

3. But, lastly, is it probable, supposing this to have been St. Paul's meaning, that he would have expressed himself as he has done? If in writing to a half-Greek half-Celtic people he ventured to argue from an Arabic word at all, he would at all events be careful to make his drift intelligible. But how could his readers be expected to put the right interpretation on the words "this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia"? How could they possibly understand, knowing nothing of Arabic, that he meant to say, "this word Hagar in the Arabic tongue stands for Mount Sinai"? Even if it be granted that his readers were acquainted with the fact which was the key to his meaning, is ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ at all a likely expression to be used by any writer for ἐν τῇ Ἀραβικῇ γλώσσῃ or Ἀραβιστί, unless it were made intelligible by the context? Yet this is the meaning generally assigned to ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ by those commentators, ancient or modern, who adopt the interpretation in question, and, indeed, seems to be required to justify that interpretation.

In the face of these difficulties, it seems at least improbable that the point of the passage is the identity of "Hagar" and "Sinai" as different names of the same mountain, and the reading which retains "Hagar" in the text loses any support which it may seem to draw from this identity, assumed as a fact.

XIII. PHILO'S ALLEGORY OF HAGAR AND SARAH.¹

In giving an allegorical meaning to this passage of the Old Testament narrative, St. Paul did not stand alone. It might be inferred, indeed, from his own language, that such applications of the history of Hagar and Sarah were not uncommon in the schools of his day.² But, however this may be, it is more than once so applied in the extant works of Philo. I have already pointed out the contrast presented by his treatment of the history of Abraham in general to the lessons which it suggests to the apostle of the Gentiles. This contrast extends to his application of the allegorical method to this portion of the sacred narrative. Philo's allegory is as follows:

Abraham — the human soul progressing towards the knowledge of God — unites himself first with Sarah and then with Hagar. These

¹ For Philo's allegory of Hagar and Sarah, see esp. *De congr. quater. crud. gr.* *alleg.* i. p. 135; *De Cherub.* i. p. 139 sq.; *De prof.* i. p. 546; *De Abr.* ii. p. 52; *De i.* p. 519 sqq.; esp. pp. 521, 522, 530, *somm.* i. p. 656.

592, and *Quæst. in Gen.* p. 189 sqq.; ² See the notes on *συνστοιχεῖ* and 233 sqq. (Aucher). Compare also *Leg. ἀλληγορούμενα*.

two alliances stand in direct opposition the one to the other.¹ Sarah, the princess—for such is the interpretation of the word²—is divine wisdom. To her, therefore, Abraham is bidden to listen in all that she says. On the other hand, Hagar, whose name signifies “sojourning” (*παροίκησις*), and points, therefore, to something transient and unsatisfying, is a preparatory or intermediate training—the instruction of the schools—secular learning, as it might be termed in modern phrase.³ Hence she is fitly described as an Egyptian, as Sarah’s handmaid. Abraham’s alliance with Sarah is at first premature. He is not sufficiently advanced in his moral and spiritual development to profit thereby. As yet he begets no son by her. She therefore directs him to go in to her handmaid, to apply himself to the learning of the schools. This inferior alliance proves fruitful at once. At a later date, and after this preliminary training he again unites himself to Sarah; and this time his union with divine wisdom is fertile. Not only does Sarah bear him a son, but she is pointed out as the mother of a countless offspring.⁴ Thus is realized the strange paradox, that “the barren woman is most fruitful.” Thus in the progress of the human soul are verified the words of the prophet, spoken in an allegory, that “the desolate hath many children.”⁵

But the allegory does not end here. The contrast between the mothers is reproduced in the contrast between the sons. Isaac represents the wisdom of the wise man, Ishmael the sophistry of the sophist.⁶ Sophistry must in the end give place to wisdom. The son

¹ *De Abc.* ii. p. 15, ἐναντιώτατοι δὲ ἀλλήλοις εἰσὶν οἱ λεχθέντες γάμοι.

² In some passages Philo still further refines on the change in her name (*Gen.* xvii. 15): e.g. *De mut. nom.* i. p. 590; *Quaest. in Gen.* p. 229 (Aucher), *de Cherub.* i. p. 139. Her first name Σάρα (סָרָה) is ἀρχή μου, her aftername Σάρρα (סָרָה) is ἄρχουσα; (see Hieron. *Quaest. in Gen.* T. iii. p. 331). Thus they are related to each other as the special to the general, as the finite and perishable to the infinite and imperishable.

