

ECONOMY OF THE CHURCH.

SABBATH-SCHOOLS.

~~~~~  
A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE BLEECKER-STREET CHURCH,

NEW YORK,

PRECEDING A CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUNDS OF THE

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

JUNE, 1845.

~~~~~  
BY ERSKINE MASON, D. D.,

PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

~~~~~  
PHILADELPHIA:

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

146 CHESTNUT STREET.

THE  
**AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,**

No. 146 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia—No. 5 Cornhill, Boston—No. 152 Nassau  
Street, New York—and Fourth Street, Louisville, Ky.

Invite Parents, Teachers, and all other friends of youth to call at the Depository, and examine their extensive stock of Books, of every size, price, and variety; JUVENILE LIBRARIES, INFANT-SCHOOL PRINTS, CARDS, &c., besides a large variety of SUNDAY-SCHOOL BOOKS, MANUALS, AIDS FOR TEACHERS, &c.

**VALUABLE BOOKS.**

(*Lately published by the American Sunday-school Union.*)

**THE USEFUL CHRISTIAN;** a Memoir of the late Thomas Cranfield, a devoted Sunday-school Teacher and Superintendent in London. 228 pp. 18mo. 30 cents. (With a Portrait.)

**THE WAY OF LIFE;** or, Scripture Truth Illustrated. By Rev. CHARLES HODGE, D. D. 343 pp. 18mo. 37½ cents.

**THE TEACHER TAUGHT;** an humble Attempt to make the path of the Sunday-school Teacher straight and plain. 396 pp. 18mo. 50 cents.

**BIBLICAL ANTIQUITIES.** By Rev. JNO. W. NEVIN. 2 vols. 288 pp. 18mo. 34 cents each.

**HISTORY OF THE HUGUENOTS.** 300 pp. 18mo. 42 cents.

**VERY CHEAP EDITIONS OF THE FOLLOWING.**

*Half-bound, Muslin Backs, Twelve and a Half Cents Each.*

**ALLEINE'S ALARM.** 198 pp. 18mo., with all the References. 12½ cents.

**THE GREAT CHANGE,** a Treatise on Conversion. By GEORGE REDFORD, D. D., LL. D., with an Introduction, by JOHN ANGEL JAMES, D. D. 180 pp. 18mo. 12½ cents.

**THE DAIRYMAN'S DAUGHTER.** Complete edition. 124 pp. 18mo. 12½ cents.

**LIFE OF JOSEPH ALLEINE,** Author of "An Alarm to Unconverted." 172 pp. 18mo. 12½ cents.

**THE INFANT'S PROGRESS** from the Valley of Destruction to Everlasting Glory. 197 pp. 18mo. 12½ cents.

**Manuals of Instruction.**

 *More than One Million Six Hundred Thousand Copies sold.* 

**UNION QUESTIONS;** or Questions on Select Portions of Scripture. In 12 volumes, 10 cents each, viz.:

| Order of the Bible.                   | Order of Volumes. |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Genesis                            | Vol. III.         |
| 2. Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua        | " IV.             |
| 3. Judges, Ruth, and Samuel           | " VI.             |
| 4. Samuel, Chronicles, and Kings      | " VII.            |
| 5. Daniel, Ezra, Esther, and Nehemiah | " IX.             |
| 6. Life of Christ                     | " I.              |
| 7. Instructions of Christ             | " II.             |
| 8. Acts of the Apostles               | " V.              |
| 9. Romans                             | " X.              |
| 10. Galatians (8 cents)               | " VIII.           |
| 11. Hebrews                           | " XI.             |
| 12. General view of the Bible         | " XII.            |

**THE CHILD'S SCRIPTURE QUESTION BOOK,** designed for the younger Classes of Sabbath-schools. The answers to the questions are short, simple, and as far as practicable, in Bible language. 197 pages, 18mo., embellished with sixty-three engravings. 12 cents each.

All the above approved by the Committee of Publication of the American Sunday-school Union, consisting of Members of the following denominations, viz.: Baptist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, and Reformed Dutch.

**General Depository, 146 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.**

## ECONOMY OF THE CHURCH.

---

### SABBATH-SCHOOLS.

---

“**THEN SAID I, WISDOM IS BETTER THAN STRENGTH.**”

Ecclesiastes ix. 16.

THE wise man was led to utter this aphorism, in view of a fact, which had fallen under his observation. A city of limited extent, and but thinly inhabited, was threatened by a mighty army which encamped before its gates. Its physical resources and energies, were wholly incompetent to its defence ; and its ruin, which seemed to be certain, was prevented only by a poor man, who owed his influence to no external distinction whatever, but simply to his worth, as a man of great wisdom. A fact illustrative of the vast superiority of mental and moral, over all other kinds of distinction. We need hardly, in our day, attempt to establish the truth of such an aphorism, taken in its general sense, for it is already established beyond dispute. We never think of mind as inferior to the body, or pretend to compare mental enlargement with mere physical developement to the disadvantage of the former. There are, too, numerous other distinctions among men, and other sources of power. Wealth and office may, without in the slightest degree adding to, or subtracting from, any of the essential elements of character, give influence, but there is nothing like the influence of

mind. There is something about wisdom, which, independent of all foreign considerations, gives nobility and efficiency to the character. We admire wisdom more than any thing else, and that not simply because it is beautiful in itself, but because we know that with but few resources and very limited physical energies, it can accomplish results wholly impracticable to ignorance and folly, whatever resources they may have at their command.

