

The Six Days of Moses.

In a former article I called attention to a certain class of Bible interpreters, who are constantly turning and twisting the Old Book so as to make it agree with what is the supposed teachings of science. We cited as an instance of this twisting process the attempt of certain followers of Hugi Miller to make the "six days" of formation, mentioned in first chapter of Genesis, by Moses, mean six indefinite periods of time.

We stated then, and repeat it now, that such an interpretation is a forced one, that it is in violation of all established rules of permanenties, is opposed to reason and common sense, and would have never been thought of, but for the assumption, that the statement of Moses is in conflict with the teachings of science. I do not "ignore science" nor "common sense," but that quality of sense which makes "six days" mean an "indefinite period"—a million years perhaps, is certainly of the commonest sort.

I rejoice when I see the Bible in harmony with the demonstrations of science, but it pains me when I see the friends of the Bible ready to surrender its plainest teachings, and make it an enigma darker than the legends of Bud-da or Brah-ma to meet speculations of science, "falsely so called."

But in the statement of Moses that the Lord made the heavens and the earth "in six days" there is no conflict with science if we allow that Moses meant by a day just what we mean, and just what the Israelites in the wilderness understood him to mean, when he said, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day."

Just here I desire to give the comment of President Milligan, who was certainly not indifferent to science nor deficient in that most estimable quality, "common sense." Commenting on the above passage he says: "It is very obvious that the word day, in the protasis of this precept, is used in its ordinary sense, simply to denote a period of twenty-four hours; and just as obvious that it is used the same sense in the apodosis; and that the six days of creation were, therefore, six ordinary days, of twenty-four hours each." (Reason and Revelation p. 327).

But as has been said this "indefinite period" theory is in violation of the plainest principals of interpretation.

Let us look for a moment at a few of these. I quote from Horn's Introduction:

1. The sense of Scripture is defined to be "That conception of its meaning which the Holy Spirit presents to the understanding of man, by means of the words of Scripture, and by means of the ideas comprised in those words."

2. "Ascertain the *usus loquendi* or notion affixed to a word by the persons, by whom the language was spoken, and especially the particular connection in which such notion is fixed."

3. "The received signification of a word is to be retained unless weighty and necessary reasons require that it should be abandoned."

4. "Of any particular passages the most simple sense, or that which most readily suggests itself to an attention and intelligent reader . . . is in all probability the genuine sense or meaning."

5. "We should be more willing to take a sense from Scripture than to bring one to it."

There are many other rules, which we have not space to mention, these are sufficient for our purpose.

Now apply these rules to the six days of creation, and we can arrive at no other conclusion than that of President Milligan, that they "were six ordinary days of twenty-four hours

each." The meaning of the words lead to this conclusion. The notion affixed to the phrase "six days" by those whom Moses addressed will admit of no other construction. Moses said, "Six days shalt thou labor," they evidently understood this to mean six literal days; he immediately follows with the statement in six days God "made heaven and earth;" how could they understand this last statement differently from the first? But under rule third we must accept the literal sense as the true one.

What "weighty reasons" are these for departing from the ordinary meaning of the words? Is there anything in the context, which requires it? Nothing. On the other hand the context forbids it. Is there any other passage that conflicts with this plain simple meaning? None. Then why depart from the common meaning of the words? Simply because some scientist has said that Moses was mistaken. And certain it is that the idea of an "indefinite period" is not one that we "take from the passage," but one which we "bring to it."

True it is, that words are often used in a figurative sense, and whole phrases and sentences are often to be understood in a secondary sense. But when this is the case there is always something in the context or in other passages, on the same subject, which indicate it.

For instance, when Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art that head of gold," we know that his language is not to be taken literally, because the context shows that it is symbolical. Again, when the Savior said to his disciples, "This is my body," we do not take his words literally, for the simple reason that the sense of the passage will not admit of it. The disciples present could not mistake his meaning. They were looking upon the body of Jesus and the bread which he held in his hand, at the same time, it required no explanation to understand his words, his meaning was obvious.

But not so in the statement of Moses to the Israelites in reference to the creation. If Moses understood science they did not, they had no way of knowing what he meant but by the meaning of his language, hence I affirm again that if he used the expression "six days" in a sense which they did not understand, and knew they did not, which he evidently did if he meant "six indefinite periods," then his language was deceptive, unless he made an explanation.

And here again let me quote from the lamented Milligan: "If (says he) the object was to give us an outline of what occurred in fitting up the earth for the abode of man within the short space of six literal days, all must say that he has succeeded well. But if it was his purpose to give even the synopsis of what was done within the immense cycles of six indefinite periods, each one of which consisted in all probability of many thousands, perhaps millions of years, then ended. So far as we can judge, his attempt was a failure."

It has been said that the expression "morning and evening" used by Moses in connection with the works of creation means simply the "beginning and the ending;" that this is the meaning in the "original, and also in our own language." This statement I am convinced is a mistake, it has no such meaning in our language. I am sure Webster defines the morning to be "the time from mid-night to noon," and evening "properly the decline or fall of the day, or the sun." Daniel speaks of the "vision of the evening and morning," he certainly don't mean the beginning and ending of an "indefinite period." David prayed "evening and morning." Paul persuaded the people from "morning to evening."

