**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 3; CHAPTER 15. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL'S TRUE EVANGELISM**

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There are more than thirty million persons reported in the enrollment of the Sunday Schools of the world. But if all these persons, and all church members as well, knew what the Sunday School is really for, the enrollment would leap upward millions upon millions.

The Sunday School is often spoken of as the child of the church, or the church of tomorrow, or a branch or department of the church. It is more than any and all of these.

The true Sunday School is the Church of Jesus Christ engaged in systematic study and teaching of the Word of God for three great purposes: to bring into the body of Christ those within the membership of the Sunday School who are not yet members of the church or of Christ; to train up those who are in Christ into a full-grown knowledge and appropriation of the riches which are theirs because they are Christ's; and to send out into the world fully equipped, victorious soul-winners who shall be Christ's living epistles to those who do not yet know Him.

The whole superb work of the Sunday School centers about its text-book, the Word of God. Bible study in the Sunday School is made the means of the three-fold purpose of the Sunday School. The Sunday School is the great organized movement of the Church of God for Bible study which has for its end salvation, character building, and equipment for evangelism. Or to describe the work of the Sunday School partly in theological terms, the purpose of the Sunday School is Bible study for justification, sanctification and service.

Whoever needs to know what the Bible has to say about next-world freedom from the penalty of our sins, and this world freedom from the power of our sin, together with the supernatural power of God as the equipment of the full grown man for service, may properly be in the Sunday School. Only those who do not need the fullest possible message of the Bible on these subjects can logically stay outside the Sunday School.

And that means that few can logically or safely stay outside the Sunday School. The true Sunday School is the whole Church of God engaged in systematic Bible study to ascertain the whole will of God as revealed in His Word for their lives. With the cradle roll at one end of the age limit for non-attending members and the home department at the other end for non-attending members, there is little reason today for anyone to remain outside the membership of the Sunday School. It is not necessary to attend the Sunday services of the Sunday School in order to be a member in full and regular standing. Literally the entire church membership can with great profit be enrolled: babies, invalids, shut-ins, traveling men, mothers tied down by home duties, railroad men, telegraph or telephone operators, - the Sunday School welcomes the representatives of every walk in life. Blessed stories are told of the home department, such as of the engineer miles from his Sunday School, safeguarded in the cab of his locomotive by his nearness to his Lord, and rejoicing in his privilege of studying the same Sunday School lesson that the boys and girls in the home school are poring over. Or about the telegraph operators who, miles apart from each other, compare notes over the wire about their Sunday School lesson. Cradle roll members don't do much reading or studying for themselves; but when the enthusiastic, tactful, loving cradle roll superintendent hurries around to a home in the neighborhood and asks for the name and enrollment of the baby not yet twenty-four hours old, you may be sure that that household, especially the father and mother, are not offended at this show of interest in the little life which is all the world to them. And stony hearts that may have seemed hopelessly remote from the Gospel have been warmed and won to a wide-open acceptance of the love of Jesus Christ because the littlest member of the family first entered the Sunday School through the cradle roll.

Thus it is that, from any way we look at it, the true Sunday School is a mighty evangelistic agency. If the Sunday School isn't evangelistic, it isn't the Sunday School. It may bear the name of the Sunday School, but that does not make it one. The true Sunday School of the Church of Jesus Christ exists solely to make the whole wonderful reach and splendor of the Good News better known, both to those within and without.

A young crockery merchant in New York State who rejoiced in Christ as his Saviour had found that when he flung himself in conscious helplessness on his Lord and asked to be used for the saving of others, his Lord took him at his word. Saving souls became his great joy and interest. He wanted to do more systematic work in that line, and to know the Bible in a more systematic way. The city in which he lived numbered one hundred thousand people; but he found that there was not a men's Bible class connected with any Sunday School there numbering as many as ten members. Yet there were sixteen thousand young men in that city.

While his own home church was being decorated, the entire Sunday School just then meeting as one class in a rear room, this man-hunter noticed some young men waiting outside to walk home with their girls after school. He invited them to crawl in under the rafters of the partially finished church, and with him find a place for a Bible class that he then and there asked them to form with him. They liked the novelty of the idea, and the class was formed, the members sitting on the back of a seat while their teacher faced them, standing. Under the scaffolding, amid dirt and plaster, he taught his first men's class, praying and telling the lesson story in simple language.

