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## The Greek of the Early Church and the Pagan Ritual.

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### VII. PURITY AND IMPURITY.

THE sins for which punishment was inflicted by the god are closely connected with the difficult subject of purity and impurity. In several cases at Dionysopolis the chastisement is inflicted, not for a positive sin, but for entering on the service of the god<sup>1</sup> in a state of impurity, or even approaching the temple or the holy village beside the temple in that state. It is an important question whether the idea of purity was taken to mean mere ceremonial purity, or included also purity of life and heart. According to Monsieur P. Foucart, one of the first authorities as regards ancient ritual, there is in none of the inscriptions anything implied except material physical purity,<sup>2</sup> but the inscriptions of Asia Minor show distinctly that this is too sweeping a statement. When Xanthos says, 'May the god be propitious to those who approach him simply' (εὐέλματος γένοιτο τοῖς ἀπλῶς προσπορευομένοις ὁ θεός), he describes the frame of heart suitable for worshippers; they are to come in a single-hearted way, without any other intention hidden in their heart (as James 1<sup>5</sup> speaks of τοῦ διδόντος Θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ διειδίζοντος). He is expressing the same thought which prompts the regulation in another case that no one shall enter the society of the worshippers (ἐρανισταί) who is not pure, pious, and good (ἀ[γν]ός, εἰσεβής, ἀγ[αθ]ός). It is quite true, as M. Foucart points out, that ἀγαθός is constantly used in the inscrip-

tions of the *eranistai*<sup>3</sup> to indicate one who has rendered service to the *eranos* or the god, and εἰσεβής one who has performed exactly the ceremonies of the cult. But yet the union of the three adjectives in the regulation implies a general state of mind bent singly on the service of the god and the cultus. The *eranistai* doubtless took a very humble view of what constituted a 'pious and good' man; and their use of the adjectives did not agree very closely with the modern use;<sup>4</sup> but there is a certain potentiality and life in the words which might in a suitable situation develop. Because the germ of moral life was faint and weak, we should not, like M. Foucart, deny that it existed at all. Paul, certainly, believed that such a germ existed in their 'ignorant worship,' and aimed at training and strengthening it.

In the Asia Minor inscriptions the precise statements of facts given in some cases show that failure in the duties of life, quite outside of the cultus and ritual of the god, might produce impurity and entail wrath and punishment from the god (see especially the cases quoted in sec. viii.). But in these inscriptions we have to deal with cases occurring after the spread of Christianity in Asia Minor. There can be no doubt that the struggle against Christianity quickened the moral life in the pagan cult; and the moral possibilities that lay in

<sup>3</sup> *Eranoi* were societies formed in Athens and elsewhere for the worship of foreign, chiefly Oriental, deities.

<sup>4</sup> It is a remarkable thing that the adjectives which seem easiest and simplest to the beginner making his first essays in Greek, like ἀγαθός and καλός, are the most obscure and difficult to the advanced scholar. Who will say how ἀγαθός should be rendered in many a passage of Greek, often the most familiar? The one thing we can assert with confidence in many places is that καλός does not mean 'beautiful.'

<sup>1</sup> On this service see sec. vi. p. 57 f., and *C.B.*, pp. 135 ff., 149 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ce qui leur est commun, c'est que nulle part il n'est question d'autre chose que de la pureté matérielle du corps (*Associations Relig. chez les Grecs*, p. 247).

εὐσεβείης and ἀγαθός were developed then more than they had been in pre-Christian time.

M. Foucart's statement, therefore, is practically pretty accurate in respect of the period and the country (Greece) which he had chiefly in mind as he wrote;<sup>1</sup> but it needs to be, to some degree, restricted and qualified before it can be used universally. Cases occur where clearly the anger of the god was roused by actual crime and moral guilt. Breaking an oath is distinctly stated to be the cause of impurity in *C.B.*, 41 (ἐπιορκήσας καὶ ἀναγνος), and the refusal to restore money deposited rouses the wrath of the god and entails punishment, which has to be expiated (see sec. viii.). Murder entails lasting impurity in one of Xanthos's inscriptions at Laurium; but this must probably be understood in the sense that a special purificatory ceremony is necessary, and that no mere lapse of time brings purity, as in the case of many other offences. That murder, alike voluntary and accidental, causes impurity, and demands special purificatory rites, was an old belief both in Greece and in Phrygia (as *Herod.* i. 35 shows).

