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- ART. I.—1. Ernesti Friderici Caroli Rosenmülleri *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum*. 20 vols. 8vo. Leipzig: 1788—1829.
2. *Handbuch der biblischen Alterthumskunde*. Von Ernst Friedrich Karl Rosenmüller Vols. I.—IV. Leipzig: 1828—1830.

THESE are the titles of the two most important works of the late Professor Rosenmüller, neither of which was finished when he died. The name of this writer is at present so familiar to the scholars of America, that a brief sketch of his life and writings cannot be utterly devoid of interest. To those who know what the life of a laborious German scholar is, we need not say that his biography will exhibit little more than a chronological list of his publications.

This distinguished orientalist and biblical critic is often called *the younger Rosenmüller*, in order to distinguish him from his father, who was also an eminent Professor in the same University, and a labourer of note in the same general field, though in another subdivision of it. John George Rosenmüller, the father, born in 1736, was successively Professor of Theology in three Universities, Erlangen, Giessen, Leipzig. His local reputation, as a preacher and an ecclesiastical functionary, was extremely high; but his

dents to read the Commentaries of Calvin: for I tell them he is incomparable in the interpretation of scripture; and that his Commentaries ought to be held in greater estimation than all that is delivered to us in the writings of the ancient Christian fathers: so that, in a certain eminent spirit of prophecy, I give the pre-eminence to him beyond most others, indeed, beyond them all.”*

In closing this article, we are happy to be able to say that two elaborate memoirs of Calvin may soon be expected. One is understood to be preparing by Mr. Henry, pastor of a church in Berlin; and great pains have been taken to gain information from unpublished manuscripts and other documents existing at Geneva. The other biography is that which was left by the late lamented Dr. M’Crie, and which will be made ready for the press by one of his sons. From the biographer of Knox and Melvill, every thing which the case admits may be expected.

ART. VIII.—*Descriptive Catalogue of Books, and other Publications of the American Sunday School Union; designed for Sunday Schools, Juvenile, Family, and Parish Libraries, and for General Reading.* Philadelphia: 1835. pp. 119. *J. M. Alexander*

IF we could look with prophetic wisdom on the doings of our age we should probably regard it as the seed-time of the world’s history. Abstracting ourselves from those self-exalting views which flatter us as being in advance of former ages, we should still find cause to think that the tokens visible in things civil and ecclesiastical, portend a great revolution. Though we may deny that any such revolution is in progress; though the latter day glory has not dawned; though false religion and irreligion are still on their thrones; and though the Church is but a small portion of the world; it is, nevertheless most apparent, that we live in a period of significant action, an age of movement and progress. It is a time of preparation. As the advent of Christ was preceded by remarkable changes in nations, so it is not unlikely that

* Christian Observer for 1827, p. 622.—“Declaration of Arminius.” Ibid. 1807, p. 179. SCOTT’S Milner, iii. 496.

the final triumph of the gospel will be preceded by analogous preparation. When God approaches, mountains are levelled, and valleys are exalted, and crooked things are made straight. Previous to the consummation we wish and pray for, it is fair to expect a train of facilities and adapted means, tending towards the great event.

It takes ages to unwind the thread of those events which occupy but a few leaves in prophecy. Thus our Lord mentions, almost in one breath, the devastation of Jerusalem and the end of the world. In our haste, we sometimes set up as prophets, and fall into the error of the Thessalonians. The day of the Lord cometh; but with stately, and as we are too apt to think, with lingering approaches. Some things there are, however, which the faintest human reason might lay down as precursors of the blessed restitution of mankind to God. Among these would be such as the following: an increase of exchange between country and country; rapid and safe communication; the mastery over the multiplied dialects which have arisen from the confusion at Babel; the predominance and diffusion of such tongues as contain stores of truth, or are spoken by good men; the advancement of knowledge, and of the means for propagating it, especially the press in its improved condition; wonderful reaching towards perfection in the arts; and, above all, greatly accelerated movement in the sacramental host, towards the illumination of the world.

All this, at whatever period it occurs, is likely to be mistaken for more than it really is. It is not completion but preparation; the scaffold, not the temple; the seed-time, not the harvest. And if we read aright the signs of the times, our own generation is just such a season of approaching day. Among the preparatory movements which divine Providence is carrying forward, those are not always the mightiest which are the most vaunted. Silent waters undermine the mountain. The dispersion of despised Jews through the Roman empire was a principal means of disseminating the truths of primitive Christianity. And the instruction of those millions who are at this moment babes and youth, appears to some minds not the least in the array of instrumentality for converting mankind to God.