From that beginning the young crockery merchant got more and more interested in bringing together young men for organized Bible study in Sunday School classes. In six months his class of eighteen had grown to one hundred and eight. In the next seventeen years, three hundred and fifty-two men were won to Christ in that one class. He gave up his crockery business to give his whole time to young men's Sunday School Bible classes. After he had brought three hundred thousand men into the Sunday School for organized effort and systematic Bible study, his ideas got large, and he went on until he actually began to talk about wanting a million - not dollars, but men. It is not as easy to get a million men enrolled in an organized Bible class movement as it is to get three hundred thousand, even if you have a whole continent to work in; and perhaps some didn't expect to see "the man who wants a million," as he liked to call himself, succeed during his life-time in his expansive wish. But he got his million; and now he signs his letters, "Yours for a million more." Marshall A. Hudson, Founder and President of the World's Baraca Bible Class Union, has shown what just one department of the true Sunday School can be and do as a mighty evangelistic agency. His work would not stay limited to men, but has reached out to a similar work for women, the Philathea movement. (Two little books telling of Mr. Hudson's methods, one on the Baraca work for men, the other on the Philathea work for women, may be had from the Baraca Supply Company, Syracuse, New York, at 50c each.)

The quiet, persistent, undefeatable evangelistic work of the Sunday School is going on all the time, in ways not as widely known as is the blessed work of the Baraca and Philathea classes, but none the less effective on that account. The writer had once been speaking at the mid-week meeting of a city church on personal soul winning, and had, among other things, urged the duty of being willing to risk mistakes in doing this work, rather than make the greatest mistake of saying nothing for Christ. After the meeting a woman came up and told him of her experience. She was a Sunday School teacher with a class of girls, and she had longed to lead to Christ one of her class. She shrank from having a face-to-face talk upon the subject with the girl, but finally determined to make the effort, and she went to see the girl at her home. She found her in; and although she had ample opportunity alone with her to speak of the purpose of her call, her courage failed her, and, talking about anything and everything but that for which she had come, she finally rose and said goodbye without having once mentioned the subject. Starting home in discouragement, the teacher had not gone far from the house when she wheeled around and went back again. She rang the bell once more. The girl came to the door herself; and this time the teacher, not trusting herself to go inside and sit down again, told her young friend as they stood together in the doorway why she had called to see her, and in a blundering, faltering way said that she wished the girl would give herself to Jesus Christ as her Saviour. Then she left the house for the second time, and went home, but not before the young girl had shown her that she was very angry with her teacher for having dared to speak so directly on that subject to her.

At the next communion service of their church the teacher was overjoyed to see that young girl among those who publicly confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Hurrying over to the girl, at the close of the service, the teacher told her how glad she was that she had taken this step. And then she said to her, "Tell me, what was it that finally influenced you to do this?"

"Why, it was what you said to me that day you called," was the reply.

And a Sunday School teacher was glad that she had dared to "make a mistake" for her Lord.

There are many methods of evangelism of which the Sunday School makes blessed use. "Decision Day" when wisely observed has resulted in great blessing. On this day a direct appeal to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour is made from the platform to the school or the department as a whole, and opportunity is given for formal response in the way of signed cards or otherwise. The observance of such a day is most blessed when there has been earnest, faithful preparation for it in prayer, by teachers and officers. It seems better not to have the day announced in advance to the school, but only to teachers and officers, that they may prepare for it in prayer and in personal work.

But the all-the-time evangelism of the faithful teacher is the surest and most effective. Most effective, that is, if accompanied by all-the-time prayer. Prayer meetings of the teachers for the conversion and consecration of the pupils is a secret of the continuously evangelistic Sunday School.

What sort of teaching is done in the Sunday School in which true evangelism is conspicuous?

It is teaching that assumes that the whole Bible is the inspired Word of God; unique, authoritative, infallible. The acceptance of destructive criticism's theories and conclusions can have no place in this teaching.

