

Samuel and God had given her the sacred task of preparing him for that mission. It was hers to teach him of the living God in whose service his whole life was to be spent; it was hers to joyfully present him before the Lord in whose presence he should abide forever. But Hannah's work was not all done when Samuel was placed in the temple. Every year she made a little coat for her son and took it to him when she went up to offer the yearly sacrifice. This tells its own story of tenderness and love and continued prayer. It is a beautiful picture of Hannah! lonely without the presence of her child, yet firm in her purpose before God, busy at her sacred task, making the little coat for Samuel, and pouring out her soul to God in his behalf, while the child ministered before the Lord. There was nothing remarkable in the life or character of Hannah, and we are not accustomed to think of her as having performed any large part in the mission of her son; but God has His silent partners everywhere, their names are not on the signboards and the world does not know how large a place they fill in the kingdom. When that which is covered shall be revealed, the work of Hannah, the godly mother, will appear more glorious than the work of many whose names on earth are written in letters of gold.

Let the brief story of this mother speak to our hearts and teach us that God would have us *consecrate our children* to His service and *prepare them* for His work. It is easy to say we will lend our children to the Lord, but it is not easy to give them that they may become anything or nothing in order to glorify God. We desire that our children be attractively clothed, be educated and possess a fair share of this world's goods, but these ambitions are worthy only so far as they are subservient to the desire that God be glorified in their lives. It was in this spirit of consecration that the parents of Ann Hastletime gave their daughter to be subjected to all that she suffered during her short, but heroic missionary life. When asking for her hand in marriage Adoniram Judson wrote: "I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean, to the fatal influences of the southern climate of India, to every kind of want and distress, to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death? Can you consent to all this for the sake of Him who left His heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing immortal souls, for the sake of Zion and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this in the hope of soon meeting your daughter in a world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall resound to her Saviour from heathen saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?" Since Ann Judson suffered and died in the name of Christ, many a noble mother has given her sons and daughters to be spent for His glory. But God requires more; He has a right to the life of every child of His redeemed people. The children of Christian parents do not come into this world as accidents, they are the most precious gifts ever given from the overflowing storehouse of God, and only when they are received as such can the mother's heart rejoice in the Lord and utter the prayer of consecration:

"Take my children, let them be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

We must not only lend our children to the Lord, but we must *prepare them* for His service. God's work is spreading far and wide: there will ever be a growing need for

laborers; somebody's boy and somebody's girl will be called to India, others to China, others to the heart of the Dark Continent, and many will be left to labor nearer home, but all must be at work. Our noblest missionaries, as a rule, do not come from the homes of ease and luxury, they come from the arms of faithful parents, who toil early and late. But how can we prepare our children for such a work? We have the pastor, the Sunday school teacher, the boarding school, and the theological hall. Are these not enough to impart spiritual knowledge, and prepare the children for their life work? These have a noble work to do, but all the Christian agencies in the world combined cannot do the mother's work. She alone holds the key to the child's heart; she knows its doubts and fears, and hopes and joys, and, holding the little ones close to her own heart, she may drop the seeds of immortal truth. If we would prepare our children for the Lord's work, we must be often in prayer with them, and for them. It is a sad fact that there are children who never hear the voices of their Christian parents in prayer. It is a sad fact that there are Christian mothers who are active in every religious enterprise, and yet never kneel with their little ones at a throne of grace. We do not say there is too much done outside the home for Christ and for humanity, but we do believe that in the very active Christian life of to-day there is a danger that the little ones may suffer, because they need more of the mother's time and energy, more of the influence that her presence only can give. If we desire God to use our children to His glory, we must pray for them, pray with them, and teach them to pray.

We must also, in this early preparation, teach our children to love and trust the true God, by telling them, again and again, the story of His beloved Son.

Do we not hear the children singing, "Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon?" In many a Christian home there are little souls hungering and thirsting after righteousness; longing to hear the words of life from the lips of their own mothers. Our hearts are pained for the little ones who are deprived of this, the sweetest of all childhood joys. We hear the story of the Cross over and over from the lips of eloquent preachers; we read it in books; we sing it in hymns. But does it ever seem to us so unspeakably sweet as it seemed when, years ago, it fell from the lips of a patient, careworn mother, who, amid all the perplexities of life, still wrought in quietness and trust? We know it is very difficult for the mother, in ordinary circumstances, to find the spare hours, or even moments, to teach the little ones of the things concerning the kingdom. There is so much that must be done. And yet, if we appreciate the sacredness of the work God has given us to do, we will let nothing prevent the conscientious performance of this sacred duty. A few moments at the close of each day spent in sacred intercourse with the children may be sufficient to direct their thoughts to God, and lead their feet in the ways of righteousness. We have known mothers who made it a duty to remain at home on Sabbath evenings, in order to have one hour a week with their little ones, to tell them the old sweet story, and to kneel with them in childlike prayer. It is possible for us, while busy with the ordinary household duties, to live out the great purpose of a mother's life, and prepare the children for the service of God. While in a godly house, a short time ago, we were pleased to hear a child say, "Mother took the children of Israel all through the wilderness while she pealed a bushel of pearls." And so, while the hands are busy, the little ones may draw closer to hear the wonderful things that only a mother can tell.

Beloved Christian mothers! if we have not yet cons