Let us come down from general observations, and narrow the field of vision to our own beloved America. Bright as we are, compared with the nations who are covered by gross darkness, we are not all light. The great mass, from necessity or choice, lie out of the influence of preaching. Even

in our thronged cities, it is notorious, the places of worship would not contain those who are able to attend sabbath services; while in the country, and particularly in the tracts beyond the mountains and 'the great river,' the destitution is subject of hourly complaint. All the energies of education and missions cannot furnish pastors enough to keep up with the amazing increase of the people; and even the unparalleled agency of Sunday Schools, the happiest invention of pious sagacity, is only, like sister schemes of benevolence, arraying forces for another, and we hope, a better age.

Look where you will, and be as sanguine as hope can ever be, you cannot expect either individuals or combinations of men to increase their speed and power beyond a certain mark. It is the law of our limited nature which hems us in. Man is frail, and slow, and mortal. Evidently, therefore, we are called upon to lay out our main strength with such instrumentality as admits of most energetic propulsion, and operates during the longest periods. We address, therefore, the *young*, because their life-time is to be the longest; and with *books*, because these can be most rapidly multiplied. On other methods of action there are great clogs; but the Press is not restrained by such inevitable delay. It is all ready, and full grown, and the way is open before it. Its means are now ample for a great beginning. The material with which it can operate, even in our own language, is this moment extant in ten thousand books and tracts; the accumulated and digested wisdom of all past time. The stereotype plate will yield its half a million of impressions before it ends its work, and the steam press will cast off sheets at the speed of two thousand an hour. The rail-way and the canal are at the printer's door, and the whole country is within a few weeks' reach of the place of manufacture. Scarcely is there a hut on this side of the Mississippi which may not be reached by books, through the shop, the pedler's wagon, or the Sunday School.

It becomes a most serious question then, How shall this channel be kept pure, and made to subserve the interests of the people? How shall it be made to pour a flood upon the public mind?

Let the reader cast his eye over the vast expanse of our territory, and imagine it covered, as is must soon be, by fifty millions, speaking one language; and let him picture to himself every family of all these millions, supplied with the bible, and then with a succession of pleasing and edifying religious works. The prospect is delightful; but it is just

what we aim to accomplish by the production and circulation of Sunday School books. In the way of such a progress as we have imagined, there stand several hinderances. Multitudes cannot read, and unless we move faster in our efforts, multitudes will end their days without this prime art of life. But even where it is possessed, multitudes have no taste for books, either from their having never been allured by pleasing compositions, or from having, through a large part of their days, been detained from all studies by labour or vice. Add to this the fact, that not one household in a thousand has been reached by the kind of books meant; and that the benevolent have not yet placed at the disposal of the disseminators funds for the supply. Consider further, that there are many who can read, and are not utterly without fondness for books, who, nevertheless, from ignorance, stupidity, or prejudice, are not yet disposed to read even the bible, or the best Tracts, still less the larger sorts of books. The Sunday School and the common school are going hand in hand to call forth a reading population; but the Sunday School is doing what the common school often fails to do; it is giving a taste for books. And the American Sunday School Union is doing even more than this, it is giving the books themselves; such books, it may be added, without fear of contradiction, as the world has never seen before. For let any candid man take up the Catalogue of the Union, and look through the titles and descriptions of the books, and say, in what nation or language has such a body of juvenile religious literature ever issued from a single establishment. Even old and tried friends of Sunday Schools will, in many instances, be astonished to find how this Society has fulfilled its trust; and how the energy of authors, compilers, correctors, publishers, printers, and salesmen, has been bending towards this great object.

The publications vary in size from the little 48mo. affair of four leaves, three inches long, to the octavo volume of some hundreds of pages. Here, of a truth, is milk for babes, and meat for men! On enumerating these publications, the inquirer finds they amount to nearly five hundred. And here let the friend of American illumination pause upon this number. Let him calculate the aggregate effect of five hundred books—and every week adds to the number—each of which is multiplied by thousands of copies—each of which copies, by the circulation of the library, is read annually by some forty individuals. Unless the books can be shown to

be bad books, every lover of his kind, looking at the mighty engine, must rejoice with amazement. That they are not bad books, in any sense, it would be needless to say. Even in the sense of pleasing, attractive, entertaining, fascinating books, a large proportion of them are pre-eminently good. And a great point is gained—if not, as the poet said, *every point*, when the *useful* is mingled with the *sweet*. Along with the improvements in printing and engraving, has advanced the art of pleasing. The publications of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, under the presidency of Lord Brougham, abundantly evince this. The Penny Magazine alone is read by more than a million; and why? The popularity of this and kindred works is easily explained. The subjects treated are those which captivate the common mind. They are treated in a plain, intelligible style. They are embellished with numerous illustrations, cuts and engravings, which go home at once to the adult no less than to the child. They are very cheap, without being at all inelegant. On the contrary, the immense sale enables the publishers to exhibit specimens of wood-engraving, inferior to nothing ever published. They are diversified in their matter, which is broken into short portions. And such is their power, that every English and American Christian ought to pray that they may not become the weapons of infidelity.

