

a small core of loyal workers were used by God to establish a work that was to have great and continuing impact upon the world for over 200 years. It is for these reasons that Robert Raikes is recognized as the Father of the Sunday School movement, and that Christians celebrate 1980 as the 200th birthday of the Sunday School.

### Sunday School Work Papers

One of the earliest independent publishers of Sunday School curriculum materials was David C. Cook. Cook's father was in the printing business, so David had an understanding of the technical aspects of printing. But instead of joining his father in business, Cook founded a company of his own to distribute sewing machine accessories.

Although Cook developed quite a successful business headquartered in downtown Chicago, he soon found his attention drawn away from his sewing machine accessory business, and toward his real love, Sunday School ministry. While teaching Sunday School as a layman, Cook recognized the need for high quality, attractive curriculum materials. While some biblical materials were available, most were drab and uninviting.

Finally, Cook felt so compelled to focus his energies on Sunday School that he sold his small business to his partner, George Bent, so that he could produce and publish curriculum materials full time. The same energy that originally he had devoted to the sewing machine business was redirected to printing and publishing.

The first material published by the David C. Cook Publishing Company in 1875 was our Sunday School Quarterly, followed by a Sunday School paper, "Our Sunday School Gem". The materials were fresh and bright, and received immediate

acceptance. Soon, Cook produced other materials needed for instructing and promoting Sunday Schools.

An innovative feature of the Cook curriculum materials was the graded aspect. One passage of Scripture was chosen for study each Sunday. But rather than have all age-levels study the biblical passage in the same way, it was handled differently for each age group. This meant that the basic emphasis for all classes was similar, but the outline, methods and illustrations were graded to the specific age-group being taught.

As the Cook Publishing Company grew and expanded, other products were added. Yet, Sunday School curriculum materials and literature were always the main emphasis. Sunday School curriculum in the tradition of the founder continues to be the emphasis of the David C. Cook Publishing Company.

