




TO THE

Clerical 


AND

LAY MEMBERS

OF THE

General Conference

—OF THE—



Methodist Episcopal Church, South,

SAINT LOUIS, MO., MAY, 1890,

—BY—

J. R. PEPPER,

CHAIRMAN

SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD MEMPHIS CONFERENCE.



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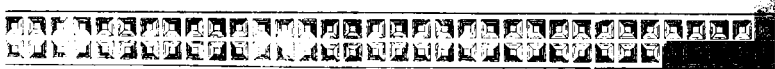


OUR MOTTO:

•All the Church in the Sunday School;
All the Sunday School in the Church;
And Everybody in both, and all at work."

OUR BELIEF:

"We must Save the Youth if we would
Save the Nation."





To all Members

—OF THE—

General Conference,


GREETING:

DEAR BRETHREN:

AT this happy season it is a fruitful source of gratification and thanksgiving to God to array before us the eloquent figures that have been wrought out during the past few years in the various departments of our beloved church. None speak more directly to the heart, none are bigger with promise for the future than those that tell the story of our triumphs in the work among the young.

Think of it! 12,589 Sunday Schools, 12,589 superintendents, 88,842 teachers, 694,533 scholars, making a total of 795,964, a gain of 378,106, or 94 per cent in the past thirteen years. What a splendid showing! As truly said by a late christian writer on this subject:







“Here the symbols of the arithmetic become animated and moving. They appeal to the imagination like the numerals of the Apocalypse. They suggest a “Children’s Crusade,”—not for the recovery of the Sepulcher, but for the vindication of the Cross. They are prophetic of the future of our church.

“The schools have made a rapid gain on the membership of the church. While the schools gained 94 per cent the church gained but 56 per cent. If the progress of each holds at this rate, it is obvious with which the preponderance of numbers will soon rest. Not long since the proportion of our Sunday School attendants to our communicants was our reproach; we rejoice in the hope that it will soon be our pride. Here the power to grow increases with growth. Here is the usurer’s thrift that adds the increment to the capital and compounds the interest. It is the stone of the prophet’s dream that gathered bulk with movement.

“At the rate of increase above stated our schools will embrace a million souls before the end of our next quadrennium. Surely we shall not fall below this, for here as elsewhere success stimulates en-





deavor. Effort to enlarge the church's gymnasium will not abate. We are confident of the million. Our hopes go beyond it."


Certainly the vast possibilities bound up in our Sunday School work deserves the most deliberate and careful thought of the General Conference.


To our publishing house agents and managers, our Sunday School editor and assistants, we make acknowledgment commensurate with the large service rendered. They have labored under many serious embarrassments during the past decade, and have accomplished a work worthy of our sincere thanks.

Now that the skies are bright with promise for all departments of our Zion, we should look well to the "bottom rock" of our foundation, and see that it is laid broad and deep.

There can be no valid reason now why our Sunday School department should not be equipped in all its practical workings *equal to any on the earth*. It can be done with very little if any more outlay from the income of the publishing house.

We first desire to call attention to what we deem our real needs, and then show





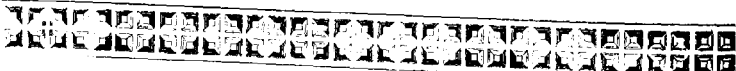
what we think an entirely feasible plan for meeting the same.

Our Needs.




1. In order to meet the necessities of the work we should have a thoroughly systematized plan for distributing vastly more Sunday School literature than we now have. We have probably an ample number of Lesson Helps, but they need enlargement and improvement, and we need many more little books, tracts and leaflets on methods of Sunday School work in detail, practices of successful workers all over the country, and many other matters in the line of helpfulness too numerous to mention here, but which every Sunday School worker, who has studied this subject seriously, will understand and appreciate.

