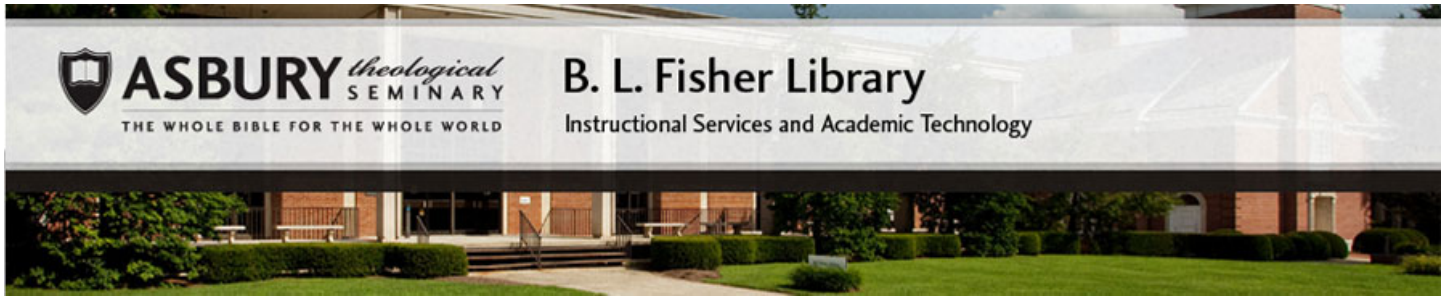

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BIBLE STORY TELLING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Religious Education

Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Religious Education

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many religious educators have set up aims for story-telling, but few of them are bi-polar in their approach. Many Bible stories are distorted to comport with a naturalistic view. Many Sunday School teachers and storytellers have had little or no training in religious education and are unable to choose theologically sound Bible stories from the mass of distorted stories.

The only way the child has of knowing God is to hear about Him through the story and see him in the life of the storyteller. Therefore it is important that the truth be presented to him in a manner that he will not misunderstand. However, the truth of the Bible should not be tampered with in giving it to the child.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to determine a Bible story and its importance; (2) to outline a proper background for the art of story-telling; (3) to emphasize the structure of the story; (4) to accentuate the urgency of possessing an aim; (5) to discover the best techniques for telling a Bible story; and (6) to list certain necessary qualities of the storyteller herself.

Importance of the study. Because the story has an appeal which is universal it has been used by prophets and teachers through the centuries to pass on the great historical traditions and religious insights of the people. Story-telling still exists today as one of the primary ways of teaching. In fact the only version of Scripture the pre-school child has is the story. Many have distorted the Scripture and have given vent to their imagination for the sake of the child, underestimating both the intelligence of the child and their responsibility to him. It is important that the narrator be faithful to the Biblical historical background and text of the story and that the use of the imagination be legitimate.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Bible story. A Bible story is a narrative taken from the Biblical text and adapted to the understanding and enjoyment of children.

Good Bible story. A good Bible story is one that is faithful to historical background and Biblical text with legitimate use of imagination.

Poor Bible story. A poor Bible story is one which distorts the accuracy of the Scripture through free play of imagination.

III. PROCEDURES OF RESEARCH

The procedures of this study included the examination of Bible storytelling for children in the libraries of the University of Kentucky, the College of the Bible, Southern Baptist Seminary and Asbury College. The sources on Bible storytelling in the library of Asbury Theological Seminary were available for this study. Sources on storytelling such as Katherine D. Cather's, Religious Education Through Storytelling and Storytelling for Teachers of the Beginners and Primary Children offered helpful material in approaching the problem of storytelling. Many of the sources consulted dealt with storytelling in religious education with only one or two chapters devoted to Bible stories.

CHAPTER II

THE UNIVERSAL APPEAL OF THE STORY

The method of storytelling is one of the oldest, most effective, and most used means of conveying truth. It has been used as an instrument in religious education as far back as history records. It is man's most ancient mode of teaching. Even in the days of unwritten language the story was doing its work in educating the people and teaching them great ideals.

I. THE USE OF STORIES DURING PRIMITIVE TIMES

In Norway, Arabia, and many smaller countries. The primitive method of teaching was the story. It has been used by all peoples in all ages who have left any record. It is still practiced by hundreds of millions of people in the world today. According to Haslett, many countries including Norway, Arabia, Persia, Egypt, India, China, South America, and some smaller countries owe much of their education to the storyteller.[1] By means of the story the earliest philosophers accounted for their existence and that of all the phenomena which surrounded them.

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[1]Samuel B. Haslett, The Pedagogical Bible School (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1903), p. 242.

The Hebrews. Hebrew men and women were like eager children as they listened to the deeds of outstanding figures of their race, of their heeding or disobeying the voice of God and the reward or punishment which followed.[2] Having heard these stories the parents in turn told them to their children. Haslett says the Passover was introduced by the story.

"And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say," etc. And then was to be told the account of the Passover.[3]

The Greeks, Romans, and others. The literature of Europe abounds in material suitable for use as an aid in the religious instruction of children. Myths and legends were contributed to the story world by the Romans, Teutons, Arabs, and Hindus. The Greeks sang themselves into immortal fame by their epics and lyrics.[4]

Socrates. This teacher emphasized to the youth of Athens through concrete example the principles he wished

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[2]Katherine D. Cather, Religious Education Through Story-Telling (Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press, 1925), p. 16.

[3]Haslett, loc. cit.

[4]Ibid., p. 243.

them to absorb. He told stories the characters of which were rewarded with peace of spirit and satisfaction in life through having made those principles their guide to conduct, or were denied the happiness that might have been theirs because of failure to heed them. "Dialogue was the favorite form of expression, of this Hellenic sage. Colloquy was used in which several characters argued their points and adjusted their differences."[5]

Plato. The great pupil of Socrates adopted methods similar to those of his master. The principles which he advocated and desired his students to follow were scattered throughout his dialogues.

The use of stories by Confucius. Centuries before the days of Socrates and Plato there was a man in China who was fully appreciative of the wisdom of using stories in teaching religion and morality. His name was Confucius. "He used stories to arouse desire for better conduct, because he discovered that in listening to accounts of those who had known the satisfaction of high conduct came desire to emulate them."[6]

The use of stories by Christ. When the Greatest

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[5]Cather, op. cit., p. 13.

[6]Ibid., p. 15.

