

STEPPING HEAVENWARD.

Stepping heavenward, Lord, am I, As the days go fleeting by? Daisied fields of youth are round me, Cloudless is the blue o'erhead, But I ponder, as I wander, Whither goes the path I tread? It must lead me, lead me ever Toward some goal, though distant far, Onward 'neath the sun of morning, Onward, 'neath the evening star, Wisely let me choose my way, Stepping heavenward, day by day.

Stepping heavenward, Lord, am I, As the moon of life draws sigh? Here the rocky steps of trial Bid me choose a smoother way; There the thorns of self-denial Press the feet that fain would stray; Worn and footsore I would falter, But the steps are one by one; Lead me, heavenly hopes that beckon, Till the tollsome march is done; Smoothing all the rugged way, Stepping heavenward, day by day.

Stepping heavenward, Lord, am I, As the days move silently? Lo! 'twas but a little journey, Though no resting-place it gave; Aged feet are these that linger At the portals of the grave. Lowly in the darkening distance Lies the path I long have trod, Glorious pilgrimage, whose ending Is the city of my God! Glad the journey, blest the way, Stepping heavenward, day by day.

—Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine for December.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Importance of Winter Work.

The following paper on the importance of maintaining Sunday Schools during the winter months was read by Mr. W. L. Bars, at a meeting of the Sunday School Convention recently held in this city:

As co-laborers in Sabbath School work we meet in convention to ascertain as far as possible wherein we have been successful in that work in the past, and wherein we have failed, to the end that we may henceforth do God's work more efficiently and obtain larger blessings. Hence the plain duty of everyone who would desire to see improvement in our Sunday school system to suggest beneficial reforms and expose whatever would retard our onward march to the ideal of a perfect Sunday school. It devolves upon me, therefore, very briefly to call your attention to one—not the least among the evils that are permitted to dwell and luxuriate in a large number of Sunday school districts within the limits of this convention. I refer to the custom which prevails and is so sacredly observed—in shame be it said—in certain localities of closing the Sabbath school and abandoning work during a portion of the year, varying in duration from three to nine months. The first frost in the autumn, it is said, generally indicates the approach of this yearly recurring period of school closing and spiritual inactivity. It is to be regretted that owing to the very incomplete returns received from the different districts within this convention, the exact number of

SCHOOLS THAT ARE THUS "GRACEFULLY SLEEPING"

throughout the winter months cannot be ascertained for your benefit to-day; yet I think it can be stated, without a possibility of contradiction, that fully fifty per cent. of our schools are in this most deplorable condition. It is satisfactory to those interested in Sabbath school work and organization to know that notwithstanding this sad state of things exists and is become widely contagious in Sunday schools located in country districts, the evil has not as yet made much progress in the schools within the limits of our cities and towns.

Where, we ask, is the necessity for this wholesale interruption in the regular work of our Sabbath schools? What are

SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES

that so largely interfere with Sabbath school work in the winter but operate less severely during other seasons of the year? The following suggest themselves.

First: The weather difficulty. It is contended by many that a necessity exists in country districts for closing Sabbath schools in the winter season, as the scholars live at long distances from the school house and could not or would not expose themselves to the inclemency of the weather to attend school. Admitting that the state of the weather in winter, would tend to reduce the number of the younger scholars, still we would be wrong in supposing it would effect in the least the attendance of

THE RIGHT MINDED ADULT PORTION of the school. But this difficulty is a weak one, since if it can be successfully urged as an objection against holding a winter session in our Sabbath schools, it can equally as well be urged in reference to work in our common schools; yet at a public school meeting what rate payer would presume to suggest that the public school in his section should be discontinued for the winter. Moreover our public schools' returns show conclusively that the largest attendance during any portion of the school year is for the winter months. The public school building in country district is not unfrequently the place where the Sabbath school meets, so that the distance remains the same on the Sabbath as on other days. Surely that which is not recognized as a difficulty six days in the week should not be looked upon in so grave and objectionable a light by Sabbath school laborers on Sunday.

Secondly—The accommodation difficulty: This suggests to our minds school buildings poorly constructed and open to the weather, lack of fuel and proper heating apparatus to make the children comfortable within doors provided

THEY ARE BRAVE ENOUGH TO OVERCOME

our first difficulty and venture out. To this some might say if such necessities cannot be provided for and this difficulty removed, it seems that a good and sufficient reason would exist for abandoning the school. Should the reply not rather be, abandon the schoolhouse but not the school. Seek out for the school one of the many comfortable dwelling houses in the district within which Jack Frost dares not intrude, and invite your scholars to follow you there. Many heads of families, if called upon, would gladly take their turn in opening their doors and their hearts to a Sabbath school. The school may in this way be preserved and work be continued, until the weather permits a return to the vacated school building; while many whose

CHILDHOOD'S DAYS

have long since fled would thus indirectly be brought under the blessed influence of the truth and taught to understand, honor and love Sabbath school work. Leave the matter of further difficulties to be suggested by those whose knowledge would better qualify them to present them, let me very briefly consider why it is so important that those seeming difficulties should not be allowed to prevail with us, and why our Sabbath schools should meet regularly for systematic study of God's word somewhere, somehow, and always while there are souls to be saved.

