



1979

# The Role of the Sunday School Conventions in the Preparation of Protestant Sunday School Teachers, 1832-1903

Doris Freese  
*Loyola University Chicago*

## Recommended Citation

Freese, Doris, "The Role of the Sunday School Conventions in the Preparation of Protestant Sunday School Teachers, 1832-1903" (1979). *Dissertations*. Paper 1846.  
[http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc\\_diss/1846](http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/1846)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact [ecommons@luc.edu](mailto:ecommons@luc.edu).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).  
Copyright © 1979 Doris Freese

151

THE ROLE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTIONS  
IN THE PREPARATION OF PROTESTANT  
SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS,  
1832-1903

by

Doris A. Freese

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

May

1979

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research of the Sunday school conventions and their relationship to the preparation of Protestant Sunday school teachers was made possible through the encouragement of many persons who assisted me in innumerable ways.

To my doctoral committee at Loyola University: Dr. Rosemary V. Donatelli, Dr. Gerald L. Gutek and Dr. Steven I. Miller, I am most appreciative for their reading my dissertation and making helpful suggestions. I am especially grateful to Dr. Miller, my adviser, for his patient guidance and constructive direction of my doctoral studies and of this dissertation.

I wish to express my thanks to the librarian and library staff at each of the following institutions: the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia; the Moody Bible Institute Library in Chicago; Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library in Evanston, Ill.; the Smith Memorial Library at Chautauqua, N. Y.; Newberry Library in Chicago; and the Historical Room at Fleming H. Revell Company in Old Tappan, N. J. They courteously assisted me in obtaining source materials for this dissertation.

In addition, I wish to express my grateful appreciation to the administration, my colleagues and students at Moody Bible Institute for their continual encouragement and assistance in my doctoral work. Special thanks go to Drs. Lois and Mary LeBar and Dr. Glenn Heck, personal friends, whose encouragement and inspiration played a significant part in my embarking on a doctoral program.

## PREFACE

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study will be to identify and describe the role of the Sunday school conventions, from 1832 to 1903, as they interacted with the need for a trained laity who could teach in the expanding Sunday school movement. In order to understand the convention movement, it will be necessary to trace the Sunday school from its origins in England through its beginnings and development in the United States. Consideration will be given to the types of training, curriculum development, educational views and methodology, and the impact of such training on the Sunday school movement.

### Significance of the Study

The problem of this dissertation is significant for the following reasons. First, the major elements of the American Sunday school changed from secular to religious education, from education of poor children to religious training of children of all classes and later of all ages, and from paid to volunteer teachers. Furthermore, the Sunday school became more closely tied with Protestant churches and did not come under the requirements of governmental control, as did the public school. While the central purpose of the Sunday school movement in the early and mid-nineteenth century was to establish Sunday schools, a growing concern for adequately prepared teachers emerged. By the end of the nineteenth century when Sunday school enrollment across the nation

could be counted in the millions, the need for trained teachers continued to exist. This dissertation examines the kinds and progress of teacher training that developed.

Second, not only did teachers need to be trained but they required suitable curricula to teach. Since the basic content of the Sunday school was, and is, the Bible, designs had to be developed which enabled the teacher to select and teach Bible passages appropriate to the pupils. It is for this reason that this dissertation traces the development of curriculum through the conventions, since the content of teaching is closely linked with the methodology of teaching.

Third, the diversity of the Sunday school movement, denominationally and geographically, within American Protestantism, required some means of amalgamating interests and achievements as well as a way of disseminating information. The national (later international) Sunday school convention served as the vehicle to accomplish these ends. This study, therefore, examines the extent of the role of the conventions as they related to the key issues of teacher training and curriculum. Because the conventions were held triennially and only for three or four days at that time, it is necessary to examine related literature and plans which reflect the implementation of convention ideas and decisions.

Fourth, the study has personal significance for me for three reasons. (1) I served as director of Christian Education in three churches over a period of fourteen years. My work was essentially one of administering the educational program of the church and preparing lay persons to serve in teaching capacities. The enrollment of the Sunday schools in the above three churches ranged in number from 300

to 1200, with teaching staffs of 50 to 175. (2) I have attended and taught workshops at conventions at all levels--local, state, regional and national. These workshops have been in the nature of teaching, training, curriculum and methodology. (3) I am currently teaching at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago in the Department of Christian Education. While the scope of the department goes beyond training for Sunday school work, the basic principles and distinctives of Christian education apply to both lay and professional teaching. Many of the students of the Moody Bible Institute will eventually teach in a Sunday school or in some other education agency of the church as lay persons, even though their vocation may be in some other field.

#### Method of the Dissertation

This study involves the collection and analyzing of documents and utilizes the procedures of the historical method. A chronological scheme underlies the dissertation, serving as a framework for a descriptive and interpretative development of the subject.

The official reports of the Sunday school conventions will be examined to discover the decisions made regarding curriculum development and teacher preparation as well as plans for implementing such decisions. Related sources will be examined to determine the extent of implementation.

Throughout the study, progress and significant changes in curriculum development and teacher training will be examined to determine whether these areas continued to embody the stated or implied purposes of the conventions.

#### Sources for the Dissertation

The sources for this dissertation are to be found in a number of institutions and private collections. The major collection is located

at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia which in 1968 became the recipient of most of the historical documents and papers of the American Sunday School Union. Some secondary sources of the Union can also be found at the Philadelphia Free Library. The collection at the Presbyterian Historical Society consists of numerous boxes of letters, pamphlets, reports and other items from the inception of the American Sunday School Union in 1824 to the transfer of its papers in 1968. A complete set of the annual reports of the American Sunday School Union and of the published reports of the national, international and world conventions can be found at the Presbyterian Historical Society. Complete sets of the various periodicals of the American Sunday School Union, such as The American Sunday-School Magazine, The Quarterly Sunday School Magazine, The Sunday-School Journal, The Sunday School Journal and Advocate of Christian Education and The Sunday School Times are also housed at the Presbyterian Historical Society.

Duplications of the above collection, other than the unpublished items, and related sources are located in numerous institutions. The writer of this dissertation visited the following institutions for the expressed reasons.

1. The archives room of Fleming H. Revell Company in New Jersey. Founded in 1887, this company was an early publisher in the field of curriculum, lesson helps and teacher training.

2. Smith Memorial Library, Chautauqua Institute, Chautauqua, New York. The papers of John Heyl Vincent as well as related sources can be found there. Vincent was a key figure in the teacher training movement in the late nineteenth century.

4. Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library, Evanston,

Illinois. The seminary, which is affiliated with the United Methodist Church denomination, has a good collection of Vincent's works plus related sources in Sunday school work. Vincent was a Methodist-Episcopal minister and later bishop of that denomination. The library also houses some of the American Sunday School Union Annual reports and some published proceedings of the Illinois State Sunday School Association.

4. Newberry Library, Chicago. An interesting but limited collection of resources on the Illinois State Sunday School Association can be found here.

5. Moody Bible Institute Library and Historical Room, Chicago. Sources on Dwight L. Moody and his involvement in Sunday school work as well as related sources are located here. The library has an excellent collection of early curriculum materials and teacher training books.

6. Other locations of sources include: Wheaton College Library, Wheaton, Illinois; Chicago Public Library; The Museum of Sunday School Heritage, Atlanta, Georgia; University of Chicago Library; and several private sources.

#### Review of the Related Literature

While the topic of this dissertation has been treated in various texts, most discussion has been limited to a chapter or part of a chapter, usually dealing historically with the conventions and/or providing brief descriptions of the major purposes and accomplishments of the conventions. Insofar as I am aware, no one has used the conventions as the focal point and attempted to identify and analyze their role in the preparation of Sunday school teachers.

The best treatment of the subject is the exhaustive work of

Edwin Wilbur Rice, The Sunday-School Movement and the American Sunday-School Union, 1780-1917, in which he deals historically with the American Sunday School Union and its relationship to the Sunday school movement. He provides a chapter on the conventions, associations, institutes, assemblies, organized denominational Sunday school work and teacher training from an historical and descriptive viewpoint. He describes the conventions in their role as arousing "universal interest . . . in making the Sunday school a world-wide power in spreading Christianity."<sup>1</sup> Because of the limits of one chapter, the area of teacher training is necessarily treated briefly. He does, however, include discussions of teacher training in some of the other chapters. He also includes two chapters on curriculum development which provide helpful background information leading up to the Convention-approved Uniform Lesson System.

A publication of the International Sunday School Association, Half a Century of Growth and Service (1916), records "The Story of the International Sunday School Association" in brief, outline form. It provides a quick overview of the key dates, accomplishments and organization of the Association. Its very brevity, however, in my opinion, limits its usefulness in that it can be understood only if one has a more thorough acquaintance with the Association and the work of the conventions.

An excellent historical study of curriculum has been done by Simeon Gilbert in The Lesson System: The Story of Its Origin and Inauguration. It is limited by its date of publication, 1879, in that it traces curriculum only seven years beyond the inauguration in 1872 of the Uniform Lessons. John Richard Sampey in The International

---

<sup>1</sup>Edwin Wilbur Rice, The Sunday-School Movement and the American Sunday-School Union, 1780-1917 (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1917), p. 5.

Lesson System: The History of its Origins and Development (1911) draws heavily on Gilbert for information up to 1879 but is able to carry the discussion to a later date.

Historical Chapters in Christian Education in America by E. Morris Fergusson provides a comprehensive study of the organization and development of the conventions from movement to association to council.

#### Limitations of the Study

The problem of the dissertation will be pursued within the framework of the following limitations.

First, the emphasis will be on the lay involvement of the Sunday school movement. The Sunday school Convention, up until its incorporation in 1907 as the International Sunday School Association, was essentially a democratic organization allowing for the greatest possible representation of lay persons in Sunday school work. Since the American version of the Sunday school almost from its inception in the late eighteenth century was a lay effort, the concern of this dissertation is with the training of lay persons by lay persons. While experts in curriculum and in teacher training were instrumental in the development of these two areas, the lay element was strongly evident because, first of all, these persons began as lay pioneers in the field and, second, they were closely attuned to the desires of the laity.

Second, the study concludes with the year 1903 when the first break in the lay domination of the Convention took place. A brief historical accounting in the concluding chapter will record the events which followed in the next twenty years to provide the reader with a sense of resolution.

Third, the Sunday school movement is essentially a Protestant

movement, although schools on Sundays have appeared in non-Protestant churches. Lynn and Wright state, "Catholics sometimes started them in frontier days and more than a few synagogues have Sunday classes for youngsters. But by and large the story is Protestant, for Sunday schools never became the rule in American Catholicism or normative in Judaism."<sup>2</sup> The study deals with the segment of Protestantism classified as evangelical and which was involved in the Convention movement.

Fourth, the study is further limited by the vast amount of materials which are available for examination and discussion within the time frame of the study. The sources used have been selected because they are representative, rather than exhaustive, of the materials extant during a particular period of time. An example of this is found in the discussion of the "Babel Period," 1850-1879, when the various denominations produced their own curricula, resulting in a proliferation of lesson materials.

#### Definitions of Terms Used in the Study

Throughout the study the term Sunday school will refer to a school held on Sunday for religious education, unless otherwise indicated. The first Sunday schools in England met for the purpose of teaching children to read and write, using the Bible as a textbook. Early Sunday schools in America served as alternatives to the common or public schools. When the public school became an accepted part of the American educational scene, the Sunday school assumed as its primary function the weekly religious instruction of children.

The term Sabbath school as used in the study refers to the school

---

<sup>2</sup>Robert W. Lynn and Elliott Wright, The Big Little School, Sunday School American Protestantism (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), p. xiii.

which met on Sunday for religious education. The word "Sabbath" in the Hebrew means "rest" and is generally used to designate the seventh day of the week observed from Friday evening to Saturday evening as a day of rest by Jews and some Christians. Within most of Christendom, however, the Sabbath refers to Sunday as a day of rest and worship. The term, Sabbath school, was frequently used in the early years of the Sunday school movement to mean the school held on Sunday.

The definition of the term evangelical used in the study will be that found in the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary: "emphasizing salvation by faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ through personal conversion, the authority of Scripture, and the importance of preaching as contrasted with ritual."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1975 ed., s.v. "Evangelical."

## VITA

The author, Doris A. Freese, was born November 27, 1929, in Westwood, New Jersey.

Miss Freese graduated from Westwood High School in 1947. In June 1958 she received the Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Christian education from Nyack Missionary College, Nyack, New York. She received the Master of Arts degree in Christian education from Wheaton Graduate School, Wheaton, Illinois, in June 1962.

She served as a Bible teacher in rural schools of Maine under the New England Fellowship of Evangelicals 1950-1953; as Director of Christian Education at the First Baptist Church, Peekskill, New York 1961-1967; as Director of Christian Education at the Knox United Presbyterian Church, Kenmore, New York 1967-1968; and as Director of Children's Ministries (1968-1972) and Director of Christian Education (1972-1975) at Wheaton Bible Church, Wheaton, Illinois. She is currently Assistant Professor of Christian Education at Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois.

Miss Freese serves as a consultant for Scripture Press Publications, Wheaton, Illinois and has written curriculum materials for this publishing company. She has written articles in the field of Christian education which have appeared in Teach, Discovery, Leadership Library for Children's Ministries and Moody Monthly magazines. She also reviews manuscripts for Moody Press and writes book reviews for

Moody Monthly. Her book, Vacation Bible School, was published in 1977 by the Evangelical Teacher Training Association, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	ii
PREFACE . . . . .	iii
VITA . . . . .	xii
CONTENTS OF APPENDIX . . . . .	xvi
Chapter	
I. THE HISTORY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN ENGLAND (1780-1811) . . . . .	1
Origin and Growth of the Sunday School Movement . .	1
View of the Child and Teaching Methodology . . . .	18
II. THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN AMERICA (1790-1824) . . . . .	28
The Shaping of a Nation . . . . .	28
The "First" Sunday Schools . . . . .	34
Emerging Sunday School Associations . . . . .	40
Characteristics of the Early Sunday Schools . . . .	47
View of the Child . . . . .	48
Responsibilities and Training of Teachers . .	49
Curriculum and Methods . . . . .	51
Summary . . . . .	56
III. EARLY EFFORTS IN GROWTH AND TRAINING (1824-1832) . . .	57
The Nature of the Sunday School During 1824-1832 .	57
The American Sunday School Union . . . . .	69
Teacher Training Efforts . . . . .	81
Educational Methodologies Examined . . . . .	85
Monitorial System . . . . .	85
Pestalozzianism . . . . .	87
Gall's Lesson System of Teaching . . . . .	88
Jacotot's System . . . . .	90
Owen's Infant Schools . . . . .	91
Froebel's Theory of Spontaneity . . . . .	92
Curriculum . . . . .	93
Uniform Limited Lessons . . . . .	93
Lesson Aids for Teachers . . . . .	96
Early Conventions . . . . .	97

Chapter	Page
IV. DEVELOPMENT OF STATE AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS (1832-1872) . . . . .	104
A Half-Century in Review . . . . .	104
The First National Convention, 1832 . . . . .	110
The Second National Convention, 1833 . . . . .	116
The Intervening Years Between the Second and Third Conventions . . . . .	118
The Third National Convention, 1859 . . . . .	128
The Fourth National Convention, 1869 . . . . .	132
The Sunday School's Struggle for Identity . . . . .	137
Teacher Training . . . . .	141
V. EXPANSION IN CURRICULUM AND TRAINING (1871-1903) . . .	146
Convention Development, 1872-1903--An Overview . .	146
Uniform Lesson System . . . . .	155
The Struggle for Graded Lessons . . . . .	173
Teacher Training . . . . .	181
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	198
Summary . . . . .	198
An Historical Update . . . . .	203
Conclusions . . . . .	206
Conclusions on the Nature and Characteristics of the Conventions . . . . .	206
Conclusions on Teacher Training . . . . .	207
Conclusions on Curriculum . . . . .	210
Conclusions on Methodology . . . . .	210
Conclusions on the View of the Child . . . . .	211
Limitations and Possible Further Research . . . . .	211
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	215
APPENDIX A . . . . .	229

CONTENTS OF APPENDIX

	Page
APPENDIX A Early Sunday Schools and Societies in America . . . .	229

## CHAPTER I

### THE HISTORY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

IN ENGLAND (1780-1811)

#### Origin and Growth of the Sunday School Movement

Gloucester, England, in the late 1700s stood as a study of contrasts. Numerous churches existed along with several local jails and the county prison. A relatively small wealthy population lived beside the masses of poor. Charities abounded as did suffering. Physical, intellectual and moral conditions of both the well-to-do and the common people reflected the harshness of society and its inability or unwillingness to institute humane changes. Crimes received severe punishment. A man caught stealing a sheep could be hanged while a minor felony could result in being transported. Minor offenses, such as begging, quarrels and bad conduct, were punished by tying the offender to the tail of a cart and whipping him or her through the streets. If one was punished by being sent to prison, he found deplorable conditions awaiting him. Those in the debtors' block depended entirely on the kindnesses of friends and neighbors for food and clothing while those who committed a more serious crime received a portion of bread daily. The well-to-do of Gloucester, though inured to crime and its corollary punishments, provided charities for the sick, the poor, and for widows and orphans. So much did charities abound in that city that people said when certain

of anything, "As sure as God's in Gloucester."<sup>1</sup> Benevolence and charitable organizations were to become an essential expression of voluntary efforts in the British Empire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Spearheaded by William Wilberforce, the Church of England expanded its early "slight efforts" of 1790 into an "immense reform movement, well organized and superbly directed . . . and using agencies and resources of a size, number and power not yet fully recognized."<sup>2</sup>

Illiteracy was common. No system of national or popular education existed. "There were not 3,500 public and private schools, it was said, in all England."<sup>3</sup> Dame schools, grammar and collegiate schools provided education for children of wealthier families, while some "charity" or "ragged" schools were kept for promising children from among the "vulgar" class. Private schools kept by a woman were known as "Mam" schools while those with a male schoolmaster were called "Gaffer" schools.<sup>4</sup> School hours often were irregular, determined by the business responsibilities or household engagements of the man or woman keeping the school. Poorly-paid and often unlettered clergymen who kept school in rural areas rarely taught more than the catechism to children. The Bible was a neglected book with few copies available. Hannah More, writer of Sunday school lessons and children's books, reported "that in Cheddar, near the cathedral city of Wells, she found wealthy farmers hard, brutal, and ignorant, and saw only

---

<sup>1</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Rice, The Sunday School Movement, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

one Bible in all the parish--and that was used to prop a flower pot."<sup>5</sup>

Gloucester boasted of industry which compounded the problems of lower class society. Known for its manufacture of pins, making of sacks and casting of church bells, the city relied on entire families to keep its pre-factory system operations in motion. Child labor was common with children working long hours beside their parents six days a week. On Sunday these children were turned loose to run wild in the streets. They spent that day in "noise and riot, playing at chuck, and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid as to convey to any serious mind an idea of hell rather than any other place."<sup>6</sup> The noise and confusion of their activities was so great that the neighbors were deprived of their enjoyment of the Sabbath. Farmers as well as inhabitants of the towns and villages complained that they suffered more damage of their property on the Sabbath than all the rest of the week.<sup>7</sup> The general view regarding the poorer classes, however, held that the children were no better than their parents, "incapable of improvement," and "attempts to reclaim them were impracticable, or at least not worth the trouble."<sup>8</sup> While charitable "sops" for the lower classes received the nod of approval and a measure of involvement from the well-to-do, most better class people believed education of the poor to be economically unsound and socially destructive.

England in the late eighteenth century began to sense the stirrings of both the Industrial Revolution and of social reform. Figures, such as William Wilberforce, John Howard, Charles and John Wesley, George

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>6</sup>John Carroll Power, The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1863), p. 37.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

Whitefield and William Pitt were soon to make their impact on British society. Into this milieu stepped a man who was to bring his contribution to reform and education through the founding of Sunday schools--Robert Raikes. Born in 1736 the son of a Gloucester editor and printer, Raikes inherited his father's occupation and position. As the proprietor of the only printing press in several counties for many years, Raikes came in contact with a diversity of people, many socially above him, and with issues of interest and controversy. That his heart and mind were moved by the social conditions of his countryside was evident in his weekly publications.

It is certain that the sight of pain, poverty, and depravity was very distressing to him, for his papers abound with representations of the vice and misery resulting from the overcrowding of the local gaols, and with benevolent appeals to the public for assistance for the poor prisoners--both debtors and criminals.<sup>9</sup>

The man Raikes, or Reekes according to Gloucester pronunciation, is pictured as a "fair, well-looking man" who walked with an air of "proprietorship," called "buckishness" or "style" by the poor. He wore a dark suit with a white, buff or fancy waistcoat, cambric frill and cuffs, nan-keen breeches, white stockings and buckles on his shoes. A wig, brown with a double row of curls, and a three-cornered hat topped his medium height and comfortably stout personage. He carried a cane and took snuff from a gold box on dress occasions or from a horn box. When he walked, he tended to draw attention to himself with affected airs of the well-to-do as attested to by the curate of his parish, St. Mary de Crypt, in 1831: "An excessive vanity was a predominant feature in Mr. Raikes'

---

<sup>9</sup>J. Henry Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1899), p. 56.

character."<sup>10</sup>

Raikes, however, for all his marks of a "self-made" man, held the respect of both the common people and gentlemen of education and position. Considered "respectable" and "eminently respectable," he kept company with the "best sort" and earned the title of a prosperous, shrewd man of business, conducting his newspaper in a judicious manner. Dependent on newspapers brought by coach from London, Raikes in his Gloucester Journal frequently excluded advertisements from his paper to make room for news, with a promise to include the advertisements the following week. As editor or "printer" whenever he found it necessary to express his opinion on an issue, he sought to do so with brevity. "Matters of opinion" were not to override "matters of fact." Likewise, "not a single instance of personal abuse can be found in the Gloucester Journal during the whole of the many years it was under the control of Robert Raikes."<sup>11</sup>

The attentions of Raikes were first drawn to the deplorable conditions of the prisons and for several years he generously contributed towards feeding and clothing both debtors and criminals confined in the several jails of Gloucester. He supported prison reform and saw two bills passed in Parliament in 1774 through the efforts of a friend, John Howard, which abolished jailers' fees, assigned fixed remuneration out of county rates and provided for proper care of prisoners and proper white-washing and cleaning of prisons.<sup>12</sup> Raikes' concern for the prisoners extended beyond the meeting of physical needs to caring for intellectual, moral

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>11</sup>Alfred Gregory, Robert Raikes: Journalist and Philanthropist (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., n.d.), p. 21.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

and spiritual wants. He supplied prisoners who could read with good books and encouraged them to instruct less favored fellow-prisoners. Not only did he exhort them to aspire towards a better life but tried to find employment for all those who were willing and able to work. His study of these degraded beings led him to the conclusion that such conditions eventuated in a continual procession "ripe or ripening for the gallows."<sup>13</sup> He further believed that their degradation could be attributed to ignorance and idleness and that reformation could be effected by restraint and instruction in moral education.<sup>14</sup> Raikes held that vice in the child was an imitation of the sights and sounds of his immediate environment. Prison work was, in effect, an attempt to improve the adult and to reach the child through the reformed parent. After several years of fruitless effort, Raikes sensed a futility in trying to change the environment through adults and shifted his efforts to changing the children within the environment. The only possible solution appeared to be the prevention of the making of criminals.

In 1780 Raikes began an experiment, which a few individuals had done before him and were doing in various places throughout England, to see whether the children of the poor "when disciplined and instructed, would show the same evidences of human feelings and instincts as children more favourably situated."<sup>15</sup> Venturing into St. Catherine's meadow near the pin factory in one of the lowest parts of Gloucester, Raikes saw the

---

<sup>13</sup>The Development of the Sunday School, 1780-1905. The Official Report of the Eleventh International Sunday-School Convention (Boston: Executive Committee of the International Sunday-School Association, 1905), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 43.

wretched condition of the children playing in the streets. In discussing the situation with an inhabitant, he was told that Sundays were far worse for the streets seethed with these "wretches" who played, shouted and rioted, making enjoyment of the Sabbath impossible. Deciding that "some little plan should be formed to check the deplorable profanation of the Sabbath,"<sup>16</sup> Raikes hired Mrs. Meredith at a shilling a day to teach reading and the Church catechism on Sunday to poor children. The first Sunday school began in Sooty Alley, the lane of the chimney sweeps, with a few boys rounded up by Raikes and Mrs. Brandon, his associate. Their early efforts were greeted with laughter and jeers as "Bobby Wild Goose and his ragged regiment" trooped through the streets to the home of Mrs. Meredith. After six months the place and teacher were changed. Mrs. Critchley, landlady of the Trumpet Inn which sat in the shadow of the county jail, took over the school. She seemed well suited, perhaps by association to the jail environment, to teach and discipline boys, some of whom were brought to school with logs or iron weights tied to their legs. Indeed, the experiment had begun and was to continue for three years before Raikes made public his plan. "Apparently he wished to see whether in Littleworth, and elsewhere, he could tame the untamed, and bring to the surface something of the divine image believed to be somewhere imprinted on the soul of every human child."<sup>17</sup>

Robert Raikes was not the first to conceive of Sunday schools for poor children although early schools generally served the purpose of

---

<sup>16</sup>Gregory, Robert Raikes: Journalist and Philantropist, p. 58.

<sup>17</sup>Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 43.

inculcating the catechism to children.<sup>18</sup> The earliest name connected with religious instruction of British children on Sundays seems to be that of Joseph Alleine. He and his wife in 1668 gathered sixty to seventy children together to teach the catechism and also engaged teachers and governors to teach children once a week. The work ceased after several years, however, due to persecutions from those loyal to the Stuarts, the ruling family in England.<sup>19</sup> A Bishop Frampton, upon resigning his office in 1693, settled in the country where he catechized children of the local parish church and "explained in the afternoon the sermon which had been preached in the morning."<sup>20</sup> Rev. Theophilus Lindsey in 1763 is reported as having catechized the young people during the interval between the two services at which he officiated each Sunday.<sup>21</sup> Women also taught some of the early schools. In 1765 Miss Harrison of Bedale established "a sort of Sunday school" in her kitchen for poor children where she taught them to read as well as to recite Dr. Watt's shorter catechism. Miss Hannah Ball, a pious Methodist, gathered "a wild little company" in her home in 1769 to instruct them in the catechism. John Wesley himself placed great stress on teaching children and

---

<sup>18</sup>Isaac Watts in the period of 1729-30 prepared and published two catechisms for use of children which Lewis G. Pray in The History of Sunday Schools and of Religious Education from the Earliest Times (Boston: W. M. Crosby and H. P. Nichols, 1847) declared to be "a great advance on all previous compilations of the same kind, and are at this day, with the exception, perhaps, of some erroneous statements of doctrine, among the best to place in the hand of childhood. Their effect on the cause of religious instruction in England must have been similar to that of Luther's in Germany and on the continent." p. 126.

<sup>19</sup>Lewis G. Pray, The History of Sunday Schools and of Religious Education from the Earliest Times (Boston: W. M. Crosby and H. P. Nichols, 1847), p. 128.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

instructed his preachers to spend an hour each week with the children in every large town "whether you like it or not. . . . Unless . . . we can take care of the rising generation, the present revival of religion will be res unius aetatis; it will last only the age of a man."<sup>22</sup>

Despite these early efforts in Sunday teaching, the title of "founder" of the Sunday schools undisputedly became Robert Raikes' after 1783.<sup>23</sup> He gave the notion of Sunday school the impetus to become a full-blown teaching agency which predated universal, free education in England. Through his newspaper he was able to widely publicize the successes of the Sunday school and to enlist the aid of benevolent gentlemen to support the idea of educating poor children. A movement for a systematic, universal, scriptural education for the poor was in the making and the Sunday school provided a method for exploring this ambition. On November 3, 1783, the following announcement appeared in the Gloucester Journal.

Some of the clergy, in different parts of this county, bent upon attempting a reform among the children of the lower class, are establishing Sunday schools, for rendering the Lord's day subservient to the ends of instruction, which has hitherto been prostituted to bad purposes. Farmers, and other inhabitants of the towns and villages, complain that they receive more injury in their property on the Sabbath than all the week besides: this, in a great measure, proceeds from the lawless state of the younger class, who are allowed to run wild on that day, free from every restraint. To remedy this evil, persons duly qualified are employed to instruct those that

---

<sup>22</sup>H. Clay Trumbull, The Sunday School: Its Origin, Mission, Methods, and Auxiliaries (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 107-08.

<sup>23</sup>Harris states that "Mr. Raikes generally dates the movement from the 3rd of November, 1783, when he stood committed to the plan by its publication. It seems as though he had up to then held himself free not to continue his schools started in 1780, unless satisfied with the results obtained. He never contested or challenged honours claimed by or on behalf of anyone prior to 1783, after which date he was the 'Organizer' by universal consent." See Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 75.

cannot read: and those that may have learnt to read, are taught the Catechism and conducted to church. By thus keeping their minds engaged, the day passes profitably, and not disagreeably. In those parishes where the plan has been adopted, we are assured that the behavior of the children is greatly civilized. The barbarous ignorance in which they had before lived, being in some degree dispelled, they begin to give proofs that those persons are mistaken who consider the lower orders of mankind incapable to improvement, and therefore think an attempt to reclaim them impracticable, or at least, not worth the trouble.<sup>24</sup>

Raikes continued to use his Journal as a platform for the Sunday school. On May 24, 1784, he contrasted the prisons, "seminaries of every species of villainy and profligacy," with the design of the Sunday School and its idea that "prevention is better than punishment."<sup>25</sup> By this time the plan of Sunday schools, so reported the London Chronicle, had spread to Leeds and Yorkshire where 2,000 poor children had been enrolled.<sup>26</sup> In June 1784, the Gentlemen's Magazine, a London periodical, published a letter written by Raikes to Colonel Townley of Lancashire which explained in detail the Sunday school plan and thus diffused throughout England both the idea and evident success of the Sunday school.

Conditions throughout England, especially in its cities, called for some kind of education for the masses. William Fox, a London draper and pious Baptist, shocked by the ignorance he saw in his travels, pledged himself to the goal of teaching all poor English men to read. He envisioned a plan for weekday schools but encountered something less than enthusiasm in his early efforts to inaugurate such a plan. When he heard of Raikes' work, he along with other influential men in 1785 organized the Society for Promoting Sunday Schools Throughout the British Dominions (later abbreviated to The Sunday School Society). Its purposes were "to prevent vice, to encourage industry and virtue, to dispel

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 62-63.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

ignorance of darkness, to diffuse the light of knowledge, to bring men cheerfully to submit to their situations."<sup>27</sup> The Society maintained an ecumenical balance in its membership with a committee of twenty-four consisting of twelve members of the Church of England and twelve Protestant dissenters. The organization provided Bibles, Testaments and spelling books for use in the schools as well as basic instructions for teachers. It apparently did not occur to Fox, Raikes or the trustees of The Sunday School Society that the education of the young was the business of the state, whose business was thought to be punitive rather than preventive. Although Fox and Raikes both held that prevention could reduce frequency of punishment, neither looked to the state for aid in their ventures.

In order that class lines be maintained, some of the auxiliary societies, such as the London Society, taught only reading. Some concern was expressed by the benefactors of the schools that a knowledge of writing by poor people would foment civil strife. As long as rigid class lines were retained, the gentlemen's society seemed willing to support the endeavor. Both The Sunday School Society and Raikes held that one purpose was to civilize the common people in order that they would recognize their positions in life and show proper respect for their superiors.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup>Harris records that among the admonitions written for the Sunday school students was: "Bow to ladies and gentlemen whenever you meet them." See Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 69. Harris also cites a description by Raikes of the results of one Sunday school for poor children: "October 1785. Two hundred children of the lower class have been taught to read in the Painswick Sunday School, and that, therefore, they who were conspicuous for their brutality and profaneness have now become quiet, and have a sense of respect and subordination to their superiors." [Italics mine]. See Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 73.

It was therefore, to the advantage of the upperclass to support the idea of Sunday schools. Since results of improved behavior were evident in such places as Gloucester, Leeds, Newcastle and elsewhere, and could be verified by reputable persons who had previously complained of irreverent and irresponsible actions of vulgar children, the gentlemen's class was exhorted to take note and participate in the venture. At least they could observe changes and then recommend as well as support financially the experiment in "botanizing human nature" and cultivating the life that was "new."

Raikes sensed the importance of identifying the Sunday schools first of all with the Church of England. He himself was a faithful member of the Established Church and knew that if the movement began with the Nonconformist groups, the Dissenters, the probability of Church support would be slim. His initial move, therefore, in Gloucester was to gain the cooperation of Rev. Thomas Stock, headmaster of the Cathedral grammar school and curate of St. John's.<sup>29</sup> Raikes also recognized, however, that if the Sunday school originated with the Church, its evident capabilities for good would speedily recommend it to the Dissenters. Support did come from some clergy in the Church of England. Both the Bishop of Salisbury and the Bishop of Llandoff in 1785 reported establishing Sunday schools in their parishes and recommended them to their dioceses.

---

<sup>29</sup>Controversy exists concerning the role of Rev. Thomas Stock--whether he conceived of the idea of the Sunday school and approached Raikes or vice versa. While he appears to have been vitally interested in the venture and participated by starting a Sunday school of his own, evidence indicates that he and Raikes entered into a financial arrangement together for a time with Raikes supplying three-fourths of the expenses for the schools and Stock the other fourth. It also appears that Raikes started the very first school in Gloucester in St. Catherine's meadow. See Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, pp. 13-35, 161-69, and Gregory, Robert Raikes: Journalist and Philanthropist, pp. 61-69.

The Dean of Lincoln likewise saw the extensive influence of Sunday school for "the cause of general reformation,"<sup>30</sup> affecting not only the children who participated but their families and neighborhoods as well.

John Wesley recommended the Sunday school to the Methodists who adopted the institution early in its history.<sup>31</sup> Particularly were the Methodists concerned with using the Sunday school for religious education--instruction in the Bible and catechism. On July 18, 1784, Wesley wrote in his private journal, "I find these schools spring up wherever I go; perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may be nurseries for Christians."<sup>32</sup> He commended Methodist ministers for setting up Sunday schools and on April 18, 1788, preached, "A Sermon for the Sunday Schools." Raikes was not unaware of the support of the Nonconformists and wrote in his Journal in 1786, "The Dissenters of every denomination were assiduous in their co-operating aid to give vigour and premanency to this institution."<sup>33</sup>

Not only churchmen but other prominent figures indicated an awareness and interest in Raikes' endeavors. In June 1788, Raikes responded to an invitation from Queen Charlotte to give an account of Sunday school work. Even at Windsor some ladies of fashion spent their Sundays teaching poor children. King George III visited the schools at Brentford and "uttered the pious wish 'that every poor child in my kingdom should be

---

<sup>30</sup>Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 78.

<sup>31</sup>It is reported that John Wesley himself instructed children on Sundays as early as 1737 while a missionary in Georgia.

<sup>32</sup>Power, The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools, p. 159.

<sup>33</sup>Gregory, Robert Raikes: Journalist and Philanthropist, p. 100.

taught to read the Bible."<sup>34</sup> In a letter to William Fox, Raikes reported, "We have seen the rapid progress of Christianity. Dr. Adam Smith, who has so ably written on the wealth of nations, says, 'No plan has promised to effect a change of manners with equal ease and simplicity, since the days of the apostles.'"<sup>35</sup> Malthus gave a "warning against the nation's leaving the entire education of the common people to the Sunday school."<sup>36</sup> Joseph Lancaster, who visited Raikes when the latter was seventy-two, expressed curiosity in the results of the work. When he asked Raikes whether any of the 3,000 poor children taught in the schools he superintended had gone to prison, Raikes gave a resounding, "None!"<sup>37</sup>

The movement was not without opposition which came from the same sources that gave assent. The major objection was that the Sunday schools were "dangerous, demoralizing, bad institutions, and agents of the devil."<sup>38</sup> Both the Bishop of Rochester and the Archbishop of Canterbury denounced Sunday schools and called upon their clergy to cease establishing schools in their parishes. They viewed the Sunday school as a threat to church unity, resulting in the establishment of dissenting chapels. As the Sunday school progressively developed into an evangelical movement, the non-evangelical party within the Established Church heightened its attack. Lynn and Wright see the controversy as one in which insinuations of French Revolutionary influence became a smoke screen for the more realistic

---

<sup>34</sup>Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 129.

<sup>35</sup>Power, The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools, p. 164.

<sup>36</sup>Trumbull, The Sunday School: Its Origin, Mission, Methods, and Auxiliaries, p. 118.

<sup>37</sup>Power, The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools, p. 213.

<sup>38</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 20.

issue of church politics. In an effort to stop the Wilberforcian coalition, churchmen sniped at both the Methodists and the evangelicals within the Established Church.

Of vital concern, however, and one which hinted at revolution, was the possible alteration of the class system. In the 1790s the threat of the French Revolution crossing the Channel loomed large and Sunday schools were viewed as "nurseries of fanaticism." "Schools of atheism and disloyalty," stated the Bishop of Rochester, "abound in this country; schools in the shape and disguise of charity schools and Sunday schools, in which the minds of the children of the very lowest orders are enlightened; that is to say, taught to despise religion, and the laws and all subordination."<sup>39</sup> Miss Hannah More of the Wilberforce group suffered persecution and false charges for her work in Somerset where more than 20,000 children of the lower classes learned the habits of industry and piety in Sunday schools. Not only were her teachers arrested and her personal character assailed but she was accused of being in the "pay of Mr. Pitt and was a prime instigator of the French plots."<sup>40</sup>

The dissenters viewed the Sunday school as a somewhat different kind of threat--a desecration of the Sabbath. One clergyman wrote as a summation of his argument against the Sunday school, "How can it be expected the Divine Being will sanction the violation of his own laws? or give a blessing to an institution which appears contrary to his revealed will?"<sup>41</sup> Another clergyman suggested that Sunday schools be held on Saturday. Scottish clergy opposed the Sunday school on two counts: it

---

<sup>39</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 9.

<sup>40</sup>Rice, The Sunday School Movement, p. 20.

<sup>41</sup>Power, The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools, p. 152.

reflected negatively on the parochial schools which every parish in Scotland provided as a means of instruction, and it would ultimately destroy family religion as well as public worship.

The common man opposed the Sunday school on the basis of fear, ignorance and hedonism. Parents in the Cheddar district would not allow their children to attend Sunday school because they thought the teachers would enslave the children's minds within seven years, at which time the children would be transported to the West Indies to be sold as slaves. Worldly-minded individuals opposed the Sunday schools on the grounds that they would curb Sunday amusements such as games, cockfighting, bull baiting, wakes, and, of course, ale houses and pubs. They used the argument that liberties and enjoyments of life would be taken away if the Sunday schools were allowed to flourish.

In 1797, the Gentlemen's Magazine, which had favorably reviewed the Sunday school at its inception, published an article by a clergyman anonymously signed "Eusebius," in which the Sunday school was severely attacked. The writer of the article claimed that the Sunday school was "subversive of that order, that industry, that peace and tranquility which constituted the happiness of society; and that, so far from deserving encouragement and applause, it merits our contempt, and ought to be exploded as the vain chimerical institution of a visionary projector."<sup>42</sup>

Raikes keenly felt the criticism levelled against the Sunday school but remained convinced of its ability to cultivate the lower classes of people. In writing to a friend in 1793, Raikes reported an incident in one of his own classes which he taught. While reading a Bible passage in St. Luke, Raikes questioned his group about the meaning of the phrase,

---

<sup>42</sup>Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 92.

"The Kingdom of God within you" (Luke 17:21). "They were all silent for some minutes. At last the boy who was reading said: 'I believe it means when the Spirit of God is in our hearts.'"<sup>43</sup> Such recurring incidents convinced Raikes that his scheme for botanizing human nature was a valid one. He concluded his remarks to his friend by stating that "now nobody regards the design. I walk alone. It seems as if I had discovered a new country where no other adventurer seems to follow."<sup>44</sup>

The Sunday school movement continued to grow despite the attacks of foes against it. In fact, Rice saw the opposition serving a good purpose in that it not only rallied friends to the support of the movement but advertised Sunday schools, calling attention to their efficiency and potential for bettering both physical and moral conditions within society. At the end of the first four years, Raikes reported ". . . by the best information I am assured that the number of poor children who were heretofore neglected as the wild asses' colt, but who are now taken to these little seminaries of instruction, amounts to 250,000. In the town of Newcastle alone the seminaries contain 5,000."<sup>45</sup> By 1811, the year of Raikes' death, 400,000 children were enrolled in Sunday schools. Growth continued to be phenomenal in Great Britain for at least another forty years. Rice reports:

A Parliamentary census of England and Wales, in 1818, gave 5,463 Sunday schools, with 477,225 scholars. A like census in 1833 put the membership at 1,548,890. An educational census of England and Wales in 1851 gave the number in Sunday-schools at 2,407,642, and this was 260,000 more than could be found in the public and private schools of those countries.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>46</sup>Rice, The Sunday School Movement, pp. 37-38.

View of the Child and Teaching Methodology

The Sunday school movement in Great Britain remained essentially an agency for teaching lower class children to read and to function as responsible citizens within a particular class structure. Although the evangelical groups followed a similar pattern in their Sunday schools, they also placed a strong emphasis on teaching the Bible and on moral education. A variety of crude backgrounds was represented in the schools. Colliers ("a savage people"), chimney sweeps, mine workers, mill workers, those who were "conspicuous for their brutality and profaneness" attended Sunday schools where their behavior changed in such a way that they "became quiet and had a sense of respect and subordination for their superiors."<sup>47</sup>

Raikes' belief in the power of education to change persons was put to the test in his early prison reform involvement. When he sensed the futility of changing adults, he redirected his educational efforts to the children. Raikes held that the parents could be reached by first educating the child. His experiment in "botanizing human nature" was allowed to run for three years before he made it public, during which time he sought to tame the untamed.

A deeply religious man, Raikes wished to bring to the surface the divine image which he believed to be somewhere imprinted on the soul of every child. Good seeds could be planted through popular education which used the Bible as the basic textbook. He relied on education of children for the production of a "new race. . . . With knowledge will come the upward tendency of man to spring towards the light."<sup>48</sup> In fact, results

---

<sup>47</sup>Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 73.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

seemed to surface so quickly that Raikes could report that by the end of a year of Sunday school, "the human soul becomes visible."<sup>49</sup>

The following principles evolved out of Raikes' experiment:

1. Vice in the child is an imitation of familiar sights and sounds.
2. There is a time in the child's life when it is innocent. Then the faculties are active and receptive.
3. Good seeds cannot be planted too early.
4. The child takes pleasure in being good when goodness is made attractive.
5. The Sunday-school may be the instrument under God of awakening spiritual life in the poorest children and, supplemented by day classes, can form the basis of national education.<sup>50</sup>

While the central purpose was to change the child in order eventually to change the adult, the Sunday school was not intended to change social status. Common people were to be influenced with teachings which suited their position in life and were to remember their places even when smiled upon by the upper classes who sought to teach them.

The idea of botanizing in human nature slowly unfolded during the early years as Raikes sought to lay down basic rules which would provide a measure of cohesion among the various schools springing up. The first rules included a requirement of cleanliness for admission into a school and an admonition against swearing and cursing in church. The condition of clothing, or lack of proper clothing, was not sufficient to prevent children from attending, but they were to come with clean hands and faces and hair combed. No one was turned away because his clothes were dirty or ragged. Raikes wrote the following in a letter to the mayor of Gloucester on November 25, 1783.

