

EDITOR'S NOTES

On Children is Dr. Barnwell's earliest published work. Setting the words from Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, Dr. Barnwell was determined to find a musical and lyrical solution to setting these words.

In many ways, this is one of her most straightforward works. Originally written for SSAA voices in a gospel-hymn style, the entire song flows with homophony and text across all voices.

We have published this song in both SSAA and SATB versions. In the original publication, the Alto 2 line was written in bass clef which we now show in treble clef. The Alto 1 line has been moved up an octave for the tenors.

TEXT

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit,
not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with

His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

—Kahlil Gibran (1883–1931)
from *The Prophet* (Knopf 1923)

Available editions

→ SATB Chorus unaccompanied	9283
SSAA Chorus unaccompanied	9291

On Children

for SATB Chorus unaccompanied

Kahlil Gibran
(1883–1931)

Ysaÿe M. Barnwell
(BMI)

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 92$

mf

Soprano

are not your chil-dren. They are the

mf

Alto

Your chil - dren are not your chil-dren. They are the

mf

Tenor

are not your chil-dren. They are the

mf

Bass

are not your chil-dren. They are the

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 92$

Piano

(for rehearsal only)

3

sons and the daugh-ters of Life's long - ing for it - self. They come through _

sons and the daugh-ters of Life's long - ing for it - self. They come through _

sons and the daugh-ters of Life's long - ing for it - self. They come through _

sons and the daugh-ters of Life's long - ing for it - self. They come through _

Available Editions

SSAA Chorus unaccompanied, Order No. 9291

5

— you, but they are not from — you, — And though they are with

— you, — but they are not from — you, — And though they are with

— you, but they are not from — you, — And though they are with

— you, but they are not from — you, — And though they are with

7

you, they be-long not to — you. — You can give them your love, — but not your

you, they be-long not to — you. — You can give them your love, — but not your

you, they be-long not to — you. — You can give them your love, — but not your

you, they be-long not to — you. — You can give them your love, — but not your

10

f

thoughts; they have their own _____ thoughts, they have their own _____

f

thoughts; they have their own _____ thoughts, they have their own _____

f

thoughts; they have their own _____ thoughts, they have their own _____

f

thoughts; they have their own _____ thoughts, they have their own _____

12

mf

_____ thoughts. You may house their bod - ies, but not their

mf

_____ thoughts. You may house their bod - ies, but not their

mf

_____ thoughts. You may house their bod - ies, but not their

mf

_____ thoughts. You may house their bod - ies, but not their

14

souls, For their souls dwell in a place of to-mor - row, which you can-not

souls, For their souls dwell in a place of to-mor - row, which you can-not

souls, For their souls dwell in a place of to-mor - row, which you can-not

souls, For their souls dwell in a place of to-mor - row, which you can-not

17

vis - it, not e - ven in your dreams. You can strive to be like

vis - it, not e - ven in your dreams. You can strive to be like

vis - it, no, not e - ven in your dreams. You can strive to be like

vis - it, no, not e - ven in your dreams. You can strive to be like

19 *f*

them, but you can - not make them just like you. Strive to be ___ like

f

them, but you can - not make them just like you. Strive to be ___ like

f

them, but you can - not make them just like you. Strive to be ___ like

f

them, but you can - not make them just like you. Strive to be ___ like

21

them, but you can - not make them just like you! (clap) (clap)

mf

them, but you can - not make them just like you! (clap) (clap) Your

them, but you can - not make them just like you! Hm _____ Hm _____

them, but you can - not make them just like you! Hm _____ Hm _____

23

mf

are not your____ chil - dren.____ They are the

chil - dren____ are not your____ chil - dren.____ They are the

mf

are not your____ chil - dren.____ They are the

mf

are not your____ chil - dren.____ They are the

25

sons and the daugh-ters of Life's long - ing for____ it - self. They come through _

sons and the daugh-ters of Life's long - ing for____ it - self. They come through _

sons and the daugh-ters of Life's long - ing for____ it - self. They come through _

sons and the daugh-ters of Life's long - ing for____ it - self. They come through _

27

— you, but they are not from — you, — And though they are with

— you, — but they are not from — you, — And though they are with

— you, but they are not from — you, — And though they are with

— you, but they are not from — you, — And though they are with

29

you, they be-long not to — you. — You can give them your love, — but not your

you, they be-long not to — you. — You can give them your love, — but not your

you, they be-long not to — you. — You can give them your love, — but not your

you, they be-long not to — you. — You can give them your love, — but not your

32

f

thoughts; they have their own _____ thoughts, they have their own _____

f

thoughts; they have their own _____ thoughts, they have their own _____

f

thoughts; they have their own _____ thoughts, they have their own _____

f

thoughts; they have their own _____ thoughts, they have their own _____

34

mf

_____ thoughts. You may house their bod - ies, but not their

mf

_____ thoughts. You may house their bod - ies, but not their

mf

_____ thoughts. You may house their bod - ies, but not their

mf

_____ thoughts. You may house their bod - ies, but not their

36

f

souls, For their souls dwell in a place of to-mor - row, which you can-not

f

souls, For their souls dwell in a place of to-mor - row, which you can-not

f

souls, For their souls dwell in a place of to-mor - row, which you can-not

f

souls, For their souls dwell in a place of to-mor - row, which you can-not

39

mf

vis - it, not e - ven in your dreams. You can strive to be like

mf

vis - it, not e - ven in your dreams. You can strive to be like

mf

vis - it, no, not e - ven in your dreams. You can strive to be like

mf

vis - it, no, not e - ven in your dreams. You can strive to be like

41 *f*

them, but you can - not make them just like you. Strive to be ___ like

f

them, but you can - not make them just like you. Strive to be ___ like

f

8 them, but you can - not make them just like you. Strive to be ___ like

f

them, but you can - not make them just like you. Strive to be ___ like



43

them, but you can - not make them just like you!

them, but you can - not make them just like you!

8 them, but you can - not make them just like you!

them, but you can - not make them just like you!

