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"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Revised Translation of Genesis.

The revised New Testament, upon which the best scholarship of our land has been long engaged, has taken its place in the book-market, and within a few months attained a wide circulation. While some fail to accept all the renderings, all scholars admit its general excellency. In our time, however, the common man needs a clearer, more accurate version of the Old Testament; and it is gratifying to know that eminent scholars, in the employ of the American Bible Union, have the work in a state of forwardness. I have before me three chapters of Genesis, translated by Dr. Conant "printed as a specimen of the revised translation, with such notes as seemed indispensable for understanding the design of the corrections, and the meaning of the sacred narrative." This covers a most important and interesting portion of the book, involving grave questions concerning the argument of "rock teaching" and Scripture doctrine. Two questions press us: What does the rock testify under the examination of those who *well know how to obtain its full, fair statement*? And what does the written revelation say, as given by God? Get the whole testimony from each, and there cannot be disagreement. In looking over these advance sheets, harmonies appear that cannot be seen in our received version. For example; The revision testifies, v. 2,—

"Now the earth was waste and empty; and darkness was over the face of the abyss; and the Spirit of God was brooding over the face of the waters."

In our version we read "And the earth was without form, and void," etc., to which the sceptical geologist objects; but an eminent Hebraist says of the original: "They are the very words which a Hebrew writer would naturally use to express the wreck and ruin of a former world, if such a one were supposed to have existed." Dr. Conant's note on verse 2, is, "Here begins a new division, as indicated by the form of the Hebrew word. Compare chap. iii. 1: The second verse is therefore, a new starting point in the history of creation."

Verse 5. And God called the light Day; and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening, and there was morning, one day.

Note on v. 5. "And there was evening, the close of a period of light by the coming on of darkness; and there was morning, the close of a period of darkness by the return of light; the two periods making a day." This is the literal rendering of the Hebrew words, and is the only construction they will bear. The common version assumes a construction of the Hebrew which is grammatically impossible.

Moreover, *evening*, in Hebrew as well as in English, means the coming on of darkness after a period of light; in other words, the close of day by the coming on of night. There could be no *evening*, therefore, without a previous period of light.

Verse 6. And God said: Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters; and let it divide waters from waters. 7. And God made the expanse; and he divided the waters which are under the expanse from the waters which are above the expanse; and it was so.

Note on v. 6. "Expanse," Dr. Johnson defines *expanse*, "a body widely extended, without inequalities." As thus defined, it exactly corresponds with the Hebrew word. So it is used by Milton:—

"Again the Almighty spake: Let there be lights, High in the expanse of heaven."

The word *firmament* in the common version, was taken from the Latin vulgate, which followed the false rendering of the septuagint version.

Now I think the correction of this single word is valuable. The criticisms of some professed "savans" on the word *firmament* must fall. While the true system of the universe was unknown, this passage was supposed to teach the existence of a fixed crystalline vault in which the heavenly bodies were set. In modern times it has been explained on the principle that Moses used the language of appearances in accommodation to the popular notion. Mr. Goodwin, a contributor to the book called "Essays and Reviews," has lately

declared that the passage is irreconcilable with the discoveries in astronomy. But he should have gone behind King James, the Vulgate, and the Septuagint, to note the sense of the Hebrew word. Perhaps he would have been spared the blunder, if he had lived to see Dr. Conant's work. Milton was wiser on this point than Goodwin, when he wrote with a beautiful appreciation of the original sense:—

"And God made
The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
Transparent, elemental air, diffused
In circuit to the uttermost convex
Of this great round."

To avoid too great length, I omit noticing several other portions marked for that purpose. If these pages are fair specimens of the work in preparation, its value will repay the lovers of God's pure word, even if we have to wait long for it. But let us hope that we shall soon read the Old Testament in a clearer, purer, diction than has yet been attained in the English tongue.—AMOUS.

How to be a happy Christian.

[The following letter was originally addressed to a young Christian friend, who was inclined to despondency, and tempted with many fears. It is offered for publication, with the hope that it may benefit others similarly afflicted:]

MY DEAR YOUNG BROTHER:—It is your privilege to be a happy Christian. David's prayer was, "Oh satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." Happiness is not the first and best thing to be sought. That is holiness; and even sorrow should be welcomed, if it will purify us by its fires; but happiness is to be found, purer and sweeter than earth can give, in wisdom's ways which are ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.

