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DR. SPRAGUE'S  
ADDRESS.



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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.

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## INTRODUCTION.

ON the second Sabbath of September, 1848, the day of the fifth anniversary of the Howard Sunday School, a new building was entered for the first time, with appropriate religious exercises. After reading a portion of the Scriptures by the Rev. Dr. Jones, pastor of the Sixth Presbyterian church, prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Cuyler. A succinct statement of the origin, progress, and completion of the building was then made, which forms a part of the contents of this little manual.

The Rev. Dr. Sprague from Albany, who was present by invitation, deliver-

ed an address, which he kindly permitted the Trustees to publish, in answer to their unanimous request. Hymns appropriate to the occasion were sung; and the exercises closed with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Webb, of the Baptist Church. It has been thought that a brief record of this humble labour of love, would furnish a memorial that would not only be pleasant in retrospect to the labourers themselves, but prove the occasion of inciting others to emulate or excel them.

## ADDRESS.

I AM always reluctant to rise before any audience with an apology; especially on an occasion that involves nothing beyond the legitimate exercise of my office, as a Christian minister. But, I should be unjust to myself, if I were not distinctly to state that I appear before *you* this evening, in circumstances that occasion me real, not to say depressing, embarrassment. The occasion that has assembled you, has seemed to me of too domestic a character for the voice of a stranger to intermeddle with its exercises. You are here to commemorate God's goodness, and supplicate his blessing, and encourage your own hearts, in reference to an object that is peculiarly your own; and I cannot resist the impression that your thoughts had

better receive their direction, at least from some one whose ministrations are familiar to you. But I have yielded my convictions and scruples to the earnest request of your beloved pastor; and I have done it the rather, because between him and myself there exists an affectionate intimacy that dates back to the playful scenes of our early boyhood. I acknowledge then, that I have consented to perform this service, not so much from judgment, as from affection: but since I have undertaken it, you must allow me to divest myself, so far as I can, of the feelings of a stranger, and take advantage of all the hallowed associations that cluster about the occasion. I know not how I can better subserve the interests of your enterprise than by referring briefly to some of those considerations that illustrate its importance; considerations fitted at once to quicken your sense of obligation to the Divine goodness, and to assist your efforts in carrying out the great purpose for which the enterprise has been undertaken.



I. Let me say, then, in the first place, that the most general, and, at the same time, the most simple view of the work in which you have engaged, is that it is *the furnishing of a new place for religious instruction*; it is the planting of a new battery to aid in the conflict with the powers of darkness; it is the kindling of a new fire, to act with consuming energy on the corruptions and lusts of men, and to pour upon the darkened and bewildered spirit the light of a new and spiritual life.

The value of the gospel, and the consequent importance of a new establishment like this in aid of its extension, is to be estimated chiefly by this single fact—that *the gospel is the power of God unto salvation*. It does indeed incidentally accomplish other things. It throws a kindly influence upon man in all his social relations. It breathes through all the walks of society, the spirit of justice and courtesy and philanthropy. It imparts dignity and stability to human government; and is a faithful expounder of the reciprocal claims not only of individuals

but of nations. In short, it is the nurse of humanity, of civilization, of patriotism, of true honour, of lofty purposes and actions, of every thing that brightens the path of our earthly existence; but all this becomes insignificant, when brought into comparison with that greater end which it accomplishes, the salvation of the soul. And here we labour under a mighty disadvantage from our inability adequately to describe, or even to conceive, how much, and what the soul's salvation includes. Look within thee, O man, and take a lesson of the value of the soul, from those mysterious workings in thine own bosom. That power that thinks and feels, that conceives great enterprises and devises means for executing them, that now loses itself in abstract and profound contemplation and now takes to itself wings and flies off into infinite space—that power is thy soul. And now if thou wilt take further counsel of thine inward exercises, and at the same time open thine ear to the teachings of God's word, thou shalt know that that soul is

