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THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.\*

BY REV. GIVENS B. STRICKLER, D. D., LL. D.  
*Union Theological Seminary.*

In the immediately preceding context, the apostle is discussing the subject of prayer. "And this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." He then adds the text: "There is a sin unto death. I do not say that he shall pray for it." What that sin is, he does not tell us. How those to whom he was writing might know when one had committed it, and so not pray for him, he does not inform us. Perhaps they had information on the subject of which he gives us no account. But, however that may be, what it concerns us to observe is, that the text plainly teaches that there is a sin that is unpardonable; a sin in regard to which no prayer is to be offered; a sin that crosses the "mysterious boundary that separates between God's patience and his wrath," and irretrievably dooms the soul to eternal death.

This solemn truth is taught in many other passages in these pages. It is taught in the Old Testament, as, for instance, by the Prophet Isaiah. When that prophet was commissioned to preach to his countrymen, he was informed beforehand that they would hear, indeed, but that they would not understand; that they would see, but that they would not perceive; that the only effect of his preaching on them would be that their eyes would grow dull, and their ears grow heavy, and their hearts wax fat;

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\*A sermon preached in the Seminary Chapel December, 1906.

# MISSIONS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

BY REV A. L. PHILLIPS, D. D.

## PRESENT CONDITIONS.

There is scarcely a Sunday-school in our Church that has not felt, that does not now feel, some missionary impulse. Here will be found a superintendent, there a teacher, yonder a pupil, who has heard the Lord's call, "Go ye." Some missionary information has been given by book, or leaflet, or address. Some missionary desire has been awakened by song or prayer or story. This interest has expressed itself through missionary offerings. For the year ending March 31, 1906, the Sunday-schools gave \$3,615 to Assembly's Home Missions, and the churches gave \$32,119; or ten per cent. came from the schools. The churches gave \$127,993 to Foreign Missions, and the schools gave \$7,646, or the six per cent came from the schools. The amount of money does not express the whole interest taken in missions by these schools. Children control little money, but give liberally of what they have. The problem before us is how to preserve the interest that now exists, and how to increase it indefinitely.

## BASE INTEREST ON INFORMATION.

The Sunday-school is, above all else, a place of instruction. It has one text-book, and all the schools study the same lesson every Sunday. Around the weekly Bible lesson all other exercises must revolve. The Bible must have first place. It is evident, then, that we must manage in some way to have the Bible lesson deal with missions. Two methods are recommended for doing this. First, use should be made of every current lesson in the International series that is of clearly a missionary character. In 1907 there are quite a number of such, four of which are here indicated: First Quarter, Lesson IX., Intercession as a Factor in the World's Redemption; Second Quarter, Lesson VIII., Preparation for Leadership; Third Quarter, Lesson X., Universal Remedy for Universal Sin; Fourth Quarter, Lesson VII., God's Method for the Conquest of the Home-Land. In

addition to this missionary treatment of the whole lessons, we may have illustrations of faith, repentance, "works of Christian usefulness," drawn directly from the mission fields at home and abroad. In the lives of men like Judson, Livingston and Paton can be found most enlightening illustrations of the Holy Word.

Second, all well-regulated modern Sunday-schools include supplemental lessons, by which instruction may be given in the history, doctrine and activities of the denomination. Here is an admirable opportunity for introducing missions by the judicious use of effective leaflets, and especially of such books as Trull's Supplemental Missionary Lessons. To neglect this matter of missionary instruction is now inexcusable. Lesson material may be found that is at once scientific and practical. To neglect is to sacrifice the missionary life of the young folks. Pastors may quietly insist upon the introduction of this work, confident that thus they will be laying a foundation for enlarged missionary zeal.

#### OPENING AND CLOSING EXERCISES.

In opening and closing his school, the wise superintendent has an excellent opportunity for developing the missionary life of his school. Now and then he may, with safety and profit, select a passage from the Bible that will convey its own powerful lesson after a simple word of explanation. Such passages as Psalm ii., Isa. ix. and the like, will lift up any school. In his prayers he will rejoice to make mention, Sunday by Sunday, of the missionaries and of their work everywhere. If his church should have the good fortune to have a pastor on the foreign or frontier field, it will be most helpful for him to pray for him by name. Now and then he may use a special and separate prayer for missions, bringing this emphasis to bear on his school. People learn much truth through the songs and hymns they sing. What a call to duty is in such hymns as "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," or "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun," or "The Morning Light is Breaking," or "The Son of God goes forth to War," or "Publish Glad Tidings." When he comes near to the time of the regular missionary offerings for missions, he may, with great profit, take pains to explain to his school the nature of the work, the reasons for giving to it, and the principles governing a Christian's giving. Such a course will inevitably increase the school's offerings manifold if carefully and patiently followed.