Many were at first deterred because they wanted decent clothing, but I could not undertake to supply this defect. I agree, therefore,

---

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>50</sup>Rice, The Sunday School Movement, p. 16.

if you can loiter about without shoes, and in a ragged coat, you may as well come to school and learn what may tend to your good in that garb. I reject none on that footing. All that I require are clean hands, clean face, and their hair combed; if you have no clean shirt, come in that you have on.<sup>51</sup>

In 1784, Raikes stated his basic operating premise: "The great principle I inculcate is to be kind and good-natured to each other; not to provoke one another; to be dutiful to their parents; not to offend God by cursing and swearing; and such little plain precepts as all may comprehend."<sup>52</sup>

Recognizing that hungry children were easier handled and better taught by being fed, Raikes approved of any who would provide some sort of sustenance for the children. Both he and others on special occasions invited children to a beef and plum pudding dinner. Believing that good behavior should be rewarded, Raikes approved the purchase of a small loaf of bread for each Sunday scholar. Although he tended to apologize for this "kind of bribery to be good," the idea of reward served to meet the child's need for approbation as well as the very basic need of survival.

Another key principle inculcated by early teachers was that of reverence, particularly in God's house. If children who were of such a disorderly nature as these could be taught a sense of reverence, they could then be trained in orderliness and industry. Since reverence was considered a foundation of personal reformation, a strong emphasis was placed on church attendance in connection with the Sunday schools. Therefore other types of rewards were given to children which included articles of clothing, Bibles, New Testaments, catechisms, hymn sheets and such little booklets as "Prayer for Private Persons, Families, Etc." and

---

<sup>51</sup>Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 309.

<sup>52</sup>Gregory, Robert Raikes: Journalist and Philanthropist, pp. 23-24.

"Admonitions Against Swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and Drunkenness."

The question of discipline necessarily had to be considered because of the nature of the children attending Sunday schools. Discipline ranged from corporal punishment to expulsion from school. "Useful admonitions" were displayed in the schools to remind children of proper behavior. Mrs. Critchley, one of Raikes' first teachers, was described as one well chosen for disciplining boys who were brought to school "with logs of wood and iron weights tied to their legs--boys who had to be birched on the premises, or taken home to be 'leathered,' or have the tips of their fingers burnt for lying."<sup>53</sup> As more humane reforms took hold throughout England, less severe measures were advocated in disciplining children who attended the schools. A pamphlet published in 1807 entitled, "Hints for the Formation and Establishment of Sunday Schools," recommended that corporal punishment be avoided as much as possible. The booklet further advised, "'If any scholars do not come clean, washed and combed, or be guilty of lying, swearing, pilfering, talking in an indecent manner,' etc., then the scholars shall be excluded [from] the school if 'he or she' is still unreformed."<sup>54</sup>

The "useful admonitions" taught reverence, personal good habits and moral truths. A few samples will serve to illustrate the diversity of the admonitions and the attempt to change the character of the children.

"When you are in church, kneel. Do not talk in church: do not eat apples or other things there or in school; for you come to church and to school to serve God and to learn your duty, not to eat and drink.

---

<sup>53</sup>Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 45.

<sup>54</sup>Cited by Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 67.

Do not sing at improper times. Those among you who have coughs should take care not to give way to them, as the noise is very disturbing to other people. Keep from swearing, stealing, and lying. Let no one tempt you to drink drams. Do not fight or quarrel, call nicknames, or tell tales. Do not take birds' nests, spin cockchafers, or do anything to torment dumb creatures."<sup>55</sup>

Sunday school was an all-day event with hours from eight to ten o'clock in the morning, followed by attendance at worship service in the church. The children were dismissed to their homes after the service and reassembled at two until six o'clock in the afternoon. No child under age five was admitted. Instruction in the early Sunday schools was limited to reading lessons and the Church of England Catechism. The Bible was central in all instruction with emphasis on memorization of Scripture passages.

As early as 1786 supplemental books were introduced into the curriculum. The chief manual, aside from the Bible, appears to have been The Scholar's Companion, compiled by Rev. Richard Raikes, brother of Robert. Divided into four parts, the manual consisted of "Scripture sentences, disposed in such order as will quickly ground Young Learners in the fundamental doctrines of our most Holy Religion, and at the same time lead them pleasantly on from simple and easy to compound and difficult words."<sup>56</sup> Lessons were comprised of alphabet tables, lists of short words and short biblical sentences, beginning with sentences composed of words of one syllable and advancing to more difficult exercises. Passages were included from the Old and New Testaments which teach man's duty to God and to his neighbor, history, such as Creation, the Fall and Redemption, and observance of the Sabbath. The four parts were graded to

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-69.

<sup>56</sup> Gregory, Robert Raikes: Journalist and Philanthropist, p. 156.

suit the pupils' ability and progress.

Books and pamphlets on prayer, used in the schools and given as rewards to the scholars, included Dr. Isaac Watts' short prayers, longer prayers by Bishop Wilson and Bishop Gibson, short prayers by Dr. Stonehouse and Dr. Watts' "Advice to Children Respecting Prayer."

Among other books used were A Copious School Book and A Comprehensive Sentimental Book. The latter, compiled by Jonas Hanway in 1786, contained the "alphabet, numbers, spelling, moral and religious lessons, lectures, stories and prayers, suited to the growing powers of children, and for the advancing in happiness of the rising generation."<sup>57</sup> Hanway also published in 1786 A Comprehensive View of Sunday-Schools in which he heartily recommended the institution for general adoption. Mrs. Trimmer, a teacher, compiled a manual, Servant's Friend, for use by the scholars. A religious manual entitled The Mendig School Question Book was written by Hannah More.

Methodology in the schools followed a catechetical, rote-learning pattern. Children learned their letters, practiced spelling and read either to the master or to the monitor who served as pupil-teacher to his class. Small groups of children gathered around their monitors and recited their lessons in a low whisper in order not to disturb the master or mistress who was teaching a larger group. While one child spoke aloud an answer of the catechism or a prayer, the others were required to repeat the same in a whisper. The minister and some of the subscribers, those who assisted in financial sponsoring of the schools, frequently visited in the afternoon to listen to the catechism responses and to observe progress among the scholars.

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

Raikes himself enjoyed teaching and cited instances where he varied his methodology by including stories and object lessons. At one time he used a magnet with its drawing powers to illustrate that the boys could become instruments in God's hand to draw other boys and help make them good.

Training of teachers for the Sunday school consisted almost entirely of a few brief instructions about general procedures. The Sunday School Society issued a series of circulars addressed to "Masters and Mistresses of Sunday Schools" intended to aid particularly those who were inexperienced in teaching. Teachers were to know and practice the best teaching methods. They were to see that the children read well and understood what they read. Neither writing nor arithmetic was to be taught on the Sabbath. The teachers were to study their lessons so thoroughly that they could gain and hold the interest of the children.

An interesting and early concern seemed to be expressed regarding the ability of children. Teachers were to arrange classes according to the varied abilities of the scholars. Nothing was to be required of children that they could not or should not do but they were to complete all that was required of them. Teachers also were to keep attendance records and to check on absentees. Corporal punishment was permissible but was to be used only as a last resort when every other means of discipline had failed.

Permeating all teaching was the religious object of the Society which was to be communicated. Children were to be warned against the evil effects of sin in general and of particular sins, such as pride, theft, idleness, lying, profanity and disobedience to parents. Biblical Precepts were to be explained in language understood by the scholars and

by teachers capable of giving such instruction.<sup>58</sup>

While the underlying basis for the Sunday school system was voluntarism or benevolence, the early teachers received a salary, which was financed by a philanthropically-minded individual or group. A mistress received one shilling a day for her service and frequently for the rental of her kitchen. Salaries often varied for men and women. In Leicester it was reported that each teacher had thirty-five scholars and the masters were paid two shillings a day, the mistresses one shilling, sixpence. The voluntary principle, however, could be seen in individual schools where classes of five boys were taught by unpaid monitors. Advanced pupils acted as teachers of younger children without remuneration-- a mutual or monitorial system in operation a decade before Andrew Bell or Joseph Lancaster proposed a similar system in day schools. As the Sunday school movement grew, continuation of teacher salaries became an increasing problem. The Wesleyans as early as 1785 said in effect, "Let us do the work ourselves," and launched an all-volunteer program. By 1803 the system of voluntary Sunday school teaching was generally accepted through the empire.

Raikes recognized the insufficiency of the Sunday school to meet the need of a national education. He frequently supplemented the Sunday efforts by paying teachers extra to instruct children at other times during the week, such as during recess from work, at dinner time or in the evening. He saw "admirable effects" from this addition and also noted that mothers of the children and young women sought to be admitted to the schools. He further promoted Schools of Industry which provided weekday instruction in industrial arts. Children learned to knit, spin wool for

---

<sup>58</sup>Power, The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools, pp. 103-04.

cloth, spin flax for linen, sew and make clothes. Girls also were trained in household duties with a view of preparing them for domestic service. Raikes viewed weekday schools as a great improvement to the Sunday school and felt that the Sunday school would eventually be replaced by the day school with a reestablishment of the practice of catechising children in churches on Sundays.<sup>59</sup>

The Sunday school in England assumed certain characteristics at its inception. It was primarily a benevolent institution for poor children to teach them reading by using the Bible as the basic text and to instill morals and religious instruction. Teachers were salaried, paid by the individual or group which engaged them. Within a decade the religious aspect of the Sunday schools took on a significant role particularly among the evangelicals. By 1800 the movement was essentially voluntary with teachers offering their services free of charge. The British Sunday schools, however, remained an institution for the poor well into the nineteenth century. Social distance between donors and recipients characterized the attitudes of those involved in the benevolent enterprise. In 1813 a public notice berated poor parents for not sending their children to Sunday school. "It is much to be lamented, that while the Benevolent and Humane are exerting themselves for your Children's Benefit, that you should be so careless of their best Interests."<sup>60</sup> Forty years later such sentiment was still evident and the Sunday school continued to be touted as an educational option for poor children.

The American counterpart of the Sunday school, discussed in the next chapter, showed similarities to the British schools. However,

---

<sup>59</sup>Harris, Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work, p. 64.

<sup>60</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 13.

distinct differences began to emerge early in the nineteenth century as the social fabric of the new country required a different approach to the Sunday school.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN AMERICA (1790-1824)

#### The Shaping of a Nation

The land to the west of England and the Atlantic Ocean held the promise of new beginnings for the colonizer, the businessman and the religious alike. To classify the colonies as "religious" or "nonreligious" is, according to Ahlstrom, a simplistic and superficial mode of identification.<sup>1</sup> Religious and missionary motives permeated thought in the seventeenth century. God's providence was seen behind every occurrence and precepts clearly set forth by the Scriptures were not taken lightly. While actual practice may have lacked depth of conviction, the underlying recognition of divine appointment was evident. John Donne, dean of St. Paul's, expressed the "ultimate vision" of a divinely appointed destiny in his summons to the stockholders of the Virginia Company in 1622:

You shall haue made this Iland, which is but as the Suburbs of the old world, a Bridge, a Gallery to the new; to ioyne all to that world that shall never grow old, the Kingdome of Heauen. You shall add persons to this Kingdome, and to the Kingdome of heauen, and adde names to the Bookes of our Chronicles, and to the Bookes of Life.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever diversity of views existed on other matters, early

---

<sup>1</sup>Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

settlers agreed that religion and education were vital to the stability and happiness of the colonies. Freedom to worship God according to the dictates of one's conscience was inherent in the colonists' concept of religion. After the Revolutionary War, the first amendment of the Constitution was to forbid the establishment by Congress of any national religion, thereby guaranteeing freedom of worship to all. However, pre-Revolutionary years saw a close relationship between education and religion. While no system of free schools for the entire populace existed, Pilgrim, Anglican, Dutch Reformed, Quaker and other groups made early provision for religious instruction and general education of youth.<sup>3</sup> Concern for the general welfare also included the maintenance of a learned ministry. New England's First Fruits (1643) expressed that need:

After God had carried us safe to New England, and wee had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our liveli-hood, rear'd convenient places for Gods worship, and settled the Civil Government; One of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust.<sup>4</sup>

To this end, Harvard College was founded in 1636, followed by William and Mary in 1693.

---

<sup>3</sup>The Massachusetts General Court in 1642 required officials of each town to ascertain from time to time whether "masters of families" were instructing children and apprentices to read and understand the principles of religion and the laws of the commonwealth. In 1647 the Massachusetts Bay enacted the "Old Deluder Satan Act" which provided for the direct employment of teachers, "whose wages shall be paid eithr by ye parents or mastrs of such children, or by ye inhabitants in genrall." In towns of one hundred families or householders, grammar schools were to be set up with fines of 5<sup>l</sup> levied against towns which ignored the Act. See Robert E. Potter, The Stream of American Education (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1967), pp. 23-24; and Newton Edwards and Herman G. Richey, The School in the American Social Order, 2d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963), pp. 56-59.

<sup>4</sup>Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 149.

Colonial and early federal education was characterized by church control with a strong religious emphasis. Secondary schools and colleges focused primarily on the training of students for "the learned professions or for the occupation of a gentlemen." Brown observed, "That the rising tide of democratic ideals in this new land would overthrow such a conception of education was inevitable."<sup>5</sup> Likewise, churches tended to foster a climate of intolerance in their general disagreement about the common religious fundamentals that could be taught in any system of mass education.

The dawn of eighteenth century America revealed a declining state of morality and religion in that the "well-springs of religious fervor" were drying up.

Where once there was ardent devotion to things of the spirit now there was self-satisfaction and lethargic indifference. The churches, once the supreme arbiters of community faith and practice, were losing their hold on the people. Drunkenness and debauchery were the order of the day; even among the clergy there was ample evidence of egregious conduct.<sup>6</sup>

According to Olmstead, the impact of the Great Awakening (1740) with revivals under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield in the North and the Huguenots in the South could be seen in "the quality of the religious experience and the level of public morals."<sup>7</sup> By the latter half of the century, however, the nation would "witness a resurgence of rationalism, spiritual lethargy, theological controversy, and political upheaval."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Arlo Ayres Brown, A History of Religious Education in Recent Times (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1923), p. 52.

<sup>6</sup>Clifton E. Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 155. See also Ahlstrom, A Religious History, pp. 282-83.

<sup>7</sup>Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States, p. 168.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

Not only were social and moral aspects of life in a state of change, but politically and intellectually the colonies were moving in a direction away from ecclesiastical restrictions. Emerging characteristics of the new country became recognizable. Cities and towns, with their many trades and activities, were growing into a fervently capitalistic and individualistic society. The Puritan "work ethic" drove farmer and trader, merchant and landlord to conquer the land and prosper in the marketplace. A kind of middle-class democracy began to develop as the colonies moved toward a state of political and social self-sufficiency. England, a long way off and frequently involved in internal and neighbor-related problems, had ruled in a loose and haphazard manner until 1760 when she began to tighten her political and economic reins on the colonial empire.

The eighteenth century also ushered in the Age of Enlightenment carrying with it the ideas of natural law and natural right, forcing such men as John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to "deal coherently with the separate but interrelated problems of man, God, nature and society."<sup>9</sup> The eventual War for Independence and the struggles of the revolutionary era, that period from 1763 to 1800, must be viewed against the background of the Puritan heritage, the emerging pattern of middle-class democracy and the influences of the Enlightenment.

With the ratification of the Constitution (1787) and its first ten amendments (1791), Protestants, humanists, deists, Unitarians and persons who professed no religious beliefs were at liberty to propagate their views. "Roman Catholics suffered legal disabilities of various sorts, but in no other thoroughly Protestant land were they so free."<sup>10</sup> The adoption

---

<sup>9</sup>Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 359.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 380.

of the Constitution and the embrace of American democracy "completed the alienation of religion from popular education."<sup>11</sup> The churches, weakened by the Revolutionary War, lost their claim to leadership in social matters, including education. "And Triumphant Democracy in securing itself in the control of the public schools was prevented from maintaining any form of religious teaching because of the disagreement of the various religious organizations as to what should be taught."<sup>12</sup> The churches, however, were not without benefit; their latter-eighteenth-century apathy actually provided circumstances for a resurgence of religious activity in America. Ahlstrom cites five factors arising out of the revolutionary era and leading to the "great tradition" of the American churches demonstrated in the nineteenth century:

(1) the reality of religious freedom, (2) the relatively distinct separation of church and state, (3) the growing acceptance of the idea of "denominationalism," (4) the rapid growth in favor of the "voluntary principle" in matters pertaining to church membership and support, and (5) the steady advance of patriotic piety, with its belief in the divinely appointed mission of the American nation.<sup>13</sup>

The concept of "voluntary principle," of self-determined act of commitment, appears to have emerged at the same time that churches in America realized the more practical implications of their new relationship with the "mother" churches in Europe after the Revolutionary War. Prior to the war, they had thought of themselves as appendages of the national churches in Europe and emissaries in a new world. In 1788, Edward Livingston of the Dutch Reformed Church announced that the churches

---

<sup>11</sup>Oscar S. Michael, The Sunday-School in the Development of the American Church (Milwaukee: The Young Churchman Company, 1904), p. 30.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>13</sup>Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 379.

now had "become national Churches themselves in this new Empire."<sup>14</sup> What emerged from the resulting struggles for identity was a new pattern of church-state relations, a voluntary system. In the area of benevolent support the voluntary principle promoted religious work out of the free-will offerings of the people, "from the impulses, without any outward coercion."<sup>15</sup> Separation of church and state was not merely a negative device but a means of allowing churches to pursue their ministries from a positive stance. It allowed churches to act spontaneously with a "vast versatility" in its efforts to preach the Gospel, attack vices and alleviate human suffering.

The voluntary principle was also reflected in the area of church membership. In some Protestant denominations, since the decision for church membership was made in adulthood or in later youth, a kind of individualism developed, asserting itself in both the areas of ecclesiastical governance and civil government. Churches exhibited a distinct congregational involvement and often democratic control. Alphaeus Packard in 1856 asserted that in America voluntarism allowed a man to recognize a divine right, "not for others to lord it over his conscience, but, without interfering with civil or religious liberty, to pay due reverence to divine ordinances and to exert freely his personal effort."<sup>16</sup> Such a principle in operation allowed for wide expression of practical concerns in meeting moral, social and spiritual needs.

One expression of voluntarism can be seen in the Sunday school, which provided a means, independent of church organizations to teach the

---

<sup>14</sup>Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), p. 40.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

young and uplift the masses. Time, energy and money were poured into the effort apart from any mandate of the church. Often a Sunday school became aligned with a particular denomination after it was firmly established. There existed, however, interdenominational schools in some parts of the country where no single denomination was strong enough to maintain a school of its own. Conversion also, in evangelical circles, was viewed as a voluntary act of commitment and could, therefore, be experienced by children and youth who attended non-church-related Sunday schools.

### The "First" Sunday Schools

Any attempt to identify the "first" Sunday school in America leads in many directions as claims for "firstness" are prolific. Secondary sources vary in their listings and primary sources are scattered along the eastern seaboard, if, indeed, they are available. For our purposes, a simple compilation (See Appendix A) from various sources, along with a brief description of schools considered to be key endeavors, will suffice. An underlying factor to keep in mind in identifying such schools is their purpose--whether to teach the catechism, to teach rudiments of reading and writing or to instruct in the Scriptures.

Schools which met on Sunday before 1780 (the year of the Raikes' school) can be traced back as early as 1669 in Plymouth, Massachusetts, when the minister asked the deacons to assist in teaching children during intermission on the Sabbath. In use at that time in the weekday schools and churches were John Cotton's catechism, Milk for Babes (1646), The New England Primer and The Bay Psalm Book. One or more of these catechetical helps may have been used in the first Sabbath school. In the Congregational Church, Roxbury, Massachusetts, boys and girls were instructed in the catechism and the Scriptures after the morning services by men and women. Whether John Wesley held a Sunday school in 1737 when he served

as a missionary in Savannah, Georgia is in question. One writer stated, "Nothing is better authenticated than that the institution which has given rise to this chronicle was the ordinary parish day school, taught by one De La Motte."<sup>17</sup> Another writer with equal assurance asserts, ". . . it is pretty certain that John Wesley's teaching efforts in Savannah, Georgia, resulted in what might be called a Sunday school . . ."<sup>18</sup> Wesley's earliest reference to Sunday schools appears to have been made in 1784 when he wrote in his diary, "Who knows but that some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians."<sup>19</sup>

Another early school was the one begun by Dr. Joseph Bellamy, pastor of a church in Bethlehem, Connecticut, in 1740, and held until the time of his death. He met with the youth of his congregation each Sabbath, "not merely for a catechetical exercise, but for a recitation from the Bible, accompanied with familiar instruction suited to the capacities of young. In this exercise, too, he was often assisted by the members of his church."<sup>20</sup> The type of school here described was more than teaching in the catechism, but offered direct teaching from the Bible.

The first secular Sunday school, and one most closely resembling the Raikes' model, appears to be that in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in 1740, under the direction of a German Community separated from the Dunkards or German Baptists. Observing the seventh day rather than the first as the Christian Sabbath, the community chose Ludwig Haecker (or Thacker or Stiebker) to hold a school on Sabbath (Saturday) afternoons "to give

---

<sup>17</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 442.

<sup>18</sup>Clifton Hartwell Brewer, Early Episcopal Sunday Schools (1814-1865) (Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Co., 1933), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup>Power, The Rise and Progress of Sunday School, p. 159.

<sup>20</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 442.

instruction to the indigent children who were kept from regular school by employments which their necessities obliged them to be engaged at during the week, as well as to give religious instruction to those of better circumstances."<sup>21</sup> This school flourished under Haecker until 1777 when, during the Battle of Brandywine, the buildings were commandeered for hospital purposes. In some cases, as seen from the above-mentioned schools, the pre-Raikes' endeavors were similar in purpose and form to the Raikes model although some schools included direct Bible teaching.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, after the Revolutionary War conditions in America changed. Separation of church and state brought about increasing sectarianism, while the churches themselves neglected the practice of catechetical instruction. The importance of schools as a means of instructing boys and girls in the ways of the new republic captured the attention of the new leadership. Before the War, the Middle Atlantic and Southern states considered education of the young a private matter, a family affair. However, after the war a renewal of interest in the Sunday school as a vehicle of instruction emerged, beginning in the south. William Elliot of Virginia in 1785 instructed white boys "bound out" to him and the girls in his charge, together with his own children, on Sunday afternoons. Children of friends and neighbors were later admitted while negro slaves and servants were taught at a different hour. All were taught the rudiments of reading in order to be able to read God's Word for themselves, the Bible being the major textbook.<sup>22</sup>

As early as 1784 Methodist ministers were required by the Discipline to provide religious instruction at least one hour a week for any

---

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 443.

<sup>22</sup>A. Brown, History of Religious Education, p. 48.

group of ten children whose parents were church members. Church legislation in the Minutes of 1790 of the Methodist Church required ministers to "establish Sunday Schools in or near the places of worship, for the benefit of white and black children, and to appoint suitable persons to teach gratis all who would attend, and who had a capacity to learn."<sup>23</sup> (It is noted in this piece of legislation that blacks were to be included in the schools and that teachers were to be unpaid.) The most notable work was that of Bishop Francis Asbury in 1786, when a school of religion for slaves was held in the home of Mr. Thomas Crenshaw in Hanover County, Virginia, patterned after the Raikes' plan. Not all teaching efforts, however, were received in a positive manner. In 1787 George Daughaday, a Methodist preacher in Charleston, South Carolina, "was drenched with water pumped from a public cistern, 'for the crime of conducting a Sunday School for the benefit of the African children of that vicinity.'"<sup>24</sup> Early efforts did not seem to meet with great success and were, for the most part, scattered and isolated.

Between the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the Sunday schools, with the exception of the Methodist endeavors, were primarily products of individuals who attempted to meet immediate human needs which they perceived. In 1793 Kate Ferguson, a Negro woman in New York City, began a school for the poor street children in her neighborhood. A cotton manufacturing company in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1794, engaged a teacher to instruct gratuitously on Sunday children employed in the factory. In Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in 1791, Mr. David Arnold at the request of Mr.

---

<sup>23</sup>Power, The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools, p. 248.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

Samuel Slater taught a Sunday school in a room in the cotton factory for the benefit of the operatives. This school was later reorganized by Mr. Collier, a Brown University student, and Mr. Slater. The sister of Rev. Samson Occum, a distinguished Indian preacher, held a Sunday school in her home in Stockbridge, New York, in 1796. Other schools were established by individuals in Boston (1791), Pittsburgh (1800), Portsmouth, New Hampshire (1803), and Baltimore (1804). In 1809 Misses Hannah Hill and Joanna Price established a Sunday school for the purpose of moral and religious instruction in Beverly, Massachusetts.

In 1803 Mrs. Isabella Graham and her daughter, Mrs. Joanna Bethune, established two Sabbath schools in New York City. Mr. and Mrs. Bethune had seen something of Sunday school work while on a trip to England in 1801 and 1802 and had determined as soon as possible to introduce the idea in the States. The first Sunday school for religious and catechetical instruction, at the expense of the Bethunes and Mrs. Graham, was held in the house of Mrs. Leech on Mott Street. About forty male and female scholars attended. Later two more Sunday schools were started in other parts of the city as well as one for the children in the almshouse in that city. Mrs. Graham also started an adult school in June 1814 which met every Sunday morning at 8:00. Eighty scholars from homes and neighboring manufactories attended the school.<sup>25</sup>

Two significant changes began to take place in the Sunday school effort after the War of 1812. The practice of hiring teachers to teach in the Sunday school became an increasing financial burden both in England and in America. Gradually individuals and church groups discontinued the

---

<sup>25</sup>"First Sabbath Schools in the United States," The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (March 1824):143-44.

practice and enlisted voluntary teachers for the work. Rev. Robert May, a missionary from England, is credited with suggesting the plan for gratuitous teaching when he started several Sunday schools in Philadelphia in 1811, although accounts of some early schools indicate that this plan had been in operation years before May's visit. The second change which evolved over a period of years was the breaking down of class barriers in the Sunday school. Both British and American schools began primarily as a means of socializing and sanitizing the lower classes. A class-oriented enterprise could not survive long in the new nation with its emphasis on democracy and equality. While class differences existed after the War of 1812, the poor were not interested in schools especially planned for them.

"The feeling that it was intended for the poor, kept both the poor and the rich from attending it,' a churchman said of the Pittsburgh Sunday school in 1809."<sup>26</sup> Dr. Lyman Beecher of Boston determined to "overthrow the system" and implored the best families to bring their children to mingle with the poor in the Sunday schools. Together with the help of such influential persons as a judge, an "aristocratic lady," and the first physician, Dr. Beecher could say in later years:

. . . we all turned our labor and influence on the Sunday school movement, and it gave an unheard-of impetus to our Sunday school, and by means of the press and by letters and personal conversation the facts became known and met with almost universal approval and adoption in our country, and the reform soon became complete.<sup>27</sup>

Thus it was that the Sunday school was upgraded to middle-class respectability. The poor, in order to prove they were as good as anyone else, scrubbed up, dressed up and presented themselves on Sunday mornings.

---

<sup>26</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 14.

<sup>27</sup>R. G. Pardee, The Sabbath-School Index (Philadelphia: J. C. Garrigues & Co., 1868), p. 19.

Lynn and Wright point out that although the Sunday school was able to cut through class lines, the demarcation of race (black-white relations) remained.

As long as the schools were largely for the children of the poor, mixing the races was no great difficulty. The introduction of an inclusiveness cutting across white class lines made the presence of black children embarrassing and troublesome. Only a few integrated schools existed in the North. Generally speaking, the American Sunday school movement faithfully observed the culture's caste demarcations just as the English evangelicals reflected the class lines there.<sup>28</sup>

### Emerging Sunday School Associations

Toward the close of the eighteenth century, education became a matter of popular and public concern: "popular as shown by a growing volume of writing on the subject, and public through the action of state and national legislatures."<sup>29</sup> The precise form of schooling, however, was yet to be decided. In Philadelphia an alternative in the form of the Sunday school was proposed by an organization later known as The First Day or Sunday School Society. On December 19, 1790, a number of men met for the purpose of establishing an educational association, among whom were Dr. William White, bishop of the Episcopal Church of Pennsylvania; Dr. Benjamin Rush, Presbyterian and later Universalist and a signer of the Declaration of Independence; and Matthew Carey, a Roman Catholic layman.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 15.

<sup>29</sup>Harry G. Good and James D. Teller, A History of Western Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), p. 450.

<sup>30</sup>The following were present at the first meeting: Rt. Rev. William White, Dr. Benjamin Rush, Dr. Benjamin Say, Dr. William Currie, Mr. Thomas Mendenhall, Mr. Matthew Carey, Mr. Joseph Sharpless, Mr. Peter Thompson, Jr., Mr. Thomas Pim Cope, Capt. Nathaniel Falconer, Mr. Isaac Price and Mr. Caleb Attmore. At a subsequent meeting, January 11, 1791, the following officers were elected: President, Rev. William White; Vice President, Mr. James Pemberton; Treasurer, Mr. Thomas Mendenhall; Secretary, Mr. Matthew Carey. A Century of the First Day or Sunday-School Society, A Sketch of the Beginning of Sunday Schools in Philadelphia (Philadelphia: The First Day or Sunday-School Society, 1891), pp. 5-8.

Bishop White, Dr. Rush and Mr. Peter Thompson drafted a constitution for the society which was adopted on December 26, 1790. Concern for education and improvement of morals of children of the poor can be seen in the Preamble of the constitution:

Whereas, The good education of youth is of the first importance to society, and numbers of children, the offspring of indigent parents, have not proper opportunities of instruction previous to their being apprenticed to trades;

And whereas, Among the youth of every large city various instances occur of the first day of the week, called Sunday, a day which ought to be devoted to religious improvement, being employed for the worst of purposes, the depravation of morals and manners; it is therefore the opinion of the subscribers that the establishment of First Day or Sunday schools in the City and Liberties would be of essential advantage to the rising generation, and for effecting that benevolent purpose, they have formed themselves into society by the name, style and title of "The Society for the Institution and Support of First Day or Sunday Schools in the City of Philadelphia and the Districts of Southwark and the Northern Liberties," and have adopted the following Constitution.<sup>31</sup>

The constitution made provision for the above officers and for twelve visitors who would inspect the schools at least once a month. Hours for attendance were to be regulated so as not to interfere with the religious worship hours on Sundays. Instruction given in the schools was "confined to reading and writing from the Bible, and such other moral and religious books as the Society may from time to time direct."<sup>32</sup> Schools began the first Sunday in March 1791, one for girls and one for boys, with hours similar to the Raikes plan, 8:00 to 10:30 in the morning and 4:30 to 6:00 in the afternoon. The teachers were paid £30, or \$80, for forty scholars per year. The first schools reported 100 scholars each, with a corresponding \$40 increase in compensation to each of the teachers. On

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

July 9, 1791, a further resolution was adopted: "Resolved, That the instruction to be given in the schools shall be confined to reading and writing from the Bible, but for such scholars as have not learned to read, spelling books and primers may be used."<sup>33</sup>

That the members of the Society were willing to finance education through personal and solicited funds cannot be denied; but also undeniable was their concern for free public education. In 1792 the Society petitioned the state legislature of Pennsylvania for the establishment of free schools throughout the state and for provision by law for support of the three Sunday schools in operation. While the latter part of the request was denied, the 1805 Society records showed a decline in numbers in some of its city schools "owing probably to the day schools for poor children having in a measure superseded the necessity of a First Day or Sunday school for boys."<sup>34</sup> As late as 1818, however, the Society reported that in the Northern Liberties, a section of Philadelphia, it appeared that only a small proportion of pupils enjoyed the advantage of week-day schooling, providing the necessity and utility of the First Day schools.

A different type of Sunday school, one with close church ties, was emerging within the city of Philadelphia. Whereas the First Day Society was comprised of men from varying religious denominations who espoused a doctrine-free policy to reading, writing and moral instruction, groups with denominational ties began to establish Sunday schools with a major emphasis on catechetical and religious instruction. Michael states that up to the close of the War of 1812 none of the religious bodies in

---

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

America "in their corporate capacity" had taken up the Sunday school. (The Methodists had made some move in that direction as noted earlier.) Structural weakness and disorganization within the religious groups, as well as a general opposition to the schools, precluded any vital involvement.<sup>35</sup> In 1815 the Society noted that its school on Coates Street had only five girls and three boys in attendance because most of the former scholars were participating in a nearby school where a number of "pious young men and women" of the Society of Methodists taught the pupils and escorted them to divine worship. A "first" is claimed, however, by the Episcopal Church for the first school officially incorporated by any religious organization in America with the opening of a Sunday school at St. John's Church in the Northern Liberties of Philadelphia in the fall of 1814. The scholars met twice each Sunday from 8:00 to 10:00 in the morning and at 1:30 in the afternoon, with sessions divided into fifteen-minute lesson periods.<sup>36</sup>

Associations of schools across denominational lines continued to spring up, however. In 1809 the Moral Society of Pittsburgh was formed "for the suppression of vice, reformation of manners, and propagation of useful knowledge" in order to improve the condition of the poorer classes of the community. A school was started the first Sabbath in September of that year, with children of both sexes from age six upwards enrolled by their parents or guardians. Teachers were appointed by the Society and no compensation was to be paid to them for the instruction given to the pupils. Hours of attendance were from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. and from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Books to be read were from the Old and New

---

<sup>35</sup>Michael, Development of the American Church, p. 63.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 64, and Brewer, Early Episcopal Sunday Schools, p. 5.

Testaments, catechisms approved by the parents and "such others as are suited to the capacities of the pupils, and recommended by the society."<sup>37</sup> Parents and guardians furnished their own books as they were able, and those unable to do so were provided books by the Society. Regular attendance and cleanliness were required. Two hundred and forty scholars, children and adults, attended the school which was touted to "oppose the torrent of irreligion and vice at the very source."<sup>38</sup> The Society viewed its school as a means of rescuing youth from the evils of society and providing religious instruction to help diminish the effects of society. The founders of the Society asserted:

When children are brought up without any one sufficiently interested in their best concerns, and in a total neglect of religious and moral instruction, amidst the contagion of bad example, the consequence is obvious; they must become the burden and pest of society; they bring with them upon the stage of life, ignorance, idleness, and the manifold evils resulting from every species of immorality.<sup>39</sup>

As early as 1804, a number of women of different denominations formed a Union Society in Philadelphia to provide religious training and instruction for poor female girls. Children were taught to read, write and sew, along with memorizing large portions of Scripture and hymns. They also received instruction in catechisms approved by their parents. Public and private examinations were held in order that supporters might witness the "effects of their liberality."<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup>"Articles of a Sunday School Instituted by the Pittsburgh Moral Society," The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (March 1824):146.

<sup>38</sup>"First Sabbath Schools in the United States," The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (January 1824):53.

<sup>39</sup>"First Sabbath Schools in the United States," The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (March 1824):147.

<sup>40</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 51.

Mrs. Joanna Bethune, whose early involvement in Sunday schools resulted in the establishment of several schools in New York City, became interested in the work of the Philadelphia Society. On January 24, 1816, she and a number of women formed the Female Union Society for the Promotion of Sabbath-Schools, whose purpose was

to stimulate and encourage those engaged in education and religious instruction of the ignorant; to improve the methods of instruction; to promote the opening of new schools; to unite in Christian love, persons of various denominations engaged in the same honorable employment.<sup>41</sup>

By the end of the year, the society reported 21 schools, 250 teachers, and 3,163 scholars. In February of 1816, with Mr. Divie Bethune presiding, the New York Sunday-School Union Society, a male counterpart, was inaugurated. About the same time the Boston Society for the Moral and Religious Instruction of the Poor was launched in 1816 to promote the cause of the Sunday school. Similar schools and combinations of local schools could be found in Hartford, New Haven, Albany, Utica, Princeton, Baltimore, Columbia, and Philadelphia.

The above-mentioned associations represent an early interest in some central bureau of organization and information about Sunday school methods, progress and improvement. A formal start toward a national, or at least a central association, took place in Philadelphia on May 13, 1817, when a number of local societies and Sunday schools merged to form The Sunday and Adult School Union. Their leading objectives were

to cultivate unity and charity among those of different names, to ascertain the extent of gratuitous instruction in Sunday and adult schools, to promote their establishment in the city and in the villages in the country, to give more effect to Christian exertion in general, and to encourage and strengthen each other in the cause of the Redeemer.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>42</sup>Marianna Brown, Sunday-School Movements in America (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1901), p.30.

The Society entered upon its work vigorously and in its annual report in 1818 it recorded 43 schools, 565 teachers and 5,970 pupils. By 1824 the number of teachers and pupils totalled 57,000 and were distributed among seventeen of the twenty-four states of the Union. Because the aim of the new society to merge all societies and Sunday schools in the United States to a common center proved popular, many existing unions dissolved their organizations to join the Philadelphia society as auxiliaries.<sup>43</sup>

Interestingly, the First Day or Sunday School Society refrained from merging with the new one, although cordial relations existed between the two societies. Rice suggests that the First Day Society "favored segregated church schools, or schools with paid teachers, and were not favorable to mixed schools on the new plan for all children, including those within and outside of families attached to the church."<sup>44</sup> Bishop White, instrumental in the founding of the First Day Society, was also foremost in launching a church-related union, the Protestant Episcopal Sunday and Adult Society in Philadelphia in 1817. According to Michael, this society did not accomplish very much due to the effect of the non-sectarian union's liberal business policy which permitted churchmen to buy "fairly suitable tracts, books of devotion and religious fiction and other Sunday-school requisites in much greater variety and much more cheaply at the union-depository than at the church establishment."<sup>45</sup>

Churches moved to establish their own Sunday school societies.

"Religious enthusiasts were quick to see in the Sunday schools an

---

<sup>43</sup>Clarence H. Benson, A Popular History of Christian Education (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), p. 137.

<sup>44</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 89.

<sup>45</sup>Michael, Development of the American Church, p. 89.

opportunity too great to lose. . . . Masses of hitherto unreached, and by old methods unreachable, children swarmed under the Church's influence and experienced a hope and an inspiration that brimmed with encouragement."<sup>46</sup> In 1826, the General Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union was formed, followed by the Sunday School Society of Unitarian Churches in 1827. The Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union was organized in 1827 and reorganized in 1828 and 1840. A Universalist Sabbath School Association came into being in Boston in 1837.

The tendency toward broad cooperation continued to increase until in 1820 the New York Sunday-School Union Society proposed the concept of a national union, general in name, to which other unions could become auxiliary. Rice suggests that the plan did not espouse a new organization but rather a broadening of the already existing organization in Philadelphia, The Sunday and Adult School Union. On November 13, 1823, the managers of the Philadelphia association met to frame a constitution changing its name to the American Sunday School Union. The name change and constitution were ratified at an anniversary meeting held May 25, 1824. A new era was launched in 1824 when the American Sunday School Union assumed national leadership of the Sunday school cause.

#### Characteristics of the Early Sunday Schools

Early Sunday school endeavors varied greatly and to picture a "typical" Sunday school during the years 1790 to 1824 is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. A few elements, however, were shared in common: the view of the child, responsibilities and training of teachers, and curriculum and methods.

---

<sup>46</sup> Brewer, Early Episcopal Sunday Schools, pp. 3-4.

View of the Child

A culturally revolutionary discovery of the child occurred during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century in that the child was perceived as having a moral and religious nature which could be improved through education, instruction and culture. Champions of children, such as Raikes in England and Sunday school advocates in America, had in mind, however, a different "child" than popularly conceived today. They saw the child as a miniature adult and expected him to speak and act as an adult. As late as the 1880s Sunday school literature portrayed the child as one who looked, dressed, gestured and spoke as an adult. The curriculum and teaching methods, discussed later in this section, reflect a similar approach to children.

Sunday school advocates, however, were convinced of the religious capability of the child. The evangelical particularly view the child as capable of conversion. Not only could the child become "hopefully pious" but he could be an instrument in the religious tutelage of adults. Children's literature of the mid-nineteenth century abounds with real and fictional stories of children who led back to faith and Christian virtues such adults as drunkards, friends, parents, servants, hard-hearted benefactors and strangers.<sup>47</sup> Underlying this concept of children was a deep concern and love as reflected in the Scriptures and a recognition that first impressions of God and His works were important:

Our Saviour loved little children, and commanded them to be brought to him--Our present institution must then be particularly pleasing in his sight; and this reflection should be ever with us. Upon the young mind as it comes from the hand of its Creator, the first impressions seem deepest and most lasting. How important is it, then, to give it a proper feeling, and to place indelibly upon it the great

---

<sup>47</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 44.

truths of religion, without which, after life is a scene of trials without consolation, of troubles without hope of release, and of sorrows without the prospect of their termination.<sup>48</sup>

And yet, while literature portrayed children as models who performed like adults, a growing recognition of their real capabilities evolved. An early attempt was made to group or grade children not only on the basis of sex, color and age but by psychological age or ability. Most schools recognized at least two departments, an infant and a senior class. Larger schools divided children into four groups, generally based on their reading ability. Children in the lowest grade, or infant, were taught the alphabet and words of one syllable. Those in the next grade, elementary, while unable to read, could spell out some words. The Bible or Scripture class held those who could read but with some difficulty or hesitation; and the senior class was composed of those with sufficient ability to read in the New Testament.<sup>49</sup> Class size varied according to the number of teachers, with large schools divided into classes of ten with a teacher for each. Although Sunday schools were essentially for children, adults frequently expressed an interest, resulting in special classes and lessons for them.

#### Responsibilities and Training of Teachers

Major responsibilities included teaching and hearing the catechism, teaching the children to master the alphabet and to learn to read, and guiding in memorization of hymns and Bible verses. However, responsibility did not stop with mere teaching chores. The teachers were expected to take the children to church for the worship services, visit

---

<sup>48</sup>"Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union," The American Sunday School Magazine, July 1824, p. 10.

<sup>49</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 74.

regularly in their homes, buy gifts for them and, in general, maintain a strong personal contact with them. Brewer observed, "If knowledge of child psychology was scant, if classroom procedure was unscientific, there was still the efficacy of personal influence. That intimate relationship between teacher and pupil has been a mighty factor in Sunday school work ever since."<sup>50</sup> Both men and women served as teachers, carrying out their responsibilities with patience and enthusiastic zeal. They were gripped by a keen sense of calling and the responsibility to bring children into the Christian faith. Teachers early personified the idea that Sunday school seeks the education of the heart.

Two other officers served in the Sunday school--the superintendent and the secretary. The superintendent supervised the total Sunday school, assuring supporters and friends that proper teaching was taking place. A layman, the superintendent often was an active and efficient administrator. He opened and closed the Sunday school sessions and usually sat in an elevated position where he could survey the classes during the lessons and recitations. He maintained order and either substituted or located substitutes for absent teachers. The secretary had charge of the books, adding and removing names of scholars, preparing lists of absentees, and making fresh class papers at the end of each quarter. He also prepared reports of the school for the annual or quarterly meetings of its subscribers and friends.

