The Odes of Solomon (Harris and Mingana translation, with notes)

Odes of Solomon (late 1st–2nd century)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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Ode 1.

1 The Lord is upon my head like a crown; And I shall not be without Him.

2 The crown of truth was woven for me; And it caused thy branches to bud in me;

3 For it is not like a withered crown that buddeth not:

4 But thou livest upon my head; And thou hast blossomed upon my head:

5 Thy fruits are full-grown and perfect; They are full of thy salvation. (Hallelujah.)

Expository Notes.
This Ode is not found in the Syriac MS. which is imperfect at the beginning: it has been recovered from the Coptic text, where it is introduced in the following manner:

'Mary, the mother of Jesus, answered and said: My Lord, these are the words in which your Power of Light prophesied aforetime through Solomon in his nineteenth Ode, and said: The Lord,' &c.

This must, then, be one of the two missing Odes at the beginning of the collection; and it is a natural suggestion that it was numbered as the nineteenth, because the collection of Psalms of Solomon, eighteen in number, preceded the Odes. This is, therefore, the missing first Ode.

We may call it, if we please, a Coronation Ode; it represents some great experience in the spiritual life of the writer, who has been crowned or garlanded with God in the form of Truth. The same figure recurs in Ode v. 12 in very similar language:

'He (the Lord) is as a garland upon my head, And I shall not be moved: Even if everything should be moved, I stand firm.'

We have it also in Ode ix. 8, 9:

'A crown eternal is the Truth, Blessed are they who put it on their heads.

There's a battle to fight ere the crown be attained.'

Again, in Ode xvii. 1, 2:

'I was crowned by my God: And my crown is living. And I was justified by my Lord: My salvation is incorruptible.'

Also in Ode xx. 7, 8:

'Put on the grace of the Lord without stint: And come into His Paradise and make thee a garland from His tree, And put it on thy head and be glad.'

It is reasonable to interpret all these passages in a similar way. Various lines of thought suggest themselves for the further elucidation of the crown: the first is that it is the same crown or wreath that is spoken of in the New Testament: here in two places we have an allusion to a lost saying of Jesus:

'The Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.'—James i. 12.

'Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the Crown of Life.'—Apoc. ii. 10;

in both of which cases the crown is the victor's reward after trial; the victor being at the same time thought of as a lover. In the Epistle of James the matter is introduced by a reference to the man who endures trial (πειρασμών), stands the test (δόκιμος γενόμενος), and accordingly receives the crown; in the Apocalypse, the Church at Smyrna is warned of the impending trial; the devil is going to cast some of them into prison, that they may be tested (πειρασθῆτε): so they must be faithful till death.

I]

It is natural to interpret the crown in these cases as the Victor's Crown.

In 1 Peter v. 4, we have the 'unfading crown of glory' promised to the faithful pastors of the Church; the blessing is here particular and not general, as is indeed the case with the crowns or garlands of the faithful Smyrneans, but it may be regarded with the former instances as a crown or reward at the end of a faithful life or a prolonged struggle: in other words, the crown is prospective. The same thing is true in the Pastoral Epistles, where a man gets his crown by a properly fought conflict (he will not get it unless he fights fair and unless he wins through, 2 Tim. ii. 5), by finishing the course and by keeping the faith, in which case there is reserved for him the garland of righteousness (2 Tim. iv. 8). The New Testament doctrine of the Crown is, therefore, consistently prospective.

On the other hand, in the Odes, the experience is in the language and terms of the present (or even of the past) rather than the future. The crown appears to be the same as Peter's, one that does not fade away, and the same as in James and John, in that it is a living crown and a lover's crown; but the writer already has his amaranth on his head. It is the same crown of victory, but the Odist suggests that in some sense the battle is over: for instance, in the ninth Ode, to which we were

referring just now, with the injunction to 'put on the crown in the true covenant of the Lord', we are told that it is the believer's by right:

10 'Righteousness hath taken it, and hath given it to you:

11 All those who have conquered shall be booked in his book.'

Here the crown is again a crown of righteousness, a reward of victory, apparently regarded as an attainment in the present life. In one case, indeed, the Odist appears to regard his crown retrospectively, as in the 17th Ode, with its living crown that is parallel to the divine justification: ('I was crowned by my God, &c.'). The difference, then, between the crown in the Odes and the crown in the New Testament is a difference of time and attitude: otherwise the language shows that the crown spoken of is the same.

The New Testament parallels, then, suggest that the crown is a Corona Militis, a wreath of victory, present or prospective. The question,

P however, arises whether there may not be other directions of explaining the symbolical language of the Odist, beside the military conception which prevails in the New Testament. Roughly speaking, there are four directions of coronation possible:

(i) The Corona Militis already referred to. (ii) The garland of the person initiated into the Greek Mystery Religions. (iii) The garland of the newly married. (iv) The garland of the newly baptised.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish whether a crown referred to should be classified under the first or second head. For instance, in the rites of Mithras, the worshipper, when he is introduced to the degree of miles has a crown offered to him, which he repels, saying in language not unlike that of the Odes, that 'Mithras is my Crown'. Is that any other than a soldier's wreath? In the mysteries of Isis, as Tondelli points out, the initiate is decorated with a garland of palm, and clad in a robe of heaven; he stands with a burning torch in his hand, and is honoured as an apotheosis of the Sun-god.

The description, as we shall see, has remarkable parallels with the Christian initiation, and we can hardly avoid the conclusion that the neophytes of one religion have borrowed from the customs of the other: the Christian religion has been coloured from the Greek Mysteries. We must examine whether the references to the Crown in our Odes are due to an imitation of the Greek mysteries. Is it a real crown that the writer is speaking of, used as a symbol of spiritual truth and experience, or is it, as in the New Testament, a mere figure of speech?