immortal: that it is diseased; that it is condemned; that it is in imminent danger of suffering under an eternal curse. And thou shalt know too, that salvation is the healing of that inveterate malady; the reversal of that condemnatory sentence; the lifting from the soul of that eternal curse, and the final exaltation of the soul to a state of perfect purity and boundless joy. I thank God for all that Christianity does for this perishing body, for this vapour of a life; but I dare not speak of the body in comparison with the soul—of time, in comparison with eternity. I would sink all the achievements of our holy religion, in the one all-absorbing consideration, that it educates the soul for immortality; that it is God's own agency for changing darkness into light, pollution into holiness, impotence into energy; especially that it breaks the cord by which justice had bound the sinner to an illimitable course of suffering. Here, I repeat, here is the ultimate triumph of Christianity: it accomplishes the soul's salvation—a salva-

tion that has its beginning on earth, its consummation in heaven.

And *how* does Christianity accomplish this?

I answer, in the first place, the truths which she reveals are all accommodated to the constitution and circumstances of man, especially as a fallen creature. I feel within me the operations of a sinful nature, the stirrings of a guilty conscience; and when I open the Bible, I find there a doctrine to which my experience answers as the impression to the seal; and in connexion with this doctrine I find such an exposition of God's law as is fitted to deepen my sense both of sin and of danger. My troubled spirit anxiously inquires whether it is possible to find relief from these inward struggles and apprehensions. And here again the Bible answers, yes; for it proclaims a free forgiveness, and a free sanctification, and finally a free and complete salvation, to all who exercise repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The style

of its invitations, its offers, its promises, is, "Come, for all things are now ready." "Whosoever will, let him come." "Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out." Not only is the redemption that is revealed of infinite value, but it is applicable to the wants of all, who are sensible of their wants, and are willing to appropriate it. Every truth which the gospel teaches is of perfectly holy tendency, and is designed and adapted to leave a holy impress upon man's spirit; in other words, it has its appropriate office to perform in the work of his salvation. And does the truth then, unaccompanied by any higher influence than its own, change man's heart, change his relations to God, change his prospects for eternity. That were indeed to be expected, if man's heart were not like the nether mill stone: but what Christ said to the Jews, is equally applicable to sinners of every age, and every character—"Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." And hereby is created the necessity for the exertion of divine power

in giving to the truth a renovating effect. The gospel is emphatically a ministration of the Spirit; and in every case in which it accomplishes its legitimate end, the Spirit works in it and by it. It is indeed powerless, unless it be accompanied by this higher influence; but where it is faithfully, earnestly, perseveringly preached, we may consider, as a general rule, that God's word is pledged that that influence shall not be withheld.

What I have here asserted, is abundantly verified by the records of Christianity in every age. No doubt it is quite possible that a man should keep a Bible in his house, and yet, continuing in profound ignorance of its contents, should remain a stranger to its quickening power; nor can any better result be anticipated, if he sits with closed ears and an utterly listless spirit under the preaching of the gospel. No doubt too, it is possible for a minister to spread out the Bible before him, and yet preach in such a manner that there may be no accompanying demonstration of a divine energy. And I will not say

that cases may not exist, in which, for a long time, no renovating influence may accompany even the faithful preaching of the word, so as to induce the lamentation on the part of Christ's ambassador—"Who hath believed our report?" But I do say with confidence that wherever the gospel is preached in simplicity and purity, there we have every reason to expect, in view of the church's past history, that the Spirit's effectual work will be going on, and, as a consequence, that there will be new accessions to the number of Christ's disciples. Look abroad to our missionary stations, no matter whether in our own or in other lands; and mark how the gospel has gradually made an impression on the surrounding darkness; how one after another has yielded to its subduing and regenerating influence, until perhaps the face of society is completely changed, and Christ has now a fair representation of followers, where, a little while since, there was not a solitary voice to speak his praise or to own his name. If

we can dispute evidence of the power of the gospel like this, then is there no evidence that is worthy of acceptation; then is there no truth demonstrable by human experience.