Such publications, in the department of religion, are what we need, what the times demand; such, to a certain extent, are the publications of the American Sunday School Union. All the great advantages which are to be derived from visible illustrations are secured by their plans. By this is not meant mere pictures to amuse children; these are good in their place; nor yet fanciful, and often erroneous and degrading effigies of sacred characters, such as, to this day, defile many editions of the bible; but chiefly such cuts or engravings, from wood, copper, steel, or stone, as give a notion of visible existences, such as is not attainable in any other way. If the reader will call at any depository, he will understand what is meant, on examining such books as the "Natural History of the Bible," Nevin's "Biblical Antiquities," "Selumiel," "Elisama," or the life of "Elijah." These, and similar books, have many cuts taken from costly and rare works, in foreign languages, and inaccessible even to most scholars. Some drawings have been made, at great expense, from nature. Objects in the animal and vegetable world are furnished on cards or in small books. Lithographic prints of animals

are taken from the living object, with corresponding lessons. Maps and topographical charts, illustrating the scriptures, have been prepared from the best authorities; they are constantly under the process of correction, and their number is continually multiplying. A method has been also adopted in narrative books, which seems to be original; it is that of giving little fragments of geography needed in the book, in the form of miniature maps, here and there, in the midst of the pages. This prevents the difficulty which young readers have in finding places on a crowded general map. It may be seen exemplified in the *Beloved Disciple*, or the *Life of Elijah*. We must not omit a beautiful quarto volume, containing lithographic views of eight interesting places in the Holy Land. The German work, from which this was taken, was prepared by the late Rosenmueller, and is in few hands in America. In the department of Biblical Antiquities and the history of Missions, there are many engravings in these books which are not to be found in any other publications in the English language. And these are matters which cannot be investigated to advantage without these very helps. All this is doubtless new to a multitude of excellent and learned persons among us, who are not careful to inquire into the beneficent operations of the day; and such facts ought to be more generally made known.

If books are dull, or if they seem to be dull, they fail of their intention. Bad books are, by the art of the enemy, too alluring. Why should good books be repulsive? If the problem were to kill a useful work, as to its real influence, the recipe might be as follows: Take so much matter, and condense it into the smallest space, on the smallest type. Print it on dark almanac-like paper, without margin, and without embellishments. Let it be printed incorrectly, stitched clumsily, bound loosely, and lettered awry. Then set a high price on it, and the adversary has gained his object: the book is *felo-de-se*.

The books of the American Sunday School Union are, so far as is known, excellent in their matter. If errors are pointed out, no delay is permitted in correcting them. Nothing contrary to sound doctrine or morals has been, or will be tolerated, except from the short-sightedness, which is incident to humanity. These publications are for the most part in genuine, pure, simple, and correct English; singularly free from slovenly diction, solecisms, provincialisms, and it is believed to a good degree, Americanisms. It is no

small gift to our country to present a library of juvenile books in pure English. It will be an evil day when our mother-English shall have been broken into dialects; a *patois* for every district; and the longer we can postpone this event, the happier will it be for the union of our states, and for the free course of commerce, learning, and religious benevolence.

There is a charm in a clear and simple style, which affects all classes. It offers no stumbling block to the ignorant and the young; it presents no repulsion to the learned and the fastidious. Great care has evidently been used to secure this excellence.

All this, however, relates to what may be called the mere exterior of these productions. It is not the neatness, either of diction or of form, nor the attractiveness of ornament and illustration, which constitutes their excellence. Other books have the same, and it may be in some cases even higher claims to attention; and hence the fact that the press teems with juvenile literature which gains patronage, and of which successive editions are rapidly sold, to the great emolument of writers and publishers; while too often, what is thus largely diffused, is grossly defective, if not positively injurious. And hence it is that those benevolent persons who have a regard for the rising youth of the land, ought without delay to use means to give wider circulation to moral and religious books for youth, which are in all respects unexceptionable.

