

**ADDRESS ON THE POWER
AND
VALUE OF THE SUNDAY
SCHOOL SYSTEM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649012916

Address on the Power and Value of the Sunday School System by Thomas Smith Grimké

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THOMAS SMITH GRIMKÉ

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AND
VALUE OF THE SUNDAY
SCHOOL SYSTEM**

The Gift of Prof. Scudder
New York, N.Y. 1833

ADDRESS

ON

THE POWER AND VALUE

OF

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SYSTEM

IN

EVANGELIZING HEATHEN

AND

RE-CONSTRUCTING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITYS,

BY

**AN IMPROVEMENT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS, THE EDUCA-
TION AND LITERATURE, AND THE SOCIAL, CIVIL AND
POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF EVRY PEOPLE:**

AND

ON THE SOUTHERN ENTERPRISE

OF

The American Sunday School Union.

**DELIVERED IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH, CITY OF CHARLESTON, ON MONDAY
EVENING, MARCH 17, 1834,**

BY THOMAS SMITH GRIMKÉ.

PHILADELPHIA:

1834.

PROCEEDINGS.

ON Monday evening, March 17, 1834, a meeting of the friends of Sunday Schools was held in the German Lutheran Church in the City of Charleston : THOMAS NAPIER, Esq. presided, and MESSRS. A. C. SMITH and JOHN DICKSON were Secretaries. The meeting was addressed by Rev. J. E. Welch of the Baptist church, and Rev. Simpson Shepherd of the Methodist church, both agents of the American Sunday School Union. In the course of the evening the following resolutions were offered by THOMAS S. GRIMKE, and sustained by the Address which follows them:

1. **RESOLVED**, That the Sunday School System, in its leading features of benevolence, practical wisdom and piety, is eminently conformable to the genius and spirit of the Gospel.

2. **RESOLVED**, That Christianity is the best foundation of Society and Government—that the Sunday School System is one of the most interesting and efficient instruments for the advancement of religion; and that Sabbath Schools do therefore deserve the patronage of the sagacious statesman and the good citizen, as of incalculable value, in the preservation of our civil and political institutions.

3. **RESOLVED**, That the Sunday School System is an inexhaustible fountain of youthful piety, and Christian knowledge, and must exercise a powerful and wide spread influence, in purifying, enlightening, and strengthening the Christian Church.

4. **RESOLVED**, That the value of the Sunday School System is still further enhanced, when we reflect on the extended and durable influence which it is fitted to exert in the Christianization of the world.

5. **RESOLVED**, That the Sunday School is but a part of the vast system of enlightened Christian benevolence, which is scattering every where the Bible, Tract, Missionary and Sunday School; and that the Sabbath School, as the true basis of all the rest, is entitled to our prayers, approbation, and patronage.

6. **RESOLVED**, That the American Sunday School Union is an honor to our age and nation; one of the shining lights which adorn the Christian Church in our day; and that it merits our sanction of its objects; our gratitude for its services; and our liberal support in the accomplishment of its wise and benevolent plans.

7. **RESOLVED**, That we have beheld with deep interest the efforts of the American Sunday School Union, for the establishment of Sunday Schools in the Valley of the Mississippi; but we naturally regard the South as equally entitled to a share of its enterprising benevolence: and we therefore welcome, as Christian friends and benefactors, the Agents it has sent forth to labor for our benefit, through all the Southern portion of the Union.

8. **RESOLVED**, As a cordial acknowledgment of the value of their object, and in order to give a greater efficiency to this truly noble and benevolent enterprise, that subscriptions or donations be now applied for to this assembly: and that whatever sum may be raised, be expended in the purchase of books, for the Depository of the South Carolina Sunday School Union in this city, to be furnished at cost and charges, to such schools, as may be established in the progress of the Southern enterprise of the American Sunday School Union.

9. **RESOLVED**, That ten gentlemen be now appointed by the Chairman of this meeting, to carry into execution the preceding resolve.

The resolutions were seconded by the Rev. Dr. McDowell, and, after some pertinent remarks from him, were adopted.

ADDRESS.

THERE was an island, in a remote corner of the ocean. Amid the solitude of that boundless sea, it stood a monument of the grandeur and beauty, which the Creator has scatterd through every region of the earth. There was the Alpine range, sublime in its elevation, radiant with its snow-crownd summits, and magnificent in the forest robe, which clothd the mountain slopes. There was the spacious plain, whose amphitheatre of hills encircled and protected all its luxuriance and variety. There was the noble river, which rushd from the mountain fastness, thunderd down the waterfall, swept in majesty through wood and vale, and heavd back the ocean with its flood. There was the savage glen, the wild scenery of cataract and cliff and shatterd rock; the romantic vally, and the beautiful grove. And there the ocean rolld around this emerald isle with all the melody and light of its summer waves, with the gloom and the dirge of the winter storm.

That isle was inhabited by a race, at once artless in manners, kind in their affections, and obedient to the dictates of natural justice. Ignorant of all but what nature taught them, and the imperfect traditions of distant ages had transmitted, they had never seen the face, nor heard the voice of civilized man: with all the simplicity of a patriarchal form of government and a state of society founded on the model of pastoral life, they livd without a knowledge of the human family, and of the world inhabited by so many millions of their race. To them were equally unknown the crimes, the vices, the folls of civilization: and still less did they even suspect the existence of the arts and sciences, which elevate, purify and adorn cultivated man. The sun had risen and set upon them and their fore-

fathers, for many a century; but as they walkd on the level beach or sat on the towering cliff, had they beheld aught on the bosom of the deep, save the sea bird, or the floating weed, or the water spout traveling along the horizon. But the days of ignorance and simplicity were now to pass away forever: and civilized man was soon to appear before them, in all the power and glory of his marvelous achievements.

