

## NOTES ON GENESIS.

## THE FIFTH DAY (vers. 20-23).

IT was the work of the second day to create the firmament and to separate the waters: it is the work of the fifth day to people water and air with their several tenants.

20. *Let the waters bring forth abundantly.*—More correctly, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures.” In the same way as the earth had imparted to it, by the Divine fiat, the power to bring forth the vegetation which adorns and diversifies its surface, so the command runs to the waters to swarm with multitudes of fish. The two commands are nearly parallel, even in the cast of language, except that in the former the causative mood of the verb gives a prominence to the action of the earth which is wanting in the latter. The renderings of the LXX., ἐξαγαγέτω, and Vulg., *producant*, do not bring out the distinction. The ἐξερψάτω of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion is nearer the mark; for, in spite of Liddell & Scott, the verb is not transitive, but is followed by a cognate accusative (see the LXX. of Exod. viii. 2). Luther also has correctly, “Es erzeuge sich das Wasser mit webenden und lebendigen Thieren.” The R.V. has here kept to the A.V., but gives the sense correctly in the margin. In Exodus viii. 3 [Heb., vii. 28] however it deserts the A.V., “the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly,” and boldly substitutes, “the river shall swarm with frogs.”

These swarms are particularly described, further, as “creatures that have life” (lit. “a living soul”), because here we have the first instance of animal life upon the earth. See the same phrase ii. 7, 19, ix. 12; and with the article, ix. 10. Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which the first appearance, both of vegetable and

animal life, is recorded. Both are ascribed to the voice of God, in both there is an operation upon matter; but the *how* is and must probably for ever remain a mystery. The process is hidden, the result only is given.

Dr. Dallinger in his masterly lecture, *The Creator, and What we may Know of the Method of Creation*, speaks of "the impassable gulf between the living and the not-living" (p. 35). He quotes Sir Henry Roscoe as saying, in his address as president of the British Association, 1887, "Although the danger of dogmatizing as to the progress of science has already been shown in too many instances, yet one cannot help feeling that the barrier which exists between the organized and unorganized worlds is one which the chemist sees no chance of breaking down." Again Dr. Dallinger writes :

"How, in the great past, mineral and gaseous matters on this earth were, as a question of scientific method, so affected as to become living matter is, to our present resources at least, impenetrable.

'Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower—but *if* I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.'

"I merely contend that, whatever were the means by which dead matter first lived, they were higher, infinitely higher, than matter and motion; they could only have been the resources of a *competent* power.

"I adopt gladly the language of Professor Huxley: 'Belief, in the scientific sense of the word,' he says, 'is a serious matter, and needs strong foundations. To say therefore, in the admitted absence of evidence, that I have any belief as to the mode in which existing forms of life have originated, would be using words in a wrong sense. But expectation is permissible where belief is not; and if it were given me to look beyond the abyss of geologically recorded time to the still more remote period when the earth was passing through physical and chemical conditions, which it can no more see again than a man can recall his infancy, I should expect to be a witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from not-living matter.' So should I" (pp. 38, 39).

Dr. Dallinger is apparently not thinking of Genesis, yet it is evident how entirely the language of Genesis lends itself to the view, of which he has here expressed his approval, as to the relation which must originally have subsisted between living protoplasm and not-living matter.<sup>1</sup>

*And fowl that may fly.*—This rendering, according to which the birds are produced out of the water, though it has the support of all the Greek versions and of Jerome, and is grammatically admissible, is not necessary, introduces a perfectly needless difficulty, and is contradicted by ii. 19, where they are said to have been formed out of the ground. It is curious to see how Augustine is puzzled by it, and to what shifts he is driven. The rendering adopted by the R.V., “And let fowl fly,” is the obvious one, and is in harmony with the style of the chapter throughout, where each successive act of creation is introduced in the same way by the jussive form, “Let there be,” etc. (vers. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14). It is true that in these cases the verb precedes the noun, instead of following it as here; but both constructions are allowable (see for instance Ps. lxxii. 9, 10).

*Fly.*—The verb is in an intensive form, and might be fully expressed by “fly hither and thither, up and down.”

*In the open firmament.*—Lit. “on the face of the firmament,” the face of the vault which sustains the waters being turned towards the earth. The Hebrew has no special name for the air or atmosphere; hence it says “bird of the heaven” (vers. 26, 28, 30; ii. 19, etc.).

