

“no man any more,” as Lord and Helper, “save Jesus only,” “that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.”

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

THE BIBLE AND WINE.

As I was sitting last year, engaged in familiar converse with a friend, in a vine arbour near to the bank of the glorious German Rhine—I with a glass of beer beside me, he with a bottle of the generous growth of his home land, which I had ordered for him as my guest—I exclaimed in a little burst of enthusiasm, “Is it not so? Just as this view of the Rhine charms us both, so the Jordan once laved the roots of Christianity not less than those of Judaism; for through the Jordan, Israel coming out of Egypt entered into Canaan; and through the Jordan, too, Jesus passed after He had returned out of Egypt, in order, accompanied by His disciples, to traverse the Holy Land as a Preacher of the kingdom of Heaven.” When I observed that this parallel did not indeed repel my friend, but yet startled him, I gave a more inoffensive turn to the discourse, and said: “Well, then, in one thing contradiction is impossible, namely, in this, that as we two are sitting under one and the same arbour encircled with vine branches, so the Old Testament and the New Testament Scriptures are equally inwrought with figures of wine, vines, vineyards and vine-culture. Though the two may differ in many respects, yet as regards wine they are one. They resemble an arbour whose foreground and whose background is covered with tendrils, is fragrant of the vine. Upon this we will touch. The subject is worthy of it.

In vino veritas
Atque sinceritas.

Quidquid latebit
Mox apparebit.

In wine is verity
And sheer sincerity.

Whate'er lies concealed
Shall soon be revealed.

With this reminiscence of the Middle Rhine I introduce my present talk.

The Rhine country was not always a wine country; Palestine, which is called by way of endearment, the gladsome land (*Wonneland*), was from of old a wine land. Then when the worthy Roman emperor Probus, from 276, took a deep interest in the culture of the soil, in the conquered lands also, and naturalised the cultivation of the vine upon the Rhine, the vine-culture on the Jordan had already received some heavy blows; for the wars of liberation against the Romans, of which the first ended in the year 72 with the destruction of Jerusalem, and the second in 135 with the exclusion of the Jews from the restored city of Jerusalem, had left the fertile vine tracts for the most part uncultivated and desolate. The Jewish city was transformed by Hadrian into a heathen city, and then by Constantine into a Christian one. But since, in the year 637, it became a Moslem city, and the whole land even to Lebanon fell into the possession of Moslem rulers, the cultivation of the vine has fallen into entire desuetude on account of the prohibition by the Koran of the use of wine. The establishment of a Christian kingdom in Jerusalem on the part of the Crusaders made but little difference in this respect, for the vine is—as called by the prophet Zechariah (viii. 12)—a “plant of peace;” the cultivation of the vine demands peace even more, in comparison, than the cultivation of the land; the Christian dominion, however, was maintained only in constant readiness for war, without assured peace. And now, since the Osmanlis obtained possession of Palestine in 1517, the Holy Land has sunk down, under the indolence and mismanagement of its potentates, to a slag of its ancient fertility, and there is found now in the attention paid to the growth by Jewish and Christian cultivators only a remnant of the once magnificent and famous vine husbandry of Palestine.

There was a time when the mountains of the Holy Land, and specially of Judæa, were cultivated in terraces far up their sides; so that the singer of Psalm lxxii., in view of the Salomonian time of peace, can wish without exaggeration, "May there be an abundance of corn in the land unto the top of the mountains, may its fruit wave as Lebanon." And Isaiah, comparing the disappointed expectation of the God of Israel to the disappointed expectation of a vine-dresser, strikes up like a wandering minstrel the song (chap. v.): "Up, I will sing of my Wellbeloved [the wellbeloved of the prophet is his God], a song of my Beloved touching His vineyard. A vineyard had my Beloved upon a mountain-horn, the son of fatness. And He made a trench about it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with a precious vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and hewed out also a winepress therein, and He hoped for the grape-bearing, and—it brought forth wild grapes." The mountain-horn was a son of fatness; *i.e.* fatness was inborn in it, namely the fatness of a fruitful soil. The *humus*, the cultivable earth, had not first with toil to be carried up to it, but was proper to it by nature. Where should we now find in Palestine such a mountain-height with piled up solid layer of mould? In Palestine at least there is none. The mountains are bare and stony, and where they are covered with trees and bushes, this brushwood hardly deserves the name of a forest—even in the valleys and plains we miss the humus-soil; meadows like our meadows are nowhere to be found save on the heights of Lebanon, and even Sharon and Jezreel, the lauded plains between sea and mountain chain, have—as Fraas, the geologist among the Palestine explorers, assures us—only the character of a vegetation of the steppes, rich in herbage and enchanting by its wealth of colours; the foot treads, between the herbs and flowers, not upon fertile earth, but upon naked, sandy, or clayey, or otherwise mineral soil.