The minister, or the teacher, or the parent, who will cause to be read a hundred of these Sunday School books where but one is read now, will be a benefactor to the next generation. This is a method of doing good which the humblest reader of these pages may successfully undertake. The character of the publications should be looked into. If evil, it is time they were quashed; if good, it is time they were scattered widely. That they have not been sold and read more extensively, is owing, in some degree, to their unpretending form. The difference between them and other children's books is not appreciated. There is no patent excellence in these books above a thousand others in the market, and the latent virtue is discerned only in the use. So long as attractive books, unobjectionable, and yet wholly irreligious, are preferred by common readers, adult or juvenile, so long these will have the wider circulation. And the circumstances under which the books of the Sunday School are sold, make it im-

possible for those who dispose of them to engage in mercantile competition. How shall this obstacle be surmounted? Thus: public attention must be directed to these valuable religious books, and wise and good men must allow themselves to take an interest in these humble walks of literature, so far at least as to express, openly and often, a candid judgment on them. In other words, religious people should do that for the cause of Christ, which worldly people do for the love of money. But the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

The American Sunday School Union has made a noble beginning. It is only a beginning, and yet they supply reading for every class of people, from the infant that wearies with eight tiny pages, to the enlightened Christian scholar who finds delight in such works as the Life of Mrs. Judson, or the beautiful narratives of Elisama or Selumiel. Can it be said of any other books, issuing from one source, that they are *universal in their adaptation*? A large part of these may be read with profit and satisfaction by the most learned man in America; yet in the same collection are found the A, B, C; the Picture Alphabet, the Primer, and the first lines of infant instruction. In a subsequent page, a word will be offered, in correction of the erroneous opinion that the books of the Union are for *children* only.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES are the grand instrument of Sunday Schools. To teach the bible, they were founded. To inculcate the bible, is their perpetual effort. To explain, illustrate, and apply the divine truth of the scriptures is their highest and most beloved object. And hence the American Sunday School Union has rightly judged it meet, to expend great labour on this field. To enumerate such of their books as are *scriptural*, would be to copy half the Catalogue. Some are intended to allure to the word of God, to show how beautiful, how touching, how truly entertaining it is. Some explain its difficulties, and lay open its rich promises, and point to its undeveloped predictions. Some illustrate the manners and customs of the east, by descriptions and plates. Great care has been taken to furnish in various forms a key to the Geography and Topography of the bible. Even its Biography has been extracted and digested; and the same may be said of its Natural History; while a Bible Dictionary is in preparation which is meant to be a little Encyclopaedia of scriptural knowledge.

Among the helps to the study of the bible, we do not

observe here any professed *Commentaries*. But scattered up and down among these works are the constituent parts of an admirable commentary, and that in a shape more likely to be useful, than in a formal exposition. And there is one Scripture Help of which the credit is due, and should be given to this Society, namely, the modern and now prevalent system of *Questions on the Bible*. Interrogatories on the mere narratives had, indeed, been used, but the very first model of Questions, eliciting knowledge of *minuter* points of scripture exposition, was furnished by the Sunday School Union. These questions have become almost universal, and, in a multitude of cases, have been imitated in works proceeding from associations or from individuals. It were supererogatory to describe a book used by every family among our readers. But it ought to be remarked, that the utmost care has been bestowed upon these volumes, of which eight have been printed. The whole set has been lately revised, and the stereotype plates have been cast anew, at great expense. Every year has witnessed improvements in the plan and execution; and it is in the plan of the Board to extend these aids to every part of the bible. If the Union had never done more than to introduce and facilitate this thorough method of bible inquiry, by these unpretending books, which we are glad to know are circulating by tens of thousands, they would have conferred a blessing on nations for eternity.

Other books, in this collection, might be named, which bring the reader in other ways to a familiarity with holy writ. These state in simple language the doctrines of Christianity, simplify those things which are obscure, or bring together, under one head, those instructions which are widely scattered in the word of God. All these methods tend to popularize accessible, but neglected truth, and to create and propagate a love for the most interesting volume in the world. It is enough to make any Christian parent's heart leap for joy, to find in the hands of his offspring such works as tend to make holy scripture more familiar to their mind, than, in former ages, it has been to nobles and ecclesiastics. Shall not such books be circulated? No one who has not made it a matter of separate trial, can readily feel how fascinating a single biography, or other story of the bible, may be made, by taking it apart from the matter mingled in the text, and interweaving remark and illustration, so as not to rend the web of history. It is a matter of fact, that persons of education and adult years have found such books as the

Life of David, or *Selumiel*, quite as entertaining and touching as the most popular and pretending performances. The Sunday School possesses many such books; as the lives of Moses and Paul, by the late Dr. Bedell; and of David, Daniel and Elijah, by an unknown, but eminently tasteful and gifted author. To these must be added *John the Baptist*, and the *Beloved Disciple*, and the *First Man*, which are all upon a happy and ingenious plan.