We do not know any thing particularly of the circumstances of the poor man to whom our text refers, nor how he acted in order to deliver the city. It seems, however, manifest, that his influence owed not a little of its efficiency to his *moral* worth, for the wise man places his wisdom in opposition to wickedness—"Wisdom," says he, "is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroyeth much good." The great point then of the text is, the vast superiority of mental and moral excellence over all mere physical, or simply conventional distinctions. There is a dignity about moral worth, which extorts, though oftentimes reluctantly, the admiration even of those who have no heart to imitate it. Wealth may secure the adulation of a cringing sycophancy; official station may enable a man to gather around him a large number of adherents, and throw over them the bonds of selfishness and interest—but a man of mind attracts attention without making any appeal to interest, and a man of moral worth always secures a heartfelt-esteem. He may be a poor man, he may wear no badge of office, he may have no other distinction but that of moral worth, yet when we look at him we cannot help feeling, that "wisdom is better than strength." It throws over a man a beauty which nothing else can impart—it presents a fountain of joy which nothing else can open—it furnishes him a security for all he holds dear, which nothing else can provide. Nay, more than this—if strength is desirable, if physical resources are valuable, moral worth, all other things being equal, gives the best pledge for the attainment of the former, and the right developement of the latter. These general remarks, are not more true of individuals than of communities. The happiness of a nation does not depend so much upon the extent of its territory, or upon the peculiarity of its soil, climate, and natural advantages, as upon the character of those who compose it. The glory of the Church consists not in the greatness of her earthly resources, or the wide

circle of influence she may describe around her, but, in the spirituality of her members. This is the general principle, and as society understands it better, it settles down more confidently upon it, as true—and all the movements of the present day which have any wisdom about them, or which are calculated to evolve any happy results, recognize the truth of this principle. It has now come to be a settled maxim, that there are no foundations of true greatness and happiness but those which are laid in moral worth—there is no advancement of society which is not an advancement in knowledge and virtue. There is no security for present or future good, but that which is found in personal and social uprightness. Observation and experience have compelled the political economist to take into consideration moral causes, as having much to do in determining the outward circumstances and positions of individuals and communities—degradation, and misery being, even in otherwise the most favourable circumstances, the accompaniments of ignorance and vice, while mental elevation, and a well-cultivated moral sense, have ever been found, even in circumstances otherwise most unfavourable, in companionship with prosperity and happiness. Principles like these scarcely call for an illustration. We, at least, as a people must feel their truth, knowing as we do, that our safeguards, and the elements of our social advancement are found in the mental and moral characteristics of the people. There is not an institution in our land, under the influence of which we live, which is not maintained by a favourable public sentiment—not a law which throws its protection over us, which can be enforced any otherwise, or any farther than the moral sense of the community may sanction it—hence the enlargement of the public mind, the elevation of the general tone of morals, the diffusion of knowledge, and knowledge of such a character as rectifies the heart, while they expand the intellect, constitute our only securities. There is in every community a vast amount of energy, and there are constantly exciting causes to bring it into action. You cannot permanently repress it, any more than you can forever smother the fires of a volcano, but you can control, and direct it into proper channels where it will be a blessing instead of a curse—and thus you can furnish in the history of individuals, as well as the community at

large, an illustration of the maxim, that "wisdom is better than strength."

The age in which we live is an age of philanthropic and Christian movement, and the plans, and enterprises of benevolence, which are continually presenting themselves to our attention, are valuable and wise, and deserving of our countenance, as they aim at the *public mind*, with a view to enlighten it and cultivate its moral sense. Among these plans, of which the present day is so fruitful, there is one to which I wish at this time specially to call your attention—one which contains within itself the elements of a wondrous power, but which, by reason of its silent, unobtrusive character, and because its effects are not in all cases immediate, is very apt to be lost sight of. I refer to the plan of **SABBATH-SCHOOL** instruction, as worthy of our attention and support, in every view in which we can look at it, and I wish to fix your minds upon it for a few moments, that you may estimate its importance, as you consider its bearings upon society, upon the Church of God, and upon individual character.

Its design, as you are well aware, respects mainly the young. It is to bring the youthful intellect, and the youthful heart of our whole country under the developing influence of religious truth. In aiming at this particular class of our population, it is in strict keeping with the spirit of our age. For there is no peculiarity for which the present day is more distinguished than its devotion to youthful culture. The varied sciences, which but a few short years since, were contained only in ponderous volumes, accessible to few, and then presented in such a form as that they could be comprehended only by ripened intellects, have now been simplified and brought down almost to the level of the infant's mind, and generally diffused. So remarkable is our day for the facilities of obtaining information, so accessible are the sources of knowledge, that there is truth in the remark so often uttered in a spirit of satire, "that all our boys are men;" it is a fact that they are men in mind at an age when their parents were but children. It is a natural result of the present system of things. As we look then at the crowds of young immortals, who throng our streets, the inquiry is an interesting one, what character are they to develope in the circumstances in which they are placed, and what is to be the sphere and nature

of their future action. We know that those energies are all to be brought forth, and to tell in some direction with great efficiency, and that in their hands are lodged the means of the ruin, or the glory of the community. They may prostrate in an hour, all that has been consecrated by past generations to truth, virtue, and happiness, or they may lay their foundations deeper, and send their influences far beyond the limits within which they are now confined.

