

EXEGETICA.

VII.

"WITHOUT REPENTANCE."

Ἀμεταμέλητα γὰρ τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ κλήσις τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom. xi. 29). A fresh example of the synonymous ἀμετανόητος in the sense of "irrevocable," as applied to a gift, is furnished by the contract of 291 A.D. published in "Oxyrhynchus Papyri," vol. ix. pp. 245 f., where the seller acknowledges that, in return for a fixed sum of money, "the land is bestowed upon you as a present (ὡς προσφερό [i.e. προσφοράν] and gift (χάριν) unchangeable and irrevocable (ἀναφέρετον καὶ ἀμ[ετανό]ητον)."

VIII.

If all prophesy, and any one enters who is an unbeliever or uneducated, he is convicted by them all, condemned by them all; the secrets of his heart (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ) are made manifest (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25).

Epictetus, in describing the teaching of Musonius Rufus, the philosopher, says that "he used to talk in such a way that we who sat there imagined that somebody had given information to Rufus about every one of us; οὕτως ἤπτετο τῶν γινομένων, οὕτω πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἐτίθει τὰ ἐκάστου κακά (Diss. iii. 23. 29).

IX.

"NOT ASHAMED."

The author of Hebrews uses this phrase (οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται) twice. (a) In ii. 11 he writes: *For the sanctifier and the sanctified have all the same origin (ἐξ ἐνὸς πάντες); wherefore he is not ashamed to call them brothers.* (b) In xi. 16, speaking of the patriarchs and the faith they evinced, he

remarks : *therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has actually prepared a city for them.* What is in the writer's mind, as he develops the argument of the second chapter, is the notion, which was perhaps connected with a veneration for angels among his readers, that it was degrading for the Son of God to assume human nature. It is argued that Christ had far more in common with men than with angels. Men were "sons of God," to be conducted to glory, and Christ, as God's Son, therefore became man. The thought here is the motive for the incarnate and redeeming life of Jesus Christ. In (b) the thought resembles that of Mark xii. 26 f. God is *not ashamed* to be called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, though they are dead. The reason is that their faith on earth is rewarded by the fellowship of the living God in heaven ; *He actually has prepared a city for them*, and therefore has a right to be called *their God*. His present relation to them, with a reward in store for their faith, corresponds to that title. We might expect, from the counsels against being ashamed of God on earth, that the writer would develop the thought of God being proud of human faith and loyalty ; but this does not seem to be prominent in the epistle.

X.

THE EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES (Rev. ii.-iii.).

The structure and phraseology of these epistles may be compared with such a document as the letter or rescript of King Darius I. to a provincial governor, Gadatas, in Asia Minor.

Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων Δαρείος ὁ Ὑστάσπεω Γαδάται δούλωι τάδε λέγει· πυνθανομαί σε τῶν ἐμῶν ἐπιταγμάτων οὐ κατὰ πάντα πειθαρχεῖν· ὅτι μὲν γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν ἐκπονεῖς γῆν, τοὺς πέραν Ἐυφράτου καρποὺς ἐπὶ τὰ κάτω τῆς Ἀσίας μέρη καταφυτεύων, ἐπαινῶ σὴν πρόθεσιν, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα σοι κείσεται

μεγαλη χάρις ἐμ βασιλέως οἴκωι· ὅτι δὲ τὴν ὑπὲρ θεῶν μου
 διάθεσιν ἀφανίζεις, δώσω σοι μὴ μεταβαλομένωι πείραν
 ἡδικομένου θυμοῦ· φυτουργοὺς γὰρ ἱεροὺς Ἀπόλλωνος φόρον
 ἔπρασσες καὶ χώραν σκαπανεύειν βέβηλον ἐπέτασσες, ἀγνοῶν
 ἐμῶν προγόνων εἰς τὸν θεὸν νοῦν· ὃς Πέρσαις εἶπε πᾶσαν
 ἀτρέκειαν καὶ . . .

The inscription, which was found in 1886 in Magnesia on the Maeander, breaks off here. It is only a copy of the original, and if, as Kern ¹ conjectures, it belongs to the second century, it can hardly have been before the writer of the Apocalypse. But it is possible that Persian inscriptions of this kind were familiar to him in Asia Minor; the general cast and tone of such addresses was not a new thing.

Herr Gunnar Rudberg, in a recent article in *Eranos* (1911, pp. 170-179), therefore suggests that John's letters to the seven churches were modelled consciously or unconsciously upon such edicts and epistles of the Persian monarchy. He calls attention to some parallels, none of which, however, is particularly decisive. Thus, the Darius letter begins with commendation, and then proceeds to censure; so do the majority of the apocalyptist's letters. Again, he compares the *μὴ μεταβαλομένω* of the Darius-letter with the *μετανόησον οὖν· εἰ δὲ μὴ* of Revelation ii. 16, and notes the interesting parallel of the *τάδε λέγει* in the address, a formal and solemn phrase, which often occurs at the opening of Oriental royal epistles (LXX and Josephus, *passim*).

XI.

"LIKE FROGS."

In Revelation xvi. 13 f. the seer recounts how he saw the kings of the East summoned to the Armageddon of a supernatural conflict from across the Euphrates by *three*

¹ Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia von Maeander*, 1900, pp. 102 f.

impure spirits like frogs, issuing from the mouth of the Dragon and from the mouth of the Beast and from the mouth of the false prophet; they are demon-spirits working miraculous signs, which go out to the kings of the universe, to muster them for the battle of the great Day of Almighty God . . . and they mustered them at the spot called in Hebrew Harmagedon. Nine years ago I called attention, in the *Hibbert Journal*, to a Zoroastrian basis for the detail of the frog-like spirits; frogs were detested by the pious Zoroastrian as the agents and creatures of Ahriman, the antagonist of the true God. Almost simultaneously F. Hrozný (in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde d. Morgenlandes*, 1903, 328) suggested a Babylonian origin for them in the legend of Istar's descent to the lower world, where Ea's messenger, sent to bid Ereschkigal release the goddess, is changed into a frog. The seer's reference to the Euphrates, he pointed out, corroborated the hypothesis of a Babylonian source for the vision, and in the Greek magical papyri the consort of Ereschkigal is named *Ῥεσεμυγάδων*, which echoes the *Ἀρμαγεδών* of Revelation xvi. 16. The analogies between the Babylonian legend and the vision are not clear, however, As Professor Steinmetzer has shown (*Biblische Zeitschrift*, 1912, pp. 252-260), the single frog in the former is an envoy of help whereas the three frogs in the latter are agents of evil; besides, these three are not changed into frogs from their original shape. Finally, the suggested origin for the obscure Harmagedon is too far-fetched to be convincing. Professor Steinmetzer does not seem to be aware of the Zoroastrian parallel. But when it is correlated with the ancient idea, preserved by Artemidorus, that frogs symbolised *ἀνδρας γοήτας καὶ βωμολόχους*, it absolves us from the need of falling back upon Babylonia for an explanation of this curious detail in the apocalyptic vision.

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