Teacher training was hit-or-miss at best during the thirty years following the start of Sunday schools in 1790. Near the close of the period, as societies increased and the Sunday school grew in numbers, interest in teacher preparation began to result in some specific kinds of

---

<sup>50</sup> Brewer, Early Episcopal Sunday Schools, p. 13.

training. The superintendent, even in the early days, made an effort to train his teachers, usually in the form of instructing them in the catechism or Bible memorization portions. In some schools visitors or inspectors were appointed by the society to regularly observe the teachers at their work. The Sunday-School Repository, a London-based magazine, issued for a short time by the New York Sunday School Union before it was purchased by the American Sunday School Union, provided assistance for teachers in conducting schools. Circulating libraries for the Sunday schools were maintained first by the First Day Society and later by the New York Union Society. While the purpose of the libraries was essentially to stimulate pupils in learning by providing books as premiums or for loan, the books were also accessible to the teachers. Among the books purchased by the First Day Society for circulation were: Doaley's Fables, Barbauld's Songs, Beauties of Creation, Catechism of Nature, Powers of Religion, Economy of Human Life, Watts' Songs, Whole Duty of Women, and Fruits of the Father's Love, along with Bibles and Testaments.

In addition to limited assistance available to teachers for self-improvement, some teachers met together for mutual improvement. Gatherings of teachers for the purpose of prayer and instruction were reported by the Utica (New York) Union Sunday-School, which was superintended by Truman Parmele. The Teacher's Monthly Concert "produced a happy effect upon the teachers" who not only prayed for their scholars in the monthly meeting but did some elementary lesson preparation.<sup>51</sup>

#### Curriculum and Methods

The most extensive help for teachers came in the form of lesson aids rather than in direct teacher-training sessions. From 1790 to 1815,

---

<sup>51</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 456.

the catechism, with few exceptions, was the curriculum. No other course of Bible study was available at that time and the catechisms were inexpensive and readily procured. Moreover, the catechism lent itself to divisions, sections and lessons for instruction. Among catechisms available were the Heidelberg (1563), Anglican (1549) and Lutheran (1529) used by their respective followers in America. John Cotton's Milk for Babes (1646), called "The Catechism of New England" by Cotton Mather, contained sixty questions which became part of the New England Primer. Its popularity continued for almost 150 years. The Westminster Shorter Catechism (1647) was later used with that of Cotton. In the first decade of the nineteenth century the Evangelical Primer of Joseph Emerson appeared.

Although graded lessons are a product of the twentieth century, early attempts were made to adapt the doctrinal studies of the catechism to the child's capacities. Isaac Watt's Catechism for Children and Youth, published in 1820, and his subsequent editions, illustrate the effort to adapt.

I. Watt's First Catechism, for children beginning at age three or four, who memorized the answers before learning to read the words for themselves.

Q. Can you tell me, child, who made you?

A. The great God who made heaven and earth.

Q. What doth God do for you?

A. He keeps me from harm by night and by day, and is always doing me good.

II. The First Catechism, Improved Education With Exercises, by Dr. Watts. Supplementary questions on each major question were added.

Q. Who made you?

A. The great God who made heaven and earth.

Who made heaven and earth?

What is God called who made heaven and earth?

III. Watt's Second Catechism, With Proofs and Prayers. This catechism for children who were beginning to read included proof

texts from Scripture which supported the answers.

Q. Dear child, do you know what you are?

A. I am a creature of God, for He made me both body and soul. "Thus saith the Lord . . . I have made the earth, and created man upon it" (Isa. 45:11, 12). "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews" (Job 10:11). "The Lord . . . formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1).

IV. Watt's Third Catechism. This was arranged for youth between the ages of twelve and fourteen, who were thought to be sufficiently mature to study the original catechism.

V. The Advanced Catechism carried a lengthy title, A Preservative from the Sins and Follies of Childhood and Youth or a Brief Account of the Sins, Vices, and Frailties to Which Childhood and Youth Are Liable and of Which They Should be Warned Early. Drawn up in the Way of Questions and Answers, With Arguments Against Them, Taken from Reason and Scripture, by Isaac Watts, D.D., London. 1820. "Its purpose was to make a practical application of doctrinal instruction."<sup>52</sup>

Q. What is the first mark of ungodliness?

A. If I never know nor praise God for His own greatness and glory.

Q. What are the ill consequences of sinful anger?

A. These five.

Q. What is the first?

A. Railing and calling ill names.

Reason against this sin. Because railers are not fit for sober company, and are very displeasing to God.<sup>53</sup>

The teacher was expected to see that the child understood every word of each question. Benson observed that even the "graded" catechism, however, failed to grasp the idea that the child was not a miniature adult and tended to place heavy emphasis on biblical doctrine, omitting vast portions of the Bible devoted to narrative, poetry and prophecy.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup>Benson, A Popular History of Christian Education, p. 174.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-74, and A. Brown, History of Religious Education, pp. 58-59.

<sup>54</sup>Benson, A Popular History of Christian Education, p. 174.

The prevalence of catechetical instruction with its emphasis on memorization ushered in the "era of memoriter work." Early in the nineteenth century it became popular to supplement catechism memorization with hymns and Bible portions. When the American Bible Society was formed in 1816 and copies of the Scripture could be procured at greatly reduced prices, it was argued that if children could memorize the catechism, they could memorize the Scriptures. This emphasis became almost a craze, with children performing astonishing feats of memorization. Schools and scholars competed to see which could recite the largest number of verses. Sunday school reports were full of such records as: "One of the children has committed to memory the four Gospels. Two others have recited the first three books of the New Testament, and one of them one hundred and seven, and the other one hundred and five, hymns."<sup>55</sup> Other reports mentioned a scholar who memorized 1,752 verses, two girls who in six successive weeks recited 8,336 verses, another Genesis through Isaiah, and one who knew the entire New Testament and several books of the Old Testament.<sup>56</sup>

Closely tied in with the memorization method and the early forms of direct Bible study was a system of rewards and penalties. In America Robert May popularized a "ticket currency" system, colored tickets awarded to children for attendance, good conduct and excellence in recitation. Tickets could be redeemed every three months for religious books and tracts. Penalties, imposed for bad behavior, neglecting to recite a verse or for being absent at roll call, resulted in the forfeit of a ticket. Even teachers and superintendents were not exempt, but were

---

<sup>55</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 75.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., and A. Brown, History of Religious Education, p. 69.

fined for absence from roll call, with superintendents paying a double fine for an offense. The American Sunday Magazine reported that during the years 1819 and 1820 the Sunday School Repository "teemed with papers" on the interesting subject of rewards and punishments.<sup>57</sup>

Two factors help explain the heavy emphasis on memorization. One, it was the commonly accepted method of learning in the schools during late eighteenth century. Two, the Bible is not a graded book and the plan to break it down into lessons suitable for teaching purposes was in the developing stages. First attempts began with the chapter and verse divisions of the Bible itself.

To Truman Parmele of the Utica Union Sunday-School (1820) must be credited the innovation of selected lessons: "that is, limited lessons not chosen by the teacher for his class but selected in advance for all the school classes and furnished in a list, with titles indicating contents."<sup>58</sup> This scheme of lessons, under the title of Questions for Sabbath-Schools and taken from the Gospels and Acts, included questions for scholars based on lessons given both by the teachers and the superintendent.

The use of lesson material directly from the Bible gradually superseded the catechism. Sunday schools continued to select supplementary books for teaching. For example, a school in Portsmouth, New Hampshire used the following: Hymns for Infant Minds, Prayers Committed to Memory, Watt's Shorter Catechism, Cummings' Scripture Questions, Lessons from Scripture; and for older classes, Porteus' Evidences, Paley's Natural Theology, Watts' Improvement of the Mind and Mason's Self-Knowledge.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup>The American Sunday School Magazine, August 1826, p. 238.

<sup>58</sup>E. Morris Fergusson, Historic Chapters in Christian Education in America (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1935), p. 120.

<sup>59</sup>Pray, History of Sunday School, pp. 217-18.

Summary

The Sunday school, launched in England in 1780 for the purpose of instruction in morals and rudiments of learning for lower class children, assumed similar reasons for existence in America. By the early nineteenth century, however, as the republic demanded a republican, universal and non-sectarian education, the Sunday school adapted its objectives to meet the need for moral and religious education. The American Sunday school emerged after the War of 1812 essentially as a lay movement for religious instruction for all societal strata based on a plan of gratuitous teachings.

If early attempts at education were unscientific and lacking in a psychological knowledge of children, after the War of 1812 Sunday schools demonstrated a sincere groping for curricular principles. The need for teacher helps and materials found some alleviation in catechetical adaptations, the simple "selected lesson system" of Parmele and limited supplementary materials available through a small number of publishers.

A different kind of need--that of association and mutual assistance--also evolved which was to cross denominational lines. The movement toward consolidation of effort began with The First Day or Sunday School Society and culminated in the great union principle of the American Sunday School Union in 1824. Chapter III begins with the formation of the American Sunday School Union and traces its involvement in the rapidly expanding Sunday school movement as well as its role in teacher training, curriculum development and the introduction of the convention movement. Rapid growth and improvement in Sunday school endeavors were to take place in a way that neither individual nor church alone could hope to accomplish.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY EFFORTS IN GROWTH AND TRAINING (1824-1832)

#### The Nature of the Sunday School During 1824-1832

The nature of the Sunday school movement in the mid-nineteenth century was both a reflection of and a reaction to the developing nature of the United States itself. Nationalism had a rebirth after the War of 1812. Shifting social standards and institutional life, a new egalitarian order, sectarianism and radicalism characterized the period. Ahlstrom suggests that the early nineteenth century

provided a good setting for the emergence of many disruptive and revolutionary religious movements. . . . Colonial tradition of rank fell to pieces in an "age of the common man." American political conservatives, even the "God-like Daniel Webster," were forced down on their hands and knees in the rough and tumble of the Log Cabin and Hard Cider campaign of 1840. Tumultuous population growth and the westward movement transformed the map and makeup of the country. Social and geographical mobility took on new meaning. Canals, railroads, textile mills, and the cotton gin led to or symbolized other transformations. Voluntaryism, freedom, and personal initiative brought the individual and collective aspirations of Americans to a new order to magnitude. The nation was on the make.<sup>1</sup>

Innovative forms of communitarian living appeared which challenged individualism as well as the conventional views of the churches. Shakers, German pietists, Owenites and the Mormons established both short-lived and prosperous experiments in communitarian living.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ahlstrom, A Religious History, pp. 474-75.

Into this scene moved the great surge of evangelical revivalism, with its strong emphasis on the Bible and personal experience. Perry Miller suggests that while the purpose of the revivals was ostensibly to convert sinners to Christ, a social overtone permeated the messages, theological discussions and results. The idea of the revivals had relevance for the community--whether each community was indeed acting as a community.<sup>2</sup> Lyman Beecher in his magazine and messages dealt with social problems such as dueling, prison reform, social benevolence and temperance. Charles G. Finney who touched off the "explosion of religions militancy" in the mid-twenties held that it was "proof of a 'seared conscience' when one was apathetic to questions concerning one's well-being or that of others. Such questions included 'abolition of slavery, temperance, moral reform, politics, business principles, physiological and dietetic reform,' etc."<sup>3</sup>

Protestants set up a network of militant organizations and societies, labelled by historians as "The Benevolent Empire," to combat "deism, tippling, frontier ignorance, Sabbathbreaking and Unitarianism."<sup>4</sup> The evangelical churches pooled their efforts in an evidence of solidarity to form a number of "home missions" associations. Some organizations were conducted under strictly denominational auspices but the more significant were combinations of two or more communions. Among the latter were The American Education Society (1815), The American Bible Society (1816), The American Sunday-School Union (1824), The American

---

<sup>2</sup>Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1949), p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Tract Society (1826), and The Society for Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education in the West (1843).

As the nation expanded its frontiers, evangelicals took up the cause of the American motto of "Go Ahead" and sought to keep up with the forward movement. In 1830 The Biblical Repertory recognized the unique character of the age.

The spirit of the age is ripe for action, for it is a spirit of extraordinary enterprise. It is a public spirit also, and is ripe, if well directed, not only for action, but for combined action, on a scale of noble daring and sublime extent, hitherto unknown on earth. It is an age of revolution; and it is ripe not only for change, but for improvement too.<sup>5</sup>

Evangelicals cautioned, however, that a nation so blessed with material benefits must maintain its moral integrity and avoid the excesses of "wealth, luxury, extravagance, vice" and disdain for others. The question was raised by a reader in a letter to the editor of The American Sunday School Magazine in 1826, "Supposing that morality and pure religion should keep pace with the growth of this nation, and that every new impulse should be on the side of virtue;--what then would be the result?"<sup>6</sup> If American morality kept pace with her growth, according to the writer, she

might . . . be the benefactor--the glory of the world--the residence of peace--the emporium of commerce--the nursery of arts, of science, and literature--the birth place of unknown myriads of immortal beings, who might be cradled for the realms of everlasting day.<sup>7</sup>

He then appealed for the establishment of Sunday schools "in the name of

---

<sup>5</sup>Miller, Life of the Mind, p. 52.

<sup>6</sup>B. S. M. [initials only], "The Sabbath Schools Connected with the Destiny of Our Country," The American Sunday School Magazine, March 1826, p. 65.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

patriotism and the most enlarged benevolence" to attack aggressively the territories of sin and to affect the destinies not only of America but of other nations. "God has put the character of posterity on the destiny of our country, and perhaps that of other empires in our hands; and this character must be shaped by our exertions."<sup>8</sup>

Industrialization and urbanization, especially in the eastern sector of the United States, brought about a shift in economic power, social status and political clout. The rise of the factory system in the 20s and 30s resulted in long working hours for entire families. Before the "ten-hour campaign" in 1835, most laborers, including women and children under twelve years of age, worked fourteen hours a day for an average of six dollars a week. Even with entire families in a single employ, maintaining a decent level of existence was difficult. It was in the cities that the inadequacies of the old order first became apparent. Reformers esteemed education as a means of curing social, economic and political ills. It was also in the urban centers where the working class demanded a better education for their children than they could finance privately.

Between 1828 and 1832, the period of the workingmen's political parties, demands were heard for schools at public expense, for schools in which rich and poor would mingle on terms of equality, and for schools under boards directly responsible to the electorate. Labor leaders were also demanding competent teachers, infant schools, and some means of education beyond the rudiments.<sup>9</sup>

In 1824 a free, tax-supported, public school system was still the dream and target of statesmen such as James G. Carter, Horace Mann and a few years later, Henry Barnard. By 1860 the public school was

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-69.

<sup>9</sup>Newton Edwards and Herman G. Richey, The School in the American Social Order, 2d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963), p. 297.

well-established in the Northern states and gaining acceptance in other parts of the United States. But the forty-year period had been wrought with struggle as the states carved out the forms that taxation, control and content would take. Cubberley suggests that the development of free state schools was characterized by seven strategic points. He cites the following:

1. The battle for tax support.
2. The battle to eliminate the pauper-school idea.
3. The battle to make the schools entirely free.
4. The battle to establish State supervision.
5. The battle to eliminate sectarianism.
6. The battle to extend the system upward.
7. Addition of the State university to crown the system.<sup>10</sup>

The emergence of the common school to meet the intellectual and social needs of children coincided with the change in the character of the Sunday school from that of teaching rudiments of learning to imparting religious and moral instruction. As the public school was viewed as an agency for "transforming the diverse racial and social elements of the population into an 'American type' of citizenship," so a similar trust in the Sunday school as "an agency for bringing about the spiritual regeneration of individuals and society" began to surface.<sup>11</sup> Both in the common school and in the Sunday school the emphasis on the dictum, "The world moves forward on the feet of little children," presumed that the one who guided the feet of children determined the direction of social progress. Both secularists and religionists characterized the nineteenth century as "the century of the child" in which the development

---

<sup>10</sup>Elwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), pp. 128-29.

<sup>11</sup>Benjamin S. Winchester, "The Adult Movement and Religious Education," in Studies in Religious Education, ed. Philip Henry Lotz and L. W. Crawford (Nashville, Tenn.: Cokesbury Press, 1931), p. 354.

of the public school system and the Sunday school movement went forward vigorously. Both exercised a peculiar kind of faith which was an indispensable prerequisite in the work of education--"faith in the nature of the child as a being who is capable of receiving, and of improving by, instruction."<sup>12</sup>

After the War of 1812 the general thrust of the Sunday school became that of conversion and of moral and religious instruction. Even in schools where reading was taught, the religious emphasis remained dominant. The Boston Gazette in 1826 declared the distinctiveness of the Sunday school when it reminded its readers that ". . . while we appreciate duly the salutary influence of public schools on the moral as well as mental facilities, we view sunday [sic] schools as exerting directly, a powerful moral force on the tender, though unformed minds of nearly one million children."<sup>13</sup> The article recognized the contribution of the Sunday school in teaching children to read, to understand what they read, to memorize and recite perfectly, to fit pupils for instruction on a larger scale and for fostering a literary taste through the selected libraries but held its major purpose to be religious.

Sunday school enthusiasts saw the value of the movement both in terms of relief of social ills and of increase in church membership. They tied in the benevolent aspect of the Sunday school with the anticipated millennium. Where governments favorable to the Sunday school existed and where proper instruction prevailed, the Sunday school was thought of as a means "to usher in the glories of the millennial age."<sup>14</sup> Where

---

<sup>12</sup>Pray, The History of Sunday Schools, p. 261.

<sup>13</sup>Cited in The American Sunday School Magazine, March 1826, p. 78.

<sup>14</sup>The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (January 1824):39.

individuals had been taught of the Spirit, they through the instrumentality of the Sunday school had been made "savingsly acquainted with Christ."<sup>15</sup> Often the Sunday school supplemented the work of other benevolent associations which attempted to alleviate the desperate situations of the poverty-stricken. The following statement appeared in the twenty-sixth annual report (December 1823) of the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children:

To the Sunday Schools the widows are much indebted: and in families where the children regularly attend there is a marked difference, not only in the acquisition of religious knowledge but in the desire of useful occupation; while the habit of reading and reflection there acquired has a great tendency to preserve them from the company of vicious and vagrant children.<sup>16</sup>

Whether the Sunday school was an agency only for the poor and ignorant or whether its borders should be extended to include all social levels was a question early faced by Sunday school organizers. In 1825 a series of articles in The American Sunday School Magazine dealt with the issue under the title "Should the Children of the Rich Be Admitted into Sunday Schools?" Letters from readers as well as editorial comments were printed. One reader expressed concern for the new direction proposed by the Sunday school and raised the following questions:

1. Would not the new plan discourage the poor from attending?
2. Would teachers be tempted to pay greater attention to the more affluent?
3. Was it proper to divert the teachers' attention from a task which they have been unable to accomplish?<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>"Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children," The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (January 1824):50.

<sup>17</sup>"Should the Children of the Rich Be Admitted into Sunday Schools?," The American Sunday School Magazine, December 1825, p. 356.

Efforts such as those of Dr. Lyman Beecher<sup>18</sup> turned the direction of Sunday schools to include every social stratum. The issue, however, found its ultimate resolution in the mandate of the church--to preach the gospel to every creature.<sup>19</sup>

Sunday school instruction is like that holy gospel whence it is derived. It extends its blessing equally and impartially to all classes in a whole world of sinners. It carries light and pardon and peace and comfort to the abodes of ignorance and guilt and sorrows, and at the same time ennobles and enriches with heavenly treasures, the children of science, refinement, and affluence. . . . Its brightest glory is found in diffusing its blessings wherever depravity and guilt are found, among the children of men. If the children of the rich possess the same sinful nature, are exposed to the same wrath, and need the same pardoning mercy with those of the poor and degraded, then the same system of means which is designed for the latter, must not, by the former, be disdained or undervalued.<sup>20</sup>

Not only did poor and affluent white children benefit from the Sunday school, but schools were organized to instruct black and Indian children and adults. Before the actual beginning of Sunday schools black children were catechized as were white children. Later the Sunday school offered significant advantages particularly in the South in bringing up negroes "in that religion which teaches the servant to be obedient to his master according to the flesh, and contented in that state of life in which it hath pleased God that he should be."<sup>21</sup> However, Southern permissiveness in black education began to change radically with the growth of the cotton industry and a greater demand for a large labor force. A series of laws in various states curtailed and

---

<sup>18</sup>See Chapter II, p. 39.

<sup>19</sup>Matthew 28:19-20.

<sup>20</sup>"Children of the Rich," The American Sunday School Magazine, January 1825, p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>Brewer, Early Episcopal Sunday Schools, p. 20.

forbade the teaching of slaves. Woodson documents the following laws:

- 1817 - Missouri - barred Negroes from attending school.
- 1819 - Virginia - slaves, free Negroes or mulattoes could not assemble for the purpose of being taught to read and write.
- 1831 - Georgia - unlawful for any Negro, or white person to teach a Negro to read or write.
- 1832 - Mississippi - unlawful for five or more Negroes to meet for educational purposes.
- 1832 - Florida - prohibited all meetings of Negroes except those for divine worship at a church or place attended by white persons.<sup>22</sup>

Restrictions in the South on teaching blacks to read and write resulted in teaching by verbal instruction and memory training. The oral method of instruction became the pattern in religious services in Scripture reading (or hearing), catechism and music.

Sunday schools for blacks were established, however, in both the North and the South. The September 1825 American Sunday School Magazine reported a Sunday school in Mobile, Alabama, with fifteen teachers, ninety-two white and thirty-eight blacks. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church played a significant role in developing Sunday schools within its own denomination for its own people. It established the first black Sunday school in the West in Chillicothe, Ohio, in 1829, and sponsored Sunday education in New England, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Washington, D.C. Between 1830 and 1860 the Sunday school was more than an "appendage of the church," as claimed by a black Sunday school missionary

---

<sup>22</sup>Carter G. Woodson, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861 (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1919; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1968), p. 228.

In some black communities it was the school, without which there would have been no literacy training at all.<sup>23</sup>

Often schools for blacks were poorly equipped and taught by teachers with little or no education themselves. The American Sunday School Magazine printed a request for help for one such needy school.

An African school in St. Louis taught in the vestry of the Baptist Church, by a coloured man, who bids fair to become a useful exhorter, or preacher amongst his own colour. Could not the American Sunday School Union afford a few tickets and books to this school as a gratuity? Testaments can be furnished by the Missouri Bible Society, but tickets and books are procured with great difficulty. About sixty attend the school, many of whom are slaves, and all are poor.<sup>24</sup>

Instability and a low level of participation seemed to be characteristic of some schools for blacks not only because of education restrictions but also because of limited facilities and lack of reading ability. In 1826 the Eighth Annual Report of the Baltimore Female Union Society for the promotion of Sunday schools reported the existence of nine schools. One school, reads the report, with 123 colored adults, "some of whom had made great improvement," had to be closed because of lack of a place to meet.<sup>25</sup> In 1828, the American Sunday School Union appealed through The American Sunday School Magazine for an extended effort to instruct children and adults of the colored population to read in order that they could benefit from "personal perusal of that word which is able to make them wise unto salvation by faith in Christ Jesus."<sup>26</sup>

The managers of the Sunday and Adult School Union (Philadelphia)

---

<sup>23</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup>The American Sunday School Magazine, April 1825, p. 123.

<sup>25</sup>Reported in The American Sunday School Magazine, February 1826, p. 58.

<sup>26</sup>"Bible Cause and Coloured Population," The American Sunday School Magazine, February 1828, p. 61.

believed that their efforts were to be as broad as the command in Scripture, "to every creature," regardless of race, color or country. As early as 1822, the Union reported fourteen schools for the instruction of Indian children: three in New York state, four in the Cherokee nation, one among the Choctaws, two among the Chickasaws, one in Indiana, two in Arkansas and one in Missouri.<sup>27</sup> By 1831 the Cherokee Sabbath-School Union and the Choctaw Sunday-School Union in Mississippi had been formed.

Early in the nineteenth century a significant addition was made to the Sunday school--the infant school. Very young children, under age six or seven, did not participate in the early Sunday schools. It took Robert Owen with his experiment in Lanarkshire in 1815 and Johann Pestalozzi of Burgdorf and Yverdon to demonstrate the educability of the young child. In 1820 Samuel Wilderspin in England elaborated the infant-school procedure to include physical exercises and learning the multiplication tables by means of play. The Sunday and Adult School Union in 1823, discussed the value and application of the new infant schools within the Sabbath school context. While most approved the idea, many including Wilderspin, doubted its applicability to the Sunday school. Infant schools were nevertheless widely adopted, although in the early years they were usually held separately from the other departments of the Sunday school.

Again, the problem of "firstness" arises. The year 1827 emerges as the one in which infant schools were established in America. During 1827-1828 several infant schools societies were formed in Philadelphia. These were absorbed into the public school system within two years. Upon

---

<sup>27</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 68.

hearing of Pestalozzi's work Mrs. Joanna Bethune of New York City became deeply interested in the plan and sent to England and Switzerland for the necessary books. On May 23, 1827, she and a group of ladies organized an infant school society to establish infant Sabbath schools. At least nine schools were launched which Mrs. Bethune superintended. She also wrote and edited several books on infant school instruction. The day before the first school began on July 16, 1827, Mrs. Bethune recorded in her diary her thoughts and prayer for the venture.

To-morrow I begin the first infant school. It is an important period in my life, and I now desire to acknowledge the goodness of God in permitting me to see the work so far. . . . O may the little one become a thousand; and like the Sabbath-schools, may infant schools spread over the land. . . . Bless all the teachers who shall engage in the work. May they indeed be apt to teach, and may our scholars be apt to learn. O take these lambs in Thine arms, and may a numerous seed to serve Thee be furnished by the infant schools.<sup>28</sup>

Churches sensed the benefits of teaching young children and opened their doors to the "hosts of newly enfranchised little ones." Rev. George T. Bedell opened an infant Sunday school at St. Andrew's Church in Philadelphia on September 20, 1827. In 1831 Abraham Martin was called to supervise an "Infants' Retreat" in Germantown, Pennsylvania, where he had the care of over 2,000 little ones.

Both pros and cons for the new plan appeared in The Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, although the infant school continued to gain support and acceptance. On the negative side, it was held that "the peculiar style and facilities of teaching children under five or six years old, which the infant school system requires, cannot

---

<sup>28</sup>George Washington Bethune, Memoirs of Mrs. Joanna Bethune (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863), pp. 163-65.

conveniently be adopted in a common Sunday-School."<sup>29</sup> On the positive side, the infant school soon came to be seen as an important and efficient auxiliary of the Sunday school, adapting its approach to the budding intellect of young children and preparing them for the reception of the more advanced lessons taught in the Sunday school. Infant schools served as a means of acquiring the disciplines necessary for later learning and study.

Within thirty years of the organization of the first Sunday school union in 1790 several major changes took place in the Sunday school movement. Its thrust became that of moral and religious education with a strong emphasis on conversion of children. Its severance from the common school grew wider as the public school became non-sectarian and tax-supported. The Sunday school opened its doors to all classes of people and extended its embrace to include young children. Numerous local, state and church associations sprang up to promote the Sunday schools while a myriad of independent schools met regularly on Sundays. Misunderstanding and lack of coordination existed as groups interested in the movement copied programs and ideas with little guidance in methodology and an almost total lack of suitable curricula. Among some of the key societies an idea gained ascendancy--the concept of an interdenominational society which could provide leadership in the growing movement. Thus was the American Sunday School Union spawned.

#### The American Sunday School Union

The preparatory step in the formation of a national organization occurred in 1817 with the formation of the Sunday and Adult School Union

---

<sup>29</sup>"Infant Sunday-schools," The Sunday-School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, 8 June 1831, p. 3.

in Philadelphia. Within a few years it became almost national in scope, although not yet in name, when local and other state associations attached to it as auxiliaries. The first call for a formal national association was made by the New York Sunday-School Union Society in its annual report of 1820, when it "pointed out the magnitude of the work already accomplished by the Sunday and Adult School Union, and proposed a union general in name, to which other unions would become auxiliary."<sup>30</sup> The Society's intent was that the Philadelphia union would broaden its scope by becoming national in name as well as in influence.

On November 18, 1823, the managers of the Sunday and Adult School Union met to frame a new constitution, changing the name to the American Sunday School Union. Approved by the society on December 11, 1823, the constitution was unanimously ratified at the annual meeting held May 25, 1824. Its objects, essentially the same as those of the Sunday and Adult School Union, were:

to concentrate the efforts of Sabbath-school Societies in the different sections of our country; to strengthen the hands of the friends of religious instruction on the Lord's day; to disseminate useful information; to circulate moral and religious publications in every part of the land; and to endeavor to plant a Sunday-school wherever there is a population.<sup>31</sup>

The newly-named organization recognized and advertised in its periodicals certain peculiarities in character and proceedings. It embraced a number of denominations of Christians: Baptist, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Moravians, Dutch Reformed, Congregationalists, Lutherans and German Reformed. The society was not truly interdenominational in the sense that the various denominations, as denominations, joined the Union. Rather it was supra-denominational in that laymen

---

<sup>30</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 452.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 453.

and churchmen, usually evangelical, within the various denominations subscribed to and supported the objects of the society. To avoid denominational favoritism in the area of publications the constitution called for a publications committee, "consisting of eight members, from at least four different denominations of Christians, and not more than two members from any one denomination. . . ."32

A second significant peculiarity was the restriction that officers and managers were to be laymen. The term, however, was used in a limited sense of people in distinction from the clergy, not of people as distinct from the professional ranks. Ministers and biblical scholars were not excluded from the work of the American Sunday School Union but were invited to aid the society in every department of its work. They served as writers, editors and missionaries or agents along with "big-hearted, consecrated" businessmen--"giving the Union the advantage of the ablest, wisest men of affairs to conduct its operations and also the benefit of the most learned and experienced scholars and educators in every department of knowledge and in every field of biblical interpretation."<sup>33</sup> All the time and services of the Board of Managers were given gratuitously although the corresponding secretary and editor of the society's publications received some remuneration.

A third peculiarity not written into the constitution but essential to the workings of the Union was its concept of the "union principle." The basis of union--the ability of representatives of varying doctrinal positions to work together harmoniously--was set

---

<sup>32</sup>"Sunday-School Statistics and Constitution of the American Sunday-School Union," Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, 5 January 1831, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 82.

forth in "the essential truths of Protestant Christianity held in common by all Evangelical denominations."<sup>34</sup> Union in Christ and union with each other formed the basis of the American Sunday School Union. Such union required "'no sacrifice of principle; no compromise of duty; no interference with the internal management of smaller associations,' but did require that 'all discordant elements must be banished.'"<sup>35</sup> Adherence to the "union principle" would make possible the great missionary enterprise in the Mississippi Valley in 1830 but it would muzzle the voice of evangelicals through Union publications during the tense days and war years of the slave problem.

The "union principle" coincided with and reflected that which was happening in the United States--the Union--during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Unity amid diversity was the hope and aim of the nation and of the American Sunday School Union. When the Female Sabbath School Union in New York and the Sunday School Union Society of Albany joined the national association in 1824, The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine and Journal of Education praised the move, hoping that other unions from Georgia to Maine would follow--"The spirit of union is the pledge of success."<sup>36</sup> A proposed union of Sunday schools in neighboring towns and counties with the Utica Union Sunday School Society called for

a Sunday School Union in every county; and those county Unions combined in a state Union; and that state Union with the American Sunday School Union. Then indeed we may adopt the expressive motto . . . "Union is power"--Yes--we trust in this case, a "power unto salvation," through the teaching of the scriptures, by Sunday Schools,

---

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (August 1824):298.

to the peace and happiness of the sons of these United States, "who shall be free indeed"--when "the Truth shall make them free."<sup>37</sup>

The idea of union had its opponents. Having changed its name, the American Sunday School Union was now required by law to file for a new Act of Incorporation. Repeated applications were made between 1825 and 1829 to the Pennsylvania Legislature for a charter so that the society might be made legally responsible for its debts. Each time the request met with strong opposition and was refused. Michael cites the Methodists as the major opposing group which "bitterly opposed its [American Sunday School Union] progress on the grounds that it was a propagating agency of Hopkinsianism<sup>38</sup> or Calvinistic Presbyterianism to the detriment of other creeds."<sup>39</sup> Opponents held that "underneath the ostensible aim to promote education, morals and religion, was concealed a real purpose to form a powerful National Society."<sup>40</sup> In a "Remonstrance" which appeared in the American Sentinel, the opposition stated:

In the different states of the union, a number of these schools have been erected together, (or more strictly their managers) forming what has been called a state Society. The evil however does not stop here, for these bodies are to be found in all the states, and at length after unwearied efforts, they have been united into one grand system. Such is the scope of action possessed by this mighty institution that while its trunk reposes on the soil of our state, its members are spread from Maine to

---

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>38</sup>A theological school of thought named for its founder, Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803), who held a Calvinistic view of total depravity and absolute divine sovereignty in which regeneration was "an entirely imperceptible work of the Holy Spirit in which man was completely passive" and conversion consisted in the "volitional exercises of the regenerate, in which they turn from sin to God, or embrace the Gospel." Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, pp. 408-09.

<sup>39</sup>Michael, The Sunday-school in the Development of the American Church, p. 71.

<sup>40</sup>Edwin Wilbur Rice, "Opposition to Sunday-Schools," Important and Remarkable Epochs in the History of Sunday-Schools (n.p., n.d.), p. 15.

Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the Western Wilderness. Its concerns are managed by men, who both in their public discourses and private conversation, have not scrupled to avow their determination to subject the consciences, and persons of the free citizens of these United States, to the tyranny of an ecclesiastical domination.<sup>41</sup>

It was not until 1845, twenty years after the name change of the association, that an Act of Incorporation was granted.

Rice points out that such opposition should not seem strange when one recalls the religious history of the period with its bitter controversies over creeds and dogmas. Those contending for denominational teaching believed that children should be taught the creeds and beliefs of their particular church.<sup>42</sup> Ultimately the situation worked out for the good of the Union in that able and godly men of public stature, including Hon. Willard Hall of Delaware, Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen and Archibald Alexander of New Jersey, Lyman Beecher of Massachusetts and the Breckenridges of Kentucky, stepped out in defense of the Union and of the union principle.

Waves of religious controversy would crest again and again in the history of the American Sunday School Union but the association chose to rely on its basic principle of union and keep on with its work. The Sunday-School Times, the official teachers' journal of the Union from 1859 to 1875, clearly stated the Union position regarding opposition:

Religious controversy will be entirely excluded from this paper. The Times will not even reply to its own assailants. Its

---

<sup>41</sup>The Charter; Being a Plain Statement of Facts in Relation to an Application to the Legislature of Pennsylvania to Grant a Charter for the American Sunday School Union (Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1828), p. 10.

<sup>42</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 132.

only answer to attacks, will be to labor more industriously to make a paper, which shall be worthy of the patronage of warm-hearted, working Christians, and which shall breathe throughout the spirit of meekness and love.<sup>43</sup>

True to its purpose, the American Sunday School Union forged ahead. In 1824, at the time of the name change, 723 schools encompassing 7,300 teachers and 49,619 scholars merged into the new Union.<sup>44</sup> Within one year the number had increased to 1,150 schools, 11,295 teachers and 82,697 scholars.<sup>45</sup> By the time of the first convention in 1832, the Union reported 9,187 schools, 80,913 teachers and 542,520 scholars.<sup>46</sup> The phenomenal growth was a product of a daring endeavor launched in 1830--the Mississippi Valley Enterprise.

The Mississippi Valley Enterprise was not undertaken in a haphazard manner. Preliminary surveys gathered by able and experienced persons indicated both a need for and an interest in extending the Sunday school movement on a more systematic basis into the "western country." In 1829 it was made known that it was the duty of the Union, if funds were available, to establish Sunday schools in the destitute regions of the West. Encouraging responses came from philanthropists and businessmen in different parts of the country, including a proposal from Arthur Tappan, a businessman in New York, who suggested that a Sunday school be established in every town in the Mississippi Valley within two years. He felt such an enterprise would thrill the Christian community who would respond

---

<sup>43</sup>"Our Position," The Sunday-School Times, 5 March 1859, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 451.

<sup>45</sup>"Statistics," The American Sunday School Magazine, June 1825, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup>"Statistics," The American Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, 23 May 1832, p. 2.

with offerings and prayers. At the May 1830 meeting over 2,000 members gave unanimous assent to the following resolution:

Resolved that the American Sunday School Union, in reliance upon divine aid, will, within two years, establish a Sunday school in every destitute place where it is practicable throughout the Valley of the Mississippi.<sup>47</sup>

This staggering task, although never fully carried out, furnished the challenge needed to catapult the movement into action. The Mississippi Valley, as the Union defined it, stretched from the Allegheny or Appalachian Mountains to the Chippewayan or Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes, approximately 1,350,000 square miles, more than two-thirds of the land mass of the nation. "Destitute places" did not necessarily mean places where no Sunday schools existed but those places where circumstances would make it practicable to establish a Sunday school. Practicable conditions included proximity of families with children over six years of age, availability of teachers, access to meeting places and a minimum of diversity of denominational preference within a small community of families.

The challenge of the enterprise resulted in several key meetings where verbal and financial support was pledged. Meetings were held in Philadelphia, New York, Boston and Washington, D.C. The Washington meeting was remarkable because of the involvement of members of the legislative body of the United States. Francis Scott Key played a prominent role in "interesting senators, diplomats, justices of the United States Supreme Court" in the Mississippi Valley campaign, and "secured the attendance of several of them, including the Hon. Daniel

---

<sup>47</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 196.

Webster, to make addresses at that meeting."<sup>48</sup> The meeting, held February 16, 1831, was chaired by Felix Grundy, senator from Tennessee, with Matthew St. Clair Clarke, clerk of the House of Representatives, acting as secretary. During the meeting seven senators and congressmen addressed those gathered in behalf of the Valley Enterprise. Four resolutions were made, each commending and supporting the effort of the American Sunday School Union to diffuse moral and religious education throughout the United States and especially in the Mississippi Valley. Rice suggests, "The magnitude of the Valley proposition appealed to their patriotism, and it was commended in the strongest terms as best adapted to put the stamp of a Christian civilization upon the West and to promote the stability of the republic."<sup>49</sup>

Agents and missionaries were assigned to the Mississippi Valley which had been divided into districts and fields by the Society. Independent teachers took up the challenge and headed west for the purpose of founding Sunday schools. On February 16, 1831, The Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education reported: "The Sabbath-School Treasury states that company of individuals who are going to Illinois, with the exception of supporting themselves by some useful calling during the week, and of labouring in the Sabbath-School on the Sabbath, now intend to start from Boston about the first of March."<sup>50</sup>

In its efforts to promote and coordinate the Sunday school movement the American Sunday School Union moved along three related lines:

---

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 198-99.

<sup>50</sup>"Emigration of Sunday School Teachers to Illinois," The Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, 16 February 1831, p. 3.

1. Educational: by providing a system of lessons, a decidedly religious juvenile literature, a complete equipment for the school, and definite information about principles and methods of teaching.
2. Organization: by promoting teachers' meetings in the local school, by forming county and state unions among schools and teachers for inspiration, counsel, and mutual improvement.
3. Extension of Sunday-schools: by employing general agents and missionaries and providing a medium of communication for and between all Sunday-school workers.<sup>51</sup>

The Union early recognized the value of the printed page in providing information, guidelines and for sharing and debating methodology and ideas. Not only would properly conducted, intelligent and informative publications convince the public of the value of Sunday schools but they would cement the various Sunday school endeavors taking place across the nation.

British Sunday school societies had for many years produced pamphlets, serial publications and books. The England-based The Sunday School Repository or Teacher's Magazine, begun in 1813 as a quarterly publication and changed in 1821 to the Sunday-School Teacher's Magazine monthly, was circulated in America. It was later purchased by the American Sunday School Union. In 1823 The American Sunday-School Teachers' Magazine and Journal of Education began as a quarterly by private publishers in New York City. This publication was transferred to the American Sunday School Union in 1824 and was issued under the title of The American Sunday-School Magazine as a monthly until 1831 when it again became a quarterly. It was succeeded by The Sunday-School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education in weekly form until 1834 when it was changed to a semi-monthly and later to a monthly publication. In 1859 a weekly teacher's magazine again was published under the title The

---

<sup>51</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 90.

Sunday-School Times. The Times was transferred to private publishers in 1861 and continued as a leading teachers' journal in America until 1967.

The Union also provided a monthly publication for pupils, The Teachers' Offering or Sabbath Scholars' Magazine, started in November 1823 by the New Haven Sabbath-School Union and intended as a monthly reward book for attendance, correct recitation and good behaviour, was purchased by the American Sunday School Union in 1824. The name was changed to The Youth's Friend and Scholars' Magazine and continued for over twenty years until it was superseded by The Youth's Penny Gazette. These periodicals included a large variety of reading for children: Bible and life-situation stories, scriptural history, poems, natural history, stories of children in other lands who attended Sunday school, temperance stories. Engravings enhanced the appearance of the publications.

Not only was provision made for teachers and youth but the Union took note of the needs of the very young and furnished suitable reading for them in The Infants' Magazine, a periodical issued monthly from 1829 to 1834. Attractive engravings and interesting matter to be read to those who could not yet read were prepared for the "wee ones."

In addition to the periodicals, books and related materials poured out from the American Sunday School Union. Pamphlets and circulars were issued which suggested a plan of procedure for organizing local, county and state unions, outlined a suitable constitution, "issued rules and regulations for the efficient management of schools, proposed systems of rewards, published instructions to aid teachers and to guide the librarian in the use and in the keeping of a library, set forth schemes for rewarding and interesting scholars. . . ."52

---

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

Materials used in Sunday schools and published by the Union included reward books, tracts, decalogues, catechisms, spelling books, tickets used in the reward system, hymn books, alphabetical cards, catalogs, adult spelling books, primers, annual reports and other publications.

Concerned that a taste for good literature would be developed among the young, the managers grappled with the task of compiling a suitable collection of juvenile literature. Four criteria governed the selection:

1. The books were to be of a moral and religious character.
2. They were to be graded and adapted to the child's capacity.
3. They were to be of a high style and fairly good literature.
4. They were to be American and for American children.<sup>53</sup>

The first book, published in 1817 by the Sunday and Adult School Union, was Mrs. Sherwood's Little Henry and His Bearer. By 1824 eighteen books had been published under the name of the Philadelphia society. By 1830 the American Sunday School Union had issued over 6,000,000 copies of Sunday school works and 200 bound volumes for libraries in addition to the teachers' magazines. The Union also issued The Union Minstrel and the Union Hymn Book containing songs, tunes and hymns suitable for and pleasing to children and youth. Manuals on instruction in music were also published.

How to place books in the hands of scholars was a question which the American Sunday School Union answered through its libraries. By 1827 free circulating libraries for Sunday schools were a popular feature. Philanthropic and benevolent persons saw the value of promoting good literature and contributed both money and writing talents. Each school

---

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

was to secure voluntary contributions for the purchase of books for its library with the understanding that the books could be taken out without charge. The Sunday school library was considered essential to a prosperous school. Not only did it prove to be a successful scheme in developing a taste for reading but it was a stimulus to induce poor children to attend the schools and continue in them. Rice suggests that the popularity of the free circulating Sunday school libraries encouraged towns and districts to start their own free circulating libraries.<sup>54</sup>

### Teacher Training Efforts

A growing Sunday school movement required adequately trained teachers. Various efforts were made in the early period of the Sunday school to provide information and guidance for teachers. Until 1824 the means for communicating such information were limited and localized. Early efforts dealt with classroom management and teacher conduct rather than with curricular organization and methodology. Teachers were reminded that they taught by personal example and that their conduct before the class was to be blameless, the type children would desire to emulate.