There has scarcely ever been a healthful mind, young or old, to which there was not a special charm in biography; and most will agree with Robert Hall, that "Of all the species of literary composition, perhaps biography is the most interesting." The wisdom of God is evinced in the fact, that the scriptural histories are almost all galleries of single portraits, series of biographies. In addition to these, which are multiplying on the Sunday School shelves, we have the lives of apostles, martyrs, reformers, ministers, missionaries and private men. The life of *Washington*, a necessary book for Americans, has been sanctioned by the late Judge Marshall, and is translated into French, and extensively used as a popular class book. The life of *John Newton* is admirable, and peculiarly adapted to seamen. The life of *Thomason*, and other works in the catalogue, have been reprinted in Bengal. The Memoirs of *Oberlin*, *Franke*, *Spener*, *Mrs. Newell*, *Mrs. Judson*, were prepared with great care expressly for this Society. Add to these, sketches, various in extent, of Melancthon, Knox, Wishart, Lady Jane Grey, Bernard Gilpin, Eliot, Cotton Mather, Edwards, Alleine, Buchanan, Legh Richmond, Obookiah, Catharine Brown, Mrs. Barbara Ewing, besides a great variety of authentic juvenile biography; and you have a very respectable biographical library.

Concerning missions and missionaries, there are more than twenty-five separate books. Concerning the Jews and Judea, there are fourteen. On the important topic of temperance, there are ten; one of which received a prize of a hundred dollars. For apprentices, there are eleven. On the relations of parents and children, twenty-one; on family relations in general, thirteen. On the Sabbath, twelve. But a full enumeration would be tedious. Many of these books are embellished with cuts of great beauty. It is proper, in this enumeration, to mention the periodical publications of the American Sunday School Union. These, at present, are two. The Sunday School Journal, issued twice a month, and the

Youth's Friend, issued once a month. Both are extensively known, and justly prized. Both are well suited to their professed ends. The Journal, not being a receptacle of mere news, or of any controversies, has not that éclat and poignancy which the bad taste of the age craves. We have observed, however, in a very constant and careful perusal of the numbers from the beginning, that it has been conducted with diligence, talent, and sound judgment, and that its original articles, on a variety of topics, have been extracted, often without giving any credit, by many leading journals. The very newest publication of those which have reached us, is the *Union Hymns*; and it appears to be an excellent selection of such verses as may befit the interesting class of persons for whom it has been prepared.

No reader can fail to observe, even from this hasty sketch, that the catalogue directs to books suited for every class of readers. The variety of subjects is very great. We meet with familiar works in reproof of particular vices, or encouraging to particular virtues; and in one form or another presenting to view the whole array of that saving doctrine which stands undisputed among evangelical Christians.

The Church is called upon to furnish for the world two classes of books; the one adapted to little children, or persons so ignorant as to need the same kind of reading; the other adapted to adults, or such youth as, by means of Sunday Schools, possess the intelligence commonly attributed to adults. The American Sunday School Union is supplying both kinds. The *juvenile* department has this manifest advantage, that its stores are available for the use of adults. For though the child cannot understand the man's book, the man can understand the child's. It is a great error of many to pass over these little works with contempt. Which of us has not been gratified and benefited by Mrs. More's tracts, or by the religious fictions of Uncle Philip, or by Mr. Gallaudet's Books on the *Soul*? The other department is more and more attracting the notice of authors. The number of really elevated and able productions, works of ingenuity, profound thought, and research, is increasing rapidly. Many of these will be read with advantage even by the rude and the young. We all like a little effort in our reading. A tract may be too elaborately plain. The direction in which the energy of knowledge works is downward. Even boys and servants are solicitous to read the books of their supposed betters. This should be considered by all who write

for the common mind. We are no more pleased with avowed attempts to come down to the level of our intellect, than we are to be fed with a spoon. True, the contrary fault is the more usual. What Goldsmith said of Johnson is verified in many who write for children; all their little fishes "talk like whales."* Still simplification may be carried to the extent of nausea. And this should be regarded as a fault in writings for either of the above classes. This subject is set in a clear light by an author deservedly esteemed as an authority in such matters. "Children," says Mr. Jacob Abbott, "can understand ordinary language well enough, if the *subject* is within their comprehension, and treated in a manner adapted to their powers." "They learn the meaning of words, not by definitions, but by their connexion in the sentences in which they hear them; and by long practice they acquire an astonishing faculty of doing this." "Perhaps" continues this sensible writer, "some may ask, what harm it will do, to simplify language, when talking to children. It does injury in at least three ways." And he specifies these: (1.) It disgusts young persons to whom it is addressed, and prevents their being interested in what is said. Girls and boys, however young, never consider themselves little children, for they can always look down upon some younger than themselves. They do not like to have their powers underrated. (2.) Children are kept back in learning language, if their teacher makes effort to *come down*, as it is called, to their comprehension in the use of words. "Notice," adds he, "that I say in the *use of* words, for, as I shall show presently, it is absolutely necessary to come down to the comprehension of children in some other respects." (3.) "Perhaps the greatest evil of this practice is, it satisfies the teacher. He thinks he addresses his pupils in the right manner, and overlooks altogether, the real peculiarities, in which the power to interest the young depends. He talks to them in simple language, and wonders why they are not interested. He certainly is *plain* enough." These remarks

