children that are nourished with good, wholesome food, kept clean, regularly exercised, and well supplied with plenty of fresh air, will be likely to grow up strong and hearty, and thereby made capable of doing a large amount of fighting for God.

(2.) Because there is a close connexion between a strong body and a sound mind. There is a mysterious connexion between the jewel and the case – the mind and the body. To take care of one is to take care of the other.

(3.) Because a healthy body is so helpful to a trusting, confident, and joyous religious experience. A healthy body is favourable to a sanguine, hopeful spirit, and a sanguine, hopeful spirit will ever be found helpful to faith and trust, and faith and trust in God bring that joy into the heart which is unspeakable and full of glory. If, therefore, you prefer that your children should grow up to have a joyous realisation of the things of the Kingdom of God, do all you can to develop and strengthen them physically.

(4.) Because the bodily health of children has so much to do with the comfort and happiness of everyone about them. Health in children, as in adults, is generally accompanied by a plentiful flow of bright, cheerful, animal spirits, and these have much to do, not only with the happiness of those who possess them, but with that of all associated with them at the time, and ever afterwards.

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It needs but little close observation of men to see that those people who have a good flow of animal spirits are far better circumstanced for a cheerful joyous life than those who are not so favoured, although the latter may be possessors of wealth, pleasure, and all else the world can give. Take care of the health of your children for your own sakes. How much vigorous healthy children have to do with the comfort and happiness of parents in particular, and of the family in general, any mother or father can tell.

(5.) Because health will have to do with the physical comfort or misery of the children themselves all the way through life. When measures that seem necessary to promote the health and strength of children call for self-denial and self-sacrifice on the part of the parents or of the child himself, let the parents call up before their minds the picture of a strong, vigorous manhood or womanhood for their darlings. Then let them compare it with a delicate, ailing one. From the contrast, encouragement will be drawn to persevere in those efforts and measures that seem likely to secure the one and avoid the other. Of course parents cannot change a child's constitution, but they can often do what will go a long way in this direction. Many children come into the world with delicate bodies, very liable to sickness. Still, with ordinary care and attention to such rules of health as are hereafter suggested, such constitutions may be very much improved. Indeed, by care, many children who in the ordinary course of things would go to an early grave, will not only live out all their days, but enjoy even superior health to that of many children who are born vigorous and are afterwards weakened by self-indulgences and neglect.

(6.) A careful early physical training has often very much to do, not only with securing health, but prolonging life itself. The statistics of health show that millions of children die annually who might have lived, and would have done so, had they received watchful care and nursing in their childhood. If you wish your children to live and take a part in this great War, and help in the conquest of the world for Christ, take care of their bodies while they are young.

(7.) In thus caring for the health of their children, parents will be teaching them lessons which they will go on practising all their lives. In this way, the children will be able, not only to preserve their own health and vigour, but, when grown to maturity, they will

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know how to care for those about them, and for their own families in turn. You will thus make your children benefactors of their fellows wherever they go.

2. Ought not parents to qualify themselves to develop and improve the health of their children?

Most certainly they ought.

(1.) Young mothers especially should seek information and instruction on this important subject from those who have had more experience than themselves.

(2.) Parents should take the burden of the children's health and well-being on their own hearts, and not leave it to servants, or nurses, or neighbours, or even doctors. If parents will only study the simplest laws that govern health, – if they will only use their eyes and ears as they go about the world, – if they will study the principal tendencies and weaknesses of their children, they will save themselves and others endless trouble. Their children will be spared much suffering, and what will be a consideration, doubtless, to some of our readers, any amount of doctors' fees will be saved.

Parents should be determined to keep their children alive and vigorous, or know the reason why. Always remember the value of "a stitch in time," and that golden maxim – which, if not written up in every household, ought to be studied and acted upon with regard to all sorts of bodily, mental, and spiritual disease – that "prevention is better than cure."

3. Will you please name a few of the conditions on which the maintenance of health very much depends?

Yes, we will name a few, with pleasure, in the next and following chapters. But they are so simple that they will be likely to suggest themselves, we think, to any thoughtful person bent on preserving the health of children. We have acted upon them in our own family, and found them useful.