

THE CHILDREN AT CHURCH.

One of the greatest needs in the Christian work of today is a revival of church-going by children, 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 today 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 today will be the church of the future; that the habits of the future are being formed today, 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 today will be the church of twenty and thirty years hence, and if the habit of staying from church is formed in childhood, it will not, in many

cases, be formed in later years.

The living, working church of today 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 today who are habitually at home during the Sabbath morning service at the church. If the church of today 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.—The Christian Irishman.

FOCUS ON TODAY.

"I'm going to be a Christian and do the work of a Christian all my life," said the earnest young convert, and his quaint old friend answered sympathetically but cautiously, "Yes, son, yes; but you'd better try to focus just on today."

The long view is pleasant and alluring, or it may appear dreary and discouraging, but whatever it is, today lies in the foreground.

The bit of ground just in front of us is apt to be a prosaic bit. It is too near to be unusual, too much like yesterday to appear very interesting. It holds none of the glamour of the far-off, none of the tempting possibilities of the future, but it is a very safe place on which to focus the vision if we are to be really useful.

To do our best with its common needs, tasks, and trials is to make a good beginning.—Ex.

NOT TOO YOUNG.

"I want to be a Christian," said a boy of eight years to his mother.

"Why, you are too young. What has put such a notion into your little head?"

"Well, mother, I have been walking through the cemetery, and a good many of the graves are shorter than I am."

The reply should have taught that mother a wholesome lesson. The average child eight years of age never heard of "logic," but he can do some reasoning out of his own head.

The parent, if wise, will not assume that a child of that age has not reached "the age of accountability." If you hold him responsible, why should you imagine that God will not? If he is required to obey you, why may he not be required to obey his Maker?—Western Recorder.

"IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING BETTER."

A young man was offered a package of infidel publications.

He replied, "If you have anything better than the Sermon on the Mount, the parables of the Prodigal Son, and the Good Samaritan, or if you have any better code of morals than the Ten Commandments, or anything more consoling and beautiful than the twenty-third Psalm, or, on the whole, anything that will throw more light on the future and reveal to me a Father more merciful and kind than the New Testament, please send it along."—Ex.

DOING AN ANGEL'S WORK.

In a very elegant palace car entered a weary-faced, poorly-dressed woman, with three children, one a baby in her arms.

A look of joy crept into her face as she sat down into one of the luxurious chairs; but it was quickly dispelled as she was asked rudely to "start her boots."

A smile of amusement was seen on several faces as the frightened group hurried out to one of the common cars.

Upon one young face, however, there was a look which shamed the countenance of the others.

"Auntie," said the boy to the lady beside him, "I'm going to carry my basket of fruit and this box of sandwiches to the poor woman in the next car. You are willing, of course?"

"Don't be foolish, dear. You may need them yourself."

"No, I'll not need them," he answered, decidedly, but in a very low tone. "You know I had a hearty breakfast, and don't need a lunch. The woman looked hungry, auntie, and so tired, too, with three little babies clinging to her."

"I'll be back in a minute, auntie. I know mother wouldn't like it if I didn't speak a kind word to the least of these when I met them."

The worldly aunt brushed a tear from her eye after the boy had left her, and said, audibly, "Just like his dear mother."

About five minutes later, as the lady passed the mother and three children, she saw a pretty sight—the family feasting as perhaps they had never done before. The dainty sandwiches were eagerly eaten; the fruit basket stood open.

The eldest child, with his mouth filled with bread and butter, said, "Was the pretty boy an angel, mamma?"

"No," answered the mother; and a grateful look brightened her faded eyes, "but he is doing an angel's work, bless his dear heart!"—Ex.

A HARD NUT FOR "NO-HELLITES" TO CRACK.

By Rev. D. E. Miller.

If there is no hell, then there is no Devil, for hell was made for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

If there is no Devil, then there is no such a thing as sin, for the Devil was the originator of sin (Rev. 12:7-9).

If there is no sin, then there is no need of a Saviour, for the mission of Jesus was to save from sin (Matt. 1:21).

If there is no Saviour, then there is no truth, for the Bible is a record of this truth (2 Tim. 3:15, 16).

If there is no truth, then all is darkness and confusion. We know not who we are, where we came from, or whither bound.

Summary:

No hell, no Devil.

No Devil, no sin.

No sin, no Saviour.

No Saviour, no truth.

No truth, nothing left.

The chain can not be broken. If there is no hell, then we have the same right to say there is no Devil, no sin, no Saviour, no truth. What say ye?