This was not so at one time. As the Sinaitic peninsula, when the children of Israel after their departure from Egypt journeyed in it for forty years, was not as yet, to the same extent, the dismal wilderness it afterwards became, so Palestine in olden time long enjoyed an alternation of the seasons more favourable than at present to the formation of a prolific soil; it was, as Moses describes it in the Book of Deuteronomy, "a good land, a land of water brooks, fountains, veins of water gushing forth in valley and in hill; a land of wheat and of barley, and of the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate; a land of the choice¹ olive tree and of honey; a land wherein thou mayest eat thy bread without scantiness." If we take a survey of the contents of Holy Scripture, with an open eye for the natural beauty of the theatre of its events, then we have before us on the right hand and on the left—from the oasis of Engedi by the Dead Sea, right away to Lebanon, and from Hebron away to the south-west into the Jewish South District,² and farther north from the plain of Jezreël, away beyond the Carmel headland—the silver-green olive plantations and the dark green fig-tree plantations, and smiling vine tracts. A good part of this glory remained till the first century of our era, and something of it has lingered even to the present. Josephus boasts that by the Lake Gennesar you might pluck ripe grapes and figs (he calls these two the kings among the fruits) for ten months out of the year. And where the cultivation of the vine is pursued in the present day, as is the case in Hebron and the Lebanon, it is seen how gigantic the productive power of nature is there. The missionary Stephen Schultz relates that there are clusters of grapes weighing as much as twelve pounds, with berries of the size of plums; and in the southern Lebanon he came upon a vine thirty feet high, whose branches presented a foliage of more than fifty feet long and broad.

¹ As opposed to the merely *wild* olive.

² Daroma, Negeb.

So greatly did the land abound in wine in olden days, specially Judæa, that, as is said in the language of prophetic poetic imagery, men washed their garments in wine as in water, and without anxiously guarding against damage, one bound his riding-beast to the noblest vine, in place of a stake. Olive, fig tree, vine are the ancient emblems of the Land of Israel. In the fable which Jotham relates to the Shechemites, to warn them against the government of the fratricide Abimelech, the trees go forth to anoint for themselves a king. They repair first to the olive, which, as the producer of the anointing oil, seems to be first pointed out for the office; then to the fig tree, whose umbrageous crown resembles a royal canopy; and then to the vine, which is rather a shrub than a tree, and loves to entwine itself in its growth about the stem of the fig tree, but the vine too answers with a refusal: "Should I leave my juice¹ which gladdens gods and men, and go to sway to and fro over the trees?" It is a standing figure of prosperous peace, that every one sits under the shadow of his vine and of his fig tree. Depicting the future age of freedom and of peace, the prophet Zechariah exclaims: "How great its pleasantness and its beauty! Corn makes the young men to bloom, and new wine the maids;" *i.e.* the young men thrive on the nourishing bread-fare of the land, and the soft sweet juice of the grape sheds a youthful freshness over maiden cheeks. And in the Song of Songs, in which all that is most glorious in the vegetable world is combined, as in the *Isola bella* of the *Lago Maggiore*, the vine stands at the head. Solomon's only beloved has a bronzed visage, because the severe brothers have made her the guardian of a vineyard, and visiting her home at the foot of the Lesser Hermon, leaning on Solomon's arm, she hints to the king, in a figure taken from his vineyard at Baalhamon, that he is not to leave without a present—as he gave presents to the guardians of

¹ *Tirosh*, must, new wine.

this vineyard—the guardians of her vineyard, *i.e.* of her virginity, namely her brothers; and in the interval we hear how, before she is taken to her new home, visited by the king, and called upon to let her voice be heard, she pours forth a lay of the vineyard :

“ Behold with fragrant blossoms adorned
Stands the vineyard, already the grapes begin to form ;
Up then and take the foxes, the little ones,
That they spoil not for us the fair vineyard.”

The development of the vine-blossom, which in Hebrew bears the beautiful name of *semadar*, appears thrice in the Song of Songs as the sign of spring; all who have ever visited a vineyard in the time of bloom (with us, end of May), have been ravished with the incomparable fragrance.

Apart from the Feast of the Vintage, other national festivals, too, were held by preference in the vineyards. As Israel's history has its Iphigenia in the daughter of Jephthah, who falls a victim to a vow, so has it likewise a counterpart to the Rape of the Sabines in the carrying off of the daughters of Shiloh. When the tribe of Benjamin had been brought down to a pitiful remnant, through the war of revenge waged against it by the other tribes, and the members of the other tribes had bound themselves by an oath not to suffer their daughters to wed with Benjamites, a national festival which was observed annually in Shiloh afforded a way of escape out of the difficulty; the young maidens of Shiloh held there the circular dances, and the Benjamites broke forth from the vineyards and carried off for themselves wives from among them, with the tacit permission of the elders. And even in the Herodian period there were associated with the 15th Ab (concluding day of the cutting of the sacrificial wood) and the 10th Tishri (Day of Atonement) for the whole populace of Jerusalem two unique forms of diversion; for on these days the maidens went forth, attired in white garments, which even the richest had

borrowed in order not to put the poor to shame, into the surrounding vineyards, and danced there, and sang sportively provoking songs, addressed to the youths who had gathered as spectators.

