

**TRUE CHILDHOOD: A SERMON
DELIVERED IN WEST CHURCH,
JUNE 2, 1872, AFTER THE DEATH
OF MRS. MARY AVERY UPHAM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649234134

True Childhood: A Sermon Delivered in West Church, June 2, 1872, After the death of Mrs. Mary Avery Upham by C. A. Bartol

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

C. A. BARTOL

**TRUE CHILDHOOD: A SERMON
DELIVERED IN WEST CHURCH,
JUNE 2, 1872, AFTER THE DEATH
OF MRS. MARY AVERY UPHAM**

True Childhood :

A SERMON

DELIVERED IN WEST CHURCH, JUNE 2, 1872,

AFTER THE DEATH OF

MRS. MARY AVERY UPHAM.

BY

C. A. BARTOL.

1872.

Harvard College Library
July 1, 1914.
Bequest of
Georgina Lowell Putnam

US 136 4/1.2

CAMBRIDGE:
PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SON.

SERMON.

"Thy holy child Jesus."—Acts iv. 27.

WHY this term so strangely applied to a man full grown,—the man of men, the greatest manhood in history,—after he had finished his course, was dead, risen, and gone to glory? What is a child but one just out of the womb or the cradle; at least still young and small and undeveloped? It is the offspring of human parents: is it yet a child of God? No, it is not in itself child in any sense. The child is one in whom the filial consciousness has waked to recognize a relation to a father and mother. What does that little soft lump know of what you are to him; of the tender affections that grew betwixt the young man and maiden,

and had their issue in betrothal and marriage; of the love that was born before a true son or daughter could be; or of the sacred yearnings rooted in the past and branching into futurity, that make a blessed family? When presently the little creature can not only suck and cling and cry and lie in its crib and begin to creep, but makes some response of a fond look with a smile or a kiss, will salute your friend who comes to see you, gets to be cunning, as we say, and seems dimly to conceive who it is to you and you to it, how proud and pleased you are! Yet it is not aware of the bond, cannot love as you do, and will not till it becomes a parent. Parents are perfectly loved only through the grave, across the earthly horizon, in heaven. As the rolling moon draws the Atlantic, how the tide of emotion rises and heaps at the sepulchre, and goes flowing far into the unseen! Who wants them back to sight, when away they

are dearer than ever before? The *imagination* of a father is more than his presence; the memory of a mother more than a mother could be. The deep and lively compunction for the failures of duty to them we cannot forget. The thanks are loud in the heart for their fidelity and patience, when their mortal sense is shut. But they must hear the tardy acknowledgments. We, gray-headed men and women, are children at last of those that begot and bore us.

Are we, however, even yet children of God? Not unless we have that *sense* of a tie with that Infinite Spirit we are part of, which is how late and long in unfolding! You are his child when nothing comes between to dispute his claim, and the earthly instruments of your being but express that thought of his which you and they were made by. Then you are young with immortal youth, have an insurance no company can furnish against death, and shall never

grow old. The oldest angels, says Swedenborg, are the youngest. They have the most freshness of feeling, zeal of enterprise, and simplicity of purpose. What is childhood, or what is age? Is that slight organism, that has just begun to breathe and wail, or laugh and crow, a child? Has it just commenced? No: it is very ancient, born old. It is a delegate from other lands. It is a representative of ages, and continuation of creatures before the Flood. All its ancestry are rolled up smooth and small in that fine bundle you bear and nurse and rock to sleep. Very ancient dispositions slumber in that weak bosom, and will soon mightily arouse. I have a friend, who took a child to adopt and rear, on the theory that all children are as white paper, born free and equal and completely pure; and that all in the character to come depends on education, circumstance, and surrounding influence. She had to modify her religious

philosophy before she got through. Our Declaration of Independence is a *glittering generality*, or *blazing ubiquity*, true only in some legal sense of just and impartial treatment of every citizen and human soul. What more unequal or more bound than those babes? What is that particular infant, you for good reason so especially prize, but a mass of impulses and inclinations, the bequest and heirloom to it of the immemorial human race, — to say nought of pre-Adamite tribes, — in the line of its descent? Will it be the heir of your property? It is the heir of your temper. Your inclinations slumber in the cradle of its brain. How often the anger, avarice, lust, pride, as well as good affections of its progenitors, are ready, at a touch of temptation or encouragement, to start, as a seed at this season sprouts and manifests itself after its kind! Do we not have the bitter tansy, smart mustard, deadly nightshade, poisonous ivy,