

gists have decided that our Lord's birth took place four years before the commencement of the common computation: *i. e.* that we ought to add four years to all dates in the Christian era.

✠ The first chapter of St. Matthew is appointed by the English branch of the Church founded by our Lord to be read three times every year, *viz.*: on the mornings of January 2, May 3, and August 31; and the verses from 13 to 25 are to read again on the Sunday after Christmas-day.

## SELECTED ARTICLES.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS—THEIR OBLIGATIONS, DUTIES, AND QUALIFICATIONS.

[The following Lecture was delivered by the Rev. Henry J. Morton, D.D., Rector of St. James' Church, Philadelphia. We trust that it will be perused with attention and profit by the parties to whom it was more especially addressed.—ED. Y. C.]

#### L E C T U R E.

MATT. XXII. 9.

"Go ye therefore into the highways and hedges, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage."

The obligations, duties and qualifications of Sunday School teachers have been set before me as subjects upon which I am to discourse this evening. They are obvious themes of *very great moment*, yet a single glance will suffice to convince you that their full consideration is not likely to be accomplished in *one discourse*, though that were extended far beyond the limits now granted to such exercises. I feel however less embarrassed by the difficulty when I reflect, that many will follow me in this course of lectures, and doubtless, without departing from the themes assigned them, supply the deficiencies of my very rapid sketch.

I address myself therefore at once, and cheerfully, to my work; and as some ambiguity seems to hang about the first subject suggested, "the obligations of Sunday School teachers," explain to you what I understand by that expression. By *obligations* as distinguished from *duties* I shall suppose to be intended, the *considerations which constrain teachers to undertake the work*; by *duties* the *things which they ought to do when the work has been undertaken*.

1. The obligations of Sunday School teachers I consider to be, 1. *The call of God.* 2. *The call of the Church.*

THE CALL OF GOD.—Sunday Schools are praised by some as the glorious discovery of the nineteenth century, and by others reproached as a modern innovation. To me they appear to be nothing more than modifications of a system as old as Christianity—modifications of the great plan of religious culture of the young, caused by the pecu-

liar circumstances of the times, and of the Church, as acted upon by the times. I feel, therefore, no hesitation in tracing up the obligations which bind the teachers in this matter to the call of God, as uttered in the text—"Go ye therefore into the highways and hedges, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." To gather together the young who need guidance, and lead them into the paths of purity and piety, is so manifestly binding upon all who have the ability and opportunity for so doing—it flows so plainly, not only from the command of the text, but from every precept in God's word, wherein love to our neighbour is inculcated, that I shall not occupy your time by enlarging upon it, but pass to a difficulty which may suggest itself to some minds, and in removing which I shall be led to discuss the second obligation by which Sunday School teachers are bound. Allowing what may not for a moment be denied, that it is the duty of every man having the ability to do good to the young within reach of his influence, to use that power in their behalf, is there any special obligation resting upon him to occupy himself in this particular work of Sunday School instruction? Is he not, unless he be an ordinary preacher of the gospel, stepping out of his proper sphere in thus undertaking the public instruction of the young in the truths of the gospel? I answer, no—for to this precise duty he is summoned by

THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH.—That the duty of giving public religious instruction was originally committed to spiritual teachers, ordained for that work, I think is plain from the recorded history of the first ages of Christianity. But that the great Head of the Church meant to confine the work to them I do not believe, because very early in the Church's history we find persons employed in the work of catechetical instruction who were not in order. We believe that from the apostles' time there have been but *three orders* of the ministers in the Church of Christ—bishops, priests, and deacons—yet we find *catechists* named as occupied in their peculiar work, and distinguished from the three orders above noticed. The author, under the name of "Clemens Romanus," has this fanciful illustration of the Church of Christ. He compares it to a well-manned vessel, or galley. The *bishop*,\* he says, resembles the *pilot*, the presbyters the *mariners* the *deacons* the *chief rowers*, the catechists the *Ναυτολόγοι*, or those whose offices it was to *admit passengers into the ship*, and contract with them for the price which they were to pay for their passage. Although, therefore, the three orders of the ministry above named did instruct the ignorant, and though this was a part of their duty, still it seems that the *same duty* was discharged by those who were neither bishops, priests nor deacons, though acting under authority and by commission of the Church! Origen was only *eighteen* years old when he first entered upon the duty of a catechist, and therefore not in orders, because not of an age to

\* Clem. Epist. ad Jacob. n. 14.