

What the Disciples in the States are Saying and Doing

COLLINGS AND CLIPPINGS FROM BY CHANGERS.

(From the Christian Oracle.)

Prof. Black in his sermon at the Central church in this city last Lord's day put the doctrine of "total depravity" in a most felicitous way when he said: "I believe the doctrine of total depravity, but not according to the teaching of the theologians. They teach that man is totally depraved in the sense that there is no good in him at all. This I do not believe. But I believe that men are depraved in all their faculties, while no faculty is totally corrupt. You take a small quantity of ink and pour it into a barrel of pure water. In so doing you do not convert the barrel of water into ink; but the whole barrel of water has been inked."

(From the Apostolic Guide.)

The great essential principle of this Reformation is freedom under Christ. We have started to come to Him on the waters. The plea is winning. We are increasing in numbers in this country at the rate of fifteen or twenty thousand per month, and this is the least of the results of our great work. Here and there a nervous individual, alarmed at some development of the rich and abundant religious life about him, sets up his cry, "All is lost! Divide!" Another, "Breakers ahead! Back to the creed!" Another, "Wo perish! Give us a king like unto the nations round us!" Oh ye of little faith! Simple ones and slow of heart to believe. "Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed."

(From the Christian Standard.)

Our meeting at Erie, Pennsylvania, continues with good interest; 44 additions.—E. L. Frazier.

WHITE HALL, Ill., March 4.—Bro. Omer is still wielding the old Jerusalem sword with power. This is the greatest epoch in the history of our church. The meeting is now in its sixth week, with 100 accessions to date.—Francis Fowler.

METROPOLIS, Ill., March 1.—We closed our meeting as reported, with 58 additions, but the revival would not close. Our first gathering after the close, 1 confessed; at night, 4 more. Then we have several week-day meetings and 5 more came to the Lord, and this morning 1 more was added, making a total of 69, and the end is not yet.—J. F. M.

EAST LIVERPOOL, Ohio, March 5.—Our meeting closed last Sunday night, lasting twenty-one days. One came at prayer-meeting last night by letter from the Baptists, making 15 since last report and 95 since the meeting began. We have now a membership of over 500; 311 of these have been added since I took charge of the work thirteen months ago. Bro. E. R. Black, of Canton, rendered good assistance at the last meeting. I go to Canton next week to assist in a meeting there. Miss Clara B. Haynes will have charge of the singing.—B. C. Black.

There is a very popular and very respectable sort of desecration of the Lord's day of which many churches are guilty. It is the substitution of secular exercises for the solemn service of God's house. City pastors with a keen eye for whatever will fill their pews catch up the passing sensation and carry it into their pulpits, no matter how much out of place it may be there.

Here is one of the leading churches of the city which gave up a recent Lord's day to the worship of the creature instead of the Creator. It was, according to the papers, "an imposing event," and made the little boys "wish they were soldiers." The Scripture teaches us to give honor to whom honor is due, and much honor is due to the memory of the great General celebrated on this occasion, but there are other and more fitting occasions for showing that honor than on the Lord's day, supposed to be devoted to the highest spiritual uses. Of all the 168 hours of the week why was that one selected which by universal custom and consent is set apart for the worship of God and communion with Christ? While Gen. Sherman was a great captain and a great citizen he did not even claim to be a Christian, and we do not believe he would approve of preachers thus putting aside the Lord's day service, especially since it is more for the purpose of increasing their own fame than celebrating his. The truth is, many preachers sacrifice this most sacred hour again and again with the unworthy purpose of getting a crowd and making a noise in the newspapers. It is a worse "desecration of the Sabbath" than many forms of it at which these vain-glorious gentlemen profess to be horrified.

During the winter season of social festivities and gayeties the pulpit and the religious press have been bestowing a good deal of attention upon those amphibious people of whom it is hard to say whether they belong to the church or the world. By some characteristics they would be placed among church members. They usually go to church on Sunday (when there are no dances, card parties, or theatres to attend); they contribute considerably to the support of the church, being people in good circumstances; they admire the pastor (if he is able and eloquent) and show him very flattering attention, and in many ways manifest an interest in "our church." But by other characteristics they are identified with the world. While finding time for a round of social engagements and attendance at various club meetings, they are never at prayer meeting, can find no time for work in missionary and aid societies, and, by engaging in things of doubtful propriety and questionable morality, are quite as much of a hindrance as a help to the cause.

