

**THE CHALLENGE OF
THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL**

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The challenge of the Sunday school by Charles P. Wiles

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CHARLES P. WILES

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By

CHARLES P. WILES, D.D.

Editor of The Lutheran Publication Society

PHILADELPHIA, PA.
THE LUTHERAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY



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FOREWORD

What the public school system is to the state the Sunday school is to the Church. The educational function of the Church is carried on largely through the Sunday school.

When Christ gave the command to His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, He added, "Teaching them." There can be no true preaching without an element of teaching, but all teaching cannot be included in preaching. Teaching carries with it two distinct ideas: the direct and personal character of the message, and the catechetical form of instruction. The Church has both her preaching and her teaching service. The Sunday school is the Church teaching. The justification of the Sunday school can be traced easily to the command and example of our Saviour.

Within the past ten years a voluminous amount of literature on the history and work of the Sunday school has been published. The result is that not only has every aspect of the activity of this institution been fully covered, but there has also been given it a new estimate and value. The Sunday school looms larger than ever before. Its appeal is

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stronger. Its place and function in the onward march of the Christian Church are everywhere recognized. It is challenging the services of our most talented men and women.

It would be presumptuous to claim that anything new will be found in these pages. The author has attempted to indicate the dignity and place of the Sunday school, and to re-emphasize some of its fundamental principles and aims. Methods are not discredited, only they do not find large place here. They are secondary, and we have endeavored to put first things first.

One cannot engage in Sunday school work for any length of time without being impressed with the need of calling its leaders back to first principles. No amount of material or intellectual equipment can take the place of ample spiritual furnishing. The Holy Spirit can make some use of an unworthy instrument; He can make more use of a weak instrument; but He can make most use of a well-trained and fully consecrated instrument. The motive, purpose and aim of what we do must be kept steadily before us.

At the request of the editor of *Lutheran Church Work*, the author prepared a series of articles on the Sunday school for that peri-

odical. About the same time the Lutheran Board of Publication requested that he deliver several addresses on the same subject before our five theological seminaries in this country.

These articles and addresses form the basis of this small volume, which amplifies and gives to them a more popular as well as a more permanent character. It is intended for those who are interested in the Sunday school, and for those who are not. It touches upon problems that rise above anything that is of purely local interest. It shows that he who goes into the Sunday school steps up, not down. May it serve, in some measure, to help us see and seize the opportunity the school of the Church offers us, and inspire us to do the best of which we are capable.

THE AUTHOR.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., 1916

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