

A Minute.

A MINUTE, how soon it has flown !
And yet, how important it is !
God calls every moment his own,
For all our existence is his ;
And tho' we may waste them in folly and play,
He notices each that we squander away.

'Tis easy to squander our years
In idleness, folly, and strife,
But, oh ! no repentance or tears
Can bring back one moment of life !
But time, if well spent, and improved as it goes,
Will render life pleasant, and peaceful its close.

And when all the minutes are past
Which God for our portion has given,
We shall certainly welcome the last,
If it safely conducts us to heaven.
The value of time, then, may all of us see,
Not knowing how near our last minute may be.

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TORONTO, NOVEMBER 29, 1890.

Learning to be Helpful.

If as men and women we expect to have good and beautiful lives, we must begin in youth to be good and beautiful. Noble things in life have to be learned; they do not come naturally. There is a story of a lady who took her class into an apple-orchard one day in early summer when the apples were very small. Drawing down a branch, she scratched with a pin on one of the apples the name "Jesus." She then marked the tree and the branch so that she could easily find the apple. In the autumn, when the fruit was ripe, she again led her class to the orchard. They soon found the tree and the branch, and then the apple on which the teacher had written, and there was the name "Jesus" covering the whole apple. It had grown as the apple grew.

If, when we grow into men and women, we would have the name—that is, the likeness—of Christ on our lives, we must have it written there in youth. Life is made up of good habits, and habits form slowly. Doing good is like playing on the piano; it has to be learned, and it is the work of many a day to become expert in the art. Music-teachers advise pupils to begin as early as possible, because in youth it is easier to train the fingers to strike the keys. The younger one begins to practise the duties of Christian life, the better.

No Christian duty is more important than that of being helpful. We begin to be like Christ only when we begin to do good to others. He came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" and

that is what we should train ourselves to do. There are a great many ways of being helpful to others. The place to begin is at home. There each one should live for the others. Parents live for their children, and children ought in turn to live for their parents and for one another. The young people of the home may do a great many things for the happiness of the household. They may learn not to be selfish. Some young people are exacting, always claiming attention, not willing to be denied any request they make, wanting the best and the most of everything, expecting all the others to serve them, although they do not care to serve the others in turn. If they could only see how ugly such selfishness looks,

they would pray most earnestly to be saved from it. The only way to be cured of selfishness is by overcoming evil with good—that is, by training ourselves to do unselfish things. Every time we are tempted to be selfish we should check the impulse and compel ourselves to do, instead, an unselfish act. When we find we have the disposition to be exacting, demanding attention and favour, we should at once take ourselves in hand and set ourselves at showing attention and doing favours to others. A few such victories over our old ugly self will show us how much more beautiful unselfishness is than selfishness, and how much better, for it also gives more happiness. Then we should keep on in the same way, training ourselves to do kindly, helpful things.

Those who live in the country know something about breaking colts. At first the colt does not want to wear the bridle or to be ridden or driven. Sometimes he fights very stubbornly, but by and by he becomes so gentle and submissive, so easily controlled, that a child can ride or drive him anywhere. We are all at first very much like spirited colts. We are naturally selfish, wanting our own way, resenting control, desiring only to please ourselves. But we must "break" ourselves, training ourselves to be submissive, gentle, kindly. If we begin early and are firm with ourselves, we shall learn at last to do Christlike things by habit even without struggle.

That is the secret of the beautiful lives of older people whom we know. Now they think only of others, never of themselves. They never do a selfish thing; they are always helping some one; and we wonder how it is that they are so different from ourselves. Once they had selfish hearts and were just like us, but they became Christians—that is, they gave themselves to Christ, and then began to do the things Christ wanted them to do. At first it was hard, and they had many a struggle and oftentimes were defeated; but they persevered, and after a while, as they grew older, it became easier and easier for them to do unselfish things, and now they seem never to have a selfish thought.

We can learn the same lesson if we will. We must let Christ rule in our heart and must begin at once to do just what he bids us do. And he never bids us do a selfish thing, but tells us always to be unselfish and to do kindly, gentle and loving things.

As certainly as your Master's love is in you, his work will be upon you.



LESSON PICTURE.

DEC. 7.—THE WALK TO ENNAUS.—Luke xxiv. 13-27.

New Sunday-school Books.

THE Congregational Sunday-school Publishing House issue a very superior class of library books for scholars of all ages, as our frequent notices of their books indicate. The latest to reach our desk is the "Bertin Gordon" series of ten small books in a case, for \$2.25. They are prettily bound and illustrated, and are especially suited to very young scholars.

The Wesleyan Conference Office, London, also issue an excellent series of books. Among the latest issues are the following:

Lena and I. By Jennie Campbell. A well-written story of English country life, of an earnestly religious character.

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All of the above will be furnished by the Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax.

Little Miss Boston. By Mrs. Harriet A. Cheever. Pp. 301. Price, \$1.25. Boston and Chicago: Congregational Sunday-school and Publishing Society; Toronto: William Briggs.

This is a Christmas story for the little girls, and with its ornamental binding, large type, handsome full-page illustrations, and neat head and tail pieces, it makes an exceedingly attractive book. It tells of a little girl who lived in a poor district of Boston with two coarse, brutal women who had taken her at her mother's death. She finally escaped from them, hiding for a while in a church, and passing through one experience after another until her adoption into the home of a wealthy family. The charm of the story lies in the sweet childlikeness of little Tid, who, without knowing much of the world, manages to take every unusual experience which comes to her in the most philosophic way and make the most out of it. Such a book as this ought to find an appropriate place at Christmas time.