

**THE TEACHER'S ASSISTANT
IN THE USE
OF THE THIRD VOLUME
OF UNION QUESTIONS**

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The Teacher's assistant in the use of the third volume of Union questions by The Committee of Publication

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THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION

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See THE *Leviticus*
TEACHER'S ASSISTANT *184*

IN

THE USE OF THE THIRD VOLUME

OF

UNION QUESTIONS.

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P R E F A C E.

WHEN this work was commenced, its chief design was, through the medium of the 'Sunday School Journal,' published by the Amer. S. S. Union, to present, once in each week, to those Teachers who were in the habit of using the 'Union Questions,' some explanations and reflections which would facilitate their business of Teaching. The publication had not long gone on in the paper, before the plan was universally approved, and found to answer the purpose for which it was designed; but inasmuch as the pages of a weekly Journal would preserve the Lesson only for the time being, it has been thought not only expedient, but necessary, to put the matter so published in a volume, that it may be used in a form perfectly convenient and permanent.

In order to make the work as complete as the nature of the case would admit, it has been carefully revised by the author, large additions made, and such amendments as in his estimation would render it still more acceptable and useful. It will now answer the two-fold valuable purpose of enabling Teachers to

give the instruction involved in the book of Questions, and parents to teach their children at their homes.

The book makes no pretension to the character of a commentary: it is a plain and simple explanation of those passages of scripture upon which questions are put in the third volume of the Union Questions. It is mainly designed as a companion for that volume; and if all is not found in it which a studious inquirer might wish, let it be remembered that it professes to do no more than to furnish answers and appropriate reflections connected with the volume of Questions already alluded to. Where teachers have the facilities of other books, it is their bounden duty to make themselves masters of the whole subject, by all the lights they can enjoy; but where teachers and parents have but few opportunities, the author humbly hopes the book may be found useful.

THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S
ASSISTANT.

LESSON I.—Genesis i. 1—13.

THE first Book in the Bible is called *Genesis*. It was written by *Moses*, who derived his information immediately from God.

1. **IN THE BEGINNING.** This must necessarily mean the commencement of Time. Previous to the creation, all was Eternity.

GOD. The title by which the Deity is distinguished. God can only be described by His attributes. The word God here used, is in the plural number, nominative case to a verb in the third person singular. It is supposed to teach the *plurality* of persons in the *unity* of the Divine essence.

The use of this plural noun (*Elohim*) here with a verb singular, and elsewhere with verbs, nouns and pronouns plural, is very difficult to be accounted for but on the Trinitarian hypothesis.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is thus spoken of in the first chapter of John's gospel: "In the beginning was the word," i. e. the word, by which is meant Jesus Christ, *was*, or existed, in the beginning; which proves that He was in existence at the time of the creation. It is also said in John, that *He* made the worlds—which shows that he possessed the character of God.

CREATED. It is from a word which signifies com-

mencement of existence; it here means, *made out of nothing*.

THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH. This probably means what is called the *solar system*; the solar system is composed of the *sun*, and the following planets—Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Herschel, also four smaller, called Ceres, Pallas, Juno, Vesta. Several of these planets have satellites, or *attendants*, and all taken together constitute the solar system.

It is now 5831 years since the creation of the world.

3. EARTH. The planet called Earth, on which we live. The sacred historian does not tell us any thing about the others.

WITHOUT FORM, AND VOID. These words convey the idea of confusion and disorder. The Earth was not reduced to its nice arrangement of land and water—had no regular form.

THE DEEP. The chaos—abyss.

SPIRIT OF GOD. Here the Holy Spirit is meant, the third person of the ever blessed Trinity, called also the Holy Ghost.

MOVED UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS. It is exceedingly difficult to convey a clear idea of these terms. The word "moved," in the original, means "brooded over," representing the action of a bird sitting on eggs; we have no adequate language to convey a correct idea. Some understand this of "a mighty wind;" but we reject this interpretation, for three reasons. 1. Though the Hebrew *Rauch* is often rendered "wind," we know of no instance in which it is so understood in connexion with the name of God. 2. The atmosphere (or firmament) was not yet formed, and therefore could not be agitated into wind. The word *Rachaph* means rather a tremulous motion, like that of an eagle fluttering over her young, or like that of the house trembling with fear.

In allusion to the agency of the Spirit of God in creation, Sir Wm. Jones notices a remarkable passage in

the Institutions of Menu. "The waters are called *Nara*, or the Spirit of God; and he is hence called, "He who moves upon the waters."—*Works*, vol. iii. p. 66.

3. **LIGHT.** This is difficult to define. Some suppose that light is a fluid universally diffused throughout the universe, and which is *latent* or *lies hid*, until called forth by some cause extraneous. Dr. Clarke thinks that the light here spoken of, is this *latent light*, and which is the same as latent heat.

What an instance of the power of God, "He spake and it was done."

4. **IT WAS GOOD.** Answered the purpose God intended by it.—By its agency we are enabled to see objects and dangers, &c.

DAY AND NIGHT. This is not meant to imply that light and darkness are *two things*; for darkness is but the absence of light, i. e. where there is no light, there is a state which we call darkness. These things were here written, probably in anticipation, for day and night, and light and darkness, which are occasioned by the motion of the earth round its axis.

5. **DAY.** That portion of time in which the part of the earth where we are, is brought to receive the sun's rays.

NIGHT. That portion of time, in which, on account of the earth's motion, the sun's rays do not reach the part where we are. While it is day with us here, it is *night* in China.

The earth turns on its axis in twenty-three hours, fifty-six minutes, and four seconds; that is four minutes fifty-six seconds less than twenty-four hours. In round numbers, we usually say twenty-four hours.

6. **EVENING.** "The end of the day, when it begins to grow dark, or at least, when the sun is considerably declined." (American Sunday School Union's Bible Dictionary.) It is so called from a word which signifies to *mingle*, and intimates that in the evening there is a mixture of light, and darkness—or twilight.

MORNING. "That part of the day before or about the rising of the sun." (Union's American Sunday-School Bible Dictionary.) In the lesson, evening seems to mean all not comprehended in morning, and the reverse.

7. FIRMAMENT. It signifies something spread out. It is used to mean the whole space above us, which appears to interpose between us and the other heavenly bodies. It has a bluish appearance to us, owing to the action of the sun's rays. The lower part of this firmament we call the *atmosphere*. This *atmosphere divides the waters from the waters*, i. e. the clouds which float in the higher regions, and which are the depositories of water, from the seas, which are great and permanent accumulations of water. This atmosphere is also called *air*: this supports animal and vegetable life—it is the medium also, through which we see objects.

8. HEAVEN. Not meaning the state or place in which God is said to dwell in glory, but is merely put to signify the region before described, (see firmament.)

9. WATERS UNDER THE HEAVENS. The earth, when it was created, seems to have been in a fluid state: this fluid state seems to be the meaning of the expression above.

GATHERED INTO ONE PLACE. Separated from the particles which are afterwards called dry land, and united together into springs, rivers, lakes, seas, &c.

10. DRY LAND EARTH. Here *earth* is used in a limited sense: our planet is called the earth, but the usual meaning of this word is the dry land, as distinguished from water.

SEAS. The largest masses of water are called seas, sometimes oceans: as Atlantic, Pacific, Mediterranean, Baltic, Red sea, &c.

It is said that about three-fourths of our planet, Earth, is covered with water.

Seas and rivers are of use, as means of communication between different countries, and different places of