

SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

Minutes of annual Sunday school conference held in the Tabernacle Sunday evening, April 4th, 1897, at 7 p. m.

The general superintendency, members of the Union board, several Apostles, and a host of Stake and ward officers and Sunday school workers, besides thousands of interested parents were present.

The vast assembly was called to order by Asst. Gen'l Supt. George Goddard.

The choir, under the management of Prof. E. A. Stephens, sang:

Sweet is the work, my God, my King.

Prayer was offered by Elder Jos. M. Tanner.

Choir sang the "Night Song."

Elder John M. Whitaker called the roll of Stakes, which was responded to by thirty-five out of the thirty-seven Stakes; read the statistical and financial report for the year ending Dec. 31, 1896, which showed a total of 104,299 engaged in Sunday school work; and presented the general Sunday school authorities, who were unanimously sustained as follows:

George Q. Cannon, general superintendent; George Goddard, first assistant general superintendent; Karl G. Maeser, second assistant general superintendent.

John M. Whitaker, general secretary.

George Reynolds, general treasurer.

As members of the Desert Sunday School Union Board:

George Q. Cannon, George Goddard, Karl G. Maeser, George Reynolds, Thomas C. Griggs, Joseph W. Summerhays, Levi W. Richards, Francis M. Lyman, Heber J. Grant, John C. Cutler, Jos. M. Tanner, George Teasdale, Hugh J. Cannon.

Second Assistant General Superintendent Karl G. Maeser, called attention to the great labor of Sunday school work, and the growing need of facilities, to meet the developments of this important institution. The necessity of normal training classes is now recognized in many schools, and where the facilities are offered, and the need is apparent, it is essential that such a class be organized for the good of the school. But the organization of a normal class in any of the schools of Zion, should not be attempted until first obtaining permission from the Union Board, and from it receive the proper and necessary instructions.

In this connection also, Elder Maeser called attention to the establishment of infant, or kindergarten classes, and the great good accomplished by properly conducting such classes. They are intended for the small children, who meet in Sunday schools, and should be taught by object lessons, for this is what kindergarten work means.

In all instructions, Elder Maeser said there is one essential, viz.: "The point aimed at in any lesson. No teacher should go before the children without having a well defined objective point—something applicable to a principle of the Gospel or an ordinance of the same, the divinity of Joseph Smith's mission, or have an important bearing upon the work of God. This is what the Sunday schools

were established for, i. e., to make Latter-day Saints of the children."

General Superintendent George Q. Cannon stated that his attention had been called to the behavior of some children and the irreverence shown by others while the Sacrament was being administered in certain Sunday schools. In some cases, also, his attention had been called to the little notice taken by some on account of the frequency of its administration, and felt that it lessens the sacred lesson it was intended to convey. Supt. Cannon regretted to learn of such a lack of training in the recognition due to the holy ordinance of the Lord's supper. He had suggested, when his attention had been called to these things, that where any one shows an irreverence for the Sacrament or who treats it lightly, they be forbidden to partake of it, or suspend its administration in a school treating it so irreverently. The Lord had commanded that no one should be permitted to partake of this holy ordinance unworthily, and he felt that the servants of God should watch this important ordinance very closely, see that it is partaken of worthily and with due reverence, and care in teaching its value to all who partake of it irreverentially. He trusted the bishopric would pay special attention to the administration of the Sacrament in the Sunday schools.

Supt. Cannon called attention to the holding of Sunday schools on the day of the Stake conference in the ward where the conferences were held. He felt sure it would be a good thing on such occasions to have the Sunday school convene at 9 a.m. and keep in session say until 10-15 allowing as many of the Saints to remain at the morning session as have a desire, and where the room is large enough. The children can thus become acquainted with the Apostles or other brethren visiting among them. Where it is the custom to adjourn the primary before the other departments, it would be well to do so at such conferences, and allow them to return home, as also the other departments at a later hour, to give room for the Saints.

He had met on several occasions under these circumstances, and the result was gratifying. It is important to have the Sunday schools held regularly every Sunday morning, yet it is not the intention to interfere with the Saints convening in their quarterly conference, and by observing the above suggestions, the school may be held, and upon its adjournment let the morning session of the Stake conference convene and if desired, continue until say until 12:15 p. m. It would be an excellent thing also, where there are two or more schools in the place where the Conference convenes, to have them meet together on the morning of the Stake conference, go through a few exercises and then listen to instructions from the Twelve, or other visiting brethren. The children would become acquainted with the authorities of the Church and would take pleasure in listening to the instructions given in simple language by the visiting brethren, for simplicity, when speaking to the young, should always be aimed at. The Union board have

no cast iron rules, but labor continually for the best interest of the children of Zion, and suggest improvements from time to time, which, if followed out, would result in a higher standard of religious education among our youth.

Assistant Superintendent George Goddard was much gratified to see the growth of the Sunday school cause the last forty-eight years, and felt that the growth would be much more rapid in the future than in the past, and he expected the time to come when instead of the Sunday schools numbering over 100,000 would number over 1,000,000.

Elder Goddard called attention to the new issue of the ten cent Sunday school hymn books, and trusted that one would be found in the hands of all the Sunday school children; that they would take great care of the same, and felt sure that great good would result to the young by all learning to sing the songs of Zion. He desired that good use would be made of the little song book.

Elder John Robinson rendered in an excellent manner a solo, subject: "The Conversion of the Apostle Paul."

Elder Heber J. Grant said he always took pleasure in the great Sunday school cause, and always felt a debt of gratitude to his Sunday school instructors for the early training he received at their hands in the Thirteenth ward Sunday school. He felt sure that all Sunday school workers would be greatly blessed and honored by the youth they teach and spoke encouragingly to the officers and teachers.

The importance of leaving speculative and mysterious questions alone should be adhered to in the Sunday schools of Zion. There are a great many people always looking after something mysterious, and in some instances he felt as though the higher departments would do better by leaving these kind of questions severely alone. Some such classes, he thought, might be properly named, "classes for the asking of mysterious questions that none would be able to answer until they got into the next world."

The time of teachers could be much better employed in living and teaching the Word of Wisdom, keeping the commandments of God, and confining themselves to instructions and teachings of plain and simple meaning and which do not involve the mysterious. Therefore, let the questions involving dark and hidden meaning alone.

The question had been asked "What shall be done with the teachers who refuse to partake of the Sacrament?" He would recommend that all such to first put himself in harmony with the authorities of the Church, put away all things that stand in the way of his partaking it, abstain from taking an active part in the class until he can partake of it worthily and wants to partake of it in order to obtain the blessing promised. He closed by invoking the blessings of God upon all those engaged in Sunday school work.

Elder Joseph W. Summerhays announced that arrangements had now been perfected for the issuing by the Union board of a Bible chart, subject, "Incidents in the Ministry of the Apostle Paul"—and when most probably would be ready by June