* Goldsmith said, that he thought he could write a good fable, mentioned the simplicity which that kind of composition requires, and observed, that in most fables, the animals introduced, seldom talk in character. In the fable of the little fishes, "the skill," said he, "consists in making them talk like little fishes." While he indulged himself in this fanciful reverie, he observed Johnson shaking his sides and laughing. Upon which he smartly proceeded, "Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like WHALES."—*Boswell*.

are cited, not as applying in all their force to children's *books*, for they primarily refer to oral instructions, but as furnishing a key to the difficulty felt by many who are employed in this field of labour. Books for infants and infantile adults must always be exceedingly plain; but we must not feed the whole generation with such nutriment. And the recent additions to Sunday School libraries, contain many works which no professional man or scholar need cast aside for their simplicity.

We call these Sunday School publications, too exclusively *children's books*, and *little books*. They are not all *children's books*; though of these there is happily a great store, admirably prepared. Many might here be named which are perfectly adapted to the uses of educated youth, accomplished men and women, and profound scholars. Of these several have been named in the preceding pages. And the number is increasing, for the best talent in the church will not long be withheld from this all-important work. Nor are they all *little books*; though for most readers, 'a great book is,' according to the proverb, 'a great evil.' Books of two, three, and five hundred pages, are not too small for the entertainment of a winter's evening.

The American Tract Society, following the example of the Religious Tract Society, of London, has begun to print and circulate *bound volumes* as tracts. The movement is wise and auspicious; we pray that it may go forward with augmented efficacy. There is no rivalry among these sister charities, but that provocation to good works which the scriptures enjoin. *Is it sufficiently considered, that the books of the American Sunday School Union are Religious Tracts?* They are already prepared, ready for purchase and distribution, and adapted in every respect to the wants of the nation. We repeat, there is in most of them nothing which disqualifies them for distribution among adults. On the contrary, those very features which smile on the child, will be the means of attracting and benefiting his elders. Facts prove it; perhaps half the books taken home from Sunday School libraries, by children, are read with avidity by parents, and whole families. Those books which we now intend are also *bound volumes*. And nothing but want of consideration and apathy prevents the immediate circulation of tens of thousands, as religious tracts. There is no reason why associations should not be formed for this very purpose;

or why existing Tract Societies should not adopt this method. Such a patronage would soon double the supply of original productions, and reprints of useful writings.

It is a great recommendation of these books, as suited for general distribution, that they are *cheap*. A pious traveller might, with very little cost, leave one at every stage of his journey. Pious teachers might introduce them for the reading of pupils, or as rewards. Pious householders might have the whole set of larger books as a family library. Of those prepared for ordinary perusal, *two hundred and eighty-six distinct works, handsomely bound, of uniform size, may be bought for fifty-two dollars*. "It is pertinent to inquire how many thousands of parents might place in their dwellings such a library; embracing matter adapted to all ages, from the youngest child that can read, to the parents and domestics of the household!

"How many thousand little companies of youth might join and purchase a complete library for their amusement and instruction!

"How many thousand sets might be used in public and private select schools, and in common schools; in apprentices' libraries; by men of property, for gratuitous distribution; by ministers and pious visitors of the poor and the rich, for the comfort and benefit of the families and individuals with whom they are called to mingle!"

It almost always happens that, after a few years, the library of a Sunday School becomes somewhat uninteresting to the scholars. The books are worn, mutilated, or at least familiar to the eye. The elder scholars complain that they find nothing new. We take this occasion to recommend a remedy for the evil. When a library has been some years in use, let it be presented to some destitute school or neighbourhood; and let a new library be bought, to replace it. Thus the number of books in circulation will be doubled; an exhibition of beneficence will be made which will have a kindly influence on both parties; and the new library of the benefactors will be invested with the charm of novelty, even though many of the books be the same. Even among the long tried and earnest friends of the institution there has been a want of united and vigorous action towards the wide diffusion of the publications. Too much reliance has been placed on the agency of the Sunday School *library*. The library is a noble engine; it was a happy thought, and its benefits can never be reckoned up in this world. For the respective