## MISSIONARY BOOKS.

In a Sunday-school institute, recently held, one of our most painstaking pastors publicly said that the introduction of a good modern library to his school had marked a distinct advance in the spiritual interests of his own large family of children. No Sunday-school library should be considered complete without a substantial number of well-selected modern missionary books. We should not be satisfied with books a half, or even a quarter, century old. The old standards should be present, but new ones should be carefully placed, such as James Gilmour and his Boys, The Cobra's Den, Mackay of Uganda, Topsy-Turvy Land, Candida, Autobiography of Paton, etc., etc. They should be mixed in with the other books in the library. The librarian may be most helpful here by using every means available to get them read. In this the teacher, too, may do good service.

## VARIOUS ACCESSORIES.

A school should certainly possess a large missionary map of the world, with the missions of its own denomination plainly marked on it, so as to be visible from any part of the room. Frequent reference may be made to it, and thus the school will become familiar with the progress being made in all the world. It will be well to have some of the pupils make big maps of certain mission fields to show details of work, especially of the man or station in which the school is specially interested. Missionary pictures, showing the life of people in the different fields may now be had cheap. The schools should be well supplied with these. A cabinet of curios, well selected and carefully kept, will afford objects for illustration. A bulletin of current events, drawn and illustrated by some gifted pupil, may be hung in the vestibule to catch the attention of the pupils and others passing by. These accessories are cheap, many of them can be made by the pupils, and all should be so made when practicable.

## MISSIONARY ENTERTAINMENTS.

Every progressive superintendent now provides for occasional entertainments for his school. The annual Christmas tree and picnic, in the spring, belong, of right, to the children. They cannot be neglected with impunity. It will do great good to have,

among the social features of the school, several carefully prepared missionary entertainments during the winter. The use of the stereopticon in this service is especially desirable. The home field, as well as the foreign, should be illustrated. Different classes might take up this work for themselves, and so increase the class-spirit and enlarge their numbers. A Japan tea at the teacher's house would be educative as well as pleasing, if it were carefully planned.

#### EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION. . .

If it be asked, "What form of organization will be most effective to aid these plans?" it may be replied, there are two ways. In the Methodist churches the Sunday-schools are all organized into missionary societies with their own officers. Once a month each school resolves itself into a missionary meeting, when its officers take charge, and a program is rendered. This is an excellent plan and works well when intelligently handled. Another plan is to organize a Missionary Department in the school, to consist of a committee of five. Its chairman should be an assistant superintendent of the school. Let this committee be charged with the duty of promoting the missionary life and activities of the school. It should be very carefully selected for efficiency and zeal. Definite responsibility promotes conscientious action. Hence the work of this committee should be carefully outlined and distributed amongst its members. For example, the chairman may be charged with the duty of helping the superintendent make the opening and closing exercises give their message for missions. To another member may be given the duty of promoting the missionary giving of the school. To another, the duty of suggesting to the Library Committee or librarian the names of suitable missionary books for all grades of the school. Another may take the oversight of the accessories, and help in many ways to make them useful. Another may help with the missionary entertainments. The committee should meet regularly and make definite written reports to the superintendent of the school. This, in substance, is the plan adopted by our General Assembly. It is progressive, practical and effective. If faithfully and continuously used, it will help to increase the missionary interest of the school's manifold.

**NO NEED OF DELAY.**

This plan can be adopted and put to work with very little delay. There is nothing radical or silly about it. It has been in use. It is approved by good sense in that it adds no useless machinery, simply providing a way to do work that is waiting to be done. It is progressive. It has the approval of the General Assembly. It should be introduced this fall into every school in our Church. Our Lord's command admits of no delay. We should be hard at work training up a new generation of those who will evangelize the world in this generation.