. . . you are forbidden to carry a rod or stick in the school; neither to kick or pinch the children; nor to pull their ears or their hair: the effect of such punishments is to the highest degree injurious: and degrading to both teacher and scholar. Be mild and condescending--meek and patient--ever watchful and ready to act with firmness and decision; experience may probably suggest many things not anticipated in these instructions, yet you will adopt no new plan without the concurrence of the superintendent; be studious and diligent during the week to prepare matter for the instruction of your class on Sundays; and God speed you and make you useful in this good work.<sup>55</sup>

Sunday school societies offered the most systematic approach

---

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>55</sup>"Conduct of Teachers," The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine and Journal of Education 1 (May 1824):176.

to teacher training in that they were usually formed for the purpose of mutual improvement and met on a regular basis. A report in 1824 of teachers' meetings held by the New York Sunday School Union Society alerted readers of The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine and Journal of Education to the values and content of the meetings.

The teachers of the schools connected with the union in this city, shortly after the organization of that society formed themselves into an association for mutual improvement. They have met regularly once a month since that time. At these meetings the state of the school is reported; any interesting facts or improved plans of conducting schools are communicated, and since May last some portion of the time each meeting has been devoted to the discussion of Sunday school subjects. This is a plan certainly well adapted to do much good. At such meetings teachers become acquainted with each other and the youngest have the benefit of the experience of the oldest.<sup>56</sup>

Monthly meetings included debates and discussions on a wide range of topics such as home-school relationships, discipline, classroom methods, Sunday school public relations and qualifications of teachers. Some questions discussed at various meetings were:

What are the best means to induce parents of Sunday School children to patronize Sunday schools, and to influence them to co-operate with teachers?

Who are the most proper visitors from Sunday schools?

What is the best method for conducting a class in a Sunday school?

What is the best plan for maintaining order in a class?

Would it be advisable to use every exertion to unite all the Schools of the state in one Union?

By what means can the benefits of Sabbath school instruction be secured to the elder scholars?

What is the best method of directing study of the Bible in Sunday schools?

By what means can Sunday schools be made more popular and useful?

---

<sup>56</sup>"Teachers' Association," The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine and Journal of Education 1 (January 1824):61.

What rules are necessary to be observed in offering prayer in Sunday schools, with regard to matter and length?

Is it proper to admit persons, as teachers, in our Sunday schools, who do not give any evidence of an experimental acquaintance with religion?<sup>57</sup>

While teachers' meetings met an immediate and local need, the general inadequacy of teachers to do their jobs properly was evident. The desirability of a more formalized instruction for teachers began to emerge. In 1827 in its eleventh annual report the New York Sunday-School Union, an auxiliary of the American Sunday School Union, recommended the establishment of a school for teachers as follows:

One of the greatest embarrassments attending the enlargement of Sunday-school operations is a deficiency of faithful and competent teachers; it is frequently the case that those who manifest a disposition to engage in this work are deterred on account of their ignorance of its duties. To obviate this last difficulty and to afford an opportunity to all teachers to become better qualified for their employment, the plan has been suggested of opening a school for teachers, on some week day or Sabbath evening, for the purpose of instructing in the practical duties of a Sunday-school teacher. A thorough acquaintance with the best plan of teaching a class, and a uniform system of instruction, so far as is practicable, appears to be very desirable. Your committee therefore highly recommend the establishment of a school for teachers, and the more so, because they have been informed that some of the oldest and most experienced among us are now ready to engage in it.<sup>58</sup>

The recommendation, however, was not carried out and it would be almost forty years before a system of instruction for training Sunday school teachers would emerge and fifty years before a school of teacher training would be established.

Institutes and normal schools for public school teachers, advocated by Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, were established as early as 1839 in Massachusetts and by 1860 nine states had begun normal schools.

---

<sup>57</sup>Extracted from various reports of monthly teachers' meetings noted in The American Sunday School Magazine and Journal of Education, May 1824, and The American Sunday School Magazine, July 1825.

<sup>58</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 461.

Dr. D. P. Kidder, corresponding secretary of the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in his annual report of 1847 called for similar kinds of schools and institutes for Sunday school teachers. He saw a basis for them in the district conventions and in the sporadic courses given to Sunday school teachers throughout the country. In his report in 1848, a note of discouragement was expressed in a reference to his previous proposal.

We confess, however, that we fear the day is distant when the church will take as high ground on this subject as that assumed by several States of the Union, viz., that in order to promote general education most effectually institutions must be provided for the special instruction of teachers.<sup>59</sup>

Arlo Brown notes that the difficulty of starting a similar plan of teacher training for Sunday school teachers lay in the fact that a volunteer force was involved in instruction only one day in the week, and that only a part of a day. While there was a strong commitment on the part of Sunday school teachers to their work, their teaching did not represent a full-time responsibility.

The Sunday school concert, while not strictly a means of teacher training, was a popular feature during this period of the Sunday school movement. Its original design was a meeting especially for prayer for God's blessing on the schools and on the labors of the teachers. A brief address by the pastor and recitation of Scripture verses memorized by teachers and scholars rounded out the session. The concerts later included such items as monthly reports by the teachers of their classes, interesting information regarding Sunday schools in the States and in other lands, readings by teachers and scholars, dialogues and simple pieces, and choral and instrumental music.

---

<sup>59</sup>A. Brown, A History of Religious Education, p. 133.

### Educational Methodologies Examined

Teacher training efforts in the early 1800s gained a following as greater interest in the quality of both teacher and teacher procedures increased. The growth of such efforts paralleled the growth of the common school movement and its concern for improved education. The common school movement, with its advantages of five-day teaching and a paid staff would, however, outstrip the Sunday school, especially in the period following the Civil War. Sunday school enthusiasts, nevertheless, were concerned with educational methodology and the possible application of systems of instruction which were finding their way across the Atlantic to the United States. Rice claims,

Every system of education then current, received careful consideration by leading Sunday-school workers, and a vast number of them were practically tested by the close of the first fifty years, 1831. The study and practical sifting of such systems in the severest critical manner, took place in the closing decade of the era. It was one of the great epochs in the history of religious education in the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup>

It must be kept in mind that many of the systems of education or learning theories were in the experimental stage or in that stage where adaptations were being made for application of the system to another culture or setting.

#### Monitorial System

The British system of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster, popular between 1810 and 1830 in the United States, awakened interest for free schools. Its efficiency and relative inexpensiveness won approval for adoption from Maine to Georgia and as far west as Cincinnati, Louisville and Detroit. In 1818 Lancaster himself came to America and spent the remaining twenty years of his life promoting the idea. The system allowed

---

<sup>60</sup>Rice, "First Fifty Years of Sunday-Schools," Important and Remarkable Epochs, p. 2.

for instruction of a large number of boys, up to a thousand, under the control of one teacher using monitors, bright older pupils, to teach small groups. The teacher first taught the monitors who instructed groups in what they had just learned. At times the master teacher instructed the entire group, leaving the monitors to drill and examine individual pupils or small groups.

Although not fully adopted by the Sunday school, some useful features were incorporated in the management of Sunday schools. The plan of unpaid or voluntary teaching became a distinctive of the Sunday school movement. In many schools the superintendent served as a master teacher in that he taught the teachers the Scriptures passage and reviewed memory portions during the week which they in turn taught on Sundays to their classes. An interesting similarity can also be seen in the classroom setup of the Sunday school and the Lancastrian school. In the monitorial system the boys sat on benches in rows with the monitor standing or sitting at one end. During recitation or drill time, the boys frequently stood with their toes touching a semi-circular line drawn on the floor. At a central and raised spot sat the master teacher. An 1824 ground plan for a Sunday school room showed a 22' x 28' room with twelve semi-circular benches seating ten scholars each. A teacher's bench and small desk were positioned in the center of each semi-circle. All scholars were seated facing the superintendent who sat on a raised 6' x 4' platform at one end of the room. This arrangement was designed to "give him [the superintendent] great advantages in securing good order in the school."<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup>"Ground Plan of a Sunday School Room," The American Sunday School Magazine, September 1824, pp. 83-84.

## Pestalozzianism

Pestalozzi's emphasis on the child and the simultaneous development of the moral, physical and intellectual powers of the child through natural education dominated American elementary education from 1860 to 1900. However, early in his career Pestalozzi and his ideas came under critical study by Sunday school leaders. In fact, one of the earliest notices of that system in English was made in The Sunday School Repository, or Teachers' Magazine in April 1820, based on French works before an English translation had appeared. Elaborate critical notices of Pestalozzi and his work appeared in religious and Sunday school journals in which he was referred to as "the illustrious founder of the Pestalozzian system," "useful and true philanthropist," "a hardy explorer." His faults likewise were discussed. "Nature was the goddess of the scholastic temple reared by Pestalozzi . . . he trusted too much in that idol."<sup>62</sup> However, the critics added, "The religious faith of the man has little to do with his system. . . . It forms no good reason for despising his methods."<sup>63</sup> A major objection to the system centered on the problem of imparting the abstract principles of biblical truth through sense realism. Of particular interest and use to the Sunday school worker was the emphasis on the character of the teacher and the use of teacher approbation for meritorious conduct.

Sunday school leaders sifted from Pestalozzi's ideas those which they counted sensible, substantial and applicable to the Sunday school setting and which could be understood by the teachers and turned

---

<sup>62</sup>Rice, "First Fifty Years of Sunday-Schools," Important and Remarkable Epochs, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 117.

into practice. While not directly referred to as Pestalozzian in substance, the following illustrates early attempts to understand teaching-learning in terms of sense education and movement from the concrete to the abstract.

No subject can be illustrated but through the medium of ideas previously received; and every proposition should be made in terms familiar to the recipient. Very young minds do neither draw an inference, nor anticipate results beyond sensible objects: they do not even compare mentally, and are not capable of reasoning. This is for want of ideas. Therefore, a very little child may say, "this lead sinks because it is heavy;" this they see and feel: again, "if I throw up this ball it will come down;" this they only infer because they have known to do so before. But older children and more instructed, would thus express themselves, "I cannot see the stars by day, because the sun shines so bright: how bright the sun must be?" Others yet more enlarged in capacity, through the multiplication of ideas, would advance a step further in the exercise of intellect, and might be supposed to say, "how warm the sun is? if my heart was as warm with love as the sun is warm, how I should love God and my parents too; but my heart is cold and I cannot love; this must be because I forget their benefits." Now there is nothing in this beyond the capacity of a well-instructed child of twelve; but one of six, unless of bright parts and early advantages, would not thus reflect, neither compare thus mentally, nor make such deductions; it would say, "I do not love, because I don't want to." They would not think that they ought, nor consider what is the reason they do not. The first investigates mentally, for the mind abounds in ideas; the other can only do so through the medium of the senses; they must see, and hear, and touch; therefore sensible objects exclusively can be subjects of investigation; these as they see, taste, touch, and handle, supply them with ideas, and so establish judgment.<sup>64</sup>

#### Gall's Lesson System of Teaching

The revival of the use of the catechism in New England in the early 1830s was strongly opposed by some whose protest focused on the prevailing method of simply memorizing a catechism. An attempt to guide teachers and parents in the proper use of the catechism can be seen in the title page of a book by James Gall:

---

<sup>64</sup>"Method of Instruction," The American Sunday School Magazine and Journal of Education 1 (April 1824):149-50.

The End and Essence of Sabbath-school Teaching and Family Religious Instruction--in which the present defects in communicating religious knowledge to the young are investigated; and the lesson system of teaching the Scriptures is fully developed. "I had rather speak five words with my UNDERSTANDING, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." I Cor. XIV. 19.<sup>65</sup>

Eleven other books by Gall followed which used the question and answer method to teach and explain both catechism and Scripture passages.

Although Gall's "Lesson System" gained great popularity in Scotland and England for a short period of time, it was vigorously criticized in America and Gall was charged with a lack of knowledge of the child's mind, a strong emphasis on instruction in words and a major use of direct catechetical questions.

The Lesson System did not present a basic philosophical approach to education but rather identified a series of steps to follow in guiding children in understanding, feeling and applying biblical truth. The five steps included: (1) Catechetical exercise, (2) Explanatory exercise, (3) Drawing of lessons, (4) Application of the lesson, (5) Devotional exercise from the answer. The whole system resolves itself into the following principles:

The child must understand 1. The use and connexion of words (by the catechetical exercises.) 2. The meaning of words (by the explanatory exercise.) 3. The doctrines and duties taught (by the drawing of the lesson;) 4. The influence which a knowledge of these doctrines and duties should exert over us in all the relations and circumstances of life, (by application of the lesson.)<sup>66</sup>

While Gall's lesson plan did not find favor in Sunday schools in the United States, his five steps were incorporated into the uniform

---

<sup>65</sup>"Lesson System of Teaching the Scriptures," The American Sunday-School Teachers' Magazine, May 1830, p. 141.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

limited lessons for Sunday schools adopted in 1826 to 1830.

### Jacotot's System

Jacotot's Method of Universal Education developed a word method of teaching pupils to read, with an emphasis on repetition of letters and syllables in words. Further learning was built on recognition of syllables previously learned. This idea of saturation and concentration carried over into other areas of knowledge. Jacotot's basic tenets were: (1) Learn something thoroughly and refer everything else to it. ". . . fix a single word; by the combined aids of analysis and synthesis, exhaust it of all the knowledge it contains; associate all these parts of knowledge with one another, and fasten to these in the same manner all the new ideas which you get elsewhere."<sup>67</sup> (2) Scholars have not learned merely because they have been taught; scholars have learned only when they have retained. (3) To forget is the same as never having learned.

Jacotot held that the pupil was to be a self-educated person. The teacher therefore was to "tell the pupil nothing, explain nothing, insist upon nothing and affirm nothing. The pupil was to see everything for himself, and to make his own references and reflections, not to receive those made by others."<sup>68</sup> Jacotot further stated that "'real learning is not the offspring of hireling teachers,' which meant that paid instructors may guide, but by self-education chiefly, a man arrives at eminence in knowledge."<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup>"Methode Jacotot," The Sunday School Journal, 29 August 1832, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup>Rice, "First Fifty Years of Sunday-Schools," Important and Remarkable Epochs, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

To Sunday school teachers who believed in a body of absolute truth and in indoctrination of that truth, Jacotot's method was viewed as a system of nature carried to its extreme and bordering on agnosticism. However, Sunday school leaders followed their principle of sifting out beneficial elements of various methodologies and placing the useful features into their own philosophical setting. Two key elements were utilized by the Sunday school. Jacotot's comments on paid teachers were used to support the voluntary teacher system of the Sunday school. The word method of teaching was revised and modified for use by the American Sunday School Union and the manuals, charts, cards and wall sheets widely used for several years before public schools became popular. Again, after the Civil War, the system was utilized in the teachings of freedmen when it was found to be helpful for teaching adults as well as children to read.

#### Owen's Infant Schools

The acceptance and introduction of infant schools into the Sunday school scheme was discussed earlier in this chapter. The potential of teaching young children caught the attention of Sunday school leaders and churches who incorporated the idea early into the movement. Much discussion, however, revolved around the philosophy of Robert Owen and the elements which could be accepted or had to be rejected by the Sunday school. The major objection had to do with Owen's attack on the doctrine of human depravity and his opposition to teaching the Scriptures to children. A British-based teachers' journal reviewed Robert Dale Owen's An Outline of A System of Education at New Lanark and stated:

. . . our readers will perceive that Mr. O's opinions and our's [sic] are in diametrical opposition; he does not approve of teaching the young the doctrines of the Bible; we consider that they form the

basis of all enlightened, religious, and moral instruction, and that the system of education must be necessarily wrong, in which they are not the alpha and also the omega.<sup>70</sup>

The reviewer cited the statement from Owen's book that the Scriptures were read and the catechism was taught at New Lanark,

not as being considered the proper method of conveying religious instruction to the minds of young children, but because the parents were believed to wish it; and any encroachment on perfect liberty of conscience, was regarded as the worst species of tyrannical assumption.<sup>71</sup>

Thus the reviewer suggested that "all that is exemplary at New Lanark may be traced, first, to the religious instruction communicated to the people; and, secondly, to the excellent habits enforced by Mr. Owen, and the other proprietors of the mills. . . ." <sup>72</sup> Again in keeping with the sifting practice of Sunday school leaders, the good of the infant school could be extracted from the Owenite philosophy and adapted to the Sunday school setting.

#### Froebel's Theory of Spontaneity

Interest in Froebel's kindergarten and methodology is a later development in the Sunday school movement. However, early in the 1830s his idea of spontaneity was studied and considered as more devout than the system of his master, Pestalozzi. Nevertheless, while Froebel's principles of child growth and spontaneous development were considered valuable to Sunday school instruction, his system was criticized as irreligious in a large sense because it was perceived as beginning with nature rather than with God.

The above discussion illustrates the efforts of earnest Sunday

---

<sup>70</sup>"Review," The Sunday School Teachers' Magazine and Journal of Education 8 (1824):118-19.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

school leaders and educators to wrestle with educational ideas and methodologies as they groped for a curricular principle that would fit the conditions of the institution they promoted. The ideas of great educators of the time were woven into the structure of the Sunday school and affected its principles and methods of teaching. Some basic teaching methods began to emerge which were to become common to the Sunday school and which were reflected in its curriculum.

### Curriculum

With the rise of the Sunday school movement there came a pressing need for teachers' helps. Between 1780 and 1815 the catechism was the main type of lesson used, with variations in content, supplementary questions and some attempts at grading. Between 1825 and 1872 a great variety of lesson helps were introduced: selected Scripture lessons, question books and memorizing plans. The year 1872 marks a significant step in the development of a curriculum when the International Uniform Lessons were adopted. However, many and varied were the exploratory and experimental steps before Sunday school educators arrived at a uniform system. The period 1824-1832 reflects the searching spirit of the educators.

### Uniform Limited Lessons

Among the early efforts to limit the lessons taught by teachers in a given Sunday school was that of Truman Parmele of Utica, New York, in 1823<sup>73</sup> where, rather than each teacher selecting the lesson material for his or her class, lessons were selected in advance for use by all the teachers. Parmele's scheme of lessons from the Gospels and Acts

---

<sup>73</sup>See Chapter II, p. 55.

was published in 1824. Each lesson was limited to one chapter with a few questions accompanying each lesson which called for some thoughtful study in addition to memorization of the chapter.

In 1824 the London Sunday Teachers' Magazine suggested the importance of assigning portions of Scripture and catechism rather than letting children select and memorize what they pleased. Early in the same year two Sunday schools in New York adopted a scheme of lessons arranged by "Father" S. W. Seton and William Tomlinson. The lessons to be used for general use by the two schools contained selections, without questions, from the Gospels in chronological order. Each scholar received a printed card containing the selection which he was to read during the week. After receiving instructions on the selection the scholar was to commit it to memory. The pastors gave a weekly lecture to the teachers on the lesson to assist them in teaching the following Sunday. The Seton-Tomlinson plan attracted wide attention and prompted the New York Association of Sunday-School Teachers to recommend, in October 1824, "That all lessons for recitation in Sabbath-schools should be selected and previously explained by the teachers."<sup>74</sup> On January 1, 1824, the Association commenced a series of selected lessons for the next four months.

In an attempt to provide lessons for a larger readership, the American Sunday School Union in March 1825 printed a list of select lessons, comprising studies on the life of Christ, for one year in card form. Passages of Scripture were stated with the subject of each lesson, e.g., Lesson 10--Matthew 3:1-17, Preaching of John and Baptism

---

<sup>74</sup>Rice, "First Uniform System of Lessons," Important and Remarkable Epochs, p. 5.

of Christ. Lessons were issued without questions, note or comment. The first annual course was comprised of forty-nine lessons with the other Sundays to be used for quarterly examination of the scholars.

The Uniform Limited Lessons were enthusiastically received so that after a trial period of two years, the American Sunday School Union announced in 1827 a new series of lessons to include five annual courses of instruction, or a five-year lesson cycle. The new lessons provided an impetus to teachers and an increase in interest and spiritual renewal in the schools.

It [the Uniform Lesson System of 1827] gave a marked stimulus to the instruction by teachers, and great enthusiasm in the study of the Bible by scholars. . . . So apparent and superior were the advantages of the new system, and so generally satisfactory did it prove in practice, that as early as 1828 it was asserted, "the Selected Lessons are now almost universally introduced."

Almost immediately the news of revivals and accessions to the churches began to come from schools in nearly every part of the country where they had been adopted.<sup>75</sup>

Essential features of succeeding lessons of the next seventy-five years had their origins in this early uniform system. First, the system offered a uniform series, one lesson--the same lesson--for all. Regulations from the American Sunday School Union required that every class in a particular Sunday school receive instruction on the same lesson at the same time. Second, the plan provided for study of the entire Bible, including selections from the Old Testament, life and teachings of Christ, studies in Acts and Epistles and studies in type and prophecies. Third, it provided for regular review and examination of the scholars. Fourth, it was proposed for national use. Fifth, it prompted publication of graded lesson helps for teachers.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

## Lesson Aids for Teachers

The new plan called for special kinds of teaching aids-- auxiliary study resources, such as commentaries, dictionaries, works on Jewish antiquities and habits and customs of Bible people. Often the pastor taught the teachers during the week in order to prepare them to teach on Sunday. Teachers, however, wanted some written help, a "brief," on the lesson which they could study on their own.

Two systems of aids were developed to assist teachers. Rev. Albert Judson, employed by the New York Sunday School Union, prepared a series of graded questions which was published monthly. The first grade of questions was simple and easy and could be answered by citing a clause from the Bible text. The second grade of questions was less simple, requiring more thought and leading the teacher to explain and the scholar to know the meaning of the text. The third grade of questions arose from the passage under study and called for relating the same or a like topic or truth from other passages of Scripture. Thus, while a uniform system existed, graded helps were provided.

Mr. Henry Fisk, a superintendent in New Jersey, issued a similar plan of lesson helps with the approval of the Princeton Sunday School Union. Fisk claimed that his series, A New Series of Questions on the Select Scripture Lessons for Sabbath Schools, was better adapted for use in rural schools than was Judson's. In an effort to secure unity in the Sunday school lesson system throughout the land, the American Sunday School Union acquired both series and with the mutual consent of the respective authors commissioned Fisk to combine the best of both into one series of questions. This combined system became the first issue of the Union Questions. A book of questions only, however, was

soon found to be inadequate in helping teachers. The American Sunday-School Magazine and other teachers' journals, in response to calls for additional lesson helps, began to publish notes and comments on the Uniform Limited Lessons, adding illustrations and applications. It is at this point that a five-fold treatment of the lesson text, based on Gall's lesson system, was incorporated, namely, teachers' helps in five distinct forms of narrative, questions, explanations, symbols and practical lessons. Many other forms of lesson helps were issued but those described above give a fair idea of the genesis and development of teacher aids during the trial years (1824-1830) of the Uniform Limited Lessons.

In 1831 what is termed by Sampey as a "distinctly retrograde movement in Sunday school instruction" occurred. "Interest in the series of Uniform Lessons seems to have begun to wane about 1831, and a rival scheme entered the fold."<sup>77</sup> The Verse-a-Day devotional study system of the Moravians, which had been introduced into the Sunday schools in Sullivan, Madison County, New York, in 1829, was adopted by the Sunday-school Teachers' Association of Oswego County, New York, and recommended to the "entire Christian world." The American Sunday School Union published the plan in its Sunday-School Journal and recommended it for supplemental use but not as a substitute for the Uniform Limited Lesson system as the Verse-a-Day plan was regarded as a step backwards toward the old memorizing practice.

#### Early Conventions

The need for coordinating efforts, for resolving questions of

---

<sup>77</sup>John Richard Sampey, The International Lesson System: The History of Its Origin and Development (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1911), p. 28.

policy and procedure, and for sharing methodological and curricular ideas moved Sunday school leaders to organize into unions and associations. A growing Sunday school with its increasing requirements of qualified teachers and a suitable curriculum called forth every means of communication available in the early 1800s. The printed page was a major vehicle for diffusing ideas. Sunday school teachers and leaders were invited to share their programs and ideas through the numerous teachers' magazines and journals. Gatherings of teachers for mutual improvement provided another means of communicating ideas. The "convention idea" was to become fashionable throughout America in the nineteenth century at every level. Indeed, it was the voluntary principle in action. It was said,

. . . if an orphan child is to be fed, a poor family to be provided with a bucket of coal, or a dog or cat to be rescued, an American immediately calls a convention and forms a society to do the work. This is a caricature which our neighbors make of us, but it indicates that the convention is a spectacular feature of our social work.<sup>78</sup>

Visitors to the United States expressed amazement at the success of voluntarism which differed radically from the state-church tradition in Europe. Alexis de Tocqueville noted the unique relationship of religious groups to republican institutions after a visit to the United States in the early 1800s.

Religion in American takes no direct part in the government of society, but nevertheless it must be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of that country; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of free institutions. Indeed, it is in this same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief. I do not know whether all the Americans have a sincere faith in their religion, for who can search the human heart? But I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of

---

<sup>78</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 351.

republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation, and to every rank of society.<sup>79</sup>

The Sunday school was no exception to the idea of convention, conference and commission. From 1820 to 1825 numerous local conventions were held along the eastern seaboard either to form local unions or to meet for mutual improvement. The natural step was to move from a local organization to a county and then to state alliance. In 1824 the first state convention was held in New Hampshire to form a state Sunday school union. This convention was followed by similar ones in other states for the forming of state unions, which became auxiliary to the national society, the American Sunday School Union. According to Fergusson, the convention

stood for all that was progressive, evangelical, and idealistic in Sunday School service. To attend a convention revealed to the local worker his chosen cause operating on a wider field, broadened his fellowship, inspired him to new effort, and returned him with loyalty to church and denomination intelligently reinforced.<sup>80</sup>

It was the interest and profit derived from local, county and state conventions which led to the national conventions of 1832 and 1833.

The American Sunday School Union broadened its conferences very early in its existence. At the 1824, 1826, 1828 and 1830 anniversary meetings, auxiliaries were invited to send representatives who took part in the discussions on various questions. In 1828 a convention was held for three days in which representatives from twenty auxiliary societies participated. Reports and information from various parts of the States were considered. Recommendations included enlargement of

---

<sup>79</sup>Ahlstrom, A Religious History, p. 386.

<sup>80</sup>Fergusson, Historic Chapters in Christian Education, p. 30.

the Union's publishing operations, establishment of Sunday schools among seamen and increased effort in organizing Sunday schools in every state and territory of the United States. The meeting or convention in 1830 in Philadelphia resulted in the great Mississippi Valley campaign. These meetings or conventions placed before the representatives whatever reports or surveys could be gathered during the interim periods through questionnaires sent out inquiring into the religious condition of the communities and churches in different sections of the country.

A convention of a different type--a national convention--was inaugurated during the anniversary of the American Sunday School Union and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church on May 23, 1832. At an earlier meeting of the managers of the Union on April 10, 1832, a national convention was proposed:

Resolved, That it be recommended to the superintendents and teachers of Sunday-schools in the United States to convene at some suitable time and place for the purpose of considering the principles of the institution; the duties and obligations which attach to the several officers of Sunday-schools; the best plans of organizing, instructing and managing a Sunday-school in its various departments, and such other topics as may pertain to the general objects of the convention.<sup>81</sup>

Individuals actually engaged as superintendents, teachers or active officers in Sunday schools were encouraged to attend the proposed preliminary meeting scheduled for May 23. The purpose of the preliminary meeting was to consider the expediency of a national convention, place and time for such a meeting, subjects to be presented. The plan for the meeting was clearly outlined:

The proposed convention is designed to afford such advantages for devising some general system of proceeding not TOUCHING IN ANY POINT THE RIGHTS OR PRIVILEGES OF ANY SCHOOL, NOR THE THINGS

---

<sup>81</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 353.

TO BE TAUGHT, but simply the external organization, and such circumstances depending on this or may be thought susceptible of general regulation; and here there can be no design to dictate or control, but to recommend and suggest.

The course now proposed for the teachers of Sunday-schools has been adopted some time since by common school teachers, and with a promise of very useful results. We hope it will be fairly tried, and we have no doubt it will promise as much for us.<sup>82</sup>

The May 23 preliminary meeting was attended by superintendents, teachers and delegates from thirteen of the twenty-four states and two of the four territories. Ninety-one were enrolled as members and took part in the discussions. When it was decided to call a convention in New York City on October 3, 1832, a call in the form of a printed circular was issued in May, stating: "The object of the convention is to deliberate on the best plans of promoting the usefulness of this system of religious instruction, and, if possible, to adopt some means of rendering it more efficient than it yet has been."<sup>83</sup>

In order to pursue their objectives in an intelligent and informed way, the board of managers distributed a circular of seventy-eight interrogatories, printed on eight folio pages, with large spaces for answers after each question. Categories or questions dealt with: Schools, Organization, Discipline, Visiting, Mode of instruction, Union Questions, Other books, Libraries, Other means of success, Superintendents, Bible and adult classes and Miscellaneous. A sampling of questions reveals the following concerns:

1. Have you schools for infants? for children? for adults?
7. Are the children classed according to their capacity and progress?
8. What is the proper number for a class of children?
21. Please to state fully your views of the best method of instruction, whether orally by the teacher, by conversation with the class, or with the scholars individually, or by lecture; whether it is advisable to encourage the children to

---

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., pp. 354-55.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 468.

- express their own sentiments, to discuss important points with them, and to gain their assent to truth by reason instead of authority.
22. Mention any mode of communicating knowledge which you know or believe to be peculiarly adapted to the object.
  23. What is the best plan for instructing children who cannot read, and what are the best elementary books?
  25. Do you use maps, pictures, diagrams, etc.?
  28. Do your teachers see that the children who cannot read are placed at public schools, or are otherwise instructed during the week?
  30. Do you use the Union Questions? If so, please state how you use them--whether by asking all the questions as they stand in the lessons, or whether you select them according to the capacity and intelligence of the several members of the class, or ask questions of your own on the general subject of the lesson, without reference to the order or language of the book, etc.? Please mention particularly your views on this head, and the result of your experience or knowledge in regard to the plan of using the Questions.
  36. Can you recommend any work not in general use which you believe to be adapted to the purpose of Sunday-school instruction?
  49. What is the best plan of mutual instruction and study for teachers?
  50. Do teachers hold weekly meetings to study the lesson?
  55. What should be the distinction between the superintendent's authority and that of the teachers?
  58. Might not Bible classes be formed to include all ages and ranks in the congregation, but especially of youth who are above the ordinary age of Sunday scholars?
  65. At what age should children be admitted into infant schools? and what is the best mode of conducting them?
  66. What is the proper discipline of an infant Sunday-school? What are proper subjects and modes of teaching? And what exercises are suitable?
  67. What is the best plan of training scholars to become teachers? What is the result of your observation respecting the usefulness of scholars who have become teachers?
  68. What preparation is considered necessary to enable a teacher to meet his class?<sup>84</sup>

The scene was thus set for a new chapter in the progress of the Sunday school--the national convention movement. The first convention held in October 1832 was followed by a second in 1833. The third did not convene until 1859 and the Civil War delayed the fourth until 1869. Thereafter the national conventions met triennially, becoming international

---

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., pp. 469-74.

in 1875, and promoting world-wide conventions with the first held in 1889 in London. Chapter Four follows the progress of the first convention in 1832 up to the significant convention of 1872 when the International Uniform Lesson system was adopted.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEVELOPMENT OF STATE AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS (1832-1872)

#### A Half-Century in Review

In 1830 the population of the United States was 12,866,020 inhabitants, scattered over twenty-four states and four territories. During the forty-year period (1832-1872) discussed in this chapter, the population began to swell as the tide of immigrants increased. The flow of immigrants during the decade of 1821-1830 was a mere trickle of 143,439 compared with 2,314,824 during the decade of 1861-1870. Between 1849 and 1860 a great shift of population occurred as immigrants moved into the new country beyond the Mississippi. Internal migration took place as new immigrants pushed into New England and the Northeast. In the 1850's "fully five-sixths of the people dwelt upon the open land, or in the villages and towns which dotted the countryside."<sup>1</sup> This pattern was to change so that by 1890 one-third of the population would be concentrated in urban areas, and by 1900 urban dwellers would reach the forty per cent mark. According to Spicer,

The reality of this economic development was confirmed by the growth of large cities; the unprecedented increase in railroad mileage above the Potomac and Ohio Rivers; the growth in

---

<sup>1</sup>Carl Lloyd Spicer, "The Great Awakening of 1857 and 1858" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1935), p. 14.

manufactures and the great increase in the value of the products; the growing disparity between the higher and lower classes; and especially the surge of business enterprise into every field of public activity, including politics and religion.<sup>2</sup>

Growth of cities demanded a new look at the role of the churches and their relationship to the increase in poverty and growing restlessness "which was not in keeping with the general prosperity, political idealism, and orderly community life of the rural districts."<sup>3</sup> Evangelicals involved in cooperative benevolent and missionary societies experienced a new sense of responsibility for those "whom a soulless industrial system had thrown upon the refuse heap of the city's slums."<sup>4</sup> The American Sunday School Union, for example, gave increasing attention to unchurched urban children. One of its agents, William E. Boardman, recalled from the Michigan frontier in 1855, directed the Students Mission Service, which exposed ministerial students to urban work by providing service opportunities in cities. In September, 1856, a carefully organized program to evangelize New York City's improverished masses was launched by the New York Sunday School Union. Each church in the union was allocated responsibility to visit homes and organize mission Sunday schools in a destitute area. The following spring two thousand visitors in teams of two blanketed the city, visiting both the lowliest and the most fashionable sections. Smith notes, "By 1859 the New York chapter of the Union reported that forty per cent of the 65,000 who attended its schools were from families which did not attend church."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 167.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Several key events shaped the emerging patterns of religious effort during the forty years from 1832 to 1872. The monetary crisis of 1837 all but suspended those mission operations based on the voluntary principle. Attention of the people in the 1840s became fixed upon economic and political matters, resulting in a diminishing involvement in benevolent and evangelistic efforts. The American Sunday School Union itself suffered a financial loss and found itself heavily in debt. Twenty years later in 1857 a second monetary crisis again closed banks and swept away savings with an intensity of mental and physical suffering said to have exceeded that of the 1837 crisis.<sup>6</sup> Concurrent with the collapse of Wall Street in 1857 were obvious signs of stirrings in the spiritual realm. In New York City weekly laymen's gatherings for prayer had been inaugurated on September 23, 1857. Increasing interest had resulted in daily meetings beginning October 7, just a few days before the stock market crashed. By mid-winter crowds were meeting daily at the Old Dutch Church on Fulton Street and at the John Street Methodist Church. In February the noonday prayer meetings caught the attention of newspaper reporters who disseminated the news of revival through the editorial page and by telegraph. Such newspapermen as James Gordon Bennett of the New York Herald and Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, exploited the revival news with editorials and news stories. The noonday prayer meetings spread to other cities and within a few months every large city had regular gatherings for prayer. These interdenominational gatherings, supported by clergymen and local units of the Young Men's Christian Association, became the seedbed for a widespread religious awakening in 1857 and 1858.

---

<sup>6</sup> Spicer, "The Great Awakening of 1857 and 1858," p. 27.

The Awakening of 1858 differed from previous spiritual revivals in that it began in the urban centers and spread to rural and small-town churches. The 1858 revival has been looked upon as a leaderless revival in that few new theological formulas or doctrines emerged nor did a single great leader appear on the scene. Rather it was characterized by a large lay involvement of the preaching of several key men, such as Charles G. Finney in Boston; Henry Ward Beecher in New York; Dr. Henry W. Bellows, Pastor of the Church of the Puritans, New York; Rev. A. B. Earle, a Baptist field evangelist; Elder Jacob Knapp, a Baptist evangelist; Bishop Waugh and Bishop Pierce of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>7</sup>

Not only did the Awakening seek to answer questions raised by the 1857 financial crisis (Had God's hand struck against the nation?)<sup>8</sup>, but it sought to quicken the spiritual and moral currents in American society. The impoverished were reached not only with the Gospel but with preaching focused on man and his individual sin, the slavery issue and its collective sins became a matter of concern during the Awakening. Henry Ward Beecher, Charles G. Finney, Rev. Dr. Cheever were among the revivalists who held to an ultra-abolitionist school of thought. The slavery issue culminated in the Civil War which swept the country into social conflict.

Work of benevolent organizations was slowed due to the financial pressure placed on individuals to meet the demands and emergencies

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 64-89.

<sup>8</sup>"James Waddell Alexander, Pastor of the largest Old School Presbyterian Church in New York, for example, joined many contemporaries in thinking the financial crisis proof that God had been pleased 'by the ploughshare of his judgments to furrow the ground for the precious seed of salvation.'" Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, p. 64.

created by the war. The financial reverses of the American Sunday School Union made the support of its missionaries and agents difficult and also made the appointment of new missionaries impossible. While the American Sunday School Union experienced financial retrenchment, not all churches encountered the same difficulty. Henry May in Protestant Churches and Industrial America, stated that, "Throughout the war ordinary religious functions were not only maintained but expanded. War prosperity provided increased funds for home and foreign mission, Bible and tract distribution and the newer work of the Young Men's Christian Association."<sup>9</sup> He indicates that the interest in missions and evangelism was stimulated by both the 1859 Revival and the revival of 1863 which swept the war-torn land.

Sunday schools in the path of the armies often sustained losses. Rice reported, "In two states alone, where the Society had 3,000 to 4,000 schools, contending armies swept hither and thither, dissipating many and destroying their libraries."<sup>10</sup> On both sides, however, were those soldiers who "turned their thoughts toward the faith which they had learned in the little country Sunday-schools."<sup>11</sup> In the border states, American Sunday School Union missionaries tried to carry on Sunday-school work as in peacetime and often crossed the battle lines. American Sunday School Union Area Superintendent, John McCullagh of Kentucky, was a personal friend of leading officers in both the Confederate and Union armies and frequently ministered on both sides of the conflict.

---

<sup>9</sup> May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 249.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 250.

Other organizations were involved in ministering to the spiritual needs of the wounded and combatants. The Young Men's Christian Association in Chicago formed an Army and Navy Committee, later affiliated with the Northwestern Branch of the Christian Commission, which held services and visited the various camps. Dwight L. Moody, president of the Chicago Young Men's Christian Association, devoted much of his time during 1861-1865 to holding gospel services, prayer-meetings and song services; distributing Bibles, books and tracts; and personally visiting the camps. In the biography of Dwight L. Moody it was reported that, "He was on the ground ministering to the wounded after the battles of Pittsburg Landing, Shiloh, and Murfreesboro; he was with the army at Chattanooga, and among the first to enter Richmond."<sup>12</sup>

Post-war years witnessed large-scale reconstruction, a process of rehabilitation which embittered the defeated and enflamed the victorious.

The post-war generation seemed to be gripped by an insatiable lust for power coupled with an arrogant self-righteousness and self-esteem. . . . This was an age of social naivete, reckless speculation, unbounded assurance, flamboyant taste, and deficient morals. Its first love was "bigness," its measure of value economic. It believed in God, but its faith was in man and in the bright tomorrows in which all things were possible.<sup>13</sup>

Conditions were sad in the North but the state of things in the South was considerably worse. The freeing of 4,000,000 slaves added to the general desolate condition, while there was imperative need to restore churches and Sunday schools destroyed by the war. Thousands of Sunday schools were weakened by the constant loss of superintendents and

---

<sup>12</sup>William R. Moody, The Life of Dwight L. Moody, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), p. 85.

<sup>13</sup>Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States, pp. 399-400.

teachers; in many schools there was not a single male teacher left. Library books and other literature were in short supply. The American Sunday School Union responded as best it could in an attempt to meet the need for literature and assistance in re-establishing Sunday schools.

In 1864 American Sunday School Union workers had called for a reassessment of the various areas of the country to determine the actual status of Sunday schools. This led to a simultaneous canvass or survey in New England, Pennsylvania and the Middle West. The reports, which revealed townships and districts with considerable population without any Sunday schools, called for immediate changes in the American Sunday School Union missionary effort. Consolidation of efforts, which began thirty years earlier in 1832 with the first national convention, surged forward after the Civil War as local, county and state conventions again popularized the Sunday school.

#### The First National Convention, 1832

The character of Sunday schools in 1832 varied considerably from school to school. Some were held in the morning, some during an interval between the morning and afternoon church services, some in the afternoon and some in the evening. Sunday schools were held in various kinds of places: still houses, engine houses in Cincinnati, railroad cars in Chicago, private homes, churches, a room over a grog-shop, log cabins. Sunday school workers went into areas where the children were and sought out easily accessible places for meeting. The time of instruction varied from one to five hours, with diverse differences in the teaching plan followed during the sessions. Curriculum materials, discipline, form, order and arrangement of classes, subjects and modes of instruction, duties of teachers--all varied with the different schools. A desire for

some sort of general regulation in order to increase the efficiency of Sunday schools emerged as an overarching purpose for calling the first national convention.

Inaugurated by the Board of Managers of the American Sunday School Union and called at a special meeting in May, 1832, the first convention met October 3, 1832 in New York City. The Board of Managers sought for the widest possible representation in keeping with their underlying concept of "union." They further sought to keep the convention free from any official connection with the American Sunday School Union. This position and expectations for the success of the Convention were stated in the fourth of July issue of the Sunday School Journal:

We have no official connexion ~~tsicl~~ with the approaching Convention, the business being very properly confided wholly and independently to those who are actively engaged in the course. But we look forward to the measures of the convention as involving the great interests of Christian education, more deeply and directly than any step which has ever been undertaken collateral to the establishment of Sunday schools.<sup>14</sup>

While the majority of leaders and active members were connected in some way with the American Sunday School Union, their relation to the convention was due to their involvement in Sunday schools.

Regardless of who the conferees would be, the object of the convention was to secure the widest experience and the "freest expression of opinion from all classes of Sunday-school workers."<sup>15</sup> An editorial comment in the Sunday School Journal expressed this desire:

The most important object aimed at is to bring together

---

<sup>14</sup>"Teachers Convention," The Sunday-School Journal and Advocate of Christian Education, 4 July 1832, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Rice, "The Sunday-School Movement, p. 356.

practical men of all opinions, by the interchange and comparison of which it is hoped more consistency, strength, and usefulness will be imparted to the means of Christian education than have ever yet been brought into the service.<sup>16</sup>

In preparation for the first national convention, the Committee on Interrogatories mailed 2,500 eight-page circulars containing a series of seventy-eight questions.<sup>17</sup> Replies were received from 142 parties (only 138 in time for the convention) from twenty states. In compiling the responses for the convention, the Committee on Interrogatories closed its report with this caution:

We must not forget the great variety of circumstances that prevail in our schools. What is most suitable in one place would be improper in another. Teachers become discontented when they find their school not exactly modelled as some others which are recommended. One grand object of the system should be to adapt it as far as possible, to all circumstances and all situations. This cannot be done if a precise system is insisted on or too strenuously urged.<sup>18</sup>

On October 3, 1832, the first national convention assembled in the Chatham Street Chapel in New York City, attended by 220 delegates from fourteen states and territories. States represented included Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Tennessee, Connecticut, Rhode Island, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Michigan. Rice states that "This was a large attendance, in view of the limited facilities for traveling (less than 300 miles of railway), and of the scourge of Asiatic cholera that visited New

---

<sup>16</sup>"Teachers Convention," The Sunday School Journal, 5 September 1832, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>See Chapter III, pp. 101-02.