But, even in Asia Minor, the notion involved in ἀγνός was, as a general rule, mere ceremonial and physical purity. Eating the flesh of the sacred animal, the goat, evidently caused impurity (though the place where the word ἀναγνος might be used is lost) (*C.B.*, No. 43; see sec. ii.). An exceedingly gross and disgusting case of personal impurity is mentioned in *C.B.*, No. 50. Xanthos mentions among the rules of his sanctuary that 'all who enter the *hieron* of Men Tyrannos must have bathed the whole body on the same day, and must be pure: impurity from garlic and pork and sexual intercourse lasts a day; from touching a dead body, ten days; from skin disease (φθορά), forty days' (*C.B.*, p. 137). In practice it appears that at Dionysopolis sexual familiarity was the commonest cause.

One of the most striking contrasts in feeling between the votive inscriptions is in reference to the marriage relation. In the votive inscriptions the most frequent cause of impurity arises through the relation of marriage. Apellas was punished, in *C.B.*, No. 46, because he wished to remain with his wife; and it is implied that during the periods when persons were engaged in the divine service (see sec. vi.), they had to separate from their

<sup>1</sup> His inscriptions mostly are older than Christ, and almost all belong to societies in Greece, chiefly Athens and Rhodes.

consorts; in other words, 'this religion did not recognize marriage as part of the divine life' (*C.B.*, p. 137). Marriage was a human device, an outrage upon the divine freedom, and the service of the god required a return to the unrestricted sexual licence of primitive man and of the wild animals. Impurity was the result of familiarity with any woman, wife, or other within the forbidden periods, and at no other time; occasionally, as a concession to morality, impurity from another woman lasts twenty-four hours longer than from a wife; but there is not even the most rudimentary conception that familiarity with any other than a wife is wrong at all times. The whole matter is bound within a circle of ceremonial restrictions for special occasions, originating in a form of religion which did not originally recognize marriage.

Again, to appear before the god in a soiled garment was a cause of impurity. Antonia had gone up to the holy place in a soiled garment (ἐν ῥυπαρῇ ἐπενδύτη, *C.B.*, No. 52), and was punished by the god, and acknowledged her fault. James (2<sup>d</sup>), on the contrary, blames those who pay more attention to the rich man in fine clothing than to the poor worshipper ἐν ῥυπαρῇ ἐσθῆτι, and who would give a more honourable place to the more beautiful garment. Undoubtedly Greek ritual would have expressly accepted the rule that the more beautiful garment does more honour to the god. But it is quite in the spirit of the votive inscriptions when the true believers in Sardis are described as those who have not soiled their garments (οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια, Rev 3<sup>d</sup>), and who walk in white garments, or when the cleansing of the iniquity of Joshua is symbolized by taking away his filthy garments, and clothing him with a change of raiment (*Zec* 3<sup>d</sup>, 4).

Ἄγνός, ἀγνεία, and ἀγνίω are the most common terms in the inscriptions to indicate purity; but καθαρὸς and καθαρίζω<sup>2</sup> occur occasionally, without any apparent difference being intended between them.

The language of the New Testament seems to make a distinction. It retains the use of ἀγνός and its derivative ἀγνίω in the sense of ceremonial purity, personal purity, and chastity; while in the sense

<sup>2</sup> Deissmann has observed this (see *Neue Bibelstudien*, p. 24), where he points out that καθαρὸς ἀπὸ is not a Hebraism (as is often stated), but is found often in papyri, in an inscription of Pergamos (Fränkel, No. 255), and in Demosthenes; while Xanthos of Laurium used καθαρίζειν ἀπὸ. Compare *Ac* 20<sup>26</sup>.

of moral purity, which is rarely found in the Asia Minor votive inscriptions, it tends to use *καθαρός*, especially with *καρδιά, συνειδήσις*. But James (3<sup>17</sup> 4<sup>8</sup>) and Peter (1<sup>22</sup> 3<sup>2</sup>) use both *ἀγνός* and *ἀγνίζω* to indicate purity of heart; and so also 1 Jn 3<sup>8</sup>. Paul's use of *ἀγνός* in Ph 4<sup>8</sup> and 1 Ti 5<sup>22</sup> approximates towards this sense; but generally it has in his writings the sense of personal purity and chastity.