And now I ask you to estimate the importance of your enterprise, considered simply as giving enlargement to the means of grace, as extending the knowledge and influence of that gospel by which alone man can be saved. If it were merely the interests of this poor brief life, that were here contemplated, we might afford to look upon what you have been doing with comparative indifference. But when it is borne in mind that the instrumentality here put in operation, takes hold of the infinitely higher interests of the never dying life—that it aims at nothing less, and accomplishes nothing less, than the regeneration and exaltation and glorification of man's whole nature; when it is remembered that though mortal voices alone will be heard here, yet that through the breathings of the human spirit, God's arm will be revealed, and his name magni-



fied, and his glory made to shine more brightly, even upon the eye of seraphs—I say, when all this is considered, *who* will venture to set a limit to the importance of your enterprise? Who will think of applying to it any other measure than that by which we estimate the soul itself, and God's glory manifested in its redemption? Be it so that the men of the world may regard your project as of no moment, and may even turn towards this edifice an eye of scorn, when they are told for what purpose it has been erected; yet be assured that all who discern the things that are spiritual, will pronounce upon your effort a far different judgment. Your fellow Christians will bless God for what you have done, and ask him to bless you in what you are yet to do. The angels who make God's church their care, will be attracted hither by the triumphs of his grace which will here be manifested. And as one soul after another, renewed through your humble instrumentality, shall put off the earthly tabernacle and appear among the

ransomed in Heaven, each of them will be hailed not only as a monument of God's redeeming mercy, but as a witness to the importance of your benevolent undertaking.

What I have said thus far, applies to the house that you have opened in common with every other place in which the gospel is dispensed: but there are other considerations, equally illustrative of the importance of your enterprise, of a more particular character. I remark then,

II. In the second place, that you have here opened a place for the preaching of the gospel *in a large city*. I here use the word *preaching* in its more extended sense, as including any or all the public modes of Christian instruction.

The characters of men for good or evil, depend, in a great measure, on the external influences to which they are subjected. While every man has an individual and ultimate responsibility in respect to his own actions, there is an important sense in which men make each other what they are; and

this forming work is no doubt accomplished chiefly by the insensible influence of example. Whatever, therefore, serves to modify our social relations, or to multiply or diminish the points of contact with our fellow men, or to give one complexion or another to our own immediate sphere of action, is to be considered as constituting part of that providential instrumentality by which our characters are formed.

Now a moment's reflection will be sufficient to satisfy you that in a large city, like this, there must be influences at work to produce a peculiar intensity of evil, as well as to furnish some peculiar facilities for doing good; and both these considerations stamp your enterprise with signal importance.

Need I say that here are many temptations to evil that are unknown in the retirement of a country village. Here human ingenuity has tasked its powers to the utmost to do the work of the devil. The fine arts that *should* always minister to the cause of

virtue, are put in requisition to strew the road to death with flowers, by giving to vice the highest possible attraction. Here men are crowded together; and while the bad have every opportunity to co-operate for evil, strengthening each others' hands, and keeping up each others' courage, and furthering each others' devices, they have also more easy access to the uncorrupt and unsuspecting, and often accomplish a fatal work, before their malignant design has been discovered. As the fetid breath of a great number suffering under a loathsome malady, and crowded into the same apartment, corrupts the whole atmosphere, so the moral atmosphere of a great city, especially of certain portions of it, becomes absolutely pestilential, from the intense and multitudinous breathings of the spirit of depravity. In accordance with this representation we find that great cities have always been proverbial for great crimes. Here the spirit of the mob finds *its* element; men can assemble in frightful masses, and perform terrible

acts, almost before the hand of civil power can overtake them. And here too the tale of individual deeds of profligacy most frequently shocks the public ear; and the whole community stands aghast at the fiend-like exploits of some incarnate demon. Hence the parent sends his son from the country to the city, with trembling anxiety; and endeavours to surround him with all restraining, and healthful influences; and fears to inquire concerning him, lest he should hear that he is in league with the tempter; and alas! in too many instances, has his heart broken by having the conviction forced upon him that his son is ruined. Yes, I repeat, in every large city there are temptations to crime, facilities for crime, examples of crime, which ordinarily we look for nowhere else.

