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"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—John viii, 32.

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THE TEACHING FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

An Address by Rev. H. Wilson, of Concord, delivered before the Catawba Synodical Sabbath School Convention and School of Methods at Johnson C. Smith University.

Teaching was the starting point of the Church. In its foundation, Jesus made the Bible school the basis of its work. The wonderful growth of the Church during the first three centuries may be attributed to its teaching program; but it has not until recently been recognized as the main part of the Church's program. Formerly, preaching was the Church's main method of enlargement. We recognize the value of preaching, but, as a matter of fact, preaching rarely recognizes the fundamental element of pedagogy; that is, of adding something new to the facts already acquired. Most preaching has for its aim the correction of some fault, the explanation of some doctrinal truth. The best preaching after all is that which seeks to follow up this principle, as with the wonderful exposition of Alexander Maclaren, Matthew Henry and of the other expository preachers. The church is in the world to teach and that function will never be removed. The command given by the Master as He left this earth, "Go, teach" is perennial in its outlook and universal in its sphere, for every generation falls under its influence.

But the Church has adopted several means of teaching specifically the truth which it seeks to inculcate. The first systematized program of religious instruction was the Sunday school or the church school. For many years the teaching element has apparently been left in the hands of this organization. Of late several plans have been formulated, some with extraordinary success, others still in the experimental stage.

As we are all, more or less, familiar with the Sunday school and its method of work, we shall not take the time to do more than make a cursory glance at this part of the Church's teaching program. Not that it is of minor importance. It is tremendously important, for out of the Sunday school come 80 per cent of the Church membership, and yet that eighty per cent is but a fraction of the souls which the Sunday school reaches. Of the other 20 per cent many of them were once taught in some Sunday school, and in after years the teaching of other days comes like the "pattering of memories on the roof which the years have built around their heads."

The Sunday school teaches to win humanity for Christ. And the time to win them is in the days of their youth. A magnet held before a handful of tacks will attract almost all of them, but when held before a number of old rusty nails, only occasionally will one move. So Christ will draw the young. When men have formed their habits and made their place in the world, it is difficult to get them to consider the claims of Christ. And if we want the Church of tomorrow to have strong men and women in it, they must be reached today while they are in the plastic period of their years. The place to reach them is in the Bible school and to reach them they must be taught.

Building and maintaining a Church school is no child's play. It is a business and calls for brains, tact, perseverance and faithful continuance of the very best people of the Church. The Ohio Superintendent, who was a busy clerk in a store, and had only an hour at noon and evening, spent thirty minutes on his meals and the other thirty calling on the sick, the absentees and the disgruntled. He built up a school of from two

hundred to an average attendance of seven hundred. But he did it by constant work and with adequate cooperation. Every successful teaching organization in the church must have had similar experience.

Of late years the teaching function of the Church has received new impetus, and there was need for it. We had got to the stage where we sent the children to the Sunday school every Sunday for an hour, and out of the hour they got a half hour's religious instruction; then we sent them to the public schools where they received their mental training, and then we packed them off to the Y. M. C. A., or Y. W. C. A. if the town afforded such organization for their physical training, and we allowed them to ramble the streets and go to the movies for their social training. And many wonder today why the boys and girls of yesterday are the youth of today which seem to be flinging off on one side all restraint and living in an age of precocity never before known. And so, the teaching program of the Church has been enlarged, and includes such methods and plans as the School of Methods, the Daily Vacation Bible School; the School of Missions, and the Weekday School of Religious Instruction.

The School of Methods seeks to train leaders to know the psychology of child life and mentality, to get a broad viewpoint of pedagogy which will give them the right idea of teaching the varied ages which may demand their services, and gives the approach to the presentation of the lesson which fits it for the particular group under their care. It plans a more thorough course of Bible study. It gives the viewpoint which opens out the situation the writer of the particular book faced and the methods which the prophet or apostle took to meet that problem. And the beauty of the School of Methods lies in the fact that it provides for specialists in one particular field, and as it plans for the entire field rather than one particular church, its studies rank higher than could be at all possible under the old Teacher Training class. We do not want to minimize the Teacher Training program, but the value of the School of Methods to any teacher is so much superior that unless there is no other alternative every teacher should be compelled to take courses in the School of Methods.