Teacher of all times began His ministry He utilized the story freely to elucidate principles and convey truths. Some of His most sublime truths were presented in the form of stories. "The story was His favorite method of teaching; no other teacher of whom we have record used parables so freely and so effectively."[7] "Through the parable of the good Samaritan He taught the beauty of being merciful in a way that unnumbered 'Thou shalts' could not have done."[8] Jesus of Nazareth fully understood the power of the story over the human heart and used it effectively throughout His ministry.

The use of stories in Europe during the Dark Ages. There were many great teachers in Europe even during the Dark Ages so that the world was not wholly devoid of light and progress. These men did an immortal work through the medium of oral narration.

These leaders were comprised of two groups. One group went as missionaries from Italy, where already Christianity had taken root, into lands beyond the Alps whose inhabitants were yet barbarians. The other group was composed

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[7]C. B. Eavey, The Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), p. 245.

[8]Cather, op. cit., p. 16.

of tribesmen who recited the traditions of their people to the rising generation.[9]

Influence of the missionaries among the tribesmen. The Italian bishop Remi was instrumental in helping the Frankish king Clovis choose his bride, Clotilda of Burgandy. It was through the bishop's tales of the Babe in the manger who became the Man of Sorrows, that the girl was won to Christianity. After her marriage to Clovis she worked with the missionary to Christianize her husband and Gaul.[10]

Numerous legends from Charlemagne's time acclaim Turpin, Archbishop of Rheims as a prince of storytelling. Even though he did many evil deeds he was able to keep the zeal for Christianity in Gaul at high pitch by the powerful emotional appeal of his tales.[11]

The use of stories by Buddah, Mohammed, and other religious teachers. Just as freely as Jesus used the story so did Buddah. He won millions to his faith through his preaching and tales. China, Japan, and India carry the imprint of the lasting influence of his teaching.

Having been impressed by different religious teachers Cather wrote of Mohammed's method:

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[10]Cather, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

[11]Ibid., p. 18.

> Mohammed, prophet of the Moslems, pictured to his apostles the bliss that awaited all believers in his doctrines, pictured to them the beauty of the houris and the peri, the asphodel meadows, the beguiling music, the days of ease and nights of pleasure in the Paradise of the Koran. It is the traditions of Mohammedanism, told and retold for the centuries at Saracenic firesides that have kept the Moslem faith alive in the world.[12]

Even though Christianity became the legalized religion of Norway in the eighth century, the vikings did not turn to this faith in time of trouble. The power of the ancient tale still held them. The people still worshipped the god Thor when they were in trouble. The stories that kept alive their beliefs were passed from one generation to the next. Thus they believed as their fathers before them.

Stories the first medium of systematic education. Charlemagne was one who desired a cultured nobility. Being a man of great dreams for his kingdom, he set about to fulfill his ambition by finding teachers to instruct the boys of the blood-royal. He established schools of history in Paris. Since there were only chronicles on rolls of parchment which could be brought from the east at great cost, history was taught entirely by word of mouth.[14]

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[12]Cather, op. cit., p. 19.

[13]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[14]Ibid., p. 20.

Because Charlemagne was an egotistic individual he commanded teachers to tell of his achievements, many of which could not be proved. They went from castle to castle recounting the heroic stories of former days.

Storytelling a part of minstrelsy. As musical instruments were introduced into the world west of the Bosporus, deeds of heroes were often told to the accompaniment of a lute or lyre.

The harp had become a part of the life of every country of central and western Europe toward the end of the Dark Ages. Harpists traveled from castle to castle entertaining the people with their songs and stories which furnished amusement and helped to give variety to a life that was confined within narrow boundaries. They fully understood the power of music over the emotions and while song and tale were harmonicusly blended the minstrels knew that they held their hearers in the hollow of their hands. History was taught in no other way than by lips of the storyteller until modern times.[15]

In Colonial times. Storytelling was used extensively as a method of teaching history in the American colonies preceding and during Revolutionary War days.

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[15]Cather, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

In fact "numerous records show that as late as two centuries ago, in universities throughout Europe, but one book of history was used by a class. This book was in the hands of the teacher."[16]

II. THE INNATE APPEAL OF THE STORY

> A story is a great life message that passes from one soul to another. It steals as quietly as a canoe into the hidden places where naught else can go; it is as scothing as a sun sometimes and at other times it cuts like a two-edged sword. It is quickly given, but it lasts in the life through eternity. It has power to bless and it has also power to curse.[17]

All children love stories. Apparently stories meet some deep need in human nature, for ever since there have been people there have been stories and storytellers.

The story wields a variety of influences upon human life. It has power to nurture any one of the emotions, because when the child hears a narrative in which any of the base emotions are glorified, he comes to glorify them in himself, or at least to justify them.[18]

> The story form is the most effective, wrote White in 1926, because it is the most interesting way in

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[16]Cather, op. cit., p. 23.

[17]Margaret W. Eggleston, The Rise of the Story in Religious Education (New York: George H. Doren Company, 1920), p. 16.

[18]Cather, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

> which a truth can be presented. It impels to action as a cold, unadorned, statement never can, because it stirs sentiment and arouses feeling.[19]

The story touches the heart. The characters who make the plot arouse the emotions and make people feel with them. Such emotions as mirth, anger, pity, desire, disdain, approval, and dislike are aroused in the listener by the characters as they move through the tale.[20]

The story feeds the desire for experience. To hear about the experiences of others is to widen the range of one's own experience. As the narrator presents the characters of the story as real human creatures, the audience enters into the characters' experiences.

The story is a tool of universal adaptability. "Its appeal is like that of music, sculpture, or painting. The old and the young are swayed by it, the cultured and the illiterate, the Mongolian, the negro, and the white."[21]

"Thus the story," says White, "influences life and conduct as truth presented in the abstract fails to do.

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[19]Goodrich C. White, Teaching in the Sunday School (Atlanta: Emery University, 1926), p. 42.

[20]Cather, op. cit., p. 25.

[21]White, op. cit., p. 44.

. . . The story gives to truth a dynamic power which as mere theory it often lacks."[22]

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[22]Ibid., p. 26.

CHAPTER III

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE STORY

Basically stories as an art form are the same in structure. However, there is something distinct and different about each one. This applies to Bible stories as well as others.

