

THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN

CHAPTER 35: WILL YOU GIVE THIS TRAINING?

"WHERE have you been?" said one friend to another when they met in the City.

"I have been hearing a lecture on the Training of Children, was the reply.

"Where have you been?"

"Oh," said the other, " I have been at home doing it."

Both were right, especially the one who had been doing the work. But we will hope that the other, having heard his duty explained and enforced, would thereby be led immediately to the discharge of it.

Dear reader – comrade or otherwise – you have come thus far with us in our remarks. Now the question very naturally comes up: If you have not already set yourself to the task, will you do so, and will you do it with your might? To hear or read about duty is one thing – to do it is quite another. It is emphatically true in this case that not the forgetful hearer, but the DOER OF THE WORD will be blessed in his deed.

Almost every day of our existence the sense of the overwhelming importance of this duty grows upon us. It is said that on a certain occasion, in the presence of the First Napoleon, a company of distinguished personages were discussing the special needs of France. After hearing attentively a number of different opinions, the Emperor is said to have remarked, "THE GREAT NEED OF FRANCE IS MOTHERS!"

Alas! this is still true, we doubt not, of that nation; and not of that nation only, but of every other nation under heaven. The crying want of the world is true, noble, godly mothers and fathers, too, as far as that goes. The children of every land are growing up to a heritage of misery here and hereafter, for want of the training which only godly fathers and mothers can give – fathers and mothers who recognise the value and importance of the souls of their children, and who will, at all costs, train them for

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Holiness, for humanity, and for God.

Parents, will you do this? Are you doing it? Or in the highest interests and destinies of their being, are your poor children orphans? That is, are you caring for their earthly interests at the expense of their souls? If so, you will find yourself in the deplorable position of the servant girl, who, having, through carelessness, during the absence of her mistress, allowed a beautiful child entrusted to her care to be burnt to death, tried to excuse her neglect by presenting the mother with the child's clothes, all clean and in good order. Alas! alas! what compensation were the clothes – however carefully got up – to this broken-hearted mother for the loss of her darling? She wanted the child, not its clothes. So parents – while we do not want to undervalue the importance of a due and proper care of the bodies of your children, yet we must insist upon the fact that, in the great day of account, He will require from you their souls; and it will be no mitigation of your condemnation and distress that you took care of their bodies and their minds and their worldly interests, if it was at the expense, or to the neglect, of their everlasting Salvation.

Can anything more be added to what has been already advanced in the foregoing pages to urge you, as parents, to a whole-hearted devotion to the task of training your precious charge? I fear not. Still, I feel I must try.

Four great interests are at stake. Each one taken alone is of sufficient importance to justify every effort you can put forth. Training will make, sure of them all. They have been hinted, at as we have gone along. I produce them again – ponder them well in your hearts. We begin with the first:

1. THE WELFARE OF THE CHILDREN THEMSELVES.

Love comes with the children. To seek their highest good is but the compliance with the strongest natural instinct of the parent's heart. Unless these inborn yearnings have been destroyed by some fiendish passion, some wild inhuman lust, or some mean form of selfishness, this innate love of the children will dominate in the heart of every father and mother, and no price will be counted too high to pay, no sacrifice too painful to make, to secure the future well-being of the little ones.



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It is important that parents should clearly see wherein this well-being consists. Many, many, sad failures follow daily from misapprehensions here; and, mistaking the thing to be aimed at, no wonder that all sorts of erroneous methods are pursued in order to reach it. What is it?

Beyond controversy, one indispensable element in the real well-being of the children is GOODNESS.

Whatever else they are or are not, they must be good. I care not who you are or what opinions you entertain on all other themes, you will admit that it cannot possibly be really well with your children, now, or at any other time, unless they are good. Then, to turn their feet into the way of God's commandments, and to so bend their wills and fix their affections that they shall never depart from the paths of rectitude, must be an ambition, not only worthy but supreme, in the very nature of things, in every Christian father and mother's heart.

