

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

An Essay

ON THE EXPEDIENCY OF CONTINUING SABBATH SCHOOLS THROUGH THE WHOLE YEAR, READ BY REV. DAVID FREEMAN, BEFORE THE SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION AT WINDSOR.

[CONCLUDED.]

IV. A fourth reason for continuing the Sunday School throughout the winter, is that the teacher during that part of the year in which they have the best opportunity, may also have the strongest inducements to increase in scriptural knowledge. As a general rule there is more leisure for self improvement in the winter than in the summer. But to make the best improvement of a long winter evening we need something to stimulate us to mental exertion otherwise we shall make but little progress. The school boy, the academician or the collegian has to meet his class and his teacher, and by this thought he is stimulated to exertion, and then when a man enters upon professional life he still has a stimulus to constant improvement, to ensure success. So with the Sabbath School teacher. However much he may know, he may still increase his stores of knowledge by sitting at the feet of Jesus as a disciple. And no one is in more favorable circumstances to increase in spiritual knowledge. Aware that he is to meet his class of immortals, learning from him the way to heaven, he can have no stronger nor holier inducement, to prayerful study that he may be able to illustrate and enforce the teachings of scripture before them. Thus the wintry season affording greater facilities for improvement he would find his labors profitable and delightful. Instead of entering upon his work as a task he would at length find the employment of learning and teaching as necessary to his happiness as his daily food. It is difficult to imagine any position more useful and happy than that of the faithful Sabbath School teacher. It is a position that princes might aspire to. Angels might gladly engage in it, but that privilege is reserved to us. That is our prerogative, that privilege is our perquisite. But where this employment ceases during the most favorable half of the year the teacher loses that high relish for the work which is needful for success. He loses too his pleasure in the close study of the bible which every christian ought to possess. His religious character also and happiness will suffer from the same cause, and he will be in danger of declension, and of sliding back entirely from the position of a Sabbath School teacher. Thousands who have at one time taken a degree of pleasure in the work, by suspending it have lost their interest in it and abandoned it altogether. Having put their hand to the plough they turned back, and shewed themselves unfit for the kingdom of God. The mind of the teacher becomes dissipated by the gaieties and festivities of society, and his soul becomes drowned in carnal pleasure. But if it had been preoccupied with his holy work, it might have escaped the danger.

V. In the fifth place the effect of the discontinuance of the Sabbath School in winter is equally bad or worse upon the minds of the pupils. It is of the utmost importance that the truths of the bible be constantly pressed upon the mind, upon the intellect, the conscience, and the heart of the young. Nothing can be of greater service to the young than to have a portion of God's word constantly before their minds as a Sabbath School lesson. A portion of scripture to be committed to memory may drive away a thousand temptations to sin and folly. The same may be said of a good book such as may be found in the Sabbath School library. By this means the child may associate with the greatest and best of men, and no period is more favorable for him to do this than during a long winter's evening. Now if he attends the Sabbath School in winter he will during this most favorable period be under the influence of the scripture lesson, the pious teacher, and the religious book. His young mind will be continually occupied with these hallowed influences.

VI. As a sixth reason for continuing our Sunday School labors in the winter, we would urge that then Satan is most busy in working all his institutions. The seething bar-room, the gaming table, the silly dance, the stage, the social party, the carnal amusement, are all of them more active in winter than in summer. Now while Satan is working the harvest with all his institutions to lead the young astray, shall the christian teacher, suspend his efforts and allow the devil to have every thing his own way? When the enemy is most active, and is making the

greatest inroads, is that the time for the christian army to put down their weapons, strip off their armor, and lie down to sleep? When Satan is most diligent should we be most slothful?

He finds it comparatively difficult to carry on his operations in summer, although even then he is too successful. In summer the young are in the fields and the woods, which in themselves exert a healthy influence on the mind. There the boy is playing by the babbling stream, is climbing the leafy tree, or scrambling over the precipitous rock. Or else he is tasked with hard labor in the fields. The girls are running over the green fields, or climbing the fences, or chasing their brothers through the woods, or gathering garlands for their own brow, or flowers for mother's beautiful vase in the parlor. All these rural scenes, by occupying the young mind in summer, to a certain extent, exert a healthy influence over it. Outdoor fellowship with the creation is far less corrupting than indoor communion with each other; except now and then a slide down hill or a slide on the ice, there are not many out-door attractions for the young in winter. In this period we are thrown more upon our own mental resources, and we have more leisure to employ our minds by way of self improvement, or the contrary. By what course of reasoning then can we decide to throw all these advantages into the scale of wickedness?

As all men by nature have an inclination to evil, unless otherwise influenced they will spend their leisure time in sin.

"For Satan finds some mischief still For idle hands to do."