I. THE PARTS OF THE STORY

The beginning. "The beginning of a story, to those who hear it, is like the first impression of a person upon the strangers he meets."[1]

It is in the beginning or introduction that the hero or heroes of the story are introduced in such a way that the hearers are eager to know more of them and their deeds. It anticipates without predicting the end. It intimates the problem which the climax will determine. These beginnings arouse expectancy as is shown in these parables:

"Harken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow."[2]

"And it came to pass, that, as they were in the way a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee

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[1]Katherine D. Cather, Religious Education Through Story-Telling (Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press, 1925), p. 63.

[2]Mark 4:3.

whithersoever thou goest."[3]

"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him."[4]

The introduction should be checked to see that it answers three simple questions--Who? When? Where? However it is not absolutely essential that all three be in the introduction. It is only necessary that the hero or heroine be introduced in such a way that the little children will be curious to know what is to follow.[5]

An effective introduction is the most important part of a story. It should arouse interest and give a hint of the line of thought that is to be developed. All unnecessary description must be omitted and directness must be the thought of the teller in the introduction. This is the real test of the narrator's ability.

Conflict always appears at the very beginning of a well-constructed story. If it is a story to be told, it sometimes appears in the first sentence and always in the first two or three paragraphs.[6]

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[3]Luke 9:57.

[4]Matthew 8:5.

[5]Margaret W. Eggleston, The Rise of the Story in Religious Education (New York: George H. Doren Company, 1920), p. 23.

[6]Cather, op. cit., p. 64.

> Usually, in the first two or three paragraphs the atmosphere of the tale is created. The setting of the story is made clear. But this must be done deftly and skillfully. Beyond a sentence or two there must not be a description of time or place in which no characters are present.[7]

Bible stories are examples of perfect beginnings. Interest is aroused by the first sentences. This is aptly illustrated in two passages taken from Matthew 3 and 4. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[8] "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."[9]

The reader or hearer is not disappointed when he hears such interesting beginnings. He knows that something will happen as does right through the body of the story, until suspense reaches its apex in the climax.

The style of the introduction may be either narrative or dialogue. Each has been and can be used with success. Of the two dialogue is the more difficult; therefore, it is recommended that the novice begin with narrative. However after being fairly well launched, the tale may abound in conversation.[10]

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[7]Cather, loc. cit.

[8]Matthew 3:1-2.

[9]Matthew 4:1.

[10]Cather, op. cit., p. 70.

Body. From the beginning the action continues on through what is known as the body of the story. Following a series of actions which form a simple plot, the narrative reaches a climax which gives meaning to the whole.

Climax. "The climax is the heart of the story," says Eggleston," . . . "the meat of the nut." . . . "it is the turning point of the story."[11] It is here that the great point of the narrative is revealed.

Conclusion. After the climax has been reached, the end follows speedily in the conclusion. Here the characters should be disposed of and the minds of the audience be put at rest. They do not care to listen to added details since it detracts from or spoils what has gone before.

If one would have a story teach a lesson, the mind must be left at rest, ready to turn back and think again of the deeper meaning of the tale. This ending of a story, however, must not be confused with the appending of a "moral." For the ending must never moralize or put into words what the narrator thinks about any of the characters or their actions.

Unity of the story. The conclusion upholds the unity

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[11]Eggleston, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

of the story. It must not detract from the climax neither must it suggest another story. It must end the story that has been told. Children's stories end very quickly. Children do not want a long-drawn-out ending after the tale is told.[12]

The perfection of the body, climax, and conclusion in the structure of Bible stories is presented in the following examples:

> In the first chapter of Genesis, light envelops the universe, "a firmament in the midst of the water" is created, the seas are divided from the land: grass, herbs, and trees appear. The sun, moon, and stars are set in the sky, and creatures of land and water are made. Then comes the climax, the place where interest runs highest. Man is created in the image of God and given dominion over the beasts.
>
> Then, simply and dramatically, without in any way depreciating what has gone before, the story is finished in a satisfactory manner.
>
> "And God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."
>
> "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had made."
>
> "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from his work which God created and made."[13]

Make sure of a good conclusion; then let the story carry its own message. "For children especially, the story should have a happy ending."[14]

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[12]Eggleston, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

[13]Cather, op. cit., p. 71.

[14]C. B. Eavey, Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), p. 248.

Among the chief characteristics of a good story for children under nine or ten years of age are the following:

1. Aptitude or appropriateness.
2. Plot or plan.
3. Action or movement.
4. Predominance of the imaginative over the rational.
5. Predominance of the narrative over the descriptive.
6. Unity or coordination.
7. Richness of material.
8. Adaptation of language.
9. Suggestiveness.
10. Adherence to the words and substance of the original.
11. Presence of the dramatic element.
12. Moral and character elements.
13. The realistic element.
14. Supernatural or miraculous element.
15. Balancing of material.
16. Emotional coloring.[15]

II. STORIES ABOUND IN DRAMATIC INTEREST

Dramatic story. Of it Cather says:

> . . . a story is dramatic only when it keeps the listener or reader in suspense as to the outcome and its effect upon the character or characters. It can arouse suspense only when there is conflict between the characters and an opposing force or forces. The characters must be conscious, living purposeful creatures.[16]

In order to be dramatic a story must deal with active objects alone. The personifying of trees, flowers, stars, and mountains has not been very successful. Some interest

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[15]Samuel B. Haslett, The Pedagogical Bible School (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1903), pp. 244-245.

[16]Cather, op. cit., p. 59.

has been created by the personification of objects, but not for a long period. On the whole this type of tale is not too popular.

III. DIFFERENT KINDS OF STORIES

There are different types of stories, but they all follow the same general pattern.

The plot story. A hero is involved in a situation where the final outcome is uncertain. It is the outcome which makes the climax. Knowing that climax and keeping it in mind, the storyteller uses it to rouse interest in both hero and outcome; through events which follow, which aid or hinder the hero, to the final act, which breaks down the last barrier and concludes the story. The story of Joseph is considered a "plot" story.[17]

The problem story. The hero has a problem whose solution is the climax. The listener's interest must be sufficiently engaged in the problematic introduction in order to make him want the hero to find the answer. By following the hero into each succeeding event the hearer hopes to find the solution; welcomes it when it comes as the climax; and

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[17]Jeanette Perkins Brown, The Storyteller in Religious Education (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1951), pp. 14-15.

settles back contented with the final sentence. The story of Jesus' answer to the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?" is a familiar example.[18]

The journey. It works toward the climax which is the journey's end. The reason for the person's journeying compels interest in the introduction of a well-told story. Each step leads to a milestone or hinders progress towards it. If the suspense has been well kept, arrival, in a strong climax, is attended by relief.[19] An illustration of this type of story is the Prodigal Son.