2. We need a much more general distribution of our regular publishing house literature than goes out at present, in order to keep our workers fully alive to the issues of the times, and to give them the inspiration and enthusiasm always engendered by a thorough knowledge of our splendid history, doctrine and polity





(the equal of which we do not believe exists on the earth to-day). Who is not filled with holy fire when he once fully understands the excellencies of our ecclesiastical machinery, and he can but feel the impulse of prophecy upon him for its magnificent future with God's blessing upon it? "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," is the utterance of one who saw by the light of the Lord's candle long ago. It is true, and has many parallels to-day. Our candid opinion is that more Methodists become puny, sicken and die for lack of knowledge than any thing else. Hence, we need to scatter cheap, wholesome literature, methodically, continuously and abundantly as the leaves of the forest. Of course this is no new suggestion, simply following the primitive paths of Mr. Wesley and his early helpers. The wisdom of the ages demonstrate that some things cannot well be improved on. This idea of Mr. Wesley is one of them.

3. We need more direct connection with head-quarters. Of course, at present our editor cannot visit the field and personally come in contact with thousands who have read his comments for years, but have never seen his face in the flesh.




The benefit of a living representative is fully understood by the world, and is being utilized in many directions by the church. What would our Mission Board accomplish without a secretary in the field? Who would know half as much about our prosperous and hopeful field of Church Extension without the business-like appearance and statements of Dr. Morton, who constantly recounts success in other fields, and thus furnishes the best possible reason for more earnest and liberal support? Commercially it is next to impossible to know what the world wants or really needs *without going where the people live*. And one of the wise devices of this age is to create a demand by going, and then fill it with the needed production. Many a man has added to the comfort and pleasure of his home and family by some simple article to which his attention was directed. Otherwise he would probably never have known of it. Hence, the benefit of a living, breathing representative, who out of knowledge thus gained, will evolve many more plans for forwarding the work now impossible to even dream of. If acting on the principle that the richest yielding part of a business deserves the best attention,





then there can be no question as to our duty in the premises.

4. We need a weekly organ to push the work to its highest excellence. Scarcely anything now can prosper or make rapid progress without an organ. We must keep the field covered with information. There is nothing that more quickly strikes a responsive chord than the doings of eminent and useful workers in other places. How can we possibly know these things without an organ? Our *Advocates* are burdened all the time with more matter than they can print frequently for weeks, and it is not primarily the function of such a paper to furnish this kind of information. The Magazine comes only once a month, and has its own peculiar field with no room for practical hints to workers, and no place for toilers in this department to report their doings for the benefit of others. Suppose a brother in Texas has discovered an excellent plan for accomplishing some particular thing, and it would do great general good if disseminated, what will be effected by it if it never goes further than his neighborhood, and how will the brother in Georgia ever know of it if there is no organ through which to give the same to our



entire connection? The secular schools of the country have long ago laid tribute on this useful vehicle for advancing great educational movements, and they keep the workers in her fields fully abreast of the times through various well-conducted journals. And what a magnificent basis for patronage for such an organ with considerably over

100,000 Officers and Teachers,

outside of thousands of *other adults* who constantly need such a help as it would afford. As a business proposition, it certainly presents an excellent channel for reaching the extremities. A vigorous secretary with such a medium of communication, with such a host before him, would occupy a throne unequalled by anything in the line of ecclesiastical power for good. He could quicken every nerve and marshal every man and woman with vitalized step to the conquest of the world for Christ through the children of the church. Now, of course, all these things cost money, and will not be met by a theory or a vision.

The Plan Proposed.

1. Let there be such legislation as is necessary at the General Conference to set on foot "A Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South," and, if thought wise, couple with it a tract attachment, for the present at least.


2. Elect a first-class man as secretary, who will give his entire time to this part of the work. Be very sure he is the right man before electing him.

3. The statistics show 795,964 members in our Sunday Schools. Let there be an assessment made of three cents per capita annually, which would yield say \$24,000 in round numbers if all paid. Of course the preachers should be required to see that the amount is raised in the Sunday School, and either forwarded to the proper authorities or settle with the Sunday School Board at Conference, just as other funds are reported now. I am satisfied there would be far less trouble raising this fund than any of our connectional claims, especially after a year's trial, when its merits would be fully understood, and its benefits made manifest.

4. There could be a "Sunday School Union Day," or "Harvest Home Day," something similar to "Children's Day," say the third Sunday in October, about equally dividing the year between that and "Children's Day," on which occasion the various interests of the work might be reviewed from a different angle than any other during the year. This need not give our pastors any extra work, but rather an additional opportunity to reach the hearts of the young of their respective flocks.

