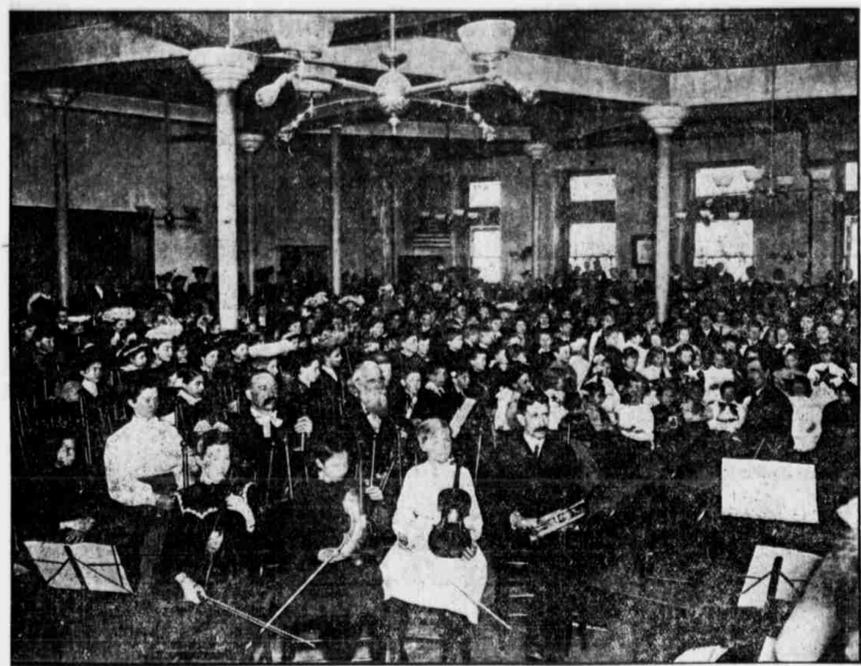


Method of Organizing and Operating a Modern Sunday School



GLIMPSE OF THE FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL SUNDAY SCHOOL.

THE Sunday school idea is not new, nor is it modern. It is a matter of knowledge without question with the theologians that in Old Testament times the young were carefully educated in matters of religion and the same custom prevailed in New Testament times.

Seward Street Methodist school. This was for two and a half years under the superintendency of T. F. Sturges, one of the most able organizers and administrators, and is now presided over by L. T. Huffman, who is keeping up the standard of the school to the top notch.

four instructors are necessary, and they have a reputation as teachers all over the city. They are William Baird, Dr. Aiken, George F. Gilmore and John L. McCague. This school is noted also for the largest cradle roll in Omaha.

The Cradle Street Presbyterian school is the largest school in the city. It is situated in a district swarming with children, with no other churches close by, and consequently it has a lot of material from which to draw. An astonishing fact in connection with the school is that it has no adult class, and that the average attendance in the primary department is 146, making it the largest primary department in the state.

Three among the best Sunday schools of the city are the primary department of the Seward Street Methodist, the Calvary Baptist and the Second Presbyterian. Each one averages above 250 attendance.

into the school as soon as they are old enough to attend, by visiting the interest of the parents when they are babies in arms. The name of a baby is placed on the Sunday school roll when its parents are willing. Some little bit of the primary department takes the baby as her special charge. She brings its birth offering, sends it presents and reports on it to her class. This cradle roll is regarded as an important factor in getting the parents interested, in influencing them to keep their older children in school and to send the baby when it is 2 years of age.

Organizing the Older Pupils. In the larger and some of the smaller schools the young men's and young women's classes are formed into organizations run by the members of the class. They are primarily for study, but they have a social feature. The Men's Baruch class is now a national organization which finds

its way into schools of all denominations, with the exceptions of Catholic and Episcopal. A notable example in Omaha is the Men's Baruch class of the Calvary Baptist church. Young women are banded together in the same manner in Philanthropic classes. These societies have a social evening perhaps once a month and this helps in keeping the members interested.

Home Study Work. The home department is designed to reach all who are unable or disinclined to attend the Sunday school. It offers a practical and profitable method of Bible study, of aid and supervision in such study, and of connection with the Sunday school while yet the one studying remains at home. It is helpful to the aged and to invalids, to those whose duties keep them from the school, and to those who live at a distance.

Work in the Mission Field. Every school has a mission fund. In some a collection is taken on a certain day for missionary offerings, and in others a certain per cent of the year's collections is given. From 150 to 200 is given to missionary societies each year by each school, according to its size. Little children in India and China are supported and sent to Christian schools by some of the schools. All the birthday offerings at the Central United Presbyterian school are for the support of two Hindu children. Several schools of the city contribute in like manner to the education of a heathen child or two, and it does the Sunday school children a world of good when they are doing good for some one so far away. Letters are sent by the missionaries in the far-off lands to the children who are supporting the little brown and yellow children, and American boys and girls are glad to hear from their cousins across the seas and to know that their interest is being appreciated.

