

THE CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH.

How in the world would the Church go on if the children gave up coming? You see what would happen: the grown people, being the only ones left in the church, would grow older and older, and sadder and sadder, without any children to brighten them up, and one by one the grown people would die, and leave empty places, for there would be no one to fill their places if the children stopped coming.

So you see the Church cannot do without the children. Without you my little friends, the Church would be a failure. Perhaps you never thought before that the Church needs you. Well, realize it now, for it is a very grand thought. It shows you how important your lives are. And do not think that the only reason you are needed here is to fill up the empty places left by the older friends who go away into the other life. You are needed in the Church for what you are now.

By coming to the Church you make everyone happier, you strengthen and gladden the whole place and the whole service; and as for him who is speaking these words to you, he *could* not go on without you. The minister's courage would just give out altogether if he could not see your faces here and feel that you are growing up in the spirit of the place.

You, children, can no more do without the Church than the Church can do without you. Children who grow up without coming to Church, if they are well enough to come, are as incomplete as children who grow up without a home.

But suppose, as children, we do not come to church; suppose we get in the habit of spending our Sundays at home, idly or foolishly—by so doing we are forming a habit which will slowly rise like a great wall of stone, higher and higher, to keep us away from the sanctuary of our Father.

You have something in yourselves which you can give by coming, that adds to the strength and beauty of the Church, and the Church has something to give you which you cannot find anywhere else in the earth except in the sanctuary of God.—*From The Children and The Church, by Charles Cuthbert Hall.*

A FIVE-MINUTE SERMON ON HABIT.

Isaiah i: 17, "Learn to do well."

Boys and girls, you can obey this text by trying to do well to-day, and to-morrow, and the next day. It is the same as learning to skate. You fall, and rise again. You fall, but try again. After a little you can stand, and then can push out one foot, and by and by the other, until at last away you go, gliding away over the ice like the wind.

Learning to do well is like learning to swim. You wade into the water, but not very far, for fear you will drown. You try to swim, but sink. You try again, and do a little better. You swallow a good deal of water. It gets into your ears and eyes and nose; but you keep on splashing, and finally you can swim. So you must keep on doing well until you learn how, and it has become a habit. A habit is something which we have. That is what the word means. It often becomes something which has us.

A habit is formed the same way that paths or roads are. You often see people "cutting across lots." Where they do this, a narrow strip of grass about a foot, or fourteen inches wide, will be trodden hard; and that is a path. It is made by being walked over again and again and again. You can soon get into the habit of doing a thing if you will do it over and over many times. The more you do it the easier it will become, just as a path grows wider and plainer the more it is travelled.

It is hard to keep people from going across lots after a path is once made; and so it is hard to stop doing what we have fallen into the habit of doing. It will not be easy for you to "do well" after you have once learned to do wrong. Bad habits are like the ruts made by carriage wheels in country roads—they hold people fast. I once read of an old man who had crooked fingers. When a boy, his hand was as limber as yours. He could open it easily, but for fifty years he drove a stage, and his fingers got so in the habit of shutting down on the lines that they finally stayed shut. The old man can never open his hand again.

Boys, if you do not wish to fall into the habit of swearing, refuse to swear at all. If you do not wish to become the slave of tobacco, let cigarettes alone. If you do not wish to die drunkards, never begin to tippie. If you do these things only a few times, they may become habits and hold you fast. You would then smoke, and swear and drink almost without knowing it, or knowing why. "Learn to do well," but "abhor that which is evil."—*Christian Advocate.*