5. It would undoubtedly give such an impetus to the work that the income from "Children's Day" would enable each Sunday School Board to place one man at least in the field to cover their respective Conference bounds, who would not only work constantly for the betterment of Sunday Schools, but would also become an excellent canvasser for our publishing house, and thereby greatly aid in making known our interests generally. Think of say *forty agents* for the publishing house pouring in orders daily. What a stream of business going to one channel, and returning with blessings to our people.


6. Of course the expense of all this work should be borne by the "Sunday




School Union," and its expansion would depend upon the income of that work just as the other Boards take care of their expenses. If an assistant Sunday School editor is needed, which doubtless will be the case, let the publishing house look to that and any other additions of force and improvements necessary.

7. When it is understood that only about *twenty-five per cent* of the adult members of the church are giving any active work to the Sunday School, and hence we have only about half as much Sunday School membership as we have in the church, an anomalous condition, we need no further argument in showing evidently a disease in the vitals, and the imperative need of heroic treatment in the way of thorough organization of "all for all." Our motto should be, "All the Church in the Sunday School, all the Sunday School in the Church, and everybody in both, and all at work."

8. When it is also understood that the little *twenty-five per cent* effort of the adult membership yields *eighty per cent* of the conversions and accessions to the church, we catch sight of a problem at which we may well stand amazed while filled with yohh joy. What institution on earth ever







furnished such an exhibit—25 per cent invested, 80 per cent dividend annually. Could there be a stronger appeal to our generosity? “We cannot offer a better compliment to a good thing than to try to improve it,” said a wise man. There was never a richer opportunity nor a more favored moment than we have now.

9. It is to the honor of our beloved Methodism that she furnished the first voluntary Sunday School teaching. When the devout followers of Mr. Wesley in Oldham saw the great outreach of the work as instituted by Mr. Raikes and his paid teachers, they said, “let us do it ourselves” as a voluntary offering of service to our dear Lord.

10. With such a precedent the work had stretched from pole to pole, so that if every Sunday School teacher to-day was paid one dollar per Sunday for their labor it would require *sixty-five million* annually to cover that expense of the work alone. What a matter for rejoicing, then, is the voluntary feature of the work, otherwise it would have been greatly impeded and, perhaps, blocked long ago.

11. Then, as Methodists, having set the key to an invaluable free-will service, we cannot afford to not foster the work, and





stretch every muscle of our organic life to enlarge its development and increase its efficiency. As to numbers, our goal should be at least *a member for every member of the church*. As a teaching agency in *material furnishing and methods, we should equal the best secular schools of our land*.

12. With such a standard before us, and with such possibility almost in our grasp, it would be a fitting crown to the work of the General Conference to give this most hopeful child of the church a heritage worthy of her name. And for this purpose I make appeal to our beloved bishops and all in authority to carefully consider these things.

We would suggest the following charter, constitution and by-laws for the Sunday School Union:







Proposed Charter.

The People of the State of _____ represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows :

SECTION 1. The Act entitled "An Act to incorporate the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, &c., &c.


SEC. 2. The several persons now composing the said Society, and all persons who may become associated with them, and their successors, are hereby constituted a body corporate and politic, by the name of the "Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South," and by that name they and their successors shall and may have perpetual succession, and shall, in law, be capable of suing and being sued in any court whatever, and may have and use a common seal, and the same may alter at pleasure; and such Corporation is and shall be capable of purchasing, holding and conveying such real and personal estate as the purposes of the said Corporation shall require, not exceeding in amount the sum of three hundred thousand dollars.






SEC. 3. The objects of the said corporation are charitable and religious; designed to advance the interests and promote the cause of Sabbath Schools in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the United States and elsewhere.


