

is all due to a misunderstanding, and that it is the work, not of Christ Himself, but of the early Church. Many of us will doubt the power of the popular imagination to produce effects so much above its own level. But indeed on all grounds the hypothesis seems to be an untenable one. The texture of the Gospels is too closely knit to allow room for it by any process of critical elimination, and to introduce it is to make the history of the founding of Christianity less coherent and less intelligible.

W. SANDAY.

### THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A man of two minds, he is unstable in all his ways."—JAMES i. 6-8.

BEFORE we enter on the main theme of these verses there are two critical points to be noted, to each of which we must give a moment's attention. St. James says that the man of dubious or double mind must not expect to receive anything of "*the Lord*." Now on the lips of any other Apostle, "the Lord" would stand for the Lord Jesus Christ. On *his* lips it stands for God, the Father Almighty, as we may see by comparing ver. 5 with ver. 7: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of *God*"; "Let not that man think he shall receive anything of *the Lord*." Obviously "the Lord" of the latter verse is the "God" of the former. Here then we have a new indication that St. James remained a Jew after he became a Christian. Unlike the other Apostles, he used this term "the Lord" in the Jewish sense, as it was used by the Hebrew prophets. With him, as with them, "the Lord" stood for Jehovah, not for Jesus.

Again, St. James had another Jewish habit. The Hebrew

poets were fond of playing on words in a double sense. So was St. James, as we shall have to note again and again. But he is not responsible for the pun on "wave" and "wavering" in ver. 6. That is due to our translators. There is nothing to warrant it in the Greek, which is, quite accurately, rendered in the Revised Version, "Let him ask in faith, nothing *doubting*: for he that *doubteth* is like the *surge* of the sea driven by the wind and tossed." I have retained the older rendering of the Authorized Version simply because the pun is quite in St. James's style, and in translating it is well to maintain an author's characteristic style so far as we can.

And now for our main theme—the sequence of thought contained in these verses.

"Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward": so at least we often say; so Job said. But, at the most, the saying is only a half truth. It would be quite as true to say, "Man is born to joy, as the birds to sing," and even more true. Before his troubles came upon him in such blinding succession and force, Job himself, translating his own experience into abstract forms, would have said, "Man is born to tranquillity, enjoyment, peace." And, after the Lord had "turned his captivity," and given him "twice as much as he had before," he saw and acknowledged that it was good for him to have been afflicted, that out of his sorrow there had come a truer, finer joy. We are too apt to follow his example, and judge the lot of man from our own; and even in judging of our own lot we commonly fall into two mistakes.

First, when the keen edge of pain is pressed on our hearts, we forget how much there is in life, and even in our own life, that is bright and cheerful; how fair the world is in which we live; how much kindness we receive from our friends and neighbours; and how many opportunities we have of showing them kindness and of doing them good.

When we are troubled by *the cares* of home, we do not for the moment remember through what large spaces the common charities and pleasures of home have nourished our hearts and made them joyful. When we are troubled by the cares of business, we do not for the moment remember how much we have gained from business, how much of wholesome occupation, how much training in manliness, in tact, in power to deal with men; we forget how miserable we should have been if we had had no daily task to occupy and steady and brace us. When we lose one whom we love, we do not for the moment remember how many are left to love us; in the keen sense of how much we have lost in losing him, we forget that here, in our very loss, is a new opportunity of proving that we were not unworthy of his love, if only we nerve ourselves to serve those who were as dear to him as to us, instead of indulging in an unavailing grief. We sigh, "Man is born to trouble!" and forget, for the time, how much tranquillity and joy the days have brought us. And thus, before we are aware, we libel God, the Giver of all good, and even assume that it is pious to utter this libel on His goodness!