The evangelistic school knows that all men (and "men" means men, women and children) are lost until saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. The teaching in such a school brings out clearly the lost condition of the entire human race by nature, and recognizes no possibility of salvation by education, character, or any other works of man. It gives full recognition to education as the duty and privilege of the Christian, but it does not substitute education for salvation.

The evangelistic Sunday School holds up the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of men, accepting the Word of the Holy Spirit that "neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." And because no man or created being can save another created being that is spiritually lost, the uncreated deity of Jesus as Saviour is recognized and declared. The new birth, accomplished by the Holy Spirit in the one who believes in Jesus Christ as Saviour, marks the passage from death unto life, - that is the Gospel of the evangelistic Sunday School.

The workers in such a Sunday School know that no human being can save a soul; they know that no human being, no matter how faithfully and truly he tells the story of salvation and offers the Gospel invitation, can win another soul to Christ or enable that soul to believe on Christ as Saviour. It is recognized that this act of acceptance and belief is not the result of human teaching or telling or persuading or inviting, but is a supernatural work of God. Therefore the evangelistic teacher depends chiefly upon prayer to succeed in the chief mission of the Sunday School. The teacher recognizes that prayer is the great secret, the great essential of effective evangelism. The evangelistic teacher prays souls into salvation before even expecting to be used to that end in teaching or personal conversation.

Not all so-called Sunday Schools are evangelistic. Not all are being supernaturally used of God in the miraculous work of bringing lives into the new birth and the new life in Christ Jesus. There are dangers that threaten the Sunday School of today probably more than in any preceding -generation. These dangers not only threaten; they are disastrously and effectively at work in many schools.

The undermining work of the destructive criticism has crept into Sunday School lesson helps. Not only in so-called "independent" courses of Bible study but in helps on the International Lessons, issued by regular denominational boards, are found lesson comments that assume the error and human authorship of parts of the Bible instead of inerrant, inspired authorship. It has been a distressing thing to many to note this terrible encroachment of the Adversary as he uses the very tools of the Church of Christ to lead teachers and pupils away from the hope of eternal life. For, as has been well pointed out, the Adversary's first move is to discredit parts of the Bible, then the atonement of Jesus Christ, then the deity of Christ. And without a Saviour who is God the "evangelism" of the Sunday School is not the Good News.

Not long ago "The Sunday School Times" had occasion to investigate a certain "Completely Graded Series" of Sunday School lessons (not the International Graded Lessons) of which the publisher said: "These lessons are already in use in thousands of up-to-date Sunday Schools. The various courses of study have been prepared under the direction of men who are recognized as authorities in this country in religious education, and they therefore embody the results of the latest scholarship." Upon looking into the lesson courses themselves, such statements as the following were found:

"It is easy to see that the age that produced the Gospels would not be anxious for scientific accounts of the deeds of Jesus, but that it would expect of Him exactly the acts that are attributed to Him. It is possible therefore that some events, like the restoration of the centurion's servant, were simple coincidences; that others, like the apparent walking of Jesus on the water, were natural deeds which the darkness and confusion caused to be misunderstood; that others, like the turning of water into wine, were really parables that became in course of time changed into miracles. As nearly all the miracles not of healing had their prototypes in the Old Testament, many of them at least were attributed to Jesus because men expected such deeds from their Messiah, and finally became convinced that He must have performed them. - Editor."

The foregoing paragraph was from a help for the Intermediate teacher. In a similar volume for the Junior teacher there appeared the following discussion of the reasonableness of miracles:

"There are some scholars who find traces of this tendency to magnify the marvelous even in the Gospels themselves, which, with all their uniqueness, are human documents, written by flesh and blood human beings. For example, in our story of Jairus' daughter, Mark's account, as we have seen, leaves us in doubt whether the little girl was really dead, or only in a swoon, or state of coma. In Matthew's later account, however, we find that Jairus says to Jesus, 'My daughter is even now dead.' When they reach the house, flute players, hired for the funeral, are already on the scene. This increases the marvel of the story, but does not seem to add to its moral significance. It is possible that not a few of the accounts of miraculous deeds, attributed to Jesus, are the product of this same tendency. By this is meant the tendency to magnify the marvelous, as seen in apocryphal legends, arising from a vulgar craving for signs and wonders."