FIRST—SATAN'S SCHOOL NEVER CLOSES.

It is always open, and the superintendent in charge and his staff of teachers are always in attendance, and are especially active in finding "some mischief still for idle hands to do." Let us remember that while we are closing our Sabbath schools, dismissing our scholars, and settling ourselves down for the winter's rest, the entrances leading to the devil's workshops are being widened and prepared to receive those whom we have just disbanded for a season. The cold weather does not deter their entering there. Even our most beloved and cared for scholars for whose conversion we are constantly watching and praying may at all times, "even the accepted time" perchance, find opportunity to enter there, to mingle with bad companions, to meet wrong influences and to develop habits of mind and body that may render further Sabbath school work as regards them useless.

Secondly—Disorganization, tending to weaken the membership of the school and its influence for good. Teachers and classes separate and class connections are broken up. The happy relation existing between pupil and teacher ceases, and consequently the watch, care and control of teacher over the scholar in and out of class are at an end. These who are thus disbanded and uncared for during the winter are less willing to return again to work when the time arrives for the school to re-open. The relaxation from work tends to

weaken the scholars' desire and ability to resume study and places him under conditions far less favorable, than would exist had there been no interruption in his study and training.

Thirdly—Intelligent study of God's word is hindered and rendered incomplete: With the closing of the Sabbath school the systematic study of God's word ceases in those homes at least where God himself is not honored. This reason is especially applicable to those schools where the international series of Sabbath school lessons has been adopted. Under this system one half of the year, beginning in January and ending in June, is occupied with lessons taken from the New Testament; the other half of the year, beginning in July and ending in December, is spent with lessons in the Old Testament, so that schools closing their work in November and re-opening in May would lose the closing lessons in the second half of the year and the opening lessons of the first half of the year and could not at all profitably and successfully follow such a course.

Fourthly and lastly, by closing our schools in winter we would fail to reach a large class of persons whose callings in life take them away from our school districts during the summer, but who usually return to remain at their homes during the winter. Such are our young men who engage in fishing and other similar pursuits along our coasts or follow the sea.

It seems unnecessary to advance further reasons why we should endeavor to sustain our Sabbath schools uninterruptedly throughout the year, so necessary to successful work does such a course appear. Let each one examine this matter for himself and see if the difficulties are not within ourselves rather than without. When we realize, as we should, how grave and important are the responsibilities we have assumed in becoming teachers and instructors of the young in our Sabbath schools, and fully understand all that is comprehended in that word "faithful," those difficulties, the offspring of our selfish natures, will fade away as phantoms before the rising morn and selfishness will be swallowed up in self-sacrifice. Permit me in closing to add to this already extended paper, a few sentences, applicable to the subject. I have chosen from a biographical sketch of one who was during life, one of the world's most eminently distinguished and faithful Sabbath school superintendents, I refer to the late Henry P. Haven. His biographer says of him, "he was preparing for his 40th anniversary of that school when he entered into rest. Although the ride or the walk from his home might be a tedious one in mid-winter, he was sure that souls were as precious and Bible study as important in January as in July, and if a Sabbath school was worth having at one time, it was worth having at all times. Matters quickly settled on this basis of permanent action. So long as one teacher and two scholars would attend, he would keep up the school without a peradventure. When the number dropped below that he would re-open the question for further consideration. From this decision he never wavered. Is not this a fair solution of the vacation question of any school?"

At a mass meeting held in St. Matthew's church during Convention the following resolution in reference to the above was passed unanimously:— This meeting desires to emphasize the views presented in the excellent paper of Mr. Bars, and to give it forth as our unanimous and unqualified judgment that all Sabbath schools, both in town and country, should be open the whole year round. No reason can be adduced for closing the Sunday schools during winter which would not hold equally strong in favor of closing our common schools during the week. The winter is our harvest time for every kind of christian work, when there is more leisure for study than at any other season of the year. To close our schools then is seriously to interrupt the good work, to interfere with

the adoption and carrying out of the admirable International series of lessons, to discountenance the working of the Divine Spirit there, often more than ordinarily operative, to hurt its most prolific nursery, and so to chill the ardor and check the activities of all who feel it to be good to be always zealously affected about a good thing. This conference would, therefore, earnestly entreat all residing in districts where there has hitherto been a suspension of Sabbath school labor during the winter months prayerfully to reconsider the whole subject, and to bring themselves into line with the grand army of Sabbath school laborers the world over, and the great leaders of thought and action on this question, who are as one man in opposing any ceasing from the work and favoring a patient continuance therein.