³ ἡ μέση καὶ ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία is Philo’s favorite phrase, e.g. *De Cherub.* i. p. 139.

⁴ *De congr. quæst. crud. gr.* i. p. 519 ταύτην Μωϋσῆς, τὸ παραδοξότατον, καὶ στεῖραν ἀποφαίνει καὶ πολυγονωτάτην: comp. *De mut. nom.* i. pp. 599, 600, where he adds κατὰ τὸ ἀδόμενον ᾧσμα ὑπὸ τῆς

χάριτος Ἀννης ἢ φησιν, Στείρα ἔτεκεν ἑπτὰ ἢ δὲ πολλὰ ἐν τέκνοις ἡσθένησε (*1 Sam.* ii. 5).

⁵ *De eccl.* ii. p. 434 ἡ γὰρ ἔρημος, ἣ φησὶν ὁ προφήτης, ἐτεκνός τε καὶ πολὺπαις, ὅπερ λόγιον καὶ ἐπὶ ψυχῆς ἀλληγορεῖται (*Isa.* liv. 1). The coincidence with St. Paul is the more striking inasmuch as Philo very rarely goes beyond the Pentateuch in seeking subjects for allegorical interpretation. There is, indeed, no mention of Sarah and Hagar here, but it appears, both from the context and from parallel passages, that they are present to his mind.

⁶ *De sobr.* i. p. 394 σοφίαν μὲν Ἰσαάκ, σοφιστείαν δὲ Ἰσμαὴλ κεκλήρωται: comp. *de Cherub.* i. p. 140, and other passages referred to in p. 368, note 1. The names give Philo some trouble. Isaac,

of the bondwomen must be cast out, and flee before the son of the princess.¹

Such is the ingenious application of Philo—most like, and yet most unlike, that of St. Paul. They both allegorize, and in so doing they touch upon the same points in the narrative, they use the same text by way of illustration. Yet in their whole tone and method they stand in direct contrast, and their results have nothing in common. Philo is, as usual, wholly unhistorical. With St. Paul, on the other hand, Hagar's career is an allegory, because it is a history. The symbol and the thing symbolized are the same in kind. This simple passage of patriarchal life represents in miniature the workings of God's providence, hereafter to be exhibited in grander proportions in the history of the Christian church. The Christian apostle and the philosophic Jew move in parallel lines, as it were, keeping side by side, and yet never once crossing each other's path.

And there is still another point in which the contrast between the two is great. With Philo the allegory is the whole substance of his teaching; with St. Paul it is but an accessory. He uses it rather as an illustration than an argument, as a means of representing in a lively form the lessons before enforced on other grounds. It is, to use Luther's comparison, the painting which decorates the house already built.

At the same time we need not fear to allow that St. Paul's mode of teaching here is colored by his early education in the rabbinical schools. It were as unreasonable to stake the apostle's inspiration on the turn of a metaphor or the character of an illustration or the form of an argument, as on purity of diction. No one now thinks of maintaining that the language of the inspired writers reaches the classical standard of correctness and elegance, though at one time it was held almost a heresy to deny this. "A treasure contained in earthen vessels," "strength made perfect in weakness," "rudeness in speech, yet not in knowledge," such is the far nobler conception of inspired teaching which we may gather from the apostle's own language. And this language we should do well to bear in mind. But, on the other

of course, signifies "laughter," betokening the joy which comes of divine wisdom; see, besides, the passages just referred to, *Leg. alleg.* i. p. 131, *Quod det. pot.* i. pp. 203, 215. Ishmael he contrasts with Israel, the one signifying the *hearing* God, the other the *seeing* God (אֵלֵּי אֱלֹהִים, אֵלֵּי אֱלֹהִים,

"vir videns deum"; comp. Hieron. in *Gen.* T. iii. p. 357). Thus they are opposed to each other, as ἀκοή to ὁρασις, as the fallacious to the infallible, as the σοφιστής to the σόφος, *De prof.* i. p. 577; *De mut. nom.* i. p. 609.

⁵ *De Cherub.* i. p. 140.