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Sunday School Banner.

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Our Sunday-school Literature.

THE accompanying article from the *Sunday-school Magazine*, edited by the Rev. Dr. Kirkland, published by the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and one of the most valued of our exchanges, expresses so much good sense that we abridge it to suit our own periodicals. Notwithstanding the persistent efforts of the irresponsible, broad-guage Chicago publisher, who is willing in another sense than that of St. Paul to "become all things to all men," and who offers prizes to induce Methodist schools to forsake their own publishing house in his favour, our periodicals have had a record of remarkable prosperity. Notwithstanding the hard times and keen competition, *Onward* reports this year an increase of over two thousand, and has won golden opinions from our Sunday-school patrons. Only yesterday a minister writes that for senior schools it is "peerless." The following is Dr. Kirkland's article:

"To our way of thinking there is but one question involved in all this matter: What literature is best for our *own* schools and children? The care of the mind and soul of our children is as much more important than the care of the body as the value of the one exceeds the value of the other.

"Our Sunday-school literature is intended for our own schools; hence it interprets the Gospel as we Methodists understand it. The literature of the Chicago concern is for anybody and everybody—Methodists, Baptists,

Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans and all the rest—and hence in matter of doctrine it teaches *nothing*. It is like soup in which no rich, marrowy bone has been boiled, no seasoning added; a thin, unpalatable, unsavory mess of—slops.

"We are quite willing, however, to have our Sunday-school periodical literature compared with that of any other Church or publishing house in this Continent. Our literature has been improving with every issue, and it will continue to improve month by month until our resources and the resources of the Church are exhausted.

"Suppose two Sunday-schools should be started in your neighborhood—the one conducted by loyal Methodists, tried and true, and the other by these Chicago teachers—to which of these would you send your children? Would you let the Chicago concern bribe you with a few cents—not dollars—to leave your own Church, your own Sunday-school, and your own ministers and teachers?

"What constitutes a Sunday-school, a Methodist Sunday-school? Not that it is held in a Methodist church, that its officers and teachers are Methodists, that its pupils are of Methodist families. All of these conditions may be met, and yet the school may lack a great deal of being a *Methodist* school. A Methodist Sunday-school is one in which Methodist doctrines are taught; and if Methodist literature is not used, there will be precious little of distinctive Methodist teaching in ninety-nine out of a hundred of our schools.

"We are not at all in sympathy with this hue-and-cry for 'cheap and shoddy' literature, Sunday-school or otherwise. Our literature is worth all it costs and more. No wonder there are so many half-starved minds and souls when they have been fed on the 'cheap' papers and 'cheap' books, cheap in every sense, that nowadays abound. It is bad enough to starve one's own soul on such stuff; it is next to murder to force such unwholesome mental and spiritual food on our children.

"One brother objects to our literature because it is published at a small profit. Would he have the publishing house to sell it for less than cost? Who then would foot the bill, and save the house from bankruptcy? Does he suppose that the Chicago concern is publishing its literature at less than cost? Would he prefer to see the profit—for there must be a safe margin of profit in every successful business enterprise—would he prefer to see the profit go into the treasury of the Chicago concern rather than into the treasury of his own Church? How much does this brother contribute annually for Sunday-school literature anyhow? We have some opinions on the subject, but we would like to *know*.

"Finally, if we were pastor of a charge, we would no more allow any other than our own literature to enter our Sunday-schools than we would permit the 'Baptist Bible,' Presbyterian Hymnal, and the Episcopal Prayer-Book to be