Statesmen and philosophers understand this matter perfectly—hence the simplifying of knowledge, and the facilities for its attainment, which are so wondrously multiplying—hence the system of national instruction which has sprung up, and is maintained by public sentiment, and by public resources. The days of ignorance, in this land, have gone by—the days of light have come. There will be mental developement. You might as well roll back the Atlantic, as stay the advancing tide of intelligence. Yes, and we may glory in this, as one of the peculiar features of our age, and he is not a man, much less a Christian, who would wish it changed ; and yet, amid all the appliances of means of intellectual culture, which abound so greatly, there is no influence which determines the character of that developement which they certainly secure—there is no assurance, in any of our civic arrangements, that the mind which we are thus educating will not be a wild and ungovernable mind ; an instructed mind, but uninstructed in righteousness ; with powers fitted for mighty achievements, but wholly ignorant of the moral influence which alone can direct those powers to right ends.

The Church of God would be recreant to her trust, if she should be behind the spirit of the age, or fail to furnish the great desideratum of education, which the circumstances of the times, now, more than ever, demand—**A RELIGIOUS TUTELAGE**. In reference to this matter we have not been wholly inactive, nor can we say that more effective measures than any which have hitherto been put forth, might not be adopted. As it is at present, the **SUNDAY-SCHOOL** service constitutes the means upon which we are mainly dependent to affect even the children of the Church herself, and wholly dependent to affect those who are without its pale ; and though the service is a noiseless one, it tells with effect wherever it reaches.

Cast your eye over a Sabbath-school—there are young minds,

drawn away from those deteriorating influences, which seem to work with greater power, on that, than on any other day—and collected in happy moral associations, and under the influence of religious truth, brought down to their capacities, in the same way in which knowledge upon all other subjects is simplified. You cannot fail to perceive that under this reiterated action week after week, there is going on a process of healthful mental development. You have here the secret unfolded, by which mind may be enlisted in its own advancement—for the religious element of human nature is taken hold upon, as information is introduced in connection with themes which must awaken attention and kindle emotion. Now study this process well, and when you have seen and made yourselves acquainted with its action—conceive of it as universal, of the influence of the system extending through the length and breadth of the land, of this process going on from week to week, regularly as the Sabbath-day returns—conceive every child in our country reached and affected by it,—and can you form any calculation as to its results, or doubt as to the character of the generation whose minds should be thus developed?

Certainly we should have every thing to hope for from the universality of the system, and nothing to fear—unless indeed men are afraid of the prevalence of knowledge, and the power of a high sense of moral rectitude—for the Sabbath-schools of our land must, so far as their influence extends, raise up a population intelligent and high-minded, who will frown upon wickedness, and set their faces against the inroads of unrighteousness. Limited as their influence, comparatively speaking, has been thus far, yet even now, reflecting and observant minds point to them as the birth-place of not a little of the conservatism of the country, which will increase, and become more effective, as the power which originates it is more extensively diffused.

There are, I am well aware, doubters—there have been ever since sin entered into the world—there never yet has been a plan of usefulness, an enterprise of good started, without finding enough to prophesy a failure—the system of which we are speaking is not an exception to this general rule—and yet, thus far there has been no failure. True, the results have not been such as we might have wished, but in view of the expenditure of means and efforts, they

have been more than we could rationally have hoped for, and yet these results are of such a character that they are but partially disclosed—and the reason why the manifest results have not been greater, why its influence has not been more extensive, and its power more generally felt, is not to be found in the system itself, in any mistake in the principles upon which it proceeds, or in an essential defect in the machinery which it sets in motion, but in the limited degree to which it has secured the sympathies, and the practical regards of the Christian community. Oh, if we had but given to it a moiety of the interest, and expended upon it half the effort, and half the resources which have been given and expended in the case of some splendid monuments of mistaken philanthropy, systems good in their design but false in the principles upon which they proceed, and in their means defeating the very end which they professedly aim to secure—systems intended to relieve and raise the poor man, but gaining our suffrages only by the deceptive appearances of wisdom which they put on, which may indeed comfort, and elevate their subjects for the moment, only to sink them deeper than before, increasing the sources of public wretchedness, by the very means adopted to exhaust them—giving a man a sense of independence by making him feel how truly dependent he is—systems thus not merely of mistaken philanthropy, but of practical mischief, which rears all over the land receptacles for poverty, which meet a man only at the spot where he ceases to feel himself a man, and promise him protection and support, only as he becomes debased enough to receive them—if we were to expend half the effort and half the resources, upon the institution whose claims we are this day advocating, demanded by the system which thus raises these morbid, and enlarging excrescences upon the body social and political, we should have in the next generation less need of any of these plans of fictitious benevolence, which curse the very subjects whom they aim to bless; because we should raise up a population, which, as intelligent, would disdain the degradation to which these systems would sink them, and, as virtuous, would not require the aid they are intended to bestow.

