

*ST. PAUL AND EPIMENIDES.*

IN the EXPOSITOR for October 1906 I published an article dealing with the supposed habitual inveracity of the Cretans as affirmed by a prophet of their own, who is quoted in the Epistle to Titus ; and I endeavoured to show in the first instance that it was not general nor habitual lying that was laid at the door of the Cretans, but rather it was a special, particular lie, from which the enlightened Greek conscience had revolted, the belief, in fact, that Zeus, the father of gods and men, was mortal, and that his tomb could be seen in Crete : a thing which no one could believe who had right thoughts in theology, and a sufficient faith in a non-transient God.

Having established the grounds upon which the Cretans had lost their character and not found themselves in religion, it was natural to suspect that, if we could recover some more of the lost text of Epimenides from which Paul was quoting, we should find the particular lie denounced in the context.

At this point I was able to quote from a rare manuscript of commentary upon the lectionary in the Nestorian Church known as the Gannat Busamē, or Garden of Delights, a book which was especially valuable because it contained an immense quantity of extracts (in Syriac) from the lost writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, quoted either anonymously (for purposes of self-defence on the part of the Nestorian against their orthodox persecutors), or under the disguise (transparent to the initiated) of the Interpreter. In this valuable book I found under Acts xvii. 18 the following sentences :

*“ In Him we live and move and have our being.”* The Cretans used to say of Zeus, that he was a prince and was

ripped up by a wild boar, and he was buried ; and lo ! his grave is with us. Accordingly Minos, the son of Zeus, made over him a panegyric, and in it he said :

“ A grave have fash oned for thee, O Holy and High One,  
The lying Cretans, who are all the time liars, evil beasts, idle bellies  
But thou diest not, for to eternity thou livest and standest,  
For in thee we live and move and have our being.”

It was easy to see that we had here, in a translation, some Greek verses ; for one of the sentences is, almost exactly, the hexameter from Epimenides in the Epistle to Titus ; but what surprises us is that the famous sentence “ in Him we live and move and have our being ” is in the same sequence, and must itself be an Epimenidean hexameter. Now this had never been suspected ; commentators on the text of Acts xvii. 18, 19 had been careful to mark parallels to Aratus and Callimachus for the half-verse

*τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν,*

but they did not suppose Paul's poetry went further than the half-line of his Cilician compatriot ; in Westcott and Hort's text the fragment of Aratus is printed as verse ; we must now employ another spacing for the words—

*ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμὲν,*

even though they do not, as they stand, make an exact hexameter.

From this point I went on to suggest that we had really recovered four verses of Epimenides, and to restore them to their primitive form ; and at the same time to conjecture that, since the verses in the Gannat were said to come from a panegyric which Minos made on Zeus, that the reference to Minos should lead us to identify the poem from which the lines were taken with the lost work of Epimenides, whose title was Minos, of which Diogenes Laertius says that it contained a thousand lines. If the rest of the poem

was as lofty as the four lines which we have found, our opinion of Epimenides will coincide with that of the Epistle to Titus, that he was a prophet as well as a poet.

The rest of the article related to the curious parallel made between the Cretan religion and the Adonis and Attis cults of Asia Minor in the matter of the god slain by a wild boar ; it was natural to make the modern anthropological interpretations that the god was originally the boar, and that the same reasons for pig-taboo would be found underlying the Cretan and the Asia-Minor and Syrian cults.

In April 1907 I returned to the subject in a second paper, whose title was *A Further Note on the Cretans* : in this the restoration of the verses was completed in the following form :

τύμβον ἐτεκτῆναντο σέθεν, κίδιστε, μέγιστε  
 Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί.  
 Ἄλλὰ σύ γ' οὐ θνήσκεις, ἔστηκας γὰρ ζῶδς αἰεὶ,  
 ἐν γὰρ σοὶ ζῶμεν καὶ κινύμεθ' ἡδὲ καὶ ἐσμέν.

A further attempt was made to show that the whole of the vituperation of the Cretans in the second line is due to a single cause, the death and burial of Zeus, and that the comparison with the beast and the glutton was due to the fact that, as in similar cults, they ate their god in the form of the sacred animal and ate him raw.

My reason for making a further reference to the matter at the present time lies in a fresh discovery of Theodorean matter which I have recently made, which confirms the position taken up in the previous articles.