<sup>18</sup>Edwin Wilbur Rice, "First National Sunday-School Convention," Important and Remarkable Epochs in the History of Sunday-Schools (n.p. and n.d.) p. 21.

York and other cities that year."<sup>19</sup>

The Honorable Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey was elected president. Other officers included William A. Tomlinson of New York and General William Williams of Connecticut as vice-presidents; Dr. D. M. Reese and James B. Brinsmade of New York as secretaries.

The Committee on Interrogatories recommended that the following eight topics drawn from the responses be considered for discussion:

1. Frequency and length of sessions of Sunday schools.
2. Importance, modes, and effects of visiting.
3. Teachers' prayer meetings.
4. Mutual instruction of teachers and preparation for the duties of the school.
5. Plans for training scholars to become teachers.
6. Means of retaining elder scholars.
7. Personal habits of teachers in their influence on scholars.
8. The influence of a superintendent on the character and prosperity of a Sunday-school.<sup>20</sup>

They further recommended that special committees be appointed to report in full to a future convention on the following subjects:

1. Sunday infant schools.
2. The organization and discipline of Sunday-schools.
3. Plans of instituting and sustaining schools, including modes of obtaining and visiting scholars.
4. Plans of instruction for schools.
5. Libraries.
6. Bible classes and elder scholars.
7. Duties of superintendents and teachers.
8. Organization of county and other unions.
9. On the answers to the interrogatories issued for the convention, with power to digest and publish at their discretion.<sup>21</sup>

Committees were appointed to prepare reports on the above topics for use at a future convention. In most cases these committees were

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>20</sup>"Sunday-School Teachers' Convention," Sunday School Journal, 10 October 1832, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

instructed to report to the next convention through the Committee on Interrogatories. However, several resolutions were passed at this first convention.

The first resolution included a preamble stating the then-perceived purpose of the Sunday school.

Whereas the Sunday-school system is founded on the study of the Scriptures, and well adapted to the moral and religious improvement of all ages and classes of the community; and whereas it is the duty of those who profess the Christian religion, to participate in a system designed for the universal diffusion of Bible knowledge: therefore

Resolved, As the opinion of this Convention, that the Sunday-school should embrace all classes in the community.<sup>22</sup>

Two other resolutions adopted were:

Resolved, That prayer meetings, especially before entering upon the duties of the school, together with private devotions in behalf of this special object, are among the most important means of preparation for the duties of teaching, and that the Sunday-school monthly concert for prayer on the second Monday of each month be recommended by this convention, as well as the more frequent meetings of particular schools.

Resolved, That the word "pupil" be substituted for "children," in the reports, etc. of the convention whenever it can be properly done.<sup>23</sup>

Resolutions were made on the following topics but were referred to special committees for report at a later convention:

Monthly Concerts--That a committee of five be appointed to advise the means of securing the attendance of ministers, parents, and children at the monthly concert, and of rendering the services of that evening interesting. [A five-member committee was appointed.]

Teachers' Meetings--That it be recommended to teachers to hold weekly meetings for mutual instruction and preparation for meeting their classes. [A five-member committee was appointed to report on the best mode of conducting such meetings.]

Superintendents' Qualifications--That the influence of superintendents on the prosperity of their schools is such as to demand

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

the greatest caution in the selection of persons to fill that office, and that great zeal, diligence, and faithfulness are necessary in order to the proper discharge of their duties.

Visitation of pupils--That a system of visiting scholars is essential to the success of Sunday-schools.<sup>24</sup>

Discussions on other topics included: the classification of pupils from the youngest in the infant department to a normal class of those who were capable of studying, along with the Scriptures, Jewish antiquities, biblical geography and evidences of religion; the importance of training pupils to become teachers and suggestions for placing them in classes to study the subjects and modes of instruction; the formation of teachers' libraries; better school-room furniture, with the use of the semi-circular or half-square benches; better ventilation of rooms; and other topics directly related to teaching and teacher improvement.

The three-day convention closed with a resolution, "That another convention be called to meet in Philadelphia on the 22nd day of May, 1833, at 10 o'clock."<sup>25</sup> That the results of this first convention fell short of expectations was reflected in an editorial comment in The Sunday School Journal.

We have been somewhat disappointed by the results of this meeting. Our expectation was, that a great amount of intelligence and opinion having been received from all sections of the country, the convention would adopt some active measures, the influence of which would at once have been felt in all the schools. We supposed, in short, that the principal business of the convention was to answer the interrogatories which had been issued; taking the returns which have been made to them as the expression of the views of the Sunday-school teachers, from which to frame a system adapted as far as possible to the present wants of the schools. But it was, perhaps, as wise to postpone any positive measures on a subject so little studied and understood, until some further investigation; and we therefore are

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>"Sunday-School Teachers' Convention," The Sunday School Journal, 10 October 1832, p. 3.

satisfied with the prospect that the May convention will be one of business and will furnish something positively useful to the schools.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the editor of the Journal was too close to the situation to realize fully the vision of the men who attended the convention. H. Clay Trumbull put the convention into clearer perspective when he reviewed its discussions at the 1872 convention.

While that exhibit [the record and reports of the convention as they appeared in The Sunday School Journal] evidences now the progress that has been made in the intervening forty years, it quite so clearly shows the forwardness and breadth of view of those engaged in the Sunday-school work at that time. Much that was then of interest is now obsolete; but there are a few questions at present engaging the attention of Sunday-school workers which were not touched on at the National Convention of 1832. The views then expressed by Sunday-school men. . . prove that the convention included the best thinkers and most progressive workers of the day, and that they sowed the seed of much, in the harvest of which we rejoice. The age has made progress; but there were men in that gathering in advance of their age.<sup>27</sup>

#### The Second National Convention, 1833

The second convention met in the American Sunday School Union lecture room at Cherry Street in Philadelphia on May 22, 1833. Willard Hall of Delaware was chosen president; Matthew L. Bevan of Pennsylvania and Gerrit Smith of New York, vice presidents; and Louis D. C. Elmer of New Jersey and W. B. Denman of Pennsylvania, secretaries. Only nine states were represented at this convention which seems to have been called too soon after the first.<sup>28</sup> However, the urgency of dealing with some

---

<sup>26</sup>"Sunday-School Teachers' Convention," The Sunday School Journal, 17 October 1832, p.3.

<sup>27</sup>H. Clay Trumbull, "Historical Introduction," The Fifth National Sunday-School Convention, Held at Indianapolis, April 16,17,18,19, 1872 (New York: Aug. O. Van Lennep, 1872), p. 12.

<sup>28</sup>States represented were Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Tennessee. Except for Tennessee the representatives came from the Atlantic coast states, suggesting the limitations that travel and transportation must have played in the calling of a second convention only eight months after the first.

of the issues raised at the first convention motivated the leaders to present elaborate reports on the themes assigned to them at the first convention. Reports were presented on "Qualifying Scholars for Teachers," "Teachers' Meetings," "Libraries," "The Duties of Superintendents and Teachers," and "Infant Classes." Report on the Objects and Modes of Sunday School Instruction, presented by James W. Weir on behalf of his committee, represents a comprehensive and discriminating approach to the two major objects of religious instruction: to inform the mind and to purify the heart. The first object, to inform the mind, pertained to teaching the Scriptures to the young and discussed the need for definite objects or aims on the part of teachers, the importance of order in teaching settings, a recommended method for teaching children to read,<sup>29</sup> recommended curriculum materials for various age levels, recommendation for weekly teachers' meetings, the value of using both the direct and indirect modes of catechetical instruction and the importance of simplicity in language and subjects. The second object, to purify the heart, related to the conversion of the young with instructions for the teacher in how to present biblical truths which lead to a conversion experience.<sup>30</sup>

Other reports covered the following topics: organization and discipline of schools, establishing schools in prisons and alms houses, formation of temperance societies in Sunday schools, forming missionary and other benevolent associations in Sunday schools, expediency of establishing private Sunday schools and interesting ministers and church

---

<sup>29</sup>The Jacotot Method was recommended because it emphasized a word approach to teaching instead of using the alphabet and syllable approach. See Chapter III, pp. 90-91 for a more detailed description of the Jacotot Method.

<sup>30</sup>James W. Weir, Report on the Objects and Modes of Sunday School Instruction (Philadelphia: n.p., 1833), pp. 3-21.

offices in Sunday schools.

Resolutions that were passed included:

Fourth of July proposal--That a simultaneous effort would be made throughout the nation on the fourth of July to invite every child and adult to attend some place of Bible instruction on the following Sunday, July 7. Officers and friends of Sunday schools were asked to divide their territories into districts and assign individuals to visit systematically every home within a particular section.

Schools and jails--It was the duty of the religious community to provide Sunday school or religious instruction in state prisons, jails, penitentiaries and alms houses; therefore, friends of the Sunday school throughout the country were to faithfully and immediately perform said duty.

Sermon to parents--All ministers friendly to Sunday School were requested on the first Sunday in October to preach a sermon addressed to parents and guardians urging the necessity of a more cordial cooperation in the work of the Sunday school.

Means of interesting ministers and churches--Teachers were urged to seek the approbation and cooperation of the church and its ministers and were to place themselves in a class of instruction taught by the minister of the church with which the school was connected.

General Bible classes--It was recommended that classes for adults be formed for Bible instruction and for qualifying teachers.<sup>31</sup>

The reports and resolutions of the second convention were printed in The Sunday School Journal and filled fourteen columns of the 22" x 16" pages. In this manner the results and deliberations of the convention were diffused throughout the United States to those interested in Sunday school. It is interesting to note that no resolution or recommendation for a third convention was made at the close of the second. The next convention did not meet until twenty-six years later in 1859.

The Intervening Years Between the Second  
And Third Conventions

The years from 1833, the date of the second convention, to 1859,

---

<sup>31</sup>"The Resolutions of the Convention," The Sunday-School Journal, 12 June 1833, p.3.

the calling of the third convention, witnessed key stages in the progress of the Sunday school. First, interest in the Sunday school work developed at the local, county and state levels to such an extent that organization became an essential element in the propagation and maintenance of the Sunday school, as local, county and state unions continued to spring up across the country. Second, the very nature of organization lent itself to a growing desire for improving Sunday school work and providing adequately trained teachers. Emphasis on normal schools and training for public school teachers had resulted in the establishment of teacher institutes in several states in the nation so that by 1860, twelve state normal schools had been established in nine states.<sup>32</sup>

When the Sunday school leaders established teacher institutes in 1857 and in the following years, the organization of the conference and convention endeavors at the local, county and state levels provided the framework for such schools. A third stage in the progress of the Sunday school during the intervening years of 1833 to 1859 was the revival of

---

<sup>32</sup>A review of the development of public school teacher training reveals the following: 1823, Rev. Samuel R. Hall of Concord, Vermont, engaged in preparation of teachers for common schools; 1827, James Carter petitioned the Massachusetts legislature for an appropriation for the establishment of a state normal school; 1826, Governor Clinton recommended to the legislature of New York the establishment by the State of a seminary to train leaders in the monitorial system of instruction (Nothing came of the recommendation); 1827, Governor Clinton recommended the creation of county schools for the education of teachers; 1827, the New York legislature appropriated money to aid the academies in promoting the education of teachers; 1839, first state normal schools opened in Lexington and Barre, Massachusetts; 1840, a third school was established in Bridgewater, Massachusetts; 1844, a short-lived normal school was established in New York; 1849, Henry Barnard served as the first principal of the school established in Connecticut; 1849, Michigan enacted a law providing for such schools. Edwards and Richey, The School in the American Social Order, 2nd ed., pp. 371-374; Elwood P. Cubberley, The History of Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), pp. 751-53; Gerald Lee Gutek, An Historical Introduction to American Education (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970), pp. 132-37.

interest in national conventions, with the convening of Sunday school leaders in 1859 and their intent of holding other conventions with the next one scheduled for 1861.

The second convention had adjourned sine die (without any future date being designated) on Thursday, May 23, 1833, with no reference to a future convention. A committee was appointed to work in conjunction with the secretaries for the publication of the reports of the convention proceedings. Trumbull states that the convention ended on a positive note and that "in no way was any doubt shown of the success of the Second Convention."<sup>33</sup> The reason why the two national conventions were not followed sooner by others is not apparent. Although no meeting on a national scale was called until 1859, local, county and state unions continued to hold conferences and conventions. Asa Bullard, who served for many years as a Sunday school superintendent in New England, cites the following conventions which met within a three-year period in his immediate geographical locale:

1833--The Worcester (Massachusetts) North Conference Sabbath School Society held a Sabbath School Convention.

1834--A Sabbath School convention was held at Templeton, Massachusetts.

1835--The Middlesex South Conference met at Hopkins, Massachusetts.

1835--The Essex County Congregational Sabbath School met.

1836--A convention of Sabbath Schools in Kennebec County, Maine, was held at Hallowell.

1837--The Worcester Harmony Conference Sabbath School Society held its convention at Grafton.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup>H. Clay Trumbull, "Historical Introduction," The Fifth National Sunday-School Convention, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup>Asa Bullard, Fifty Years with the Sabbath Schools (Boston: Lockwood, Brooks and Company, 1876) pp. 256-59.

In 1855 a state Sunday school convention was called in Massachusetts followed by state conventions in New York and Connecticut in 1857. The North-Western Sunday School Convention assembled November 11, 1857, in Chicago, for a three-day convention and culminated with a parade of 4,000 children on Friday afternoon. Representatives from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin and Iowa attended. The convention, held in the same year that the nation suffered a financial crisis,<sup>35</sup> was apparently well-attended, although no attendance statistics appear to be available. The Sunday-School Journal reported: "Notwithstanding the 'monetary panic,' there was a large number of delegates present, at the opening, and accessions were daily made throughout the sittings of the convention."<sup>36</sup>

The New York and Connecticut conventions of 1857 introduced a plan for engaging, on a voluntary basis, county secretaries who coordinated the Sunday school development efforts within their counties. The plan further included the gathering of statistics at the county level and provided for coordination of state-wide leadership. According to H. Clay Trumbull, ". . . other states, East and West, followed with similar organizations, and there has since been no break in the course of organized work to the present time."<sup>57</sup> Further efforts in organizing in some formal way can be seen in such recommendations from conventions as: organization of cities, towns, villages and neighborhoods into visiting districts for the purpose of inviting children to Sunday school,

---

<sup>35</sup>See this chapter, p. 106.

<sup>36</sup>"North-Western Sunday-School Convention," The Sunday-School Journal, 16 December 1856, p. 190.

<sup>37</sup>H. Clay Trumbull, "Origin and Progress of Sunday-School Conventions," The Sunday School Times, 30 May 1896, p. 339.

semi-annual meetings of Sunday school superintendents within a particular state for the purpose of advancing the interests of their schools, annual anniversary celebrations or social gatherings for Sunday school children, systematic visitation of every family in every town within a state, the keeping of permanent records of the names, classifications and attendance of pupils and teachers in Sunday schools, and regular meetings of teachers for prayer and mutual assistance.

The local, county and state conventions generated enthusiasm for the cause of the Sunday school and served as a means of inspiring teachers to carry out their task with vigor. What the conferences lacked in the formulation of methodology and system, they made up in inspiration and enthusiasm. Some excerpts from the report of the North-Western Sunday-School Convention, held November 11-13, 1857, in Chicago, will serve to illustrate the typical character of the conventions in the formative years prior to 1872. Reports made by delegates from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin and Iowa included incomplete statistics and a general report on the condition of Sunday school work in each state. The reports were followed by a discussion of several questions, for example, "How can the destitute of our city and country be gathered into Sabbath-schools?" and "Infant classes; their importance and management." The recorder of the North-Western Convention reported: "The discussion upon each of these questions was spirited and interesting, but especially upon the first."<sup>38</sup> He noted on another question, "The discussion was open and free to all present, so that many hints of interest were communicated by persons from a distance happening to be present."<sup>39</sup> The

---

<sup>38</sup>"North-Western Sunday-School Convention," The Sunday-School Journal, p. 191.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

meetings were described as "exceedingly impressive and interesting."<sup>40</sup> Music, banners, slogans and parades highlighted convention proceedings.

On Friday afternoon, according to the North-Western Convention reporter:

This was the time set apart for Sunday-school army of the city to show itself; and its numbers were truly formidable. Nearly 4,000 children paraded through the streets, with their streaming banners lifted high, which showed plainly, that they were not ashamed of the Bible, nor the Bible schools. . . . The whole exercises were intensely interesting, and if cheery countenances, flashing eyes, and quick responses have a meaning at all, we can but conclude, that the gallant throng--now Sunday-school children--will become Sabbath-school men and women.<sup>41</sup>

The Convention also served as a vehicle for uniting in one cause men and women from differing sectarian backgrounds and became an essential instrument in preparing the way for the adoption of the Uniform Lessons system in 1872. This system provided a series of lessons to be used by Sunday schools across the nation and eventually around the world. Chapter V discusses the Uniform Lesson System in detail.

An important link between the convention movement and the Uniform Lesson system was the Sunday school institute. The Sunday school institute was a kind of temporary Sunday school normal school, operating at the local or regional level--an idea borrowed from the teacher's institutes connected with public school education.

In 1879, Simeon Gilbert, editor of the Methodist Episcopal publication, The Advance, assessed the situation of the Sunday school during the mid-nineteenth century:

It is not easy, at this time, to realize fully how void of any well-matured method, and system generally, were the Sunday-schools of the country--say twenty years ago [late 1850s]. And yet, even then, there were not a few men who had vision enough to see what

---

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

was needed, even if they could not conjecture how to bring it about.<sup>42</sup>

The need for some systematic training for teachers, however, was expressed early in the days of the Sunday school. In 1827 The New York State Sunday School Union recommended the formation of a school, apart from the weekly teachers' meetings, for the purpose of training teachers. Progress in establishing normal schools for public school teachers advanced but a need for qualified teachers in the Sunday school remained.

In 1847 Rev. Dr. D. P. Kidder, Corresponding Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday-School Union, in his annual report urged the formation of "normal Sunday schools" for the instruction of teachers, for group consideration of questions concerning the improvement of methods and standards, and for the general welfare and progress of Sunday school education.<sup>43</sup> In his plea for normal Sunday schools, Dr. Kidder made reference to the teachers' institutes, organized for the purpose of training public school teachers, and declared that such meetings "gave occasion to ask why Sunday-school teachers may not have similar means of improvement. Perhaps," he further stated, "a basis for them is already established in our district Sunday-school conventions, and in the courses of lectures being delivered to Sunday-school teachers."<sup>44</sup> He visualized organization of training classes wherever the services of a competent person could be secured and the content of the classes made practical and interesting for optimum benefit to the teachers. "Even if

---

<sup>42</sup>Simeon Gilbert, The Lesson System: The Story of Its Origin and Inauguration (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1879), p. 17.

<sup>43</sup>Austen Kennedy deBlois and Donald R. Gorham, Christian Religious Education: Principles and Practice (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1939), p. 293.

<sup>44</sup>A. Brown, A History of Religious Education, p. 132.

all the teachers of a district could not meet during a sufficient length of time to take a complete series of lessons on the best methods of Sunday-school instruction, those who could, if representatives of the different schools, might return and impart the knowledge they had received to their several associates."<sup>45</sup> The following year Dr. Kidder again referred to the subject of normal Sunday schools and noted that no movement had been made in the direction of formation of such schools.

The proposal of normal instruction for Sabbath-school teachers was suggested in our last report. We confess, however, that we fear the day is distant when the church will take as high ground on this subject as that assumed by several states of the Union, viz., that in order to promote general education most effectively institutions must be provided for the special instruction of teachers.<sup>46</sup>

Although Dr. Kidder's suggestion appeared to make slow progress, a number of the local and district Sunday school unions provided instruction for their teachers under competent leadership. Some training manuals were in print, published by the American Sunday School Union as well as by denominational publishing house and independent authors. One title, The Teacher Taught: An Humble Attempt to Make the Path of the Sunday School Teacher Straight and Plain (1839) included chapters as follows: On the Origin and Progress of Sunday Schools, On the Organization of Sunday Schools, On the Superintendent, On the Personal Duties and Qualifications of Sunday School Teachers, On Teachers' Meetings and On the Susceptibility of Children to Religious Impressions.<sup>47</sup>

Frank Lankard in his History of the American Sunday School Curriculum suggests that one of the causes and influences leading to the

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

introduction of the uniform international Sunday school lessons was the Sunday school institute movement.<sup>48</sup> It was not until 1857, ten years after Dr. Kidder's recommendation, that the first normal class was organized in Joliet, Illinois, by the Rev. John H. Vincent, then pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church. John H. Vincent, "The prophet of teacher training,"<sup>49</sup> was later to found the Chautauqua Institute and to spearhead the adoption of the uniform lessons at the 1872 convention. Vincent's first normal classes were organized for the purpose of training his own Sunday school teachers. "His plan was to give teachers a broad general preparation, of an elementary character, in the facts of biblical history, geography, literature and teaching, church history, and the Sunday school."<sup>50</sup> His Palestine Class was an innovative plan initiated by Vincent in 1855 and incorporated into later training programs, including Chautauqua. The purpose of the Palestine Class was to enable teachers and Sunday school pupils "to acquire at least an outline knowledge of the major events and people of the Bible within the geographical context. . . ."<sup>51</sup> Vincent actually laid out a scale model of the map of Palestine on the lawn of his church and used it as a teaching tool as he lectured to the teachers and as they worked out their assignments.

---

<sup>48</sup>Frank Glenn Lankard, A History of the American Sunday School Curriculum (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1927), p. 202.

<sup>49</sup>Henry Frederick Cope, The Evolution of the Sunday School (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1911), p. 156.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>51</sup>Sonja Marie Stewart, "John Heyl Vincent: His Theory and Practice of Protestant Religious Education from 1855-1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1977), p. 96.

At the Rock River Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in Chicago in 1860, Vincent succeeded in securing the adoption of a resolution calling for institutes for the training of Sunday school teachers.

The importance of teachers' institutes to the educational interests of the country cannot have escaped your attention. May we not profitably introduce something similar among us? Such an institute, conducted by our ablest Sunday-school educators, could not fail to elevate our standard and improve our system of religious culture.<sup>52</sup>

In April 1861 at the Galena District Convention in Freeport, Illinois, the first regularly organized Sunday school institute held its inaugural session. Others followed in neighboring communities. In the same year a district institute was organized in Detroit, Michigan. At the Cook County (Illinois) Sunday-School Teachers' Convention in Chicago in November, 1864, Rev. J. H. Vincent urged the organization of a "permanent Sunday-School Teachers' Institute for the Northwest."<sup>53</sup> One year later the Northwestern Sunday School Teachers' Institute held its first meeting in Chicago. Two years later The Training Class of the Chicago Sunday School Union was organized.<sup>54</sup> While a few institutes and normal classes appeared at this time and interest began to grow, emphasis on a systematized form of teacher training did not surface until the mid-1870s, after the launching of International Uniform Lesson System, Vincent's work at Chautauqua and the exposure for such emphasis through the triennial, international Sunday school conventions.

---

<sup>52</sup>Warren Akin Candler, The History of Sunday-Schools: A Brief Historical Treatise, with Special Reference to the Sunday-Schools of America (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1880), p. 104.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>54</sup>Cope, Evolution of the Sunday School, p. 157.

The time appeared to be ripe for such institutes. Just one week after Mr. Vincent urged the organization of the Northwest Institute in 1864, two men, Ralph Wells and R. G. Pardee, held their first regular institute in Steuben County, New York. Both of these men, along with Vincent, assumed leadership positions in the Sunday school conventions in later years. R. G. Pardee spent the remaining years of his life establishing a system of normal training for teachers through local institutes.

In 1858 at the New York state Sunday-school convention, under the leadership of Pardee and Wells, along with other key leaders in Sunday school, a proposal was introduced calling for a national convention of Sunday school teachers at Philadelphia "in the apparent belief that the idea was quite new, and that no such gathering had been attempted."<sup>55</sup> The proposition was promptly acted upon and a call was issued, naming February 22, 1859, as the day for the convention. An invitation was extended to every evangelical Sunday school to send at least one delegate, with clergymen being included by virtue of their office and work. Trumbull notes that "The general religious revival of 1858, in the United States, made then a fitting time for a new gathering of Christian workers from all parts of the land, to counsel as to their field and duties, and the response to the call was general and hearty."<sup>56</sup>

#### The Third National Convention, 1859

The Third National Convention met in Philadelphia on February 22, 1859, with delegates from seventeen states and the District of

---

<sup>55</sup>Trumbull, "Historical Introduction," Fifth National Convention, P. 15.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

Columbia. At least one delegate, Peter Sinclair of Scotland, represented Great Britain, the first such international representation. Some Sunday school workers who had served prominently in the 1832 and 1833 conventions, as well as in local, county and state conventions, were active in the 1859 convention. Ex-Governor James Pollock of Pennsylvania was chosen permanent president of the convention with John S. Hart, editor of the American Sunday School Union publication, The Sunday School Times, serving as temporary chairman. H. Clay Trumbull of Connecticut and George Baughman of Virginia were secretaries. James Weir, who did much to shape the policy of the first and second conventions, served on the Business Committee and drafted the resolutions adopted as the platform of the third convention.

The chief aim of the convention appears to have been inspiration rather than instruction. According to H. Clay Trumbull, "Its record marks a national revival of interest in Bible study and in the religious training of the young, more clearly than it shows special progress in the Sunday-school cause since the corresponding gatherings of 1832-'3."<sup>57</sup> The foundations of the American Sunday school system had been laid in the first and second conventions and no significant advance was made in the third. However, the numbers of people who attended indicated that a greater interest in the Sunday school movement existed across the nation. While no figures of the exact attendance seem to be available, reports indicate that "the interest in the meetings increased from session to session until the large hall where they were held could not contain the crowd desiring to attend."<sup>58</sup> A special children's meeting was held Wednesday afternoon in the hall in which "every nook and corner of the house was literally jammed. At least 5,000 persons were present."<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

A number of resolutions relating to the teacher were passed, including recommendation of weekly teacher meetings for prayer and study of the lesson, thorough preparatory study on the part of the teacher, punctuality, efficient utilization of the hour for instruction, visitation in pupils' homes, and the exemplary life of the teacher. However, the first resolution of the convention best reflects the progress the Sunday school was making toward its full recognition as a department of the church rather than as an outside agency. While still in committee, the resolution was drafted as follows: "Resolved, That we regard the Sunday-school reliable as an agency for bringing the entire youth of the community under the saving influence of the Gospel."<sup>60</sup> H. Clay Trumbull suggested that the resolution be changed to read: "Resolved, That we regard the Sunday-school, in connection with the teaching of the Family and the Pulpit, reliable as an agency for bringing the entire youth of our country under the saving influence of the Gospel."<sup>61</sup> When reported to the convention, a motion to strike out the words "in connection with the teachings of the Family and the Pulpit" led to a spirited discussion which reflected the view of some that the Sunday school was to be considered distinct from the family and the church. The clause was retained, however, and the Sunday school was brought into closer relationship with other departments of the church.

It was further resolved to call a similar assembly of representatives of evangelical Sunday schools in America at some time in 1861. A committee, headed by George H. Stuart, was appointed to decide upon the time and place and to make all necessary arrangements. However, ten years elapsed before the fourth national convention was called, the

---

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

delay due to the turbulent conditions from 1861 to 1865 brought on by the Civil War. The time lapse wrought so many changes that many Sunday school workers in the late 1860s seemed unaware of the 1859 convention. Two groups in 1868 made almost simultaneous calls for a national convention. At the Illinois Sunday school convention in DuQuoin in May, 1868, resolutions were adopted in favor of "a delegated national Sunday school convention."<sup>62</sup> In June 1868, at the International Convention of Young Men's Christian Associations in Detroit, Sunday school workers from twenty states and Canada in informal meeting voted to call an international Sunday school convention with "two delegates from each congressional district in the United States and twenty-five from Canada."<sup>63</sup> A Committee chaired by Edward Eggleston<sup>64</sup> was appointed to make arrangements for the convention.

The announcement of this international convention brought to light the existence of the committee appointed at the Philadelphia convention ten years earlier. The two committees joined in conference and issued a call in February 1869:

A National Sunday-school convention was held in Philadelphia in

---

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>63</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 365.

<sup>64</sup>Edward Eggleston,, a former Methodist circuit rider and minister, became editor of the National Sunday School Teacher in 1867. In 1870 he joined the staff of the Independent in New York and remained as corresponding editor of the National Sunday School Teacher until 1873. In 1871 he left the Independent to edit Hearth and Home, where his first adult novels appeared serially. Kunitz and Haycraft in American Authors, 1600-1900, note that: "The Hoosier Schoolmaster and Roxy are the best of his novels, though The Graysons is interesting as being one of the first novels to include Lincoln as a character . . . Carl Van Doren calls him 'the earliest American realist whose work is still remembered.'" See Stanly J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft, ed., American Authors, 1600-1900 (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1938), p. 215.

1859. At that meeting a committee was appointed to call another convention, but for various reasons it was deemed inexpedient to call it for several years afterwards. Meantime the rise of the state Sunday-school conventions into a great and growing power has altered the face of the work. Several of these have taken action looking toward the calling of a new National convention. In June, 1868, at the International Convention of Young Men's Christian Associations, at Detroit, a meeting of the Sunday-school laborers present was called, and it was voted to call an International Sunday-school convention, and a committee was appointed for that purpose.

Though there was the greatest desire expressed in almost every quarter for such a meeting, the committee were forced on several accounts to abandon the calling of the convention on the basis proposed, and to recommend the beginning anew upon a different plan. Recognizing therefore the need there is for such a convention for consultation in regard to plans of labor, in regard to methods of hold institutes, in regard to convention work and organization, in regard to normal instruction, in regard to states where state conventions are not yet organized, in regard to the relations of our work to the Sunday-school work in other lands, and realizing the fact that such a convention is not only needed but demanded, the undersigned, on behalf of Sunday-school workers generally, hereby call such a convention, to meet in Newark, New Jersey, by invitation of the New Jersey Sunday-School Association, and of the citizens of Newark, on the 18th day of April 1869. It is intended that it shall be a mass convention, open alike to all who come, but every state convention, by its executive committee, is invited to send a delgation, not to exceed twice the representation of the state in both houses of Congress.<sup>65</sup>

#### The Fourth Convention, 1869

The fourth convention assembled on April 18-30, 1869 at the First Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey, with 526 delegates from twenty-eight states and one terriotry in the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland, Egypt and South Africa. Seven-tenths of the delegates, however, were from the immediate vicinity of New York and New Jersey. Between 1,000 and 3,000 persons attended the various sessions of the convention. George H. Stuart served as president with H. Clay Trumbull, John H. Vincent and B. F. Jacobs as secretaries.

---

<sup>65</sup>Trumbull, "Historical Introduction," Fifth National Convention, p. 18.

Edward Eggleston of Illinois chaired the Executive Committee. The emerging leadership of these men was evident in their personal involvement in Sunday school work, in publication of teaching and organizational materials, and in their upcoming role in the 1872 convention with the inauguration of the Uniform Lesson system. The non-sectarian character of previous conventions continued to be reflected in this convention. Denominations represented by speakers and key delegates were: Presbyterian, Ralph Wells; Congregational, Henry Ward Beecher<sup>66</sup> and H. Clay Trumbull; Episcopal, Stephen H. Tyng; Methodist, Edward Eggleston and John H. Vincent; Reformed Dutch, Frederick Theodore Frelinghuysen<sup>67</sup>; Baptist, B. F. Jacobs.

This fourth convention marked a significant step in the development of the Sunday school convention concept. First, it espoused a twofold purpose of inspiration and instruction. Inspiration was attained through the large meetings, stirring addresses, interchange of greetings by delegates from each state, territory and country, and

---

<sup>66</sup> Henry Ward Beecher served as pastor of the Plymouth Church (Congregationalist) in Brooklyn from 1847 to 1887, where, according to Kunitz and Haycraft "he was an immense success. Going to hear Beecher preach was a regular part of visiting New York for most tourists." His sermons which he preached extemporaneously, without notes, were taken down and published in the Independent which Beecher edited from 1861 to 1864. See American Authors, p. 65, and Olmstead, History of Religion, p. 450.

<sup>67</sup> Frederick Theodore Frelinghuysen studied law in the office of his uncle, Theodore Frelinghuysen, who served as vice president of the American Sunday School Union for fifty years and was presiding officer and chief spokesman for the first national convention in 1832. In 1861 Frederick Theodore was "appointed Attorney-General of New Jersey, and served until 1866 when he was chosen by Governor Ward to represent New Jersey in the Senate." He served as Secretary of State from 1881 until 1885. See Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 7 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), pp. 15-16.

through prayer and singing. Instruction took on a different form in that the convention was subdivided into six sections, meeting in different churches throughout the city, where workers in the various departments of the Sunday school could counsel together and compare successful methods as well as hear informational addressess. This innovative approach to the convention was considered so successful that it was recommended, in the form of a resolution, to all large conventions:

That we commend to the attention of all large Conventions the plan of dividing into sections,--Pastors, Superintendents, Infant-class, and Intermediate teachers,--each class by itself,--for specific instruction and familiar conference, afterwards bringing condensed reports before the mass Convention.<sup>68</sup>

Second, the major subject of the convention was the promotion of teacher training through institutes and normal classes. So prominent was this subject that a plan was considered for the founding of an International Training College for Sunday-School Teachers. In 1868 the Committee on International (meaning the United States and Canada) Sunday-School Normal College recommended the plan to the New York State Sunday-School Teachers' Association which came out in favor for "the ultimate establishment of such an institution, with a full and liberal endowment, and every appurtenance of a first-class institution of learning."<sup>69</sup> While in favor of the plan, the New York State Sunday-School Teachers' Association recommended that:

For the purpose of a practical trial we advise the institution of a training class or classes to be formed in the City of New

---

<sup>68</sup>The Third National Sunday-School Convention of the United States, 1869 (Philadelphia: J. C. Garrigues & Co., 1869), p. 154. (The 1869 convention was referred to as the "third" convention until 1872 where the record was changed to indicate the 1832 and 1833 conventions as two separate conventions.)

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

York, to be held during the winter of 1868-9, under the name of "The Normal School for Sunday-School Teachers in the United States and Canada."<sup>70</sup>

The plan of instruction was to be modeled after that of the normal schools for public education, with the object of such schools "to teach teachers how to teach." The course of instruction was to include general instruction in ideas and methods of teaching, application of principles to the study and teaching of the Scriptures and "exemplification of both by practical men with regard to the organization of schools and the details of Sunday-school machinery."<sup>71</sup>

After discussion by the larger convention the following resolution was adopted:

That we recommend the forming, in each Sabbath-school, of normal classes for the careful training of teachers. That we deem the plan of establishing a normal college for the training of Sunday-school teachers, as recommended by the New York State Association, worthy of careful consideration, and also recommend that Rev. J. H. Vincent, of New York, Rev. H. Clay Trumbull, of Connecticut, and Rev. Edward Eggleston, of Illinois, be added to the Committee.<sup>72</sup>

Third, an area of concern at the fourth convention which would influence future conventions was the relationship of the Sunday school to the family and the church. The convention disapproved the idea that the Sunday school was in any sense a substitute for family or pulpit instruction, or that it functioned independently of the home and church.

Fourth, the convention introduced the exhibition of "appliances and helps" for Sunday school workers through a Sunday-school Museum. On display both for viewing and for sale were curriculum materials, teaching equipment and supplies. The official report states:

---

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

Tables were spread with tempting books, and papers, and pictures, and mottoes, and cards, and the walls were hung with maps, and banners, and illuminated texts, making a varied and most interesting show to Sunday-school eyes. Blackboards, of different makes and sizes, easels and stands, class forms, reversible-back seats, library systems, registers, etc.,--in short, everything needed in Sunday-school operations found its place of display.<sup>73</sup>

The Museum was apparently a success and became an essential feature of future conventions.

Fifth, the fourth convention launched the triennial meeting plan of future conventions. The Business Committee reported in favor of meeting in April, 1872, with the place to be decided by the Executive Committee immediately before the time of the meeting. Discussion from the floor resulted in a decision to accept an invitation to meet in Indianapolis, thus setting the pattern for determining the place of future conventions at the previous convention.

Finally, an area of interest expressed in some of the reports, but not formed into a resolution, was the emphasis on uniform lessons. In their report to the convention, the ministers' group announced that they were "clearly convinced that uniform lessons, properly graded, conduced greatly to the efficiency of !their! schools."<sup>74</sup> Likewise, the Sunday school superintendents' stated: "That a uniform lesson is essential to the highest success of every school, and that it is practical and desirable to unite all the schools of our whole country, upon one and the series."<sup>75</sup> Two-thirds of the superintendents in attendance reported using uniform lessons in their entire school rather than allowing teachers to select independently the lessons they would teach.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

The stage appeared to be set for the 1872 convention which would launch the uniform lesson series not only on a national scale but also internationally.

The Sunday School's Struggle for Identity

Clifton Brewer cites several changes in the Sunday school which occurred between 1835 and 1865. Schools tended to hold only one session on a Sunday and the time of the session was shortened, usually to one hour. Recitations changed from vain repetitions of long memory passages to factual and explanatory lessons. Departments by sex were abolished as the need for separating boys and girls decreased. Accommodations for the Sunday school improved, particularly where the school was directly tied in with the church and where it used the existing church facilities.<sup>77</sup>

The period between 1800 and 1860 has been viewed as a period of development of identity in that the Sunday school emerged from a pioneer in the kind of education later offered in the public schools to an agency for church teaching and religious education. William Bean Kennedy in his monograph, The Shaping of Protestant Education, asserts:

By 1860 there had emerged a general consensus in American Protestantism that the combination of public and Sunday school teaching would largely take care of the needed religious teaching of the young. In that pattern the public school was primary; the Sunday school was adjunct to it, providing the specific religious teaching it could not include. Only on the basis of such widespread Protestant dependence upon common schools for a fundamental part of religious education can the place of the Sunday school be understood.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup>Brewer, Early Episcopal Sunday Schools, pp. 99-101.

<sup>78</sup>William Bean Kennedy, The Shaping of Protestant Education (New York: Association Press, 1956), p. 27.

With the rise of public weekday schools, the Sunday school shifted toward a more specialized religious function. It was, however, viewed as an adjunct to the public schools which stressed the "principles of piety," cited in the law of 1789 and repeated in 1827,<sup>79</sup> and ethics. The schoolbooks during this period reflect a heavy emphasis on religion and morality. The McGuffey readers with a strong leaning toward morality sold over one hundred million copies between 1836 and 1890. According to Henry Steel Commager,

The world of the McGuffeys was a world where no one questioned the truths of the Bible, or their relevance to every-day conduct, and where the notion that the separation of church and state required the exclusion of religion from the schoolroom or from schoolbooks seemed preposterous.<sup>80</sup>

A dual pattern of parallel institutions emerged which was designed to educate children in secular, although peculiarly moral and ethical, religious or sectarian subjects, respectively.

At the same time the Sunday school struggled with its relationship to the public school, it also sought to define its relationship to the church. Not only was the Sunday school the predecessor of the common school, but it also pioneered the westward movement of the church. Around 1845 Frederick A. Packard of the American Sunday School Union estimated that probably one-half or three-fourths of the Sunday schools in the West and Southwest "were formed and are still held where there are no houses of worship."<sup>81</sup> In many ways the Sunday school shared the outreach atmosphere of the period. Kennedy viewed the Sunday school as a significant factor in the advance of Protestantism in that:

---

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>81</sup>Frederick A. Packard, Popular Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Sunday-Schools in the United States (Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, n.d. [ca. 1845]), p. 19.

It pioneered for the church where formal ecclesiastical organization was lacking . . . it united pioneers in providing schooling for their children . . . it prepared individuals for conversion when the time of revival came . . . it formed communities ready for the preachers who would bring persons into the church.<sup>82</sup>

Once churches were organized in remote as well as more urban locations, the function of the Sunday school shifted to include not only its outreach efforts but it became the chief channel by which new members came into the church. The rise of denominationalism in the 1830s resulted in increased efforts to produce materials and programs which reflected each denomination's distinctives. The union principle and aims of the American Sunday School Union were found to be too broad and "non-sectarian" for denominationalists who proceeded to establish their own Sunday school and/or Christian education associations. The forty-year period between 1830 and 1870 has also been identified as the "Babel Period" in Sunday school curriculum history because of the proliferation of curriculum materials produced by the denominations. Kennedy interprets the Babel period as "evidence of the attempt to control the schools of the churches and to find materials and programs to nurture that denominational expression."<sup>83</sup> He views the period as evidence of the high degree of creativity of Sunday school leaders to provide curriculum materials which would "fortify the Sunday school at a point of great need--the inculcation of denominational beliefs and the nurture of their own children and young people."<sup>84</sup>

By 1860 the two institutions, the church and the Sunday school, existed as parallel institutions. The Sunday school was lodged in

---

<sup>82</sup>Kennedy, The Shaping of Protestant Education, p. 39.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

the church basement or in an educational building, symbolically separate or subordinate to the church proper. Its lay atmosphere stood in contrast to the strongly clerical stance of the church. The clergy tended to be separatist in its community effect, whereas the lay involvement within the Sunday school spilled over into local community and business spheres.

While the Sunday school struggled to clarify its identity as it related to the public schools and to the churches, the union principle, espoused by the American Sunday School Union and carried over into the conventions, bore fruit in several ways. Its broad base of lay involvement and control contributed to the feeling of national unity. Such unity was particularly noted in the stand taken by the American Sunday School Union, as events led to the Civil War, when it warned its agents to avoid conflicts over the slavery issue.

In 1857 one speaker called the American Sunday School Union a "Union-saving Institution," proclaiming that

South Carolina and Massachusetts quarrel in politics, but the American Sunday School Union constrains them to exchange the kiss of peace and to work shoulder to shoulder in this great cause of Christian love.<sup>85</sup>

The national conventions later reflected this spirit when they brought together Protestant representatives from all sections of the nation after the Civil War.

Another important contribution of the Sunday school to Protestantism was its emphasis on the Bible and morality and the development of a "creed," or a "few elementary truths," which were to be taught to children. A typical list of essentials which comprised the "Sunday

---

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

school faith" included the following:

1. God made me.
2. Christ died for me.
3. My soul will live forever.
4. If I repent and believe in Christ, I shall be forever happy.
5. If I die in sin, I shall be forever miserable.
6. I must obey my parents, and those that have rule over me.
7. I must keep holy the Sabbath Day.
8. I must read the Scriptures, and learn from them what I am to believe and do.<sup>86</sup>

At the adult level the statement read:

In the doctrines of the supremacy of the inspired scriptures, as the rule of faith and duty--the lost state of man by nature, and his exposure to endless punishment in a future world--his recovery only by the influence of the Holy Spirit--the necessity of faith, repentance and holy living with an open confession of the saviour before men, and the duty of complying with his ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper--in these doctrines we find the essential and leading truths of the Christian system; in the reception of these doctrines we agree, and with God's help, we endeavor to teach and inculcate them on all whom we can properly teach.<sup>87</sup>

#### Teacher Training

The post-Civil War days began to reflect a change in the view of the child, from thinking of children as "miniature adults" to a growing awareness of the uniqueness of childhood. Teachers who taught boys and girls on a week to week basis began to recognize that children were distinct beings who developed through regularly observed stages. Brewer observes, "It was too soon to expect much psychologizing on the matter, but in an untechnical way the principles of modern child psychology were beginning to appear."<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Twenty-third Annual Report of the American Sunday-School Union, May 17, 1847 (Philadelphia: n.p., 1847), p. 17.

