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Chapter II

The Making of Men. — II.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man; ... male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. — Genesis i. 26, 27, 28.

As we have seen, the making of men who shall exhibit His image and be made partakers of His nature is still the great work of God, and it is work in which we are called to co-operate with Him. The subject is one which has special attractions for Officers, whatever rank they may hold; indeed, it is one of far-reaching importance to all those who desire to see men restored to God and enabled to keep His commandments. I will pursue it a little further. I do so the more readily because thinking about it has been a blessing and encouragement to my own soul. If its lessons have been apparent to me before, they have not yielded those fuller rewards which have followed a closer and more attentive consideration.

And this suggests an important thought with regard to much that is contained in the Bible. No matter how simple or obvious a truth may seem, or how apparent may be its uses, it is often quite impossible to extract full measure from it, or even to fully understand its meaning, until we have taken it and used it, and applied it to ourselves. Just as many things in nature standing ready and complete for our use are yet useless until we grasp them, and, working at them, make them our own; so much of the teaching of the Scriptures and many facts of God's dealings with men are of little real service to us until, in a similar way, we have taken hold of them for ourselves, examined and prayed about them, and applied them to the wants and wounds of our own hearts.

The corn, for instance, hangs ripe and pure upon the stalk, a perfect fruit of the earth ; and yet to make full use of it we need to seize it, to thresh and crush it, to convert it into flour and dough, and subject it to a violent heat; and even then we must masticate and digest it for ourselves. When this has all been done, and not before, we find it useful to sustain us in strength and health and life.



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It is the same with much of the most precious of the grain from the harvest fields of truth. Beautiful and valuable as it always is, it is only when we have studied it for ourselves, taken the trouble to thresh it out from the incident or history in which God has placed it, and, above all, have fearlessly applied it as a test to our own conduct and character, that we get out of it the strength and life and light that it is intended to give.

But I must come back to our topic, the making of men.

1. In the creation of Adam and Eve, God was also providing means for making the whole family of men. To our first parents, and through them to their children and their children's children, He gave those powers and instincts both of mind and body which were necessary to the reproduction of their kind. Year by year, as sure as seed-time and harvest, while the world shall stand, one family of men will produce another, and that one another; one generation will bring into being the next, and so on until the end of time. This was God's plan for the perpetuation of the human race. In Eden He not only called into being a man, but a race of men; and, beginning with the first created pair, He condescended to provide for the help and to require the co-operation of the individual members of that race in the achievement of His purpose.

And His scheme of a new creation is arranged on a similar plan. He will work to the uttermost for the salvation of men; but His energies stand waiting for the action of our faith and love, and come into play only as we work. The command to His sons and daughters of today, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,' is in the same strain as the old word which bade the first human pair, 'Multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.' By our union with Christ we are to beget children unto the Spirit. So St. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, said, 'For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel;' and of another of his converts he wrote, 'whom I have begotten in my bonds.'

Yes, that is it; that is what both the world and The Army need, mothers and fathers in God — men and women who will co-operate with Him in the production of a race of holy men, who will



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die rather than remain sterile and barren in the service of their Lord, who will stand forth in spite of every difficulty and devil as the makers of men. What this involves of labour and suffering, some of us already know a little, although we have not had such a travail as fell to Paul's lot. Though,' he says, 'ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers;' 'But I am your father,' he argues, telling them something of what that relationship means for him; 'We are made a spectacle unto the world,' he writes; 'we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; being reviled, being persecuted, being defamed, being made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.'

Ah! when men and women receive that spirit, and abide in it, then, and not till then, they shall become fathers and mothers in Israel, and cooperators with the Creator in the work of restoring men to His image and likeness.

2. But there was, at least, one momentous difference between the creating work of God in Adam and Eve and the work to be done through them and their descendants in the reproduction of the race. These two came from the Maker's hands perfect and entire, and lacking nothing. Everything that was needed of beauty and strength, of intelligence, of harmony, of purity, was there. Adam was, indeed, a fit lord of all created things, and Eve was meet in mind and body to be his companion and helpmeet. How different was this to the helpless condition of infancy in which the rest of the human family is appointed to commence existence! For strength, weakness; in place of responsible self-reliance, abject dependence; instead of the wisdom and intelligence of the man, the ignorance and innocence of the babe.