SEC. 4. The management and disposition of the affairs and property of the said Corporation shall be vested in a Board of Managers, composed of one member of each annual Conference, who shall be chairman of his Conference Sunday-School Board, appointed by the General Conference of said church at its quadrennial sessions, and of the bishops of said church, who shall be *ex-officio* members of said Board of Managers. Such managers as were appointed by said General Conference at its last session shall be entitled to act as such from and after the passage of this Act, until they or others appointed by the ensuing General Conference shall assume their duties. Any such Board of Managers may fill any vacancy happening therein until the term shall commence of the Managers appointed by an ensuing General Conference. Said Board of Managers shall have such power as may be necessary for the





management and disposition of the affairs and property of the said Corporation, in conformity with the Constitution of said Society, as it now exists, or as it may be from time to time amended by the General Conference, and to elect the officers of the Society, except as herein otherwise provided; and such Board of Managers shall be subordinate to any directions or regulations made, or to be made, by said General Conference.

SEC. 5. Thirteen members of the said Board of Managers, at any meeting thereof, shall be a sufficient number for the transaction of business. The Corresponding Secretary and the Treasurer of said Society shall be elected by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and shall hold their offices for four years, or until their successors are elected; and in case of a vacancy by resignation, death or otherwise, the Bishops of the said Methodist Episcopal Church, South, shall fill any vacancy in the office till the ensuing General Conference. And, until otherwise provided by the General Conference, said Board of Managers may appoint and remove at pleasure the Treasurer of said Corporation.



SEC. 6. The said Corporation shall be capable of taking, receiving or holding any real or personal estate, by virtue of any devise contained in any last will and testament of any person whomsoever; subject, however, to the limitation expressed in the second section of this Act as to the aggregate amount of such real estate; and the said Corporation shall be also competent to act as a trustee in respect to any devise or bequest pertaining to the objects of said Corporation, and devises and bequests of real or personal property may be made directly to said Corporation, or in trust, for any of the purposes comprehended in the general objects of said Society, and such trusts may continue for such time as may be necessary to accomplish the purposes for which they may be created.

SEC. 7. The said Corporation shall also possess the general powers specified in the Statutes of the— — — — State.

SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect immediately.

Constitution.

ARTICLE 1. The title of this association shall be The Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

ART. 2. The object of this society shall be to promote the cause of Sabbath Schools in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the United States and elsewhere.

ART. 3. This society is to interfere in no way whatever with the present Annual Conference Sunday School Boards, but said Boards hereby become auxiliary to the Sunday School Union, and will hereafter act in conjunction with it, making semi-annual reports, 1st of April and 1st of October, to said society as a matter of information for general distribution by The Sunday School Union.

ART. 4. The payment of ten dollars at one time to this society shall constitute an honorary member for life.

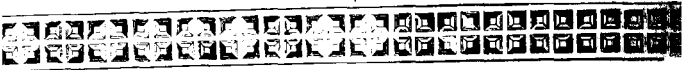
ART. 5. The further regular income of the society shall arise from an assessment of three cents per capita of the Sunday Schools, together with ten per cent from "Children's Day." The collection of said funds to be made on "Sunday School

Union Day," the third Sunday of each October, and "Children's Day," third Sunday of each May. The surplus, if any, above current expenses, is to be used in forwarding the Sunday School work in our connection in whatever way and in whatever direction deemed most wise by the Board of Managers.

ART. 6. The funds of the society shall be expended at the discretion of the Board of Managers, in defraying the current expenses of the Union, and in forwarding the object contemplated by the second article of the Constitution.

In all cases of application for aid, if relief be deemed necessary, it shall be granted in Sunday School publications of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, unless the circumstances seem to demand the appropriation of money. In case of more calls on the Board for aid than they can meet, they shall appropriate to the relief of the most necessitous cases first, without respect to location.


ART. 7. The senior bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, shall be President of the society. The remaining bishops shall be its Vice-Presidents, ranking in order of seniority. A Vice-President shall be appointed by each Annual



Conference, who shall be Chairman of the Conference Sunday School Board. There shall be appointed for this society by the General Conference a Treasurer, a Corresponding Secretary and an Editor of all Sunday School publications.

ART. 8. A public anniversary of the society shall be held each year at such time and place as the Board of Managers shall determine.