schools in which it acts, it is a fountain of truth and happiness; but for the country, teeming with a vast population, native and foreign, ignorant, vicious, and becoming more and more so at a rate which outstrips our sleepy march, we need more. We need a particular endeavour to put books into the hands of a million of people, who will infallibly read something; and whom we wish to read something good. Where, except from Tract Societies and Sunday Schools, can we get such reading for them? Let the benevolent and wealthy inquire whether a new attempt, of mighty force, is not demanded, to throw into the way of perishing thousands the truths of religion. Let the individual reader of this page—conscious that he has not done all that he might have done for Christ—pause and inquire. How many of such books can I buy and give away? Or how many persons can I persuade to supply their families? Or in what other way can I supply useful knowledge, at so cheap a rate, to my fellow countrymen? Here are trains of instruments all set, ready to move, suited to move well, competent to move powerfully; and the lever is put into the very hands of good men; and yet there is no advancement. It is to remedy this; to awaken the minds of those who are really asking the path of duty, that this recommendation of the Sunday School books is now offered.

The fact that Christians of several evangelical denominations are united in this institution, gives rise to certain peculiarities in its publications. The following extract from the By-laws of the Board of Officers and Managers, will show the ground of public confidence that the books will never become the organ of any sect:

“The Committee of Publication shall consist of eight members, from at least four different denominations of Christians, and not more than two members from any one denomination. They shall select, read, revise, and prepare for the press, such books and other works as they shall deem proper to be published by the society, and shall order their size and style of execution, and cause the first edition to be printed, published, and fix the price of the same.”

But while it is thus rendered certain that, without a singular and unlikely mal-administration or unfaithfulness, nothing sectarian will be taught; there is, in the same proportion, a yielding on the part of each denomination that its special distinctions shall, in this work of benevolence, be kept out of view. And on one important subject, the Sunday School

Union has followed the precedent of all the reformed churches in their respective manuals for juvenile instruction. We mean the subject of *Church Government*, which, so far as we remember, is not touched in any *catechism* of any Protestant church. But this, and all other, omitted, or, more properly, *reserved* topics, are left to be propounded and inculcated by every church within its own limits. And by issuing the catechisms of these several churches, for their use, and by furnishing *Questions* on doctrinal books, which must infallibly lead to the inculcation of that very doctrine which the teacher believes to be found in the passage under examination, the utmost facility is really given for the propagation of the very tenets which the different patrons of the books desire to be taught. It is moreover very unjust to charge this Society with indefinite exhibition of gospel truths; as will appear to any one who will look at the eighth volume of the Union Questions. We, therefore, deny the proposition below in all its parts:

“That the advantages of Sunday Schools may be extended to all classes of the community, we have permitted the catechism of our church to be superseded by a system of Bible Questions, prepared with the express design of merging all denominational distinctions in a general and indefinite exhibition of the doctrines of the gospel, which will offend nobody.”—*From a religious paper of Nov. 19, 1835.*

The Questions on the Bible do not supersede the catechism of any church. They are not meant to do so. They have no tendency to do so. In point of fact, they have not done so, except by the culpable neglect of individual pastors or teachers. And we know of no places where the study of doctrinal and distinctive catechisms is more revived than those where the Union Questions have been used from the beginning. No intelligent teacher ever used them, without finding it easy and almost unavoidable, to introduce the very tenets which his church professes. And it is a signal excellence of the Question system.

Latitudinarian views of doctrine have been feared by some good men. Such jealousy is needed, for the preservation of every separate church organization. By all reflecting men, every church is considered as competent to point out what and how much doctrine is a term of its fellowship, or a qualification for its ministry. The American Sunday School Union, like the Tract Society, has observed a studied silence upon those points of doctrine and order in which evan-

gical sects differ. Now, of this no sect can justly complain; inasmuch as no one sect can justly ask the propagation of its peculiar tenets from any other; and because each church is left to do for itself, and alone, exactly what it would have done if no union of Christians of various churches had ever arisen. This is no more than allowing, that saving doctrine may be taught by one who does not betray himself as a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, a Baptist or a Methodist. It is no more than a division of labour in a great cause; setting apart one set of duties to be performed by each denomination, because such denomination alone can or will perform them to its own satisfaction; and setting apart another set of duties, to be performed by members of several denominations in concert, because they can, in concert, do immensely more than all can do singly. This is a fair defence of the cardinal principle of the American Sunday School Union, to all minds which do not conceive such a severance of fundamental from other truths to be intrinsically wrong. Such minds may be ingeniously convinced; but their action must always be trammelled. It is believed that the Union has never wittingly invaded the prejudices of any evangelical denomination. Charges of this kind have been made; ignorantly or wantonly; but they have neutralized one another as coming from opposite directions. And some charges, of mutilation or corruption in standard books, were so promptly, honestly and satisfactorily cleared, even to minds akin to the accusers, that candour ought long ago to have prompted a retraction of them; instead of which, we lament to see that they have been reiterated.

