

AN ADDRESS

AT THE

OPENING OF THE NEW EDIFICE

FOR THE

HOWARD SUNDAY SCHOOL

On Sabbath Evening, September 10th, 1848.

BY

WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Albany.

WITH AN

APPENDIX.

PHILADELPHIA.

1848.

APPENDIX.

Brief Historical Sketch of the Howard Sunday School, delivered by the Rev. J. H. JONES, D. D., at the opening of the New Hall, September 10th, 1848.

THE Howard Sunday School originated, it is believed, in an impulse of the Spirit of God, by which several members of the Sixth Presbyterian church were moved to do more for his glory. While they saw with pleasure, that Christians of different evangelical denominations were engaged in gathering into schools the neglected children in the outskirts or suburbs of the city, it appeared to them that there were very many equally destitute, on the lines of the city proper, who were almost wholly overlooked.

At a meeting of the Teachers of the school in the church, the subject was discussed; after which it was resolved to appoint a committee to seek a suitable location to open a school for this portion of children needing moral and religious instruction. A number of places having been examined, application was made for a room in the eastern part of Moyamensing, when Providence directed the

attention of the committee to the Howard Temperance Hall, on the south side of Shippen street below Fourth. This was in the autumn of 1843. The building was engaged at once, and the school was opened on the second Sabbath of September, with eight scholars in the morning, and an increase of thirty in the afternoon. Such, briefly, is the origin of the Howard Sunday School. But the progress and success which led to the erection of a new building, may be better told by the teachers themselves in a communication addressed to the "Friends of Christian Benevolence" when they first resolved on undertaking it, inasmuch as it proved to be singularly prophetic. From this paper it appears that after they had become fully organized, and the nature of their benevolent labours known and rightly appreciated in the neighbourhood, the number of children increased so rapidly, that before the first year had expired, the room we occupied, say they, was found too small to contain the children who belonged to the school. The roll book numbered, January, 1847, over six hundred names of children who have been connected with the school; some of these have left the city, others have removed to a distance from the school; some have died, and others attained an age enti-

tling them to be classed with adults. At this time there were connected with this school two hundred and fifty-two children and twenty-six teachers. During the past year there has been an average attendance of one hundred and forty-seven children and twenty-one teachers, whilst as many as two hundred and twenty-four children and twenty-four teachers have been present on an ordinary occasion. Compare this number of children and their teachers, with the size of the room at present occupied, (which is thirty feet by only fourteen feet wide,) and it will be seen that an imperative necessity exists for more ample accommodations.

This class of population are frequently changing their residence, and these children have come to us with little or no effort to obtain them, as our seats are generally full without looking after absentees, much less seeking new scholars. The room occupied at present, will not accommodate, probably, more than half of the children who really belong to the school; *and we have no doubt that a room in that vicinity, capable of seating three hundred children, could easily be filled every Sabbath; and a congregation of these people gathered to hear the gospel preached.*

Very few of these children receive due

religious instruction at home, but, on the contrary, many are exposed to influences that will sweep them to destruction.

Preaching has been regularly kept up on alternate Sabbath evenings, and it is intended, if we are successful in obtaining a new room, to have the gospel preached every Sabbath gratuitously.

The teachers, fearing that many of the children, as well as their parents, never go to a place of worship, visited the several families, and collected the following information:—That, out of one hundred and fifty-eight families who have children attending this school, very few attend a place of worship; and fifty-six of these families admitted that “they never go to church”—we were also encouraged by obtaining a promise from sixty families to attend a place of worship, should one be provided, where the gospel would be preached entirely free.

On commencing the work of collecting the requisite funds, the book for subscriptions was handed to the pastor, who expressed his views of the enterprise by commending them and their cause, with great cordiality and earnestness, to all who, by their prayers and gifts, would co-operate in an enterprise of evangelical benevolence.

The Rev. Dr. Wm. A. McDowell, Corres-

ponding Secretary of the Board of Missions, was pleased to confirm this commendation by adding:—"I am personally well acquainted with the leading men engaged in the Howard Sunday School enterprise. They are active members of the Sixth Presbyterian church, of which Dr. Jones is pastor. The enterprise is one of great necessity and vast importance. The men engaged in it may be relied on. In my opinion, it has strong claims on the sympathies and aid of Christians in this city, and should receive immediate and liberal support."

With these facts, the teachers of the Howard School appeal to their friends, and the friends of Christian benevolence, to assist them in this effort to obtain suitable accommodations for the increasing numbers of their school. Every ten dollars of the amount subscribed, to represent a share in the building, which shall entitle the holder to one vote for Trustees to be elected by them, to hold and control the building.

JOHN M. HARPER,

W. D. SNYDER,

In behalf of the Howard Sunday School.

After the making of this appeal, the committee issued forth to ascertain the result, notwithstanding their own personal and pri-

vate duties were numerous and pressing, yet such were their zeal and perseverance, they soon obtained \$3000—\$725 of which were given by friends of the cause not connected with the congregation, leaving \$2275 that were contributed by its members. It is due to this committee also to record that such was the prudence and kindness with which they proceeded, that they accomplished their difficult work without offending by their forwardness, or leaving on the mind of any person applied to, an unpleasant impression. From the report of the Building Committee it will be seen that the whole cost of the house and furniture, was \$4779.55, upon which \$3037.64 had been paid at the time of opening the building, leaving a balance against the house of \$1741.91, and after deducting the contents of boxes left at several houses, for the collection of mites, amounting to \$150 and \$200 subscribed, which was not then paid, the actual debt on entering the house was only \$1391.91.