### VIII. OATH AND PERJURY.

A remarkable parallel to Mt 5<sup>34</sup>, 'Swear not at all,' and Ja 5<sup>12</sup>, 'Swear not,' is found in an inscription of the Katakekaumene. Compare the words, *μη̄ ὀμνύετε μήτε τὸν οὐρανὸν μήτε τὴν γῆν μήτε ἄλλον τινᾱ ὄρκον, ἢ ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μη̄ ὀμόσαι ὄλως*, with the warning given on a *stèle* to beholders, *μη̄ ὀμνεῖν τινᾱ μήτε ὀρκίζ[ειν] μήτε ὀρκωρότην γίνεσθαι* (*Smyrn. Mouseion*, No. φογ). The mutilation of the *stèle* obscures the exact sense, but, probably, the intention was that the oath is likely to be dangerous, as unforeseen circumstances may prevent its fulfilment. The ancient rule—Break not your oaths, but pay them to the Lord, *ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις οὐκ ἐπιорκήσεις, ἀποδώσεις τῷ Κυρίῳ τοὺς ὄρκους σου* (Mt 5<sup>33</sup>)—expressed exactly the pagan view; but the oath is a bond from which it often proves hard to get release, and the inscription just quoted advises that none should incur danger by becoming bound by an oath.

An inscription of Philadelphia, a city on the edge of the Katakekaumene (if not actually reckoned in it, certainly possessing part of the Katakekaumene as subject territory), throws light on the advice given against binding oneself by an oath. [Try]phon paid his vow to Mother Anaitis, when he had discharged the conditions of his oath (*Μητρί Ἀναεΐτιδι γενόμενος ὄρκον μνήμων ἀνέθηκεν εὐχὴν*). I can see no explanation of this remarkable inscription, except that *μνήμων* means 'one who has attended to and executed the terms of his oath' (comp. *ἱερομνήμων*). The oath was difficult to discharge; [Try]phon vowed a dedication to the goddess, if he succeeded in freeing himself from the bondage in which the oath placed him; and in this inscription he records that he paid his vow, after the goddess had aided him to discharge his oath.

He who has not kept his oath becomes impure and unfit to engage in the service of the gods. In *C.B.*, No. 41, Sosandros having broken his oath, and being impure (*ἐπιорκήσας καὶ ἀναγνος*), entered

the temple of the god and goddess, who are worshipped on the same altar; he was chastised; he gives public warning that none despise the god, since he will have this *stèle* as an example: *ἐπιорκήσας καὶ ἀναγνος ἰσῆλθα ἰς τὸ σύνβωμον. ἐκολάσθη. παραγγέλλω μηδὲνα καταφρονεῖν τῷ Δαιρμηνῶ, ἐπεὶ ἕξει τὴν ἐμὴν στήλην ἕξενπλον*. This is probably the highest moral tone that is observable in any temple inscription in Asia Minor.

*C.B.*, No. 44, was probably similar to No. 41, but breaks off at the word *ὀμόσας*, owing to fracture of the stone.

In 119 A.D., it is narrated in an inscription of the Katakekaumene, how Apollonius gave in trust to Skollos 40 denarii; and when he asked it again, Skollos swore by the gods (whose names were written at the head of the inscription) that he had given it back. Apollonius gave place to the goddess, and left the matter in the hands of the goddess (*παρεχώρησεν τῇ θεῷ*). Skollos was punished to the measure of death (*εἰς θανάτου λόγον*); and after his death restitution was demanded by the gods (*ἐπέζητήθη ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν*). His daughter Tatias expiated the oaths which he had taken on himself (*ἔλοισε (i.e. ἔλυσε) τοὺς ὄρκους*); and now having propitiated the gods, she blesses Mother Atimis and Men Tiamou (*εἰλασαμένη εὐλογεῖ Μητρί κ.τ.λ.*).

The use of *λύω* here in the sense of 'expiated,' seems to arise through the idea of loosing and untying the bonds by which her father had bound himself, when he swore. From it comes *λύτρον*, which is used once or twice in the sense of an offering of expiation, setting oneself free from guilt by discharge of the duty imposed by the god; e.g., Artemidorus and Amias (his wife) with their six relatives, witting or unwitting,<sup>2</sup> dedicated according to order a *λύτρον* to Men Tyrannos. The sin was some act in which their relatives even unconsciously became involved; and they had all to ransom themselves by paying the penalty.<sup>3</sup> I do not find any instance of *λύω* in this sense in the New Testament; but *λύτρον* occurs in a similar way *δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν* (Mt 20<sup>28</sup>, Mk 10<sup>45</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> Probably *τῆς τιμωρίας* is to be understood.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning becomes plain when *ἕξει* is read (as is shown in *Journ. Hell. Stud.*, 1889, p. 227). Dr. Buresch, reading *ἕξει* like the old editors, finds the words unintelligible (*Aus Lydien*, p. 87).

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps *λύτρον* for *λύτρον* occurs in *C.B.*, No. 53.