21. The creative word is general: in the accomplishment thereof some details are added.

*Great whales.*—The R.V. correctly, “the great sea-mon-

<sup>1</sup> Although I purposely abstain most carefully from building up any artificial scheme of “reconciliation” between Genesis and science, and in particular from any attempt to make out a correspondence between the “days” of Genesis and the “periods” and processes of geology, yet I do not feel myself precluded from drawing attention to the recorded opinions of men of science, so far as they seem to illustrate the leading statements of Genesis.

sters." The root denotes something "long," "extended," and the word is used rather widely, sometimes of the serpent (Exod. vii. 9; Deut. xxxii. 33; Ps. xci. 13), more commonly of the crocodile (Isa. xxvii. 1, li. 9; Ezek. xxix. 3; Ps. lxxiv. 13, etc.), and of other huge water animals (Ps. cxlviii. 7; Job vii. 12), but never of fishes as a class. These are here denoted at large by "every living creature which moveth, wherewith the waters swarm after their kind." There is no pretence for saying that the Hebrew word *tannin*, here rendered "whales," means "crocodiles" in this passage, and that the object of the writer in declaring that they were the creation of God was to furnish an indirect protest against the crocodile-worship of Egypt. The word rendered "moveth" is used not only, as here, of fishes and of the smaller creeping animals, whether with or without feet, upon the earth, but even of the larger land animals (Gen. vii. 21; Ps. civ. 20); and the noun derived from it is applied in one passage collectively to the whole population of the sea (Ps. civ. 25).

*Which the waters brought forth abundantly.*—Rather, "wherewith the waters swarmed." See note on ver. 20.

22. *And God blessed them.*—Not only as before is there the customary mark of the Divine approval, "And God saw that it was good" (ver. 21), but a special blessing is pronounced on these, the first creatures that have "a living soul." This blessing provides for their multiplication, each after their several kinds, in accordance with the law of their creation, and indicates a permanent difference of species. Nothing is said about centres of creation or derivation from single pairs. The plants also were endowed with the power of reproduction; but no Divine word of blessing is addressed to them, as now to the "creature that has life" in a sense in which the plant does not possess it. The phrase, "Be fruitful and multiply," is characteristic of the Elohist. With

the Divine blessing the fifth day closes: "And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day."

#### THE SIXTH DAY (vers. 24-31).

The work of the sixth day, like that of the third, to which it corresponds, is twofold. There the earth is prepared by the separation of land from sea, and by clothing it with vegetation, to be the abode of animals and man; here man and animals are created to inhabit it.

24. *Let the earth bring forth.*—Exactly parallel to the command ver. 11, where see note.

*The living creature*, or rather, "living creatures"; lit. "living soul."—This is the general description of the tenants of the land as before (ver. 20) of the tenants of the water. They are afterwards distributed roughly into classes. The land animals, like the plants, are the offspring of the earth. But whereas it is said in ver. 12 that the earth *brought forth* grass, etc., here it is said God *made* the animals. (The verb "made" in this verse is exactly equivalent to the verb "created" in ver. 21.) According to ii. 19, Ps. civ. 29, Eccles. iii. 20, they are made "out of the ground." There is a Divine operation upon the earth in order to their production, more immediate than in the case of the vegetable kingdom. They are classified broadly under three heads (repeated in a different order, ver. 25), as existing each of them "after their kind": (1) cattle,<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* domestic animals, though the word comprises elsewhere the larger kinds of wild animals (vi. 7, 20, Lev. xi. 2; and in poetry is frequently used of wild beasts); (2) reptiles, including all the smaller animals (see above, ver. 20; the verb from this root is used in a wide sense of the *movement* of the beasts of the forest, Ps. civ. 20; cf. Gen. ix. 2); (3) beast of the

<sup>1</sup> For this the LXX. has τετραπόδα in ver. 24 and τὰ κτήνη in ver. 25. The Vulg. has *jumenta* in both.

earth (or "of the field," ii. 19), including wild beasts of all kinds.

"The zoology of the writer," it has been said, "like his botany, is of an extremely simple kind. It comprises three classes of animals: those that live in the water, those that fly in the air, and those that inhabit the earth. The last in their turn are subdivided into three categories: domestic quadrupeds, quadrupeds that are not domestic, and creeping things—a vague and wide term, comprising all animals which have more than four feet or which have none at all." But see above on ver. 11. Whether of all the various animals a single pair only was created, we are not told. The expression in ver. 20 points the other way. If the waters were to swarm with swarms of living creatures, this could not possibly mean that only a single pair of each kind was created.

*And God made.*—In ver. 21 we have, "And God *created*." Cf. vers. 7, 16, and see below, 26, 27: "Let us *make* man," "So God *created* man," the two verbs being practically synonymous in this chapter. Again on this act of creation there rests the Divine approval: "God saw that it was good" (ver. 25).

26. A vast preparation has been made, a glorious house furnished, the dweller is expected. In solemn state he is ushered into his abode.

*Let us make man.*—The plural has been differently explained. The Palestine Targum, the Midrash, Philo, and other Jewish interpreters, and some Christians following them, suppose that God addresses the hierarchy of heaven, with whom He takes solemn counsel, before He creates man, the flower and crown of all His works. Others, and especially the Patristic expositors, see here a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, and by implication at least the doctrine of the Trinity. But the first explanation has no support in the context, and the second anticipates the later revelation.