A Little Fun at Home.

Do not be afraid of a little fun at home. Do not shut up your house lest the sun should fade your carpets; and your hearts, lest a laugh should shake down a few of the musty old cobwebs that are hanging there. If you want to ruin your sons, let them think that all mirth and social enjoyment must be left at the threshold without when they come home at night. When once a home is regarded as only a place to eat, drink and sleep in, the work is begun that ends in gambling-houses and reckless degradation. Young people must have fun and relaxation; if they do not find it at their own hearthstone they will see it at less profitable places. Therefore, let the doors and windows be cheerfully thrown open in the summer, and make the home delightful with all those little arts parades so well understood. Do not repress the buoyant spirits of your children. Half an hour of merriment within doors and merriment of a home blots out the recollection of many a care and annoyance during the day, and the best safeguard they can take with them into the world is the influence of a bright home.—Selected.

How to Study the Bible.

BY REV. PRINCIPAL GRANT, D.D., LL.D.

I do not mean a merely devotional, but a scientific study of the Bible. The importance of this has been admitted since the Reformation by every one who believes that the Bible contains a Revelation from God that is intelligible. Notwithstanding this traditional admission, the knowledge of the Bible possessed by the average Christian is both meagre and crude.

One reason of this general ignorance is that the great truths revealed in the Bible with regard to God and man are writ in such large letters that he who runs can read, and many good people profess themselves satisfied with knowing those. Another reason is the extraordinary excellence of the Bible as a book for devotional reading, no matter how hap-hazard the way of reading it. We get so much benefit and so much interest from reading bits here and there disconnectedly, that we forget that there is a still more excellent way. Another reason is the difficulty of getting a thorough and scientific knowledge of the Bible, and the average Christian is indolent. This difficulty is felt when we attempt to study any one great writer, say Shakespeare or Browning. Most of us are content with knowing scraps of either. It is now admitted that we must study writings in connection with the author's times and his own development. We can easily see how infinitely this difficulty must be increased, if we remember that the Old Testament itself is a whole library, the purified essence of the literature of a wonderful people. This literature is rightly called a book, or even the book (Bible). There is a unity in it which every devout and intelligent reader recognizes; but it is none the less a library, including history, biography, poetry, and almost every other form of literature of varying degrees of excellence.

A scientific, that is a methodised, knowledge of that book or literature is indispensable to the intelligent Christian. He ought to understand its spirit, the laws and conditions of its growth, the literary and historical circumstances in which it was developed, and the relation of part to part and of the parts to the whole. With that understanding he will be as superior to one who has merely memorized texts as the man who has learned any subject scientifically is to the man who knows a large number of facts which he has never co-ordinated; as superior as a disciplined army of ten thousand is to a mob of millions; or the modern student of medical and surgical anatomy to his predecessors; or the man who studies biology according to the modern principles of evolution to the old believer in successive catastrophes and separate creations; or the modern astronomer to the man who sees the stars on one vast plane.

How, then, are we to get this scientific knowledge? Classification of the books according to some principle that will throw light on their relations, is the first thing needed. Here our English Bible, especially in the Old Testament, gives us little help. The classification in it is the fourfold one—into law, history, poetry and the prophets. This arrangement is based on misconceptions, and is misleading to the ordinary reader, who fancies, for instance, that the historical books are not prophetic, that the prophets did not write in poetry, and that Malachi was the last book of the Old Testament to be written. If he studies the genealogies in the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, he will find that those Books must have been written a century later than Malachi, while commentators, like Calvin, who decided author-

ship by internal evidence, assign some of the Psalms to the time of the Maccabees. Hence I regret that we have not followed the Hebrew classification in our English Old Testament. Our Lord referred to it in Luke xxiv. 25, 27, 44. He gives the basis of the division found in the Talmud, and adopted in every Hebrew Bible used by us to this day, viz:—

I. The Law: including Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy—five books.

II. The Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets from Hosea to Malachi, counted as one—eight books.

III. The Writings—three poetical: the Psalms, Proverbs, Job; the five Rolls: the Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther; three Historical: Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles—eleven books.

Thus we have the whole Old Testament arranged in twenty-four books, classified as three correlated parts. We can now ask, What gives unity to all these books, and what is the relation of part to part?