How wonderful are God's ways! Man is not only to co-operate with Him in continuing the race, and peopling the earth with his kindred, but is also to share with Him the work of preserving, training, and moulding it — to share, in fact, in all that goes to the true making of his own offspring. And that offspring, therefore, is placed in his arms, made dependent on his toil, and inspired with an all-powerful instinct of confidence which responds to the affection of its parents. It may have been that in the cradles of an unfallen world, God had designed to work an even greater work than that which He did in Eden, and to produce, as the earth went forward, by the aid of mothers and fathers who had not lost His image, a race of men and women even stronger



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and nobler than Adam and Eve when first they left His hands: men and women who, when matured in holiness, should have passed — perhaps in some such way as Elijah passed — from the highest condition of which an earthly life was capable to a life still higher, if not Divine.

But, whatever the world would have been had Adam continued in innocence, it is clear that the creating work to which we are called today runs on similar lines to that of long ago. God not only honours us by making us partners with Him in begetting the children of the Kingdom, but He also expects us to share in the great work of the Holy Spirit in training and teaching the hearts and fashioning the lives of the babes in Christ — the little ones of the flock of God—and so to work together with Him in building up their characters in the likeness of Christ.

This is work which some devoted souls amongst us are apt to overlook. It is not enough to bring children into the world. The birth is much, very much, towards the making of a man; but it is far from all. All careful parents will tell you that their great anxieties and labours for their children only then begin. There at once arises a necessity for a thousand things in the way of helps to growth, and health, and achievement. And so with souls new born of the Spirit: the Mercy-Seat is only the beginning. The New Birth, wonderful as it is, is one part of all that goes to the making of the New Man. The young life must be fed, and it is our business to feed it. The child must be taught, and that before it understands; reprov'd, and that before it recognises sin; picked up when it stumbles, not knowing why it stumbles; must be wept and prayed over, consecrated and separated to God alone; and it is ours — we, who are the makers — to do it all. There must be a standard worth setting up, and an example worthy to be followed, put before our children in the Gospel, and we must provide them both. We can trace one mother's slovenliness or another's loving devotion in her girls. So the angels of God detect the reproduction of our spirit in those we are set to train. Above all, as in the natural family, so in the spiritual, the children must be loved. It is an old saying, that you can love your way to heaven. It is true that you can love other people there as well.

Oh! are you doing this, the daily work of the makers? It needs courage, but God will give it. It demands true patience, and God will give it. It needs the spirit of the Cross of Jesus, and God will give that also. If you have failed here in the past, begin right away. Unless we make men of



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GOD, all we do is a ghastly failure, and you will fail, we all shall fail, unless we watch and feed, and train and guard, and love and lead them, one by one.

3. One other word. I turn for a moment, especially to the parents who may read these lines, who are Officers of The Salvation Army. If what I have said be true — and God expects of all parents that they work with Him in the making of their children into men and women after the pattern of their Lord — how much more does He require it of you, my dear comrade? The little child is the clay in the mother's hands — she is the potter; it is the father's workshop — he is the worker. In union with God the parents may, indeed, transform the tiny being into His likeness. Nothing can prevent it. The Word of God is sure. If they will do faithful work, He will work; and when He works who shall hinder? 'Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark,' is still His command. Oh, let there be stronger faith, and more earnest effort for the sanctifying of our children! They are in the covenant. We gave them to God before they were born. No sooner were they laid in our arms than we held them up before the Father, and offered them back to Him from Whom we had received them, crying, 'How shall we order the child, and what shall we do unto him?' We destined them for His service, whether on earth or in heaven, by the predestination of faith. Maybe He has taken some of them to Himself, but some are spared to us. Shall those that remain, and in whom He trusted us to work with Him, be any the less His than those who have gone before? God forbid! All who are ours must also be — nay, shall be — His, made over again in His image, to be like Him for ever. 'And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.'