Junior teachers were told, in explanation of the omission of the story of Ananias and Sapphira:

"This fear is explained by the story of Ananias and Sapphira, which precedes this sentence in the complete text of Acts. This story is like a number of other ancient narratives, in that the facts are probably recorded with substantial accuracy; but the author's own interpretation of these facts seems to us, in these days, not altogether satisfactory. There is no reason for doubting the account of the deception practised on the apostles by this unscrupulous couple, Ananias and Sapphira; nor the account of Peter's rebuke; nor the statement that they both died shortly after receiving the rebuke. In that period of the world's history people would inevitably conclude that this death was a direct manifestation of the Divine wrath invoked by Peter. This interpretation, however, seems inconsistent with the Christian conception of God as a loving and patient Father. On account of the primitive ideas which it reflects, the story has been omitted from the Junior Bible."

As was editorially stated in "The Sunday School Times," which discussed this series of lessons, it is only too true that: "There are those who have not taught the whole Christ of the New Testament and the Old, but have been busy about the presenting of a different and lesser Person. They have followed and taught Jesus of Nazareth as the ideal teacher and leader, acknowledging Him as indeed the most extraordinary development among the noblest sons of God, and the Gospel story of Him as usually reliable, but they have not been presenting Jesus unreservedly as the eternal Christ in all that the Scriptures in their uttermost struggling for full expression claim that He is; as all that He was, very Life itself to the disciplined mind and the revolutionized personality of Paul; as all that He is to those who daily testify in word and deed to liberty from the crushing bondage of sin by His indwelling."

The same editorial discussed the peril of teaching a "modified Christ." It went on to say:

"It is no uncommon thing to find teachers of the Bible who are thus teaching a modified Christ. The cautionary attitude, to say the least, of a type of influential scholarship, on the trustworthiness of the Scriptures, and the encouraging of suspended opinion as to the claims of Christ, are more confusing and insidious in their results on the mind and the life than a flat denial of cherished truth by confessed unbelievers. The New Testament writers, on the one hand, are not wholly able within the range of human vocabularies to find language that will release the streams of inspired truth concerning the Lord Jesus. In their most rapt ecstasy, as in their apologetic, they cannot exalt the Christ as they would, because not He, but language, is inadequate. They simply cannot say enough of Him. But, on the other hand, there is a type of modern scholarship not without its influence upon the trained and untrained Bible teacher alike, which is careful not to say too much of Jesus. There is a restraint in its deliverances about Him, a cautious and reserved detachment, which would seem to belong as a method rather to the outside observer than to the inner disciple. Ethical and social leadership and supremacy are freely attributed to Jesus, but this type of Biblical scholarship does not seem, in dealing with Jesus, to be dealing with the same eternal Christ who was disclosed to John and Peter and Paul and others of like mind and experience. Indeed, the limitless ascriptions of John, the sweeping declarations of Peter, the passionate abandon of Paul, by no means characterize this kind of scholarship. On the contrary, its Jesus is far less than the New Testament Christ; its New Testament a record quite open to reasonable doubt. Yet the superior advantages of lesson helps embodying the results of this attitude toward Jesus and the record of his life are widely urged upon teachers and pupils in the Sunday School today."

Just here those who have the Sunday School at its highest point of evangelistic efficiency should have clearly before them the facts concerning the course of Graded Lessons issued by the American Section of the International Committee. It is a seventeen year course, of which sixteen years of study have been issued, running from the first year "Beginners, for four-year-olds, through the third year Senior, for nineteen-year-olds." The writer had occasion to discuss this course of lessons in the columns of "The Sunday School Times" just before the International Sunday School Convention held in Chicago in June of 1914, and takes the liberty of printing here a portion of what was said at that time:

"These lessons are rendering a greatly needed service in awakening the Sunday School world to the claims and rights of the child. They are showing what a supremely delicate and difficult task it is to bring to the child, in the way that child nature is entitled to, the instruction that God intends. It is to be hoped that these lessons have made it impossible for the Sunday School ever to go back to what may have been its former carelessness, indifference, and ignorance on this subject."