The second mistake we make is in not discerning that trouble itself is designed to conduct us to the true joy, the supreme good of life. The most valuable of all possessions is, as we have seen, a pure and noble character, a perfect and entire spiritual manliness. Even while we are on earth our happiness depends far more on our character than on our outward conditions; for men of high and fine spiritual character are happy in all conditions, from the lowest to the highest, from him who has not where to lay his head to him who has not where to bestow his goods. And when we die, when we leave this world, our character still more directly determines our fate. Of all that we have we can only take *this* with us—our character and the fruits it has borne, whether in the habits it has formed for us, or in the

deeds it has prompted us to do. We shall take our habits with us, and our works will follow us. Clearly, then, our main task in life is to form in ourselves that noble and complete character which is the mainspring of happiness both here and hereafter. If you were about to emigrate to the antipodes, and of all your possessions there was only one which you could take with you, and that the very thing which had most promoted your well-being before you started, would you account yourselves wise were you to bend your attention on everything else, and neglect only that? But we *must*, all of us, soon emigrate to another world. There is only one of our possessions that we can take with us—our self, our personality, our character, such as we have made it. Can it be wise of us, then, to attend to everything but this, to anything more than this? Is it wise to be for ever pursuing gains that we must leave behind us, without much regard to their effect on character; or pleasures, the very faculty for which we shall lose when we die; or so to live among our friends as not to make sure that we shall meet them again beyond the sea, in the new world to which we go?

If we were wise, we should take the counsel of St. James, and make *character* our supreme end and aim. We should welcome whatever will help us to be “perfect and entire, lacking nothing.” We should count it all joy when we fall into the divers trials by which we are made constant in our fidelity to God—to truth, *i.e.*, and righteousness and charity; and thus we should acquire the divine art of extracting joy from trouble itself, and a cheerful strength from the painful tests to which we are kindly exposed.

“But,” it may be said, “such wisdom, though we crave it, is beyond most of us. It is high; we cannot attain unto it.” With what comfort, then, should the assurance come home to our hearts, that, if any of us lack wisdom, lack *this* wisdom, we have only to ask it of God, and He will give

it to us, and give it without upbraiding us either for asking so much, or for not having asked it before! How welcome should be the assurance that God will give us the very wisdom for which we sigh, and which seems beyond our reach, not because of any virtue or desert on our part, but simply because He is God the Giver; because He gives to *all*, and not only to us; because, in His boundless goodness and bounty, He *must* give, and still give, and give again, just as the sun must shine.

We are very ingenious in tormenting ourselves, and often, when at last we have learned what the true wisdom of life is, and have come to long for it, and have even asked God for it, we mournfully conclude that He will not hear our prayer, either because we are not worthy, or because we have asked amiss. Let us therefore lay to heart the promise of St. James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to *all* men, *with simplicity* (i.e. without reserve, without duplicity, not keeping the word of promise to the ear, only to break it to the hope), *and chideth not, and it shall be given him.*"

We shall need all the comfort we can get from this assurance, and from the fact that it is based on the very nature of God Himself; for the holy Apostle goes on to warn us that in one way we may ask amiss, ask so as not to obtain, even when we are asking wisdom to form our character and guide our lives aright. God is the Giver, indeed. He lives only to impart Himself, to bless us with all good. But even He cannot give us a good we will not take; or rather, He may and does give it to us, but He cannot compel us to use it for our good; and if we do not use it for good, we must abuse it to our own hurt and be all the poorer for His bounty.

God gives as the sun shines, on the evil and on the good; but it is only the good soil that takes the benefit of its light and heat. Nay, more, bold as it may sound, I

will undertake to show that God *has* given, given to each one of us, this very wisdom—wisdom to mould character and guide life aright—for which we nevertheless ask, and do well to ask, Him. *He* has it who uses it, and he who uses it not; we all have it, however imperfectly we act upon it. For is there any one of us who does not see at times, is there any one of us who does not see at this moment, that to have a noble and complete character formed in us, to become perfect and entire men, such as Jesus was, is our highest conceivable good—highest in life, in death, and in the life to come, the good which is both most valuable in itself and most enduring? But if we do, we all *have* the wisdom we ask, though we do not use it to the full. The defect is not in God, the Giver, but in us, the askers.

