

ARTICLE IX.

CRITICAL NOTES.

THE THEOLOGICAL ASPECT AT THE GERMAN UNIVERSITIES
AT THE PRESENT TIME.

RECENTLY I came upon an article in the *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA*, written by Joseph Cook in the year 1875, on the "Decline of Rationalism in the German Universities." Much of what was then written was undoubtedly true at the time. Still I remember well, that, when I thought of going to Germany at that time, to spend a year studying at some German university, President A. H. Strong, D.D., said to me before going: "I advise you to finish your course here before you go, for the danger of becoming unsettled in the belief is too great." And if I look upon the results that have been secured for the American Theology I am compelled to affirm, that, in many respects, the suggestion of Dr. Strong was perfectly true. For many young men who came to Germany even then have, besides having acquired some of the scientific habits of German scholars, become unsettled in their religious belief, and imbibed much of that method of criticism which has not unjustly been called "destructive." Many of these now fill the chairs in the institutions of learning in the United States whose theology is rather doubtful, and scarcely anything more than a reproduction in the States of the teaching received at the German universities years ago. And the seed thus transplanted into the American schools of learning is, as we see from every paper and journal we receive from America, already bearing its doubtful fruit.

One form of Rationalism may at the time Mr. Cook wrote have been on the decline; but another was even then rampant, the seeds of which are now bearing fruit in the professorial chairs and the pulpits, not only in Germany, but elsewhere too. I need only mention such names as Weizsäcker at Tübingen, Schenkel and Hausrath at Heidelberg, Reuss at Strassburg, Mangold at Bonn, A. Ritschl at Göttingen, Riehm at Halle, Dillmann at Berlin, and Wellhausen at that time at Greifswald, now at Göttingen, to show that there was then Rationalism enough at the different seats of learning in Germany. There were such men also, as Luthardt, Delitzsch, Kahnis and Wold-Schmidt at Leipzig, J. T. Beck and Palmer at Tübingen, v. Hofman at Erlangen, Zöckler at Greifswald, Grau at Königsberg, and others no less positive and evangelical in their views. But most of these have since then been gathered to their fathers, having

done a good work through many years, and others have entered upon their work; some as positive as these last named, others if possible more liberal than the former.

Of the positive theologians now in the forefront I mention H. Cremer, v. Nathusius, and Hausleiter at Greifswald; Heshagen, Nösgen, and Walther at Rostock; Althaus at Göttingen; Kawerau at Breslau; König at Bonn; Lemme at Heidelberg; Schlatter at Tübingen; Theo. Zahn at Erlangen. But there can be no doubt that most of the German universities are now, if not entirely, to a very large extent, filled with theologians of the most radical tendencies. It would be easy to mention dozens of names such as O. Pfeiderer, Harnack, and Gunkel at Berlin; Meinhold at Bonn; Krüger, Holzmann, and Stade at Giessen; Smend and Wellhausen at Göttingen; Merx and Hausrath at Heidelberg; Kautsch at Halle; Cornill at Breslau; Jülicher at Marburg; Spitta at Strassburg; Gottschick at Tübingen. These are some of the names of those most radically inclined. Then there are scores of theologians who represent a milder form of Rationalism at each of the seventeen German universities. They are what the Germans call *Vermittelungstheologen*, i.e. theologians who try to reconcile between the positive and the negative: a thing which they rarely succeed in doing to the satisfaction of either. In reality, there are at present perhaps only two or three universities in Germany to which I should advise young men to go, with some hope that their Christian faith would remain unshaken and unscathed. But these are somewhat out of the way, and scarcely ever attended by foreign students. One reason, no doubt, is, they do not make so much noise, the faculties are generally much smaller, and hence the attraction is not so great, and the towns in which they are located are less attractive, than Berlin, Leipzig, Bonn, Heidelberg, and Tübingen. For good and positive instruction, however, I know, at the present time, no university which I should recommend as much as Greifswald, and Rostock, and perhaps Erlangen and Tübingen. The instructors of these four are staunchly Lutheran, but positive and biblical in their views, and thoroughly equipped for their calling. But this did not prevent American students twenty and thirty years ago from attending the lectures of Luthardt, Kahnis, and Delitzsch, who were as much Lutherans as the professors of the four universities mentioned above, and ought therefore not prevent a Free Churchman from attending these universities.