The other auxiliaries that have been mentioned fall into the pupil's curriculum rather than the teacher's. The facts relative to religious education of Protestantism are well known, for it has often been repeated that while the Catholic child receives about 300 hours of religious instruction in the year and the Jewish boy about 200, the Protestant child, with with but very, very few exceptions only receives 26 at the most. This is due to the fact that parents have relegated the moral training of their children to the Sunday school. But the Sunday school meets but once each week, and then but for one hour, and of this hour at least a third is taken up with opening and closing and the proverbial review and announcements, leaving only forty minutes for the lesson, even under the best conditions. And that does not allow for the times when the family vacates and forgets Sunday school and everything else. The vacation Bible school was planned to help fill this need.

The next on the teaching program is the D. V. B. School.

A Vacation School is different from any other kind of school. It is not like Sunday school or public school. It is vacation time and vacation implies a change, not necessarily going away from home. It also suggests a good time, and the D. V. B. S., to give it its abbreviation, plans a good time for the boys and girls. It seeks to do the things that they like to do. The whole program is built to fit the life of boys and girls and bring them real joy. It begins at 9 o'clock, with supervised play in the half hour or so before the school opens. It lasts two hours and a half to three hours. There are no text books, and instruction is given almost entirely through stories, either told or memorized. In the school the impulse of child life to make things is satisfied, for in this school they are taught to make many things neatly and accurately. Their work also aims to teach them the necessity of working together as Christians. The church building is used generally, giving the boys and girls of the immediate community, irrespective of creed, a happy and profitable time under Christian leaders and amid Christian surroundings.

Dr. Gage tells of the following incident associated with Church Vacation Bible School work. One prominent physician said, "Why has not this been done before? The children are kept busy in good, cool surroundings, and it is the best thing I have seen in Sunday school work." An Italian mother whose three children had not missed a day and had done wonderful handwork, said, "I want to thank you for what you have done for my children. I want the motto grow up good American citizens." A Lithuanian mother expressed herself in broken English: "Missus! my Leoe was such a bad rascal, but now he is so changed. I look at him, say nothing but hold my breath."

A Vacation Bible School is a community and national asset. It brings children of all races, creeds and nationalities together in one spirit. It is one of the best Americanizing agencies now at work in any land. Every church that runs a Daily Vacation Bible School receives many blessings. It advertises the church. It makes people believe in practical Christianity. It adds new scholars to the Sunday school. It gives the church an opportunity to render real service to boys and girls. The church in this work is carrying out our Master's command to Peter, "Feed my lambs."

The School of Missions lies outside of the actual work of the Bible School in character building except in its relation to the broader viewpoint of humanity. These classes also do not necessarily limit themselves to the younger members of the community; many of the older folks enjoy the programs and discussions which naturally arise in the study of the relations of the Gospel to the world at large. But the stimulation of interest among the children of other nations must have a place in church life, in Christian teaching if we are to bring to pass that great vision of world brotherhood which is the only solution for the abolition of war. And in this respect the School of Missions should have a place in the Church program. It can be very easily related to the work among the children where the church is conducting a Daily Vacation Bible School because a part of the curriculum of that school deals directly with the missionary spirit and thus as far as the younger members are concerned the Vacation Bible School uses missionary material in its program.

But the newest and most important development of the present day is the Weekday School of Religious Instruction. This program seeks to utilize a portion of the Public School period for the teaching of religion. This teaching, as we understand it, is

not to be given in the public school itself, but in the church which the child regularly attends. Attendance is compulsory; that is, if the child's parents do not wish the child to attend the religious instruction period, the child must stay in school, in the regular class room work. Teachers are provided by the various churches, and, in some cases, a religious course has been planned by the various churches to which they all can agree, and the child in this case has not gone to the church of his association, but to the nearest church building to the school it attends.

