

### Summer Opportunities

July and August are different. Every Sunday School teacher and officer knows that. Because they are different from the rest of the year in Sunday School work, because they present their own peculiar problems, there is a big temptation to "lie down" on the job till they are past. In September a "fresh start" may be made along the good old lines that prevail through the other ten months. This temptation may lead one to neglect some of the finest opportunities he may have in the whole year for real service.

Think of some of the possibilities! Many Sunday Schools should have one or more of their workers at a Summer School. One, at least, of these representatives should be chosen from the younger and less experienced teachers. No School will lose by this venture.

Some Schools will want to close down. Teachers want a holiday. Scholars go away. Closing down is, as a rule, a bad thing. Better change the hour, provide substitute teachers who will let the others have a holiday and keep some sort of class for the boys and girls who do not go away—than stop altogether. How about picnics, or camps, or trips for the boys and girls who cannot get away?

How about the summer resort where some fortunate teacher may spend a good part of the season? Is there a Sunday School there? If not, can he start one? If there is, can he help? Some Sunday School teachers on holiday at summer resorts, have done excellent work.

## WITH OUR CONTRIBUTORS

### Attention—Its Nature and Laws

*By Professor L. A. Weigle, D.D.*

(The sixth of a series of twelve articles by the author of *The Teacher*, one of the books in the New Standard Teacher Training Course, discussing more fully some points dealt with in the book.—EDITORS.)

"Attention!" is the most familiar of military commands. It means not only that the soldier shall stand with body erect, heels together, eyes front, and hands at sides, but that his mind shall be alert, ready to hear, understand and obey further commands.

Attention is an attribute of intelligence and will. It characterizes activity that is distinctly mental, as contrasted with that which is merely physical, instinctive or habitual. If the mind be thought of as a tool, attention is its keen cutting edge. Liken it to a theatre, and attention is its spotlight; to a camera, and attention is its focus.

Attention is sometimes involuntary. One's attention is naturally attracted by stimuli that are sudden, intense, strange, unusual, rhythmic, or recurrent, by pains, hunger-pangs or other signals of organic needs, by quick changes and sharp contrasts, or by anything moving. It is one of nature's provisions for our safety, that we should be made to notice things like these, which are so often the signs of danger.

When not thus involuntary, attention is in general directed by interest, which may be either: (1) immediate or remote; or (2) native or acquired. Interest is immediate when the present activity or object of attention is interesting or satisfying in itself; remote when it is attended to only because it is seen to be a means to a further end. Interest is native when determined by some one or more of the great instinctive tendencies or capacities which constitute original human nature; acquired, when determined by ideas or habits which have been gained in the course of experience.

The most significant distinction is that between attention which is relatively spontaneous, because whole-minded, and that which involves strain and effort, because of distracting impulses. When some interest gains full possession of the mind,—whether it be immediate or remote, native or acquired,—attention is easy, and one does his best mental work. When, on the other hand, one is not fully interested in the task at hand, conscious of conflicting impulses and open to distraction, attention is difficult. It takes effort to resist the more alluring things and to hold one's mind to the chosen object. And the mind, naturally, does not work quite as well under these forced conditions.