If you are good yourself, you know the blessedness and rest and divinity of goodness, and you will not only yearn to make your children good, but the very thought of their being anything else will stab you as with a dart. Look at your darlings as you clasp their innocent forms to your bosoms, or watch them slumbering in their little beds; and then say whether the very thought of any one of them growing up to be a thief, or a liar, or a harlot, or a drunkard, or a respectable sham or white-washed hypocrite, would not horrify you, and make you feel that you would rather ten thousand thousand times lay them all in the grave. While, on the other hand, the anticipation of their being made and kept holy and good amidst the ocean of uncleanness and immorality which you know will so soon be rolling all about them, will be almost as welcome to you as the expectation you cherish of their walking some day in white robes in the companionship of the holy angels over the golden streets of the New Jerusalem.

I have shown in this book a sure and certain way, so far as anything on earth can be sure and certain, by which you can realise this Heaven-born, sanctified yearning for your children. Nay, more than this, I have shown you that this is THE ONLY CERTAIN

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WAY. Will you take it?

You do not want them to go to the Cross round by the public-house, the brothel, the ball-room, the race-course, the gambling hell, or any of the other earthly hells of cheater, or Pharisism, or infidelity, and only land at the Saviour's feet with broken health, shattered minds, and dissipated habits, destroying every possibility of usefulness, or requiring a life-time to repair the havoc wrought.

No! No!! NO!!! Ten thousand times no! Then take them by the hand in the morning of life, in the bloom of their existence, and lead them straight up to your Saviour, and make them bow and submit to Him; so shall they not only obtain His forgiveness and favour, but be regenerated by the Holy Ghost and doubly strengthened to walk the slippery paths of youth, and face victoriously all the opposition that earth and Hell can bring against their future holy career.

Come then, my comrades, my friends, known and unknown, in The Salvation Army and out of it, imitate your Heavenly Father, whose first great business, nay, whose infinite anxiety it is to make and keep us all good. You are appointed not only to point out, but to lovingly compel your children to travel over this royal track of goodness by giving them this training.

Most fathers and mothers are more anxious about the happiness of their children than they are about their own. There are very few parents who are not perfectly willing, and who do not every day forego their own comfort in order to promote that of their children.

Alas! alas! what a misfortune it is that parents, while so concerned for the happiness of their darlings, should so often adopt a course calculated to bring about just the opposite effect! If you want your children to be happy, take the one only course that will lead to it.

The assertion already repeatedly made in these pages is incontrovertible, that God has inseparably linked goodness and happiness together. In childhood, in youth, in manhood, in grey hairs, and in the spirit world, peace and purity are never found



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apart. Happiness and naughtiness are an impossibility. Oh, the delusions that have possession of multitudes of parents on this subject! Although their own lives, down to the present moment, may have been a constant contradiction of the theory that happiness may be found and maintained without goodness, they go on sending forth their children – victims of the same lying delusion – only to make the same sad discovery after the same weary round of disappointment, finishing up too often with a death-bed of despair and a hell of endless remorse.

Parents think and say that it is their chief concern to make their children happy. Then what ought they to do? Why, common sense and their Bibles, and the religious teaching they possess, however little that may be, should compel them to take that course which alone is calculated to make them GOOD.

The Kingdom of Heaven, for children as well as for men and women, consists, first in RIGHTEOUSNESS, and then PEACE, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. Father, mother, take the Saviour's counsel, and "seek" for your children "FIRST the Kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added" unto them.

Do parents act thus generally with their children? Alas, they do not! Look at them in your own circle; many of them professedly Christians. Nay, look at yourself How are you acting? Is it not a common thing for parents to say – perhaps not with their lips, but by their conduct, and we all know that actions speak louder than words – " I want my children to be happy, therefore I will work, and weep, and pray to make them rich, or clever, or beautiful, or famous, or learned, or something of the same kind"? And does it not, also, almost always invariably follow that when God allows these poor, misguided children to reach the bubble sought, it is only to have it burst in their despairing grasp, and go out in darkness, often taking them with it?

Do you want your children to be happy – to have a happiness that has foundations, that will bear reflection, that will stand the tremendous strain of poverty, of affliction, of a dying hour, or of the Judgment Day? Do you desire for them a happiness that can live without the support of the riches and pleasure and pomps of the world; that will outlive the rolling comets and the blazing suns? I show it you, and I show you the way to it. The Bible is full of it. "Blessed " – that is happy, supremely happy – "are the pure



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in heart." There is no other way to blessedness on earth or in Heaven; so come along, father, mother, and thank God for this way, this royal way of joy and gladness and set to work to get the feet of your children firmly established in it.

