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EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD.

(By request.)

The faith of Christendom is found ultimately to rest upon a single miracle. Christians themselves are taught to stake all on this miracle: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." 1 Cor. 15, 14—18. Thus Paul. This is not hyperbole.

Facts of sacred history show that the supreme importance of the resurrection of the Lord was recognized not only in verbal statement, but in the entire activity of the early Church. In the same chapter from which we have just quoted Paul sketches in a few lines the essentials of apostolic preaching. He states, v. 1: "I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received," etc.; and then proceeds in vv. 3, 4 to say: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Peter's Pentecostal oration, the first public effort of an evangelical preacher in the New Testament, states, and proves by means of Old Testament

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN.

A consciousness of moral guilt was the immediate result of the first transgression. Then awoke "the avenging rectoral faculty" in man — Conscience. Even as man has never lost the power of recognizing God in the works of nature (Rom. 1, 19—21), and for this reason is "without excuse" when he transfers his devotions from their true object to idols of his own making, even so the faculty of distinguishing right from wrong, the "sense of sin," and, with it, the consciousness of guilty wrongdoing, has played a leading part in the history of the race and of the individual. It could not be otherwise. "The Gentiles, which have not the Law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the Law *written in their hearts*, their con-

science also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another," Rom. 2, 14. 15. The neglect or misuse of these two powers which man possesses as a natural endowment—a knowledge of the true God and a knowledge of His immutable Law—will constitute the guilt of natural man "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ," v. 16.

In early ages man was not only conscious of this inner law, but was able to trace it back to its origin in the divine mind. In the Zend writings of ancient Persia a "First Law" is explicitly referred to, which was not written, but which the servants of the highest God obtained by immediate and individual revelation "through the ear;" this law, we are told, was later on given a fixed, literary form by Zoroaster.¹⁾ Bluntschli quotes the following from the Brahminic Laws of Mann: "While you are saying 'I am alone,' there dwells in your heart the highest Spirit, an acute and quiet observer of all the good and all the evil that you do." Another Brahminic theologian taught: "The Spirit within, Conscience, has a knowledge of good and evil; and stands in communion with the great World Soul; these two together judge thoughts, words, and actions." The universality of conscience was already recognized by Confucius: "The moral law of the highest philosopher is likewise to be found in the hearts of all men." That the written codes are an outflow of natural law is stated with great clearness by Cicero in the *Offices* (3, 5): "The law of nature is the law of God; human laws, which are established for the benefit of society, do not differ from the law of nature, but are restatements of it (*repetita ex ea*), and in agreement with nature; if they do not so agree, they are unjust and partial." And elsewhere: Laws are not "something constructed by the human mind—but some-

1) Similarly Antigone, in the tragedy, appeals to the higher, "unwritten laws of the gods," in protest against the despotic commands of Creon. (*Antig.*, v. 452.) An ancient code of the Chinese refers to "the Law of the Most High, which is imprinted upon human nature." (Cited by Hofmann, *Das Gewissen.*)

thing eternal, proceeding from the Wisdom which rules the universe with its commands and prohibitions. . . . Ultimate Law is as old as the Divinity; it had its rise *simul cum mente divina*; therefore it can never be abrogated." (*De Legg.* 2, 4. 6.)

Of course, natural man cannot long remain in ignorance of the twofold primary function of conscience. Aristotle²⁾ describes the pleasant sensation which follows right conduct, and the agony of a guilty mind; "the wicked try to flee from themselves, they hate existence and die a self-inflicted death." "Evil conscience is the memory of wicked deeds, good conscience a memory of good deeds," says Seneca. And Cicero refers to the "most pleasurable consciousness of having lived a good life, full of good works." But by far the greater number of passages in which the voice of pagan conscience has found utterance contain reflections on the accusing and convicting power of the inner Voice. The consciousness of moral integrity is exceedingly rare; the *consciousness of guilt*, on the other hand, as universal as paganism itself. A shivering conscience, which "feels the stroke of justice before it falls," has left its record on many a page of ancient literature.

True to the naturalistic tendency of the Hellenic mind, the avenging power of conscience was viewed under the aspect of mythical personification. *Dike* appears in Hesiod and Homer as the goddess of justice, whose seat is by the side of Zeus.³⁾ "If the Sun himself were to go beyond his bounds, the furies of Dike would find him out!" said the "obscure Ephesian."⁴⁾ Both *Nemesis* and *Dike* were termed *ἀδράστεα*, because, says Aristotle, "no one can escape them." *Alastor*—the avenging spirit that roams about, so often referred to in the Attic drama; *Ara*—the curse that follows transgression, from whose temple in Athens those criminals were publicly cursed whom the police authorities could not reach;⁵⁾ *Ate*—a personification of destruction in Homer; and the *Poinai*—or goddesses of punish-

2) In the *Greater Ethics*, cited by Hofmann, op. cit., p. 17.