<sup>87</sup> Twentieth Annual Report of the American Sunday School Union, May 21, 1844 (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1844), p. 57.

<sup>88</sup> Brewer, Early Episcopal Sunday Schools, p. 109.

In 1860 "A Sunday School Teacher" reported in The Parish Visitor that a teachers' class met weekly to study how to simplify instruction so the youngest child could understand. In a simulated situation one teacher taught the lesson while the other teachers tried to "bring their minds down to the level of children."<sup>89</sup> Discussion, comments and suggestions for improvement followed the presentation.

The training of teachers during this period, 1832-1869, was aided by the numerous materials available, although the scheme of training was left to the individual schools and superintendents. A few examples will serve to illustrate the content of books for teachers published at this time. An early book, Ephraim Holding's Homely Hints Chiefly Addressed to Sunday School Teachers (1845), approached teaching from an inspirational and devotional angle, asking such questions as: "Do You Learn While You Teach?," "Do You Study the Habits of Young People?," "Are Your Scholars Glad to See You?" and "Are You Fond of Children?" Many volumes, however, used less of the inspirational approach and discussed teaching from a pedagogical and methodological perspective. In The Sabbath School As It Should Be (1841), William Andrus Alcott discussed the duties of the teachers along with the methodology to be used in teaching. Erwin House, The Sunday School Handbook (1868), included chapters on lesson preparation, methods of teaching, grouping of scholars, the art of questioning, teachers' meetings and ways to teach the uniform lessons at various age levels.

John Heyl Vincent, who inaugurated the teacher institute movement in the 1850s, produced numerous teacher training publications. For instance, his Little Footprints in Bible Lands; or Simple Lessons in

---

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

Sacred History and Geography, for the Use of Palestine Classes and Sabbath Schools (1861) provided teachers with a system of teaching biblical history and geography. In 1865 Vincent, as Secretary of the Chicago Teachers' Union, began publication of The Sunday School Teachers' Quarterly, a monthly magazine. Henry H. Meyer states in his book, The Graded Sunday School in Principle and Practice, that the publication of these lessons constituted the

first series of analytical lessons and the first Sunday-school lesson periodical ever issued in America, if not in the world, and The Sunday School Teacher became the model after which, with some modification in style and amplification in scope and contents, all subsequent periodicals of the kind may be said to have been modelled.<sup>90</sup>

In 1866 Vincent began to publish in the magazine a course of uniform lessons on the life of Jesus entitled "A Two Years' Course with Jesus." He resigned from his post in Chicago in 1866 and moved to New York City to serve as general agent for the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Church. In 1868 he was elected to the denomination's highest educational office, Corresponding Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union and Editor of The Sunday School Journal for Teachers and Young People. He became involved in Sunday school reform through the setting of standards for Sunday school lessons and Sunday school teacher education. In 1874 Vincent co-founded the Chautauqua Assembly which became a leading center for adult education in the nation.<sup>91</sup> From his pen poured forth scores of books and articles on various aspects of teacher training. Along with books of a curricular nature, such as

---

<sup>90</sup>Henry H. Meyer, The Graded Sunday School in Principle and Practice (Nashville, Tenn.: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1910), p. 89.

<sup>91</sup>Stewart, "John Heyl Vincent," p. 39.

First Year with Jesus, The Second Year with Jesus, Little Footprints, and A Year with Moses, he wrote extensively on teacher institutes and normal classes. Two early works (prior to the 1872 convention) included The Sunday-School Teachers' Institute (1866) and Sunday-School Institutes and Normal Classes (1872).

In 1866 Vincent attended the opening of the Sunday-School Normal Department of the Northwestern Female College in Evanston. The plan of study for the department covered forty sessions and noted five books for study: Sunday-School Worker by R. G. Pardee, Thoughts on Teaching by John Hart, Teacher Taught and Teacher Training by Frederick Packard and Sunday-School Photographs by Alfred Taylor.<sup>92</sup>

As previously mentioned, up to 1872 most institute work overlooked the successive steps in the development of the young mind. An exception, although still pedagogically immature, could be seen in books written for teachers of infant classes. Mary Harvey Gill wrote several volumes of simple lesson plans for teachers in the infant school. In the Second Year in the Infant School, Hours with the Youngest, No. 2 (1866), she included lesson texts and suggested methods, such as use of pictures, questions, singing by lining and phrase repetition. Songs were integrated into the teaching hour and general and specific applications were made on the Bible story or text.

Kennedy in The Shaping of Protestant Education suggests that by 1860 the Sunday school developed as "an educational and ecclesiastical hybrid."<sup>93</sup> While it struggled with its identity,

---

<sup>92</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 372.

<sup>93</sup>Kennedy, The Shaping of Protestant Education, p. 77.

the ensuing half century was to see the American Sunday school burgeon into a religious educational phenomenon such as the world had never seen. Expanded into a world program, it was to influence the religious educational patterns of countries that had never seen the conditions out of which it had grown in England and America. And in America it was to continue to influence successive generations of Christians according to the particular emphases it included in its teaching.<sup>94</sup>

The local, county and state conventions generated enthusiasm for the Sunday school and served as a "grass roots" experiment in organization and methodology. It was at the local, county and state levels that the concept of the Sunday school institute for teacher training emerged but the idea required a means for more extensive diffusion before it could gain recognition among Sunday school leaders and workers. The national conventions, beginning in 1869 with the triennial pattern for meeting, served this purpose.

Adequate preparation of Sunday school teachers was also complicated by a confusion of curricula produced by various denominations. The leaders of the Sunday school movement, seeking to coordinate curriculum and teacher preparation, held that a uniform lesson system was essential for such coordination. The 1872 Convention became a key instrument in this development as it launched the uniform lessons and built continuity into the triennial meeting pattern.

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### EXPANSION IN CURRICULUM AND TRAINING (1872-1903)

The period from 1872 to 1903 was one of extensive progress in the Sunday school movement and particularly in the areas of curriculum and teacher preparation. Plans for teacher training abounded and were publicized and promoted by the conventions and the press. A strong contingent of key leaders emerged who helped steer the direction of the conventions and produced curriculum materials, training manuals and teacher helps.

#### Convention Development, 1872-1903--An Overview

With the launching of the triennial concept in 1869, the convention was well on its way in growing from a single general meeting in 1832 to an organization, The International Sunday School Association,<sup>1</sup> holding thousands of conferences annually. H. Clay Trumbull in an "Historical Introduction," which prefaced the published proceedings of the 1872 Convention, compared the First Convention in 1832 with the Fifth in 1872 as follows:

A comparison of the First convention with the Fifth exhibits the progress made meanwhile in the Sunday-school cause in this country. The First convention was composed of pioneers in a comparatively new work, assembled to agree on the principles of "a system of

---

<sup>1</sup>The name of the organization was changed from the International Sunday School Convention to the International Sunday School Association in 1905 and the organization was officiallly incorporated in 1907.

religious education," then first developing. The Fifth convention was made up of representative exponents of the Sunday-school sentiment prevailing in all the land, to secure uniformity of action on the basis of principles long since established and well understood. The individual power and responsibility of members was greater in the First convention than in the Fifth. The representative character of the delegates was weightier in the Fifth convention than in the First. The action of the first convention was chiefly for a constituency yet to be formed. That of the Fifth was for the constituency which had summoned it. In looking at the record of these two conventions, one is likely to be most impressed with the sagacity and foresight of the men who planned so wisely at the New York convention in 1832, and with the magnitude and glory of the cause represented by the assembled workers at Indianapolis, in 1872. And the contrast indicates the growth of the Sunday-school system in America during the next forty years. Who shall say what is to be its growth in the next forty years?<sup>2</sup>

During the years from 1832 to 1875<sup>3</sup> Sunday school enrollment grew from 9,187 schools, 80,913 teachers and 542,420 pupils<sup>4</sup> in 1832 to 69,871 schools, 753,069 teachers and officers and 5,790,683 pupils in 1875.<sup>5</sup> By 1902 the Sunday school enrollment in the United States and its territories reached 139,817 schools, 1,419,807 teachers and officers and 11,493,591 pupils.<sup>6</sup> In the thirty years from 1872 to 1903 a number of changes took place which reflected the scope and growth of the Sunday school and the Convention movement.

---

<sup>2</sup>H. Clay Trumbull, "Historical Introduction," The Fifth National Sunday-School Convention, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Figures on Sunday school enrollment were not gathered by the International Sunday School Convention until 1875.

<sup>4</sup>The Eighth Annual Report of the American Sunday School Union (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1832), p. 9. These figures reflect only those schools which were connected with the American Sunday School Union.

<sup>5</sup>The First International (Sixth National) Sunday School Convention, Held at Baltimore, Md., May 11, 12, 13, 1875 (Newark, N. J.: The Executive Committee, 1875), p. 135.

<sup>6</sup>Official Report of the Tenth International Sunday-School Convention (Toledo, Ohio: The Executive Committee, 1902), p. 69.

A change in the name of the convention occurred in 1878 which expanded the borders of inclusion of the gatherings. A few Canadians had attended the 1869 and 1872 Conventions but were not recognized as official representatives because of the limitations imposed by the very name of the gatherings, National Convention. S. B. Scott, Esq., of Montreal, Canada, argued for recognition at the Fifth (1872) Convention:

A single thought more with regard to the National Sabbath-school Convention. I wish to throw out here what our hopes are regarding it. Previous to the convention in Newark it was suggested that the convention be made international, but it was not; and previous to this convention it was suggested that this one should be made international, but it was not--doubtless for good reasons. Our Canadian friends are now hoping and desiring that the next will be made such. May I not hope that you will be willing the next convention shall be made international.<sup>7</sup>

In 1875 the Sixth National Sunday School Convention was designated as the First International Sunday School Convention, with the participation of twenty Canadian representatives. In 1896 the international field was extended to include Mexico, Central America and the West Indies.

A second change had to do with the development of a system for gathering and keeping statistical records of Sunday school enrollment. At each of the first five Conventions (1832, 1833, 1859, 1869 and 1872) statistics of attendance and nationwide enrollment were generally ignored or very sketchily recorded. Organizations such as the American Sunday School Union and denominational groups kept statistical records but these did not necessarily reflect all of what was happening at each state level. As the convention concept developed and as Sunday schools spread across the United States and throughout the world, an increasingly sophisticated plan for acquiring and maintaining triennial statistics

---

<sup>7</sup>Fifth National Sunday School Convention, pp. 48-49.

emerged. The type of reporting of actual Sunday school enrollment during the first five conventions consisted generally of enthusiastic guesses and probable figures. For example, John Heyl Vincent gave the following as an "important fact" in an address at the 1872 Convention:

That during the last three years, there has been increased attendance of adults upon the Sunday-school; that the idea is fast being discarded that the Sunday-school is distinctly a school for the children. The statistics would probably show that at the present time the very large proportion of 33 per cent of all the persons attending Sunday-school in the United States are over fifteen years of age.<sup>8</sup>

E. Payson Porter, Sunday school statistician of the highly organized Illinois Association, presented the plan used for garnering information at the township and county levels in that state. States were divided by district and county with the local group reporting to a county secretary who reported to a district secretary. The state secretary then received and compiled all the district information. State maps with district and county markings, such as colored discs, for each Sunday school were kept current and provided an instant visual overview of the entire state. In 1872 Mr. Porter was appointed to serve as National Sunday School Statistical Secretary and his plan was acknowledged as "one of the most admirable ever invented for the statistical work of any State."<sup>9</sup> It was hoped that other states would be instructed in its use so that the "whole difficult problem of statistics would be systematically and accurately compassed."<sup>10</sup> In 1875 Mr. Porter presented the first nationwide statistical report on Sunday school enrollment. It was not until the 1881 convention that salary and expenses for the statistical secretary were discussed when a plan for assessing each

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 31. (Italics mine.)    <sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 53.    <sup>10</sup> Ibid.

state, based on its Sunday school enrollment and state organization, was presented to the delegates. Nine states offered to contribute a larger sum of money than assessed while three needed to obtain further approval from their state associations. Compensation of \$1,500 in salary and \$1,300 for expenses, covering the three-year period between conventions, was approved.

A third change was reflected in the organizational growth of the International Sunday School Convention. From the modest beginning in finances in 1881 of \$3,493.64 the triennial budget of the International Sunday School Association rose to \$56,281.45, with a substantial force of paid workers in 1905.<sup>11</sup> Further evidence of complex organizational development can be seen in the movement from a simple structure of a few executive officers in 1832 to a network of departments and associations by 1905. The early officers personally financed their expenses and a nominal registration fee plus freewill offerings covered the expenses of the conventions. Organizational growth of the Association required, however, the employment of key figures in the ensuing years: 1887, an International Field Superintendent; 1899, a General Secretary and an International Field Secretary; 1902, an International Primary and Junior Secretary; 1903, two International Field Workers.

Increased interest in work among blacks, a fourth change or development, grew after the Civil War and separate organizations for ministry among the "colored people" were started in the southern states.

---

<sup>11</sup>Herbert H. Smith, ed., Organized Sunday School Work in North American, 1918-1922, Official Report of the Sixteenth International Sunday School Convention, Kansas City, Missouri, June 21-27, 1922 (Chicago: International Sunday School Council of Religious Education, 1922), p. 102.

At the 1881 Convention in Toronto, Canada, Rev. B. W. Arnett, a Methodist minister from South Carolina, was the first black to speak at an international Sunday school convention. His address, "Sunday Schools Among the Freedmen at the South," recognized the important role the Sunday school played as the only common schools for blacks for many years. He stated:

There is no people on the face of the globe that is more indebted to the Sabbath School for their present condition than the race that I represent. To us, sir, this Sabbath School for years was our only common school. It was there that we are taught our a, b, c. It was the Presbyterian and the Episcopalian who taught us to read God's Word. That grand class in our own country, the Methodists, they took us up, and they taught us to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. One liberated the mind and the other fired the soul. The Baptists taught us how to be baptized (applause), and with these things, head and heart and body clean (renewed applause), Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, take your share to-day, I come to-day to greet you and to thank you in the name of my race for this. (Loud applause.)<sup>12</sup>

The Reverend Arnett was called again to the platform at the final session to give a brief closing address.

Blacks were recognized at the international convention but apparently experienced discrimination at the local and state levels. In 1887, Mr. F. F. Watson, a black delegate from Kansas,

presented a resolution requesting the Executive Committee, in view of the fact that in many of the Southern States the colored people were prevented from assembling in local and state conventions, to adopt such methods as shall secure to them the benefits of the International Convention.

The convention voted to refer the resolution, under the rule, to the Executive Committee, whereupon Mr. B. F. Jacobs, Chairman, said:

---

<sup>12</sup>The Third International (Eighth National) Sunday School Convention of the United States and British American Provinces, Held in the City of Toronto, Canada, June 22, 23 and 24, 1881 (Toronto: The Executive Committee, 1881), p. 167.

"The Executive Committee take action upon it and recommend its adoption." (Applause.)<sup>13</sup>

It is unclear exactly what methods were adopted to help alleviate the situation. However, the International Sunday School Convention continued to encourage work among blacks and expanded its support by appointing in 1896 L. B. Maxwell to serve as the first Negro Secretary. Later in 1908, the International Sunday School Association launched its College Negro Teacher Training Movement for Sunday School Workers.

The changes which took place from 1872 to 1903 were evidences of the organizing ability and the driving ambition of the leadership of the Sunday school convention system. Lynn and Wright contend that "the transformation of the Sunday school into the worldwide work of evangelical Protestantism was quite deliberately and thoroughly the work of an energetic group of men--the 'Illinois Band.'"<sup>14</sup> Included in the "Illinois Band" were Dwight L. Moody,<sup>15</sup> Chicago salesman turned full-time evangelist; Benjamin F. Jacobs, Baptist layman and produce dealer and later real estate man in Chicago; John Heyl Vincent, a Methodist clergyman; Edward Eggleston, a Sunday school editor; and William

---

<sup>13</sup>The Fifth International (Tenth National) Sunday School Convention of the United States and British American Provinces, Held in the City of Chicago, Illinois, June 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 1887 (Chicago: The Executive Committee, 1887), p. 180.

<sup>14</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 56.

<sup>15</sup>Stanley R. Gundry, in his book, Love Them In, reports that Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) was led by a Sunday school teacher in 1855 to "accept God's love by committing his life to Christ." (p. 21.) He himself became involved in Sunday school work in 1856 when he recruited children from the streets of Chicago and took them to a mission Sunday school on North Wells Street. In 1858 or early in 1859, he "began his own Sunday school on Chicago's North Side in a deserted saloon near the North Side Market." (p. 33.) In 1860 Moody became involved with the

Reynolds, a Peoria businessman. In 1864, Moody, in a conversation with Reynolds, proposed that they become involved in teaching children through the Sunday school. They agreed to go to Springfield, Illinois, the following June to the state Sunday School convention. Moody proposed, "Let's go to Springfield on Friday evening and visit all the pastors, superintendents, and choirs, and hold special meetings on Sunday and Monday and see if the convention can be something besides a parade."<sup>16</sup> Moody eventually moved out of Sunday school work but Reynolds, Jacobs and Vincent continued to guide both the Illinois association and the international movement.

---

Young Men's Christian Association and played an active role in the United States Christian Commission during the Civil War. He served as president of the Chicago YMCA from 1866 to 1870. His Sunday school work continued to grow so that by mid-1862 450 children attended and in 1864 the school moved into its own building. The new facility included "an auditorium seating 1,500, a chapel and numerous classrooms. At the end of 1865 the weekly Sunday school attendance averaged 750, being the second largest Sunday school in Chicago." (p. 38). The congregation evolved into a church and officially became the Illinois Street Church in 1864. See Gundry, Love Them In, The Proclamation Theology of D. L. Moody (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), pp. 17-61.

Moody extended his involvement in the Sunday school movement to the Illinois State Sunday School Association, when, in 1865, he, William Reynolds and B. F. Jacobs joined forces to "give their strength to Sunday school work." Moody became vice president of the Illinois State Sunday School Union in 1866 and president in 1876. He took an active part in the Galesburg (Ill.) Convention in 1880 and conducted an opening devotional period each day at the Eighth International Convention in Boston in 1896.

Moody founded two prep schools, Northfield (Mass.) School for Girls in 1879 and Mount Hermon (Mass.) School for Boys in 1881. In 1889, the Chicago Bible Institute for the "training of Christian workers" was inaugurated. Its name was changed to Moody Bible Institute after Moody's death in 1899. See V. Gilbert Beers, "The Work and Influence of D. L. Moody in the Field of Christian Education" (M.R.E. thesis, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, May 1953), pp. 13-22; and C. B. Eavey, History of Christian Education (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964), pp. 259, 340-41.

<sup>16</sup> Moody, The Life of Dwight L. Moody, p. 98.

The problem of organization, which consisted of molding the many Sunday schools across the nation into a great institution and of reuniting broken relationships between northern and southern Sunday school co-workers, challenged the men. Lynn and Wright suggest that for men such as Jacobs and Vincent, "To organize was not just a necessity; it was also the major creative act of life."<sup>17</sup> Besides the North-South difficulties in the late 1860s, other questions and uncertainties stood unanswered. Lynn and Wright described the mood:

East-West relations were edgy; the raw boastfulness of the mid-western Sunday school associations did not quite conceal an unspoken resentment against established, complacent ways in the East. Further, considerable differences existed between rural and urban schools. What did workers in sod huts in Kansas have in common with the staffs of mammoth downtown churches in Pittsburgh?<sup>18</sup>

The method for building coherence into the national association resembled that of a well-oiled political machine in that each state was divided into counties and districts with reliable contacts for exchanging information, whether it was convention news, statistics or new methods. William Reynolds, temporary chairman of the 1896 Convention, compared the Sunday school association with the organizational prowess of Tammany Hall in New York City. Lynn and Wright suggest that this was not a political endorsement, because most northern Sunday school leaders in the late nineteenth century leaned toward the Republican Party. Rather, "the tribute was that paid by an evangelical organizer to the true professionals in the organizing enterprise."<sup>19</sup>

With the 1896 gathering, the conventions took on some of the

---

<sup>17</sup>Lynn and Wright, The Big Little School, p. 58.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

characteristics of political rallies in that "boosterism," or a spirit of quick growth and high hopes, prevailed. Parades, slogans, public rallies, music, oratory--all were a part of the conventions. The head of each state delegation usually prefaced his remarks with glowing statements about the glories of his state and its citizens, and their great and growing Sunday schools. The recital of statistics reassured the delegates of growth taking place within the movement. But "boosterism" was not enough to sustain a high level of enthusiasm and involvement over a period of years. The ultimate purpose of the Sunday school, to teach pupils the Word of God, had to be brought into focus in two specific areas: curriculum and teacher training. It took B. F. Jacobs, known as the generalissimo of the "United States Sunday School Army," to put forth a simple yet innovative idea of uniform lessons which captured the vision and energies of his co-workers and added new impetus to the convention momentum. John Heyl Vincent in turn took up the cause of teacher training and developed the institute and moral class concept.

#### Uniform Lesson System

"Uniform lessons," according to Rice and McConaughy "did not spring up in a night. The idea was the culmination of a series of experiments with many schemes for biblical study during more than a century."<sup>20</sup> The adoption of the Uniform Bible Lessons in 1872 at the Fifth National Convention in Indianapolis launched an era in Sunday school history which was to steer the direction of curriculum and teacher training for forty years.

---

<sup>20</sup>Edwin Wilbur Rice and James McConaughy, ed., Handbook on the Origin and History of the International Uniform Sunday-School Lessons (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1922), p. 3.

Curriculum development can be placed into four major eras or stages prior to 1872. While there was a great deal of overlapping, in that old forms tended to persist during these stages, each era was characterized by a distinctive approach to curriculum. The following serves as a review of the stages which have been more fully discussed in previous chapters.

1. The catechetical era (1790-1815). Catechisms generally were intended to teach dogmas of a particular religious group and doctrines of the Bible but usually neglected the vast portions of the Bible that were devoted to narrative, poetry and prophecy. While Raikes used the scheme of teaching reading directly from the Bible, Sunday school children connected in some way with a church also received catechetical training.

2. The memorizing era (1816-1825). During this period great emphasis was placed on memorization, not only of the catechism but of the Bible. The argument ran, "If children could memorize the catechism, they could also memorize the Scriptures." Benson suggests that "the use of lesson material directly from the Bible for memory work rapidly crowded out the catechism from its long-established place."<sup>21</sup>

3. The Limited Uniform Lesson Plan (1825-1850). With the introduction of Truman Parmele's selected lessons in 1823, the concept of choosing lessons to be used by all the teachers in a single school took root. In 1825 the American Sunday School Union published a series of selected lessons thereby assuring a wider readership and usage of the concept. Graded "helps" for the Limited Uniform Lesson Plan were

---

<sup>21</sup>Benson, A Popular History of Christian Education, p. 175.

devised as early as 1825 by Albert Judson under the auspices of the American Sunday School Union in the form of the Union Questions. James Gall's work in methodology influenced the shaping of the Limited Uniform Lessons from 1826 to 1830. The Union Questions, endorsed by the 1833 National Convention, continued to be widely used after 1850 and received approval at the 1859 Convention.

4. The Independent Lesson Plan or "Babel Series" era. Whether the period is designated as forty years, (1830-1870) as by Sampey,<sup>22</sup> or as only twenty years, (1850-1870) as by Rice,<sup>23</sup> it was during these years that each denomination and prominent Sunday school publishing house produced its own scheme of lessons. The emphasis was on doctrines peculiar to each denomination and lessons were planned to meet the need of a particular constituency.

Three factors appear to bear on the development of a uniform system of Bible lessons: the post-Civil War demand for unity, the regularly-recurring institution of the convention and the emergence of men with vision.

Denominationalism and the "Babel Series" mentality continued after the Civil War. However, pressure was on to minimize divisiveness and to ameliorate prejudice. Rice notes, ". . . the Civil War conspicuously emphasized the peril of division to society and religion. Hence, it did much to lessen denominational prejudice. Its influence, however, upon series of lessons for Sunday-school study was not immediate."<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>Sampey, The International Lesson System, p. 32.

<sup>23</sup>Rice, Sunday-School Movement, p. 295.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 296.

By the beginning of 1870, according to Gilbert, as many as thirty monthly and weekly publications produced current lesson notes.<sup>25</sup> Among these were "Lessons for Every Sunday in the Year," by Orange Judd, used widely in Methodist Episcopal churches from 1862 to 1867; lessons in The Chicago Sunday-School Teachers' Quarterly (later The National Sunday-School Teacher), edited by John H. Vincent and later by Edward Eggleston; the Berean Series of lessons written by John H. Vincent (which superseded Judd's lessons); Henry C. McCook's Westminster Series used widely in the Presbyterian Church; and the American Sunday School Union Explanatory and Union Series used in nondenominational, rural and Union schools (1868-1872).

The second factor bearing on the development of the uniform plan was the necessary element of a large, representative national body which met on a regular basis, provided continuity of leadership and promotion, and crystallized the thinking and desires of Sunday school workers. The national (later international) conventions served this purpose. The regularly-recurring meetings every three years also provided the time necessary for the Lesson Committee, appointed in 1872, and the publishers to do the writing and diffusing of the scheme and the opportunity for public reporting, commendation, recommendation and evaluation.

A third factor was the emergence of key leaders to devise a uniform lesson plan and give it wide circulation through the vehicle of Sunday school conventions and publications. The men involved were John H. Vincent, Edward Eggleston and Henry C. McCook, who were already

---

<sup>25</sup>Gilbert, The Lesson System, p. 43.

involved in writing curriculum, and B. F. Jacobs, the "father of the idea of a national uniformity of lessons."<sup>26</sup> One of the "Illinois Band" and superintendent of a Baptist Sunday school in Chicago, Jacobs became president of the Illinois Sunday School Convention in 1868 and campaigned strongly for development of Sunday schools throughout the state. He took a prominent part in the 1869 Convention at Newark, serving as one of the secretaries of the Convention. He lost heavily in the Chicago fire of 1871 but continued his Sunday school work both at the state and national levels. Jacobs possessed the "mind of a statesman"<sup>27</sup> and had the ability to rally men to a cause. He was to bring together two men with competing lesson systems, Eggleston and Vincent, as well as other publishers of Sunday school lessons to the point of desiring and requesting uniform lessons.

John Heyl Vincent, early in his ministry in the Methodist Episcopal Church, saw the need for adequately trained teachers. His Little Footprints in Bible Lands (1861) was designed to train teachers in the geography of Palestine. In 1865 at an institute conducted by the Chicago Sunday School Union he proposed this question: "Is it practicable to introduce a uniform system of lesson into all our schools?"<sup>28</sup> His two-year series of lessons, Two Years with Jesus, appeared in 1866 in the Sunday School Teacher which Vincent edited and was widely used by schools in Chicago and other parts of the country. That same year Vincent was called to New York to serve as Corresponding Secretary of the

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>27</sup>George Herbert Betts, The Curriculum of Religious Education (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1924), p. 125.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union and Editor of The Sunday School Journal for Teachers and Young People. In 1867 he launched a denominational series of lessons known as the Berean Series.

The editorship of the Chicago-based Sunday School Teacher, which became the National Sunday School Teacher, passed to Edward Eggleston, whose National Series of lessons followed the Two Years with Jesus series. Betts notes concerning the National Series that it "grew in popularity and carried the circulation of the journal to the then enormous number of 35,000 while the Scholar's Lesson Paper which accompanied the series had a circulation of more than 350,000."<sup>29</sup> Both the Berean Series and the National Series enjoyed wide circulation and became chief rivals in the curriculum field.

B. F. Jacobs emerged as the champion and chief promoter of the uniform lesson idea. However, Jacob's leadership appeared to coincide with popular interest in uniformity, making such a scheme possible.

According to Trumbull,

The movement for uniformity was popular rather than personal. B. F. Jacobs, of Chicago, became in measure its representative leader; but his strength in it was chiefly due to the general and gaining sentiment in its power the country through. Apparently no publishing society or house was originally desirous of the experiment. Most of the prominent Sunday-school men of the nation doubted either its feasibility or its desirableness. It was the Christian people of the United States--the great mass of Bible students through the length and breadth of the land--who pressed for it, creating a public sentiment in its behalf not easily resisted.<sup>30</sup>

As the idea of uniformity germinated in Jacob's mind, he began to advocate such a plan at various institutes and conventions in Chicago and

---

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>30</sup>Trumbull, "Historical Introduction," Fifth National Sunday School Convention, 1872, p. 21.

the Midwest. His plan was fourfold: (1) One lesson for all classes in a single school; (2) one lesson for all the schools in the nation; (3) lesson notes and helps supplied by the various denominations and published weekly or monthly by both the religious and secular press; (4) the adoption of the National Series by Sunday school throughout Chicago.<sup>31</sup> He visualized schools all across the country uniting in usage of the same course of Bible lessons, "but each school teaching the lessons in its own way, and each denomination affording the best helps it could for its own schools."<sup>32</sup> Eventually his vision included uniform lessons for the Sunday schools of the whole world.

In January 1868 the Standard, Baptist paper in Chicago, began publication of weekly lesson notes based on the National Series and prepared by Jacobs. Through Jacob's urging the Sunday School Times (the American Sunday School Union publication), three leading Baptist papers in the East, the Examiner and Chronicle of New York, the Watchman and Reflector of Boston, and the National Baptist in Philadelphia; and the Heavenly Tidings, the Sunday school paper published by the Chicago Young Men's Christian Association, began publication of the weekly lesson notes. In May 1868 Mr. Jacobs advocated the plan of uniform lessons before the Illinois State Convention at DuQuoin, Illinois, and again in the fall at the New York State Convention held in Elmira.

En route to the Fourth Convention held in Newark, New Jersey, in 1869, a number of delegates attended the New York Teachers' Association, where Jacobs presented the concept of uniform lessons. At the

---

<sup>31</sup>Gilbert, The Lesson System, p. 39.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

Newark Convention, Jacobs, in charge of the superintendents' section, presented the subject. It was received with such enthusiasm that the superintendents wanted to take the matter before the entire Convention for approval. Jacobs opposed this move, however, because he felt that a sufficient number of publishers was not ready to accept such a plan and the idea could be jeopardized by hasty action. He did submit to the Convention a statement of the superintendents' desire in the form of a declaration:

That a uniform lesson is essential to the highest success of every school, and that it is practical and desirable to unite all the schools of our whole country upon one and the same series.<sup>33</sup>

With growing interest at the popular level for uniform lessons, the Executive Committee in a meeting on July 10, 1871, to arrange for the forthcoming Fifth Convention to be held in Indianapolis in 1872, adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, That in the judgment of the executive committee of the National Sunday-school Convention the Sunday-school cause in our country would be greatly promoted if the publishers of Sunday-school lessons would unite on a uniform series of topics for the lessons of 1872.

Resolved, That we appoint a committee consisting of Brothers B. F. Jacobs, Alfred Taylor, and J. S. Ostrander, to convey this statement to said publishers, and to<sup>34</sup> urge upon them such conference as may lead to this co-operation.

Twenty-nine publishers or their representatives met August 8, 1871, and after earnest discussion voted twenty-six to three to appoint a committee to select a list of lessons for 1872. Appointed to the committee were Edward Eggleston, editor of the National Sunday School Teacher; John H.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>34</sup> Trumbull, "Historical Introduction," Fifth National Sunday School Convention, 1872, p. 20.

Vincent of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union; Richard Newton, editor of the American Sunday School Union publications; Henry C. McCook of the Presbyterian Board of Publications; and B. F. Jacobs, Baptist layman.

After the adjournment of the publishers' meeting, the newly-appointed lesson committee held a session the same day. Dr. Vincent insisted that the outline of the scheme be formed before they left. However, Dr. Newton had to leave the city that afternoon and Mr. Jacobs had to leave but could return the next morning. Both men agreed that the remainder of the committee should begin the lesson selection process. The three members, after a brief consultation, were unable to come to an agreement and printed the following card that afternoon and mailed it that night to six papers for publication:

UNIFORM LESSON--THE FAILURE--The undersigned, having been appointed at the conference held at the call of the National Executive Committee, a committee to select a course of lessons for the whole Sunday-school public, find it impossible at this late day to select a list of subjects acceptable to all, or creditable enough to put the experiment on a fair basis. The compromise necessary to effect a union at this moment renders it out of the question to get a good list, and with the most entire unanimity we agree that it is best to defer action until the matter shall have been discussed in the National Convention.

(Signed) Edward Eggleston,  
J. H. Vincent,  
Henry C. M'Cook.

New York, August 8, 1871.<sup>35</sup>

The next day Jacobs, upon hearing of the decision and fearing that delay would mean the demise of the plan, insisted that the subcommittee be recalled and do the work it was commissioned to do by the publishers. A subsequent card went out to the papers which had

---

<sup>35</sup> Gilbert, The Lesson System, p. 48.

received the first, stating:

The undersigned desire to recall the circular forwarded yesterday, entitled "Uniform Lessons--The Failure." We desire to state that, having reconsidered the whole subject, we have agreed upon a series for 1872. Will you accommodate the committee by withholding the publication of the former circular? A list of lessons for 1872 will be forwarded soon.

Edward Eggleston,  
J. H. Vincent,  
B. F. Jacobs.<sup>36</sup>

Practical problems peculiar to denominational viewpoints plagued the committee in their selection of a suitable list of lessons. Three proposals were set forth: that the lessons be essentially doctrinal, that the lessons focus on application of biblical teachings to practical duties, and that the plan be based on the ecclesiastical year, centering on the holy days of the church.<sup>37</sup> Betts notes, "Since not all of the three policies of 'doctrines, duties and days' could rule, compromise was necessary. It was decided to approximate the demands of all three positions by so covering the Bible as a whole that in the end the features of all three plans would be included."<sup>38</sup>

The course finally agreed upon consisted of two quarters of lessons from the National Series, one quarter from the Berean Series, and one quarter made up by the committee. The "patchwork" approach of the plan was to be severely criticized later, but the first year's lessons included the following: first quarter, lessons from Acts, Hebrews, and Revelation; second, lessons on Elisha and Israel; third,

---

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Betts, The Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 125.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

lessons dealing with the Epistles; and fourth, lessons about Daniel and his times.

One further step was necessary to assure success for the uniform lesson system--official sanction by the National Convention. The program committee for the Convention gave prominence to the question of lesson uniformity in the following pre-convention announcement:

Foremost in importance and interest among the themes for discussion by this convention is that of a system of uniform Bible lessons for the Sunday-schools of the land. Wednesday evening has been assigned by the committee to a full consideration of that subject.<sup>39</sup>

At the convention Jacobs presented the plan and submitted the following resolution:

Resolved, That this Convention appoint a committee to consist of five clerymen and five laymen, to select a course of Bible Lessons for a series of years not exceeding seven, which shall, as far as they may decide possible, embrace a general study of the whole Bible, alternating between the Old and New Testament semi-annually or quarterly, as they shall deem best, and to publish a list of such lessons as fully as possible, and at least for the two years next ensuing, as early as the 1st of August, 1872; and that this Convention recommend their adoption by the Sunday-schools of the whole country. . . .<sup>40</sup>

Earnest discussion followed with Vincent speaking in favor of the plan and Eggleston representing the minority and negative position. The question was postponed until the following afternoon. After some further discussion, "the cries of Question! question! !becamel too earnest to be longer resisted."<sup>41</sup> The vote was then taken by rising, with an overwhelming vote of "aye" and only ten voting "nay." The

---

<sup>39</sup>Trumbull, "Historical Introduction," Fifth National Sunday School Convention, 1872, p. 21.

<sup>40</sup>Fifth National Sunday School Convention, p. 88.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

following were appointed to serve on the Uniform Lesson Committee:

Clergymen:

Rev. J. H. Vincent, D.D., Illinois (Methodist)  
 Rev. John Hall, D.D., New York (Presbyterian)  
 Rev. Warren Randolph, D.D., Pennsylvania (Baptist)  
 Rev. Richard Newton, D.D., Pennsylvania (Episcopalian)  
 Rev. A. L. Chapin, D.D., Wisconsin (Congregationalist)

Laymen:

Philip G. Gillett, LL.D, Illinois (Methodist)  
 George H. Stuart, Pennsylvania (Presbyterian)  
 B. F. Jacobs, Illinois (Baptist)  
 Alexander G. Tyng, Illinois (Episcopalian)  
 Henry P. Haven, Connecticut (Congregationalist)<sup>42</sup>

Dr. John H. Vincent was named Chairman of the Lesson Committee and served in that position for twenty-four years. A resolution was also passed which allowed for the appointment by the Sabbath-School Association of Canada of a committee of two, one minister and one layman, to cooperate with the ten above-mentioned appointees, making the scope of the Lesson Committee international. In 1874 the Sunday School Union of London decided to use the system in their afternoon schools and from 1874 to 1914 lesson lists were sent each year to the Union for approval and recommendation for improvement.

From its inception the Lesson Committee worked under strict limitations as to its functions. Its purpose was to build a framework of biblical passages into a series of lesson topics which could then be developed into actual Sunday school lessons by the various denominations and publishers. Rice states that "the aim of the committee representing the publishers was to secure uniformity in the Scripture subjects only, and not a uniformity of the treatment of them, or of methods of

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 131-32.

instruction."<sup>43</sup> The committee, therefore, issued the basic materials to be used in the International Lessons, such materials including lesson title or topic, the biblical passage and the memory text. The materials were not copyrighted and could be used by any publishing house in the development of its lessons.

Appointed for a seven-year term, the committee selected lessons for the seven-year period on a year-by-year basis. A basic unit of study was structured for each quarter, or three-month period, although some studies continued for six months or even for a year as in 1882 when the Gospel of Mark was selected for study for the entire twelve months.

Each denomination produced its own special edition of the International Lessons, such as the Berean Series by the Methodists, Keystone by the Baptists, Westminster Series by the Presbyterians and The Pilgrim Teacher by the Congregationalists. Writers took the basic materials and added study helps, supplemental suggestions and teaching ideas which made up the "lesson leaflet" which was used extensively in Sunday schools. Two writers, Jesse L. Hurlbut of the Methodist Episcopal Church and F. N. Peloubet of the Congregational Church, developed lessons for their denominations which were published on an annual basis. The subtitle of Hurlbut's Illustrative Notes on the International Lessons for 1894 identifies the kinds of helps provided. It reads: "A guide to the study of the Sunday school lessons, with original and selected comments, methods of teaching, illustrative stories, practical

---

<sup>43</sup>Rice, The Sunday-School Movement, p. 301.

applications, notes on eastern life, library references, maps, tables, diagrams, pictures."<sup>44</sup>

While the Lesson Committee stayed largely within its parameters, some changes and additions were made to the lessons in the ensuing years. In 1874, a "Golden Text" was introduced, a Scripture portion which was "thought to embody, in a single verse or less, the central idea of the Scripture studied."<sup>45</sup> In 1878, short passages for memorization were indicated. As previously stated, the series for 1882 devoted the entire year to the study of the Gospel of Mark. The year 1890 saw the designation of one Sunday each quarter as Temperance Sunday, allowing for a lesson to be taught on this subject. In 1894, the committee indicated connective and parallel passages along with the main biblical passage. In 1896, an optional and separate course for the Primary Department was developed and followed in 1902 by an optional "Two Years" Course for Beginners" (Kindergartners).

Almost from the date of issue the International Uniform Lessons met with phenomenal success so that by 1890 at least ten million Sunday school teachers and pupils were using them. By 1902 the number had increased to more than fifteen million, and by 1905 to seventeen million.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps an excerpt from Dr. Vincent's glowing report at the 1875 Convention helps illustrate the evident success of the lessons and the exuberance of the leaders.

---

<sup>44</sup>Jesse L. Hurlbut and Robert R. Doherty, Illustrative Notes on the International Lessons for 1894 (Boston: A. I. Bradley & Co., 1893), p. 1.

<sup>45</sup>First International Sunday School Convention, p. 43.

<sup>46</sup>John R. Sampey and Ira M. Price, The Story of the Uniform Lessons (Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1930), p. 32.

These Lessons are largely in use throughout our own land by Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Moravians, friendly members of the Reformed Churches, Adventists, and many others,--a mighty host, to be enumerated only by millions. . . . Our lessons have found their way to the Sunday-schools along the shores of the Atlantic, down the slopes of the Pacific, and through all the region which lies between. East and West and North and South have come to love and use them.

Our work will help to unify the nations. The tidal wave is already rolling along the shores of continental Europe. The grand swell is felt in Asia, and even in the regions that are beyond.

Our Lessons are to-day in use in France and Germany, in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey, Italy, and Greece; in Syria, Hindustan, India, Burmah [sic] and China. Mexico and the Choctaw Indians are sitting with us to study the same Scriptures. The Sandwich Islands have clasped hands with us across the intervening waters, and it is literally true that one set of Sabbath studies is going with the sun around the globe.<sup>47</sup>

The Uniform Lessons were both enthusiastically received and repudiated. While it was soon evident that although the uniform system lacked a consistent educational methodology, it did serve an important role in the development of Sunday school lessons. Cope sums up the positive aspects of the Uniform Lessons plan as follows:

It made possible the cooperation of all denominational and private enterprises for publication and circulation toward one end, that these lessons should be within the financial and intellectual reach of every pupil in every school. It made possible the concentration of all the energies of all the schools upon a single lesson plan, so that the conception of the school as a definite teaching agency became fixed beyond any doubt or question. It secured the concentration of Sunday-school leadership and to some extent biblical scholarship in the selection of the material for the lessons and, more particularly, on the preparation of comments and other aids for teachers. It revealed gradually the pedagogical necessities of the Sunday-school teacher.<sup>48</sup>

While it appears that "the historian must record the inauguration

---

<sup>47</sup> First International Sunday School Convention, pp. 44-45.

<sup>48</sup> Cope, The Evolution of the Sunday School, p. 107.

and the growth of the International Uniform Lesson System as one of the greatest co-operative movements in the history of Christendom,"<sup>49</sup> the observer of the movement will also note that from the day of inauguration there were those who criticized the plan of assigning the same Scripture lesson for all ages in the Sunday school. At the 1872 Convention while the question was under discussion, Rev. P. S. Evans of Connecticut spoke in favor of a series in three grades which would allow for the developmental growth of the pupil.<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, early objections to the Uniform Lesson System did not focus on educational inadequacies but rather on the content itself. At the 1878 Convention, Warren Randolph, Secretary of the Lesson Committee, cited four major objections to the plan: (1) The lessons were "fragmentary" and "scrappy;" (2) they left no room for teaching "doctrines of the denominations;" (3) they did not give sufficient prominence to "reforms" and "missions;" (4) they were not arranged according to the "church year."<sup>51</sup> The latter three criticisms arose from denominational and vested-interests groups. The first objection, however, struck at one of the major promises of the Lesson Committee: "to guide every student through a comprehensive study of the Bible in a period of seven years."<sup>52</sup> In reality, gaps and significant omissions could be seen in the plan. For example,

---

<sup>49</sup>Sampey, The International Lesson System, p. 118.