In this inscription it would almost appear as if the sin of Skollos lay not in appropriating the money entrusted to him, but in coming under oaths to the gods. It is probably implied that his daughter paid the money and thus dissolved the binding force of the oaths; but the stress is laid only on the fact that she expiated the oaths and propitiated the gods.

#### IX. THE PUNISHMENT.

The punishment inflicted by the god or the goddess was, as a rule, doubtless, some bodily disease. This is expressly stated in some cases: Ammias was punished in the breasts (*ἐκολάσθη εἰς τοὺς μαστοὺς*), because she had spoken sinfully. In *C.B.*, No. 43, general physical debility seems to be the punishment, and in No. 45, a wasting away; but in many cases the representation of some part of the body above the inscription shows that the punishment was an affliction of the organ in question.

The chastisement seems often to have taken the form of fever, in which strength and power waste away without any visible affection of a part of the body. This kind of disease was understood to be caused by fire sent from the world of death by direct act of the god,<sup>1</sup> which consumed the inner life and spirit of the sufferer. Its effect is expressed, 'consumed by fire' (*πεπρημένη*) in the Cnidian inscriptions, and 'wastes away' *τήκω* (for *τήκομαι*), at Dionysopolis (*C.B.*, No. 45).

The punishment sometimes is unto death; *τῇ ἀπωλείᾳ* in one case, (*εἰς θανάτου λόγον* in another, and *ἐκολάσεται καὶ διέφθειρε ὁ θεός* in another case (sec. iv.) may perhaps imply the same issue.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Paul says in the two passages already quoted (sec. v., vi.), *διὰ τοῦτο . . . κοιμῶνται ἱκανοί*, and *εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός*.

The disease from which Paul himself suffered, and which was (as Lightfoot has shown, *Gal.* p. 186 ff.) of a recurring type, may have been fever,<sup>3</sup> and in that case it would naturally be taken by the natives as a visitation of the gods and a reason for contempt and abhorrence. Hence it was doubly remarkable that they did not reject him or his message, but treated him as the messenger of God, not the hated of God.

<sup>1</sup> See Wuensch in *Corp. Inscr. Att. Appendix*, p. xii.

<sup>2</sup> In 2 Co 4<sup>16</sup> *διαφθείρεται ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος* implies only gradual wasting away (which is indicated by *τήκω* in *C.B.*, No. 45).

<sup>3</sup> *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 94 ff.

The words of Mt 4<sup>24</sup>, 'all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments,' *ποικίλαις νόσοις καὶ βασάνοις*, is illustrated by a phrase used in one of the Cnidian inscriptions, imprecating suffering and disease on a woman, 'may it not be her lot to find Demeter propitious, but (may she be) tormented on the rack of great torments,' *μεγάλας βασάνους βασανιζομένη*. This is a more comprehensive formula than the commoner Cnidian curse 'consumed with the fire' (of fever); and in it, as in Mt, 'torments' is used as a more general term, embracing all 'diseases' and suffering of other kinds in addition. This word *βάσανοι*, which thus comprehends all sufferings inflicted as a punishment on the living by the gods of the world of death, passes readily into the sense of the torments inflicted on the dead in the future world, Lk 17<sup>23, 28</sup>.

The children or grandchildren are held responsible for the original wrong or debt due to the god, and are punished for it, as in the old Hebrew belief. Thus, for example, Tatias expiated the oaths on account of which her father had been punished to the measure of death (sec. viii.); and after Theodote died, her grandson had to pay the debt which she had incurred to the god (sec. viii.).

In some inscriptions a man suffers even for the sins of his relations. Thus Aurelios Mousaios, on behalf of his sister, Aphphia (*ἀναδεξάμενος τὴν ἀδελφὴν Ἀφφίαν*), gave a *stêlē* to the goddess when she demanded it from him. As the demand was addressed to Mousaios, it is probable that his sister had died; and he was made responsible for her debt. And in the case quoted in sec. viii. six relatives, some of whom had not been aware of the fault, are concerned in atoning for it.

A further proof of the importance which was attached by ancient belief to fevers as being caused by the direct action of the gods of the world of death, and as an evidence of the power and wrath of those gods, occurs in the Sethianic curses, written on leaden tablets, which were found in 1850 in a tomb on the Appian Way close to Rome, and have just been published by Dr. Wünsch.<sup>4</sup> In the first the curse is *patiatur febr(e)s, frigus, tortion(e)s, pallor(e)s, sudores, obripilation(e)s meridianas interdianas serutinas nocturnas*. This is merely a description of fever with its recurring paroxysms and the characteristic symptoms. *Tortiones* corresponds to the Greek *βάσανοι*.

