



A Christmas Song.

I know a path by angels trod,
Before the world was old,
But on it came in later days
A multitude untold—
A shining host, a praising host;
Let God be praised for them,
Who sang his praise in lofty lays
O'er famous Bethlehem.

No tongue can tell the sacred pomp
That sweeps from heaven that day,
And trailed glory past the spheres
To where the Infant lay.
Lift up your eyes in vast surprise,
Ye shepherds, on the scene,
And see the beaming forms that hang
The heavens and earth between.

Upon their heads are golden crowns,
Their robes are white as snow,
Sweet lightnings from their faces flash
Upon the vale below;
Before the glory of the Lord
The stars turn pale and flee—
Oh what a sight, that gracious night,
For shepherd swains to see!

Through all the still and scented air
There comes a deeper calm,
As if from fear lest it should hear
Naught of the coming psalm.
And now the air grows sweeter still;
Slow beat the balmy wings,
Clear o'er the mute and raptured earth
The choir of angels sings.

And far across Judean hills
Swell out the floods of praise—
I would that music such as this
Might sweeten all my days;
For lo, 'tis Paradise to hear
The glory of that sound,
That swells so grandly to the skies,
So sweetly seeks the ground.

Full many an age has passed away
Since that grand song was given,
Which sweetened all our arid air
And wedded earth and heaven;
But still each year we seem to hear
The angels sing again
The dear old song, the grand old song,
In sweet and lofty strain.

And ever as we give our gifts
And homes with garlands weave,
Our hearts will turn their backward gaze
On that first Christmas eve,
And sing his praise in joyful lays
By whom that Child was given,
Whose advent here such mighty cheer
Gave all the choirs of heaven.

—Rev. E. F. Burr, D. D., in the
Episcopal Recorder.

The Creation of the World.

BY REV. J. E. HOPPER.

No. 1.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."—Gen. 1: 1.

The object God had in view in giving us the Bible was to afford us a knowledge of his character as revealed in the plan of salvation through his Son Jesus Christ.

The information given on other points is merely incidental and subsidiary to its main aim. No science, art, history, or philosophy is introduced for its own sake.

The popular language of the day when the books were written is used, even when it is inconsistent with the facts of science. For instance, the sun is represented as rising and setting; Joshua speaks of it as standing still. The earth is represented as stationary; the firmament as a roof sustaining an ocean of water, and having windows to let the rain through. These were the popular notions of the day when they were penned.

Presenting a revelation two courses were open to be pursued. The one was to adopt these popular

opinions and present the books as they are given us, although scientifically inaccurate. The other was to make the Scriptures a text book of science as well as a revelation of God. By the adoption of this latter course the book would have been more unintelligible to past generations, and also to us, unless we have reached the limits of knowledge; and its size would have been enormous. All things considered, we submit God has given us his book in the best form to answer the object in view. John said of his gospel, and doubtless it is applicable to the whole revelation, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing ye might have life through his name."

I. Science has proved a great age for the earth. It cannot answer the question whether the earth was created or existed from all eternity. That we must learn alone from reason and revelation; but it speaks clearly about the earth's age, not stating an exact number of years, but pointing back to tens of thousands of years. The earth's crust, in which are found animal remains, is from 8 to 10 miles thick, composed of strata, resting on a granite base, tilted upwards here and there by volcanic and other forces. These strata, slowly and gradually through the ages of the past, under the guiding hand of God, were formed by natural agencies. They are of the same material, but each has its own peculiar fossil, animal, or plant remains, which are not commingled. These strata show some half dozen great ages or epochs in the world's history. The following is the result of actual investigation of the earth's crust:

For 200 feet we find human relics.
" 2000 " anti-Adamite plants and animals of various kinds.
" 2700 " all sorts of reptiles.
" 2700 " marine reptiles only.
" 9000 " fishes.
" 33,000 " molluscs or shell fish.

(Since the flood 12 species have died out, while 60,000 perished in the fossil age.)

Below this the granite base. When the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. We can see how time and the agencies of fire and water would produce all the varied forms of the earth's crust. The creative power of God and the working of natural causes would produce all plant and animal remains we find. We conclude, then, no miraculous creation of these in the state in which they now appear. It would be deception on God's part. He works not to deceive, but to promote the development of man's nature, affording him subjects for investigation.

Science, then, tells us the earth is tens or hundreds of thousands of years old.

Science tells us it has been inhabited again and again by plant and animal life of extinct species.

Science points to man's residence on the earth as infinitely brief, compared with its previous forms of life.

Science points to a time late in the history of this world when it was submerged in water, called commonly the Drift Period—a period of abounding water, snow, and ice. In proof of this, we find a boulder containing 161,000 cubic feet moved a distance of 32 miles from one of the Alps, and by careful measurement its exact place has been ascertained whence it was carried. Also, there

are granite rocks in Iceland, although the island is formed of lava, and Central Europe is overspread with boulders from Northern Europe.