As long as men of the type of Pfeiderer, Harnack, Wellhausen, fill the academic chairs, nothing different is to be expected in the pulpits. In most of the large cities of Germany there are, therefore, about as many liberal as orthodox ministers; the liberals, or rather radicals, in some instances even outnumbering the orthodox or evangelicals.

To show how far a liberal theologian occupying a prominent position as professor of church history at Göttingen (G. Krüger) dares to go, let me quote what he said some time ago as to what he conceived to be his

duty towards the church he is called upon to serve. "First of all, a frank, candid confession, that I personally conceive the work done by me as academic teacher as unchurchly (*unkirchlich*). . . . Unchurchly, also, in the sense that I nowhere in my work care for the church, whether the results of my work please her or not; whether she believes herself damaged by my deductions, perhaps also by my entire method of working,—I will not say that it leaves me indifferent, but I do not allow these possibly emerging considerations any influence on my work. But I would like to go further still—and this is indeed the main point with me—I seek the real mission of an academic teacher in something which must frighten the church at first. Our mission in following our *calling* is, in the first place, *to endanger the souls*." Is not this a strong expression; nay, an impudence seldom found? And he dares to utter it at a theological conference at Giessen. No wonder that it should cause sensation and irritation in many parts of the land. Still he has found defenders not only in Dr. Rade's paper,¹ and others of similar liberal tendency, but also in Dr. Walz, Counselor of the Hessian Consistory, and Krüger's superior. He treats Krüger as a prudent pedagogue his unskilled pupil. While granting that much of what Dr. Krüger has written must work confusion, he says, as it were, to the professor, "Is it not true, Mr. Professor, you have not meant it thus?" In this tenor every paragraph of his declaration is treated; even the expression "calling . . . to endanger the souls." Dr. Walz tries to explain, "Surely the author does not wish to deny, that there is no holier duty than to guard souls. He evidently wanted to say, that the duty of a teacher of science is to cause the pupil, who is perhaps still indolent and rests safely on the traditional, before he really possesses it, some uneasiness; to cause him to reflect, to test, yea, to raise doubts." Nevertheless, Walz admits Krüger "wished to ignore the religious wants, rather than serve them." Being taken to task for this defense by the *Evang. Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, Dr. Walz tried to restate his utterances without satisfying any one.

Not all of the liberal professors go so far as this one; but are, perhaps, just for this very reason, more dangerous than he. Among them I count such men as Harnack, Spitta, Simon, Jülicher, and others. These, by their enchanting and captivating language, enamor the young, inexperienced student, who, without knowing it, takes in poison mixed with some truth in a large enough dose to hurt him for a long time, and at least endanger, perhaps destroy forever, his spiritual life.

How far the ideas of these Moderns have penetrated into the rank and file of the clergy of the state churches—the Free churches have thus far manfully withstood this infection; their ministers may, in a few instances, be tainted a little—is evident from some remarks by Pastor Weingart, of Osnabrück, which he made a year ago, occasioned by an Easter sermon. This resulted in his deposition by the Consistory of Hanover.

¹ Die christliche Welt.

The cases of Pastor Neidhart of Hamburg, and Hillmann, formerly pastor of the Reformed Church in Hamburg, are to the point. The former was chosen by a Berlin parish, but, on account of his radical opinions, not confirmed by the competent consistory, which is in itself not over-orthodox; while the latter has been compelled by his church officials to resign on account of offensive utterances. Not long since he spoke in Brunswick, and according to reports uttered blasphemous words. He is said to teach "Jesus was only a child of his time, and subject to the errors of his contemporaries. He cannot have taught what he had heard from his father. He is not risen from the dead, but he probably disappeared in a cleft of a rock. The Gospel of John merits no credence, and Paul, notwithstanding high thoughts, offers a doctrine full of contradictions, and is not free from superstition." Such utterances are the results of the teaching of men like Harnack, who declares in his "Essence of Christianity," that "Christ has no place in the Gospels." If such utterances as those of Hillmann are withheld in many instances, it is not because only a few hold such sentiments, but rather because they dare not express them.