We must have, my brethren, some means not simply of instruction, but of religious tutelage. It is the requirement, alike of Chris-

tianity and patriotism and sound political economy and common sense, but in the land in which we live, there is no institution, in which the youthful mind can be religiously developed, but the **SABBATH-SCHOOL**—nor, in our present circumstances, do we see how there can be any but one which will illustrate its general principles. And in view of this truth, if it is a truth, we may well gather around it, and give it our sympathies, and cordial co-operation. It will not do for us to look upon it with an unkindly eye, nor to cast upon it the cold breath of indifference, appealing, as it does to us, as philanthropists, as patriots, and as Christians—and, if we see that there are in it elements of blessing, unattainable under present circumstances, by any other means, then we should feel the obligation, resting upon us, as those who are to look, not every man at his own things, but every man also at the things of others, to give it our sympathies and support. This is my first general view of the subject before us.

II. We have, however, another view, in which it becomes us, especially as Christians, to look at our subject—for if I mistake not, the Church of God has in this matter, a deep interest. If there is a topic which should enlist her attention, awaken her anxieties, and secure her pains-taking and care, we have it here—for the question, if not of her existence, at least of her enlargement is involved.

The Church of Jesus Christ must look mainly to the rising generation, because, so far as earthly influences are concerned, she has every thing to hope for, or to fear from them. What she is to do depends upon what they shall be. In view of the fact, which every page of the Church's history presents to the eye, that the gospel triumphs especially among the youthful portion of our population, and, comparatively speaking, achieves but few of its victories among those whose character has become matured, and whose habits of thought and action have become fixed by age—if she lay out her plans for the extension of her boundaries, and for the success of the gospel—if she would act wisely and well adapt her means to her ends—if she would strike the blow where it will be most surely felt, and will tell with the greatest power, she must direct her efforts mainly to those who are springing up into manhood all around her—she must seize upon all whom she can by

any means bring under her influence, while the forming process is going on, or at least before character is fixed, and principles of thought and action have attained the stiffness of maturity. The children of this world, who, as our Saviour tells us, are wiser in their generation, than the children of light, have already shown us that this is the soundest philosophy, because it ultimately secures the happiest results, with the greatest economy of human efforts. We must, indeed, be blind to all that is passing around us in the world, if we have not observed that this is the philosophy of all the antagonist systems to the gospel. You find them in their practical working, taking every where positions whence they can act most effectively upon the young. There are no noisy demonstrations about them, no array of any wondrous influences, or stupendous machinery which attracts attention—their movements are silent, unobserved—their influence insidious, as they use their appliances especially upon the youthful mind. The powers of hostility to the truth as it is in Jesus, are aiming, not to bring *men* over to their ranks, but to secure a developement of character where it is not yet formed, and which shall be favourable to their designs. We talk a great deal of the onward movement of the Church of God, and she is moving onward—but we do not understand the signs of the times, if we do not perceive the evidences of a coming conflict. The lines between truth and error, are every day drawn with great distinctness—and preparations are making for the contest. That conflict will, in all probability, be fought, not by us, but by our children—the rising generation are to be the actors in the scenes of struggle and strife, which are to precede the final triumph of the gospel.

And now the great question is, how we shall reach this rising generation, so as best to secure in their experience, the present effect of the gospel, and prepare them for the parts which they shall be called to act hereafter. The question, I beg you to observe, is not how, abstractly considered, the gospel may be made to tell with most power upon the youthful mind—not what would be the most efficient plan of operation, if it could be fully carried out—though taking even this view, the system we are advocating should advance strong claims to our attention—but the question is, what is the most feasible plan, in the present circumstances, and under the pre-

sent arrangements of ecclesiastical and civil society? It is the established order of God, that the youthful mind should be developed under domestic influence, and that our children should be trained at the domestic altar. No system can be wise, none can be successful, because it cannot secure the blessing of God, which, in its principles, overlooks, or in its practical working tends to disturb, this heavenly arrangement. No influence can safely dispense with parental influence—and the Church of God should be prompt to frown upon every system which would, in the least degree, weaken a sense of parental obligation, as aiming, not perhaps designedly and openly, but really and covertly, a death-blow at her prosperity. No, I would have a crushing sense of responsibility come upon every parental mind. I would have every parent feel his answerableness to God and the Church, and to society at large, for the character his child should exhibit, and the part he should act in future life. But then, my brethren, what shall we say of cases, where no sense of obligation exists? What shall we say of the hundreds and thousands of young immortals, with regard to whom, so far as their moral and spiritual welfare is concerned, no parental interest is felt, and upon whom no parental feeling and effort are expended? Does the Church of God owe nothing to them? Must the ruin of the young necessarily follow “the blood-guiltiness” of the parent? “God forbid.” Does the Church—does society, owe nothing to itself in reference to them? Must they necessarily grow up to be the enemies of religion, and scourges of the community? The point here is not to choose between Sabbath-school instruction and the instruction of the domestic fire-side, equally constant and faithful—but it is to choose between religious and irreligious developement of character. These minds will expand—they will act under some influences, and in some associations. Shall they act under the influence and amid the associations of the Sabbath-school, or those of a directly opposite character? Will you choose the gnarled and knotted tree which grows up in the wilderness, unsightly to the eye and useless in its productions, cumbering the ground which gives it support—or the tree which springs up under the hand of judicious cultivation, comely to the sight and delightful in the fruit which it yields. I do not know—I cannot see how, in any other way than the one of which we are

speaking, an influence of a strictly religious character, can be brought to bear upon this class of minds—but I do know that there is a process of religious tutelage going on every Sabbath, which is efficient so far as it reaches. The truth is brought home to children, and in a manner level to their capacities—and it is the only means to secure a right developement of character, spiritual safety, and good influence in these cases, upon which the Church of God can now depend. Destroy it, paralyze its influence, and you blot out the hopes of countless multitudes—you leave them to go on in a career which unrestrained natural desires and unholy influences will mark out for them, to be curses to the Church of God—many of them outcasts of society, and almost all of them eternal exiles from heaven.