I have recently been reading for Mrs. Gibson a text and translation which she is preparing for the press of the commentary of Isho'dad, the Nestorian Church-father, upon the Acts of the Apostles, which is to form a sequel and continuation of the work of the same father upon the

Gospels, which Mrs. Gibson has recently published. Isho'dad's work is a mine of quotations from known and unknown fathers, such as would naturally be cited by a Nestorian author; and, in particular, as in the case of the Gannat Busamē, the pièce de resistance of the banquet is the works of the proscribed Theodore. It was, therefore, with some pleasure that I acceded to Mrs. Gibson's request that I would write a brief introduction to Isho'dad on the Acts, as I had done to Isho'dad on the Gospels. It was with great interest that I found in the comments on the seventeenth chapter of Acts the same matter from Epimenides which I had noticed in the Gannat, and, what was more to the purpose, the quotation was in a more extended form. For this reason I think it will be as well to put the passage on record, as it definitely confirms my conjecture that the verses of Epimenides are taken from the Minos. We will begin the quotation a little higher up, so as to mark the identification with Theodore, and we will continue it a little lower, so as to include what Theodore says about the quotation from Aratus. It will thus become clear that the whole of what we quote, with the exception, perhaps, of a single interpolated sentence, is from the hand of Theodore.

“The Interpreter says that the Athenians were once upon a time at war with their enemies, and the Athenians retreated from them in defeat; then a certain Daimon appeared and said unto them, I have never been honoured by you as I ought; and because I am angry with you, therefore you have a defeat from your enemies. Then the Athenians were afraid, and raised up to him the well-known altar; and because they dreaded lest this very thing should have happened to them, that they had secretly neglected one who was unknown to them, they erected this altar and also wrote upon it, *Of the Unknown and Hidden God*: wishing, in fact,

to say this, that though there is a God in whom we do not believe, we raise this altar to His honour that He may be reconciled to us, although He is not honoured as a known deity : therefore Paul did well to take a reason from this and to say before them, *This hidden God, to whom ye have raised an altar without knowing Him, I have come to declare unto you.* There is no God whom ye know not, except the true God, who hath appointed the times by His command, and hath put bounds, etc." [*He hath determined the times, that is to say, the variations of summer and winter, spring and autumn.*]

"*In Him we live and move and have our being : and, as certain also of your own sages have said, We are his offspring.*" Paul takes both of these quotations from certain heathen poets.

Now about this passage, "*In Him we live and move and have our being*" : the Cretans said about Zeus, as if it were true, that he was a prince, and was lacerated by a wild boar, and was buried ; and behold ! his grave is known amongst us ; so Minos, the son of Zeus, made a panegyric over his father, and in it he said :

The Cretans have fashioned a tomb for thee, O Holy and High !  
Liars, evil beasts, idle bellies ;  
For thou diest not : for ever thou livest and standest ;  
For in thee we live and move and have our being.

So the blessed Paul took this sentence from Minos ; and he took the quotation,

" We are the offspring of God,"

from Aratus, a poet who wrote about God, and about the seven [planets] and the twelve [signs] ; saying, " From God we begin, from the Lord of heaven, that is Zeus ; for all markets, and seas, and havens are filled with His name ; and also in every place, all men are in want of Him, because we are His offspring ; and He out of His goodness giveth

good signs to us and to all men. He moves us to come forward to work ; and He ordains all that is visible and invisible ; and because of this we all worship Him, and say, ' Hail to thee, our Father, wonderful and great ! ' ”

“ Plato also and others say that souls are by nature from God.”

It will be seen that this is a much more extended quotation than we found in the Gannat. It may be suspected that the Gannat has reduced matter which was before it in Isho'dad : it introduces the reference to the Interpreter at the same point, for it also has, though not completely, the extract about the Athenians and the Unknown God. The Gannat neglects, however, the reference to Aratus, and omits the statement that Paul is quoting from the Minos of Epimenides, which was the point in our first investigation that was waiting for confirmation.

The passages from Aratus, which the Syriac has translated (from Theodore) can be recognised in the following, where a comparison will show how far the translator has understood his author :

*Arati Phaenomena.*

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα, τὸν οὐδέποτε ἄνδρες ἔωμεν  
 Ἄρρητον μέσται δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυαί,  
 Πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραί· μεστὴ δὲ θάλασσα,  
 Καὶ λιμένες· πάντη δὲ Διὸς κεχρήμεθα πάντες·  
 5. Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν· ὁ δ' ἥπιος ἀνθρώποισι  
 Δέξια σημαίνει· λαοὺς δ' ἐπὶ ἔργον ἐγείρει,  
 Μιμνήσκων βίότιοι.

14. Τῷ μὲν αἰὶ πρῶτόν τε καὶ ὕστατον ἰλάσκονται.  
 Χαῖρε πάτερ, μέγα θαῦμα, μέγ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὄνειαρ.

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