



Narration: A Classical Guide with Jason Barney

Lecture 11: Narration in the Liberal Arts Tradition, Part 2

Outline:

The Quadrivium Arts of Mathematics

- Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy
- When we talk about the quadrivium arts, we are really talking about math and science as a whole.
- Should narration be used with mathematics and science?
 - Students rehearse and reproduce the demonstration of the teacher themselves.
 - Students can teach the demonstration to the class.
 - Have students narrate back the steps to solving a problem.
 - This would help mathematics students recall more fully the new content that you were exposing them to.
 - In a lab report, students need to write everything that was observed in detail in the lab. The report is a narration of what happened in a lab or experiment.
- It is important to not let math and science crowd out the truly human things.
 - We can put quantification back in its place as a subsidiary development as something that fits within the qualitative framework of the classical and Christian tradition.
 - What might it look like to restore narrative to math and science? In this way science recovers a technical narrative.
 - Science and math fit in the story of humanity and discovery. If we do this, there would be opportunities for students to narrate. This might not happen every day, but there would be opportunities.
- Charlotte Mason had endorsed something similar in a literary rediscovery of science. “Books dealing with science as with history say, should be of a literary character” (Mason).
- Charlotte Mason envisioned a different type of science textbook than we are used to.
- When we approach math and science as utilitarian subjects, students are not inspired. What if we could bring back discovery and the emotional investment in the history and journey of discovery for scientists, mathematicians, and inventors?
- Modern research has confirmed the value of retrieval practice for math and science learning.



Philosophy

- Philosophy is the love of wisdom or the sciences.
- Those who are best at mastering what the traditions before have said that are able to reach out beyond the unknown.
 - What better to help students to know and understand from authorities, than to get really good at narrating from texts?
- Narration is a help not a hindrance to expert knowledge in any particular area.
- For Mason, the acquisition of knowledge did not await the mastery of the liberal arts.
- Three sorts of knowledge are proper to a child.
 - Knowledge of God
 - Knowledge of man
 - Knowledge of the universe
- You work upon knowledge with the tools of learning.
- Charlotte Mason wanted to bring sciences and philosophy down to our youngest children. She wanted philosophy for every child, to be prepared for a life full of relationships with God and others.

Theology

- Knowledge isn't really scientific demonstration.
- The great recognition:
 - The dove descends not only on the theological sciences, but also on the seven liberal arts.
- Charlotte Mason thought about education as coming from God above.
- Theology is the queen of the sciences. All truth is God's truth.
- Do we imagine that learning is truly a spiritual exercise?
- There is something truly spiritual about our ability to know anything at all.
- Do we really understand knowledge, how ideas can spark and spread. There is something deeply mysterious and powerful that Charlotte Mason is putting her finger on.
- Let's help foster the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit in our students.