The day came, and to the feather-cinctured chief and the simple islanders around him, there appeared, as it were, a little cloud in the East, rising and spreading, till it seemd a self-moving tower, white as a wreath of snow, advancing towards them. They had seen the water-spout spring up from the deep or drop from the clouds; but never had such an object fascinated their curiosity or kindled their amazement. With what delight and astonishment they gazed, we may strive to imagin, but shall never realize. She came, the merchant ship of a distant shore: and pausd in her onward career, to enquire what the children of nature had to give in the exchanges of commerce. For the first time in the history of that island, civilized man was beheld on its shores: and the trader with keen and practiced eye examind the land and the sea, the forest and the river. But all was barrenness to him, and in a few hours he passd away to return no more. A few months elapsd and another such object was seen to glide along the horizon, and as it turnd with the shifting breeze, the natives again beheld the ship of the stranger beside their shore. She came, bearing around the world in the fulfilment of enlightend plans, the messengers of art and science. They had come forth out of the bosom of imperial citys to travers the ocean and visit every land, that the college and the cabinet, the museum and the botanic garden, the laboratory and the workshop might be enrichd by the treasures and discoverys of evry clime. But the arts and sciences had achievd no victorys there: and nature, grand and beautiful as she was, offerd nothing that was not common to a hundred isles. She also passd away on her voyage of discovery, to be seen no more. A few years had glided away, and the simple islanders beheld *the same spectacle*, the self-moving wingd dwelling of the

stranger. It was the battle ship of a great nation: and she came to bear from realm to realm, the emblem of sovereignty and might. She came in her pride and power, in her glory and beauty. She anchored near that island to honor the birth day of her monarch. The martial music poured its magnificent melodies along the winding shore and through the forest depths. The flags of a hundred nations waved in the breeze while the broad ensign of a monarch's dominion unrolled its gorgeous drapery and challenged the admiration of the children of nature. But when the unseen cannon sent forth its lightning flash, and the voices of many thunders, the islanders fled away panic stricken, or bowed down to the earth, to worship the delegates of Godlike power. The merry dance and the festive song had closed, and as she swung with the tide, the natives beheld at her prow, the giant statue of the trident-sceptered Neptune. In a few moments the flags disappeared; the canvas again winged her for flight; and like a giant rejoicing to run his course, she bade adieu forever to a land where ambition saw nothing to covet and power nothing to subdue.

Years had elapsed, and the floating palaces of the stranger, with their grandeur, and beauty, and terrors, had been wrought into many a story by credulous old age: and had decorated the artless verse of many an island bard. A third generation had succeeded, and often did they long to behold the miracles, with which legendary lore had delighted them in childhood and youth. At length the moment came. It was amid the shades of night that a ship unseen, unnoticed, anchored beside their shores. No object was visible; but through the gloom and silence of night, the furling of the sails, the plunge of the anchor, and the music of the wind amid the shrouds, were wafted to the land. At midnight the deep-toned bell was heard,

"Swinging slow with solemn roar,
Over the wide water'd shore."

The artless savage stood listening with intense curiosity, and bewildered in amazement, yet without terror. The dawn came, and he beheld with rapture the wonderful object, which had kindled his imagination in the tale of the nursery and the song of the *savage poet*. Still all was silence, and as she lay motionless,

lifeless, on the calm bosom of the deep; she seemd to be the plague ship, tenanted only by the dead. The brightning East bespoke the near approach of sunrise: yet still no sound was heard, no boat was seen approaching the land. What stranger was this? Was it the merchant vessel or the discovery ship, or the man of war, returnd to visit again the island solitude? Was it a corsair, outlawd by the nations; or a privateer, the licensd pirate of civilization; or the mutiny ship, taking refuge from public justice, in the recesses of the sea? Those had forgotten the savage in his beautiful wilderness: and these had not wanderd so far from the highways of navigation. Not one of them was there; for as the sun arose above the waves, music, never heard before, filld the soul of the savage with solemn awe, with mysterious delight. It was the morn of the Savior's nativity, and was usherd in as became the bearer of glad tidings, the missionary ship.

"The organ came gathering and rolling its thunder,
Yet wanted not intervals calmer of wonder:
And stops of low sweetness, like winds when they fall,
Or voices Elysian, that come with a call."

The melody died away upon the breeze, and then came the clear deep-toned voice of the missionary, as the morning prayer ascended to the throne of grace, in praise, thanksgiving and supplication. Thus passd the day, and still not a human being approachd the land. The sanctity of the Sabbath restrained the curiosity of all, who dwelt in the ship of missions. Who can realize the inquisitiv anxiety, the surprise of the simple nativ, as he walkd from morn to evening along the beach, and calld to mind the landing scenes which legend and song had recorded in his memory. At length another morning came. The matin services had returnd thanks for their preservation amidst the storm, and the coral reef, and the treacherous calm: and had besought a blessing on the dedication of themselves to the conversion of the heathen. They entreated with many tears of faith and hope, that the heathen island before them might "re-joice and blossom as the rose," and "the wilderness and solitary place might be glad" through their labors. The boat was