The character story. Some stories deal with character development and change. Only a single experience or set of experiences within a brief time span can be dealt with in a short story. One experience which definitely affects and changes character is conversion. This act is performed by the transforming power of God.

The introduction of this type of story shows the person in need of a change of life; this causes the audience to care what happens to him. Paul's conversion furnishes an example of this.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF BIBLE STORIES

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[18] Ibid., p. 15. [19] Ibid.

Parable. It has been said that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Halley states the definition in this manner: "A parable is a sort of extended metaphor; a comparison; illustrating spiritual things by ordinary. Roughly speaking, parables are stories to illustrate certain truths."[20] In parables the characters are human beings and the events are such as actually occur. Christ, in His teaching used this method very freely. The parables of the Kingdom in Matthew 13:1-53 show this.

History. History is an account of what has actually happened, a record of events gone by. It is "A systematic record of past events, especially of those concerning the life of a nation and in which man has taken part."[21]

Some of the most interesting stories in the Old Testament are historical. The lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon would be classified under this type. These stories may also be classified as biography. This by no means exhausts the number of annals that are found in this section of the Bible.

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[20]Henry H. Halley, Pocket Bible Handbook (Chicago: Henry H. Halley, 1946), p. 390.

[21]Funk and Wagnalls, College Standard Dictionary (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1946), p. 545.

Drama. Drama is: "A series of actions, events, or purposes, considered collectively as possessing dramatic unity."[22] The book of Job, which is a great masterpiece of literature, is considered drama. It might also be called a "historical poem." "The book is a philosophic discussion, in highly poetic language, of the problem of human suffering."[23]

Realistic stories. Stories from history, biography, and personal accounts of Biblical authors belong to this class. "They have a special value because besides suggesting a principle they also indicate how it may receive specific application in life."[24]

The accounts of Dives and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31, the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32, and Jonah in Jonah 1-4 are realistic stories.

". . . If one knows the Bible well enough, it is possible from it alone to satisfy every story need of the child from infancy to manhood."[25]

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[22]Ibid., p. 355.

[23]Halley, op. cit., p. 233.

[24]Edward Porter St. John, Stories and Story-Telling in Moral and Religious Education (Chicago: The Pilgrim Press, 1910), p. 24.

[25]Cather, op. cit., p. 176.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEANING AND PLACE OF AIM IN STORY TELLING

Since "aim controls everything,[2] it is needful to define the ultimate aim in Christian education.

A definition of aim. Eavey says of aim:

> A curse that blights much of human activity is aimlessness. The fable of the grasshopper and the ant illustrates vividly the necessity of purpose. The ant was diligent in business, working constantly toward the accomplishment of a predetermined end. The grasshopper spent time aimlessly, having nothing to do but to enjoy the thrill of passing through the air under the impetus of self-propelled activity directed toward the accomplishment of nothing particular. The ant attained results in terms of what her activity was intended to accomplish; the grasshopper reaped the consequences of having no end in view, for he perished as an outcome of his own aimless activity. The world is full of very active people who hop about hither and thither but who never accomplish anything worth while because they have never taken time to obtain the wisdom they could have were they to give careful consideration to the possible ends and goals of activity in which they engage. One who enters upon any course of action without such consideration is like a man who starts upon a journey without knowing where he is going; both will get nowhere in particular.[1]

The importance of an aim. The storyteller must have a clear and well-defined ultimate aim and also an immediate aim. Being sure of the aim of her endeavors, she is able to

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[1] C. B. Eavey, Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), p. 42.

employ her knowledge of truth, pupils, principles, and methods in the direction of its realization.

Aim dictates the course of action one pursues, and affords ground for measuring the progress of accomplishment.

Some suggested aims. White gives as the ultimate aim of Christian teaching:

> To lead each pupil to a knowledge of God's will and an acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord, and to develop a Christian character that is expressed through worship, right living, and efficient service.[2]

Carmack states it as:

1. Bringing the pupil to Christ.
2. Bringing him up in Christ.
3. Sending him forth to work for Christ.[3]

Functions of aim in teaching. Right aim in teaching, according to Eavey, serves at least six important purposes:

> 1. Gives direction. Aim gives direction to thought, activity, and the processes necessary for effective desireable changes.
> 2. Makes for orderly continuity. Right aim gives continuity to the process of teaching. It enables the teacher to put various parts of the work in proper order; it helps him to discriminate between major and minor points of emphasis; it keeps the mind from getting so lost in a maze of details that the task of reaching an adequate solution of problems is abandoned or left to some impatient, tired guesswork.

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[2]G. C. White, Teaching in the Sunday School (Atlanta: Emory University, 1926), p. 170.

[3]Eavey, op. cit., p. 52.

3. Provides a basis for selection of materials and activities.

4. Gives a sound basis for measurement.

5. Encourages right aims in pupils. Right aim on the part of the teacher helps the pupil to make aims for himself. . . . The test of right aim is not the worthiness of the teacher's purpose but the degree to which results in terms of that aim are achieved in the life of the individual pupil.

6. Keeps the teacher courageous and energetic. Right aim inspires the worker. Nothing succeeds like success, and no success brings such thrill as results from earnest effort directed toward the attainment of a high and lofty end.[4]

The Bible the true source of aim. The aims in Christian teaching are to be found in the Scriptures.

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[4]C. B. Eavey, Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), pp. 48-50, Citing S. L. Roberts, Teaching in the Church School, pp. 40-44.

CHAPTER V

THE TECHNIQUE OF STORY TELLING

"Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well" is a well-known proverb. This holds true in storytelling. For the Bible story is the child's version of the Bible and as such influences his life and conduct. If the story is poorly told the child suffers.

I. THE STORYTELLER'S PREPARATION

The plot of the story. The storyteller should know the plot of the story as well as she knows the multiplication table before attempting to tell it. The only way she has of knowing the story is to analyze and examine each incident or picture in its regular order. She should first obtain a general idea of it, then read it over again noting each incident in the order of its occurrence. It is wise for an inexperienced narrator to indicate on paper the several incidents and number them.[1]

Suppose the story is "The Twins Make A Foolish Trade," from the twenty-fifth chapter of Genesis. The plot outline would read as follows:

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[1]Katherine D. Cather, Storytelling for Teachers of Beginners and Primary Children (New York: The Caxton Press, 1921), pp. 52-53.

