



LESSON I.—JANUARY 6, 1907.

God, the Creator.

Genesis i., 1-25.

Golden Text.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.—Gen. i., 1.

Home Readings.

- Monday, Dec. 31.—Gen. i., 1-25.
 Tuesday, Jan. 1.—John i., 1-16.
 Wednesday, Jan. 2.—Job. ix., 1-21.
 Thursday, Jan. 3.—Job. xxxviii., 1-21.
 Friday, Jan. 4.—Job. xxxviii., 22-41.
 Saturday, Jan. 5.—Ps. xix., 1-14.
 Sunday, Jan. 6.—Ps. civ., 1-22.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

When Michael Angelo overlaid the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel with frescoes that make its common plaster more precious than gold, he dipped his pencils into the first chapter of Genesis. Each successive panel matches its respective paragraph—the Separation of Light and Darkness; the Creation of the Sun and Moon; of Trees and Plants; of Adam; of Eve; and so on. The frescoes are indescribably majestic, but they fall short of the narrative which inspired them. That is unapproachable in literature or art. It is Divine.

If the immortal Florentine had drawn his inspiration from any other cosmogony than that of Moses, the Vatican ceiling would have been marred with the incongruous shapes of man's wild fancy and wilder fear. Dualism would have been there—a devil as powerful as God; or Polytheism—gods many and all in a wrangle, one pulling down what the other set up; or Pantheism, an eternal matter, insensate, yet evolving itself in various stages, the thing fashioned greater than that which made it; or such grotesque ideals of the universe as, for example, that of the Hindu with its pyramid of snake, turtle, and elephant, and triple disk.

Instead of all this we see on that lustrous roof the ineffable Jehovah in the form of a man, as the Bible itself must needs present Him to us—eternity upon His hoary brow, omniscience beaming in His eye, omnipotence in His outstretched arms, and infinite love in His whole mien. This majestic Father of the world is pictured as proceeding with the complacency of Infinity to hang His lanterns in the sky, to separate air, water, and land. Then He peoples each with creatures suitable to their respective spheres—their bodies cunningly adapted to ether, fluid, and terra firma respectively.

For a seventh time the Almighty 'Former of the Skies' spreads His hands in benediction over all His works, and in the seventh epoch there is cessation from creative activity.

This mosaic account of Creation is a miracle in words. Not to this present highly-cultured age, but back three thousand years, to the beginning of literature, must we look for the most satisfactory statement of the origin of things. There through the mists of human speculations, through rising and falling systems of philosophy, Genesis shines like a star ever ascendent. It is not attached to any system of geology, astronomy, or biology. So,

as numbers of these have sunk in their turn, Genesis has never been submerged. The book may clash with an hypothesis, it never does with a fact. The narrative is elastic enough to take in all the modern discoveries of physical science, but presents a rim of steel to the vagaries of false science.

Whence came this phenomenal writing? From the genius of man? Then, why is not its equal found in the ancient literature of other nations apparently better situated to produce such a book than the petty and oft-captive Israel? Inspiration is the only adequate explanation of Genesis. The blessed intent of the book is seen by the most casual reader. It is a mirror to reflect the person and attributes of God; it answers, too, the question of the heart as to the origin of nature and of man. It deserves the alliteration, Simple, Sublime, Sufficient.

ANALYSIS AND KEY.

1. Michael Angelo's debt to Genesis. Frescoes fall short of narrative. Genesis unapproached.
2. Other cosmogonies in contrast. Dualism, Polytheism, Pantheism.
3. Picture of God, the Creator. Eternity, omniscience, omnipotence. The Father of the World at His work. Seventh benediction.
4. Mosaic account: Miracle in words. Satisfactory statement of origin of things 3,000 years old.
5. Only to be accounted for by inspiration.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

The difficulty here is to know what not to teach. The paragraph is fairly packed with seed-thoughts. Selection is imperative. Matters of comparative unimportance, but which if once mooted might lead to time wasting debate should be omitted.

The majesty of the mosaic account of Creation may well be shown by using the crude heathen cosmogonies as a background. The orderly and glorious progress of creation should prompt the exclamation, 'O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all!'

God gave man a quit-claim deed to the world when He said, 'Take it, dress and keep it.'

