

September 30, 1912.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

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Young People's Column.

THE CHILDREN AT CHURCH.

One of the greatest needs in the Christian work of today is a revival of church going by children, or, if you will, taking the children to church.

The importance of early years in shaping life and destiny is ever winning a larger place in the thought of nearly all who work for the world's betterment. There are forward movements along nearly all lines of special work for the young, and in the church this is shown especially in Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies. Many of the leading religious teachers of to-day give their best thought to devising new plans for reaching and teaching the young; and conventions, from district to world-wide, are held in increasing numbers, to impart these plans, to impress their importance and to give inspiration for carrying them out.

But the simple duty of taking the children to church, training them in this regard in the way they should go, a duty which requires no special knowledge, no systems of lesson-helps, no teacher-training, is not on the increase, either in its practice or in emphasis of its importance. Take the congregations in village, town or City, and in most of them not one in ten is a child, whereas in many, at the morning service, there might be and should be as many children as adults.

In two ways this is a great loss. In the first place, childhood is the impressionable time of life, and it is perhaps not too much to say that of those who have received in the House of God deep and abiding impressions, which have led them to decision for a better life, ten have received such impressions in childhood for every one who has been thus impressed and led to decision in mature years.

There is something in the solemn stillness of the church that appeals to the child and impresses it as the Sabbath School cannot do. The special sphere of the latter is the imparting of religious knowledge, but in the quiet solemnity of the church the appeal of the faithful preacher finds an entrance to the heart of childhood that it often seeks in vain from those of riper years.

The other result is the formation of habit. In a few years many of the children leave the Sabbath School. But if the habit of church-going be formed, then there is hope that it may be life-long, with all the possible good and helpfulness that follows in its train.

"The church of the future" is often predicted, with variations according to the taste of the prophets. But there are some things that are sure, viz., that the children of to-day will be the church of the future; that the habits of the future are being formed to-day, and children who grow up non-church-goers are not going to be active church-goers and workers and builders in the years to come.

The seriousness of the situation is very evident. The children of to-day will be the church of twenty and thirty years hence, and if the habit of staying from church be formed in childhood, it will not, in many cases, be formed in later years. The living, working church of to-day is not composed of those who stayed from church in their childhood. The church of the future will not be made up of the children of to-day who are habitually at home during the Sabbath morning service at the church. If the church of to-day be empty of children, the church of the future will be, to

some extent, correspondingly empty of adults.

Sabbath schools and young people's societies of many kinds have their sphere and their great value as departments of church work for the young, but they cannot be substitutes for attendance at church, except at the peril of that church in the future.—*Presbyterian Record*.

A BOY WHO WAS WANTED.

"Well, I've found out one thing," said Jack as he came home to his mother, hot, tired and dusty.

"What is that?" she asked.

"That there are a great many boys in the world."

"Didn't you know before that there are too many boys?"

"Partly; but I did not know there were so many more than are wanted."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I've been 'round till I am worn out trying to find a place to work. Wherever I go there are more boys than places. Doesn't that show there are too many boys?"

"Not exactly," said his mother with a smile. "It depends entirely on the kind of boy. A good boy is always wanted somewhere."

"Well, if I'm a good boy, I wish I knew where I'm wanted."

"Patience, patience, my boy. In such a great world as this is, with so many places and so many boys, it is no wonder that some of them do not find their places at once. But be very sure, dear," as she laid a very caressing hand on his arm, "that every boy who wants a chance to do fair, honest work, will find it."

"That is the kind of work I want to do," said Jack. "I don't want anybody's money for nothing. Let me see—what have I got to offer? All the schooling and all the wits I've been able to get up in thirteen years, good stout hands and a civil tongue."

"And a mind and heart set on doing faithful duty," suggested his mother.

"I hope so," said Jack. "I remember father used to say, 'Just as soon as you undertake to work for anyone you must bear in mind that you have sold yourself to him for the given time. Your time, your strength, your energy are his, and your best efforts to seek his interest in every way are his due.'"

The earnestness in which the boy spoke seemed to give an assurance that he would pay good heed to the words of the father whose counsel could no more reach him.

For two or three days longer Jack had reason to hold to his opinion that there were more boys than the world wanted, at the end of which time he met a business man who, questioning him closely, said:

"There are a great many applications for the place, but the greater number of the boys come and stay for a short time and then leave if they think they can do a little better. When a boy gets used to our routes and customers we want him to stay. If you will agree to remain for at least three years we will agree to pay you three dollars a week as errand boy."

"That is just what I wanted to do, sir," said Jack eagerly. So he was installed, and proud enough he was at bringing his wages home every Saturday night, and realizing that, small as they were, the regular help was of great value to his mother.

It is not to be wondered at that the faithful carrying out of his father's admonition after awhile attracted the attention not only of his employers, but of others with whom he was

brought into contact in the pursuit of his duties.

One day he was asked into the office of Mr. Lang, a gentleman to whom he frequently carried parcels of value.

"Have you ever thought of changing your situation?" asked Mr. Lang.

"No, sir," said Jack.

"Perhaps you could do better," said the other. "I want to get a boy who is quick and intelligent, and who can be relied on, and from what I see of you I think you are that sort of a boy. I want you to drive a delivery wagon, and I will pay you five dollars a week."

Jack's eyes opened wide.

"It's wonderful good pay, sir, for a boy like me, I'm sure. But I promised to keep on with Mr. Hill for three years, and the second year is only just begun."

"Well, have you signed a regular agreement with Mr. Hill?"

"No, sir; I told him I'd stay."

"You have a mother to assist, you told me. Couldn't you tell Mr. Hill that you feel obliged to do better when you have a chance?"

"I don't believe I could," said Jack, looking with his straight frank gaze into the gentleman's face. "You see, sir, if I broke my word to him I shouldn't be the kind of boy to be relied on that you wanted."

"I guess you are about right," said Mr. Lang with a laugh. "Come and see me when your time is out; I dare say I shall want you then."

Jack went home very much stirred by what had been said to him. After all, could it be wrong to go where he could do so much better? Almost double the wages! Was it not really his duty to obtain it, and to drive a wagon instead of trudging wearily along the streets? They never had felt so hot and dusty as they did just now, when he might escape from the tiresome routine.

Might, but how? By the sacrifice of his pledged word. By selling his truth and his honor. So strongly did the reflection force itself upon him that when he told his mother of the offer he had received he merely added:

"It would be a grand, good thing if I could take it, wouldn't it, mother?"

"Yes, it would."

"Some boys would change without thinking of letting a promise stand in their way."

"Yes, but that is the kind of a boy who, sooner or later, is not wanted. It is because you have not been that sort of a boy that you are wanted now."

Jack worked away, doing such good work, as he became more and more accustomed to his situation, that his mother sometimes wondered that Mr. Hill, who seemed always kindly interested in him, never appeared to think of raising his pay. This, however, was not Mr. Hill's way of doing things, even though he showed an increasing disposition to trust Jack with important business.

So the boy trudged through his three years, at the end of them having been trusted far more than is usually the case with errand boys. He had never forgotten the offer made him by Mr. Lang, and one day, meeting that gentleman on the street, ventured to remind him of it, telling him his present engagement was nearly out, adding:

"You spoke to me about driving the wagon, sir."

"Ah, so I did, but you are older now and worth more. Call 'round and see me."

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