II. What does revelation affirm concerning these facts, and how do they harmonize?

Before offering anything in favor of a harmonious utterance of the book of nature and revelation, let it be distinctly understood that we must judge of the statements of science and revelation just as we would the evidence of two separate witnesses. We have no right to affirm disagreement if there is any way of harmonizing the statements.

Two theories are held by leading scientific gentlemen, who believe in the Mosaic account of the creation, either of which accord with the facts of science. The first theory holds the first verse of Genesis to be independent of the six days' work following. Thus "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" is to be considered as a clause wholly unconnected with the succeeding part of the chapter. When that beginning was we are not told, but whenever the heaven and the earth began to exist, it was by the creative power of God. Suppose now the heaven and the earth to be made: suppose all the anti-Adamite periods to have passed away: suppose the last of the extinct animals and plants to have died off: then is to follow the next clause, "And the earth was without form and void." Again God interposes and sends his Spirit to move upon the face of the waters; and afterwards, in six days, remodels the whole earth, adapting its animals and plants to man, his last great work.

The other theory is to understand the word day to be an indefinite period of time, and not 24 hours. That it is so used in Scripture not unfrequently there can be no doubt. In Gen 2: 4 it is indefinite: "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens." Here creation is referred to as the work of one day, not of six. Again, it is said, "God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had created and made," whence it would seem that he rested 24 hours, but this is not the case, as the Sabbath rest still continues. Paul, in exhorting the Roman converts, said the night is far spent, the day is at hand—a period of greater light dawning. Again, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have mercy's offer thus: "to-day if ye will hear his voice," &c.—that to-day is our life-time; 2 Peter 3: 8, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." With regard to the expression morning and evening, used so often in the account of the creation, Daniel used this expression for a period of 2300 days, denoting its beginning and ending (Daniel 8: 14, 26). Now, if we interpret the word day and the phrase morning and evening after this analogy, the whole difficulty of harmonizing the representations of nature and revelation is surmounted.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. This was the period from the beginning of creation till the basement granite rocks of our earth, containing no remains of animal life, were all laid. Then it was "without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

I. Then "the Spirit of God moved

upon the face of the deep," and called into existence those sightless molluscs and lowly zoophytes, whose fossils mark the 1st period (Cambrian).

God next commanded the light to shine and dispel the darkness which was over the face of the whole deep. Still the Spirit moved upon the waters and a higher order of shell-fish (trilobites) with eyes, tenanted the ocean. This was the first time that light was divided from darkness; and as every subsequent period resembled this, it is aptly called the first day, or the first period when there was a morning and evening.

II. The next process was the lifting up of the firmament or thick mists, which brooded over the whole earth. As soon as this was done, creatures which required air were created—the work of the 2nd period (Silurian).

III. To this follows the 3rd period (Devonian), which begins by the gathering together of the ocean into one place, and the appearance of dry land. This was the time when the great mountain ranges were upheaved, and the limits of the deep were circumscribed. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed after its kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed is in itself" (Carboniferous).

IV. Now came the period when the sun and moon were commanded to shine upon the earth, and to rule both the day and the night. There was light before, but no rays of the sun ever reached the surface of our globe. Every previous period was sombre and sunless, hazy and clouded. The subsequent ones enjoyed the bright sun and saw the moon in her glory.

V. Then God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the creeping things that have life, and fowls that may fly above the earth. And God created great whales or sea monsters, and everything that creepeth. This was the fifth day's work—the age of the reptiles, when sea monsters, and creeping things, and winged saurians abounded.

VI. Lastly, God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creatures after his kind, cattle and beasts of the earth after their kind. At the close of this, the last day or period, man was made, and to him was given the dominion of the earth.

Either of these methods of reconciliation are better than rejecting, on the one hand, the facts of Geology, or on the other, the statements of Scripture.

In this department of scientific or Biblical study we do not need to pin our faith to any particular theory. All that should especially interest us as believers in the inspiration of the Mosaic records is this: Is there any possible way of harmonizing them with the facts of science? There may be several methods of doing this, and as long as there is even one method of reconciliation left us, the opponents of Scripture ought not, as honest men, to denounce us for believing what is easily capable of being triumphantly defended.

This first chapter of Genesis meets many objectors because it rebukes nearly every form of false religion—Atheism, Polytheism, Materialism, Pantheism, Fatalism, every form of Paganism. The first and last chapter of the Bible unite in proclaiming Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The first represents man sent into the world formed for his enjoyment. The other represents man welcomed to God's presence: whosoever will,

let him come. Great changes have occurred—a greater is to come; and a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, shall appear.

Why Not Do It Yourself?

BY SYDNEY DAYRE.