What is this defect then? How comes it to pass that, longing for the true wisdom of life, asking for it, having it, we yet feel as though we had not received anything of the Lord? St. James suggests the answer. We are men of *two* minds instead of men of one, and therefore we are as unstable as water, nay, as *foam*, and do not reach the excellence for which we sigh. Even when we pray for wisdom, we waver in our choice. If we crave wisdom, we also crave an ease, a gain, an enjoyment which is inconsistent with wisdom and the use of it. Instead of being like a mighty river which steadfastly presses on its way, sweeping all obstacles before it, we are like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed now this way, now that, the sport of every wind that blows. This is that fatal flaw in our nature which defeats our endeavours after true wisdom. We are not of a single heart, we are not of one mind, we are not of an undivided will in our high quest.

Now is not that true? St. James does not charge us with hypocrisy, with pretending to a goodness we do not possess, or with feigning a desire for goodness we do not feel. He simply charges us with vacillation, with incon-

sistent aims and desires. "Oh, yes," he seems to say, "you want to be good, want it quite sincerely; but then you want many other things as well. At times you want them more. You shrink from the effort which goodness involves. You know it is wise and right, the true wisdom, the one duty, to serve God and your neighbour, and you wish to do it; but at times you shrink from the trouble of leaving your room and your book to serve a neighbour, or from the thought and emotion without which you cannot worship God. You sincerely desire to carry your religion into your daily life; but you cannot always be at the pains to control your temper, or you have not the courage to discountenance a dishonest custom, or to refuse a profit which can only be obtained in doubtful ways."

This, and such as this, is what the Apostle means when he reminds us of our instability, our two-mindedness, of the fickleness of our hearts, of our divided wills. Elijah had the same thought in his mind when he upbraided the Israelites with the challenge, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" or, more exactly, "How long halt ye between *two paths*?"—one foot on the higher path and one on the lower, so that they made little way, and were thrown into a distorted and ungainly attitude.

We all know what the Prophet, what the Apostle meant, for we have all limped on Elijah's two paths; we have all been as waves on St. James's sea, now rising toward heaven, now sinking toward the abyss. Or, only slightly to change the figure, we have all wavered on the waves, as Peter did when, no longer keeping his eyes on Christ, he began to sink. Like him, we have had our minds distracted between trust and fear, between love for the Master and self-love. "Wherefore didst thou *doubt*?" said Christ to Peter; *i.e.* "Why become a man of two minds? Why suffer your thoughts to be drawn in two opposite directions—*toward* Me, and yet *away* from Me?" And to us St.

James says: "Do not doubt; do not suffer your minds to be distracted by the contending claims of flesh and spirit, of heaven and earth, of time and eternity: or, though you ask for the best things, you will not, *because you cannot*, receive anything of the Lord. He *will* give you wisdom if you ask it, for He gives to *all*; but what will you be the better for wisdom if you do not use it?"

What we want, in order to attain decision of will, unity of character, is *faith*, or more faith, in the spiritual and eternal realities, to have our hearts more fully set on them, to be quite sure that they are worth more than all the goods of time, and that we may possess and enjoy them, even in these fleeting hours of time. And therefore it is that St. James bids us, if we lack the true wisdom, *ask* for it *in faith*, nothing doubting. The fact is, that we do doubt, that we do not fully and heartily believe. We get weary and ashamed of limping awkwardly on our two paths; we grow sick of being tossed to and fro between our better and our inferior desires; and we ask God to give us wisdom to choose the better part, to take and keep the higher path, to maintain a settled and onward course. But even as we ask, even when we are in our best moods, do we quite want to break once for all with the world? do we see no flower we long to pluck which blooms only on the lower path? Alas! we ask for decision itself with an undecided heart, not expecting, nor altogether wishing, to receive a full and immediate answer to our prayer, not braced and prepared for the effort it would take to grasp that answer, should it come.

Is there no remedy, no real help for us? Will *nothing* induce or compel us to choose God and truth and goodness with all our hearts? Will nothing persuade us to make the formation of a noble and harmonious character our supreme aim, and to follow it with a single and an undivided will? Shall we never make it our chief and stead-