"There is welcome evidence that the Graded Lessons are resulting in bringing pupils to decision for Christ. Mrs. Bryner, the International Elementary Superintendent, recently published, in the state Sunday School papers the results of her inquiry of state and provincial elementary superintendents concerning the spiritual results, that can be reported from the introduction of the Graded Lessons; and the testimony was most encouraging. One school reported that the number of Juniors coming naturally into the church had increased seventy-five percent since the adoption of these lessons in that school."

"In the First Year Senior there is excellent topical study offered on 'The Needs of the World,' 'The Standard of Success,' 'The Challenge to the Individual;' and this year offers also two complete book studies, taking up the Book of Ruth in three lessons and the Epistle of James in nine lessons."

"The opportunity for complete book study is still further extended in the Third Year Senior, just issued by the Lesson Committee, offering opportunity for brief, rapid surveys of more than twenty of the books of the New Testament. The doctrine of salvation is well taught here also, in a lesson devoted to 'Developing the Theology of Salvation,' from Romans."

"In such points as these, and in many other admirable opportunities for thorough-going Bible study, the International Graded Lessons offer the Sunday School a rich field for profitable work."

"Yet in spite of all this there are other factors in this series of Graded Lessons that are fairly characterized as regrettable and harmful. If one asks why these words should be used, here is the answer:

Because there are elements here that tend to minimize or ignore the unique and supreme character and authority of the Bible as the inspired Word of God; that tend to blur the line between the natural and the supernatural; that tend to place nature study on the same plane as Bible study in gaining a knowledge of God; and that tend to a lack of emphasis on certain vital doctrinal teaching of the Gospel of Christ."

"Extra-Biblical lessons have been inserted throughout this Graded series, that is, lessons the material for which is drawn chiefly from other literature than the Bible. In one instance - in the Second Year Intermediate, - a full six months is devoted to the study of 'Later Christian Leaders,' including such characters as Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and Florence Nightingale; and three months of the six are devoted to the study of a single modern missionary, Alexander Mackay. A note from the Lesson Committee points out that the material upon which these three months' lessons are based is found in the well-known book 'Uganda's White Man of Work,' the Committee having previously said: 'It is intended that a more careful analysis of a single character shall prepare the pupil for the nine months' study in the life of Christ which will immediately follow in the lessons for the Third Year Intermediate.' Just what effect will it have upon fourteen-year-olds to bring in a book of this sort, as, in a sense, parallel material to the Bible's record of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ? To be sure, Scripture material is suggested for each of these extra-Biblical lessons, but the Scripture material is subordinate, and the extra-Biblical material is the main theme for study."

"As is well known, in response to a widespread protest the Lesson Committee in 1911 issued Biblical lessons to run parallel to all the extra-Biblical lessons in the Graded Series, and to make such other, minor modifications as seemed to it desirable. These Biblical lessons do not replace the extra-Biblical lessons; they 'take their place beside the extra-Biblical lessons in the lists already issued.' The International Lesson Committee therefore stands before the Sunday School world committed to offering the Sunday School constituency material from other sources than the Bible as its chief material for study in numerous Sunday School sessions."

"And it has been done with deep-seated conviction on the part of those who favor it. At the conference on the International Lessons held in Philadelphia in 1914, a prominent leader in the work of the Graded Lessons said publicly, and with intense earnestness: 'We deny at every point that our course is a Bible course; our course is a Child-Teaching course.'

"As we speak of 'the Sunday School' today, we refer to the very limited opportunity for Bible study offered in the session of an hour or so on Sunday, where the actual Bible studying, Bible teaching period is about thirty minutes. This is the church's chief and only Bible teaching service, at present, in the vast majority of churches. To give any other form of material than the Bible the right of way in this restricted period is a perilous thing. The church must have a service of Bible study and Bible teaching. Its very life, and the life of the home and the community, depend upon this. Nothing that is extra-Biblical can be permitted to encroach upon that vital part of the church's work. It will be a sad day indeed when this question is considered even debatable by the majority of the members of the Church of Christ on earth."

"It is important to recognize also that there is no real dilemma between the Bible and child-teaching. We do not have to choose between the two. We must have them both, and we can. The Bible is God's best provision for child-teaching."