It is noteworthy that the winged word, "Wine maketh glad the heart of man," is found in the Psalter, and indeed in Ps. civ., which is a song of praise to God the Creator. The interest of Holy Scripture in the world of nature is not called forth merely by the sensuous charm of the beautiful in nature, not merely by the enjoyment afforded by such natural objects as food and drink, but it is before everything a religious interest; it sees in the things of nature incorporated thoughts of God, copies in this world from archetypes in the world beyond, miracles of creative omnipotence and wisdom, gifts of the heavenly love. The joyous aspect of a glorious vinetract points the spirit up to God the Creator and Giver; and when it is laid waste the sight of this desolation attunes the soul to sadness, something as when a table laden with festive gifts has been overturned and that which sparkled thereon is reduced to fragments. In this sense Isaiah, in his oracle upon Moab, bewails the desolation of the Moabite vine-district by the Assyrian war; the city of Jazer weeps for the devastated vinefields of Sibma, and the 'prophet weeps and laments with her, that over the luxurious tillage of the Moabite sister cities Heshbon and Elâle there has gone up in place of the *Hedad* (huzza) of the wine-treaders, the *Hedad* (hurrah) of the wildly charging foeman:—

"Therefore I bewail with Jazer's weeping Sibma's vine,
I water thee with my tears, Heshbon and Elâle,
That upon thy summer fruits (fruit-gathering) and upon thy vintage
Hedad is fallen."

Joel's lament, too, over the all-withering drought and the all-consuming swarms of locusts is, above everything, a

mourning with the mourning world of nature, although also over the fact that the sources of nourishment for the world of men and beasts are destroyed, and especially over the fact that the necessary means for the daily service of God are withdrawn: "Cut off is meal offering and drink offering from the house of Jahve; they mourn, the priests, the ministers of Jahve." They mourn, for the presentation of the daily morning and evening sacrifice, which in other cases even amidst the straits of a siege was not omitted, has become impossible, owing to the devastation of the corn and the vines.

The daily morning and evening sacrifice concluded with a libation of wine, in connexion with which the trumpets of the priests and song and music of the Levites resounded, as described in the Book of Ecclesiasticus (and admirably translated by Luther): "He," namely the High Priest, Simon II., "stretched out his hand to the cup, and poured of the blood of the grape; he poured out at the foot of the altar a sweet-smelling savour unto the Most High, King of all. Then shouted the sons of Aaron, and sounded the silver trumpets, and made a great noise to be heard, for a remembrance before the Most High. Then all the people together hastened, and fell down to the earth upon their faces to worship their Lord God Almighty, the Most High. The singers also sang praises with their voices [with psalms] and the whole house resounded with the sweet melody."¹ In the Mishna-tractate on the meal offerings (*menachoth*), the localities are mentioned whence the best and second best wine for the wine libations were derived. Among the latter localities is found also the White City on the Hill. That is probably Nazareth; for this bears in ancient records the name of the White City, because the houses are built of white limestone, and because it lies in an amphitheatre

¹ The concluding words, from those bracketed onwards, are after Luther's version.

formed by hills of white calcareous lime. In the present day the wine culture there is insignificant; they train upon the soil creeping vines, but the red and white grapes, cut unripe, are brought to market to be enjoyed as a refreshing compote.

That the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament condemns the immoderate use of wine we need not say. To the officiating priests wine, or other strong drink, is prohibited under pain of death; as likewise of the presbyters and deacons of the Church it was required first of all that they should be no wine-bibbers. For the rest, however, only the Nazarite, who had taken a vow of abstinence for a limited time or for the duration of his life, entirely abstained from the use of wine, and that nomadic tribelet, too, of the Rechabites, whose inexorably firm adherence to the custom handed down from their fathers Jeremiah holds forth as a pattern to his own countrymen; there were also in the Roman Christian Church, Jewish Christians who on principle renounced the use of flesh and wine, perhaps because the time was not meet for indulging in such enjoyments, even as after the destruction of Jerusalem many said: "Shall we eat flesh and drink wine now, when the altar is destroyed on which flesh was wont to be offered and wine to be poured forth to God?" There are, therefore, under given circumstances, relatively legitimate grounds for abstaining from wine. That is the standpoint which should be taken by the Anglo-American advocates of the Temperance movement, without seeking to wrest from Scripture a testimony that the use of fermented wine is forbidden under any circumstances. How often have I been asked by those on this side whether the wine of the four cups of the Jewish Paschal meal was fermented! They would fain substitute in the Lord's Supper the unfermented juice for the fermented wine. The Jewish Passover wine, however, is really fermented, and only as a substitute in case of need is

unfermented wine permitted. Thus it was unfermented wine, too, which Jesus handed to the disciples at His parting meal, concluding with the mysterious words: "Verily, I say unto you, I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." One is reminded in this of the old synagogal metaphor, that there is a wine of the world to come, which has been laid up since the six days of the Creation for the future use of the blessed.