It may be presumed that few evangelical Christians of our day, if they wished to send a minister to preach a sermon in a given spot in the mountains, would hesitate to despatch for this purpose, a Legh Richmond, an Andrew Fuller, a Richard Watson, an Edward Payson, or a Samuel Davies; especially if each of these good men should voluntarily engage to avoid the topics on which they differed. Now, to be consistent, the same evangelical Christians ought not to hesitate, where they cannot send the teacher, to send his *teachings*, or what is equivalent, books containing the same. This is what the Sunday School and the Tract Society do. Let them be rejected when they do otherwise.

These remarks began with the subject of the world's conversion to God. It is a topic which will reign over the mind of the Church until the great trumpet shall sound.

Closely connected with it, as a favoured instrument, is the preparation and promulgation of good books. Such are the books now recommended. Like their authors, they have defects, errors, and blemishes; but against these there are strong checks, and by the daily pruning, even of enemies, they are approaching the purity and fulness of truth. They are, blessed be God, flowing out in a widening stream. However undervalued by many, and overlooked by most, at home, they are finding their level abroad, and dispersing themselves to the people of many tongues. A number of them have been already reprinted in England, by the Religious Tract Society. Others have been reprinted in India, and orders have been received, very recently, from Calcutta, for a number of complete sets, comprising several thousand volumes. There is reason to expect a large circulation in that city and in the interior of India. They are gone, also, in large numbers, to various mission-stations, in all the continents, even to distant China. Some have been translated into German and French; one in Modern Greek, and some are now translating in the very metropolis of France.

Here we cannot but call to mind the indications of Providence, with regard to the language which it is our happy lot to own as our mother-tongue. Leaving out of view the vast extent of the American continent and islands over which it prevails; we see, at a glance, that the progress of British arms, and the spreading of British colonies in Africa, Asia, Australia, and many remote islands, is rapidly making the English tongue the predominant dialect of civilization. The Greek once spread itself thus, after Alexander's conquests, and its mighty wave afforded a course for the Septuagint, the original New Testament, and the holy effusions of martyrs and fathers. In this was manifested a wise and gracious provision. The Latin spread itself over Europe and North Africa, and in like manner conveyed, for ages, the Christian doctrine of a church not yet all corrupt. And now the English language, in which are embalmed the noblest specimens of genius and learning in alliance with piety, a language spoken by the two great nations who are honoured more by their zeal in propagating the gospel, than by all their wealth and force, is carrying its blessed conquests over a large part of the human race. Thronged India, besides its thousands claiming British descent, has a mighty population of natives, who will soon use the English tongue. We cannot but regard the new progress of our language in

the East as one of the most remarkable signs of the times, in reference to the progress of religion among men. It is known, that since the rise of British power in India, the Persian has continued, to a large extent, to be the medium of intercourse in judicial proceedings, and in diplomatic and official correspondence. This is now to be in a great degree superseded by the English, and the effects of the change we need not stop to detail. "English in India," says the Rev. Alexander Duff, of Calcutta, "holds the same place which the Latin and Greek did in Britain at the period of the reformation. And English, in India, must be the medium of all knowledge to those who receive the higher range. It is the lever, which as an instrument, is to move all Hindostan." We learn several valuable facts from this gentleman's statements. Owing to the substitution of English for Persian, a sensation has been produced. From the Burman empire to the furthest west, there has been a demand for English books and teachers. Even in the court of Delhi, the favourite son of the present representative of the great Mogul is himself studying English; and a number of similar instances are given. From our own American Sunday School Union, books have been loudly demanded, as the only works extant of the right sort, and not for *children* only, but for the *young men* of Hindostan. So soon as English takes the same place in judicial affairs, which it begins to do in political, India will be opened to a flood of gospel light. The fate of multitudes will be dreadful, if left to the native literature; and, on the other hand, if American Christians, by tracts and books, duly apply the engine put within their reach, they may facilitate incalculably the progress of the Church.

Thus it is, that from writing of the infant primer, and the picture book, we have strayed into a tract, the most sublime which can be presented to human minds; the return of all mankind to God. The two things are connected. Would that all professing Christians could be induced to consider it. In the revolution of years, it may prove to have been the intended work of the American Sunday School Union, to carry its operations, not merely to the Valley of the Mississippi, or the western plains, but to the whole unconverted world.