I close this article with an extract from the sage of Bethany College—the immortal Campbell. It shows what little sympathy he had with the evolution and progressive theories of

this generation: "God, in his infinite individuality and omnipotence, retires within himself, then utters a mighty fiat, and at his behest all creation springs erect into existence. In support of this theory, we presume to hold that Adam never was a boy; Eve never was a girl; that the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fishes of the sea, also the noble and majestic Palms of Galilee that lifted their lofty heads so grandly towards the heavens, yea, everything, throughout the entire range of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, all that constituted the universe, were in their first stage, created in a state of high and wondrous perfection. . . . It is in accordance with this theory that we look at the sun in his first attitude with respect to the latitude and longitude of man's first locality—the garden of Eden. When the great luminary was formed and placed in the heavens, it did not appear to Adam, rising from the east, but first appeared at high noon, in full-orbed and surpassing splendor. And how emblematic of perfection and design was its position! From that stand-point the sun began to descend, until it disappeared from Adam in the western horizon. The earth having revolved once upon its axis from west to east, the splendid orb, at the end of twenty-four hours had arrived (the next day noon) at its starting point 'and the evening and the morning were the first day.'"

Thus we see that the master mind of Alexander Campbell had no sympathy with the silurian nonsense and evolution tomfoolery of Hugi Miller, Darwin and their followers. It has been urged that we can't tell "the exact length of those primordial days, seeing that the sun and the moon were not made until the fourth day." To use the classic language of the objector, I might say, the objection is founded "on the simplicity of unconscious and dogmatic ignorance." Men of science know, and common sense ought to know, that the sun is "not the original source of light;" light existed before the fourth day. "God said let there be light and there was light." "God divided the light from the darkness, and God called the light day, and the darkness he called night, and the evening and the morning were the first day." Gen. i. 3-5.

Here we have light and darkness, day and night, before the sun and moon were made the "great light bearers" to the earth. The separation of light from darkness, or the creation of day and night on the earth was the result of the first day's work. How this separation was accomplished I don't know, but I have an opinion, and that is, that it took place in the first revolution of the earth upon its axis. So we see that with the recurrence of day and night the length of the first four days are as definitely determined as the last two, in fact, as any day.

The work of the fourth day was not the creation of the sun and moon; their creation is evidently included in the statement of the first verse of Gen. 1st, and belongs to that period called by Moses the "beginning." But the work of the fourth day was the arrangement of those two planets to be light bearers to the world.

Moses, according to the best authorities, does not say that God made "two great lights," (as our translation reads) but that he made two great light bearers, so that the work of the fourth day was not the creation of light, but the arrangement of it for the benefit of man and beast.

Here I dismiss the subject believing that we shall know more about all these things

"In the dawning of the morning
When the mists have cleared away."
OLD FOGIE.

Don't Stop that Cough,

Too suddenly by taking some mixture containing Morphine. Better far let nature take its course, gently assisted by that pleasant and reliable remedy, Dr. Young's Yankee Cough Syrup.

"With the Heart Man Believeth."

BY S. H. HEDRICK.

NUMBER II.

In our former paper we noticed the nature of mind and heart, with some restriction upon those who indicate the physical heart as the object indicated in Scripture. It was truly one of the great mistakes of the past to think of the heart as anything outside of mind, soul, or spirit, and worse still to select this fleshy organ as the thing referred to. Yet they did so, and the present generation is not free from its disastrous effect; and if our brethren speak, write and make black boards so as to perpetuate such a gross error the world will recover from it slow indeed.

We would not undervalue Sunday school work and help, nor say anything to discourage the use of black boards. We are on the contrary, favorable to all of them. We use a board ourselves in our effort at preaching, but we reject at once any and all such figures or words that are so manifestly contrary to the Scripture as the one referred to and others we shall notice.

We have before us a copy of the "Superintendent's paper," published at Philadelphia, by John D. Wattles. We send the black board for Feb. 29th:

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS
CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL
SERVE.
The Beatitudes of Jesus.
ONLY TRUST HIM.
All these things shall be added unto you.

This black board perverts and ignores verse 33 of Matt. vi., which says: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and these things shall be added unto you." This board says, "only trust him." Jesus evidently taught them to "seek." This implies something to do, and the Gospel requires a change in life; it requires full and unreserved obedience to the law of the Spirit of life; and when men seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, they must seek by a faith that fully accepts the Gospel in all its requirements; a faith that assents to all the facts stated in the Gospel. That consents to all the commands of Jesus, and so doing, it confides in his promises or truly trusts him. The popular theory of faith only ignores this it assumes that he who simply and only cast himself upon the Lord will be pardoned whether he obeys the Gospel or not, and many such suppose that God has fully authorize such ideas; therefore it is preached, prayed and sung till it has become the chief element in the revivals, in the creeds, and in the thoughts and actions of many people.

Worse still, this "only" is prefixed and affixed to the divine word in every way to support such an idea. Many of these Sunday school black boards are grand auxiliaries in perpetuating these errors. They are often prepared and designed and set up by some mechanic or printer who knows but little of the lesson or of the Bible in general. Yet, in most cases, they are prepared by the editors, and we shall always feel that they are and should be responsible for them. Such boards show that the editors of the "Superintendent's paper" is either ignorant of Scripture or willing to permit to sustain a popular erroneous theory; and this invasion of the plain import of Matt. vi. 33, indicates that the latter is the true supposition.

We desire to ask Mr. Wattles to tell the superintendents what gross error may not be proven if such perversion and substitution as this is admissible? Tell them \$60, if this is not a violation of all those Scriptures which forbids either additions too or subtractions from the word of God? If these boards are a specimen of the helps he proposes to give to the superintendents of the land, the less custom

he has the better it will be for the rising generation.

In this we are not to be construed as opposing black board illustration; we think such helps invaluable, but when an illustration is made to set out the plain teaching of Jesus, and substitute a false sectarian theory, such illustration is a curse rather than a blessing. To such black boards as them found in the February issue of the "paper" certainly will not favorably commend it to the thoughtful.

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