The same plural form of expression occurs in the story of the Fall (iii. 22), "The man is become as one of us"; in the dispersion at Babel (xi. 7), "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language"; in the vision of Isaiah (vi. 8), where there is a combination of the singular and the plural: "And the Lord said, Whom shall I send? and who will go for us?" In like manner in the vision of Micaiah (1 Kings xxii. 19, 20), the Lord is sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him, and He addresses a question to them, to which one makes answer after this manner and another after that. And in the prologue of the book of Job, "the sons of God," *i.e.* the angels, come to present themselves before Him, and the adversary comes with them, and a dialogue takes place between God and the Satan. But in these three latter passages express mention is made of the angels or the seraphim. The eternal King on His throne is surrounded by His court. It is not so in the passages in Genesis. There is no mention there of angels. If in Job xxxviii. 7 we are told that, when the foundations of the world were laid, "all the sons of God shouted for joy," this does not imply that God took them into His counsel in the creation of man. Delitzsch, who strenuously supports the interpretation that the plural form is used in Genesis because the angels are addressed, argues that the expression, "Let us make," does not denote more than this taking into counsel, it does not denote that the angels had any part in the creation itself; it is their sympathy, not their co-operation, which is enlisted. Even the expression, "in our image, after our likeness," he argues does not exclude the belief that God associates the angels with Himself; for the angels are called "sons of God," and therefore partakers of the Divine nature, of which man himself is destined to be a partaker. (Cf. iii. 22 and Ps. viii. 6 with Heb. ii. 7, 2 Pet. i. 4.) Still this notion of an address to the angels cannot, I think, be maintained; for

it is introduced from other parts of Scripture, and no hint of it is given in the passage before us; it is to put a stress upon words to interpret, "Let us make," as only expressing the communication to the heavenly host of the Divine purpose, without their being invited to take part in it; it is a notion which finds no support elsewhere in Scripture, that man's likeness to God in any way involves a likeness to the angels; and Delitzsch's reference to Psalm viii. 6 does not establish this. The Scripture doctrine is, that, though man is for a little while lower than the angels (Ps. viii. 6, LXX. ; cf. Heb. ii. 7), ye by virtue of the incarnation the is to be in Christ higher than the angels, and not that he participates in their nature. His sonship is through the incarnation. God speaks as sovereign Lord, in the exercise of His absolute will and pleasure, when He says, "Let us make," as well as when He says, "Let there be."

How then are we to understand the plural? It is the fashion now among critics to deny the existence of a *pluralis majestaticus*, "a royal we," in Hebrew. At least this is said to be found only in later Hebrew, and in the mouth of Persian or Greek rulers (Ezra iv. 18; 1 Macc. x. 19, xi. 31, xv. 9). But the "royal we" is common enough in other languages, and even in the Korân, despite its strict monotheism, God frequently speaks of Himself in the plural. Moreover as the name of God itself is plural in Hebrew, as comprising the fulness of all attributes and powers in one Person, it seems very natural that such a Person should say of Himself "We" and "Us," and especially on a solemn occasion like this, when God would create a being who was to be made in His own image, and set as His vicegerent upon earth. We have but to substitute the singular in this passage, "Let Me make man in My own image," to be sensible how much it would lose in dignity of expression. The plural is a plural of majesty. Compare our Lord's words in St. John iii. 11 :



“We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.” This is the simplest and most natural explanation, and I have no hesitation in adopting it.

This being is to be made according to God’s purpose “in His image after His likeness.” There is only a slight distinction here in the use of the prepositions, the first, “in,” gives more definiteness perhaps to the object; man is cast in the mould, as it were, or clothed in the image of God; whilst the second, “after,” suggests the idea of a pattern which is followed, though, considering the usage elsewhere (*e.g.* Exod. xxv. 40, xxx. 32, 37), that difference can hardly be pressed. The LXX. have the same preposition in both cases: *κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν*. In v. 3, the order is reversed in the Hebrew: “in his likeness, after his image”; and there the LXX. render *κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ*; whereas the Vulg. has in both passages *ad imaginem et similitudinem*. Nor can a very clear distinction be laid down between “image” and “likeness.” The former, which occurs in the same sense as here in v. 3, ix. 6, means properly “a shadow,” “a vain show” (Ps. xxxix. 6, lxxiii. 20). But it is used also generally of images (1 Sam. vi. 5, 11; Ezek. xvi. 17), and also of idols, as being representations, adumbrations of deities (Num. xxxiii. 52, 2 Kings xi. 18, etc.). The latter is used of any sort of resemblance; more particularly, as by Ezekiel, of the forms seen by him in vision (i. 5, 26; viii. 2; x. 1, 21, etc.); once of the representation of oxen supporting the brazen sea in Solomon’s temple (2 Chron. iv. 3); in 2 Kings xvi. 10 it is used of the pattern of an altar. The two words therefore are very nearly synonymous.<sup>1</sup>

Not having any claim to speak with authority on scientific subjects myself, I asked three of my friends, eminent

<sup>1</sup> The word *תּוֹמָר* is not a later Aramaic word, as Wellhausen asserts. It is good Hebrew both as to the root and as to its formation.

for their scientific attainments, who are also devout believers in revelation, to say how far, in their judgement, the statements of the first chapter of Genesis with regard to the order of creation are or are not confirmed by what may be considered the certain results of modern scientific discovery. They have all replied, and have courteously allowed me to publish their replies, which will follow in due course.

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