Nor is the institution of which we speak without its influence, even where parental responsibility is felt, in increasing a sense of it, and securing its faithful discharge. It has, indeed, been supposed, that its plans and mode of action might affect injuriously the parental conscience, and invade the sphere of parental effort—and yet facts seem thus far to have established a different theory. Parents naturally take an interest in that which interests their children—and when these children retire from the scene of Sabbath study, they carry with them, in the interest which is awakened in their minds, an influence which gives wakefulness to the parental mind in reference to the very subjects to which their attention has been turned—and thus truth is carried to many a household, where otherwise it might never enter, and obligations are felt, where before they had been wholly neglected, and more rightfully discharged, where before they had been but partially respected. If the annals of the Christian Church were carefully examined upon this subject, I think her history would fully bear me out in all the positions I have assumed. Never, I imagine, has the subject of youthful tutelage excited more interested attention than it has under the present system. Granted, if you please, that many of the disciples of Jesus Christ were faithful before in the sphere of their domestic duties, they are none the less faithful now, while the means they enjoy of accomplishing their ends, are more numerous and better than they ever were before—while in many cases, of great unfaithfulness in this respect, the parental conscience

has been enlightened, and the pressure of public opinion, and outward circumstances, have been brought to bear upon the discharge of duty, and where the duty has not even been thought of, it has risen with all its peculiar impressiveness to the mind. The modes and plans of action in this department have been, to a great extent it may be, changed, but the amount of action has been increased, and never, we believe, has there been so great a degree of Christian influence brought to bear upon the youthful mind as at the present moment.

And then, if you look at the practical working of the system, you will see the interest the Church of God has in it, from its bearings upon the present and future condition of those who are brought fully within its reach. We do not suppose, that by the influence of the Sabbath-school alone, we are elevating its subjects to the distinctions of earth—though so far as moral causes have any bearing upon temporal happiness, we are doing a great deal to secure such an elevation. We do not calculate upon leading these children in the path crowded by the sons of ambition, nor upon introducing them to the walks where the daughters of mirth and splendour are taking their brief promenade. We would not do so if we could. We are doing more and better for them than this. We are making them happier in their earthly circumstances—we are preparing them for respectability and usefulness, in whatever sphere Providence may call them to move, by enlightening their minds, elevating their affections, and bringing their souls under the sanctifying influences of the truth. We are taking them to the cross of Jesus Christ, and teaching them to hang their immortal hopes upon it. Under our instrumentality they are becoming children of God, the heirs of eternal life. The conversions, which are taking place in early life, are in the main, the results of impressions received in the Sabbath-school—nay, I may go farther upon this point, and say, that usually the first indications of a revival of religion are seen in the Sabbath-school.

It is not a common thing for a child to lose the early impressions which he here receives, or to dishonour the instructions of a faithful and devoted teacher. It is rare to find the succeeding history of a Sabbath-scholar marked by open abandonment. God's providence is continually illustrating his truth, that if you "train

up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it." Some of the brightest ornaments of the Christian profession, some of the most effective and honoured labourers in the Redeemer's vineyard, began their Christian career in early life, and point to the Sabbath-school as their spiritual birth-place—and many a song now sung in heaven, had never been heard but for this blessed institution.

I need not go into statistics, to show the need of increased effort in this cause. The evidences of that need present themselves on every side to the view. Nor need I exhibit the results of these efforts. They are too numerous and palpable to be overlooked. But I will, before I conclude, suggest two thoughts, which may serve to commend the object I advocate to your sincerest regards.