"There is a real danger, also, in using nature as the chief material for Sunday School teaching, even with the youngest beginners. Nature study has its valued place as material to illustrate Bible truths. Our Lord used it in that way. But there is no such revelation of God in nature as there is in the Holy Scriptures. Nature is natural; the Bible is supernatural. The two are in no sense equal revelations of the heart of God and of the Gospel of Christ. Indeed, nature is a sin-distorted, sin-cursed thing. God made this very plain when He said in the Garden of Eden, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake; … thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee,' as He told Adam and Eve how they had degraded even the earth beneath their feet through their sin. It may not be necessary or wise that the little child should be taught this; but it is very necessary that the teacher should have this in mind in using nature material to illustrate the ways and the love and the protection of the Heavenly Father. It puts sharp limitations upon our use of nature materials, and it suggests that such nature material, in and of itself, should not be the leading material in any lessons for Sunday School study."

"Apart from the question of nature studies as such, there is present in the International Graded Lessons the modern steadily encroaching atmosphere of the 'natural' as over against the 'supernatural.' The atmosphere in many colleges today is an atmosphere that denies the supernatural. There are evidences, here and there throughout this scheme of lessons, of such a handling of the Bible as one would give to any other book. Such lesson titles, for example, as 'Gideon, the Man Whom Responsibility Made Great' (First Year Intermediate), 'Abraham - The Challenge of an Ideal' (Second Year Senior), 'The Development of Religious Ideas in Early Israel' (Second Year Senior), are hints of this; as is also the note on Lessons 17 to 22 of the First Year Intermediate, 'David, the Man Who Showed Himself Friendly': 'the aim is to show that David's power to make and retain friends explains his career and his character.' This ignoring of God's sovereign grace as the secret of David's career is not sufficiently offset by the close of the note, that David's 'intimate, constant, and childlike fellowship with God was the supreme friendship of his life, exalting and directing his actions.' "

"And there is a certain inadequacy in some lesson topics, a failure to reveal the stupendous riches of the Scripture truth that is to be taught. An example of this is to be seen in the Third Year Senior topics for the study of the Epistle to the Galatians: 'Paul's Assertion of Independence,' 'The Bondage of Tradition,' 'The Christian Idea of Freedom.' The wording of these topics does not do justice to the great eternal spiritual truths of bondage to sin under the law versus the life of victory-by-freedom in Christ which this Epistle so gloriously brings out.

"Many would have been glad to see somewhere in these lessons, among the many statements of aim and purpose of the courses for the different years, a declaration of aim that the pupil shall come to recognize man's lost condition as constituting our need of a Saviour. This is nowhere stated. It is stated that the lessons have the aim of bringing the pupil to the personal acceptance of Jesus as Saviour and Lord; and that is good. But a clear declaration of the universal need of the new birth would have given increased doctrinal strength to the series. This lack is accentuated by such expressions as the following: 'The average age of thirteen calls for a new type of lessons which shall make their appeal to the new sense of selfhood and the new hunger for a satisfying personal ideal.' The emphasis seems to be chiefly 'to deepen the impulse to do right,' rather than to show (not necessarily to the youngest children, but certainly somewhere during the series) the hopelessness of any one's doing right except through the regenerating presence of the Holy Spirit made possible by the acceptance of Christ as Saviour."

Against all such encroachments upon the Word of God, upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and upon a clear vision of men's eternal need of that Gospel, the Sunday School of true evangelism must stand with the firmness of the Rock of Ages. Only the power of Christ can enable us to stand thus firmly in the strength of Christ. He is doing just this, with blessed results, for Sunday Schools that ask Him to do so upon His own terms.

The Social Service program, which includes so many things Christian in spirit, but which in many cases so disastrously puts fruit ahead of root, is a danger against which the Sunday School needs to guard, especially in its adult classes. The salvation of society regardless of the salvation of the individual is a hopeless task; and the Sunday School of true evangelism will not enter upon it. But the Sunday School that brings the good news of Jesus Christ to the individuals of any community lifts society as the usual Social Service program can never do. A striking illustration of this principle has been noted in the work of Evangelist "Billy" Sunday. Sunday preaches the individual Gospel of the apostolic church. He says little about social service. But the community-results where Sunday's evangelism has had an opportunity are revolutionizing. There is no social service worker in America today whose work can compare, in the very results for which the social service program aims, with that of Sunday's. And so the Sunday School of true evangelism will do an effective work in social service; but it will do it in the Lord's way.