This is no arbitrary arrangement. It is not an accident that heavenly purity should mean human blessedness. It is in the very nature of things that it should be so. Let me show you how this comes about.

This Divine goodness, wrought in the heart, whether of men or children, means a clear conscience – all past sin and wrong-doing being forgiven. It is heralded by a full pardon and the consciousness of it. Hence there are no haunting memories of the past, and no dark fears of the future.

It means a clean heart. The vile spirits of self-seeking, and pride, and malice, and envy, and vanity, which are the roots and causes of so much inward unrest and misery, are cleansed away.

It means the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, giving strength for the keeping of the commandments of God.

It means a heart filled with love to God and love to man, and love brings Heaven to those who have enough of it.

And then it follows, naturally, that a heart filled with love should always lead to a life of benevolence, and that must ever be a source of satisfaction and gladness.

It means a life of faithful human service, and that brings the pleasure of a conscience void of offence towards all men.

It means that supreme worship and love of God which always ensures the peace which passeth all understanding, – the joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.

And over all, and upon all, it means the bright shining of the Sun of the Divine Presence, which shineth day and night – the undefinable, but nevertheless realisable,

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comforting, sustaining, guiding, keeping presence of God, which He gives only to sincere, obedient, and fully – surrendered hearts.

Will you train your children for such a life of rest and gladness here, or will you leave them to drift off into the mighty ocean of worldliness, formality, iniquity, and misery that is everywhere foaming and surging around them? Drift off, alas! not only to be damned and broken on the black rocks that are unseen, but on those only too well seen, and then to be finally and eternally wrecked.

The second leading consideration that we think should induce parents to give the training advocated in this volume, is because it is intimately connected with –

2. THE HAPPINESS OF PARENTS THEMSELVES.

While we protest against the sordidly selfish motives which actuate multitudes of parents who train their children simply to gratify their own likes and interests, to feed their pride or advance their ambitious schemes, we are equally aware that the happiness of parents all the way through this life, and in a mysterious way in the life beyond, depends, to an awful extent upon the well-doing of their children.

Mother, father, look this calmly in the face as you first take your babe into your arms, and say to yourself:

"This child, if it lives, is destined to exert a most serious influence for good or evil over my heart, and over my life, and over my home, and over all my associations, and over all my destiny in eternity. If it turns out well with the child, it will be well with me. If the child becomes good, and happy, and useful, and godly on earth, and is finally landed in Heaven, it will be to me a source of unceasing joy and gladness; but if otherwise, it will be a never-failing cause of anxiety and sorrow in this life, and very probably interfere with the fullest happiness which is possible to me in the life to come."

We read in history (we hope it is only fable) that the Romans had a custom of chaining prisoners together by an iron girdle so closely that when one of them rose, or walked, or lay down, the other must rise, or walk, or lie down also; otherwise there must be

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perpetual strife and discomfort. And, more painful still, it is said that when one of these prisoners, so chained together, died, the corpse was not removed, but left to be dragged about, rotting and festering under the eyes of its living comrade, creating physical misery indescribable. There was no deliverance from the body of that death.

Now, it seems to us that, in some mysterious manner, God has, after this fashion, connected the child with the parent. The doings – the destiny – the welfare of the child is linked with the inner being of the parent. The heart of the one is bound up with the heart of the other.

Is it not so with you? When the child is sad, is not the mother sad also? When the child suffers, does not the mother suffer? If the child wanders away, does not the mother's heart wander away with it? Or if the child becomes (as God forbid that any child of yours ever should become) a harlot, a thief, or a murderer, will not its poor, rotting, festering memory, the shadow of its former self, now marred – murdered, as it were – cling to the parents, and be dragged about by them with weary sighs, heavy groans, and oceans of tears, wherever they go? In the light, and in the darkness, in the drawing room, or the shop, or the factory, this poor child's form will be there and cannot be shaken off.