Esau was a hunter; Jacob was a plain man.

Isaac loved Esau; Rebekah loved Jacob.

Esau asked for pottage; Jacob asked for a birthright.

Esau, despising his birthright, sold it.

Once the steps of the story are fixed in mind the narrator must visualize these and see every picture composing it. However, she should not attempt to recite it word for word since that would make the telling unnatural. She should study the characters and setting until they are real to her, and their experiences are hers. She must think of the effect she plans to produce, and arrange the succession of events and climax accordingly.[2]

There are times when it is well to memorize certain portions of the story so that the beauty of language will not be marred and the child will receive the total effect that the teller wished to produce.

The speaker should obtain all the information possible pertaining to the story she has to tell. The more knowledge one has of the characters the keener becomes the visualization that is so necessary, and the more profoundly will the tale stir the child.

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[2]Paul H. Vieth, How To Teach In The Church School (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1935), p. 128.

The telling of the story will be of little avail, if the narrator fails to appreciate and convey something of its atmosphere. Says Cather:

> This makes it clear why the teller of the Old Testament stories needs to study the customs of the Old Testament times. He needs to know something of the feasts of the Hebrews, the particular significance of the various books of the Bible, the religious sects of the Jews, their laws, customs, occupations and modes of dress. Without this knowledge he cannot touch the stories with the atmosphere they must have if they are to become as personal observances or experiences to the children.[3]

Securing dramatic suspense. In order to determine what opposing forces or characters make the dramatic suspense which is essential for gripping interest, the storyteller should note the element of conflict in the story as she prepares it for the telling.

Practice telling the story. Telling the story aloud is of the greatest value for it helps the narrator to realize how the story is going to sound and to choose her own words definitely and accurately so she will have no trouble in telling the story to the audience for whom it is intended. She may tell it to herself, to the tables and chairs, and to an imaginary audience, aiming to make the rendition so

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[3]Katherine D. Cather, Storytelling for Teachers of Beginners and Primary Children (New York: The Caxton Press, 1921), pp. 59-60.

dramatic that it cannot fail to catch and hold attention when told to the children.

"Live with the characters through their experiences and the words describing the scenes will come easily because the storyteller knows what she is talking about."[4]

See, feel, and know the story. The charm of a story depends upon the way it is told. The story may be perfect in structure, beautiful in its message, and well selected to accomplish the desired purpose, but ineffective if not well told; while a story with less suitable qualities may make strong appeal because of the manner in which it is related. The narrator should enter into both the feeling of the characters in her story and that of her audience as they vicariously experience the emotions of the characters.[5]

Appreciate the material. If a story cannot be respected or taken seriously, it should not be told. If the story seems trivial to the teller, it cannot be given in a convincing manner, for the child will immediately sense a lack of sincerity.

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[4]Thelma D. Walton, Teacher-Parent Book (Los Angeles: Gospel Light Press, 1950), p. 8.

[5]C. B. Eavey, Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), p. 251.

When the teacher appreciates and understands the story's meaning and message, she can concentrate every effort on getting that message home to the child.

II. TELLING THE STORY

Gain or win the attention of the children. Never presume that children will voluntarily pay attention. The narrator must obtain and sustain attention. Therefore, the storyteller should be direct and forceful in her manner. She should look directly into the faces of her listeners and make them feel the importance of the story by her manner. This cannot be done if she looks off into space.

The vocabulary should be simple but graphic. "It is of great importance that the language in which a tale is told should fit the spirit of that tale."[6]

"Short sentences are much preferable to long ones in any told story, but short sentences are necessary in little children's stories."[7]

Good English. The best English should be used with

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[6]Katherine D. Cather, Religious Education Through Story-Telling (Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press, 1925), p. 156.

[7]Margaret W. Eggleston, The Rise of the Story in Religious Education (New York: George H. Doren Company, 1920), p. 41.

but a minimum of slang when the situation indicates such usage. For example little children especially like words containing the letter L and the letter T. Plan to use correct musical English which they enjoy.[8]

Use direct discourse. White says:

> Let your characters do their own talking. Use direct rather than indirect discourse. Study some of the stories that Jesus used in his teaching; note how the characters speak for themselves. Turn, for example, to the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and the eleventh to the the fourteenth chapters of Luke.[9]

Direct conversation helps to make the story vivid. This is especially true if the narrator imitates the characters in the story.

The pause. This is one of the greatest aids in making a tale dramatic. The sudden unexpected pause at the climax, in the middle of a sentence or just after the opening words heightens dramatic effect. "And it came to pass when the people shouted with a great shout, . . . that the wall fell down flat."[10] The pause is also the most effective means of reviving interest that has begun to wane. It may serve as

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[8] Ibid., p. 42.

[9] G. C. White, Teaching in the Sunday School (Atlanta: Emory University, 1926), p. 55.

[10] Joshua 6:20.

an aid to the narrator in recalling some part of the story.

Action. The main thing to remember in telling a story is that the work of the narrator is to describe scenes and action. Concerning this Smithers observes:

> A good story for Primary children has plenty of action. It moves. It does not limp along with many explanations and long, involved beginnings. Something has happened; some life problem has been solved, some conflict won, and the account is all worthy of record. Many a child has been antagonized especially by Bible stories, because his teachers did not make the stories have plenty of action. Too many explanations were introduced and the child was lost among unimportant words. Nothing was happening of any importance, so why heed?[11]

The story of Daniel in the lions' den, which is recorded in Daniel 6:18-24, has enough action in it to keep any child spellbound.

Sincerity and emotional appeal. A child desires a picture of life that is real and has power to stir his emotions and guide him into action, and at the same time "He wants it clothed in beauty of imagery and of language."[12]

Vividness and sensitiveness. Imaginative sensitiveness contributes to vividness. The spiritual yearnings of ordinary people and the hidden meanings of events are seen by the

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[11]Ethel L. Smithers, Teaching Primaries in the Church School (Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1930), p. 163.

[12]Ibid.

teacher. Having an acute pictorial as well as dramatic sense, she is able to present pictures of life to her class.[13]

Do not moralize. In this Cather, White, Smithers, Walton and others are agreed. The storyteller should take her hearers to the scene of the story and let them see for themselves and draw their own conclusions. The child sees the moral himself if the story is properly presented.