One last word. If the Sunday School is really to do its work as an evangelizing agent, the Sunday School must consist of workers whose personal lives are radiant with victory. The Sunday School of true evangelism declares with convincing power the message of the victorious life.

Here is an evangel, a Good News, which is all too new to many a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who rejoices in the Sunday School as his field of service. But our Lord wants it to be the experienced possession of His every follower.

Evangelism that is limited to the Good News that there is freedom from the penalty of our sins is only a half-way evangelism. It is a crippled, halting evangelism. If we would tell "that sweet story of old," let us tell the whole story.

And the whole story is that our Lord Jesus Christ came, not only to pay the penalty of our sins, but to break the power of our sin. He laid aside His glory and came from heaven to earth, not only that men might be saved from dying the second death, but also that they might live without sinning in this present life. Here is Good News indeed; so good that to many it sounds too good to be true. But, praise God, it is true! When the Holy Spirit says to us, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace," He means it. When Paul declared in the exultant joy of the Spirit, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin," he meant it. It was true. And the same Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is making men free today from the law of sin, when they are ready to take Him at His word. When the beloved Apostle wrote, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin," he meant just that. When our Lord Jesus Himself said, first, "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin"; and then, instead of leaving us hopelessly there, went on to say: "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall- be free indeed," He was trying to tell us what His whole salvation is.

The victorious life is not a life made sinless, but it is a life kept from sinning. It is not, as has well been said, that the sinner is made perfect here in this life, but that the sinner even in this life has a perfect Saviour. And that Saviour is more than equal, while we are still in this life, to overcoming all the power of our sin.

The Keswick Convention in England has for forty years been blessedly used of God in spreading abroad the Good News of the Gospel of victory over sin. The life that is surrendered unconditionally to the mastery of Jesus Christ and that then believes unconditionally in the faithfulness of that Saviour Lord to make His promises true, begins to realize the meaning of the unspeakable riches of God's grace.

There are Sunday School teachers who are rejoicing today in the privilege of telling their classes the whole message of true evangelism. May God mightily increase the numbers of those who shall bear witness, by their victorious lives and by their eager glad message, to the whole evangelism of the Word: the saving and the keeping power of our wonderful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Then, "If He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

**Footnote:**

Representatives of two denominational Sunday School Publishing Boards have stated that the helps published by them are free from the objections noted.

I. J. Van Ness, Editorial Secretary of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board (Nashville, Tennessee), writes: "Many denominations have made radical modifications for themselves. The Southern Baptists have issued a complete series of periodicals for these lessons, using only Biblical material, and making material changes in the lessons for the Beginners, Primary and Junior Departments. The Lesson Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention entirely reconstructed the Intermediate courses, using in the main the material put out by the International Committee, but making changes in the arrangement and in the titles. The series of lessons which we are putting out is essentially different from that which you condemn, and has few, if any, of the points which you point out."

Marion Stevenson, of the Christian Board of Publication (St. Louis, Mo.), writes: "It should be noticed that we are following the Biblical lessons so strongly approved by the International Sunday School Association at San Francisco and also at Chicago. As your editorial stands, it is a blanket indictment of the Graded Lessons, to which we would respond that we are not guilty. The characteristics complained of are true of hardly any graded literature except that published by the Syndicate. But the Syndicate is a diminishing association. Since its organization the Presbyterian bodies have withdrawn and are preparing their own literature, thus leaving the Syndicate to the Methodist Church, North and South, and to the Congregationalists. Some smaller denominations are selling agents for the Syndicate material. But from the first the Baptists, North and South, and the Churches of Christ, have chosen their own writers. The indictments against the Syndicate material may not therefore be drawn against all graded lesson literature. They are certainly not true in regard to the graded literature prepared by the Christian Board of Publication."

Every movement away from the perils that would injure the Sunday School is to be heartily welcomed; and the writer gladly gives prominence to these letters of denominational leaders.