

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

BY PROFESSOR W. M. RAMSAY, M.A., D.C.L., LL.D., ABERDEEN.

## XV. THE POWER OF GOD.

THE power of the god or goddess is often extolled: [εὐλογοῦντες? τὰ]ς [δ]υνάμ(ε)ις (*Athen. Mittheil.*, 1881, p. 273),<sup>1</sup> or ε(ὶ)λογῶν σου τὰς δυνάμ(ε)ις, or δυνατῇ θεῷ εὐχαριστῶ Δητῷ. The threat is used, he who is disobedient ἀναγνώσεται τὰς δυνάμ[ε]ις τοῦ Διός (Le Bas-Waddington, No. 668).

The plural δυνάμεις is used in all these cases: it indicates, as is common with the plural of abstract nouns (especially in Latin), instances in which δύναμις is shown, *i.e.* 'marvellous works.' In the example last quoted, 'he that is disobedient shall recognize the marvellous acts of Zeus.' The thought corresponds to the Mohammedan saying 'Mashallah! (what God wills!)' an exclamation of surprise at anything remarkable, or great, or excellent.

Both singular and plural are used in the New Testament: μὴ εἰδότες τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ Θεοῦ, Mt 22<sup>29</sup>; δύναμις Κυρίου ἦν, Lk 5<sup>17</sup>; and δυνάμεις οὐ τὰς τυχούσας ὁ Θεὸς ἐποίει, Ac 19<sup>11</sup>.

The god or goddess is the powerful one: δυνατῇ θεῷ εὐχαριστῶ Δητῷ (comp. Ro 11<sup>23</sup>, δυνατὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ Θεός; He 11<sup>19</sup>, δυνατὸς ὁ Θεός). Leto makes things possible that were impossible, *e.g.* ἐξ ἀδυνάτων δυνατὰ π(αι)εῖ (*C.B.*, No. 53; comp. Mk 10<sup>27</sup>, Mt 19<sup>26</sup>, παρὰ Θεῷ πάντα δυνατὰ); Lk 18<sup>27</sup>, τὰ ἀδύνατα παρὰ ἀνθρώποις δυνατὰ παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ ἐστίν.

One of the most remarkable of all the hieratic inscriptions is now in the Boston Fine Art Museum, but evidently is closely related to the Katakekaumene inscriptions. In 196 A.D. Mousaios and Kalligeneia paid their vow on behalf of their son, Mousaios, bearing witness to the marvellous acts of the gods (μαρτυροῦντες τὰς δ[υνά]μ(ε)ις τῶν θεῶν). The 'bearing witness' is a variation of the 'publishing on a *stelê*,' (sec. xiii.); but it is interesting to find a word that became so characteristic of public Christian testimony used of public pagan testimony to the power of the god; μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι (Rev 22<sup>18</sup>) might be inscribed on every pagan *stelê* of confession.

<sup>1</sup> Misprinted 373; this fault extends over two sheets of the *Mittheilungen*.

## XVI. THE MANIFEST GOD.

The expression, 'the manifestation of the Lord,' is used six times by Paul, with various accompaniments: ἐπιφάνεια τοῦ Κυρίου, τοῦ Σωτῆρος, αὐτοῦ, τῆς παρουσίας, τῆς δόξης (1 Ti 6<sup>14</sup>, 2 Ti 1<sup>10</sup> 4<sup>1-8</sup>, 2 Th 2<sup>8</sup>, Ti 2<sup>13</sup>).

In hieratic inscriptions the appearing of the god in visible form to men is commonly expressed by the same word, *e.g.* in an inscription of the Greek colony in South Russia, Syriskos composed a historical narrative of the manifestations of the virgin goddess (τὰς ἐπιφαν]είας τὰς Παρθένου [συ]γγραφῆς)<sup>2</sup>; at Ephesus we read of the manifest appearances of Artemis (τὰς ὑπ' αὐτῆς γεινομένας ἐναργεῖς ἐπιφανείας); and at Pergamos of Sabazios and of Zeus, in which cases the same formula is used (with which comp. 2 Mac 2<sup>21</sup>, τὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γεινομένας ἐπιφανείας). Again, the god is often addressed in votive inscriptions as 'Manifest,' ἐπιφανής; and the same adjective occurs in a similar sense in Ac 2<sup>20</sup>, ἡμέραν Κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ.

## XVII. THE NAMES OF GOD.

The most remarkable name that occurs in the hieratic inscriptions is found only in dedications, 'Ὅσιψ Δικαίψ, 'To the Holy and Just.' Both epithets are applied to God in the New Testament; but they are not used together except in Rev 16<sup>5</sup>, Just art Thou, Holy One. Holy, Ὅσιος, is said of God (He 7<sup>26</sup>, Rev 15<sup>4</sup>, Ac 2<sup>27</sup> and 13<sup>35</sup> (from Psalms), etc.); Just, δίκαιος (2 Ti 4<sup>8</sup>, 1 Jo 2<sup>1</sup>, Ac 3<sup>14</sup>, etc.).