And when such a poor child, through the want of parental care, and teaching, and example, goes into the future world a lost soul, as God knows such children too often do, with a wail of despair on its lips, will not the spirit come back to the mother and father, and upbraid them with that cruel neglect and ruinous example, which has contributed to its damnation?

If this be so – if the fate of the children is so closely connected with that of the parents, that for us to be joyful they must be joyful, for us to prosper they must prosper also, then how important it is that the parents should bring their hearts and energies to the task of giving that training to their children which will most surely mould and fashion them for a good and happy lot.

Humanly speaking, children make for their parents either Hell or Heaven, even in this life. Those good gifts of God, capable of working out for us the highest enjoyment



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when rightly used, do, as everybody knows, when neglected or abused, become the keenest and most productive sources of anguish and remorse. And as children are the richest treasures entrusted to our care, they consequently have more to do with our happiness than all other human things put together.

Illustrations of the miseries resulting from the want of this training could be produced sufficient to fill any number of volumes; but, alas! alas! they are strewed around us in only too great abundance everywhere. Is it not sadly too common a thing for parents to be made miserable, and to have all the comfort of their lives marred by spoilt, badly-behaved, selfish, tyrannical children?

The extent to which ill-trained children can make homes wretched, which otherwise might be like paradise, has always been a source of astonishment to me. For instance, see the little things when hardly able to stand alone, crying for what they cannot get, displeased with every effort put forth to give them pleasure, quarrelling, jangling, and restless, making the lives of each other, and of mothers, and fathers, and servants, and friends almost unbearable!

But wait a bit and see how this capacity for making misery will have increased when a little advance in age brings to the children some choice and control over their own movements. And when to their own self-will is added the influence of schoolmates and companions, as ill-trained or more so than themselves, or when their worldliness and selfishness are still further developed by the conceit that so commonly comes with a little education or some business authority.

Alas! alas! too many parents, and guardians, and servants know all this to their misery. Oh, what lamentations are to be heard daily, and what confessions of helplessness are to be seen pictured forth on countenances where the sense of propriety, mixed with pride, forbids any reference to the cause of it!

But if, when young, children have the power to make those about them unhappy, how will this ability be increased if allowed to grow old in selfishness and sin? How many fathers and mothers are there in this land at the present moment who are strangers to an hour's real peace by day or a night's quiet repose, in consequence of their anxiety



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about their children – of whose whereabouts they are uncertain, but of whose wicked, profligate lives they are only too painfully certain!

Let those parents who read this book PONDER THESE THINGS WELL IN THEIR HEARTS.

If you do not want to have your declining years embittered, and your grey hairs brought with sorrow to the grave, resolve that you will, in the most serious spirit, and in the strength of Divine grace, set yourself to control the wills and train the hearts of your children from their earliest days in paths of righteousness and godliness.

And further, if parents are to meet their children in Heaven, let them train them for it.

We have seen already how intimately the happiness of children in this life is connected with your own. Bear in mind also that this connexion will be continued right away into the next.

There are three leading expectations cherished by all good fathers and mothers with respect to their fullest happiness in the heavenly world.

1. There is the desire in every sanctified soul to see the King.
2. There will come the desire to see the Kingdom, the great glorified Corporation, the multitude which no man can number, who have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.
3. And next, there will inevitably be in every parent's breast the strong and deathless desire to see their own children there.

Heaven would be no Heaven without the King. Were it possible for us to find Him absent on our arrival, we should want immediately to go where He was, wherever that might be.

Heaven would be but poor indeed, compared with what we anticipate it, without the



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glorified spirits of just men made perfect, the souls of our departed comrades.

And it seems to us that Heaven would be deprived of much of its brightness and joy unless the precious children were there also, whose joys and sorrows have filled up so large a measure of our hearts on earth.

Verily, verily, are they not a part of us? True, we can imagine that the link which binds our hearts to theirs may be broken, and it is just possible that we may come to forget that they ever existed. He who has the arrangements for our final felicity in His hands will doubtless do what tends most perfectly to secure our everlasting joy; but surely our Heaven will be more complete with the children there – their divine destiny accomplished and their everlasting perfection secured.