The storyteller must have confidence. When the narrator faces her audience she must feel that she has something to tell them and may therefore anticipate holding their interest. However, the outcome will depend on whether or not she knows her story well enough to present it smoothly.

Eggleston says that "memorizing the text is a hinderance for the speaker will be thinking of the words instead of the message."[14]

The manner of the storyteller. Being natural is one of the first requisites of good storytelling. This is not achieved over night but comes about through earnest study.

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[13] Ibid., p. 164.

[14] Margaret W. Eggleston, The Use of the Story in Religious Education (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1920), p. 53.

Gesture. "In order to bring vividness to the child," wrote Cather, "it is not necessary to turn into a gymast or gesticulator. The work is precisely opposite to that of an actor, . . . for the business of the narrator is to describe."[15]

The storyteller should not attract attention to herself, but picture the scenes so vividly that hearers may see them as clearly as she does. This involves being sparing in gestures. Gestures should be a part of storytelling only when unavoidable. If the narrator is saturated with her story, she will not stop to consider whether she should wave a hand or point a foot at a certain word or phrase.

Changes of voice in telling a story. A well-known writer in the field of religious education comments:

> In all the Bible stories in which there is much dialogue the story-teller should endeavor to make the voice fit the characters as he visions them. . . . Bible stories in which change of voice in the dialogue will make the telling more effective are: The Five Thousand Fed, John 6:1-13; The Meal and Oil that Did Not Fail, I Kings 17:8-16: The Blind Man Cured, John 9:1-11.[16]

Vary the tone in narrative portions as much as in the

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[15]Katherine D. Cather, Storytelling for Teachers of the Beginners and Primary Children (New York: The Caxton Press, 1921), p. 75.

[16]Ibid, p. 80.

dialogue. To heighten suspense, the narrator has only to drop the voice lower than the usual conversational tone. This is especially helpful when children begin to show inattention.

The use of pictures. Pictures stimulate feeling, thought and impulse. Their use in telling a story is of great value, provided they are handled with smoothness and artistry. Pictures help children to see and to understand what they have not seen or may not see in the tale to which they listen. They deepen impressions.

Since there are many ways of using the pictures, it is for the storyteller to decide which method she can use to the best advantage. Some workers show them during the process of narration; others make them objects of discussion preceding the story while some make the observation of pictures and objects an aftermath to the tale.

No set rule is given as to when a person should use pictures. Since storytelling belongs to the field of art it is the narrator's prerogative to manipulate her materials in the way she can use them most effectively.[17]

> The teller of stories to little children must often draw from the entire field of art if his work is to be well balanced and effective. This fact

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[17] Ibid., p. 81.

> should be fully sensed by the narrator. . . . To give the Bible stories without investing them with the color of Giulio Romano, Pellafrina da Modena, Murillo, Michael Angelo, Titian, Doré or Rembrandt is to permit the child to experience only half the delight he should have in them. Nothing so vivifies a tale as a picture illustrating that tale.[18]

Whenever possible the child should have a small picture to take home, that he may live with the story and the more completely possess it. The child will see the story in the picture if he is taught to study it in relation to the story after he has heard it.[19]

III. SOURCES OF STORY MATERIALS

Supplementary Bible materials help to emphasize the principles and truths which Bible stories demonstrate.

It should be the constant aim of the narrator to learn all she can about Old and New Testament characters so that she can make them real to her audience. The children should know the characters in order to clearly understand the lessons their lives teach. For this to happen, the teller must see the characters in their own environment.[20]

It is necessary to know about the Holy Land, its

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[18]Katherine D. Cather, Storytelling for Teachers of Beginners and Primary Children (New York: The Caxton Press, 1921), p. 37.

[19]Ibid., p. 38.

[20]Katherine D. Cather, Religious Education Through Story-Telling (Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press, 1925), p. 179.

various peoples, geography, and customs.

Geography of the Holy Land. The narrator is not expected to know everything there is to know about the Holy Land; however, the highlights of the geography of the Bible country must be clearly in mind. A map will give the location of the places but it will not give the personal touch that makes Palestine a real country.[21]

> Customs. . . . The story-teller . . . needs to know something of the customs and ways of life in Bible lands and times. . . . When he speaks of Pharisees, Saducees, scribes, or Levites, he should know the place of those men in the social order of their day. He should have a comprehension of the festivals and religious observances of the ancient Hebrews, and some understanding of their laws.[22]

IV. BIBLE STORIES

The well-known Christian educator and Sunday School Promoter, Clarence H. Benson, quotes G. C. White as saying:

> The impossible never appeals like that which is in the realm of achievement for every boy and girl. A fairy tale does not leave the pupil any hope of realization. The true story will command the larger interest. It is the element of truth that characterizes Bible stories and makes them superior to all others.[23]

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[21] Ibid., pp. 180-181.

[22] Ibid., pp. 181-182.

[23] Clarence H. Benson, The Christian Teacher (Chicago: Moody Press, 1950), pp. 225-226, Citing G. C. White, Teaching in the Sunday School, p. 45.

Hamill says that "as far as possible the storytelling of the lesson should conform to the words and facts of the sacred Book and the utmost accuracy of statement should be observed."[24]

Some authors are not as strict as Hamill in his attitude toward accuracy of statement. Some stories misrepresent the Biblical facts.

Genesis 4:1-16 gives the story of the murder of Abel. Sly takes liberties with the story:

> God said to Cain: "Why is your face scowling? If your heart is honest, your face will be bright. If your face is scowling with anger, Sin, like a lion, is lying in wait for you, eager to spring upon you. You ought to master that lion of hate in your heart." Not long after that the two brothers were out in the country together, Cain quarreled with Abel and the crouching lion of hate and jealousy in his heart sprang up, and Cain attacked his brother and killed him![25]

Andruss, in her book, Bible Stories As Told To Very Little Children, deals similarly with the story of Joseph as found in Genesis 37:3-28:

> Now Jacob had twelve little boys, and the name of one of those boys was Joseph.
>
> Joseph was a good boy. But the other boys, who were older than Joseph, did not behave so well.

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[24]H. M. Hamill, The Sunday School Teacher (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, South, 1904), p. 39.

[25]William James Sly, More Stories Retold (Chicago: The Judson Press, 1936), p. 93.