In regard to such a title doubt exists whether its use in Asia Minor may not be due to Jewish influence. It is certain that the large colonies of Jews, sent to Asia Minor by the Seleucid kings to form a loyal garrison in a strange land, exercised a powerful influence on the development of thought and religion in the country. Hardly any clue to the history of these colonies has survived, because the Jews took Greek and Roman names, and in

<sup>2</sup> Published by Latyshev, *Inscr. Pont. Euxini Or. Sept.* i. No. 184. I gave the restoration of Wilhelm in *Arch. Epigr. Mittheil. Oesterr.*, 1897, p. 87.

inscriptions there rarely occurs anything to show Jewish origin; but the natural probability that such large bodies of Jewish settlers, placed from the first in a position of advantage and privilege, would produce men of importance in business and politics, is confirmed by a recent discovery, which makes it probable that several powerful families, boasting descent from 'kings and tetrarchs,' were of Jewish origin.<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, certain that the god *δσιος και δίκαιος* was often represented as the horseman god (Sabazios), and the pair of epithets is once applied to men.

We can only guess as to the possibility that the dedications 'to the Holy and Just' may have been due in part at least to the influence exerted by Jewish ideas on the pagan ritual of Phrygia. But this is a certainty in regard to another title used in dedications, 'To the Most High' or 'To the Most High God,' *Θεῷ ὑψίστῳ*. This is indeed found in some cases, where, from date or other reasons, Jewish influence cannot be thought of; but in a number of cases in Asia Minor, where the title is used, Jewish influence is proved by other circumstances.<sup>2</sup> This name is more characteristic of the Old Testament than of the New, though found in the latter.

The name 'the Lord,' *ὁ Κύριος*, is rather rare in the hieratic inscriptions. It is probably due to Semitic influence, and is certainly not of the Greek type; but it is more likely to originate in the old Semitic spirit of early Anatolian religion than in late Jewish influence. Hence 'the Lady' is oftener mentioned than 'the Lord.' When converts in Galatia and Asia spoke of 'the Lord,' it would hardly be possible for them to divest themselves wholly of the ideas which they had formerly associated with that title. Nor was it Paul's intention that they should rid themselves entirely of their old ideas. He desired to purify rather than to obliterate them, as was pointed out in the

opening section. There is no room to doubt that he used the customary language and forms of polite intercourse, and encouraged his followers to do the same;<sup>3</sup> and so far as letter-writing is concerned, that is proved by the comparison of his Epistles and the ordinary letters of the period. Most of these forms were connected with religion, and took a religious cast, as, for example, in Rome a dinner began with an *invocatio deorum*, and ended with a libation to the Lares. Paul's aim was to retain the religious form, omitting only the idolatrous element. That is plain throughout his teaching, and its wisdom is indubitable. His converts were not to separate themselves from the world, but to preserve a gracious and courteous demeanour to all.

Naturally, history showed how difficult it was to eliminate the idolatrous element; it returned in new forms; the old local deities became the angels of Colossian worship and the local saints, even 'the Christ of Smyrna,' in the later Greek Church.

The other titles in the inscriptions, *Tyrannos*, epithets from the places of worship, like *Δαιβηνός* etc., and other unexplained names, like *Tiamou*, are not such as could have any analogies in early Christian language, though the local epithets came back once more in the later Christianity as epithets of saints.

I have come to an end, but not finished the work. It is obvious that each of the preceding sections has merely touched the fringe of a topic on which much more can be learned; and that our conception of the way in which Asia Minor was Christianized, and of the character of the resulting religion in the country (which played so important a part in determining the Christianity of the Empire), will be cleared up in many respects when the work is properly done.

It may be worth adding, in conclusion, that the rare form *ἤρκεν* (Col 2<sup>14</sup>) is exactly paralleled by *ἤρκότα*, which is used in the same sense, 'having taken away,' in one of these hieratic inscriptions; see *Athen. Mittheilungen*, 1881, p. 273 (misprinted 373), where the word is absurdly and unjustifiably altered by inserting a syllable *ἤρ(πα)κότα*.

<sup>3</sup> *St. Paul the Trav.* p. 149.

<sup>1</sup> Speculations on the subject may be found in *C.B.*, chap. xv., on 'The Jews in Phrygia.'

<sup>2</sup> The subject has been much treated in recent times; references in *C.B.* pt. ii. p. 652f.; Schürer, *Theolog. Littsig.* 1897, p. 257; Roscher, *Lexicon Mythol.* s.v. *Hypsistos*; and Cumont, *Hypsistos*.