Man's dominion over nature was never greater than at the present. He is wresting her secrets and subduing her forces to his use.

The dignity of man's position in nature, the variety, delicacy, and strength of his senses and faculties make one exclaim, 'O rich and varied man, thou palace of sight and sound.'

Primary teachers have a fascinating task in discovering and banishing the crude and amusing notions about earth, air, sky, water, stars, etc., with which they find little minds packed. A taking object-lesson may be given by laying an orange on the table, and having an apple suspended with a cord revolve about the orange. Orange for sun; apple for earth. What makes day and night, the year and the seasons, may thus be illustrated. Earth may be described as a house, beautiful and comfortable, which God has built for His children—a cellar full of coal and other things we need. The carpet changes every season, so we shall not get tired of looking at it—from green, sprinkled with flowers, to russet in the fall, and white in the winter—a house hung with pretty pictures.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Jan. 6.—Topic—Beginning with God, and continuing with Him. Gen. i., 1; John i., 1-14; xv., 4-7. (Consecration meeting.)

The Glory of Drudgery.

Waitin' fer a train to-day, I couldn't help noticin' the shiftn' engine, 'nd how hard 'twuz workin'. 'Twuz puffin' here 'nd tuggin' there, 'nd never standing still for five minnits. 'Nd it never got outside the yards either. Jest back 'nd forth, on the same lines of rails, gettin' trains ready fer other engines to take out, allers in the thick of things, never runnin' out through the fields 'nd woods or acrost the river bridges or over the hills, like the other engines—my! 'twuz like a parable of some folks' lives, allers doin' the hard work in the hard places.

'There ain't no glory in bein' a shiftn' engine. No fast runs, 'nd no record-breakin' hauls—jest makin' up trains so's they kin start out right. Seems to me there's lot of men 'nd wimmen—specially wimmen—jest like that, doin' common things day in 'nd' day out, 'nd gettin' no glory nor credit out of it all. Folks praise a great man, 'nd fergit the mother that started him out right. They admire the head of a concern, when it's the quiet partner or the gray-haired clerk that keeps things goin' straight. The engine that goes speedin' along, over a clear, open track, with the hull continent ahead—that's the engine fer them, every time!'—Selected.

How can mortal man expect to perform Sunday school work without careful preparation and training? The teacher should study the lesson until he is brim full of it; should study it not only until he knows it, but until he knows that he knows it. Then and only then will he be prepared to teach his pupils and hold their interest.—'M. C. Advocate.'

Does Your Subscription Expire This Month?

Would each subscriber kindly look at the address tag on this paper? If the date thereon is Dec. it is time that renewals were sent in so as to avoid losing a single copy. As renewals always date from the expiry of the old subscriptions, subscribers lose nothing by remitting a little in advance. When renewing, why not take advantage of the fine clubbing offers announced elsewhere in this issue?

Greatly to His Advantage.

If a nice canvasser comes to your door get his name and address, say what he is handling, and send it to us, and we will send you free of charge a copy of the new picture paper, the 'Canadian Pictorial,' or ask the canvasser to write us himself. He will hear of something greatly to his advantage. We want boys to sell by the dozen, and agents to canvass for annual subscriptions. The 'Pictorial' Publishing Company, Montreal, Canada.

Individual Subscriber's Advantage.

Individual subscribers are invited and recommended to take advantage of the clubbing rates, whereby they can have their selection of one or more additional papers at a merely nominal rate, and those who like pictures will find in the 'Canadian Pictorial' many that are worth hanging on the wall. See our remarkable clubbing offers elsewhere in this issue.

WARNING NOTICE.

The very advantageous terms on which we were enabled to offer 'Messenger' subscribers the 'Canadian Pictorial' and the 'Northern Messenger' for one year by the Pictorial Publishing Company. As already indicated, the low price of the 'Pictorial' was for introduction purposes merely. We therefore give notice that after January 15th the price for the 'Northern Messenger' and the 'Canadian Pictorial' for a year each will be one dollar for the club. BETTER TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE 75 CENT RATE WHILE IT LASTS. Address all subscriptions to John Dougall and Son, publishers of the 'Northern Messenger,' 'Witness' Building, Montreal.