3) Hesiod, *Op. et Dies*, v. 256.

4) Heraclitus, *Fragm.* 34.

5) Welcker, *Griech. Goetterlehre* III, p. 82.

ment (in Aeschylus) — all these may stand as examples of that intensity with which the Greek expressed the subjective sentiment of Guilt and the related idea of Punishment, as based on simple, concrete fact. Evil Conscience itself was personified in Erinyes; the pangs of an evil conscience, in the Erinyes. They are called *ἡεροφοῖτες*, walking in the dark; *στυγεραί*, terrible; hateful, merciless, stony-hearted, hard-striking (*δασπλήγεις*). “Brazen-footed” they are termed by Sophocles,⁶ because they never give up the chase when they once pursue a victim; “even if he fled under the earth — they will surely find him.” *Καμπεσίγυνοι* — “bending the knees” of the guilty one, is another epithet quoted by Welcker (op. cit.). They punish even the gods when they have become guilty of wrong (Hesiod in the *Theogony*, v. 220)! “If not my intuitive forebodings are much mistaken,” says the chorus in *Elektra*, “the dread avenger Dike is coming apace with punishing power; . . . soon Erinyes appears, fleet-footed and many-handed, with iron footsteps, from her awful hidingplace” (v. 473 sqq.).⁷ In the most awful drama of antiquity, the “Erinnyes” of Aeschylus, the furies that pursue Orestes into the very temples of the gods do not hesitate to accuse and objurgate Apollo himself as instigator and accomplice of Orestes in the murder of his mother. “You, Orestes, must suffer punishment in your turn [in spite of Apollo’s intercession], so that I suck from you alive the red gore from your limbs; and having wasted you away I will lead you alive Below, that you may suffer a return for matricidal woe. . . . Fate has destined us to hold this office, to pursue the murderer until he has gone below the earth; and when dead he is not by any means free!” (v. 263 sqq.)

The “furies” of Roman mythology are of course copied from the Greek conception of Nemesis and Erinyes. Cicero thus interprets their true character: “The wicked are pursued and terrified by the Furies, not, as represented in the drama, with

6) *Elektra*, v. 491.

7) So, generally, in Greek tragedy, the evil conscience of malefactors finds expression in the sinister warnings and forebodings of the chorus.

burning torches, but with the tortures of Conscience and the agony that follows transgression (*fraudis cruciatus*).”⁸) The very word “*conscientia*” is used to denote “*evil conscience*,” “*conscire sibi aliquid*” — to be conscious of wrongdoing. “This shall be thy brazen wall,” says Horace, “not to be conscious of any wrong (*nil conscire sibi*), not to grow pale with guilt.” (Ep. 1, 1, 60.) “This is the first punishment that lights upon the author of a crime,” says Juvenal in the oft-quoted thirteenth Satire, “that by the verdict of his own breast no guilty man is acquitted. . . . *Conscience*, as their tormentor, brandishes a scourge unseen by human hands! Awful, indeed, is their punishment . . . in bearing night and day in one’s own breast a witness against one’s self. . . . Such is the penalty which the mere wish to sin incurs. For he that meditates within his breast a crime that finds not even vent in words has all the guilt of the *act!*”⁹) . . . These are the men that tremble and grow pale at every lightning-flash; as though not by mere chance, or by the raging violence of the winds, but in wrath and vengeance the fire-bolt lights upon the earth!” “*Nihil est miserius, quam animus hominis conscius*” (of wrong-doing), are the words of old Plautus in the *Mostellaria*; and Quintilian quotes as a common saying: “*Conscientia mille testes*” — an (evil) conscience may stand for a thousand witnesses.

As might be expected, the passages in which the ancients have *ex professo* discussed Natural Law and its relation to conscience, are comparatively few in number, even in the writings of the philosophers and poets. Nor can we from such sporadic instances — however great their value may be to the psy-

8) *De Legibus* 1, 14.