My notes would, however, be incomplete, did I not state, that, in spite of such teaching at nearly all the universities of Germany, there are still many men in the pulpit who firmly hold to the pure gospel, and preach it with success. To name them would lead too far, especially since the majority of them are not so much known outside their particular spheres of labor, as the theological professors. Stöcker, formerly court preacher, is doing a grand work in city mission work in Berlin. Besides him, I would mention Drs. Dryander and Braun, general superintendents of Berlin (the former is also court preacher), and Dr. Behrmann, senior of the Hamburg clergy, and others.

Thus, while most of the theological chairs are at present filled by liberal and ultra-liberal professors, there is a goodly number of men who do not follow them blindly, but firmly believe in the Divine Sonship of Christ, in his immaculate conception, the reality of his miracles, his death on the cross for the sins of mankind, his resurrection, etc., and these are really the salt of the earth. They do a good work among their fellowmen, and when they preach they generally have full churches; while the disciples of the liberal professors, in spite of the eloquence of many of them, usually have more empty pews than attentive listeners. Only on ecclesiastical holidays, such as Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, and Whitsunday, have they as a rule full houses.

What Rev. K. O. Broady of Stockholm wrote of Sweden is true also of Germany—perhaps of other countries too: "Rationalism of the direst type is settling in like a flood upon us. The crisis is taking place within the Lutheran Church, but of course the whole people are more or less affected." If I were therefore asked, "Would you advise young men to go to Germany to complete their theological studies?" I should, in most

cases emphatically say, No. There is, if I mistake not, Rationalism enough in America already; and, besides, the Semitic languages are now taught in America by men about as competent as any German professor. Hence this can scarcely be considered a valid reason for going to Germany to study them there.

J. G. F.

WHERE WAS THE FLOOD?

AN inquiry into the extent of the Noachian Flood necessarily begins with an inquiry into the law governing the use of words which tell of the flood,—where it was, and how extensive. The words which set these things forth are used under a specific law, which must be understood by the translator if he would get at the truth.

In such an inquiry, *erets* in Hebrew and *ge* in Greek, with their qualifiers, demand first attention; the one being most used in Hebrew, and the other alone in Greek. The translators of our English Bible did not follow the custom of the Alexandrians of invariably translating *erets* with one word; but they generally followed the Hebrew in the use or the non-use of the article, which made it definite or general. It is rare for them to attach the article to *ge*, when the original *erets* did not have it. This custom of theirs made it possible for the Greek readers to understand whether the original *erets* was *limited*, as describing a particular country, or *unlimited*, and needing an adjective to limit its signification.

But our English translators have given us two words, instead of one; and so the original significance is lost, and sometimes a false one gained. Over six hundred times *erets* has been translated by the Saxon word "earth," and thirteen hundred and fifty-three times by the proper word "land." In this way the fine distinctions made in the original use are lost to the English reader, and some times a false one is left in the mind.

Our grammarians have recognized the non-use of the article in certain cases, and charged it to poetic license. An example of this is found in Deut. xxxii. 1, where "heavens and earth" (*erets*) are called upon to hear. Another case of that omission of the article from *erets* which has been attributed to poetry, but should rather be attributed to the style of Isaiah, ("who," Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander says, "begins in symbols, which he explains immediately after,") is found in i. 22 and 23; x. 7-9; xi. 8-9; and xiii. 10-11, where the first-mentioned verses are in figures, and the next in literal terms. The Doctor omitted to notice this most remarkable example of the prophet's style in addressing the rulers of Sodom first in their symbolical relations, as "the heavens and the earth." The omission of the article indicates that he was not addressing the physical heavens and the physical land, which would have required the article; but those *men, authorities* in church and state, whom he calls in literal terms "rulers of Sodom." The same omission of the article

when this phrase was used in chapter lxx., in which he first announces the "creation of new heavens and a new earth," points to a law of his style that, when using those familiar words as symbols, he should omit the article, which would make them concrete entities, not figures.