The Old Testament throughout is a revelation of God as the Eternal, the living God who desires to redeem man from sin. In part first, He reveals Himself to Moses, and in doing so calls Himself the God of Abraham, the man with whom history begins with the God of grace a recognized factor in history. He reveals Himself as the God and King of that "people of Revelation" whom Moses was to lead forth from bondage, and as their King He gives them laws. In part second, He reveals His character in connection with the history of the people, the only way, it may be said, in which the actual features of His character could possibly be impressed on the general consciousness; and He gave prophets who expounded for them and for all time the meaning of the history. In part third, He reveals Himself in connection with problems that tried the soul, and that had to be solved in thousands of varied individual experiences. In the solution of each and all alike of these problems, He was found to be a sufficient practical guide of life, and a never failing stay and staff to the weak hearts of men. Does not the Old Testament gain now value when it is looked at in the light of this triple division, which, as Westcott says, "is not a mere accident or arbitrary arrangement, but a reflection of the different stages of religious developments through which the Jewish nation passed? The knowledge of it is the first requisite to a scientific study of the literature of the Bible, in its unity and its complexity, in its order and completeness. It is a pity that we have not adopted it, all the more when we remember that it was sanctioned by the Lord Himself, and I would now recommend it as a suggestive and otherwise helpful guide to the English student of Holy Scripture.—Presbyterian Review.

The Cost of a Bible.

The first English translation of the Bible, as our young people are aware, was made by Wycliffe, A.D. 1380. Before that, the price of a Bible in Latin was equal to fifteen hundred dollars of our money. Even after Wycliffe's copy was finished the value of a new Testament was one hundred and fifty dollars of our money.

Tyndale was the first who had a Bible printed in English. The first edition was bought up and burned, but he soon got out a second. He was betrayed into the hands of the enemies of truth, and strangled at the stake. His body was burned to ashes, "but the Word of God is not bound."

Selections.

"Good-bye, God Bless You."

I love the words—perhaps because,
When I was leaving mother,
Standing at last in solemn pause
We looked at one another.
And I— I saw in mother's eyes
The love she could not tell me—
A love eternal as the skies,
Whatever fate befel me;
She put her arms about my neck
And soothed the pain of leaving,
And, though her heart was like to
break,
She spoke no word of grieving;
She let no tear bedim her eye,
For fear that might distress me.
But, kissing me, she said good-bye,
And asked our God to bless me.
—Eugene Field, in Chicago News.

How the Discussion Ended.

When people really come to know each other they have less to dispute about than when they simply stand apart and dispute and pelt each other with hard words and sectarian names. Men like manliness, and courage and self sacrifice, and soon find that true Christians agree about many more things than they differ about.

A missionary of the American Sunday School Union accepted a challenge to discuss with a "Hardshell" preacher, before several thousands of people, the subject of Sunday schools. But on reaching a creek between him and the place of meeting, the evening before, he found it overflowing its banks with a very rapid current, and no bridge within fifteen miles. The meeting was to open next morning at nine o'clock. At first he thought he must give it up; but on picturing to himself the disappointment and disaster likely to ensue, he plunged in upon his horse, and after a fearful fight for his life crossed over.

A gentleman who witnessed the missionary's thrilling adventure described the scene to the old preacher the same night. On Sunday morning an immense crowd was present, and, according to arrangement, the missionary spoke first. Then the old preacher rose and said:—

"Brethren, and friends, all I have to say is, that the man who would cross Duke's mill-dam, on horseback, when it was near dark, and have such an escape as Bro. Davis has described, has convinced me that he means something and is honest, and that this must be God's work." And, taking the missionary by the hand, he added, "God bless you, my brother, and the American Sunday School Union, and the school the missionary is about to organize here to-day." In the course of years four churches have grown out of that Sunday school.—The Common People.

Good Manners at Home

The presence of good manners is nowhere more needed or more effective than in the household, and perhaps nowhere more rare. Whenever familiarity exists, there is a tendency to loosen the check upon selfish conduct which the presence of strangers involuntarily produces. Many persons who are kind and courteous in company are rude and careless with those whom they love best. Emerson says, "Good manners are made up of petty sacrifices," and certainly nothing can more thoroughly secure the harmony and peace of the family circle than the habit of making small sacrifices, one for another. Children thus learn good manners in the best and most natural way, and habits thus acquired will never leave them. Courtesy and kindness will never lose their power or their charm, while all spurious imitations of them are to be despised.—The Republic.