When the storm howls abroad Satan gathers his sheep into his fold within, and there he feeds their minds in his own way. He is careful too of his tender lambs which he nurses in a manner peculiar to himself. John Newton said "Fill the bushel with good wheat and you may defy Satan to fill it with tares." But Satan says, "if I can get hold of these children and plant their little hearts all full of tares, then I will laugh at your vain endeavors to root them up and plant good grain instead." Now this is the contest going on between the christian and the devil. The one wishes to sow weeds in the mind of the young, the other good clean wheat, the seed of the kingdom. We will suppose that this contest is raging furiously as it is on the part of Satan, and as it ought to be on the part of us professed christians. Now winter is the great moral sowing time, how then can we idly allow the enemy to monopolize the whole spring time, and wait as it were, till he is done, and be content to scatter a few seeds here and there when Satan has already been planting, or in some corner of the field which he perchance has overlooked? It seems like being afraid to forestall the enemy of souls, or to destroy the works of the devil.

VII. By the present system we rob God of the better half of the time that might be employed in the Sabbath School. We pray that the kingdom of God may come. We also acknowledge that if we would labor faithfully in the Sabbath School, we should find this among the most effective means of answering our prayers. The best of men as well as the greatest have felt honored in being permitted to labor in the Sabbath School. Chief Justice Marshall, at the age of seventy, regarded it as an honor to march through the city of Richmond at the head of a Sabbath School procession. Judge Washington of the Supreme Court of the States of America was active in the Sabbath School cause. Frelinghuysen, while Attorney General of New Jersey and a senator taught in the Sunday School, and cheerfully associated with any one who was a teacher therein. President Harrison long taught a little Sabbath School on the banks of the Ohio. When the boys stole his fruit his servant recommended keeping a dog to protect it. "Rather" said he "let a Sunday School teacher take care of the boys." Hon. B. F. Butler, Attorney General of the United States was a devoted Sunday School teacher, and in the latter part of his life taught continually a bible class of young men. Hon. Wm. Ellsworth, Governor of Connecticut, loved to work in the Sabbath School, and it was a proverbial remark with him that "When he quitted the gubernatorial chair in the State house and came before his class to teach them the word of God, he felt that he was not going down, but going up. If we appreciated the dignity of our work as did these and other great and good men, we should not suspend it during the most favorable half of the year. In these circumstances it is simple mockery for us to pray that the blessing of God may descend upon our youth.

VIII. As an eighth reason why we should no longer discontinue our schools in the winter, I

would urge the consideration whether the labor we do bestow can be blessed in the present circumstances. It is a general rule that success in the cause of God, will be in proportion to the highness of our aims, and the earnestness of our efforts, unless we are willing to make every sacrifice for God we cannot expect any more than partial success in laboring in His cause. That minister who if it were the will of God, would gladly go to the heathen, is best qualified to labor in the home field. That christian who if he were called by duty, would gladly suffer death for the Saviour would be best qualified to live for God's glory. In other words our zeal for God, our efforts for His glory, and our success in those efforts in general keep pace with each other, and may be measured by each other. Let us apply this to our Sabbath School cause. The earnestness of our efforts will be the measure of the zeal we entertain and the success we enjoy. What then is our active effort for Sabbath Schools? It is just what we deprecate. We work one half of the year; I will not add, and that the least favorable half. And who will say that our zeal or success is one half what it should be? Probably it would be seen, on enquiry, that those schools which are efficiently kept up the whole year, are blessed more than twice as largely, as those which are continued one half of the time. When and where have revivals occurred in those schools which are conducted in this half hearted manner? Why is it that so few of our schools enjoy the reviving influence of God's grace? Let us ponder these questions.

We would not depreciate what is being done by the friends of Sabbath Schools in this Association. Neither would we say that to continue them through the winter is all the improvement they need. But still we believe it to be a radical improvement required. It is vain to manure a tree till it has taken root in the ground. Planted in May and pulled up in October, it could draw but little nourishment from a soil ever so rich. But when it has time to be firmly rooted it will then flourish and yield fruit. So it is with a school. When we become earnest enough to make our Sabbath Schools permanent then we may expect the blessing of God upon them. While we are half-hearted in our work and love to shirk it as much as possible, we may expect that God will blow upon it. If we are not pleased with the work of our own hands, surely we must expect that the displeasure of God will rest upon it too. But let us change our course, and in this heavenly enterprise whatsoever our hands find to do, do it with our might, then we know that our prayers will be answered, and our work be prospered. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether both shall be alike good."

For the Christian Messenger.

College Agency.

Bridgetown, Oct. 27, 1862.

DEAR MESSENGER,—

"Since writing you last, I have obtained in behalf of our seat of learning; \$100 note from Walter Welton, this is his second hundred toward a Scholarship, which he intends to finish in as brief a space as possible. Parker Dodge has pledged \$100 on condition that the insurance of certain lost property is forth coming.— Rev. Wm. Porter, Pastor of the Wilmot Church, is actively engaged getting up a Scholarship for his church, and doubtless will succeed. Our young brother is deservedly valued by his people, and none the less because he takes an active part in the Educational, as also the other Benevolent Objects of the denomination.