> And because Joseph obeyed his daddy all the time, his daddy gave Joseph a beautiful coat of many colors.
>
> When Joseph's brothers saw Joseph wearing this beautiful coat, they wanted coats like it, but Jacob would not give them lovely coats like Joseph's, because they listened to error so much. . . .
>
> Now, what do you think Joseph did when he found himself down in this deep, deep pit?
>
> Joseph knew that God is Love, and he knew that Love was right down there with him in the deep, deep pit, and he knew also that Love would lift him up out of the pit.[26]

At the junior level the child is beginning "to have a definite sense of right and wrong and along with this sense goes an "eager love of truth."[27]

The story of Adam as recorded by Asch does not harmonize with the Biblical account of the same event. Asch has projected his imagination so far that it places the Bible story in the realm of the ridiculous. This can be seen in the succeeding sample from his book, In The Beginning:

> . . . Among the animals, however, there was no order and no harmony; and often when they came together to consider some serious matter, they would at once begin making a great uproar, fighting, and beating one another; they grew mad with rage and wild; they did not understand one another and did

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[26]Bessie Edmond Andruss, Bible Stories As Told To Very Little Children (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1937), pp. 27-28.

[27]Marjorie E. A. Clark, Methods of Teaching Religion to Children (Westminster, S. W. I: National Society, 1944), pp. 107-108.

not know what they should talk about.[28]

Asch tells how Adam named all the animals:

> At first heavy steps were heard as the enormous elephant came along, and when Adam saw him he said:
> "He has a long nose like an elephant, so he shall be called Elephant--and he was at once so named. Then came the lion," . . . .
> "He roars exactly like a lion, so I will call him a Lion"--and he was promptly given that name."[29]

One important detail to remember in using Biblical material is that the story should be true both to the facts and to the spirit of the text. Too often the teller implies things that are not actually in the Scripture. Later the child as he reads the Biblical account, may say, "That is not the way I heard it from my teacher."

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[28] Sholene Asch, In The Beginning (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1935), p. 1.

[29] Ibid., p. 2.

CHAPTER VI

THE STORYTELLER

It is not enough for the storyteller to have a knowledge of the subject and know the techniques of Bible storytelling. As a Christian teacher she handles the good Word of Life. This presupposes certain fundamental considerations.

Relationship to God. The narrator should be a Christian. This means that she has passed from death unto life; she has been born again. Eavey affirms:

> The natural man, being dead in trespasses and sin, cannot follow Christ as a Christian though he may, in a self-effortful way, follow Him as an example. Christ is the Savior of men, and one who follows Christ as a Christian is one who has been saved. It is one thing to be called a Christian and quite another thing to be a Christian.[1]

"Jesus said, And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."[2] Thus the speaker is able to speak with the authority of God's Word.

Represent Christ aright. Children cannot conceive of love or sacrifice greater than they see in their teachers.

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[1]C. B. Eavey, Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), p. 71.

[2]John 12:32.

If a child respects and loves his teacher, he will have more cause to love God; however, if he does not love his teacher whom he has seen, how can he love God "whom he has not seen?"

Example. Children are usually good judges of character. They learn to read smiles and frowns long before they can understand.

"What we are often drowns out what we say. Words and maxims may be misunderstood; character seldom is. Precepts may fail to impress; personality never does."[3]

Benson says:

> Character itself does not make anyone a Christian. This is the work of God. But a Christian, and especially a Christian teacher, because of his greater influence by way of example, must be a person of the highest moral standards. Impurity, compromise with wrong, indulgence in questionable practices, will have to be abandoned. The Christian teacher must 'abstain from all appearance of evil.' (1 Thess. 5:22).[4]

Betts names the positive elements of personality as:

1. Openminded, inquiring, broad
2. Accurate, thorough, discerning
3. Judicious, balanced, fair
4. Original, independent, resourceful
5. Decisive, possessing convictions

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[3]George H. Betts, How To Teach Religion (Chicago: The Abingdon Press, 1919), p. 15.

[4]Clarence H. Benson, The Christian Teacher (Chicago: Moody Press, 1950), p. 57.

6. Cheerful, joyous, optimistic
7. Amiable, friendly, agreeable
8. Democratic, broadly sympathetic
9. Tolerant, sense of humor, generous
10. Kind, courteous, tactful
11. Tractable, cooperative, teachable
12. Loyal, honorable, dependable
13. Executive, forceful, vigorous
14. High ideals, worthy, exalted
15. Modest, self-effacing
16. Courageous, daring, firm
17. Honest, truthful, frank, sincere
18. Patient, calm, equable
19. Generous, open-hearted, forgiving
20. Responsive, congenial
21. Punctual, on schedule, capable
22. Methodical, consistent, logical
23. Altruistic, given to service
24. Refined, alive to beauty, artistic
25. Self-controlled, decision, purpose
26. Good physical carriage, dignity
27. Taste in attire, cleanliness, pride
28. Face smiling, voice pleasing
29. Physical endurance, vigor, strength
30. Spiritual responsiveness strong
31. Prayer life warm, satisfying
32. Religious certainty, peace, quiet
33. Religious experience expanding
34. God a near, inspiring reality
35. Power to win others to (Christ)
36. Interest in Bible and religion
37. Religion makes life fuller and richer
38. Deeply believe great fundamentals
39. Increasing triumph over sin
40. Religious future hopeful

Then he lists the negative elements:

1. Narrow, dogmatic, not hungry for truth
2. Indefinite, superficial, lazy
3. Prejudiced, led by likes and dislikes
4. Dependent, imitative, subservient
5. Uncertain, wavering, undecided
6. Gloomy, morose, pessimistic, bitter
7. Repellent, unsociable
8. Snobbish, self-centered, exclusive
9. Opinionated, dogmatic, intolerant
10. Cruel, rude, untactful

11. Stubborn, not able to work with others
12. Disloyal, uncertain dependability
13. Uncertain, weak, not capable
14. Low standards, base, contemptible
15. Egotistical, vain, autocratic
16. Overcautious, weak, vacillating
17. Low standards of honor and truth
18. Irritable, excitable, moody
19. Stingy, selfish, resentful
20. Cold, repulsive, uninviting
21. Tardy, usually behind-hand, incapable
22. Haphazard, desultory, inconsistent
23. Indifferent, not socially-minded
24. Coarse, lacking aesthetic quality
25. Suggestible, easily led, uncertain
26. Lack of poise, ill posture, no grace
27. Careless in dress, grumpy, no pride
28. Somber expression, voice unpleasant
29. Quickly tired, weak, sluggish
30. Spiritually weak, inconstant, uncertain
31. Prayer cold, formal, little comfort
32. Conflict, strain, uncertainty
33. Spiritual life static or losing force
34. God distant, unreal, hard of approach
35. Influence little or negative
36. Little concern for religion and Bible
37. Religion felt as a limitation
38. Lacking in foundations for faith
39. Too frequent falling before temptation
40. Religious growth uncertain[5]

A Christian enthusiast. The teacher's enthusiasm for the task will largely be in proportion to her faith in the great enterprise to which she has been called. Success will depend upon this factor. She must have faith in God, faith in the Bible, and faith in the task.[6]

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[5]Betts, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

[6]Benson, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

Appearance. What the teacher is and what she looks like affect the story and those who are listening. If she is a dull, drab looking individual, the children will respond in like manner. Then again, if she is alert and attractively dressed they will be more apt to listen.

