

The Little Baptist

By J.M. Martin

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:15

Chapter 3

Conversation About The Bible.

Mellie became satisfied that there was no mistake about her Bible, and continued to read it, and to ask her mother the meaning of texts she did not fully understand. Mrs. Brown took great pains to explain to Mellie all about the Bible. How it was first written by men inspired of God; but that it was not first given in our language, therefore had been translated from other languages into the English. That a good and wise king of England, named James, seeing the great need among the people of the Bible in a language that they could read, employed a number of the best scholars in his kingdom, and had them to translate it into the English language. "And this translation," said she, "is the Bible that we now have."

"But, mamma, everybody don't use it, do they?" asked Mellie with an air of sober reflection.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Brown; "those who speak the English language, except the Roman Catholics; they have a translation differing in some respects from this, but the Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians, with other sects in our country, all take this as the Word of God."

Mellie pushed back her hair, gave her chair a hitch up closer to her mother, and replied:

"It's very strange that they don't all agree then, if God tells them all the same things. I think God won't like those much who will not do what He tells them. But mamma, what do you mean by *translating* the Bible?"

"To translate, my dear, is to change the words which are in one language into the words of another with the same meaning. Words, you know, are signs of ideas, and we get the idea, or meaning, of the words in one language, and express it by using the words of another language."

Mrs. Brown further explained that the writers of the Old Testament wrote in the Hebrew language, and the writers of the New Testament in the Greek language, and in order to give us their meaning, scholars who understood these languages had given the ideas to us in words of which we know the meaning.

"Yes, mamma," said Mellie, "I think that I understand you, and I think it was very kind in King James to have the Bible translated into a language that the people can read and understand. But you have always told me that it is the Book of God, and if the people all

think that it is His book, I can't see why they don't all read it, and do just what it tells them. Now you know, mamma, that Dr. Farnsworth preached last Sunday that people were God's children, or I thought that was what he meant; and he said they ought to look to God to learn their duty, and when God tells them in the Bible what they must do, they ought to do it willingly just like a good child obeying its parents. You know, mamma, that you always praise me, and call me your little darling when I do as you tell me, and you say if I disobey you will have to punish me for it. Then, if people are God's children, I think they ought to read His book, and then do whatever it tells them. Don't you think so, mamma?"

"Yes, dear; but you know that bad people, like bad children, do not care to do what is right. They rather take pleasure in doing evil. But all good people want to do right - they want to do just as God tells them."

"But the *good* people don't all do alike, mamma. You said that Mr. Coleman, the Baptist preacher, was a good man, and I know Dr. Farnsworth is a good man; but they don't both do alike - I know they don't. They both have God's book to tell them how to do, and yet when Dr. Farnsworth baptizes people, he just takes a *little* water in his hand and wets a little place on their heads, and Mr. Coleman leads them down into deep water, and puts them all over into it. And I think that John the Baptist must -"

Mellie was going on to say that she thought John the Baptist must have put the people all over in the water, too; but her mother stopped her by saying that it was a difference in understanding the Bible that caused the different denominations to practice differently; "And," said she, "I have no doubt but that all honestly think they are right. I believe that Dr. Farnsworth, and Mr. Coleman, both have honest intentions, and are trying to obey God as best they can. They can't both see alike in reference to baptism, and, therefore, they don't do alike."

"Well, mamma, I'm going to read my little Bible and I'm going to be good, and do all it says for me to do. I intend to see how much of it I can understand, and if there is any of it that God has not made plain so people can understand it, I guess it is about something that He don't want us to do. I'll see what it says about baptizing folks and everything else. God wants us to read His Bible, don't He, mamma?"

"True, my child, and I'm glad to find you so determined to read and be good. When you find anything that you can't understand, come to me and I will try to explain it to you. I want you to see how much you can learn. Should we find anything in reading that is too hard for us, we will ask Dr. Farnsworth to explain it when he calls, and you shall understand all that your Bible teaches. It is only a month now until you will start to school. Then I hope you will learn a great deal about the Bible as well as your other books."

"And I shall be so glad to go to school, mamma, for then I will *have such a nice time*. I'll ask Mr. Hamilton to let me study Grammar and History - yes, and Botany, so I can go in the class with Laura Thompson, Nellie Perkins, Katie Jones and all the larger girls. I intend to try to beat them all, too, I don't care if they are older than I am; I'll make them work for it, if they keep ahead of me. O, I do wish school was open now."

Saying this she bounded from the room perfectly elated with the thought of going to school.

~ end of chapter 3 ~
