

there may be other reasons why you shouldn't have a pony; but even mother knows it wouldn't be wise or kind to send people a pony who haven't a stable to keep it in, and who couldn't afford to build one. Father has a hard enough time getting food and clothes for all of us, and he couldn't possibly manage to keep a pony. And now what else, little girl, have you asked for, that you didn't get?"

"I asked that I'd get perfect marks for my spelling, and I had three mistakes!"

"Did you study extra hard?" "No, I didn't study them at all."

"I don't think my little girl ought even to expect to have a prayer like that answered", said Mrs. Ross, gravely. "God answers prayers, but He expects us to do our part. Mary gets us our breakfast every morning, but we have to come down and eat it. If you had really done *your* part, I think God would have helped you."

"And now, suppose we try to find out a few prayers He *has* answered. What words did you say last night?"

"Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me;

Bless Thy little lamb to-night;

Through the darkness be Thou near me;

Watch my sleep till morning light."

"Were you warm and comfortable all night?" "Why yes, mother, of course."

"Dr. Brown told me the other day of a little boy he went to see in this city. He found him lying on a pile of rags on the floor. There was scarcely any fire in the room, and he just had a thin old skirt over him. God certainly has blessed you, and taken care of you, too. What do you think now, Helen, about never getting anything you ask for?"

Helen hung her head. She was a thoughtful little girl, and was already ashamed of her silly speech.

"I really don't think I meant it, mother, and I won't ever say it again, 'cause it isn't very grateful, when God is so good to me."

St. John, N.B.

### Bible Stories the Best

By Professor Frederick Tracy, Ph.D.

Of course, all Bible stories do not stand on the same level. All are not equally

suitable for children. Some are not suitable at all. And some that are suitable for a child of one age, would not be suitable for a child of another age. But, allowing for this, it is still true that we have, in the stories of the Bible, the very best material for the spiritual instruction of the young child.

First of all, these stories, above all others, are simple, artless, and straightforward. They are not clogged by theories. There is in them no posing, or striving for effect. There is no obvious effort to teach truth; hence they teach truth all the better. "A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living", etc. Read the story through, note the exceeding simplicity of the language, and the utter absence of all studied moralizing; and ask yourself whether this is not one reason why the story has exercised so magical a power over the human heart in all the ages since its first telling. In this respect the story resembles Him who first told it; in its simplicity and directness lies one of the secrets of its power.

Again, Bible stories are the best because they are so *true*. By this I do not mean that they confine themselves to the *facts*. I rather mean that they are in harmony with the deepest realities in the nature of man, and in his religious experience. They would seem to have been specially designed to force home to the heart the great guiding principles of the higher life.

This absolute truthfulness of the Bible story carries with it a candor that is sometimes embarrassing. It never obscures the distinction between right and wrong. Even at the risk of giving offence to sensitive ears, it calls things by their right names. Vices are never permitted to go about disguised as virtues, as is too often the case in our modern literature.

Again, the Bible story puts no premium upon mere worldly wisdom. It is quite true that the heroes of these stories sometimes prospered in worldly matters, but it is never made to appear that the heaping up of riches, or the attainment of honors and distinctions, is the greatest thing in the