For the Visitor. THE GATHERING AMONG THE TELUGUS.

During the famine the heathen cried to their gods in vain. God answered the cries of his Telugu children, and sent them help from their christian brethren of England and America. This could not fail to operate favorably upon the minds of the people. The gospel had been preached in their villages throughout the whole region. In the steadfastness of the native christians, and in the relief that christianity brought to the starving ones, they saw practically illustrated the blessed power of the gospel. For fifteen months of this period Mr. Clough rejected all applications for baptism. Some for gain might be deceiving the missionary, and so wisely he deferred all baptisms until "relief operations had for the most part ceased." He began baptizing the converts on June 16th, 1878. In June 1,168 were baptized; in July 7,513. In these two months 8,681 were baptized on this one field. In August 466; in November 59 and in December 400, making in all 9,606, or more than one third of the entire number of our church members in those two provinces.

A PENTECOSTAL BAPTISM.

At Valumpilly, ten miles north of Ongole, 2,222 of the 7,513 baptized in July were baptized in one day. There were put six administrators, and but two at a time engaged in baptizing. They relieved each other when necessary. The time occupied was but nine hours. There was no unseemly haste. Everything was done deliberately and orderly. And thus by this modern fact, the "couldnt do it" argument of the opposers of immersion stands refuted.—A. P. McDIARMID in Can. Baptist

THE BAPTISTS FIRST.

The Baptists were first to print a book in England in favor of complete religious liberty. (Leonard Bosher in 1614).

The Baptists were first in America to separate Church and State and make the soul free. (The Baptists in Rhode Island, 1638).

The Baptists were the first in England to start missions to the heathen. (William Carey in 1789).

The Baptists were the first to start a Bible Society for the world. (Joseph Hughes, 1804).

The Baptists were the first to advocate the amendment to the Constitution of the United States guaranteeing religious liberty. (General Association of Baptists in Virginia).

The Baptists were the first denomination to translate the New Testament into English. (American Bible Union, 1588).

The Baptists are first in successful missionary operations abroad, their converts year by year outnumbering those added to any other communion. — Watch Tower.

All true no doubt, but we know a good many Baptists who are not entitled to any of the credit of it. They not only do nothing for the world at large, but they do nothing of any value for the individual church to which they belong. Yet they will boast about the things that "we Baptists" have done! says Bro. Henderson.—Tennessee Baptist.

THE "VISITOR" FOR 1884.

Arrangements are being made to make the VISITOR for 1884 still better than ever before. In order, however, to fully effect our plans money is needed. It is owed us, but our appeals seem ineffectual to move many of our patrons to payment of their small bills to them, but to us in the aggregate a large amount. We desire for many reasons to bring the VISITOR to the advanced payment system. It will prevent errors in bills and give the reader the wholesome feeling that he is reading his own paper and not that of the proprietor. To promote this end we desire to give notice that after the first of January 1884 we shall feel at liberty to stop sending the VISITOR to those who are more than one year behind in payment and send their bill for collection. We shall greatly dislike to do this but justice to ourselves and to our paying subscribers demands it. We further propose to send all who pay up their back debts and remit in addition \$2.00 advance payment for 1884, a copy of the Canadian Record for a year. It is an excellent 8 page Missionary and Sunday School paper adapted to promote intelligence in the family and desire for the spread of Christ's kingdom in the world. Let us have a hearty response to this offer. To all new subscribers paying in advance we make the same offer. Will our pastors speak a favorable word for their denominational paper, make known our offer and send us new names. Every Baptist minister in the Maritime Provinces is our agent to help on this good work.

1884.—H. N. Y.—1884.

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The first issue of THE WEEK will appear December 6th. THE WEEK will appeal by a comprehensive table of contents to the different tastes which exist within the circle of a cultured home, and will endeavor faithfully to reflect and summarize the intellectual, social and political movements of the day. Mr. Goldwin Smith will be a regular contributor. Mr. Edgar Fawcett, author of "An Ambitious Woman," "A Gentleman of Letters," etc., contributes to THE WEEK a novel of New York society, entitled, "The Adventures of a Widow." Principal Grant, of Queen's University, will write, among other valuable papers, a series descriptive of a tour taken by him during the past summer "Down the Kicking Horse and across the Selkirk." Dr. Grant will also contribute articles on various important subjects, such as Indian Affairs, Progress in British Columbia, etc. Mr. J. E. Collins will contribute, among other papers, one on the pressing subject of "Inter-national Copyright." Mr. Wm. F. Clarke, late of Winnipeg, will write of "The Real Outlook in Manitoba." Contributions in prose and verse may be looked for from

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