We are facing a crisis in the world today, and it is pointed out that the jails are filling with juveniles while the elders are disputing as to the best methods of religious education that will keep them out. Of the cities now using the plan of religious education, over 1000 in number, the experiment seems to be unanimously a success. Writing in *The Continent*, Walter Albion Squires says, "When the public schools cooperate with the churches by granting public school time for church school classes, the churches and other religious organizations are given an opportunity to organize an educational program which is up to public school standards in efficiency. This 'released time' enables the churches to enroll in their classes the entire church population of the community. This has actually been accomplished in scores of communities. Of the 11,000 children in the public schools of Kansas City, more than 10,000 are enrolled in week day church schools, operating on public school time. Here is a distinctively American solution to some of our problems. It is fair to Protestant, Jew and Roman Catholic. It does no injustice to the very few parents who are opposed to their children receiving religious instruction. The plan in no way violates the separation of Church and State." In fact, states another Church paper, the religious forces have a right and a duty to demand that the State shall not be permitted to so monopolize the time and vitality of the children that they will have neither time nor vitality left for religious instruction.

The Church was commissioned to go and teach. Any method that can be used to teach the essential and fundamental principles of our Protestant heritage, must of necessity be encouraged, and at whatever sacrifice necessary; the child must not be robbed of his intrinsic birthright, that of receiving such religious instruction and guidance as shall at least point the right pathway when the ways appears; for the moral growth of our nation, the development of a high type of character depends largely on the youth knowing the principles of Christianity as given by the Scriptures which are not only profitable for doctrine, reproof, and correction, but also for "instruction in righteousness."

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VIRGINIA WESTERN DISTRICT S. S. CONVENTION.

The 32nd annual session of the Western District Sunday School Convention in the Presbytery of Southern Virginia convened with Trinity church, Ridgeway, Va., August 7, 8 and 9, 1925.

A splendid program of the year's work was carried out, beginning Friday, August 7, at 10 A. M., with Mr. S. L. Young, S. S. Missionary, presiding. Devotions were led by Rev. C. M. Dusenbury, of Stuart, Va.

The number of schools represented by delegates, 11; No. of delegates, 18; ministers, superintendents and teachers, 16. All the ministers in the district were present and gave great strength to the Convention.

The reports were the best. The young people were awake to their task and performed well their part.

Mr. Young, after having served faithfully for five years, declined the office of President, feeling that some one else would be glad to serve in that capacity. Rev. C. M. Dusenbury was elected President. We think the work will go on to great success in the future as it has in the past.

Splendid papers were read and discussed. Departmental Conferences, Primary, Junior and Adult, were demonstrated by teachers of the different Sunday Schools.

The order of opening was devotion and Bible Study, led by Rev. Wm. Fowlkes. Memorial services in memory of Rev. W. A. Yancey, S. S. M., and Mrs. Emma G. Dickson were very impressive. Rev. L. L. Downing presiding. Short talks upon the life and service of those two persons who had given their lives in service for the Master, and the religious training and Christianizing of the race, were spoken by Mrs. S. J. H. Dillard, Mrs. B. M. Hereford, Mr. J. M. Penn and Rev. Dusenbury.

Sermon on "Evangelism in the Sunday School," by Rev. L. L. Downing.

Reports from Sunday schools all showed signs of progress spiritually and numerically. Rev. Wm. Fowlkes gave a good report of the School of Methods and encouraged all the local schools to prepare to send delegates to the School of Methods. Fifth Avenue Sabbath school and the Woman's Missionary Societies sent three delegates to the School of Methods: Mrs. Maud Reynolds and Miss Mary Watterson and one more delegate whose name we do not now recall. The Western District S. S. Convention sent Rev. G. R. Carter, minister of Holmes Memorial and Trinity churches, to the School of Methods.

Round Table Discussion, led by Rev. F. C. Shirley, was very instructive and helpful. The Cradle Roll by Miss Ethel Reamy; D. V. B. S., Rev. Shirley; Catechism Contest, by Mrs. S. J. H. Dillard. A class of four persons, three young ladies and one young man, made the effort to recite from memory the Shorter Catechism. A prize was offered by Mr. S. L. Young to the one most successful, which was a Students' Bible. The prize was won by Mr. J. P. Wilson, a member of Trinity Presbyterian church, who, though spending his vacation in Oxford, N. C., and actively engaged in the Sunday school work of Timothy Darling Presbyterian church, came home to help Mr. Young and the young people with the music for the Convention. This shows Mr. Wilson's devotion to his home church work.