Without them, I suppose we shall be content, and at rest, and happy. But there are degrees of contentment; there are different measures of rest; there are higher and lower standards of happiness. And it seems to us that for parents to have the perfect degree of contentment, the full measure of rest, and the highest standard of happiness reached, so far as outer things and circumstances are concerned, in the Eternal City, we must be WITH THE KING, IN THE KINGDOM, AND HAVE ALL OUR CHILDREN WITH US THERE.

Call this selfish, do you? Well, be it so. As parents, we are what God has made us, and what we have said we think will accord with the instinctive feelings of every saved parent's heart.

Do you not feel like this my brother, my sister? When the thunders are hushed, and the lightnings have ceased, and the storm is lulled, and the waves are calmed down, and the heavenly ship has gone over the bar into the haven, and you find yourself safely landed on the golden shores, do you not expect that you will want either to find your children there, or to know that after finishing the fight you have been compelled to leave on earth, they are coming on in a little time crowned and triumphant to join you?

I know you will. Every mother's and father's heart, justified and sanctified as I hope

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yours is, will say, " Amen, so let it be." Then, train your children for it. Do not be allured away from your purpose by any will-o-the-wisp that may start up with its false, gleaming, worldly, devilish fires, however bright and glittering they may appear. Do not listen to any suggestions, counsels, or cautions that may come from kindred, or friends, or anybody else, if they seem likely to interfere with the chances of your darling children making their calling and election sure to this heavenly inheritance. Do not indulge in the common, every-day practice of the professedly Christian world, of giving a half-worldly training, or in the equally palpable folly of withholding an out-and-out godly one, in order to obtain some supposed worldly advantage, and then expect that, contrary to the very course of things, something is going to turn up that will give to your children that holy character without which it is impossible for God to have them in Heaven. No! no! no! To turn your children's feet into a path leading in the opposite direction to the goal which you want them to reach, and yet expect that they will reach it, is not only folly, but folly of the most stupid kind. For their sakes, and for your own, turn their faces towards the city that hath foundations. Walk before them in the narrow way; encourage and practise their feet in the heavenly road, so shall they finish the journey and follow you to Heaven. *"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."* (Rev. 14:13)

Parents should give this training to their children, as only thereby will they qualify them to render the most effective assistance in saving the world.

3. TRAIN THE CHILDREN FOR THE WORLD'S SAKE.

Many who will read this book have a measure of sympathy with the multitudes of poor, suffering people, who wander about on its surface, and for the most part wander about in sin and woe. On these multitudes you look, as it were, with the very eyes of Jesus Christ; you see the world as He saw it; you regard it as He regarded it – not only in its relations to the sorrows and joys which are but for an hour, but in its relations to those that will endure for ever. You weep, you pray, you long for its Salvation, and you are willing to suffer, nay – if the Master plainly called you to it – you are willing to die for it. You want to help it – , and you often regret in your yearnings on its behalf, not only that there is so little you can do, but that you possess so little that seems to you of



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any particular value that you can give. You have no money, nor genius, nor learning, nor eloquence to lay on the altar. Did you possess these gifts, how gladly would you lay them there! But having them not, you feel as though you could do little more than sit down alongside the dark, deep river of restless, wretched, sin-cursed souls, as it rushes by you on its rapid course to the bottomless pit, and sigh and weep.

And yet you have treasures in your possession, probably of greater value and influence and potency for the accomplishment the task in hand than the rich mines of the Indies, the eloquence of the greatest orators, or the knowledge of the learned. You have children who will grow up to exert forces for good or evil, compared with which all mere human gifts are but as the dust before the hurricane. Oh, train them to be saviours of men; qualify them for this mighty destiny, and then bring them to the Lord Jesus and give them to your King.

In the American war of independence, and in other wars as well, where the hearts of the people have been deeply stirred, it has been quite a common occurrence for mothers to send their elder sons to the battle-field, knowing full well what terrible risks they run. But more than this: on receiving back these sons maimed for life, or on hearing the bitter news of their having fallen amongst the slain, it was not an uncommon thing for these mothers to send other sons to take their brothers' places in fighting for their country. Such mothers have imagined that greater interests were at stake than even the lives of their children, and consequently they have given them up. Doubtless, this giving up has been accompanied with such tears and agony, seen and unseen, as are indescribable here; but, nevertheless, they have given them up for what they thought to be the freedom and the happiness and the welfare of the multitude.