1. We cannot doubt that its design is good. We add now, that it is effective to accomplish its design, by reason of its great simplicity. Generally speaking, in the physical, mental, and moral world, the most effective instrumentalities are the most simple. What mechanical power more simple, and at the same time more effective, than the lever? Truth, presented in its simplest forms, has the greatest influence over the mind, while a complicated system of moral means answers scarcely any other end than to show the folly and impotence of its projector. We have claimed as an admitted principle, that nothing can give permanency to the institutions of the Church of God, perpetuate her privileges, and extend her boundaries, which does not bring her to regard particularly her youth, and lead to the fulfilment of parental obligation likewise. Where these obligations are fulfilled, under the blessing of God, the Church must advance in a career of success and prosperity—and what can, in the present circumstances of society, secure such a result so certainly, because in a manner so simple, as the institution of which we are now speaking?

2. My other thought relates to the catholic spirit of this enterprise. In its general aspect and working, it is entirely free from every thing like sectarian peculiarity. It interferes with the particular tenets of no one Christian denomination, while it combines the truly Christian feeling and influence of the whole; and I look upon this feature of it as not only giving to it an additional degree of power, but as also constituting one of its greatest glories. There

never was perhaps an age in the history of the Christian Church, when the signs of the times so strongly condemned sectarianism, and demanded of the Christian Church that she present an unbroken phalanx to her common enemy; and yet, if I do not mistake greatly the signs of the times, the evidences of a growing sectarianism are becoming more clear and distinct. I am not one, you will bear me witness, to sanction latitudinarianism of principle, or to advocate the feeling which would lead one to throw the mantle of charity over the greatest errors—and yet I would stand myself, and have all whom I can influence, to stand upon the broad ground of a **CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY**. I have my own peculiar views, which distinguish me from many others. I advocate the principles peculiar to the body in whose ministry I stand from conviction and choice, and I do not know of one of them which I would yield in a contest concerning them, satisfied as I am, that the great system of doctrine which we teach is more consonant as a whole to the Bible, and to the dictates of right reason, than any other system with which I am acquainted. If I did not think and feel so I should not be here to-day.

But then it has been well remarked, that the vital power of the gospel does not reside in any one peculiarity, or in any one mode of exhibiting and illustrating it. It is not the distinctive feature of any one evangelical body, which is mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. The world is to be converted to Jesus Christ, not by the enforcement of those points upon which evangelical Christians differ, but of those in reference to which they are agreed. In the former way you may make men staunch sectarians, but never can make them Christians. In taking this position, and acting upon these principles, I do not throw away one iota of what I deem important, but only wield with greater effectiveness that which I deem essential. I love the peculiarities of my own professed faith, but I love spiritual Christianity more. I had rather see a man a Christian, even if he does not agree with me in every thing, than find him adopting theoretically all my peculiarities, while he gave no evidence of a change of heart—and wherever I can meet, on common ground, with the true disciples of Jesus Christ, I am willing to forego peculiarities, in order to advance with greater power and success our common faith.

Proceeding upon this principle, the institution whose claims we advocate, is gifted with a power which it could not otherwise exert. The truths which it brings to bear upon the minds of the young, are the great essential truths of the gospel, in which all evangelical Christians agree, and it is worth all it costs, as a simple exhibition of the catholicity of the Church of God. In some of the details of its operations, it may indeed strike many, as susceptible of improvement, for nothing merely human is perfect, and in reference to these experience teaches wisdom; but as it is, it can effect what no merely denominational effort can accomplish—it can go where no sectarian body as such can go, and thus throw the influence of the gospel over hundreds and thousands, who, so far as we can see, could be reached by no religious instrumentality whatever. As patriots, then, and philanthropists, but more as Christians, we bid it “God speed,” and we would that all the people should say “Amen.”

In its behalf then, is our appeal addressed to you to-day. We ask for it your sympathy, your prayers, and your cordial co-operation. We ask you to lend your influence to a cause so holy. We would that all around us might be gathered in under its influence. We can do much in the sphere in which God has called us to move, to further its high design. We can give it the weight of our countenance and example. We can take the little wanderers whom we find astray, and guide them to these scenes of scriptural effort and instruction. We appeal, in its behalf, to the young people of our charge, to secure their personal effort. We ask them if they are not willing to consecrate a small portion of their time, which we are sure could not be better employed, to this benevolent effort. There is perhaps no better sphere for the development of Christian character—no Christian employment which can engage your powers with higher advantage to yourselves. There are too many of our youth who are little better than loiterers about the vineyard of the Master, and who come, by means of religious inactivity, to be mere ciphers in the Redeemer’s kingdom; and sure we are, that you could not have a more rational and dignified, and honourable employment, than that of labouring to train up immortal minds for usefulness in this world, and for glory, honour, and immortality, in the world to come. Society has claims upon you,

and we call you to meet them. 'The Church of Christ has claims upon you, and we call you to meet them. God has claims upon you—and the unbaptized, and unblessed population of youth around you, have claims upon you, and we call you to meet and answer them; and while thus we give our personal efforts to render permanent and effective the influences of this institution, in the sphere around us, let us give our aid to widen its sphere of action, to extend its blessings over our whole land. If it is one of the foundations of the hopes of our country and of the Church of God—if it contains within itself, as we have supposed, the elements of a wondrous conservative power—if it wields the only spiritual influence, by which thousands and tens of thousands of the rising generation can be reached—we ought not to be satisfied till every community in our widely extended country, shall be blessed by it—till its influence is thrown over the whole of our youthful population—and we are unfaithful to ourselves, to the Church, and our country, if we will not aid in bringing about such a happy consummation.