The vine is a beautiful image, at the service of men, of ascending from humility to glory. There is among the useful plants no one more modest, more easily satisfied, and without display rendering such great things, out of unpretending form developing such delicious fruits. The vine is magnanimous in its endurance; it accommodates itself to the most diverse kinds of soil and a pretty high degree of cold, and does not succumb even to cruel ill-treatment. In this respect Joseph, in the blessing of Jacob, is likened to a vine, the dreamer delivered by his brethren to the heathen, who as the exalted one became the deliverer and benefactor of his people. Therefore in Ps. lxxx. Israel is compared to a vine, a vine transplanted out of the soil of Egypt, the house of bondage, to Canaan, which, though sorely plucked at and bitten, yet remains an object of Divine choice and protection, and of a love which eventually dispels for itself every cloud. And therefore Jesus also compares Himself to a vine, and His Father to the vinedresser, and His disciples to the branches; and the Church sings of the wine which He sacramentally dispenses:

"O sacred wine, to me be blest;
Since He, whose blood gives me
To feel forgiveness of my sins,
Meets me indeed with Thee."

Through these three figures of the vine there runs the

chain of historic connexion, but an intermediate link is wanting. The Messiah is the Son of David, and is known by the prophets simply as David. Where, however, is David compared to a vine? When I was sitting with my friend in the vine arbour on the Rhine, I related to him that in the library of the Jerusalem cloister in Constantinople there had been discovered an ancient and beyond doubt Jewish-Christian Church Order, of which the text has been published since the year 1883. Here a communion prayer reads: "We thank Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of Thy servant David, which [vine] Thou 'hast made known to us by Thy servant Jesus." No one has yet succeeded in pointing out the place whence this figure of the vine of David is taken.

"I think I know the place," said my companion, "but we have no books here." Then he took a draught, smiled, and continued: "It is remarkable how the early Jewish and early Christian literature accord in matters of wine. "That is just what I was driving at," cried I: "The Old Testament and the New are one stream, as the German Middle Rhine from Bingen to Coblenz and from Coblenz to Bonn—one stream, wherein the mountains and the wine-lands and the stars and the sun are reflected." He was silent, and left me the last word.

EPILOGUE.

The explanation which my Rhenish friend had in mind consisted, as I think, in this, that in Ps. lxxx., where Israel is compared to a vine transplanted out of Egypt into Canaan, it reads (vv. 15, 16): "Elohim Zebaoth, oh! turn again, look from heaven and see, and visit this vine. And protect him whom Thy right hand hath planted, and the son whom Thou hast firmly bound to Thee," and that these verses are rendered in the Targum (the Aramaic

paraphrase): "Elohim Zebaoth, oh! turn now again, look from heaven and see, and remember in mercy this vine. And the vine-shoot which Thy right hand hath planted, and the King Messiah (*Malka Meshîcha*), whom Thou hast established for Thyself." Here the parallel is drawn: vine = Messiah (David). As I quitted the chamber after my lecture, a friendly scholar gave me in passing another solution, in referring me to a passage of the Talmud (*Berachoth*, 57a) where it is said: "He who sees a choice vine in a dream, may look for the Messiah, for it is written (Gen. xlix. 11), 'He bindeth to the vine his foal, and to the choice vine his ass's colt.'" Rabbinowicz, in his *Varia Lectiones* to the Talmud, observes on this place that a Paris MS. of the Talmud bases this interpretation of the dream upon Ps. lxxx. 9 [8], for it reads, "A vine out of Egypt didst Thou transport, dravest out heathen and plantedst it." Thus here too the parallel is drawn, with an appeal in justification partly to Gen. xlix. 11, partly to Ps. lxxx.—vine = Messiah. The two references to the source of the figure in the newly discovered document of the early Church mutually supplement each other.

FRANZ DELITZSCH.

THE PROBABLE PHYSICAL CAUSES OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

GENESIS xviii., xix.

A RECENT interesting article in the EXPOSITOR by Dr. Cheyne, has induced me to return to the consideration of the physical causes involved in the destruction of Sodom and its companion cities, and has suggested some questions which had not occurred to me, when discussing this most realistic narrative, and comparing it with the appearances