1. To be happy, you must "rejoice in God." In ourselves there is nothing pleasing. We are polluted with sin. To look down into our hearts is to behold abundant cause for distress. To look up to God is to bask in the beams of the "Sun of righteousness," to draw life and bliss from the great fountain of joy. Habitually think of God, therefore, as your Father, infinite in goodness and mercy. View him not as a stern Lawgiver and Judge, but as your Preserver, Benefactor, Friend and Saviour. Meditate on his goodness as displayed in his works, as you behold the varied exhibitions of his power, wisdom and love, in nature in the spring, summer, autumn and winter, rejoice. Remember God is love, and as you see this love lavished upon you, in your many mercies, your circumstances, your parents and friends, your happy home, and the innumerable blessings, temporal and spiritual, God has given you, you can hardly fail to cherish a thankful spirit, which is always a happy one.

2. But you may reply, "My sins so distress me that I cannot rejoice." To remove this distress, say to yourself, "I know I am a great sinner, but Jesus is a greater Saviour." It is right to confess our sins, to admit their heinousness, and to be sorry for them. But this, so far from destroying our happiness in Christ, should increase it. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Jesus "came into the world to save sinners." He "died for the ungodly," "the just for the unjust." He "bore our sins in his own body on the tree," and has "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." He is, therefore, "mighty to save," "able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him." You have believed in this precious Saviour. Oh rejoice in him. Take this glorious truth to your heart in all its fulness. Say to yourself, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." However numerous and dark your sins, he has made a full satisfaction for them. God has accepted it. The thunders of the law you have broken are silenced. There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. The moment you believe in him, pardon, adoption, peace, heaven are yours.

Let your sinfulness, therefore drive you not to despair, but to Jesus. Not to despondency but to firmer faith in the "lamb of God." Let a sense of guilt make you humble, contrite, penitent, but only that you may cling with stronger grasp to the cross, as a drowning man to the plank. Often read and appropriate to yourself those precious texts which "declare the exceeding riches of his grace," those repeated promises of salvation to the believer.

Trusting in Jesus you cannot be lost. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but "the word of our God shall stand forever," and that word is your security. To every such temptation of the adversary you may reply,

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

3. Sometimes despondency has a physical cause. The spirits suffer with the health often when we are not conscious of it. To avoid this, exercise freely in the fresh air, play with your young companions, seek to be cheerful, and to enjoy every innocent pleasure that may keep up the tone of your health, both of body and of mind. Surely the child of God has a far better right to enjoy the blessings of life than the child of wrath.

When tempted to despond, at once examine into the cause. If you discover sin, go to God and confess it. Pray for forgiveness, and renew your application to the "blood that cleanseth from all sin." If you cannot find out such a cause, drive away your gloom by active employment of some kind. "Fill the measure with wheat, and there will be no room for chaff." Go and play, or ride, or walk or work, or read the Bible, or some other interesting book;—do something, any thing almost rather than indulge and increase it by brooding over it, groaning, complaining, and wishing impossibilities.

In short my dear brother, "commit the keeping of your soul" to Jesus. Trust him fully, and rest satisfied that in his arms you are perfectly safe. This will give you peace. Then go on to serve God from love, and not from fear. Try to do your duty promptly and cheerfully, and when you fall short, as you may, perhaps, daily, apply anew to the cleansing fountain of atoning love. Thus only can you be happy and holy. Your earthly pilgrimage will be illumined by the Saviour's smile, and will terminate in the perfect bliss of the redeemed in glory.—Nat. Baptist.

Good for a School-house.

"Rather poor accommodation for a family there, I should think," said a friend, as we rode past a small, one-story building, in one of the rural districts of New York.

"It is a school-house," I replied.

"Indeed! it is very good for a school-house."

That evening at the prayer-meeting, I heard a Christian say, "This is a dreary world. I wonder that I should ever feel attached to it. Friends fade away riches take to themselves wings, pleasures have a concealed sting. Everything here is transitory."

Dreary, I thought, yes dreary enough as a dwelling place, but is it not very good for a school-house? And that is the only purpose for which God ever meant it.

