

## HABITS.

Habits are a power for good or evil; they may make or mar the life, and so gradual is their formation that before one realizes it they are fixed and almost unchangeable. An act to-day, the same repeated to-morrow and the next to-morrow until in a very little while that act has become a part of the character.

Habits are helps or hindrances in the way of good living. When they are correct they may have the strength of walls of stone, and serve as barriers against a rushing torrent. When they are bad, they have the strength of the torrent itself in hurling men on to destruction.

Life, so long as it lasts, goes on strengthening habits, and new ones are constantly being formed, but the time when the most lasting habits are established is in youth, and these in time become as strong as iron bands, which can hardly be broken.

Young people are not conscious of the power of the habits they are acquiring until it is too late to change them without making a great struggle, and exercising great strength of will, for which some, unfortunately, are not equal.

While it is true that it is much easier to fall into bad habits than to acquire good ones, yet even the former cannot flourish without some encouragement, which many are too willing to give them, and the best way to discourage their growth is to form good habits, and cling to them with such resolution as to allow no place for those of another type.

In these days, when temptations crowd around each one, it is well if the armor of habit is tightly braced, that it may do its part in protecting the character from their assaults, and while habits are being formed it is well to decide what is to be chosen, and what discarded.

To begin at the fountain-head, correct habits of thought must be formed, since from the thoughts of the heart come the actions. In that inner life, known to oneself alone, are the germs of good and evil; the evil thoughts which blossom into action are there harbored and encouraged, or the pure, honest thoughts which bring forth noble deeds are given a place, and as the habit of thought is, so will the speech be, with its world-wide influence.

If the thought is clean, the speech will be the same; if charity for the failings of others fills the heart, the speech will be guarded when one discusses his neighbor's affairs, and in this matter some have become accustomed from thoughtlessness to speak lightly of the name and fame of others.

Youth is the time in which to learn habits of temperance. It is very much easier to avoid an evil habit than to break away from one, and by their wicked lives

those who have yielded have learned to their sorrow that intemperate habits are hard to overcome.

Temperate habits bring in their train purity of life, they pave the way for that industry which is one of the best preventives of bad habits; the old proverb says truly that "He that works is tempted by one devil, he that is idle by a thousand."

Religious observances build a hedge about the life, and many have been saved from evil by the habits of church-going learned in youth, and the habit of prayer and Bible-reading are cables which prevent the drifting away upon a sea of sin, of those lives which have not found a sure anchorage.

If the importance of good habits could only be understood, then those would be diligently cultivated which make for peace, purity and holy living, those which lead upward rather than downward, and the end would be a well-balanced life, whose influence is all upon the side of right.

Bible references : Prov. 1:30, 31; 5:22, 23; 6:16, 19; 10:26; 11:19; 14:17; 16:24, 28; 18:9; 21:17; 23:20, 21; 24:28; 25:28; 27:15; 29:20; Job 1:1; Prov. 3:10, 11, 21-23; 4:11, 12; 6:6-8; 8:34; 10:9; 12:28; 16:32; 20:11; 21:3; 21; 22:4, 9, 29; 23:17; 27:23, 24; 31:26; Luke 1:5, 6; Acts 10:1, 2.  
—Presbyterian Banner.

## HONORING FATHER AND MOTHER.

By Rev. Dr. Cuyler.

One of the most touching scenes in any biography is that of the great Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his old age, standing bareheaded, on a rainy day, in the market-place of Uttoxeter to do penance for having disobeyed his father when a boy. Filial reverence is one of the best evidences of a sound heart.

There is not the slightest hope of any wholesome religious and soul converting influence in any family where the parental authority is trampled underfoot.

The word "honor" is very deep and strong; it takes hold of the heart, and roots down into the core of the heart. It amounts, as the twelfth chapter of Hebrews tells us, to "reverence," and this, too, when parents are inflicting wise and loving chastisement. The surest way for parents to forfeit the respect of their children is to be too weak, or too indolent, or too unprincipled, to maintain a corrective discipline. Parents must deserve to be honored, and then they have a right to expect and to require loving and loyal obedience.

What the law on Sinai commanded is re-enacted in the New Testament. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Filial obedience is thus made a part and parcel of Christian piety. It ought to