My brethren, my illustration is finished, and my appeal is before you. I will not believe, until you practically declare it, that I have spoken to-day in vain. May God give us grace to act as we feel it to be our duty, and then may we look for his blessing to render that action effectual.

## LIBRARIES

# FOR SUNDAY-SCHOOLS, FAMILIES, ETC.

THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, No. 146 Chestnut street, Philadelphia, is prepared to furnish Libraries of the following descriptions, suited for Sunday-schools, public and private schools, families, manufactories, steamboats, &c.

No. I.—484 volumes, being a full set of the Society's publications, exclusive of Maps and Question Books, &c., each book numbered on the back, with 100 Catalogues of the same, without a case, \$90 00; including Maps of the Ancient World and Palestine, \$92 50; and the whole in a neat case, \$97 50.

No. II.—80 volumes, with 25 Catalogues, and a case, \$20 00; without a case, \$17 50.

No. III.—100 volumes, selected for Sunday-schools, \$25 00; without case, \$22 50.

No. IV.—CHILD'S LIBRARY. This consists of books of 32mo size, commencing with the third series and ending with the sixth, bound in 18 volumes, price \$2 25.

THE CHEAPEST LIBRARY EVER PUBLISHED FOR SUNDAY-SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.—100 select volumes, from 72 pages to 252 pages, 18mo, substantially bound, with muslin backs and marbled-paper sides: each volume regularly numbered and ready for use, with 25 catalogues of the same. Only \$10 00.

## RECOMMENDATIONS.

"The American Sunday-school Union has conferred an immense benefit upon the Christian public, repaying tenfold the contributions it has received, by its numerous publications. They have been valuable from the beginning; but we observe with pleasure that the books published by the Union during the last year are superior in some respects to its previous publications. Some of the most elevated minds in our country have recently been engaged in preparing works for the Union. Formerly its committee reprinted books from the London press: now those of the Union are reprinted in London. They are fitted for youth of all ages, classes, and characters; and as they inculcate evangelical truth, without any thing to offend political or denominational preferences, they may be introduced with propriety into every school and family in our country."—*Southern Religious Telegraph*.

*Views of Rev. James B. Taylor, of the Baptist Church, Richmond, Va.*—"The providence of God most loudly calls on the American public to give a more extensive circulation to these volumes. An engine of incalculable, yet salutary power is furnished, and it may at will be made to operate with continually increasing force. At a comparatively small expense, any neighbourhood, and without difficulty, the whole nation itself, may be supplied. Where are our men of property who wish to make a profitable use of their money in such an investment as shall benefit their posterity? Where are our patriots who desire the perpetuation of our venerated institutions? Our philanthropists, who seek the weal of their species? Let them look at these facilities for effecting extensive good to their country and the world. A single man may, through these volumes, be the instrument of making impressions on a thousand minds, which shall survive the records of time. While canals are opened, and railroads constructed, and every species of improvement is receiving most liberal encouragement, here is an enterprise which promises to improve the intellect and morals of the present age."

"The books prepared and issued by the American Sunday-school Union now amount to a very considerable number, and are admirably adapted to aid in the work of Sunday-school instruction, and to inform and interest the minds of children and youth. They furnish valuable and ample materials not only for the Sabbath-school library, but also for the family library designed for the young."—*New York Christian Intelligencer*.

*From the New York Baptist Register.*—"They have been prepared with care. Many of them are from the pens of the best writers in the country. It will be remembered, that at the meeting of the Baptist Convention at Syracuse last year, a resolution was unanimously adopted, recommending the Society to the confidence and support of Baptist churches."

"I have had the opportunity to examine all that they have published, from the alphabet up to the last beautiful Annual. This examination has been not slight. It must be remembered that they prepare books for the infant school, for the adult school, for the poor of large cities, in which ignorance and stupidity are gathered—for the vast West—where there are but few books, where there is little opportunity for the child to receive instruction, and therefore he needs something peculiarly attractive to catch his attention, and to stimulate his curiosity; for the West, where often several denominations from different parts of the world meet in the Sabbath-school as on common ground; for the family circle of the poor and of the rich, of the Quaker, the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian, the Baptist, the Methodist, &c.; and it will be seen that the work of preparing suitable religious books is an immense task. If they have not succeeded, it has not been for want of patience and perseverance. That they have made no mistakes, I do not assert; that they have done wonders, all must allow. The great problem is, whether any association can occupy this common ground of Christianity, and create such a Christian literature as will drive out all that is foolish, and yet be pointed enough to lead the soul to God. An examination of what they have done satisfies me that it can be done; and while I do not pretend that faults and imperfections may not be pointed out, yet I do say, that such an amount of safe, judicious, interesting Christian literature has not been presented to the world, by all the minds that have thought and written for the young, since the days of Luther, as has been presented by this society."—*Rev. John Todd, of Pittsfield, Mass.*

NEW AND BEAUTIFUL SERIES OF  
**CHILDREN'S TRACTS,**  
 OR FORTY-EIGHT ATTRACTIVE LITTLE BOOKS OF FOUR PAGES EACH,  
 WITH ONE OR TWO NEAT AND APPROPRIATE CUTS.  