fast endeavour to be true and upright and kind in all we do, and with all our strength? Many of us are so sick of our indecision, of being divided in will and aim, that we say we would willingly make any sacrifice in order to have done with it, that the sense of unity may be brought into our hearts and lives, that we may always be doing one thing, and that the best. And sometimes God takes us at our word. He sends the divers tribulations which make us feel how unable the things of sense and time are to satisfy the soul, how uncertain our hold of them is. He convinces us, by arguments which rend our hearts, that we cannot rest in any earthly good, however pure and sweet it may be; or that, if we could rest in it, we cannot be sure of having it long. And thus, painfully yet most graciously, He teaches and constrains us to seek first the things which lie beyond the reach of change, and which *can* satisfy us, even though we should lack all else. Truth, righteousness, charity, fellowship with the Father and with His Son, the hope of becoming one with all the wise and faithful and good, and of meeting all whom we love in a world in which there will be no change, save the changes which will bring us nearer to each other by bringing all nearer to God—these now become our aim, our strength, our joy. The very sorrows we most dreaded have made us men of one mind, and will in due course make us perfect and entire, lacking nothing. We still love the beautiful world around us, and the friends who have long been dear to us, and the necessary or honourable tasks assigned us, and the pleasant recreations and enjoyments permitted us. We love them more than ever: but we love and value them most of all, not for what is outward and visible in them, but for what is inward and invisible; for the help they yield us to become brave and true and gentle, for the opportunities they afford us of helping others to walk after the spirit, and not after the flesh. We love this beautiful world most of all

when it speaks to us of the beauty of its Maker. We love our common and public tasks, not so much for the gain we make by them, as for the good we may do by them, the contribution we tender to the general welfare. We love our friends, not so much for any personal comfort or ease we may get out of them, nor because they cast back on us a softened and flattering reflection of ourselves, but rather because they are helping us, and we are helping them, to live the true life, to pursue the chief good. And, imperfect as we all are, there are many of us who really do value our friends in proportion as they aid us to be our best selves, and invite us into those upper chambers of the soul in which we find it so hard to abide.

When we pray for wisdom, then, wisdom to guide our lives toward high spiritual ends, we may be sure that God will give it. But we may be sure too that, with the wisdom, He will send the trials which will constrain us to accept and use it. When the trials come, we must bear them; for who can escape the hand of God? But shall we not also take the wisdom they bring with them? Shall we not suffer them to redeem us from our indecision, from halting and wavering between the supreme eternal good and a good that is only temporal and will change with time? Shall we not count it all joy if by these trials we are made men of one mind, and have that mind fully and wholly bent on God, and on the joy and peace which are to be found in Him, and in Him alone?

There is but one way to escape the trials which are so painful to us. And it is this: To make them unnecessary, by an instant, voluntary, and entire devotion to the true aim, the supreme good, of life. Because God loves us, and *will* make us perfect and entire, He must and will send us any sorrows, losses, pains necessary to detach our hearts from the inferior objects and aims on which they are too apt to settle. His very love for us compels Him to compel

us to choose the better part. If we would avoid the pain of compulsion, we must freely choose the better part for ourselves. So long as we halt between two, and waver this way and that, we must not expect, we dare not hope, to escape the trials which will make us of a single heart and an undivided will. When those trials come, let us remember for what they come, what an end of mercy, that so we may be able to rejoice in tribulation itself, knowing that by tribulation God is constraining us to bring forth all the peaceable fruits of righteousness and love.

S. Cox.

## GENESIS AND SCIENCE.

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THREE eminent men of science<sup>1</sup> have, at my request, furnished me with their opinions as to the possibility of establishing an agreement between the statements in the first chapter of Genesis and the certain and well-ascertained results of modern scientific investigation.

I am glad to say I have their permission to publish the papers and letters in which these opinions are expressed, and they now appear as an appendix to the "Notes on Genesis" in successive numbers of *THE EXPOSITOR*.

J. J. STEWART PEROWNE.

### PROFESSOR STOKES ON GENESIS.

#### I.

DEAR MR. DEAN,—

Some of the questions you ask me are rather for a theologian to answer than for a scientific man, especially one who does not know Hebrew. I think perhaps I had best, in the first instance, mention what on scientific

<sup>1</sup> Sir G. G. Stokes, M.P., F.R.S., President of the Royal Society; Rev. C. Pritchard, D.D., F.R.S., Savilian Professor of Astronomy in the University of Oxford; Rev. G. Bonney, Sc.D., F.R.S., Professor of Geology in University College, London.