9) “*Facti crimen habet.*” Compare with this the saying of Epictetus: “That which you must not do you must not even wish to do.” (*Fragm.* 100.) “Some one asked Thales whether an unjust person remains hidden before the gods; he replied: Not even when he has an evil thought.” (Diog. Laertius, *Thales*.) “You may hide before men whatever wrong you commit; before the gods even the thought of it remains no secret.” (Lucian, *Epigr.* 8.) This agrees with Aelian’s remark (*Var. Hist.* XIV, 28): “In my opinion not only he who commits sin is wicked, but also he who *intends* to do evil.”

chologist—obtain an adequate idea of that intense conviction which was the great determining factor in ethnic life and religion—the conviction of *inexpiable moral guilt*. That the human race is totally depraved and fettered in the bonds of sin appears to have been *commune dogma* of the ancients.¹⁰⁾ “It is impossible for man not to be evil,” says Simonides in the dialogue;¹¹⁾ “it is difficult to be virtuous.”¹²⁾ “All men commit more evil deeds than good, from childhood up.”¹³⁾ “More men possess an inclination to do evil than to do good,” says Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia*;¹⁴⁾ and elsewhere: “He is a great fool who does not recognize the evil disposition of the entire human race.”¹⁵⁾ The dramatists expressed the same conviction in unequivocal terms, as when Euripides says: “Sinning comes natural to men,”¹⁶⁾ and in a fragment, “How inborn (ἔμφυτος) is wickedness in all men!”¹⁷⁾ Or Sophocles, in the *Antigone*: “Transgression is universal among men.”¹⁸⁾ Similarly Isocrates: “We are all much more inclined to do evil than to do good.” Among the later authors we may cite Epictetus: “If you desire to become righteous, first admit that you are wicked.” “How, then, is it possible to be sinless? Not by any means (ἀμήχανον)!”¹⁹⁾ And Libanius: “To be sinless is an exclusive prerogative of the gods.” Aelian quotes this apophthegm of Archytas: “To find a person that has not in him something treacherous and malignant, is as difficult as finding a fish without spines.”²⁰⁾ Even Lucian has one of his characters say: “Most men love to tell lies. Some without need much prefer lies to truth, and please themselves and make a business of it without any particular reason. Men have an innate love for lying.”

All antiquity rings with the echo of those words which “the Lord said in His heart: . . . The imagination of man’s

10) A most vivid consciousness of sin, says M. Mueller, *Essays* I, p. 40, “is a prominent feature in the religion of the Veda.”

11) Plato, *Protagoras* 344 C.

13) *Hippius* I, 296 C.

15) *De Bello Pelop.* III, 45.

17) *Bellerophon*, 299.

19) *Diss.* IV, 12, 19.

12) *Ibid.* 339 C.

14) II, 2, 24.

16) *Hipp.* 615.

18) v. 1023.

20) *Variæ Hist.* X, 12.

heart is evil from his youth," Gen. 8, 21. They find a close parallel in Cicero's *Tusculanae Quaest.* (Book III, 2): "Nature gives us very small sparks of virtue; these we soon extinguish entirely as we degenerate through wicked morals and principles, so that the light of nature never again appears. As soon as we see the light of day, we are straightway in every kind of depravity, so that it almost would appear as if we had drawn in error with our mother's milk. . . . Nothing is so wicked that man would not become guilty of it in order to satisfy his lust." "Corrupted by the allurements of lust, we no longer can distinguish those things which are naturally good."²¹⁾ Man's entire helplessness over against temptations cannot be more clearly expressed than in the famous lines of Ovid: "I see the better thing (to do), and approve of it; but I follow that which is evil." "I see what I am now about to do; nor is it ignorance of what is right that leads me astray, but lust."²²⁾ Similarly in the *Amores*: "I hate it; yet I cannot desire *not* to be what I hate!" "We always incline towards forbidden things and desire that which we must not have."²³⁾ Seneca was conscious of "a certain weakness of good intention in all matters."²⁴⁾ He would be satisfied if only every day he could "diminish his vices somewhat and criticise his own faults; ego enim *in alto* vitiorum omnium sum—for I am on an *Ocean* of every kind of iniquity."²⁵⁾ In another passage Seneca refers to the theory of Berossus, that the world must at some time, by a fatal conjunction of the stars, come to an end in a universal deluge. He does not deny such a possibility, for, he says, "sunt omnia facilia naturae;" but in the end, he thinks, the ancient order of things will be reestablished; "the animal world will be generated anew and a new race of Man, unacquainted with sin (*in scius scelerum*), and born under better auspices, will be given to the earth. But even in their case, innocence will not last long—only while they are still new on the earth. Speedily

21) *De Legg.* I, 47.22) *Metam.* 7, 20. 92.

23) II, 4, v. 5; III, 4, v. 17. Nitimur in vetitum, etc.

24) *De Tranq. Animi* II.25) *De Vita Beata*, 17.

wickedness will break forth — virtue will be hard to find. Virtue needs a leader and a guide; vices are learned also without a teacher!”²⁶⁾ The last sentence in this very remarkable passage finds a close parallel in the following, from Hsun Tzu, a Chinese philosopher of the third century B. C.: “By nature, man is evil. If a man is good, *that is an artificial result.*”²⁷⁾

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(To be concluded.)
