The Bible as the Basis of Images and the Parables of “The Little Prince” by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

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Abstract

The article focuses on the fairy tale and parable “The Little Prince”, the masterpiece of the famous French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900 - 1944), whose literary works are imbued with deep humanism and faith in a human being, search for the truth and meaning in life. The article examines the genre of a parable in terms of the Christian tradition. The parable was one of the main methods of preaching of Jesus Christ. Christian sources indicate such basic features of a parable as teaching and edification through the images and characters from real life; they have deep spiritual meaning of divinely revealed truth. Allegorical stories make words of teaching more expressive, they teach meditation. The article reveals parallels between Saint-Exupery’s work and biblical images and parables such as a sheep as an image of the evangelical lamb, a baobab as sprouts of sin, the Little Prince’s rule to clean his planet as a call to morning prayer, the theme of the freedom to choose between good and evil, an image of the volcano as the need for purification from passions, the character of the lamplighter as an image of a righteous monk, a heart as the organ of spiritual knowledge. These vivid images of the fairy tale like the biblical parables demonstrate the unity of the spiritual and the physical world, help to understand the hidden wisdom, allow to lodge the truth deep on memory.

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And the little prince asked himself: "How could he recognize me when he had never seen me before?" He did not know how the world is simplified for kings. To them, all men are subjects. "Approach, so that I may see you better," said the king, who felt consumingly proud of being at last a king over somebody. The little prince looked everywhere to find a place to sit down; but the entire planet was crammed and obstructed by the king's magnificent ermine robe. So he remained standing upright, and, since he was tired, he yawned. "It is contrary to etiquette to yawn in Antoine de Saint-Exupery. The Little Prince. To Leon Werth. To Leon Werth." So then I chose another profession, and learned to pilot airplanes. I have flown a little over all parts of the world; and it is true that geography has been very useful to me. At a glance I can distinguish China from Arizona. If one gets lost in the night, such knowledge is valuable.