<sup>50</sup>Fifth International Sunday School Convention, p. 94.

<sup>51</sup>Second International (Seventh National) Sunday-School Convention of the United States and British American Provinces, Held in the City of Atlanta, Ga., April 17, 18, 19, 1878 (Washington, D.C.: The Executive Committee, 1878), pp. 38-39.

<sup>52</sup>Cope, The Evolution of the Sunday School, p. 109.

during thirty-seven years only thirty-one of the fifty chapters of Genesis were studied; only seventeen Psalms and only two chapters from I Chronicles were used. The relative value of various passages seemed oddly placed, as seen in five lessons on the Beatitudes and twenty-one on the tabernacle and its ceremonies; the book of Ruth was not covered in its entirety while there were fourteen lessons from Leviticus and six on the thirteenth chapter of Romans.<sup>53</sup> The criticisms of "fragmentary" and "scrappy" seemed indeed justified.

Cope labelled the idea of uniformity as a "delusion" and likened the concept to the rigid lines of business uniformity as seen in the factory plan. The idea of one lesson for all had a certain appeal but the emphasis of the system on mechanical, business uniformity tended to retard its education development.<sup>54</sup> One also sees a parallel with big business and the factory plan in the large Sunday school buildings. For example, in Philadelphia and Akron, the superintendent's desk was located in a central position with several floors of rooms slanted sufficiently so that "every scholar as soon as entering the school is under the immediate supervision of the superintendent."<sup>55</sup> In addition, doors of the surrounding rooms could be opened to allow the entire school to function in unison or closed to allow for separate class teaching.

The most fundamental objection--lack of educational adaptation to younger pupils through graded lessons--was little discussed in the

---

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>55</sup>First International Sunday School Convention, p. 147.

early years of the Uniform Lessons. However, continued use of the lessons by teachers of young children pointed up the needs of the pupils in a way that the confusion of many lessons could not. Moreover, those who actually used the lessons with young children, and who recognized the need for graded curriculum, became quite vocal in their criticism. One factor bearing on the lack of concern for a graded curriculum was that little consideration was given to appointing educators to the Lesson Committee. Betts states:

The Committee has had as members trained clergymen, trained biblical scholars, trained business men, trained editors, trained Sunday-school field promoters, but it is not easy to find among its membership those who have been specially trained and proved in the science and art of education as related to childhood and youth.<sup>56</sup>

Events occurring outside the realm of the Sunday school in the 1890s also had their effect on the lesson system. The public schools had become graded and were providing suitable curriculum for the teachers. Betts noted that, "Modern child study had made a beginning and its advocates strongly attacked the principles of an ungraded course of study."<sup>57</sup> Within the Sunday school ranks primary teachers' unions had sprung up and primary teachers were devising their own lessons to teach to young children. The Seventh Convention in 1893 marked a crisis in the history of the International Uniform System in that the report of Warren Randolph, Secretary of the Lesson Committee, was virtually an apology for the Committee. Although some delegates at the Convention objected to the method of selection pursued by the Lesson Committee, not a single voice was raised against the system as a whole. Approval

---

<sup>56</sup>Betts, The Curriculum of Religious Education, pp. 143-44.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

of the system by a vote of confidence was overwhelming, reminiscent of the 1872 Convention when the plan was first launched. However, graded lessons were to become a fact within three years of the 1893 Convention.

### The Struggle for Graded Lessons

In 1887 the Executive Committee of the International Convention set forth the following statement describing the aim and object of the International Sunday School Convention:

1st. To arouse enthusiasm in tri-ennial conventions in the Sunday-school work of the land, and promote acquaintance and fellowship among the workers engaged in that field.

2nd. To present in these conventions the best methods of work in every department of Sunday-school activity, by means of such speakers as have proved themselves specialists in their several departments.

3rd. To make suitable provisions for the appointment of the International Lesson Committee.

4th. To co-operate with State, Territorial and Provincial Associations along the line of more effective organization, or where no such associations exist, to endeavor to help in their formation.<sup>58</sup>

The fact that the Convention met only triennially tended to limit what it could do. It did serve the purpose of inspiring Sunday school workers and initiating ideas--ideas which had to be diffused more extensively at the local levels by those who attended and by the press.

The Convention, however, also provided a platform for the expression of groundswells of interest. The triennial meetings made any change necessarily slow but change could be effected if a group persisted and represented popular desire. Just as the inauguration of the uniform lessons was a demonstration of such "grass roots" interest so

---

<sup>58</sup>Fifth International Sunday School Convention, p. 179.

was the eventual shift to graded lessons.

Although early in the history of the American Sunday school provision was made for infant classes,<sup>59</sup> after the first conventions in 1832 and 1833 little emphasis was placed on teaching young children until the 1859 Convention. At that time a great meeting was held for children in which several thousand attended. A more systematic approach to infant classes began to occur so that at the Fourth Convention in 1869 thirty infant class superintendents met in special sessions to discuss organization and methodology for infant classes. Interest and enthusiasm gained from the Convention resulted in the organization of the Infant Class Teachers' Union in 1870 in Newark, New Jersey. Mrs. Samuel W. Clark, teacher of the group, selected Bible stories which were thought to be interesting to children, developed them into lessons and taught them to the other teachers in the Union. Later she adopted the Berean Series, edited by John H. Vincent, and in 1873 the International Uniform Lessons were used.

In 1871 the first Primary Teachers' Union was formed in New York, with another in Philadelphia in 1879 and in Washington, D. C. in 1881. In 1884 a National Primary Union was formed and in 1887 the name was changed to the International Primary Union of the United States and British Provinces. The Union became a department of the International Sunday School Convention in 1896 and by 1899 310 primary unions were in existence. It was this teachers' group which campaigned for graded lessons and put pressure on the Lesson Committee to make the change.

---

<sup>59</sup> See Chapter III, pp. 67-69.

The primary teachers gathered strength through both the local and state unions and at the international conventions. As early as 1869 the Convention subdivided into age level or specialization sections with at least one morning devoted to sessions in a particular area. In 1884 primary teachers attended the Primary Teachers' Institute Session where eight topics relating to teaching primaries were discussed. Up to this time the groups at the Convention were loosely organized in that a conductor arranged the conference and presided at the meetings. In 1890 the primary teachers' gathering was designated the Primary Department and offered seven sessions in primary teaching. In 1896 the International Primary Teachers' Union held its business meetings and its own series of six sessions in conjunction with the Convention, thus tying it in closely with the total international Sunday school movement. An additional six workshops were offered during the Convention in the area of teaching primaries. As the group gathered strength and numbers, it became increasingly vocal about the need for graded lessons. An outside factor in the form of competitive lessons also became a prime link in the movement for graded lessons.

The most formidable opposition to the Uniform Lessons, and one which was seized upon by primary teachers, was the graded lessons produced by Rev. Erastus Blakeslee, a Congregational minister in New England. In 1888 he had prepared a series of lessons based on the Uniform Lessons which attempted to unify the impression of detached lessons inherent in the Uniform system. He further tried to incorporate into his series the Inductive Bible Method of Bible Study, advocated by Willaim Rainey Harper of Yale University, but found the task futile.

Moreover, Blakeslee was unable to convince the International Lesson Committee of the superiority of his methods. In 1890 he created a new series of lessons which incorporated the graded principle. Publication began in 1891 by the Bible Study Publishing Company in Boston. In 1893 the Bible Study Union was formed in New York to encourage better methods of Bible study and teaching, especially those represented in the Blakeslee lessons.

Blakeslee divided his lessons into three general parts: Children's Courses, stories and great truths of the Bible; Young People's Courses, biblical history and geography; and Bible Class Courses. Within the Children's Courses were three grades: primary or infant class lessons, lessons for the middle grade, and lessons for the advanced primary grade.<sup>60</sup> The lessons provided a more connected study of the Bible than the Uniform Lessons, adapting the material to the child and attempting to meet his needs. Not only was Blakeslee a bold innovator in lesson preparation but he proved to be an aggressive competitor in the field of Sunday school curriculum. Sampey illustrates Blakeslee's skill in selling his product when he states:

While the International forces were traversing difficult portions of the Old Testament, Mr. Blakeslee would issue a new and attractive series on the Life of Christ; and when the International lessons were in the New Testament, the Bible Study Union periodicals were pointing to the comparative neglect of the Old Testament prophets and sages and the wonderful adaptability of their messages to the social conditions in modern times.<sup>61</sup>

When Blakeslee succeeded in rallying to his cause a number of the large

---

<sup>60</sup>Samuel B. Haslett, The Pedagogical Bible School (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1903), p. 65.

<sup>61</sup>Sampey, The International Lesson System, p. 124.

Sunday schools in New England and the East, the publishers of the International Lessons were forced to recognize the growing popularity of a graded series.

In 1893 at the St. Louis Convention the Uniform Lessons came under severe criticism and scrutiny. What amounted to a vote of confidence for the system and the Lesson Committee was expressed unanimously by the delegates in attendance. Although the primary teachers expressed their loyalty to the Uniform Lessons at that time, some in actuality had suppressed their conviction that a special course should be developed for children under six years of age. They soon, however, began to approach different members of the Lesson Committee for a special series of lessons preparatory to the Uniform Lessons.

Early in 1894 Miss Bertha F. Vella, Secretary of the International Primary Teachers' Union, sent a questionnaire to primary teachers to determine the extent of their wishes regarding curriculum. The responses were to be tabulated and submitted to the International Lesson Committee at its March 14, 1894, meeting in Philadelphia. The following represent the tenor of the forty-seven questions asked:

Do you prefer that the primary lessons shall be uniform with the whole school?

Are any of the lessons so difficult that they cannot be simplified for the children?

Is a uniform or a graded system best adapted to continuous development of the child?

Do you think a uniform system can be made a graded system also?

Do you believe a separate primary course advisable?

Please outline your plan for a course of primary lessons.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 163.

Upon receipt of replies from 300 teachers, the Executive Committee of the International Primary Teachers' Union met on March 13, and adopted the following resolution. Only Mrs. W. F. Crafts, the President of the Union, voted in the negative.

Whereas, The Uniform International system of study of the Bible in all the departments of the Sunday School for more than twenty years has been fruitful of great good in unifying forces to secure the best results, to the greatest numbers, and

Whereas, There is now a constantly increasing demand for a special and separate lesson for the Primary department, and

Whereas, This demand for a special and separate lesson for the Primary department is being supplied by lessons selected and prepared and published by private and denominational publishing houses, so that teachers are being drawn away and separated from the International and uniform plan of the study of the Bible, thus creating division in the great Sunday School army, and

Whereas, We have cause to believe that the majority of the Primary teachers and schools desire to continue the study of a lesson selected by the International Lesson Committee,

Therefore--resolved, that we recommend to the Lesson Committee now in session in Philadelphia, that they select a separate International Lesson for the Primary department, to begin January first, 1896, and that it consist of one half the length of time used to cover the regular course.

Resolved--That it is the judgment of the Executive Committee of the International Union of Primary Sabbath School Teachers that this separate and special Primary Course should be in addition to the regular course, and shall not interfere with the present lesson helps, which are prepared for the Primary department, but it shall be optional for each denomination to prepare helps for the Primary department, as at present upon this course, and it shall also be optional for each school to adopt this course.

(Signed) Mrs. M. G. Kennedy, Vice-Pres., Philadelphia  
 Mrs. S. W. Clark, New York Union  
 Mrs. James S. Ostrander, Brooklyn Union  
 Israel P. Black, Phila. Union.  
 Wm. P. Hartshorn, Boston Union.<sup>63</sup>

The Union placed its request directly to the Lesson Committee

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

which, "not insensible to the pressure of public opinion, acceded to the request and issued such a course, expressing at the same time their own conviction that the Sunday school should continue in the undivided use of the Uniform Lessons by the entire school!"<sup>64</sup> It was issued in the fall of 1895 but no helps were prepared by the denominational publishing houses.

Another agency which became an important link in the movement for graded lessons was the Summer School of Primary Methods organized by E. Morris Fergusson. Later this school became known as the New Jersey School of Methods for Sunday School Workers, held at Asbury Park, New Jersey. Two key figures at this school influenced the eventual adoption of international graded lessons. In 1896 Mrs. J. Woodbridge Barnes, with a group of summer school students, devised a study plan based on the question, "What do we wish our children to know about the Bible before they are twelve years of age?"<sup>65</sup> The result of their work became the basis for the Graded Supplemental Lessons of the Elementary Department of the Sunday School, approved by the International Sunday School Convention at Denver in 1902. The success of these lessons led primary teachers to demand the creation of international graded lessons for the entire Sunday school hour rather than for the ten-minute supplemental lesson time allotment.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup>Betts, The Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 141.

<sup>65</sup>A. Brown, A History of Religious Education, p. 103.

<sup>66</sup>The idea of a supplemental lesson was raised at the 1884 Convention in Louisville to provide a ten-minute general study of the Bible each week before the lesson recommended by the International Uniform system. Because the Uniform Lessons tended to be fragmentary, the

Another key figure was Miss Margaret Cushman, a public school kindergarten teacher who gave her lectures on child study in 1897 at the School of Primary Methods at Asbury Park. When asked to work out her principles in a series of lessons for young children, she developed a two years' course for kindergarten age. The lessons, according to Arlo Brown, "proved to be very popular forerunners of the new movement [for graded lessons]."67

Through urging by denominational publishing houses the International Lesson Committee in 1901 appointed a sub-committee to prepare a one-year course for beginners. Their recommendation was presented to the Denver Convention in 1902 along with a recommendation for changes in the advanced Bible study course, resulting in the following resolution:

Resolved, That the following plan of lesson selection shall be observed by the Lesson Committee to be elected by this Convention:

One Uniform Lesson for all grades of the Sunday-school shall be selected by the Lesson Committee, as in accordance with the usage of the past five Lesson Committees; provided, that the Lesson Committee be authorized to issue an optional "Beginners Course" for special demands and uses, such optional course not to bear the official title of "International Lesson."

Resolved, That at this time we are not prepared to adopt a series of advanced lessons to take the place of the uniform lessons in the adult grade of the Sunday-school.68

In an effort to maintain its long-standing tradition of one set

---

supplemental lesson provided the continuity needed to cover major thoughts and concepts from the whole Bible in a short period of time. It was during the supplemental lesson that early attempts at grading for different age levels occurred. This could be done without violating the basic principle of the Uniform Lessons.

67A. Brown, A History of Religious Education, p. 103.

68Tenth International Sunday School Convention, p. 17.

of lessons at the adult level, the Lesson Committee held firm to its adult series but acquiesced to the demands for a graded series at the younger level, although it would not grant the series the right to carry the official title of the Uniform system. However, the fact that the series was approved by the Convention gave the primary teachers the leverage that they needed for future action.

Mrs. J. W. Barnes continued her quiet and persistent campaign for graded lessons. In 1907 she took a bold step and requested that the Lesson Committee inaugurate a completely graded system covering all ages up to adulthood. The Committee suggested a counter plan, and although neither plan was adopted at that time, the very concept foreshadowed a new step to be taken one year later. In 1908, a group of fifty-four men and women representing the Lesson Committee, the Graded Lesson Conference headed by Mrs. Barnes, the Editorial Association and the Executive Committee of the International Sunday School Association met to draft a resolution recommending adoption of a graded system of lessons to be presented at the 1908 Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. The plan was not to do away with the Uniform Lessons but was to parallel them with a graded series. The Association approved the plan and recommended that the Lesson Committee prepare a thoroughly graded system of lessons and to continue the Uniform Lessons. Thus after some forty years of struggle, graded lessons won their place in the curriculum of the Sunday school.

#### Teacher Training

By 1869 the Convention had developed a clear statement of the purpose of the Sunday school and the necessity for trained teachers.

The Committee on Resolutions issued the following report:

We gladly recognize, in this National Convention, all Sunday-school workers and all Sunday-school organizations, having in view the evangelical religious instruction of the children.

That this Convention values the Sunday-school, not only as a medium of direct and positive Bible instruction, but as a valuable auxiliary to the household study of God's word, and as supplementary to home instruction. We hereby express our conviction that these different departments of Bible instruction are, and ought to be, entirely harmonious, and mutually helpful.

This Convention desires to encourage, by all reasonable means, the organization of State, County and Town Convention and Institutes, and the organization of District school-house Sunday-schools in settlements remote from churches, and also encourage all voluntary Sunday-school labor.

That we recommend the forming, in each Sabbath-school, of normal classes for the careful training of teachers. That we deem the plan of establishing a normal college for the training of Sunday-school teachers, as recommended by the New York State Association, worthy of careful consideration, and also recommend that Rev. J. H. Vincent, of New York, Rev. H. Clay Trumbull, of Connecticut, and Rev. Edward Eggleston, of Illionis, be added to the Committee.<sup>69</sup>

The Convention stated three essential elements of the Sunday school: the purpose of the Sunday school was biblical instruction, its teaching staff was to be voluntary, and the teaching staff needed to be trained. The need for training was expressed by the teachers themselves as well as by the superintendents of Sunday schools. Arlo Brown noted there was a "rising popular interest" in teacher training during the twenty-year period after the Civil War which gave impetus to the Uniform Lesson System as well as to the growth of teacher training agencies.<sup>70</sup> B. F. Jacobs saw a relationship between a proper curriculum and teacher training. In an address at the Third National Convention in 1869, he stated:

---

<sup>69</sup>Third National Sunday School Convention, pp. 153-54.

<sup>70</sup>A. Brown, A History of Religious Education, p. 140.

How shall we help each other to do our work? The questions of drilling or training teachers can only be solved so far as we can communicate to one another the thoughts and ideas we ourselves have. It is beyond question the great desire of teachers to know how they may better do their work. Teachers all over the land are praying for more grace, more wisdom, and more common sense. At the root of all plans to meet this want of trained teachers lies the question of the uniform system of lessons, that in three of the six Section meetings was favorably alluded to.<sup>71</sup>

Discussion at the 1869 Convention focused on possible solutions to the problem of teacher training. Suggestions ranged from special methods of teaching to the establishment of a National Normal College. Edward Eggleston

remarked that the question before them was not upon the relative merits of individual methods of teaching but how shall the five hundred thousand normal teachers in the United States be real teachers--how? It is not to be done through a National Normal College, although he would not oppose that movement.<sup>72</sup>

Eggleston saw the aim of Sunday school institutes as training teachers to teach rather than spending a large amount of time on content-related subjects, such as sacred geography. He recommended several ways to meet the training needs: area institutes, training courses in theological seminaries, and weekly teachers' meetings. According to Eggleston, institutes should be held at the town and district levels on a regular basis with an annual two-day or one-week training series. He held strongly to the basic premise that "every congregation must provide some way for the training of its own teachers."<sup>73</sup> In order to accomplish this, ministers were to be taught in the seminaries how to train their teachers. Eggleston's concept of the weekly teachers' meeting included training in the methods of teaching as well as orientation in the

---

<sup>71</sup>Third National Sunday School Convention, p. 123.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

biblical content.

J. H. Vincent, who had been engaged in training institute work since 1857, in an address at the same Convention, stated that "the great object of a Normal class is to train teachers in the acquisition of knowledge and in the communication of knowledge."<sup>74</sup> He outlined three areas to be included in the normal classes; "the general view of the field of knowledge, some knowledge of method, and the practical illustration, in the class, of actual teaching."<sup>75</sup> In response to the recommendation for training at the theological seminary level, Vincent cited the following instances where such training occurred.

It is perhaps not so widely known that three or four years before Mr. Pardee's death [in 1860], he delivered courses of lectures before Princeton and Union and some other Theological Seminaries; and my predecessor in the office I now occupy, the Rev. Dr. Kidder, Professor of Biblical Theology in the Garrett Institute at Evanston, Illinois, put all his students under a course of training to fit them to become Sunday-school teachers.<sup>76</sup>

Although the issue of Uniform Lessons dominated the 1872 Convention, the subject of teacher training received a new emphasis in that a sectional meeting was held specifically for the leaders of teachers' institutes and normal classes. Vincent in an address to the delegates of the entire Convention noted that during the three years between the 1869 and 1872 Conventions "there have been more Sunday-school Conventions, local and State, more Sunday-school teachers' Institutes, more normal classes, more scholars brought into the Sabbath-school than there ever has been during any former period of three years within the history of our country."<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>77</sup>Fifth National Sunday School Convention, p. 31.

The Convention's role in the area of teacher training was first limited to announcement, explanation and resolutions. Diffusion and implementation of the idea were dependent upon leadership at the local and state levels and the efforts of denominational and private publishers. Each denomination established a normal department and in 1871 the American Sunday School Union appointed H. Clay Trumbull to serve as Normal Secretary. John H. Vincent envisioned a prolonged institute, held during the summer, where Sunday school teachers could train for their work. In 1874 in Chautauqua, New York, he launched a "two weeks' session of lectures, normal lessons, sermons, devotional meetings, conferences, and illustrative exercises, with recreative features in concerts, fireworks, and one or two humorous lectures."<sup>78</sup> The experiment was called The Chautauqua Sunday-school Assembly with the "basis of [its] work . . . in the line of normal training, with the purpose of improving methods of biblical instruction in the Sunday school and the family."<sup>79</sup> The Chautauqua plan was expanded to include other general cultural interests in the ensuing years but, according to Cope,

it resulted in the formation of an Assembly Normal Union, and this later led to the appointment of the International Sunday School Normal Committee, to the establishment of definite courses of normal lessons, to the preparation of many books, both those designed for the Chautauquan Circles and others, of high value directly to the Sunday-school teaching and to the stimulation of popular education.<sup>80</sup>

At the 1875 Convention held in Baltimore, Vincent in his address, "How to Increase the Teaching Power of the Sunday-school," suggested

---

<sup>78</sup>John Heyl Vincent, The Chautauqua Movement (Boston: Chautauqua Press, 1886), p. 16.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-18.

<sup>80</sup>Cope, The Evolution of the Sunday-school, p. 160.

the various form training classes could take.

1. The Teachers' Meeting, a weekly meeting where the best methods of teaching may be illustrated in connection with the lesson for the ensuing Sabbath, and some time be spent in the study of general subjects of which Bible teachers need instruction.

2. The Normal Class, held on a separate evening, for a series of weeks or months, during which a prescribed course of study may be prosecuted.

3. The Preparatory Normal Class, held at the same hour as the Sunday-school, composed of older pupils who are to be teachers in the future, and taught by the most competent person who can be secured for the purpose.

4. The Seminary Normal Class, in connection with institutions of learning. Two hours a week may be spent in exercises adapted to give our young students an idea of the dignity and importance of the Sunday-school work, and to prepare them for useful service there.

5. The Special Normal Class Exercises in connection with Sunday-school Conventions, Institutes, etc.<sup>81</sup>

The above plan became the basic structure for future training programs and was in keeping with Eggleston's thesis, stated at the 1869 Convention, that the training of teachers was first and foremost the responsibility of each congregation.

In 1878, William F. Sherwin in his address, "State Conventions and Institutes," suggested that a clear distinction be made between the two gatherings. He stated, "The convention is more for general effect--for arousing enthusiasm and stimulating zeal--the institute rather for inquiring into the what, and the how, for pure instruction of teachers and workers in methods of education, in detail."<sup>82</sup> In The Modern Sunday School Vincent defined the terms "normal school" and "Sunday school institute." "Normal schools are schools in which the true theory of

---

<sup>81</sup>First International Sunday School Convention, pp. 103-04.

<sup>82</sup>Second International Sunday School, p. 112.

education is taught, its true methods illustrated, and its pupils trained to teach under judicious and skilled scrutiny."<sup>83</sup> He saw the Sunday school normal class based upon the same theory as that of the public school with the same "worthy and much needed practical results."<sup>84</sup> He defined the Sunday school institute as an abridged normal class, a short session of one to several days.<sup>85</sup>

Discussions and addresses on normal classes and teacher training became increasingly prominent at the International Conventions. Three addresses were given on the subject at the 1878 Convention in Atlanta. In 1881 in Toronto, teacher training was a key issue. Several addresses on the topic were presented along with one by Dr. Vincent on "The Self-Training of Teachers." He suggested that a Sunday school teacher visit the public school to observe the teacher and pupils.

A Sunday school teacher who will go and watch that good school mother, sitting down in a quiet place, and hearing a recitation by a class, watching the teacher and thinking, and mentally trying to apply some of the methods, would find a good method of self-training, ten such visits a year to an average Public School would tend to make the Sunday School teacher vastly more effective as a teacher in her work . . . .<sup>86</sup>

This appeal to the example of public school teaching and the training of public school teachers was to become increasingly evident at future Conventions.

In each of the succeeding five Conventions (1887, 1890, 1893, 1896 and 1902), appeals and resolutions were made calling for adequate

<sup>83</sup>John Heyl Vincent, The Modern Sunday-School (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1887), p. 82.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>86</sup>Third International Sunday School Convention, p. 129.

training for teachers. Comparison was made between the training of the public school teacher and that of the Sunday school teacher. William Randolph at the 1896 Convention held in Boston expressed concern for the lagging pace of Sunday school teacher training. "Our Sunday-schools must keep pace with the day schools in methods and skill in imparting knowledge."<sup>87</sup> He called for the assistance of public educators in meeting the need for teacher training.

Many of our public school teachers are active Christian men and women. They know the art of teaching, and are admirably qualified to conduct the classes for training teachers . . . Let me send out this plea again that the college men and professional men unite with us in this work, and use a measure of their special talent in raising the standard of Bible teaching by helping us with these training classes; as well as by aiding in our conventions and Normal institutes, in township, county and state.<sup>88</sup>

The training lag can be seen in the statistics reported at the 1902 Convention held in Denver. The following figures, related to teacher training in the United States and its territories, were reported:

Conventions held in 1901	17,399
Primary Unions	369
Normal classes held in 1901	1,159
Membership in the normal classes	9,812
Normal graduates in 1901	1,077
Teachers' meetings held in 1901	4,406 <sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup>Eighth International (Thirteenth National) Sunday School Convention Held in Tremont Temple, Boston, Massachusetts, June 23, 24, 25 and 26, 1896 (Chicago: Published for the Executive Committee by W. B. Jacobs, 1896), p. 44.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>89</sup>Tenth International Sunday School Convention, p. 72. At the Fourth Convention (1884) the Executive Committee requested that the Statistical Secretary include in his next triennial report the number of officers and teachers who had passed some course of normal training. Actual figures for this category were not reported until 1902, although the number of state primary unions was reported in 1896.

The number of Sunday schools, officers, teachers and pupils reported in the same report for the same period of time was:

Sunday schools	139,817
Officers and teachers	1,419,807
Pupils	11,493,591
Pupils joining the church	110,309 <sup>90</sup>

It is noted that the 1,419,807 officers and teachers in Sunday school work represent eleven per cent of the total Sunday school enrollment of 12,913,398. While the figure of 9,812 members in normal classes could represent some or all of the officers and teachers, it could also include older pupils in training as prospective teachers. Therefore, the figure 9,812 can be seen either as a percentage of the officers and teachers (.007%) or of the total Sunday school enrollment (.0008%). The number of actual graduates, 1,077, or eleven per cent of those enrolled in normal classes, tends to support the training lag noted by Randolph. A hidden figure of those in training is reflected in the number of conventions and teachers' meetings held during 1901 and the number of primary unions in existence in that year. Actual figures of attendance for these gatherings are not reported. If one could hypothesize that each convention was attended by an average of fifty persons, each primary union by twenty members and each teachers' meeting by ten persons, the total of 921,390 teachers who received some sort of training, inspiration and stimulation may be closer to the actual figure. At best, however, sessions other than normal classes would be informal and of a shorter duration.

At the 1881 Convention a resolution was passed seeking greater

---

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

cooperation on the part of the theological seminaries in the training for Sunday school work. The resolution stated:

That in the opinion of the Convention additional provision should be made in theological seminaries calculated to prepare students for more efficient Sunday school work, and that this provision should be not merely in the nature of a supplementary course of lessons, but in as prominent position as Church history and other subjects.<sup>91</sup>

The issue of cooperative efforts in training by theological seminaries appeared again at the 1884 Convention in a similar resolution. Arlo Brown in his History of Religious Education stated, "Dr. Vincent expected the Christian colleges at once to establish chairs for the training of teachers of religion, but the chairs were not established to any great extent for many years."<sup>92</sup>

Marion Lawrance, General Secretary of the International Sunday School Convention of 1902, recognized the growing interest in theological seminaries and the relationship between the need for ministers who could train teachers and the Sunday school as a source of prospective church members. He stated:

We are glad to notice that our theological seminaries are beginning, in answer to a very general and wide-spread demand, to pay more attention to sacred pedagogy, normal classes and such lines of study as will more thoroughly fit the young men who go out as ministers in the arts of teacher-training and Sunday school management. The purpose is not that the ministers should in all cases do this work when they become pastors, but they should be familiar with what is needed, and see that it is done. In some of our seminaries regular lecture courses have been established on "The Sunday-school," and courses of study are being introduced which will greatly help in the line above indicated.

Able men and laymen had spoken at Lane, Croger, Montreal, Hartford

---

<sup>91</sup>Third International Sunday School Convention, p. 107.

<sup>92</sup>A. Brown, A History of Religious Education, p. 143.

and Xenia seminaries. Invitations from Auburn, Princeton, Chicago, McCormick, Southern Baptist.

When we remember that probably not one church in a hundred is making any systematic effort to supply Sunday-school with trained teachers, and only one church in thirty-three, according to our reports, has a teachers' meeting of any character, we see the need which the seminaries are coming to recognize. If it is true that in this country fully four-fifths of those who are added to our churches by conversion come through the Sunday-school, it is certainly proper that the Sunday-school should receive more attention in our theological seminaries than it has in the past.<sup>93</sup>

In an effort to coordinate its educational efforts, the International Sunday School Association organized a Department of Education in 1903 with W. C. Pearce as Teacher-Training Secretary. Cope cites the following steps of progress which occurred in the seven years following the establishment of a permanent department in the Association.

1. The general stimulation of the organization of classes.
2. The standardization of the work and the requirements for elementary diplomas.
3. Holding several conferences of experts and leaders at which the needs of teachers have been studied.
4. The extension of training to the ministry through the theological seminaries.
5. The better understanding of requirements of interdenominational work.
6. Training courses provided in the curricula of certain colleges.<sup>94</sup>

At a conference early in 1908, first steps toward standardization of teacher training courses were taken when denominational representatives, Sunday school secretaries and other educational leaders adopted

---

<sup>93</sup>Tenth International Sunday School Convention, p. 59.

<sup>94</sup>Cope, The Evolution of the Sunday-School, pp. 162-63.

the following resolutions. These were later presented to the 1908 Convention held in Louisville.

It is the sense of this conference in defining the minimum requirements for the Standardized Course for Teacher Training that such minimum should include: (a) Fifty (50) lesson periods, of which at least twenty (20) should be devoted to the study of the Bible, and at least seven (7) each to the study of the Pupil, the Teacher, and the Sunday-school. (b) That two years' time should be devoted to this course, and in no case should a diploma be granted for its completion in less than one year. (c) That there should be an advance course, including not less than one hundred (100) lesson periods, with a minimum of forty (40) lesson periods devoted to the study of the Bible, and of not less than ten (10) each to the study of the Pupil, the Teacher, the Sunday-school, Church History, Missions or kindred themes. (d) That three years' time should be devoted to this course, and in no case should a diploma be granted for its completion in less than two years.<sup>95</sup>

Prior to the standardization of teacher training by the International Sunday School Convention, literature available for teacher training could be classified into three distinct types: Sunday school organization and general practical helps for teachers, practical helps for teachers of young children, and brief manuals for teachers of normal classes.

The first type, Sunday school organization and general practical helps, was intended for use by the teacher or superintendent who was called upon to teach and yet who had little experience in teaching. The purpose of such books was to disseminate the ideas and methods of the various conventions and institutes. In the "Introduction" to The Model Sunday-School: A Handbook of Principles and Practices (1892), George M. Boynton stated:

---

<sup>95</sup>Organized Sunday School Work in America, 1905-1908, Triennial Survey of Sunday School Work including the Official Report of the Twelfth International Sunday School Convention, Louisville, Ky., June 18-23, 1908 (Chicago: The Executive Committee of the International Sunday School Association, 1908), p. 361.

The Sunday-school Conventions or Institutes cover this same ground, or parts of it, whenever they meet, but they meet only occasionally and can reach but a small fraction of those who need most the help they bring. This little book may aid in supplying the information and advice which come from gatherings of earnest Christian workers.<sup>96</sup>

Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts authored The Ideal Sunday School: or, The Sunday School As It Is and As It Should Be (1876) which included practical suggestions for the Sunday school along with appendices of samples of printed forms, flyers and records to be used in the Sunday school. Many books of this first type included chapters on overall Sunday school organization along with the how-to-teach material. The purpose of these books was to provide practical helps for teachers in all areas of Sunday school teaching. Examples of such books include: Teaching and Teachers or The Sunday-School Teacher's Teaching Work and The Other Work of the Sunday-school Teacher (1884) by H. Clay Trumbull; The What, Why and How of Sunday-School Work (1898) by J. H. Bryan; The Sunday-School Teacher (1907) by Howard M. Hamill, Superintendent of Training Work of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; The Modern Sunday School in Principle and Practice (1907) by Henry Frederick Cope, General Secretary of the Religious Education Association. These books were written primarily to Sunday school teachers who could benefit from them through a self-study plan.

The second type, books written for teachers of young children, likewise was intended to be read by the individual teacher for his own self-improvement. Sara J. Crafts wrote Open Letters to Primary Teachers (1876), a how-to book for primary teachers. Israel P. Black who served

---

<sup>96</sup>George M. Boynton, The Model Sunday-School: A Handbook of Principles and Practices (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1892), p. 1.

on the Executive Committee of the International Primary Teachers' Union authored Practical Primary Plans for Primary Teachers of the Sunday-school (1898). With growing interest in the kindergarten concept, some teachers attempted to apply Froebelian kindergarten methodology to the Sunday school. Frederica Beard wrote The Kindergarten Sunday-School (1895) in an attempt to clarify what elements of the methodology could be useful in Sunday school and to suggest "'a more excellent way,' based on laws of the child's being, and the spirit in which the kindergarten was conceived."<sup>97</sup> A. F. Schauffler's book, The Teacher, the Child and the Book (1901) contains a chapter by Mrs. H. E. Foster entitled "The Child in the Kindergarten" which applies the principle of self-expression to the Sunday school context.

The third type of book written during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was the brief manual to be used by teachers of normal classes. These books dealt with the Bible, the pupil, the teacher and the school in a condensed form consisting of outlines which required supplementary research on the part of the teacher. Questions at the end of each lesson were so structured that they required the memorization of much of the content of each lesson. Two books which were of this type but provided expanded outlines were Elements of Religious Pedagogy: A Course in Sunday School Teacher-Training (1909) by Fred Lewis Pattee and The Sunday School Teachers' Normal Classes (1895) by George W. Pease, an instructor in the School for Christian Workers at Springfield, Massachusetts. Pattee's book was approved as an Advanced Standard Course by

---

<sup>97</sup>Frederica Beard, The Kindergarten Sunday-School (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1899), p. 8.

the Committee on Education of the International Sunday School Association. Pease's book was based on lessons he had taught in various normal classes. The book contains expanded outlines on a variety of topics, such as "Child Nature," "The Laws of Teaching," "The Art of Questioning," "The Art of Illustrating," and "Blackboard Illustrations," and is intended for use by a normal class teacher. "Questions for Review" are included at the end of each chapter.

Jesse Lynn Hurlbut authored several teacher training manuals, including Revised Normal Lessons (1893), Outline Studies in the New Testament for Bible Teachers (1906), and Hurlbut's Teacher-Training Lessons for the Sunday School (1908). W. J. Semelroth wrote The Complete Normal Manual for Bible Students and Sunday School Workers (1893) which included a plan for covering the course in one year. Herbert Moninger's Fifty Lessons in Training for Service (1908) was intended for use in teacher training classes, young people's societies, mid-week prayer meetings and adult Bible classes.

The United Presbyterian Board of Publication produced A Normal Class Manual for Sabbath-School Workers (1881), "covering in brief the complete organization of the school, the specific duties of officers, teachers and scholars, and containing outlines for Normal Class instruction."<sup>98</sup> Rev. James A. Worden by direction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church prepared two volumes for normal class instruction, namely, The Westminster Normal Class Outline, Junior Course (1879), and The Westminster Normal Outlines: or, The Christian Teacher

---

<sup>98</sup> A Normal Class Manual for Sabbath-School Workers (Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1881), p. 3.

in the Sabbath-School, Middle Course (1881).

The simplification of teacher training material in the manuals cited above presented an eventual problem. According to Arlo Brown, the outline form had merit if it were accompanied by sufficient explanatory information to enable the student to use the material correctly. However, that seemed not to be the case. Rather, the outlines were simplified and put into a convenient form for memorizing. As with the earlier misuse of the catechism, the outlines became the total curriculum rather than suggestive guides.<sup>99</sup> The student, required to pass an examination based on the textbook, simply memorized the outline or the "Questions for Review" usually found at the end of each chapter. Brown suggests that "it was relatively easy for such a student to pass a creditable examination, but he was not prepared to teach because of such memorization."<sup>100</sup>

The desire for teacher training was strong enough for the issue of training to command special attention at the Conventions. While the Conventions, through the Lesson Committee could provide some specific and tangible assistance to teachers in the form of curriculum, they were limited in what they could provide in systematic teacher training. Formats for training, suggested lesson outlines and printed materials were available in abundance during the period from 1872 to 1903. Conventions, institutes and normal classes were held by the thousands across the country. Yet, as Brown states, ". . . we were compelled to note that this era of enthusiasm and great beginnings failed to measure

---

<sup>99</sup>A. Brown, A History of Religious Education, pp. 146-47.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

up to expectations."<sup>101</sup>

The final chapter will examine the successes of the Conventions in providing curriculum and in the training of teachers; it will also attempt to assess the factors which reflect the inability to achieve the expected results.

---

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

The problem of this dissertation, as stated in the Preface, was to identify and describe the role of the Sunday school conventions, from 1832 to 1903, as they interacted with the need for a trained laity who could teach in the Sunday schools, with consideration given to types of training, curriculum development, and educational views and methodology. The impact of such training on the Sunday school was to be analyzed. The task has been accomplished in this dissertation.

In order to place the Convention movement, which began in 1832, in proper perspective, Chapters I and II trace the origin and growth of the Sunday school in England and America.

Chapter I examines the social conditions in England which prompted Robert Raikes in 1780 to launch his experiment in training unruly boys and girls in morals and in teaching them to read. His plan, which predated universal, free education in England, used the Bible as a basic text and called for paid teachers. The British Sunday school was primarily a benevolent institution for poor children to teach them to read and continued as such well into the nineteenth century. Within a decade of its inception, the Sunday school began to take on a significant role in religious education, particularly among evangelicals.

By 1800 the movement was essentially voluntary with teachers offering their services free of charge. Raikes viewed the lower class child as one who could be taught to read and to function as a responsible citizen within his class stratum. The evangelicals placed a strong emphasis on conversion or "becoming pious." Reverence for God's house, personal good habits and moral truths were taught. The catechism supplemented the use of the Bible, along with manuals to assist in the teaching of the alphabet, numbers, spelling and moral and religious lessons.

Chapter II treats the emergence of the voluntary principle as churches severed their ties with the "mother" churches in Europe after the Revolutionary War. This principle allowed churches, without coercion from government, to act spontaneously in their efforts to preach the Gospel, attack vices and alleviate human suffering. The Sunday school movement was an expression of the voluntary principle as the need for instructing boys and girls in the ways of the new republic became evident. Sunday schools between the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, with the exception of the endeavors of the Methodists who were required to provide religious instruction, were primarily the products of individuals who attempted to meet needs of poor children who ran the streets or worked in mills and factories.

In 1790 the First Day or Sunday School Society was formed to provide for education and improvement of morals of children of the poor. Other such associations sprang up and served as educational alternatives until the common school movement took root. These associations represented an early interest in some central bureau of organization and information about Sunday school methods, progress and improvement. In

1817 a merger of a number of associations and Sunday schools resulted in The Sunday and Adult School Union which in 1824 became the American Sunday School Union.

We noted also in Chapter II that after 1812 two changes occurred: the practice of hiring teachers was generally discontinued and a gradual breaking down of class barriers within the Sunday school took place. The child was perceived as having a moral and religious nature which could be improved through education, instruction and culture. However, he was seen as a miniature adult who spoke and acted as an adult. Sunday school advocates were convinced of the religious capability of the child and evangelicals viewed him as capable of conversion.

Teacher training was hit-or-miss during this period with an emphasis placed on gatherings of teachers for prayer. The catechism was widely used and some adaptations were made in an attempt to grade the material. The simple "selected lesson system" of Parmele and limited supplemental materials represented the curricular improvements of the day.

Chapter III notes the rising concern for education in the midst of growing industrialization and urbanization. The emergence of the common school to meet the intellectual and social needs of children coincided with the change in the character of the Sunday school from that of teaching rudiments of learning to imparting religious and moral instruction. The infant school was introduced into the Sunday school in the 1820s as individuals and churches saw the benefits of teaching young children. With the establishment of the American Sunday School Union, the Sunday school movement surged ahead. The Mississippi Valley

Enterprise in 1830 spearheaded the establishment of thousands of new Sunday schools. The Union further provided a central agency for dispensing information about teaching methods and materials. Sunday school societies sprang up for the purpose of mutual improvement of teachers.

We also noted in Chapter III that the Sunday school leaders in the early 1800s were familiar with the educational methodologies being developed abroad. By 1831 they had examined and selected elements from the monitorial system of Bell and Lancaster, Pestalozzianism, Gall's Lesson System of Teaching, Jacotot's Method of Universal Education, Owen's infant schools and early aspects of Froebel's Theory of Spontaneity. In the area of curriculum the American Sunday School Union published the Uniform Limited Lessons. Two systems of helps were developed by Rev. Albert Judson and Henry Fisk to guide teachers in using the lessons. During the period from 1824 to 1832, the first state conventions for Sunday school teachers were held for the purpose of sharing ideas for mutual improvement. Interest at the state level generated a desire for national convention.

Chapter IV traces the development of the Convention movement which began with the first one called by the American Sunday School Union in 1832 to discuss topics of concern to Sunday school teachers and to assign themes for further reporting. At a second Convention, in 1833, reports on these themes were presented with no further conventions designated. A third convention was called in 1859 when the need for mutual assistance again became apparent. In the meantime, state conventions organized their states at the local and county levels, generating enthusiasm for the Sunday school cause. Out of the state conventions grew

the concept of the Sunday school institute, an idea borrowed from the public school teachers' institutes. The Sunday school institutes, however, lacked a systematic approach to teacher training and were, in a real sense, experimenting with the various forms of training. Ten years elapsed, primarily due to the complications of the Civil War, between the Third and Fourth Conventions. While the 1859 Convention was largely inspirational, the Convention of 1869 espoused a twofold purpose of inspiration and instruction. The major subject of the Fourth Convention was the promotion of teacher training through institutes and normal classes. Teacher training during the 1832-1872 period assumed a more definite form in the institutes, normal classes and convention discussions. John Heyl Vincent, who inaugurated the teacher training institute movement in the 1850s, produced numerous training publications. The works of various writers in the field tended to overlook the successive steps in the development of the young mind although some materials were being written for teachers of infant classes. This period is also identified as the "Babel Series" era or the era of independent lesson plans when the various denominations produced their own schemes of lessons to meet the needs of their particular constituencies.