"Will you not go to prayer meeting to-night with me, Ruth? Come, it will seem like old times to have you going to the old place again. I'll have the horse 'round in a few minutes."

"I'll go John, but don't bring the horse. Walking will be pleasanter than riding on a summer evening like this."

It had been a long time since John Wentworth's sister Ruth, long ago married and gone away, had made a visit to the old homestead. Her older brother, now with a suspicion of grey in his hair, was its master in place of the old father who had for so many years held an honored position in the well-to-do farming community.

"I can't say, though," resumed John, as they began their walk, "that I can promise you much good by going."

"Good," she echoed, in some surprise, "I always thought you considered prayer meeting a rather good place to go to."

"Yes, I do. But I mean you'll be sure to find a lack here, Ruth. We need a stirring up of dry bones about as badly as any church you ever saw. Our prayer meeting is such a dead sort of a place, I sometimes think there is little edification to be found there."

"What seems to be the trouble?"
"Oh, no life about things. None of the brethren seem to have any readiness in giving a lift, and little fervor when they do make an effort. They sit and sit and let things drag. But I think if someone would only make a vigorous start and lead off, the others would be glad to follow. It really seems a shame that such a state of things should keep on among Christian people." And John shook his head in virtuous condemnation of his fellow-men.

"Why don't you do it yourself, John?" asked his sister.

"I? Why, Ruth, you talk foolishly. You know very well I'm not one of that kind."

"One of what kind?"
"The kind that take a lead, and stir things."

"But why are you not, John?"
"Well—you know I am one of the backward sort. Men are different in their ways. I've always taken my quiet position in the background, and left others to keep things active. So it isn't expected of me."

"But why shouldn't it be? Why are any others more under obligation to do it than you? Are there any who receive more special orders than others to be diligent in the Master's business?"

"Dear me, Ruth, you are so persistent." He had not for a long time been confronted by anything so perplexing as this pressing, "Why? Why?" from his sister, or any question so hard to answer.

"Well," he resumed, "I don't say they are, except that in every church are to be found those who take a lead, and those who are satisfied to be led. It's right that it should be so, I suppose. And I've never, so far, had reason to think I was called on to do more than I am doing."

"Perhaps your feeling as you do about the deadness is a very good

evidence that you are called on."
"Nonsense, Ruth, you talk like a woman."

"As to its being right that some should do the work," she said, with a sober shake of the head, "I can't see it so. I can't help thinking that the members of a church ought to be like a grand army, marching shoulder to shoulder, each doing his own share. Now, if everyone in the prayer-meeting is, like you, waiting for some one to stir up things, how long is it going to wait? It seems to me a sad thing that the Lord's own servants, year after year professing his name, claiming pardon for their sins through his sacrifice, and cherishing the hope of everlasting life through his abounding grace, should be able to come together without having their hearts and tongues glowing with praise or prayer."

She said no more, for she was a woman not given to many words. But, as they finished their walk in silence, there was ample time for the relief of the burden which had been laid upon him by her simple words, "Why don't you do it yourself?"

Why? He had no answer to make except in a mute confession of duty left undone, and opportunities lost. But, thank God, conviction had not come to him as it comes, alas, to so many of us, too late!

When the pastor, after opening the meeting, looked about him with a glance of appeal for co-operation, joined with a discouraged expression which betrayed his lack of expectation of receiving anything of the kind, Brother John Wentworth rose and poured out his soul in humble confession of past shortcomings, with earnest and heartfelt craving of pardon and help for better things in time to come.

Heart always moves heart. Another voice soon followed his in contrite wonder that the story of the shed blood and purchased salvation should be so often repeated to deaf ears and stony hearts. Men seemed suddenly alive to the solemn responsibilities imposed upon them by the blessed privileges offered by the sacred hour, and the time which had heretofore dragged its slow length wearily, poorly filled out and poorly improved, was all too short for those whose awakened souls sought eager expression.—American.

The Donkey Silenced.

A fox, one evening passing through a common, heard a donkey saying in loud and positive terms to the owl and mole that nothing could convince him of the existence of the lion. Said he, appealing to the mole:—

"We have never seen the lion, have we? We cannot be asked to believe what we have never seen, therefore the lion does not exist, never has existed, and never will exist!"

Just then a mischievous wind blew a speck in the donkey's eye.

"Why do you not go on with your fine speech?" blandly asked the fox.

"I cannot on account of the pain," dolefully replied the donkey.

"Why did you admit the speck in your eye?" asked master fox.

"How could I see it?"

"But surely you saw the wind?"

"The wind? who sees the wind?" brayed the donkey.

"Friend, you must be mistaken; did I not hear you say that you believed only what you saw? How then can you be in pain from an invisible speck blown by a wind you could not see?"

So many a man emulates the donkey in denying the invisible.