We have another Scholarship in progress to bear the name of Handley C. Morse. This is to be done by an affectionate brotherhood or family, in memory of a departed and much beloved parent; three branches of the family have pledged in writing, that they will each take \$100 a piece. All that we have conversed with who know the remainder of the family assure us that the fourth portion will, without fail, be taken up. May their descendants be richly endowed with the treasures of science.

I expect to leave for New Brunswick by the next boat from Digby. It will require two months more to work this field or valley. The season just now is not the most suitable, it is expiring time now, the returns will be coming in by and bye when myself, or some more suitable person, will I trust reap largely.

Yours truly, A. D. THOMSON.

For the Christian Messenger.

Revival at Onslow.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—

As you and the numerous readers of the Christian Messenger rejoice to hear of the prosperity of Zion; in order that you may be made partakers of our joy, I attempt to give an account of what the Lord has been, and is doing in Onslow.

The seeds of divine truth had been long and faithfully sown here, by our revered pastor; while many prayers had ascended to heaven for a season of refreshing from the presence of the

Lord. Yet still it was a time of "drought and gloominess, of darkness and the shadow of death;" the dew of blessing descended not; the precious seed anxiously and prayerfully scattered, seemed to "fall by the wayside, where the thorns sprang up and choked it;" gaiety and frivolity reigned predominant among the young, and the hope of better days well nigh died out in the hearts of many of the Lord's children, until they were almost constrained to cry, "Are his mercies clean gone forever, and will he be favorable no more?" But faith and hope sometimes penetrated the cloud, and we caught glimpses of the bow of promise; and we felt as though we should utterly faint and fail, did we not "hope to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Yes! our heavenly Father, in the exercise of his infinite love, was preparing to bless us and we knew it not; he was coming in his own time and way, to fill our hearts with gladness and our tongues with singing. When all seemed dark and drear to our shortsighted vision, the orient streak—sure herald of coming morn—was making its appearance. When through the weakness of our faith we were almost hopeless, deep seriousness was taking hold of hitherto thoughtless hearts; the leaven of truth was secretly working, the word of the Lord was gradually, yet surely accomplishing the purpose for which he had sent it, and his gracious promise was being fulfilled: "Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days."

You are aware that a Quarterly Meeting here had been in contemplation for some time, and at the appointed season, Elders Reid, Thompson, Balcom, and Porter came to us, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by them, praying sinners in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. It soon became evident by signs infallible that the time for the manifestation of redeeming power among us had come. A Conference was appointed, which was solemn, deeply interesting and well attended by the young; when two of them arose, happy in the glorious hope of having passed from death unto life. And the next afternoon another came rejoicing in the Saviour's love. Also, a number of young persons who were deeply convicted of sin, and earnestly inquiring the way of salvation, arose, thus signifying their desire that prayer should be made unto God for them. We were also told of an aged man in the vicinity, who had lived for fourscore years without hope and without God in the world, one for whom pious sons and daughters had long prayed, who had been called at the eleventh hour, was "sitting at the feet of Jesus," and desiring to follow his Lord in the path of holy obedience; not because he expected any saving influence through outward ordinances, but because he desired to honour his blessed Master by thus publicly professing his allegiance to him before those who had known him all his life long as a worldly man. Meetings for prayer and exhortation were continued, and in a few more days eight rejoicing believers, all in the bloom of youth, came out from the world, "filled with the peace which passeth all understanding, having the love of God shed abroad in their hearts," who were also "buried with Christ by baptism unto death, that like as he was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so they also should walk in newness of life."

These, together with the four previously baptized, (who were the first fruits of the revival,) were welcomed into the church of God on earth, on Lord's day, 12th inst. It was a touching scene, a happy day for the church in Onslow. There they stood, the hardy handed old man of fourscore years, and the fair haired youth of fifteen; the others in the bloom of manhood and womanhood, consecrating their lives to the Saviour. Scarce a fortnight after his baptism, and but two days after receiving the right hand of fellowship and partaking of the Lord's supper in remembrance of his Saviour, that aged christian passed to the general assembly and church of the first born above, and, we doubt not, was welcomed by the Saviour to all the bliss of heaven, and has sat down to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

On Sabbath afternoon 16th inst., a third baptism took place when eight more youthful disciples of Jesus; with two others more advanced in life, from the North River section of the Church, were immersed in presence of an immense concourse of spectators; thus making a good profession before many witnesses. May the God of all grace, guard these who are rejoicing in a newly found Saviour, be their strength in the hour of temptation, keep their feet from falling, and at last present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Evening meetings, and weekly Conferences