On the 2d Sabbath of September the school was opened in the spacious and delightful room in their new building. From the commencement of the school in September, 1843, to the present date, September, 1848, the exercises have not been omitted a single Sabbath. The teachers

have discharged their duty with diligence and fidelity, which has been attended with encouraging tokens of Divine approbation. There has been a palpable improvement not only in the appearance and deportment of the children, but in the morals of many, and some, it is believed, have passed from death unto life.

May the Great Head of the Church smile on this humble endeavour to be co-workers in carrying out the purposes of his redemption; and may the result be anthems of rejoicing in heaven over very many brought to repentance.

REPORT OF THE BUILDING COMMITTEE.

At a meeting held on the 5th of February, 1848, the undersigned were appointed a committee to superintend the erection of a building for the use of the Howard Sunday School, and now beg leave to submit to the contributors an account of their stewardship, and to announce the completion of the beautiful structure on Shippen street between Third and Fourth streets, and its readiness for the occupancy of the school, on Sunday, 10th inst. It is with unfeigned pleasure and gratitude to God that we are enabled to report that thus far we have been blessed in our attempt to benefit our fellow-creatures, and to place in your hands a structure, convenient for the purposes intended, and from which, we trust, will be disseminated those important truths which will not only ameliorate the temporal condition of multitudes, but lead them by a way, which now they know not, to eternal and unfading joys beyond the troublous scenes of time.

After entering upon the duties assigned them, your Committee issued proposals for the erection of a building in accordance with a resolution adopted by you, at the meeting above mentioned, designating a house three stories high, and submitted specifications for that purpose, for such a building, thirty-six feet front by sixty feet deep,* to be built in

* The lot is 40 feet front by 110 feet deep.

the most substantial manner, of the best materials and workmanship. Several plans and estimates were received, and after much deliberation your Committee concluded to accept that offered by Messrs. Stuart and Phillips, as being the least expensive, and combining all the advantages of the others; accordingly they entered into contract with those gentlemen, for the erection of a building in accordance with a plan submitted by them, for the sum of \$4,270, to be completed on the 1st of August.

During the erection of the building, some slight alterations were made, not included in the contract, making an additional expense of \$126.82 to Stuart and Phillips, increasing the amount of their contract to \$4,396.82

Other work, not in their estimate, including furnishing the room with settees, lamps, &c., amounting to 382,73

Making the total cost of the building,* \$4,779.55

Messrs. Stuart and Phillips have received \$2,875.00

Donations in work and material, 143.30

Cash paid for insurance, water rent, and lamps, 19.34

Making total amount paid, \$3,037.64

Leaving balance unpaid and due upon the building, \$1,741.91

* Subject to a ground rent of \$200 per annum.

The subscriptions not yet collected amount to \$240, which will leave a debt of \$1,500 to be provided for, during the coming year, and your Committee trust that all who feel an interest in the success of the enterprise in which we have embarked, will use every exertion in their power to accomplish this desirable object, so that we shall be enabled to meet our obligations to the builders; to whom it is due to say, that nothing has been left undone upon their part, to finish the building in a satisfactory manner.

Your Committee, in completing their labours and placing the building in your possession, beg leave, in conclusion to remark, that they believe the material used in its construction is of good quality, and the workmanship such as will meet your approval; care has been taken not to incur unnecessary expense, and at the same time to do all in a substantial manner. The upper rooms extending over the whole building, are well adapted for school rooms,* being large, well-lighted, and ventilated, and, upon the whole, the building is an ornament, and we hope will prove a blessing, to the district in which it is located.

All which is respectfully submitted.

HENRY LELAR,	}	Building Committee.
JOHN M. HARPER,		
WILLIAM H. HART,		
L. C. EDMUNDS,		
WM. D. SNYDER,		

Philadelphia, September 7th, 1848.

* The upper rooms have since been leased to the Controllers of the Public Schools.

At a meeting of the contributors to the Howard Sunday School Building, held September 7th, 1848, the following gentlemen were elected Trustees.

Henry Lelar,
 John M. Harper,
 William D. Snyder,
 William H. Hart,
 Luther C. Edmunds
 William S. Boyd,
 William A. Solomon.

TEACHERS OF THE HOWARD SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Henry Lelar, *Superintendent*,
 John M. Harper, *Assistant do.*
 William D. Snyder, *Librarian and Secretary*,
 Henry Harper, *Assistant Librarian*,
 William Stitt, *do. do.*
 William A. Solomon, William S. Boyd,
 Luther C. Edmunds, James S. Chambers,
 T. Esmond Harper, James Steel,
 Joseph Agnew,
 Mrs. Elizabeth Gennenback, Miss Sally Harper,
 Mrs. Olivia Bancroft, Miss Lydia Stevenson,
 Miss Hester Stevenson, Miss Catherine Stevenson,
 Miss Jane Steel, Miss Susan Miller,
 Miss Mary Ann Davis, Miss Sarah Lindsay,
 Miss Jane Matthews, Miss Susan M. Harper,
 Miss Sarah Bancroft, Miss Triphene Matthews,
 Miss Helen Hamm.