In Chapter V we traced the Convention movement as it met triennially after 1869 and became the democratic expression of the lay worker as well as the means of diffusing methodology, curricular ideas and teacher training forms. The 1872 Convention marked a major step in curriculum development with the inauguration of the International Uniform Lesson system which reigned for forty years. A wave of teacher training plans and efforts accompanied the launching of the Uniform

Lessons which saw the development of lesson helps to guide teachers in the use of the lessons. The Convention movement allowed for the emergence of key leaders in the Sunday school movement--men who were involved in teaching, superintending, training and publishing. These men not only helped steer the direction of the Conventions but produced curriculum materials, training manuals and teacher helps.

The inadequacies of the Uniform Lessons gave rise to a movement for graded lessons for children. Primary teachers' unions championed the cause and in 1895 the Lesson Committee of the International Sunday School Convention permitted the issuance of a supplemental primary course. This was followed by a beginner's course in 1902 and a graded series in 1908.

It was further noted in Chapter V that during 1872-1903 teacher training developed into several major forms: weekly teachers' meetings, normal classes, preparatory normal classes, seminary courses, and institutes. The conventions and institutes continued to serve as central "clearing houses" for training and curriculum. Ideas presented at these gatherings were disseminated to the larger Sunday school teaching force through books, manuals, journals and periodicals. Books written for teachers fell into three classifications: Sunday school organization and general practical helps for teachers, practical helps for teachers of young children and brief manuals for teachers of normal classes.

#### An Historical Update

Rapid changes took place in the twenty-year period from 1903 to 1924 which affected the organization of the International Convention. First, the non-competitive, lay leadership of the Sunday school

conventions was diffused through the proliferation of state and county associations. The large percentage of Sunday school workers "now received their common leadership from the conventions and institutes of the state and provincial and the county Sunday school associations."<sup>1</sup>

Maintenance of strong state associations called for part-time or full-time field workers and/or state secretaries who could plan and promote state institutes and conventions, gather statistics and promote Sunday schools. In a real sense, decentralization occurred, shifting leadership from the national level to the state level. However, at the same time a movement began to strengthen and stabilize the national conventions.

Consolidation at the national level began in 1896 (Boston Convention) with the reorganization of the International Primary Union as a department of the Convention, changing its name to the International Primary Department in 1899 (Atlanta Convention). In 1899 a paid General Secretary was named and the field workers were organized into the Field Worker's Department of the International Convention but retained their freedom to serve the cause of the Sunday school in their various states. At the 1902 Convention in Denver a resolution was introduced to change the name of the Convention to the International Sunday School Association and to place the Convention under a more permanent organization. The name change became official at the Toronto Convention in 1905 and on January 31, 1907, the Association was incorporated by act of Congress.<sup>2</sup>

With the charter the democratic element of the Convention ended.

---

<sup>1</sup>Fergusson, Historic Chapters in Christian Education, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Tenth International Sunday School Convention, p. 23.

Since a convention or other indefinite constituency cannot be incorporated, the charter decreed sixteen men by name "and their associates and successors are created a body corporate in the District of Columbia under the name of The International Sunday-School Association."<sup>3</sup> No mention was made in the charter of a convention. The control had shifted from a large representative body to a relatively small board of managers.

A second change was the establishment of two competing organizations which threatened the headship of the International Convention. The Religious Education Association, launched in 1903, represented professional educators and outstanding churchmen who were determined "to secure for religious education the very best methods and teachers and to make it fully as efficient as any type of education."<sup>4</sup> Eavey states that while the Religious Education Association created new interest in religious education,

. . . the Association's service to the cause of true Christian education was harmful instead of helpful, because its members were for the most part men of extremely liberal tendencies whose contributions were not in accord with the faith of those who accepted the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God.<sup>5</sup>

The second organization, the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations, comprised of fifty-nine delegates from nineteen denominations, met in 1910 to prepare standard courses of study for teachers. Although each denomination would prepare its own lessons, the Council supervised the selection of the lessons for study and correlated the the studies to avoid overlapping. The Council, according to Fergusson,

---

<sup>3</sup>Twelfth International Sunday School Convention, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Cope, The Modern Sunday School, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup>Eavey, History of Christian Education, p. 261.

became the "determined rival" of the International Sunday School Association, making it clear that it planned to take the helm of leadership in matters of teacher training and standard-setting.<sup>6</sup> It was with this organization that the International Sunday School Association eventually had to come to terms.

According to Fergusson and Benson, although the two rival organizations maintained friendly relations, they espoused similar purposes and were, in reality, a house divided against itself.<sup>7</sup> In 1918 first steps were taken to merge the two organizations, with the actual merger taking place in 1922. The merged body was called the International Sunday School Council of Religious Education, which title was shortened in 1924 to the International Council of Religious Education. In 1950 the International Council became the Commission of General Education of the National Council of Churches.

Although there were evangelicals in the National Council, the evangelical position was not the official view of the organization. The evangelicals regrouped in the 1940s and organized the National Sunday School Association in 1945, holding a national Sunday school convention in Chicago in 1946.

### Conclusions

#### Conclusions on the nature and characteristics of the Conventions

1. The purpose of the Conventions emerged as both inspirational and instructional. Inspiration took the form of oratory, slogans, music, parades, banners and other forms of "boosterism." Instruction eventually

---

<sup>6</sup>Fergusson, Historic Chapters in Christian Education, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. and Benson, A Popular History of Christian Education, p. 328.

resulted in the division of the delegates into sections or areas of interest where reports, addresses, question and answer sessions, and discussions took place.

2. The Conventions served as a platform for airing new ideas as well as an arena for exploring and expanding methods and ideas already being implemented. Dissemination of ideas took place through other agencies and channels such as a supportive press and the delegates who returned home to train fellow workers. The triennial concept of the Convention made implementation of ideas difficult. Therefore, the Convention was dependent on publishers, denominations, key leaders and the lay delegates themselves to disseminate information.

3. The Conventions were democratic, lay-oriented and lay-led until 1899 when a paid General Secretary was named. This appointment was followed by a succession of other paid workers who assumed the responsibilities of the former volunteer Executive Committee which met annually in the three years between conventions. While the employment of executive officers allowed for greater continuity and vigorous growth during the next ten years, it eventually resulted in the loss of the democratic aspect of the convention.

4. The incorporation of the International Sunday School Association in 1907 further resulted in the loss of representative control in that the Association was no longer controlled by a convention but by an incorporated board of managers.

#### Conclusions on teacher training

1. The need for teacher training was evident from the beginning of Sunday school work in America although considered to be haphazard up

to 1860. Teacher training began as a "grass roots" expression of the teachers who wanted to do a more effective job of teaching. Because of the spiritual emphasis of the Sunday school, early gatherings of teachers focused on prayer for their pupils and their work.

2. Emphases in teacher training may be identified as follows: 1824-1850, personal qualities of the teacher and individual problems, such as visitation, discipline and recitations; 1850-1872, content to be taught, such as Bible content, sacred geography, biblical history, history of the Sunday school; 1872-1903, content plus teaching methodology, with a growing understanding of various age levels.

3. Teacher training after the 1860s took the form of institutes, normal classes and sectional meetings at the conventions. Men, such as John Heyl Vincent, travelled around the nation giving addresses on teacher training and training workers to teach normal classes.

4. The teacher training institute and normal class were patterned after the public school teachers' institute. There existed a strong desire on the part of the Sunday school leadership to emulate the public school teacher training concept and build into the Sunday school staff a similar quality of teaching and pursuit of educational enrichment.

5. Teacher training occurred at several levels: church or Sunday school, where teachers and superintendents trained together in weekly meetings and/or normal classes; union, where teachers from a number of Sunday schools received training; conventions, institutes and normal classes, where teachers trained over varying periods of time; seminary, where theological students studied Sunday school work in

order to assist teachers in their future pastorates.

7. Books and manuals were produced for teachers in these categories: Sunday school organization and general practical helps for teachers, practical helps for teachers of young children, and manuals for teachers of normal classes.

8. A graded concept of training for teaching at the children's level was evident early in the Sunday school movement, as seen in the infant class material of the 1820s, but culminated in the primary teachers' unions and their campaign for graded lessons in the 1890s.

9. Adequate training of teachers became the triennial problem of the Conventions in that both estimates and actual statistics indicated a growing gap between Sunday school enrollment and teachers who completed a program of training. A. Brown suggests some reasons for the failure of teacher training to keep up with the number of teachers:

a. Loss of consecutive leadership. In 1888 John Heyl Vincent, upon becoming a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, directed his energies in other areas. No one of his caliber and drive emerged to continue his work. Other lesser lights appeared but a sense of continuity was lacking.

b. Dissipation of attention. While the introduction of the Uniform Lessons was supported with a strong teacher training emphasis and with numerous lesson helps by the denominational publishers, the graded lessons did not receive the same support.<sup>8</sup>

10. While the Conventions could explore and promote teacher

---

<sup>8</sup>A. Brown, A History of Religious Education, p. 144.

training ideas, they did not have the power or means to impose any kind of standardization on a large, volunteer, lay Sunday school teaching force.

#### Conclusions on curriculum

1. The purpose of curriculum changed from a secular purpose of teaching reading to teaching doctrine--as seen in the use of the catechism--to teaching the Bible.

2. In order to achieve a measure of unity among Protestant denominational Sunday school efforts, the Uniform Lessons were inaugurated in 1872. These served to focus leadership and biblical scholarship in a great cooperative effort to promote the Sunday school for a period of forty years.

3. The Uniform Lessons failed to take into account the necessity of gradation at the younger age levels. Teachers who actually worked with children found the lessons difficult, if not impossible, to adapt. The graded lesson concept, arising from the local teacher level, finally found acceptance at the Convention level in 1895 with a series of supplemental lessons for the primary age.

#### Conclusions on methodology

1. Educational methodologies coming from Europe were examined and those elements sifted out which could be adapted by the Sunday school without violating its underlying principles. The Sunday school leaders consistently adapted educational ideas to fit their concept that, as a school, the Sunday school was responsive to educational trends, but it was more than a school. It was a means of imparting spiritual truth, evangelizing persons and training them in Christian living. When in the

1920s and 1930s the Sunday school was made to fit the educational theories, a loss of the underlying basis occurred.

2. The curriculum materials provided information on teaching methods and tools and resources for teachers. Such methods were demonstrated and taught at institutes and conventions. The conventions also displayed and sold teaching aids and resources.

#### Conclusions on the view of the child

1. In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century the child began to be viewed as one who could be morally and religiously responsive. He could be educated to function as a good citizen within his class stratum.

2. By the mid-nineteenth century the child was viewed as having a moral and religious nature which could be improved through education, instruction and culture. He was, however, perceived as a miniature adult. He was further thought to be capable of conversion.

3. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century there was a growing awareness by some of the unique period of childhood. It was held that children required lessons adapted to their understanding.

4. In 1904 the International Sunday School Association moved to a common usage of departmental ages and name: Beginner, 4, 5; Primary, 6-8; Junior 9-12; Intermediate, 13-16; Senior, 17-20; Adult 21, up. This decision helped to standardize curriculum materials as well as emphasize the age differentiation in childhood.

#### Limitations and Possible Further Research

The limitations of the study, as indicated in the Preface, not only determined the framework of the dissertation but also suggest areas for further research.

The first limitation was that the emphasis of the study was on the lay involvement of the Sunday school movement. While biographical studies are available for many of the key figures, very little information seems to be available for Benjamin F. Jacobs, the guiding light for the Uniform Lesson System. This writer was unable to locate any collections of materials on B. F. Jacobs. Perhaps none is extant but it would be interesting and informative to trace his life and concern for the Sunday school. It may be that any major collections were lost in the Chicago fire in 1871 when B. F. Jacobs personally suffered great loss.

The second limitation had to do with the termination date of 1903 for this particular study. At that time a break in lay domination of the Sunday school convention movement occurred along with a move toward professionalism and the intrusion of liberal theology. Further research is needed to trace the continuing efforts of evangelicals in the area of teacher preparation.

A third limitation focused on the Protestant emphasis of the Sunday school. An interesting study would examine the relationship of Protestant expectations and historical realities to the particular area of the Sunday school. Robert F. Handy examines the Protestant scene in a broad manner in his book A Christian America, Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities, but one can ask a further question: In what ways did the Sunday school movement and leadership reflect the Protestant ethic?

A fourth area for further examination, although not specifically designated as a limitation in the study, has to do with methodologies.

The Sunday school leaders, as early as 1840, examined various methodologies, such as Pestalozzianism, Lancastrianism, Owenism, and selected those elements which could be applied to the Sunday school. A more thorough examination and comparison could be made. The influence of the Froebelian kindergarten concept, which was introduced into and adapted by Sunday school teachers in the late nineteenth century, could be examined.

Finally, the convention movement of 1832 to 1903 as a means of communicating ideas could be compared with the types and impact of conventions and conferences of today. A discussion of the type of leadership, lay and/or professional, could provide insight into the contemporary view of the Sunday school.

In summary, the Convention movement began in 1832 at the first convention with the objective to bring together men in an interchange of ideas for the improvement and advancement of the Sunday school. The major topics considered at that time included many aspects of teacher preparation. Through the years the Convention leaders faithfully pursued their objectives of preparing teachers for their work. The task of training is a never-ending one when one deals with a voluntary, lay teaching force and the Conventions attempted to tackle the problem in varied and creative ways. This author has been amazed at the insight and vision of the Sunday school leaders in their pursuit of finding effective ways to prepare teachers to teach the Word of God to children, youth and adults. These leaders seemed to share the same urgency that the Apostle Paul had when he reminded Timothy of his responsibility, "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many

witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>II Tim. 2:2 (NASB). [NASB - New American Standard Bible.]

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published Reports and Proceedings<sup>1</sup>

The American Sunday School Union

The Twentieth Annual Report of the American Sunday-School Union. Philadelphia: The American Sunday-School Union, 1844.

The Twenty-third Annual Report of the American Sunday-School Union. Philadelphia: The American Sunday-School Union, 1847.

The National and International  
Sunday School Conventions

The Third National Sunday-School Convention of the United States, 1869. Philadelphia: J. C. Garrigues & Co., 1869.

The Fifth National Sunday-School Convention, Held at Indianapolis, April 16, 17, 18, 19, 1872. New York: Aug. O Van Lennep, 1872.

First International (Sixth National) Sunday School Convention, Held at Baltimore, Md., May 11, 12, 13, 1875. Newark, N. J.: The Executive Committee, 1875.

Second International (Seventh National) Sunday-School Convention of the United States and British American Provinces Held in the City of Atlanta, Ga., April 17, 18, 19, 1878. Washington, D. C.: The Executive Committee, 1878.

Third International (Eighth National) Sunday School Convention of the United States and British American Provinces, Held in the City of Toronto, Canada, June 22, 23 and 24, 1881. Toronto, Canada: The Executive Committee, 1881.

Fourth International (Ninth National) Sunday School Convention of the United States and British American Provinces, Held in the City of Louisville, Kentucky, June 11, 12 and 13, 1884. Chicago: The Executive Committee, 1884.

Fifth International (Tenth National) Sunday School Convention of the United States and British North American Provinces, Held in the City of Chicago, Illinois, June 1st, 2d & 3d, 1887. Chicago: The Executive Committee, 1887.

---

<sup>1</sup>The Reports and Proceedings have been listed chronologically for easy reference.

Sixth International (Eleventh National) Sunday School Convention of the United States and British North American Provinces Held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 24th, 25th, 26th & 27th, 1890.  
Chicago: The Executive Committee, 1890.

Seventh International (Twelfth National) and World's Second Sunday School Conventions, Held in Exposition Building, St. Louis, Missouri, August 30, 31, Sept. 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5, 1893. By J. Clayton Youker. Chicago: The Executive Committee, 1893.

Eighth International (Thirteenth National) Sunday School Convention Held in Tremont Temple, Boston, Massachusetts, June 23, 24, 25 and 26, 1896. Chicago: The Executive Committee, 1896.

Ninth International (Fourteenth National) Sunday-School Convention Held in Grand Opera House, Atlanta, Georgia, April 16th to 30th, 1899. Philadelphia: John D. Wattles & Co., 1899.

Official Report of the Tenth International Sunday-School Convention, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Denver, Colorado, Thursday to Monday, June 26 to 30, 1902. Toledo, Ohio: The Executive Committee, 1902.

The Development of the Sunday School, 1780-1905. The Official Report of the Eleventh International Sunday School Convention, Toronto, Canada, June 23-27, 1905. Boston: The Executive Committee of the International Sunday School Association, 1905.

• Organized Sunday School Work in America, 1905-1908. Triennial Survey of Sunday School Work Including the Official Report of the Twelfth International Sunday School Convention, Louisville, Ky., June 18-23, 1908. Chicago: The Executive Committee of the International Sunday School Association, 1908.

Smith, Herbert H., ed. Organized Sunday School Work in North America, 1918-1922. Official Report of the Sixteenth International Sunday School Convention, Kansas City, Missouri, June 21-27, 1922. Chicago: International Sunday School Council of Religious Education, 1922.

#### The World's Sunday School Conventions

The World's Sunday-School Convention Held in The Congregational Memorial Hall and City Temple, London. A Complete Record of Its Proceedings Day by Day, July 1 to 6, 1889. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1889.

The World's Third Sunday School Convention Held in London, July 11th to 16th, 1898. Chicago: The Executive Committee, 1898.

The Cruise of the Eight Hundred to and through Palestine. New York: The Christian Herald Press, 1905.

A pictorial and brief sketch of the World's Fourth Sunday School Convention held in Palestine.

Howard, Philip E., ed. Sunday-Schools the World Around. The Official Report of the World's Fifth Sunday School Convention in Rome, May 18-23, 1907. Philadelphia: The World's Sunday School Executive Committee, 1907.

#### The Religious Education Association

The Religious Education Association, Proceedings of the First Annual Convention, Chicago, February 10-12, 1903. Chicago: Executive Office of the Association, 1903.

#### Other

Albrook, J. B., ed. The Assembly of the North-west, Second Sunday-School Assembly of the North-west Held at Clear Lake, Iowa, August 21-Sept. 6, 1877. Chicago: Fairbanks & Co., 1877.

Ensign, F. G. Annual Report of the John Crerar Fund in the Northwestern District of the American Sunday School Union, First (1894) through Seventh (1900). Chicago: n.p., 1894, 1895; 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900.

Illinois Sunday School Union. Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Illinois Sunday School Union; Held at the State-House at Vandalia, December 8, 1830. Vandalia, Ill.: Robert Blackwell, 1831.

Proceedings of the Twenty-ninth Illinois State Sunday School Convention, Held in the Methodist and Baptist Churches, Decatur, Ill., Tues., Wed. & Thurs., May 10, 11, 12, 1887. By Harry F. Lee. Chicago: James Guilbert, Printer, 1887.

Proceedings of the Thirty-first Illinois State Sunday School Convention Held in The Tabernacle, Mattoon, Ill., Tues., Wed. & Thurs., May 14, 15, 16, 1889. By Florence A. Carrier and G. F. Randall. Edited by Prof. H. M. Hamill. Chicago: James Guilbert, Printer, 1889.

#### Books

Ahlstrom, Sydney E. A Religious History of the American People. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.

Alcott, William Andrus. The Sabbath School as It Should Be. New York: J. Leavitt, 1841.

- Alexander, James W. The American Sunday-school and Its Adjuncts. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1856.
- Archibald, George Hamilton. The Modern Sunday-School, Its Theory and Practice. New York: The Century Co., 1926.
- Athern, Walter S. The Church School. Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1914.
- Beard, Frederica. The Kindergarten Sunday School. Chicago: Kindergarten Literature Co., 1895.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Kindergarten Sunday-School. Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1899.
- Beers, V. Gilbert. "The Work and Influence of D. L. Moody in the Field of Christian Education." M.A. thesis, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Oak Brook, Ill., 1953.
- Benson, Clarence H. A Popular History of Christian Education. Chicago: Moody Press, 1943.
- Bethune, George Washington. Memoirs of Mrs. Joanna Bethune. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Relation of the Sunday-school System to Our Christian Patriotism: Annual Sermon. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1847.
- Betts, George Herbert. The Curriculum of Religious Education. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1924.
- Bird, N. L. (Mrs.). A History of the Sunday Schools in East Smithfield, Pa., Since 1822. New York: Advertiser Book Pr., 1902.
- Black, Arthur. The Golden Jubilee of the World's Sunday School Association. Glasgow: R. E. Robertson, Ltd., 1939.
- Black, Israel P. Practical Primary Plans for Primary Teachers of the Sunday-School. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1898.
- Boardman, Henry Augustus. The Union Principle; Un-Denominational, Not Anti-Denominational: or, "This AND That," Not "This OR That." n.p., n.d.
- Boynton, George M. The Model Sunday School, A Handbook or Principles and Practices. Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1892.
- Bready, J. Wesley. England: Before and After Wesley. London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1938.

- Brewer, Clifton Hartwell. Early Episcopal Sunday Schools (1814-1865). Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Co., 1933.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Later Episcopal Sunday Schools. New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1939.
- Brown, Arlo Ayers. A History of Religious Education in Recent Times. New York: Abingdon Press, 1923.
- Brown, Marianna C. Sunday School Movements in America. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1901.
- Bryan, J. H. The What, Why and How of Sunday-School Work. Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Co., 1898.
- Bullard, Asa. Fifty Years with the Sabbath Schools. Boston: Lockwood, Brooks and Company, 1876.
- Candler, Warren Akin. The History of Sunday-Schools: A Brief Historical Treatise, with Special Reference to the Sunday-Schools of America. New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1880.
- Carey, Charles S. The Class and the Desk; A Manual for Sunday School Teachers, Old Testament Series--Job to Malachi. London: James Sangster and Co., 1872.
- A Century of the First Day or Sunday-School Society, A Sketch of the Beginning of Sunday Schools in Philadelphia. Philadelphia: The First Day or Sunday-School Society, 1891.
- The Charter; Being a Plain Statement of Facts in Relation to an Application to the Legislature of Pennsylvania to Grant a Charter for the American Sunday School Union. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1828.
- Coles, Abraham. Religious Education in Its Relation to Public Schools and Sunday Schools. Newark, N. J.: Jennings Brothers, 1868.
- Colwell, Stephen. The Position of Christianity in the United States, in Its Relations with Our Political Institutions, and Specially with Reference to Religious Instruction in the Public Schools. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1854.
- Comegys, Benjamin Bartis. Beginning Life. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1879.
- Cope, Henry Frederick. The Evolution of the Sunday School. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Modern Sunday School in Principle and Practice. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1907.

- Crafts, Sara J. Open Letters to Primary Teachers. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1876.
- Crafts, Wilbur F. The Ideal Sunday School; or, The Sunday School As It Is and As It Should Be. Boston: Henry Hoyt, Publisher, 1876.
- Cubberley, Elwood P. The History of Education. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Public Education in the United States. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919.
- deBlois, Austen Kennedy and Gorham, Donald R. Christian Religious Education: Principles and Practice. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1939.
- Durell, Fletcher. A New Life in Education. 3d rev. ed. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1894.
- Eavey, C. B. History of Christian Education. Chicago: Moody Press, 1964.
- Edwards, Newton and Richey, Herman G. The School in the American Social Order. 2d ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963.
- Eggleston, Edward. The Hoosier School-Master. New York: Orange Judd Company, 1893.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Manual: A Practical Guide to the Sunday-School Work. Chicago: Adams, Blackmer, and Lyon, 1869.
- Elliott, John H. Suggestive Teaching Outlines for Workers' Training Classes. Chicago: W. W. Vanarsdale, 1889.
- Elliott-Binns, L. E. Religion in the Victorian Era. London: Letterworth Press, 1936.
- Fant, David J. and French, Addie Marie. All About the Sunday School. New York: Christian Publications, Inc., 1947.
- Fergusson, E. Morris. Historic Chapters in Christian Education in America. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1935.
- Gall, James. An Abridged Key to the First Initiatory Catechism, as Revised and Improved: For Assisting Young Teachers and Monitors to Instruct Children. Edinburgh: James Gall, 1834.
- Gilbert, Simeon. The Lesson System: The Story of Its Origin and Inauguration. New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1879.
- Gill, Mary Harvey. The Second Year in the Infant School: Hours with the Youngest, No. 2. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph Co., 1866.

- Good, Harry G. and Teller, James D. A History of Western Education. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969.
- Gregory, Alfred. Robert Raikes: Journalist and Philanthropist. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., n.d.
- Gundry, Stanley R. Love Them In, The Proclamation Theology of D. L. Moody. Chicago: Moody Press, 1976.
- Gutek, Gerald Lee. An Historical Introduction to American Education. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970.
- Half a Century of Growth and Service: The Story of the International Sunday School Association. Chicago: International Sunday School Association, 1916.
- Hamill, Howard M. The Sunday School Teacher. Nashville, Tenn.: Publishing House Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1907.
- Handy, Robert T. A Christian America, Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Harris, J. Henry. Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., n.d.
- Haslett, Samuel B. The Pedagogical Bible School. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1903.
- History, Legislation, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, of the Chautauqua Assembly. Syracuse, N. Y.: Courier Printing Co., 1889.
- House, Erwin. The Sunday School Hand-book: A Companion for Pastors, Superintendents, Teachers, Senior Scholars and Parents. Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1868.
- Hurlbut, Jesse Lyman. Hurlbut's Teacher-Training Lessons for the Sunday School. New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1908.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Organizing and Building Up the Sunday School. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1910.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Outline Studies in the New Testament for Bible Teachers. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1906.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Revised Normal Lessons. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1893.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Story of Chautauqua. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921.
- Hurlbut, Jesse Lyman and Doherty, Robert Remington. Illustrative Notes on the International Series for 1894. Boston: A. I. Bradley & Co., 1893.

- Johnson, Allen and Malone, Dumas, eds. Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 7. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.
- Johnson, Jane. Primary Lessons for First-day Schools. Philadelphia: Friends' Book Association, 1875.
- Kennedy, William Bean. The Shaping of Protestant Education; An Interpretation of the Sunday School and the Development of Protestant Educational Strategy in the United States, 1789-1860. New York: Association Press, 1966.
- Kunitz, Stanley and Haycraft, Howard, eds. American Authors, 1600-1900. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1938.
- Lamoreaux, Antoinette Abernethy. The Unfolding Life; A Study of Development, with Reference to Religious Training. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1907.
- Lankard, Frank Glenn. A History of the American Sunday School Curriculum. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1927.
- Lawrance, Harold G. Marion Lawrance: A Memorial Biography. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1935.
- Lawrance, Marion. How to Conduct a Sunday School; or Thirty-one Years a Superintendent. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1915.
- Lotz, Philip Henry and Crawford, eds. Studies in Religious Education. Nashville, Tenn.: Cokesbury Press, 1931.
- Lynn, Robert W. and Wright, Elliott. The Big Little School, Sunday Child of American Protestantism. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971.
- Marsh, W. H. H. The Modern Sunday-School. Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1874.
- Mason, Harold Carlton. "The History of Christian Education." In An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education, pp. 25-36. Edited by J. Edward Hakes. Chicago: Moody Press, 1964.
- May, Henry F. Protestant Churches and Industrial America. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- McCullagh, Joseph H. The Sunday-School Man of the South: A Sketch of the Life and Labors of the Rev. John McCullagh. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1889.
- Meyer, Henry H. The Graded Sunday School in Principle and Practice. Nashville, Tenn.: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1910.

- Michael, Oscar S. The Sunday-School in the Development of the American Church. Milwaukee: The Young Churchman Company, 1904.
- Miller, Perry. The Life of the Mind in America. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965.
- Mills, Andrew H. "A Hundred Years of Sunday School History in Illinois, 1818-1918." In Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society. Publication No. 24. Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Journal Co., State Printers, 1919.
- Mogridge, George [Ephraim Holding, also Old Humphrey]. Ephraim Holding's Homely Hints Chiefly Addressed to Sunday School Teachers. New York: R. Carter, 1845.
- Moninger, Herbert. Fifty Lessons in Training for Service. Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1908.
- Moody, William R. The Life of Dwight L. Moody. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900.
- A Normal Class Manual for Sabbath-School Workers. Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1881.
- Ogden, Robert C. and Miller, J. R. Sunday-school Teaching; Two Addresses. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1894.
- Olmstead, Clifton E. History of Religion in the United States. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960.
- Orchard, Hugh A. Fifty Years of Chautauqua. Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1923.
- Packard, Frederick Adolphus. Popular Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Sunday-schools in the United States. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, n.d.
- Pardee, Richard G. The Sabbath-School Index. Philadelphia: J. C. Garrigues & Co., 1868.
- Pattee, Fred Lewis. Elements of Religious Pedagogy: A Course in Sunday School Teacher-training. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1909.
- Pease, George W. The Sunday School Teachers' Normal Course. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895.
- Peloubet, Francis N. The Front Line of the Sunday School Movement: The Line of the Vanguard of Sunday School Progress with a Glimpse of Ideals Beyond. Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1904.

- . The International Question Book, on the Uniform Series of Sabbath School Lessons, Adopted by the International Bible Lesson Committee, Part II, for Younger Scholars, 1876. Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1875.
- Potter, Robert E. The Stream of American Education. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1967.
- Power, John Carroll. The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools. New York: Sheldon & Company, 1863.
- Pray, Lewis G. The History of Sunday Schools, and of Religious Education, from the Earliest Times. Boston: Wm. Crosby & H. P. Nichols, 1847.
- Quick, Robert Herbert. "Jacotot, A Methodizer." In Essays on Educational Reformers. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1901.
- Rice, Edwin Wilbur. Important and Remarkable Epochs in the History of Sunday-Schools, n.p., n.d.
- . The Sunday-School Movement and the American Sunday-School Union, 1780-1917. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1917.
- Rice, Edwin Wilbur and McConaughy, James, eds. Handbook on the Origin and History of the International Uniform Sunday-School Lessons. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1922.
- Sampey, John Richard. The International Lesson System: The History of Its Origin and Development. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1911.
- Sampey, John R. and Price, Ira M. The Story of the Uniform Lessons. Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook Publishing Company, 1930.
- Schauffler, A. F. The Teacher, the Child and the Book; or, Practical Suggestions and Methods for Sunday-school Workers. Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1901.
- Schauffler, A. F.; Lamoreaux, Antoinette Abernethy; Brumbaugh, Martin G.; and Lawrance, Marion. Training the Teacher. Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times Company, 1908.
- Semelroth, W. J. The Complete Normal Manual for Bible Students and Sunday School Workers, 7th ed. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893.
- Sherwood, Iladel. Two Hundred Years of Sunday School. Nashville, Tenn.: Dynamic Manuscripts, 1975.

- Shotwell, Albert. The Sabbath School: Its Influence upon Our Children, Our Country and Our World. Louisville, Ky.: J. F. Brennan, 1854.
- Smith, Henry Nash, ed. Popular Culture and Industrialism, 1865-1890. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967.
- Smith, Timothy L. Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1957.
- Spicer, Carl Lloyd. "The Great Awakening of 1857 and 1858." Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1935.
- Stewart, Sonja Marie. "John Heyl Vincent: His Theory and Practice of Protestant Religious Education from 1855-1920." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1977.
- The Teacher's Assistant in the Use of the Fourth Volume of Union Questions. Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, n.d.
- Trumbull, Henry Clay. Children in the Temple; A Handbook for the Sunday-school Concert and a Guide for the Children's Preacher. Springfield, Mass.: W. J. Holland & Co., 1869.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Sunday-School, Its Origin, Mission, Methods, and Auxiliaries. The Lyman Beecher Lectures Before Yale Divinity School for 1888. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Teaching and Teachers or The Sunday-School Teacher's Teaching Work and the Other Work of the Sunday-School Teacher. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.
- Vincent, John Heyl. The Chautauqua Movement. Boston: Chautauqua Press, 1886.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Little Footprints in Bible Lands; or, Simple Lessons in Sacred History and Geography, for the Use of Palestine Classes and Sabbath Schools. New York: Carlton & Porter, 1861.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Modern Sunday-School. New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1887.
- Vincent, Leon Henry. John Heyl Vincent, A Biographical Sketch. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925.
- Wadsworth, Alfred P. "The First Manchester Sunday Schools." In John Rylands Library, Manchester, Bulletin (England), 1951.
- Watson, William Henry. The First Fifty Years of the Sunday School. London: Sunday School Union, 1872.

- Weigle, Luther A. The Pupil and the Teacher. New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911.
- Weir, James W. Report on the Objects and Modes of Sunday School Instruction. Philadelphia: n.p. (For Gratuitous Distribution), 1833.
- Wells, Donald Austin. "D. L. Moody and His Schools: An Historical Analysis of an Education Ministry." Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1972.
- Wilderspin, Samuel. Infant Education; or, Practical Remarks on the Importance of the Infant Poor, from the Age of Eighteen Months to Seven Years; Containing Hints for Developing the Moral and Intellectual Powers of Children of All Classes. London: W. Semphin and R. Marshall, 1829.
- Worden, James A. The Westminster Normal Class Outline, Junior Course. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1879.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Westminster Normal Outlines; or, The Christian Teacher in the Sabbath-School, Middle Course. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1881.
- Periodicals
- The American Sunday School Magazine, April 1825, p. 123.
- The American Sunday School Magazine, July 1825.
- The American Sunday School Magazine, March 1826, p. 78.
- The American Sunday School Magazine, August 1826, p. 238.
- The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (January 1824):40.
- The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (May 1824).
- The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (August 1824):298.
- "Articles of a Sunday School Instituted by the Pittsburgh Moral Society." The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (March 1824):146.
- "Bible Cause and Coloured Population." The American Sunday School Magazine, February 1828, pp. 60-61.
- B. S. M. "The Sabbath Schools Connected with the Destiny of Our Country." The American Sunday School Magazine, March 1826, pp. 65-69.

- "Children of the Rich." The American Sunday School Magazine, January 1825, p. 13.
- "Conduct of Teachers." The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (May 1824):176.
- "Emigration of Sunday School Teachers to Illinois." The Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, 16 February 1831, p. 3.
- "First Sabbath Schools in the United States." The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (January 1824):53-54.
- "First Sabbath Schools in the United States." The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (March 1824):142-47.
- "Ground Plan of a Sunday School Room." The American Sunday School Magazine, September 1824, pp. 81-84.
- "Infant Sunday-schools." The Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, 8 June 1831, p. 3.
- "Lesson System of Teaching the Scriptures." The American Sunday-School Teachers' Magazine, May 1830, pp. 136-45.
- "Method of Instruction." The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine and Journal of Education 1 (April 1824):149-50.
- "Methode Jacotot." The Sunday School Journal, 29 August 1832, p. 2.
- "North-Western Sunday-School Convention." The Sunday-School Journal, 16 December 1857, pp. 190-92.
- "Origin and Progress of Sunday-School Conventions." The Sunday School Times, 30 May 1896, p. 339.
- "Our Position." The Sunday-School Times, 5 March 1859, p. 1.
- "Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union." The American Sunday School Magazine, July 1824, pp. 7-10.
- "The Resolutions of the Convention." The Sunday-School Journal, 12 June 1833, p. 3.
- "Review." The Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 8 (1824):116-20.
- "Should the Children of the Rich Be Admitted into Sunday Schools?" The American Sunday School Magazine, December 1825, pp. 355-56.

- "Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children." The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (January 1824):50.
- "Statistics." The American Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, 23 May 1832, p. 2.
- "Statistics." The American Sunday School Magazine, June 1825, p. 1.
- "Sunday-School Statistics and Constitution of the American Sunday-School Union." The Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, 5 January 1831, p. 4.
- "Sunday-School Teachers' Convention." The Sunday School Journal, 10 October 1832, p. 3.
- "Sunday-School Teachers' Convention." The Sunday School Journal, 17 October 1832, p. 3.
- "Teachers' Association." The American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine, and Journal of Education 1 (January 1824):61.
- "Teachers Convention." The Sunday School Journal, and Advocate of Christian Education, 4 July 1832, p. 3.
- "Teachers Convention." The Sunday School Journal, 5 September 1832. p. 3.

APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A

EARLY SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND SOCIETIES IN AMERICA (UP TO FORMATION OF THE  
AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION IN 1824)\*

Date	Place	Purpose and/or Type of Instruction	Source
1669	Plymouth, Mass. (Pilgrim's Church, Rev. John Robinson)	Deacons assisted minister in teaching children during intermission on the Sabbath	M. Brown, <u>Sunday-School Movements in America</u> , p. 19; Power, <u>Rise and Prog- ress</u> , p. 22.
1674	Roxbury, Mass. (Congregational Church)	Catechism and scriptures, after morning services	M. Brown, pp. 19-20.
1737	Savannah, Ga. (John Wesley) doubtful		E. W. Rice, <u>Sunday-School Movement</u> , p. 442; Brewer, <u>Early Episcopal Sunday Schools</u> , p. 3.
1740	Bethlehem, Conn. (Rev. Joseph Bellamy)	Catechism and scriptures	M. Brown, p. 20; Rice, p. 442; Power, p. 22.
1740	Ephrata, Lancaster County, Pa. (Ludwig Haecker or Thacker or Steibker)	Secular and religious in- struction	M. Brown, p. 20; Rice, p. 443; Pray, p. 204.
1781	Washington, Conn. (summer--informal)	Bible and catechism instruction	M. Brown, p. 22.
1785	Accomac County, Va. (William Elliot)	Rudiments of reading; Bible as textbook	A. Brown, <u>A History of Religious Education in Recent Times</u> , p. 48.
1786	Hanover County, Va. (Bishop Francis Asbury, in home of Thomas Crenshaw)	Religious instruction for slaves	W. Brown, p. 21; Power, p. 247; A. Brown, p. 49; Trumbull, <u>Yale Lectures</u> , p. 123.

## APPENDIX A, continued

Date	Place	Purpose and/or Type of Instruction	Source
1787	Charleston, S.C. (George Daughaday)	School for African children	M. Brown, p. 21; Power, p. 247.
1791	Philadelphia, Pa. (First Day or Sunday-School Society)	Rudiments of learning and religious instruction for poor children; paid teachers	<u>A Century of the First Day or Sunday-School Society, 1891.</u>
1791	New York City (Incorporated 1796)	Secular instruction	M. Brown, p. 233.
1791	Boston, Mass.	Not known	Rice, p. 123.
1791	Pawtucket, R.I. (David Arnold and Samuel Slater) Also 1797--reorganized by Mr. Collier and Samuel Slater	Raikes plan; for benefit of the operatives in cotton manufactory; secular instruction	Fergusson, <u>Historic Chapters in Christian Education</u> , p. 16; M. Brown, p. 232; Trumbull, p. 123; Power, p. 255; A. Brown, p. 49; Pray, p. 207.
1792	Stockbridge, N. Y. (Sister of Rev. Samson Occum--an Indian woman)	Not known	M. Brown, p. 233; Power, p. 255.
1793	New York City (Kate Ferguson--a colored woman)	For poor children in neighbor- hood	M. Brown, p. 20; Trumbull, p. 123.
1794	Paterson, N. J. (cotton manufacturing company)	Gratuitous instruction for children employed in the factory	Benson, <u>History of Christian Education</u> , p. 133; M. Brown, p. 233; Trumbull, p. 123.

## APPENDIX A, continued

Date	Place	Purpose and/or Type of Instruction	Source
1800	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Not known	Trumbull, p. 123.
1803	New York City (Mrs. Isabella Graham Mr. and Mrs. Divie Bethune)	Religious and catechetical instruction	<u>American Sunday School Teachers'</u> <u>Magazine, and Journal of Educa-</u> <u>tion, March 1824; Trumbull, p.</u> <u>123; Pardee, Sabbath-School In-</u> <u>dex, p. 16.</u>
1803	Portsmouth, N. H.	Not known	Trumbull, p. 123.
1804	Baltimore, Md. (Broadway Baptist Church)	Not known	Benson, p. 133; Fergusson, p. 17; Pardee, p. 16; Trumbull, p. 123.
1804	Philadelphia, Pa. (Union Society)	Reading, writing, sewing and religious training for poor female girls	Rice, p. 51; Trumbull, p. 123.
1809	Pittsburgh, Pa. (Moral Society)	Moral and religious instruction	<u>American Sunday School Teachers'</u> <u>Magazine, January 1824;</u> Pray, p. 208.
1809	Beverly, Mass. (Misses Hannah Hill and Joanna Price)	Moral and religious instruction; gratuitous teaching	Power, p. 257; Pray, pp. 208, 214.
1811	Philadelphia, Pa. (Rev. Robert May)	Gratuitous instruction	Power, p. 258; Trumbull, p. 123; M. Brown, p. 28; Rice, pp. 52, 444; Pray, p. 209.
1812	Brunswick, Me.	Not known	Pray, p. 210.
1814	Wilmington, Del.	Not known	Pray, p. 210.

## APPENDIX A, continued

Date	Place	Purpose and/or Type of Instruction	Source
1815	Philadelphia, Pa. (First Baptist Church-- Mrs. Ann Rhees)	Not known	Power, p. 267.
1816	Hanover County, Va. (Ground Squirrel Baptist Church--Jesse Snead)	Rudiments of learning	Power, pp. 268-69.
1816	New York City (Female Union Society-- Mrs. Joanna Bethune)	Moral and religious instruction for girls	M. Brown, p. 29; Power p. 266; Pray, p. 212; Rice, p. 57.
1816	New York City (New York Union Society-- Mr. Divie Bethune)	Moral and religious instruction for boys	Pray, p. 212; Rice, p. 57.
1816	Boston, Mass. (Society for the Moral and Religious Instruction of the Poor)	Moral and religious instruction	M. Brown, p. 29; Pray, 213.
1816	Philadelphia, Pa. (St. Paul's Church)	Religious instruction	Power, p. 267,; Brewer, p.
1817	Philadelphia, Pa. (Sunday and Adult School Union)	Moral and religious instruction	M. Brown, p. 30; Benson, p. 137; Rice, p. 60.
1818	Portsmouth, N. H. (N. A. Haven)	Moral and religious instruction	Pray, pp. 214-18.

APPENDIX A, continued

Date	Place	Purpose and/or Type of Instruction	Source
1818	St. Louis, Mo. (Missionaries of Baptist Board of Foreign Missions)	Not known	Power, p. 270.
1823	Hancock, Mass. (Unitarian)	Religious instruction of the poor and destitute	Pray p. 219.

\*A proliferation of Sunday schools occurred after the War of 1812. Those listed above were mentioned in the sources consulted. At the time of the formation of the American Sunday School Union in 1824, 723 schools were connected with the Sunday and Adult School Union and gave assent to the name change, thereby merging with the new union.

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Doris A. Freese has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Steven I. Miller, Director  
Associate Professor, Foundations of Education, Loyola

Dr. Gerald L. Gutek  
Professor, Foundations of Education, Loyola

Dr. Rosemary V. Donatelli  
Associate Professor, Foundations of Education, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

April 19, 1979  
Date

Steven I. Miller  
Director's Signature