Aid in Founding Missions. Large Sunday schools are the founders of missions in districts remote from the church. Sunday school is held usually in the afternoon and the superintendent and some of the teachers are from the parent school. As many local workers are enlisted



PRIMARY DEPARTMENT OF THE FIRST METHODIST

Every Sunday school has in it to some degree the mission element. Change has come with progress. A vast change has taken place in Sunday school methods in the last fifteen years, and today's Sunday school could hardly be recognized as the same institution. Modern methods in common school education are very different from those of a quarter of a century ago, and changes in the Sunday school have followed naturally. Young people who are under the daily training of improved methods in secular education must have the advantage of a good system in religious education or they will compare the common school with the Sunday school to the disadvantage of the latter, and will lose interest in the Sunday school if it does not approach the secular standard.

Santa Claus Land. There's a wonderful land I should like to see, Where sugar plums grow on a great green tree, Where you skate for miles on an ice cream lake, And live in a house built on sugar cake, Or of brown gingerbread or of picture books, And the collars are full of the loveliest toys And games for good little girls and boys. There are heaps of bonbons and cakes and fruit, There's a golden bangle, a silver lute, There are woolly rabbits and parrots gay, There are horses that rock through the livelong day. And when the shadows are gathering dark, They go to sleep in the Noah's ark, Or a farm yard shaded by stiff green trees That never have bent to a passing breeze. There are beautiful dollies that close their eyes, There are brave tin soldiers of every size, There are chocolate dogs and peppermint cats, There are gingerbread monkeys and shortbread rats, There are clowns and sailors and gollywogs, And wriggling serpents and jumping frogs, And swings and rattles and gay-hued trun, Omaha is not a good Sunday school town, nor is it what is generally known as a good church town. The neighboring city of Lincoln has the reputation of being a good church and Sunday school town, and the fact that it is so is generally laid to the influence of the two universities there, one of them a denominational institution. Omaha has no such attraction in the way of schools to those religiously inclined, and people do not move in from the country for "religious atmosphere," as they move to Lincoln. Then, too, say the preachers, Omaha abounds in influences which tend to keep the young away from Sunday school. Yet the fact that not so many children attend as in other cities of the same size does not prevent Omaha from having some schools as good as can be found anywhere, and two or three of them are even known far and wide as models.



WHERE THE FIRST CHRISTIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL MEETS.

And the snow that lies round his reindeer's feet, Sweetest sugar, so good to eat! And those are the reasons I want to go To this land where the sugar plums thickly grow! A Christmas Favor. Sylvia had been dowered with favors, All the long cotton thread through; Bonbons of delicious flavors, Ribbons radiant of hue; Fans from Peking and from Yeddo, Little sachets of perfume; Marcuorites—no magic meadow Ever wrought fairer bloom. Foolishness it were to wonder Why this plethora of gift, Every swain her eyes felt under If he saw her lashes lift; And her smiles such visions sweet meant, He who felt his honored smart Very shortly needed treatment For affection of the heart. I, beneath necromancy, Bent the figurative knee; Was it folly, was it fancy, That I dreamed some thought of me? All men have some fond delusion; This was mine, I will confess; Would I fall in blank confusion If I dared to plead for "yes"? "How shall I her mind discover?" Pondered I that Christmas night; Then upon a doubting lover, Flashed a ray of sudden light, As I strolled across the ball room Through an open portiere, lo, On a table in a small room, Lay some sprays of mistletoe! One I plucked—so trim and tiny; Pale as pearl the berries shown; Crossed the hour as sat in slumber, To where Sylvia sat alone— Tendered it; she took it smiling, Flashed a most bewitching line, "This is," said she, most beguiling, "Rather public, don't you think?" Ah, to me she seemed half goddess, Flashed a most bewitching line, With my favor in her bosom, Toward the wide inviting door Of a dim conservatory, Where the violins thrilled low— Kisses litly close the story Of a spray of mistletoe. CLINTON SCOLLARD.

Divisions of the Work. Among the most modern features of Sunday school work are the primary department, classes and class organization for young men and young women, the cradle roll and the home department. There is no longer an infant class in most schools. Children 2 years of age and over are placed in the primary department, from which they graduate into the intermediate department, taking with them in most cases a certificate of promotion. In the larger schools these primary departments are great feeders for the Sunday school proper. The department has a superintendent and a room of its own and has supplies especially adapted to the little ones on a separate account is kept. At any time the books will tell just how much has been paid in by the primary scholars and just what are the expenses of running the department. The little ones have certain work outlined for them, such as learning the Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer in addition to the study of the weekly lesson as told in a simple way by the teacher, and they must complete this work before they are allowed to go into the intermediate department. It is a happy day for the old when she goes into the "big school."

The Gift. She awoke on Christmas morning, And she found beside her bed Gifts of gold and costly jewels, Sapphires blue, and rubies red, Pearls rare and costly silver, Ivory, pearl and scented leather, Treasures to delight a queen. But a single rose of crimson Overlaid with perfume Gave its soul to thrill her senses And to fill the lofty room, And she knew the love that sent it, Here, humble, unconfessed, And she pinned its fragrant beauty In the laces on her breast. "Fold me in my velvet mantle, Bring the coach into the door, Or the frozen snow it rumbled, Where it ne'er had passed before, Hailing at a crazy dwelling In the outskirts of the town, Where the grimy panes were broken And the stairs were falling down. Up and up she mounted, panting, Guided ever by a thin Thread of faint, uncertain music From a mountain violin, Till she stood upon the threshold Of the mansion she had planned, And I bring you love," she said. —MINNA IRVING.