Whether Moses had the same symbolical use in his address, which caused him to omit the article, cannot now be determined. It is, however, possible that he gave life to that form of symbol for the authorities of church and state, and that it descended to Isaiah, whose writings passed it down to John, the last representative of the prophetic style. When the New Testament readers of these old prophets came to write the story of the Redeemer, they followed the custom of the Septuagint translators, and put in or left out the article, according as they had found it in their readings.

Only in one case, so far as I know, did the Septuagint translators put in an article when they did not find one in the original. That case is this of Isa. lxx. 17, where they seem not to have caught the spirit of the symbol, even when it was put in the literal in the next verse. They, however, showed their loyalty to their own land, and so attached an article to each word, the heavens, and the *ge*, or the land. The blessings were for their own country; and they were to be material ones at that, instead of spiritual, which would have made all their religious services new, and the men of the civil power, also new.

Luke, who reports words in our Lord's prophecy on the destruction of Jerusalem which are not found in Matthew, has given the exegetes a good deal of trouble over the use of this word *ge*, which in xxi. 25 is distinguished by the article. And the revelation of Jesus Christ which John wrote, is almost a sealed book, if the constant use of this word *ge* with the article is read as if the article meant nothing, and as if it were not a Jew steeped in the literature of his fathers who was the writer. The word appears seventy-six times in the Apocalypse, and is responsible for nearly that number of mistakes in the translation. The words should have been so many guides to the *locality* where all those things were to happen, and the home of most of the actors. All this confusion could have been avoided if our English translators had been as faithful in translating *ge* by the one word it stood for, as the Septuagint translators were when they used it as the symbol by which to represent *erets*.

However, as the case now stands, the Septuagint translators are witnesses of the universal practice of the Greek Jews, of giving to *erets* the significance of "land"; and to the almost universal custom of giving the article with it when they found it in the Hebrew text, and so reproducing, in Greek, so far as possible, the significance which the article and the noun together had in the original. And then it was found that the English translators have felt compelled to give the word "land" as the symbol of a meaning they found in the original text, about twice as often as they give the false word "earth." The probabilities are thus

more than three to one that the word "land" should always be used as the symbol for *erets*.

If now the inquiry is made, "What significance is given by Hebrew writers to the word *erets*?" the answer must be drawn from their writings. The general use can be determined by a few examples, as well as if the whole two thousand words and passages in which they are used, were examined.

A beginning for this may be made with the account of Abram's call and departure from Haran, as recorded in Gen. xii. 1-9. Now the Lord said, "Get thee out of thy country (*erets*), and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land (*erets*) that I will show thee." In this verse, *erets* is without the article, and can be correctly translated "country," although that is not the original signification, but is an accommodated sense. The third verse reads, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." The word here translated "earth" is the common name for "ground" (*adamah*). The translation into our word "earth" is quite proper. When the matter of the flood is reached, this will be noticed again.

"And they [viz. Abram and Lot] went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." In this passage *erets* is used twice, having no article, but having a designating noun, which indicates the land or country to which they came.

The sixth verse reads: "And Abram passed through the land. . . . And the Canaanite was in the land." Both words in this verse are without the article, according to a custom to omit it when the preposition *in* is joined to it.¹ This shows the established usage to place the definite article before the word which denoted land, to show that it was no other land than the one God had sent him to, that he might see what had been given him. It was now *the land* as expressed by *erets* with the article.

The next verse contains the notice of the gift of the land. It is made as definite as language could make it. The *erets* carries the article when the land is mentioned as in a famine. It is so defined as he travels through it; as he buys a sepulchre for his dead, and as he leaves it for Egypt, and as he returns to the land from Egypt, and his herdsmen and those of Lot strove in the land, and the land was divided between them, and the Canaanites and the Perizzites dwelt in the land.

Other countries are designated by their names. There is the Land of Moab, the Land of Edom, the Land of Goshen, the Land of Seir. But all these designating names are used in place of the article, which alone is given to the land that was given to Abram.

This habit is so fixed that he that runs may read, and not make a mistake. Wherever *erets* in Hebrew, or *ge* in Greek, has the definite article, *it must be read as the land*, whether it is found in Genesis, or Isaiah, or

¹ Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, Section 35, Note 2.