Now the only effectual remedy for this great amount of evil, the only means that can be relied on for even keeping it in check, is the gospel—especially the gospel addressed to the young; such a ministration

substantially as is brought into existence by your own enterprise. The more of evangelical and spiritual influence that there is put in operation among you, the less occasion will there be to fear from the multiform evil agencies that you have to contend with. And without a large and constantly increasing measure of such influence, these agencies will become more and more terrific, with your rapidly augmenting population. You have a right to rejoice then, and the good everywhere will rejoice with you—that you have set up this new standard in honour of Christ and his cause; for it contemplates a fresh onset upon the empire of darkness at a point where constant vigilance and unwearied effort are most indispensable.

But if there is that, in a large city, that specially requires that the influence of the gospel should be widely extended and actively exerted, the gospel has there also some special advantages for performing its appropriate work, and its friends have special encouragements for vigorous co-operation.

Especially has it the advantage of finding a multitude of subjects to act upon; and by suitable effort on the part of the church and the ministry, great numbers may easily be brought under its awakening and quickening power. And as the principle of sympathy tends to evil in the unhallowed associations that here exist, working as a ministration of ruin and death, so the same principle may operate, does operate, in similar circumstances for good; rendering men instrumental of bringing each other to reflection, to conviction, to repentance. And then Christians find some peculiar facilities for doing *their* appropriate work: the individuals whom they gather into the house of God, to hear his word and to be instructed in the Sabbath school, they can easily follow to their places of abode; and by a few minutes walk can perhaps overtake a number who will welcome them as the private expounders of God's truth. And they are thrown immediately together; they find it convenient to meet each other often, for purposes of mutual

encouragement and edification; and thus their own good affections are quickened and improved by the common effort in which they unite for the good of their fellow creatures. I do not say that these advantages are absolutely peculiar to a city, but only that they are peculiar in degree—in such a degree certainly as to give to the opening of such a place as this, a signally propitious bearing on the great cause of truth and righteousness.

III. A third consideration which ought to come into our estimate of the importance of this enterprise, is, that it makes provision not only for preaching the gospel, not only for preaching it in a city, but especially for preaching it to *the poor*.

True, indeed, the gospel has the same great end to accomplish in respect to the rich and the poor—viz: their eternal salvation; and both are to be saved in the same way, and through the same instrumentality. Nevertheless, there are some things that seem to give to the gospel and its ministry



a peculiar adaptedness to the circumstances and wants of the poor.

They have *sufferings* of which those in more favoured circumstances have but a slight conception. Many of their troubles indeed they have in common with others; but even *those* troubles assume a more aggravated form from their association with poverty. You, as well as they, are subject to the loss of health and to the pains of disease; but you can command all the alleviations and appliances that a competence, if not an abundance, can furnish, whereas they languish out months of pain, without perhaps a physician, or an efficient helper crossing their threshold. You and they both share in common the sorrows of bereavements; but it is your privilege to see your friend go down to the grave amidst a profusion of earthly comforts, and perhaps amidst all the joys which the prospect of a better world can inspire, while they watch the waning of life in those who are most

dear to them, amidst sufferings of body which even a moderate competence might have alleviated—possibly, for want of the means of grace, amidst agonies of mind, tortures of guilt, that the Comforter might have charmed into peace. Indeed there is scarcely any affliction to which men are subject, which poverty does not render more severe. And hence there is a special reason why the poor should be supplied with the only effectual antidote to suffering—the gospel. If Providence has made their dwellings darker than yours, let them have in common with your own, at least the glorious light of the gospel to illumine them. If they must suffer want in respect to the life that now is, let them not want the consoling hope of a glorious life to come. If they have no other treasure, yet if they have the Bible in their dwellings, and its truths in their minds, and its consolations in their hearts, they can well enough afford to leave the rest with God. Give to the poor the gospel, and you take from

poverty its sting; for what is poverty to those who possess the true riches, who are heirs to an incorruptible inheritance.