Miss Mary Lou Moir, a recent graduate of Ingleside Seminary, was organist for the Conventional music. The choir was made up of delegates from all the Sunday schools.

Rev. G. P. Watkins, President of the Synodical Sunday School and School of Methods, gave a splendid talk in behalf of the School of Methods and encouraged every teacher and every Sunday school to attend or send delegates.

Annual sermon preached by Rev. F. C. Shirley, dean of the School of Methods. Text, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few," Matt. 9:37-38. "Holding the Interest of the Boys and Girls of the Teenage" was discussed by Dr. E. O. Woodward, Martinsville, Va.

The total collection was \$56.06.

The Young People's concert on Saturday evening was conducted by Mr. S. L. Young, S. S. M., and Mr. J. P. Wilson. The program committee gave a splendid collection of papers, recitations and songs. All were

suiting to religious work. Their offering was \$5.00.

This most impressive Sunday S. S. Convention ended to meet with Mt. Lebanon Presbyterian church Friday before the second Sunday in August, 1926.

REV. C. M. DUSENBURY, President.

MRS. E. O. WOODWARD, Cor. Secy.

NEWS FROM FAITH CHURCH ABERDEEN, N. C.

On last Sabbath A. M., our pastor, Rev. P. W. Toney, preached an inspiring sermon from Acts 14:9, "He had faith to be made whole." His subject was, "We Need to be Made Whole." On Sunday night the sermon was equally as good. The subject was "Obedience to the Heavenly Vision."

Our Sabbath school work is still moving along nicely. Superintendent W. H. Byrd is doing all that he can to make it one of the best.

We miss our school girls and boys very much from the services since they have returned to their various schools. Misses Theresa and Verona Byrd, Willie and Bernice Barbee, and Mabel Wilson left for Mary Potter, Oxford, on the opening. Miss Nannie Blue is attending Scotia Women's College this term. Miss Gertha Mason is attending Fayetteville Normal School this term. Messrs. Rendall Lashley, Theodore Carter and Cecil Blue have returned to their respective schools.

Miss Atlanta Byrd left a week ago for Sanford where she is again teaching in the Graded school. These church workers have been instrumental in doing a great work during the summer months. Faith church misses them.

Our Ladies' Missionary Society is working nicely. On last Sunday night our President, Mrs. W. H. Barbee, announced that the Missionary ladies desired to meet for a few minutes with the pastor and sessional board and any other of the members and friends who desired to remain a few minutes after service. A large box was borne to the altar, and, to their great surprise, a beautiful individual Communion set, given with the linen, met their eyes. It was received by the pastor and sessional board, and presented to the church.

On labor day Sarah Lincoln Academy held its reunion. Elder W. H. Byrd, chairman of the trustee board of the Academy, was the instigation of this grand affair. Every one interested was asked to give this reunion his best attention; those who were not interested were asked to get interested. All former students and teachers of Sarah Lincoln Academy were asked to contribute \$1.00 or more. They responded nicely. A goal was set for \$70. Along with this affair Elder C. Utley was instrumental in getting up a grand program as follows:

Opening song, "America."
Invocation, Rev. P. W. Toney.
Solo, Miss Theresa Byrd.
Recitation.
Quartette, Glee Club.
Recitation.
Solo, Miss Lillian Douglass.
Saxophone solo, Mr. C. Utley.
Recitation.
Instrumental duett, Mes James Utley and Lashley.
Quartette, Glee Club.
Duett, Mr. and Mrs. Lashley.

Remarks, Mr. W. H. Byrd.
Miss Atlanta Byrd had the games in charge and also the social affairs.

All the women brought out baskets, and every one was served from a free storehouse. A box of fish given by Elder W. H. Byrd was also included.

The various committees now made their reports. The total amounted to \$75 or more which goes for the benefit of Sarah Lincoln Academy.

(Continued on page 3)