Benson says of the appearance of the teacher:

> A person of good physique commands the attention and draws the interest of others. His appearance creates a favorable impression, no matter how disappointing latter impressions may be. Therefore, a teacher who can present an attractive appearance has an initial advantage. The matter of dress is important in preparing the way for a favorable hearing.[7]

It is recognized that the narrator who has a fine physique, beautiful face and charming manner may win easy access to the heart and life of boy or girl where the person with lesser natural capacities may find entrance difficult. Personality can be developed.

Some other traits of the storyteller. The teacher should be well-adjusted, faithful, resourceful, cheerful, diplomatic, and cooperative. She should be physically fit at all times. Without this fitness she cannot be alert to the needs of the children. In fact one could make an almost endless list of traits which the teacher should possess.

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[7]Clarence H, Benson, The Christian Teacher (Chicago: Moody Press, 1950), p. 55.

Prayer, preparation, and leadership. A storyteller should give herself wholly to prayer, preparation, and leadership, says Didon. This sacred work demands not lukewarm, selfish, slack souls, but hearts more finely tempered than steel, wills purer and harder than diamond.[8]

Always be a student. The teacher will at all times be a student. She observes the admonition, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."[9]

An ideal teacher. She is one who meets all the qualifications of the Christian teacher.

Eavey gives a list of elements that constitute a good teaching personality:

> P--patience, peace, perseverance, personal appearance, physique, politeness, poise, posture, practicalness, promptness, punctuality, purity, purpose
> E--earnestness, education, efficiency, endurance, energy, elasticity, enthusiasm
> R--reliability, resourcefulness, respect, responsibility, responsiveness, reverence
> S--sacrifice, scholarship, self-control, sense, sensibility, sensitivity, serenity, service, sincerity, spirituality, strength, surrender, sympathy

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[8]Lois E. Lebar, Children in the Bible School (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1952), p. 37.

[9]II Timothy 2:15.

O--objectivity, openmindedness, optimism
N--neatness, nerve, nobility, knack, knowledge
A--accuracy, action, achievement, adaptability, address, alertness, altruism, ambition, approachableness, aptness, attractiveness
L--leadership, liberty, little things, love, loyalty
I--ideas, ideals, imagination, impartiality, initiative, insight, inspiration, intelligence, interest, intuition
T--tact, temperance, tenderness, thought, thrift (in time, money, energy), tolerance, truthfulness
Y--yourself at your best.[10]

". . . If we look to the things we do, the thoughts we think, and the character we express, our personalities will take care of themselves."[11]

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[10]C. B. Eavey, Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), p. 81, citing W. E. Raffety, The Smaller Sunday School Makes Good, p. 160.

[11]Clarence H. Benson, The Christian Teacher (Chicago: Moody Press, 1950), p. 57.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There are various methods of instruction, but the oldest and the one that is still being used effectively is the story. This is especially true in the religious instruction of children. For children who cannot read are entirely dependent upon the story for Biblical ideas and conceptions of God.

Many countries such as Arabia, Egypt, Persia, China, South America and others were dependent on the storyteller for their education.

Socrates, Plato, and Confucius used stories to instill ideals in people's hearts and thereby get them to change their conduct by imitating the characters in the stories.

While these teachers could only advocate imitation, Christ, the Greatest Teacher taught a way of life that would change an individual's life and cause him, not only to try to be but to be a new creature. No other teacher can do this for a person.

The light of learning was not extinguished during the Dark Ages for the work of instruction was carried on through storytelling by tribesmen and missionaries.

Stories, being the first medium of systematic education, were utilized by Charlemagne in instructing the royalty.

People of all ages love the story because it has power to foster any of the emotions.

The story, if properly constructed, is composed of four essential parts: (1) the beginning, (2) the body, (3) the climax, and (4) the conclusion. Each part is dependent upon the other. If the narrator fails to win her audience in the beginning, she has failed in her mission. Once an audience is lost it is hard to regain their attention.

The Bible which is the Book of all books has stories which can meet the needs of every child. Within its pages are many types of stories which include history, biography, poetry, drama, adventure, and many other kinds that appeal to children of all ages.

The story will be told to no avail if it does not have a purpose behind it. Having a definite aim in the presentation of a story is essential.

Some educators think that teachers should wait until the child is six or seven years of age before trying to teach him any type of spiritual truth, but this is a mistaken idea. If a child can learn nursery rhymes and jingles, he is able to learn about God.

Since the child is dependent upon the teacher for Biblical ideas of God, it is important that the teacher be a Christian and know how to present the Bible story to the

child in order that he may be saved and grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Much preparation is necessary in telling a Bible story. The narrator must know the story so well that she can give it without any helps. However, outlining the plot of the story previous to the presentation will aid in the telling of it. She should practice telling it to an audience, which may be books, animals, chairs, or an imaginary group before giving it to her pupils.

The teller should have plenty of supplementary Biblical materials to furnish a good background for her stories. She should have knowledge of the geography of the Holy Land and the customs of Biblical characters.

Many children's Bible stories distort the truth. Such stories are often placed in the hands of teachers who have had little or no training in discriminating between truth and fiction in Bible stories. Thus they present the stories to the children without realizing the harm that is being done in so doing. Once something is learned it is difficult to unlearn it; therefore it is important that the teacher be well-trained in discerning the truth before she be permitted to instruct children from God's Word.

Also the narrator may tell thrilling stories to children but if her life as lived before them is not exemplary

she will influence them but little with her words.

The great need of today is teachers who are spirit-filled and who can give God's message to children who are eager to hear the truth.

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