But how can we compare any human need as a justification for sacrifice with that upon which we are speaking here? Here is a necessity enforced by the bitter cry of millions of perishing souls. Here is something worthy of suffering. That is, will pay for any amount of blood that can be spilt, or any degree of loss that can be endured on its behalf. What do you say, mothers and fathers? Will you give your children? The Father has set you the example; He gave His Son for you. Will you not give your sons and daughters to Him, and for a dying world? Bring them out, the best you have, all you



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have, and bend yourself to train them right well for the War to which you consecrate them.

All round you fathers and mothers, at enormous expense, endless trouble, and tremendous sacrifices, are deliberately training their children for pursuits, occupations, and professions that they know, or might know, will curse the world and people Hell. Train yours to bless it and people Heaven.

Look at this poor earth of ours. Get a map of it. If you do not understand maps, ask somebody to explain to you all about the countries and peoples and languages that are described on it. Count its populations, cast up the sum of its idolatries, its superstitions, its cruelties, its slavery, its wars, its vice, its misery. How it wails in its bonds! Almost the whole creation groaneth. WHAT IS TO BE DONE FOR IT?

Thank God, something has been done – something is being done. But what has been done and what is being done are as nothing compared with what is required. We want that requirement to be met. That requirement has been talked about long enough. Surely the time and the opportunity for action have come. Will you do your share?

Did I say the opportunity had come to help the poor world out of its sins and miseries – has not the encouragement come also? And is not that encouragement The Salvation Army? Let anyone with some little thought and prayer – the more of both the better – read the Statistical Statement of what has been done by this movement as given at the close of this volume, and then say whether a really wonderful advance has not been made. And then let them consider whether the means by which that advance has been secured are not as wonderful as the advance itself, and whether, taken all together, it is not a remarkable encouragement to all who would fain do something to save souls from Hell, to save the world – to save all the world – at once to set to work full of hope, and full of confidence as to the result.

See what has been done by a handful of men and women, ordinary people. Just such persons as you, dear reader, whose eyes now rest upon this page. True, God has helped us, wrought by us, and through us, but He is no respecter of persons. Will you



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not help us? Won't you give your children to our King and train them for the War?

The world needs holy men and women. All are agreed here. We have never heard anyone dissent from this.

MAKE YOUR CHILDREN GOOD

The world needs fully-surrendered people – men and women who are not so much concerned about what they can get from God as about what they can do for Him; who have given up their lives to save other lives. Make your children benevolent and pitiful, and send them out to seek not their own, but the things which are Jesus Christ's – to live not to Please themselves, but Him who has bought them with His Blood. For the Salvation of the world.

MAKE YOUR CHILDREN WILLING TO DIE.

The world needs Soldiers, men given up for the War, and not merely Soldiers, but veterans, men and women practised and capable. Oh train your children to be Soldiers by profession – that is, make them Soldiers in heart. Teach their hands to war from their babyhood.

MAKE YOUR CHILDREN WARRIORS.

Our King is going to have an Army, a fighting Army, a disciplined Army, an invincible Army, a conquering Army, an Army that shall accomplish His purpose, rout His foes, and win the world to His feet. The advance guard of this grand Army has been skirmishing for generations, but the main body is coming into the field. Your boys and your girls are to be in its ranks, perchance carrying its Standards, or leading on its Battalions to victory; anyhow, see to it if you love the cause for which that Army is fighting, if you love this poor sin-bound world, and would like to have a hand in its emancipation, that you give your boys and girls to it, not as raw recruits but as capable Soldiers, and this you can only do by training and inspiring them in their childhood with the spirit and the motives of the War.

And, lastly, we urge you to give this training



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4. FOR YOUR LORD'S SAKE.

He wants your children. They belong to Him. He is their Creator. He keeps them in being. He has redeemed them with His own Blood. He says Himself, "All souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine; " and therefore it is only right and fit that they should supremely love, reverence, and serve Him. Will you train them to do this? You have often wished you could do something for Him in return for all His love and sacrifice. You have now the opportunity to train and present Him with the choicest treasures you possess.

WILL YOU EMBRACE IT?