 SIX BOOKS FOR A CENT!

*Published by the American Sunday-school Union, No. 146 Chestnut street, Philadelphia.*

CONTENTS OF SERIES No. I. 32mo. Price 4 cents.

|                                 |                              |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Make haste!                     | "Is it Worth Climbing for?"  | Serious Questions.           |
| The Old Box Maker.              | The End of the World.        | A Dreadful Thing to Die.     |
| Drowning Boy Saved.             | Tribute to Elizabeth Baker.  | An Address at the Grave of a |
| Franklin's Loan.                | Little Peter and his Library | Sunday-school Child.         |
| The Honest Boy.                 | Book.                        | Short Sayings.               |
| The Glass of Gin.               | To my Son on Leaving Home.   | The Kink in the Engine Rope. |
| Questions for Self-Examination. | Vanity.                      | Take Care of Your Ears.      |
| Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!         | The New Bonnet.              | Every Man in His Place.      |
| Three Sisters in one Grave.     | Work and Thrive.             |                              |

CONTENTS OF SERIES No. II. 32mo. Price 4 cents.

|                               |                                |                                   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| All the World on Stilts.      | What is it for a Child to Know | The Great Canal, or all have      |
| Signs.                        | the Scriptures?                | something to do.                  |
| Fourth Commandment Broken.    | Pull it up by the Root.        | The Home-made Boy.                |
| Little Jane.                  | The Fish which brought Money   | The Baby is with God              |
| A Deed of Love.               | to Christ.                     | The Wise Man.                     |
| The Lurking Enemy, or the     | Daily Mercies.                 | The Traveller's Prayer.           |
| Safest Place is the Cage.     | Death of Little Mary.          | Give us this day our daily Bread. |
| The Grocery ruined Him.       | The Fruitless Fig-tree, or New | The Flower-Beds.                  |
| Harvest close upon Seed-time. | Year's Thoughts.               | Parental Anxiety.                 |
| Going Apprentice.             | The Bible is True.             |                                   |

**NEW 18mo TRACTS.**

In addition to the 48 new 32mo tracts above, we have just published a new series of TWENTY-SEVEN 18mo tracts, designed for distribution among the larger boys and girls in Sunday-schools, &c., &c.

These are sold at 6½ cents the set, or four for one cent. Each tract is embellished with a cut.

TITLES OF THE SERIES No. I. 18mo. PRICE 6½ CENTS.

|                                |                       |                            |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Henry Dover.                   | The Bountiful Friend. | The Beginning and the End. |
| Our Creator.                   | Arithmetic of Life.   | The Sower.                 |
| Repentance.                    | Happy New Year.       | Faith.                     |
| Daily Blessings.               | Christ's Lambs.       | Santa Claus.               |
| "The Hook in the Nose."        | The Street School.    | Punctuality.               |
| African Child's Lament.        | Horrors of Idolatry.  | Thoughts on going to Bed.  |
| Early Piety.                   | The Stone Mason.      | "Oh! His Sabbaths."        |
| Death of a Sunday-school Girl. | "Where's the Harm?"   | Little Joseph.             |
| Dying Counsel of a Sunday-     | Little Edward.        | Little Becky.              |
| school Girl.                   |                       |                            |

SERIES No. II. 18mo. 27 tracts, 6½ cents.

|                              |                               |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The Sailor's Daughter.       | Cultivate a Small Field.      | A New Lesson.                 |
| Anne's Pupil.                | The Two Little Words.         | The Man of One Book.          |
| Willy Jones and Henry Green. | Little Poz.                   | Will you go?                  |
| The Little Choctaw Girl.     | I am the Happiest.            | Will you come?                |
| Go to the Fountain.          | No Policy in Cheating.        | Michael Blake and his Pocket  |
| A Brief Account of Mary Ann. | Bible Reasons for Reading the | Bible.                        |
| Kindness.                    | Bible.                        | Do you see clearly?           |
| "Luck," "Fortune," "Chance." | Temptation.                   | The Actress.                  |
| Pride.                       | Emma the Dunce.               | Homely Hints to Sunday-school |
| A Letter to Children.        | A Bad Habit.                  | Teachers.                     |

**Officers, Agents, and Depositories of the American Sunday-school Union.**

*President*—ALEXANDER HENRY, 146 Chestnut St., Philad.

*Treasurer*—HERMAN COPE, 146 Chestnut St., Philad.

FREDERICK W. PORTER, *Corresponding Secretary*, 146 Chestnut St., Philad.

FREDERICK A. PACKARD, *Editor of the Society's Publications*, 146 Chestnut St., Philad.

Home Depository—George S. Scofield, 146 Chestnut St., Philad.

Boston Depository—Wm. B. Tappan, No. 5 Cornhill,

New York Depository—J. C. Meeks, 152 Nassau Street.

Louisville Depository—Wm. H. Bulkley, Fourth Street.