But it cannot be disguised that poverty has its *vices* and *crimes*, as well as its sufferings; and not unfrequently the former sustain to the latter the relation of an effect to its cause. The poor as well as the rich have temptations growing out of their peculiar circumstances; temptations to envy, to dishonesty, and even to vices of a yet grosser kind. Here also, there is the absence of most of those restraints which keep in check many of the evil passions, in connexion with a more cultivated state of society; and accordingly we usually look among this class for an exhibition of the coarser and more loathsome vices. And when it is remembered that these evil courses are fraught with ruin not for the present life only, but for eternity, that the most degraded being that we meet has a soul that must be renewed, or run an interminable career of wo—can we, in view of all this, form an excessive

estimate of the importance of letting the gospel have free course among the ranks of the poor; of the importance of every effort that is put forth for the realizing of this object.

I must not omit to say in this connexion that the great mass of those whom this enterprise specially contemplates, but for some such instrumentality as is here provided, would not hear the gospel at all. You have already gathered many here who were unused to the voice of prayer and praise, and to the proclamation of divine truth; and perhaps some of this class now delight in the worship and service of God. And so it will be hereafter. This will be a precious gathering place for many who might otherwise find some gathering place dark as the shadow of death; and here, while man speaks to the outward ear, God will speak to the conscience and the heart; and the clean heart and the right spirit will come in place of darkness and pollution; and they who have been the subjects of the regenerating process will bring others with them to obtain the

like blessing; and ere long you will find that a purifying influence that hath emanated from this place, is circulating even in the very haunts of moral death. Surely it is a thought that may well animate you in your darkest hours, that most of those who listen to the gospel here, would not have heard it elsewhere; that those who here find it the power of God, and go up to heaven at last, because of its effectual working in their hearts, might, but for what you have done, have lived and died, and passed their whole eternity, with the curse of reprobation burning upon their spirits.

IV. The last consideration by which I would illustrate the importance of this work in which you have engaged is, that the ministration which is here provided, is emphatically *a ministration of charity*. I refer here to its influence upon those who have originated, and are hereafter to sustain it, rather than those upon whose moral and spiritual interests it is designed more directly to operate.

If I have a right understanding of the case, this whole enterprise has been baptized with the spirit of Christian Charity; I might almost say, that it is Charity herself descending from her native skies, to save the poor and perishing. It was Charity that first devised the plan of such an establishment. Charity surveyed the obstacles in the way of its accomplishment, and resolved that they could be overcome. Charity has gathered here an efficient Sabbath school, and has dispensed, from time to time, the word of life, and has already witnessed results from its labours and sacrifices, over which we doubt not angels have rejoiced. Charity has erected this goodly and commodious edifice; and she will hereafter dwell here as the presiding genius of the place; and the Saviour will have special complacency in what is done here, because the moving spirit will be the same with that which led him to lay down his life. And think you that Charity blesses the recipient alone; that she has no blessing for him whose bosom she inhabits, and whose

hand she opens? I tell you, nay: hers is essentially a ministration of good *in* the heart, *to* the heart, in which she dwells. You who first started this noble project which is here so happily consummated; you through whose communings and prayers and labours and sacrifices it has advanced from step to step to its present state; you who have not scrupled to put yourselves in communion not only with abject poverty and wretchedness, but with revolting and loathsome vice, for the sake of bringing their subjects into communion with the Saviour and the Sanctifier;—to you, to all of you who have been helpers in this blessed work, I appeal—have you not found a rich reward in all that you have been doing as you have passed along; in the silent, approving testimony of your own spirit; in the special manifestation towards you of God's loving kindness; in the success with which your efforts have been crowned, and the gratitude with which, in some instances at least, they have been received? And let me say, this is

