

how only one man in ten, who had been greatly blessed by Jesus, expressed his thanks for the mercy and favor shown him by the Lord. Courtesy needs to be cultivated in our young people. Politeness should be encouraged. A spirit of gratitude that gives expression to itself by the audible "Thank you" is a mark of a right heart and of a proper disposition. And yet how easy it is for us to take our daily mercies from God and not give thanks to Him. Even for our common every-day blessings we should return thanks. The habit should be begun very early, for otherwise a selfish spirit will grow in the child's heart. To our parents, friends, teachers, brothers, sisters, playmates; in fact, to everybody who helps us in any way, we should speak our thanks. But, above all, we should remember our great debt of gratitude to our Lord. He gives us life's greatest blessings—His Word, His Grace, His Spirit, and for them, and all that flow from them, we should say very thank you every day. The habit of ingratitude grows on us, as does the grateful spirit; only it shows itself by our loss and to our disgrace. So we cannot be too careful and painstaking in all our life with one another, and in our relation to God, to say, "Thank you."

AUGUST 16.—THE MAN WHO WAS A GOOD NEIGHBOR. Luke 10. 29-37.

Give a broad definition to that word "neighbor." It really means the one who is in need of our help. The Good Samaritan was not "very thank you" the wounded man in any sense of local residence. Doubtless he was an entire stranger to him. But the suffering man's plight appealed to him for help, and his response was immediate and practical. Make it clear that wherever we see any one who is in want, or in need, we know how we may give help to another, we are called upon to be "a neighbor" to that one by giving what we have and what he needs. The first place to learn this neighborliness is at home. In the many daily needs of home we can do our part to make work easy and burdens light for one another. If we show this helpful spirit there, it will become an easy matter for us to go out into the world and help those who are in suffering and sorrow. But if boys and girls are not neighbors at home to the family they will likely fall when they go away. Do what you can there. It is the doing that counts. Pity that is only shown in words when acts are needed, is not of much benefit. Christ came to do, not merely say, and we shall best follow Him if in every way of social service we go about "doing good."

Children and Church Membership

We mark with great pleasure the growing interest being taken in our little ones. Few Christians doubt the efficacy of Christ's atoning work as it affects the relation of the child to the kingdom of God. But many seem to be doubtful and hesitant about admitting young children into the church. It is not our purpose to consider just why this is; but to commend and encourage the growing disposition to bring our children into open and avowed discipleship. Considering the church in its more restricted sense, as a body of voluntary believers who have united together for worship, study, and service, we err if we discourage our children on the ground of immaturity from becoming church members. That a little child may believe in Christ is unquestionably true. We have our Lord's own affirmative statement of the fact, as for instance when He "called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said . . . whoso shall receive one such little child in my

name receiveth me . . . But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me . . ." And yet notwithstanding these "seventy words, doubts are often held and expressed as to the ability of the children to believe in Christ. Indeed, at a convention recently, we were publicly asked by a matured Methodist official, who rather boastfully said that he had never had any of his children baptized, "Do you really think that children can believe in Christ?" We answered that it would be a great sorrow to us if we believed anything else. His children, like many others we fear, had been brought up to consider themselves outside both the kingdom of God and the visible church, and that not until some coming day of mature understanding and faith, could they "belong to the church." We tried (with doubtful success) to impress this good man with the thought that his children belonged to God from the start, and that the church's duty towards them was to instruct, develop, hold, and use them for God through all their natural life. "But," it is objected, "children don't understand these things." How often this erroneous statement is made. That they do understand much more than their seniors give them credit for, is certain. Is it a matter of understanding? With all of us this is but relative. Who does "understand these things?" The most intellectual is forced to admit his comparative inability to understand. How much understanding is necessary to openly avow

REMEMBER!

"The question to be asked at the end of an educational step is not 'What has the child learned?' but 'What has the child become?'"

—J. P. Munroe.

faith in Christ and profess one's purpose to follow His leadership? It depends, perhaps, on the meaning attached to the word "faith." Can a child exercise *tau*? A child has it already. No one can doubt this. And the church should preserve its child's faith in God, and by her instruction as the child develops, give expression to it. How often the sceptical questionings of an adult reasoner have been rebuked by the spontaneous and unquestioning faith of a little child.

... Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." The time is coming when we shall have not less attention paid to the evangelism necessary to reclaim the prodigal and wanderer, but more attention to the prevention of the necessity of such evangelism by the proper culture of our little children. One great work of the church is to make the work of adult conversion unnecessary. By catechumen class or Junior League instruction let our own boys and girls be brought into early and open avowal of Christ as their life's Lord, and enlisting them for life-long service we shall honor Him and save them as well for time as for eternity. The purpose of the Junior League is to gather together for instruction and training all the growing children of our congregation, and to utilize them as their growing powers permit, in the work of God. There should always be an every circuit a class of children in training for church membership, and this class should be annually and publicly received.

Our Summer Meetings

It is rarely, if ever, wise to discontinue the Junior League during the summer vacation period. Some of our members are sure to be away from home for part of the holiday season; but enough will be left to continue the meetings profitably. But the character of the gatherings may well be changed, or at least varied. The beautiful summer evenings afford a fine opportunity for open-air meetings, and it is much better to have the Juniors gather out of doors and enjoy the evening on some friend's shady lawn, than to assemble them in some stuffy room, perhaps in some unattractive basement. The fresh air of early evening in the open is certainly preferable to the close atmosphere of the ordinary school room. We have held many such open-air meetings with our Juniors, and never failed for lack of numbers in attendance or want of interest in the exercises. If the superintendent will make use of an Athletic Committee it will be both easy and profitable to arrange a half-hour's programme of games, in which all may take part, and which, preceding the regular meeting, will have a happy, wholesome, physical, and social influence on all concerned. We have never found such games and exercises to detract from the success of the more serious half-hour's devotions and study that follow. If our children and youth were taught to associate religion with the playground, and not confine it to formal meetings for study and worship only, there would be a more healthy and natural spiritual life cultivated in them. Our summer meetings should invariably combine the physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual elements, and there is no excuse for the absence of any of these. When meetings are of necessity held within doors, as the winter season compels them to be held, the situation is different; but the summer season gives unlimited opportunity for the most active young Leaguer to enjoy himself without giving offence to the sensitive nerves of some hypercritical observer. We need not fear that such out-of-door meetings will lack reverence or order. Play is as natural, and in its place as acceptable, as worship. Some of our most helpful services have been conducted under the boughs of some wide-spreading maple in the twilight of the delightful summer evening. After the Juniors have played off their surplus stock of animal spirits and are thereby somewhat sobered down, is a good time to lead them in some quiet, thoughtful study that will help them see the beauty of the well-rounded, symmetrical life our Lord desires us to cultivate. Do not forget that many of His meetings were held under the open sky. We gain rather than lose by getting close to nature, and you have tried these open-air summer meetings, arrange for a number during the heated months of July and August, and you will assuredly enjoy them and profit thereby.

Since the June number went to press we have received several splendid answers to the Bible Enigmas given in our April issue. Gertrude Terryberry, Burford, Ont., and PEARL J. LONDON, Jacksonville, N.B., are very highly commended. Frank and Edna Fowler, Strathcona, Alberta, and Mabel Wright, Tyrone, Ont., also deserve credit for their work.

Works of art not only add charm and interest to the schoolroom but have great influence in the moral and spiritual development of the children. Their influence reaches beyond the school into homes and into society at large; and creates an appreciation of the good and the beautiful.—R. B. Dudgeon.