
may work in us that which is pleasing in His sight, and may encircle us with ever-growing completeness of beauty and strength, until He "present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

ON GENESIS XVIII., XIX.

EWALD has called Gen. xviii. 1 to xix. 29, "the most perfect specimen of a miniature epic." There are those who are offended at the anthropomorphic cast of the language. I confess however that I greatly sympathize with Delitzsch, who regards it as a prophetic anticipation of the Christian view of God. It may be that the law deepened the sense of holiness, but it was at the expense of that childlike confidence in the Divine sympathies, which, according to the Book of Genesis, was the glory of the patriarchal age. Notice in passing, that, abundant as are the parallels to the narrative in Gen. xviii. in Aryan mythology (*e.g.* the lovely one in Ovid, *Met.*, viii. 626-721), there are none, so far as I remember, in the fragments of Semitic mythology as yet known to us, and none in the mythology of Egypt. That the men of the Nile valley should have no such genial narratives, is only what might be expected; their religious system was wholly deficient in points of contact between the human and the Divine. I have not now time to discuss the religious significance of the narratives in Gen. xviii., xix. (see however the few remarks hazarded below); readers of that treasure of high religious philosophy, Schleiermacher's *Predigten*, will perhaps remember that the great Berlin preacher and theologian has not neglected the fine opportunity presented to him by this masterpiece of Hebrew narrative.

It is rather the crisis of the story to which I would call attention; Prof. Hull's recent book, published by the Palestine Exploration Fund, has doubtless disposed for ever—if a final blow was needed—of the theory, traceable in such a critical or hypercritical work as Hitzig's *History of the People of Israel* (1869), that the cities of the "Pentapolis" were swallowed up by the lake now called the Dead Sea. But how came the theory to take such a hold of the popular mind? May it not be accounted for by the fact that stories of the submergence of guilty cities are current in different parts of the world, and that these have given colouring to our view of the Sodom narrative? Tobler, the well-known Swiss scholar and student of Palestinian geography, has pointed out a tradition current in the canton of Thun, that a certain place on the shore of the Lake of Thun was overwhelmed by the waters, because a dwarf was refused hospitality during a storm by all the inhabitants except an aged couple who dwelt in a movable cottage. Comp. Ovid, as above. (See *Im Neuer Reich*, 1873, p. 167.) The North Sea and the German Ocean have similar stories of the destruction of cities or towns once situated on their shores. Wetzstein furnishes a parallel from Bedouin folklore, which is the more important, because the moral motive for the catastrophe is mentioned. Remarking on the beauty of a crystal-clear lake (but without fish), connected subterraneously with the Jordan-spring Tell-el-Kâdi, his companions expressed their wonder that the Franks were ignorant of its origin. Once, they said, a flourishing village stood here, whose people refused hospitality, with aggravating circumstances, to a poor traveller; the next morning after he had asked it in vain, a lake stood upon the site of the village (Delitzsch, *Hiob*, p. 418). There may have been such a tradition current respecting the "Pentapolis," but if so it has not been preserved. The Biblical references, exclusive of Gen. xix. 24, point however

to an earthquake as the form of the Divine judgment; מִהִפְכָּה, "overthrow" is the standing phrase in Isa. i. 7; xiii. 19; Amos iv. 11; Jer. xlix. 18; l. 40; Deut. xxix. 23 (22); and this agrees with the phraseology of Gen. xix. 25 (וַיִּהְיֶה), and (if the parallelism be worth anything) of *Korán*, Sur. ix. 71; liii. 54; lxix. 9. Wetzstein too has told us that stories of cities *overthrown* by Divine judgment are frequent on the borders of the desert (see Delitzsch, *Hiob*, p. 197; the cities are called *maqlúbât*, i.e. "subverted," which is in harmony with the standing phrase in Hebrew mentioned above. It has been conjectured that the Hebrew narrator combined *two traditions*, one representing an earthquake, the other a Divine fire, as the cause of the destruction; and the conjecture may be supported (or excused?) by a passage in Strabo (p. 374), in which he describes the destruction of *thirteen* cities, and the Dead Sea as caused by earthquakes and eruptions of fire and hot waters, and another in Josephus (*B. J.*, iv. 8, 4, comp. *Ant.*, i. 11, 4), ascribing it to lightning or "Divine fire."

Professor Palmer, in travelling through the mountains of the "Azázimeh, came upon blocks of stone, with a story attached, which the lamented professor regards as 'a transplanted reminiscence of the story of Sodom and Gomorrhah'" (*Pal. Explor. Fund. Quarterly Statement*, new series, No. 1, p. 47). I do not see the least ground for this supposition. Retributive justice was the fundamental attribute of the Divine nature, according to all the Semitic peoples—and indeed all nations everywhere—in the primitive state represented more or less accurately in Genesis; the mental soil was ready for such legends to spring up, wherever an opportunity favoured. I say nothing about the historical (or "literally true") character of these stories, for evidence which a critic would call historical is wanting. Wetzstein ventures on the remark that the narrative of Sodom is more at home in the *din Ibrâhîm* (the primitive Semitic religion

attached to the name of Abraham) than in Mosaism. I do not think this is entirely justified. There are elements in the story as given in Genesis worthy of the "merciful and gracious" name ascribed to God in Exod. xxxiv. 6; I refer of course to the truly Divine saying, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake" (Gen. xviii. 32). I cannot therefore join in any disparagement of this poetic and significant group of narratives in Gen. xviii., xix. But Biblical theologians are content if the narratives of which their materials are partly composed are *true*, though not in all cases real—*wahre, obwohl nicht immer wirkliche, Geschichten* (comp. Prof. Wordsworth, *Bampton Lectures* for 1881, p. 138). The elements derived by Biblical theology from Gen. xviii., xix., are the combination of justice and compassion in the dealings of God with men, and the mysterious solidarity of men both for good and for evil.

T. K. CHEYNE.

"I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD."

1 CORINTHIANS xi. 23.

I CONFESS that I cannot extract full satisfaction from any of the current interpretations of this difficult passage. There are minds, indeed, that can rest content with believing that the risen Christ on some occasion communicated to the converted Paul an historical account, such as he could have obtained from the common tradition of the primitive Church; and some indeed press even for the actual words as part of the revelation. To other minds, however, what appears an unnecessary multiplication of revelations, is antecedently improbable and so far incredible; nor do they derive much comfort from the suggestion that "we need