ART. 9. The Board of Managers shall have the power to form their own by-laws; to fill vacancies occurring in the intervals of General Conference; to remove the Treasurer from office for cause to them sufficient, but only after a fair investigation before a quorum of the Board with a bishop in the chair; to call special meetings of the society whenever they shall deem necessary; to prepare and circulate such Sunday School information, appeals or directions as they may think proper, and also to offer such advice and suggestions as they may deem suitable to the book agents and editors regarding Sunday School publications; to give orders on the book agents for such books as may be needed; and to transact such other business as of right belongs to





their station, and when the interests of the Union demands.

ART. 10. When any member of the Board shall have been absent from four consecutive regular meetings of the Board without sending an excuse, such absence shall be treated as a resignation, and the Board shall have authority to declare his place vacant, and to fill it as other vacancies are filled.

ART. 11. This constitution cannot be altered except by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.



By-Laws.

NO. 1. This Board shall hold its regular annual meeting on the _____ day of May at three o'clock p.m. Special meetings may be called at any time by any two of the officers, or by any four of the Managers.

No. 2. Thirteen members shall constitute a quorum at all meetings of the Board.

No. 3. At the regular meeting of the Board in May of each year, the following standing Committees shall be appointed :

First. An Executive Committee, which shall consist of the Corresponding Secretary, four ministers and four laymen. It shall be their duty to consider and act on all applications that may be made in the intervals of the meetings of the Board, and to report their action for the approval of the Board. The Committee shall have the power to make grants, at their discretion, on all ordinary applications, but shall refer to the Board important applications from foreign countries, except in urgent cases.

Second. A Committee on Publications, which shall consist of five members. They

shall be the medium through which the Board may offer advice and suggestions to the book agents or editors regarding Sunday School publications.


Third An Auditing Committee of three, who shall audit the reports of the Treasurer and all bills presented to the Board.

Fourth. An Anniversary Committee, consisting of five members, of whom the Corresponding Secretary shall be one. They shall make all necessary arrangements for the anniversaries of the Union, subject to the approval of the Board.

Fifth. A Committee of five on the Normal Department, whose duty it shall be to superintend the interests of this department, providing courses of study for Church Normal Classes, and in every possible way promoting the efficiency of our Sunday Schools in management and teaching.

Sixth. A Legacy Committee of three, to whom all questions relating to bequests may be referred.

No. 4. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Secretary to correspond with foreign and with domestic societies of a similar nature, with the several Annual Conferences and with individuals promi-




ment in the Sunday School cause ; to prepare the Annual report of the Union ; to file away letters received ; to keep copies of those sent which he may deem sufficiently important for preservation ; to hold and attend Conference or District Methodist Sunday School Conventions and Institutes, and to visit, as far as practicable, the several Annual Conferences.

No. 5. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Secretary to record the transactions of the Union and of the Board, to give notice of all meetings of the same, and to file and preserve all papers relating to the transactions of the Board.

No. 6. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all moneys collected for the Union, to make such payments as the Board may direct, and to preserve all financial reports and documents belonging to the Union, and perform such other duties as may be assigned him.

No. 7. Resolutions must be reduced to writing, if required by the Secretary or any member of the Board.

No. 8. All bills must be passed by the Board and signed by the Corresponding Secretary before they are paid.

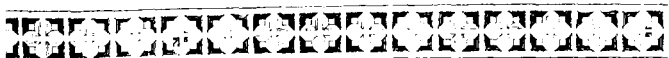




No. 9. The following shall be the order of business at each regular meeting of the Board:

1. Devotional Exercises.
2. Calling of roll.
3. Reading of the minutes of previous meeting.
4. Unfinished business of the previous meeting.
5. Report of Corresponding Secretary.
6. Report of Treasurer.
7. Reports of Standing Committees.
8. Reports of Special Committees.
9. Miscellaneous business.
10. Adjournment.

No. 10. These By-Laws may be suspended by a majority of members present at a regular meeting, or changed in the same way, provided notice of the change was given at the previous regular meeting.





SUMMARY

OF OUR REAL

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEEDS.



- 1st. A Sunday School Union in which to focus all our resources.
- 2d. An Organ in which to let our own people and the world generally know that we have resources.
- 3d. A field Secretary to vitally touch the work at all points, and give direction to our resources.
- 4th. A mighty advance movement, dating from this General Conference, that will sweep us way beyond the MILLION line during the next quadrennium.



