

presence. Teachers and officers alike should be on the alert to watch for its symptoms with a view to meeting them.

Staleness is as deadly in a Bible Class as it is in every department of life, and should be avoided as a plague.

Toronto

### Characteristics of Childhood and Their Educational Significance

*By W. A. McIntyre, LL.D.*

Principal, Normal School Winnipeg

#### IV. LATER CHILDHOOD

There is a marked change in children as they reach the age of nine and ten years. New interests arise, fresh activities appear. There is a change all along the line. Physically, there is a recovery of health and strength; in thought and deed there is a marked tendency to follow "the runaway curve;" there is marked power to receive and retain impressions; there is capacity to form specific moral habits; and there is evidence of a feeling of independence which manifests itself in all the battles of boyhood and all the disagreements of girlhood. We shall select a few of the characteristics of this period and endeavor to indicate what significance each has for the Sunday School teacher.

To run riot, to fly from one form of activity to another, to plan one form of mischief while executing another,—every teacher of children knows how common this is, with children from ten to thirteen. Nor would we have it otherwise. Teachers are not supposed to fight natural tendency; they should rather guide and control it. They must have as many suggestions for occupying attention as the pupils have themselves. She who studies her pupils to discover their interests and felt needs, and who is guided by her knowledge, will have no difficulty in securing and retaining interest. She who attempts to coerce or to direct activity in unwelcome channels can not hope to succeed, nor will she fare any better who tries the plan of coaxing. To get children busy along self-chosen lines is the secret of all good government and successful teaching. When the teacher has a sympathetic manner and when

she is rich in expedients, she can make the children follow wherever she leads. There are exceptions, of course, and there are exceptional days. It is now and again necessary to resort to private reproof where there is too much flippancy and inattention, and it is possible that in extreme cases an obstreperous child may have to be ejected for the sake of the whole school. But monotony there must not be either in the subject matter or the method of teaching.

At no period of life are children more able and willing to remember facts, names and verbal expressions than during the ages now under consideration. This does not mean that they should be given meaningless memory tasks. There is plenty that has value and suggestion to children, without asking them to load their minds with something that may possibly have a value in later years. There are poems and portions of scripture, that children appreciate fully, or whose significance is sensed by them, and these are always safe. To remember such selections is a delight and not a labor. The fact is, that if any selection is presented in a sympathetic manner two or three times, the average child will be able to repeat most of it, and, if it be presented again, it will be known thoroughly.

The facts of Bible history and the names of Bible characters are easily impressed at this stage by means of short, rapid drills. Every child is anxious to prove his growing power. The remembering of names and facts is one of the simplest standards of measurement. For this reason drill exercises are a delight. That person is fortunate indeed who in youth has his mind stored with Bible facts, and who can repeat portions of scripture and other worthy literary selections. In these days we have almost become homeopaths in this matter. A child finds it difficult to repeat a Golden Text. His grandfather repeated a whole chapter or a psalm or a paraphrase.

### How the Boys Got a Teacher

At a recent S.S. Convention held at Birtle, under the auspices of the Manitoba S.S. Association, an interesting petition, framed