<sup>4</sup> *Sethianische Verfluchungstafeln*, 1898.

The Sethianic tablets belong to the fourth century; but the formulæ and the curses are evidently hereditary and of long standing. Thus No. 3 ends *ut omnes cognoscant exemplum eorum*; which is exactly in the style of the Dionysopolitan *exemplaria*.

#### X. THE DEMAND FOR PAYMENT.

In many cases, where some debt has been incurred to the god, the latter seeks for payment; it is probable that this demand made by the god was very similar to the order (*ἐπιταγή*) which he issued in other cases (sec. xiii.). He makes it known (whether by dream or through the officials of the temple, there is no evidence in any case to show) that a debt has been incurred, and requires

the debtor to pay. In many instances it would appear that the demand was only for public confession and acknowledgment on a *stêlē* (*στήλην ἀπαιτηθεῖς ἀπέδωκα*). In some cases a man who had made a prayer and vow (sec. ii.) did not recognize that his prayer had been granted and the payment earned by the god. In that case the god demanded payment. The commonest term is *ἐπιζητέω*, but *ἀπαιτεῖν* is sometimes used: the idea is that of the Latin legal term, *repeto*.

*Ἐπιζητεῖν* is common, and *ἀπαιτεῖν* occurs, in the New Testament in the same general sense as in the inscriptions, e.g. *γενεὰ πονηρὰ σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ* (Mt 16<sup>4</sup>), *τὰ σὰ μὴ ἀπαιτεῖ* (Lk 6<sup>30</sup>), *τὴν ψυχὴν σου ἀπαιτοῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ* (Lk 12<sup>20</sup>). But there seems to be no case where the demand is made by God.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF GENESIS.

GENESIS iii. 15.

**'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'**

#### EXPOSITION.

**'I will put enmity between thee and the woman.'**—This verse adds yet another punishment [upon the serpent]. Not only is it to be an outcast creature, but also one hated with a deadly hatred. Irreconcilable enmity, a life and death struggle, is to be and continue between man and it. Since it is a penal sentence against the serpent, the principal emphasis must be laid upon man's hostile treatment of the serpent, whereas its hostility to man is introduced only as the reverse side, and as known from the relations that actually exist. But the enmity is not to be merely between her who first fell and the first seducer, but is to continue between their respective descendants, from generation to generation.

It is well known that such a deadly enmity does now actually prevail against the (animal) serpent. The worship of serpents among many peoples, as unnatural, and a sort of monstrosity, does not militate against this statement. If in any way, it is evident from this that the serpent, as representative of the evil power, is cursed. Evil thoughts, a serpent brood, ever and again steal up in enmity to the sons of men, in order to poison for them their innermost life; but by divine decree there is appointed against them unresting strife on the part of man.—DILLMANN.

The open enmity between man and serpent recurs in the whole Orient; it is everywhere impressed with a religious

character; it bears a hidden symbolical meaning; it is the combat either against the tempter, or against the prince of evil. The propriety of selecting just that reptile for such purpose has been made more manifest by the scientific study of zoology. It is argued that the organism of the serpents is one of extreme degradation; their bodies are lengthened out by the mere vegetative repetitions of the vertebræ; like the worms, they advance only by the ring-like scutes of the abdomen, without fore or hinder limbs; though they belong to the latest creatures of the animal kingdom, they represent a decided retrogression in the scale of beings (comp. Hugh Miller, *Test. of the Rocks*, pp. 82-85).—KALISCH.

**'It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'**—The only meaning which can be philologically defended is '*crush*.' This meaning suits Job 9<sup>17</sup> but not Ps 139<sup>11</sup>. The alternative rendering is '*lie in wait for*,' which suits Ps 139<sup>11</sup> better than '*crush*,' but a word = '*cover*' is required there.

Dillmann admits that the meaning '*crush*' suits the first part of the clause, *i.e.* the man's crushing the serpent's head, but denies its application to the serpent, and adopts the rendering '*lie in wait for*'; but this meaning is not so certain as the meaning '*crush*,' and the double accusative after the rendering '*lie in wait for*' is difficult.—SPURRELL.

The sense of the whole verse is accordingly this: Instead of the friendly relationship between the woman and the serpent, which for the woman had been so unfortunate, an irreconcilable conflict is to be kindled between men and the accursed beast. In it the animal will, indeed, in its insidious fashion, continually seek to be a match for them; but they are openly and manfully to deliver the deathblow against it. That the struggle will prove in the end the destruction of the serpent (of the evil power) is not expressly stated, but