"Riches, friends, pleasures pass away." To be sure they do. So do poverty, enemies, troubles, for all these are only school-books and when we have learned all the lessons any one of them can give us, our teacher, God, takes it away, and gives us another book. Earth is changeful, and ought to be. Do we want to be kept always in the lowest class, because if we enter a higher one we must give up our primers? The change from riches to poverty is often, as God looks at things, promotion.

I saw another man not long after, a professor of religion too. "Well," he said, "give me a good farm well stocked, and I'll risk all the danger of it. Why shouldn't a man have the good of the world while he is in it?"

He was making the same mistake. "The good of the world," he said, and forgetting that it is good only as a school-house, he was trying to make easy chairs of its benches, and feasting tables of its desks. He was filling it with household stores, and wholly neglecting the lessons set for him, to learn in it. I trembled as I thought of his examination day.

With a sweeter sense came the thought that this world is only a school-house, as I stood by the death-bed of an aged Christian, and heard her whisper, "All that we can enjoy of this life is very uncertain, but we know,"—here her voice failed, and I completed the sentence,—

"We know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"That," she whispered again, "is my great comfort now."—*Id.*

The Two Voices.

When Gutenberg, the first printer was working in his cell in the monastery of St. Aborsgot, he tells us that he heard two voices address him. The one bade him desist; told him the power his invention would put in the hands of bad men to propagate their wickedness; told him how men would profane the art he had created, and how posterity would have cause to curse the man who gave it to the world. So impressed was Gutenberg with what he heard, that he took a hammer, and broke to pieces the types he had so laboriously put together. His work of destruction was only stayed by another voice sweet and musical, that fell on his ear, telling him to go on, and to rejoice in his work; that all good might be made the cause of evil, but that God would bless the right in the end. So to all of us still come those voices that came to Gutenberg; the one calling us to work while it is called to-day—to try to leave this world better than we found it; and the other tempting us to give over and take our ease—to leave the plough in mid-furrow, and to rest on our oars when we should be pulling against the stream.

Daughters of Zion.

From the time of Isaiah the extravagance of female dress has been a theme of amusing or indignant comment. The last instance we have seen is that of a country pastor, west of the mountains, who was horrified at observing, one Sunday morning, no less than six brides present in his church, all arrayed in the extreme of fashion. He concluded at once that although he might gain the ears of a few of his scanty auditory, the small bonnets and big hoops, the tall feathers and broad collars would take most of the eyes. He was not disappointed. The scene brought to his mind the description of Delilah in Milton's Samson Agonistes:

"But who is this? What thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems,
That so bedecked, ornate and gay,
Come this way sailing
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus, bound for the isles
Of Javan or Gadire,
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails filled, and streamers waving,
Courtied by all the winds that hold them play,
An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger."

The movement of the stately dames as they sailed in and out recalled a passage from Wilkinson's *Merchant Royal* on the text Proverbs 31: 14. "She is like the merchant's ship; she bringeth her food from afar." "But of all qualities, a woman must not have one quality of a ship, and that is too much rigging. O what a wonder it is to see a ship under sail, with her tanklings, and her masts, and her tops, and her top-gallants, with her upper decks and her nether decks, and so bedecked with her streamers, flags and ensigns, and I know not what; yes, but a world of wonders it is to see a woman, created in God's image, so miscreant, oftentimes, and deformed with her French, her Spanish, and her foolish fashions, that He that made her, when He looks upon her, shall hardly know her, with her piumes, her fannes, and a silken vizard, with a ruffle like a sail, yea, a ruffle like a rainbow, with a feather in her cap, with a flag in her top, to tell, I think, which way the wind will blow."—*Intelligencer.*

THE END OF SPEECHES.—The leading political orator of England now is, we suppose, Mr. John Bright. A friend recently asked him whether his great speeches were delivered without study. His reply was that he usually wrote out on a card three or four of the principal subjects or branches of the subject, and walked about his room for a little while, fitting them to their proper order. "There is one thing, however," added Mr. Bright, "I always prepare, and that is the end of my speech. Before I get up to speak I always know how I am going to leave off, and that is half the art. Many a decent speaker has spoken well for a time, but cannot, while speaking, hit upon a few good sentences with which to stop, and at last makes a mess of it and leaves an unfavourable impression."