but a foretaste of your full reward. You will not abandon this work of your own hands, but will carry it forward with increasing vigour and success. But, in the mean time, you may look for a large recompense in the spiritual influence that you will contribute to diffuse around you; in the renovated aspect of this portion of your city; in the jubilees that will be kept in many of these humble dwellings, because their inmates have turned to the Lord; and not improbably in the joyful dying scenes of some, who will connect with this place and with your instrumentality, the strength which they have to encounter the monster, the confidence they have of entering into rest. But for the better part of your reward, need I say, you must wait till this mortal has put on immortality. It will come in the exceeding and eternal weight of glory; in your being permitted to recognize among the monuments of redeeming love, the monuments of your active charity; and to hear from the lips of the Judge, "Inasmuch as ye



did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me." In this view, I say again, this is a noble enterprise of yours. The end of the commandment is love; the substance of the gospel is love; God himself is love; and love, pure love—I repeat, is the very spirit of your undertaking.

It is to me a deeply interesting feature of your work, that it proposes to associate the ministry of the gospel and the Sabbath school in a combined assault upon the powers of evil. Each will be strengthened by the other's influence; each will minister to the other's efficiency; and by this goodly co-operation, we may confidently expect that glorious results will be produced. It is at just such a point as this, that the Sabbath school performs its most honoured and most effectual work. You who come hither from Sabbath to Sabbath in the capacity of teachers—may God sustain and encourage you. You cannot expect in such a place as this to hear the murmur of human applause;

but I doubt not that angels will be here to whisper their approval; certainly the Lord of angels will be here, looking complacently on all that you do for his poor; and the day will come when it will seem more honourable to have been engaged in the discharge of this humble office, than to have swayed a sceptre or worn a crown.

I cannot but think that the church whose members have been honoured to take the lead in this enterprise, ought to consider herself as eminently favoured among the sister churches of your favoured city; for it is no small thing to have caused the word of life to be stately sounded forth through such a district as this. And may I not remind you, that you have many other things to think of in estimating your obligations to God, as a congregation. You are at peace one with another, else it may well be doubted whether this labour of love would ever have been undertaken. You have as much of external prosperity, perhaps, as any church ought to desire. You have a pastor

under whose ministrations God has blessed you abundantly. You have a former venerable pastor residing in the midst of you, by whose wisdom you may still profit, and whose occasional ministrations you are still privileged to enjoy.\* And I must not omit to say that, until recently, you have been permitted to reckon in your number, a man who had stood for years as a very patriarch in the Church; who had lived and acted through heart moving scenes with the men of another age; whose name can never perish, while the history of our Church, or even the history of our country survives.† He came, disburdened of public cares, and oppressed with bodily infirmities, to pass among you the days of his old age. I suppose you sometimes heard his voice in the pulpit; I know you frequently heard it at the communion table; and I doubt not you felt it a peculiar privilege to mingle with such a spirit on such occasions; and especially to receive the consecrated memorials from his

\* Rev. Dr. Neill.

† Rev. Dr. Green.

trembling hands. You marked the gradual progress of his decay; some of you at least, knew how strong grace was amidst the greatest weakness of nature; and how the spirit of prayer and praise survived, I might almost say, his recognition of his dearest friends. And finally, he fell asleep among you; and though his grave is not here, as they carried him away to sleep with an illustrious fraternity to which he belonged, yet here were the last actings of his spirit—the stretching of its wings for its celestial home. Had he survived till this day, with what deep interest would he have regarded this occasion! Who can tell but that he regards it with a yet deeper interest now; and that if we knew all, we should know that his glorified spirit is among a cloud of rejoicing witnesses that are hovering unseen in the midst of us?

My friends, I have insensibly detained you too long; but my apology is, that you have yourselves supplied me with a theme upon which I could not well say less. I

commend you and your philanthropic enterprise to God. May he graciously condescend to fill this house with his glorious, enlightening, sanctifying presence. Let it be sacred to the cause of Truth, the cause of Righteousness, the cause of Charity. May its history, as it shall finally be displayed in God's eternal book, be the history of the regeneration and sanctification of a multitude of souls, who shall pass their whole eternity with you, in the vision and service of our exalted Lord.

## 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

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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

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Making total amount paid, \$3,037.64

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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.

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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.