Luke the evangelist, or John the Great Seer. They knew how to write such a simple matter as well as we do when we write of Palestine as "the Holy Land." It matters not what our theories may be as to the meaning of the words when found in strange and unlooked-for places; it is simply good sense to accept the meaning in common use among the people who gave the things to be read the names put upon them. Unfortunately for plain people, the common rendering of the term in the preceding part of this history has not been in the least influenced by these grammatical facts.

The first and seventh chapters of Genesis have thus been treated as if there were no common custom of the national writers which required any consideration. And yet a close regard for what has been written in that first chapter, as well as elsewhere, would well repay the one who makes it. In the account of those creative days, the names of the "dry" *mass* and of the "heaped-up waters" are given.

The one is called *erets*, or "land," the other, *yam*, "sea." The last is the only one which seems to have had any right of existence which translators need regard. The name for the dry mass, as we have seen, is translated indifferently by "earth," or "ground," or "land"; but *yam* is always translated "sea," which is no worse treated than sometimes to stand, by metonymy, for West, the region from which Daniel saw his four beasts come, and from which John also saw a wild beast with heads and horns, and a curious composite form, arrive in the land whose history he was describing. If the same courtesy had been exhibited in the handling of the generic name for the "dry mass," there would have been but little trouble in reading those documents which set forth the strange things which have taken place upon the land which the Lord gave to Abram.

No fault can be found with that national pride which still exists in the East, and especially in Syria, of esteeming their country the best country in the world, and so entitled to be called "The Land." A person writing for such a people would naturally put what had taken place in the foremost wonders of the world. This kind of thing seems to crop out in the story of the Creation, which we read as a story of the creation of the whole world; but which those Jewish writers seem to make a history of the creation of *their land*, "their heavens and land"; the words having the articles attached which makes it a *local matter*, and which also attaches the article to the *erets*, which is the *generic name for all land*. This feeling seems to have been in force at the time the first account of the flood was written, which seems to have been modified by a subsequent writer, who gave the actual range of the flood, and narrowed it down to the land which appears so prominent in the Jewish writings.

In the account of the flood there is a preliminary statement as to the moral condition of mankind which is presented according to the Eastern love of hyperbole. The hyperbole is in the use of the word *adamah*,

which, being of an indefinite character, may have either a narrow local meaning, or a large and even universal one. This last is what it has in God's promise to Abram, that "in thee shall all families of *adamah* (ground) be blessed." It evidently was the opinion of the translators of the Septuagint edition of the Bible, that the larger meaning must not be permitted to go into the Greek; and so the five *adamahs* on which the universal character of the deluge could rest, were treated as our English translators treated them, rendering them all by one word. In the English that one word was "earth." But in the Greek it was *ge*, with the article, the *universal symbol* by which they distinguished the country of God's ancient people.

There is, then, good authority for giving the *limited*, rather than the *larger*, significance to those five words, and considering them, either as hyperbole, or words of some older account which were set aside by him who wrote the final one in which the flood is *limited by the customary use of erets with the article, to the land known and accepted as the land of promise*. If the whole were written by one writer, then the interpretation given to *adamah* must be limited by what is found in chaps. vi. 5, 11, 12, 13, 17; vii. 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19. This last part is so much more concerned with *locating* the flood that it must have force to limit the significance of *adamah*. And so the extent of the flood, according to the usual significance of the name by which the country east of the Mediterranean Sea was known, must have been limited to the country designated by the second writer; and by the Septuagint translators, who evidently thought that their own land, and no other, was the scene of that great flood which they, in their love of their native land, took pains to show, by correcting the folly of spreading the flood over all the *adamah*, since it was in what they were pleased to call in their Græco-Hebraic way, "the land."

The conclusion, then, comes easy and natural, that the *Noachian flood* was not a *universal* flood, but one which drowned the unbelieving world in that land of the Jews, while saving "the heavens and the earth," in the persons of Noah and his family, to continue the ordinances of religion, and the functions of the civil powers.

That was Peter's version of the work of the water which saved him, and the religious and civil institutions of society.

And the flood he was looking for in the approaching judgment, as well as the one about which John was prophesying, was also to be a *local affair*, which would destroy all the "old heaven and land," to give room for the new, which had been constituted of those who believe that Jesus was the Christ.

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