Christmas Bells. If long ago The Christmas bells had never rung Across the snow— While Judah's shepherds watched their flocks by night, Had not that wondrous star burst on their sight, And led them unto where a young child lay, The world would be a dreary world this winter day. If on that night, On Bethlehem's plain, the Virgin's son Had not been born, How the bells ring! And how, in the far frosty sky, The angels sing!

What joy, what hope, what radiance divine Shines from that star, and shall forever shine! The song is ringing over all the earth— Today has seen a wondrous sight, the Savior's birth! But, ah! the woe It Christmas bells had never rung Across the snow! —ROBERT HERRICK. At Sea. Christmas at sea—and still the ghost fog lingers, Far off Arcadia throws her beacon light, Or like an angel life a glowing finger, To warn against the perils of the night, The misty air, Oh! ocean seems to listen To catch the greeting of the kindly stars, That shew Among the jeweled frost points on the sea, O, wife of mine, in that far harbor waiting, For my return on this homeward day— Why should the sailor feel the Christmas greeting With port and love such bitter leagues away? Size of the lonely mariner, so keep Love in the world and never upon the deep! —WALLACE IRWIN. A Greeting. We wish you a merry Christmas, And if we could have our way, We would drive a care and sorrow From your life today. The beautiful Christmas morning Should be brightest of all the year; We should bring you peace and gladness, With God's good will and cheer. There would be no empty places, And not a sigh or a heart cry, Should fall on the Christmas air. Only the song of the angels, Should float through the air this day— Peace and good will to the earth, If we could have our way. —ALICE PHILLIPS ALDRICH.

The Guest at the Inn. The Princess came to Bethlehem's Inn, The Keeper he bowed low; He sent his servants here and yon, His maids ran to and fro. They spread soft carpets for her feet, Her bed with linen fine, They heaped her board with savory meats, They brought rich fruits and wine. The Merchant came to Bethlehem's Inn, Across the desert far, From Ispahan and Samarcand, And hoary Kandahar. Rich Orient freight his camels bore; The gates they open wide, As in he swept with stately mien, His long, slow train beside. The Pilgrim came to Bethlehem's Inn; Wayworn and old was he, With beard unshorn and garments torn, A piteous sight to see! He found a corner dim and lone, He felt his scanty fare, Then laid his scrip and sandals by, And said his evening prayer. The Beggar came to Bethlehem's Inn; They turned him not away; They brought him neither meat nor wine, They bled the varlet say. "The dogs have roared; then why not howl?" "Even dogs have earth to lie upon, And hound-dogs broken bread!" Maid Mary fared to Bethlehem's Inn; Dark was the night and cold, And eerily the icy blast Swept down across the world. She drew her dark brown mantle close, Her simple hood her head, "Oh, hush on, my lord," she cried, "For I am sore bestead!" Maid Mary came to Bethlehem's Inn; There was no room for her, Nor fragrant oil, nor myrrin, But where the burned oxen fed Amid the sheaves of corn, One splendid star shined out after, When our Lord Christ was born. —JULIA C. R. BOUR.

entertainment the Walnut Hill Methodist Sunday school will take a collection for the Mothers' Jewels Home, a founding asylum at York. Many of the schools are planning similar entertainments, and the latter are well content to take part in a Christmas entertainment, at which they and their parents bring gifts for the poor. All sorts of eatables and things to wear, and money also, are brought, and the children take great delight in learning how their gifts are to be distributed and in helping to distribute them. This year at the Christmas

Man's Place at Christmas

A man is pretty lucky if he can get a tit and a pair of gloves, which he would have to have anyway, out of all the money his family spends for Christmas. There may be a grain or two of truth in this, but it seems rather a brutal way of saying that the man does not hold the center of the stage through all the great drama of Christmas. That he is not given the chief role in the holiday cast the average man is perfectly willing to admit, then to go ahead and do the best he can with the minor part given him to play. It, however, generally falls to his lot to make the play a success by opening wide his purse and putting into circulation the money he has been able to acquire by a year or more or less strenuous toil. Of course, he is not expected to spend it all, to leave his purse entirely empty and his bank account a complete wreck, but it is demanded of him that he be liberal with his surplus, more liberal, in fact, than as any other season of the year. Nor has the man any right to expect that on Christmas day he is to be loaded down with presents which none but himself can enjoy. He would be selfish, indeed, to take any such view of the real meaning of the holiday. A man with good common sense should feel perfectly satisfied if his wife presents him with a set of lawn curtains for the parlor window, a cozy coverlet for the piano, or the latest edition of the best-known cook book. True, he cannot eat these things or wear them to the office every day to show them to his friends, but what good taste his wife has, but he can have the pleasure of looking at the curtains and the piano cover, while the cook book may bring about a non-banished reform in the household cuisine. It is, therefore, the duty of man to be well content with the presents which he receives, the one others can enjoy as well as himself.—Baltimore American.