The two other directions in which coronation may be looked for are the marriage and baptismal rites. There is much to suggest marriage symbolism in the Odes.

Some persons have not unnaturally found the crown in the Canticles ascribed to King Solomon:

'The crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals'—Cant. iii. 11.

I]

In that case, the speaker in the opening Ode (and wherever the crown is referred to), is Solomon himself or some one posing as Solomon: but this explanation is, at first sight, somewhat unnatural; moreover, some one may object that we do not even know for certain that the ascription of the Odes to Solomon is primitive. The crown, in the first Ode, if it is a nuptial crown, is the bride's crown. Any one who has taken part in a Greek or Oriental marriage ceremony, will know that an actual coronation is an essential part of it: for that reason, the hypothesis of the nuptial crown is not to be excluded. In the West Syrian rite the officiating priest says:

'A crown is in thy hands, O Lord: And it descends from heaven . . . . On the head of the married pair.'

It cannot be denied that the language of the Odes is amatory. Take, for example, the third Ode; here Christ is the Beloved, the believer is the Lover; they have been joined together and their natures mingled (as was said in the editio princeps), like water mingled with wine. When that sentence was written, it had not been noticed that the illustration was one of those that are employed by the Sufis: and indeed, it would be easy to describe the whole of the third Ode as a Sufi product. It is high mystic. Compare the following rendering by Hastings of one of the Songs of Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmi:

'With thy sweet soul this soul of mine Hath mixed as water doth with wine. Who can the Wine and Water part Or me and thee when we combine? Thou art become my greater self; Small bands no more can me confine, Thou hast my being taken on, And shall not I now take on thine?'

Whatever Jalāl-ud-Dīn may have meant by his dangerously pantheistic language, the Odes of Solomon go a long way towards him. We may compare further Ode vii. 4:

'He became like me that I might receive Him: Like myself was He reckoned that I might put Him on.'

As we have said, this is genuine mysticism, the language of the Inward and Upward life. The Christianity involved is experimental and it is

P 2 ecstatic. It is not impossible, then, that the reference to the Crown might be borrowed from nuptial rites, interpreted mystically.

The objection to this point of view is that it does not cover all the passages referred to, and that it appears to take us further from the New Testament than any of the alternative explanations.

Fortunately, we are able to detect a remarkable confirmation of this view, which almost settles the question of interpretation for us. We have shown that this first Ode is imitated in the hymn which Judas Thomas sings at the royal wedding-feast, where he definitely sets the espousals of the Church over against the nuptials that were proceeding in the palace. There can be no doubt as to the origin or interpretation of a hymn which begins: (Acts of Thomas, p.),

'My Church is the daughter of light, On her head dwelleth the King: Who feeds all His inhabitants below: Truth is placed on her head.'

It is clear, then, that the Ode was understood to be an epithalamium in the earliest days of the Christian Church in Syria.

The Syriac hymn quotes also from another famous epithalamium, the 45th Psalm, in which the nuptials of Solomon are supposed to be described, e. g.

'Her garments are like unto flowers: The smell whereof is fragrant and pleasant;'

which is an imitation of 'All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes and stacte'. We take it that he made his nuptial song out of existing epithalamia; we see that the crown is a bridal crown.

The fourth explanation is that of Diettrich and Bernard and others, who maintain that the reference is to the baptismal circlet, which is still in use in the East: indeed, according to Bernard, the whole of the Odes are Baptismal Hymns, and they are meant to cover the period of instruction of catechumens, who are preparing for the Easter Baptisms in the Early Church. We have said that these baptismal circlets are still in use: one of the editors of this volume has, in fact, baptized more than a hundred children in this way; and there is no doubt that it is a part of the ancient Syrian rule before the introduction of infant baptism, as well as among the Armenians, Copts, and Abyssinians. So the question is raised whether 1]

these baptismal customs can be referred to a sufficiently early date, or the time of the composition of the Odes to a sufficiently late date, to admit of an interpretation of the language of the Odes in terms of primitive Christian ritual. The problems referred to have been discussed in the Introduction to this volume, and the arguments pro and con need not be repeated here. It seems clear that if any one of the garland-Odes is baptismal, the rest may properly be assigned to the same category: for in this regard, Odes i, v, ix, xvii, and xx belong together, and we find a common interpretation for their common language.

In Ode ix. 8, 9, the crown is taken from the 21st Psalm, probably from the Greek Bible, as may be seen from a reference to our note at that point. The allusion is important for the question of the linguistic origin of the Odes, but it is also to be noted that it is the royal crown that is spoken of in the Psalm: ('The King shall rejoice in thy salvation, &c.'). Is this Psalm used baptismally? It is certainly a favourite with the Odist, who quotes it again (Ps. xxi. 11 = Ode v. 8) in the fifth Ode, where again we have reference to the crown in verse 12. This should naturally be taken as another loan from the same Psalm.

A remarkable series of parallels to this Ode are pointed out by Bernard in the Procatechism of Cyril of Jerusalem: e. g.

'Already ye (catechumens) are gathering the spiritual blossoms for the weaving of heavenly crowns, ... for there have now appeared blossoms on the trees; may the fruit also be perfect.'

Here is one which looks in the same direction from the Hymns of Ephrem for the Epiphany Festival:

'Beautiful are your garments: Splendid your crowns: Which the First-Born has woven for you: Crowns which do not wither Have been set on your heads.'—(ed. Lamy, i. p. 111.)

Does not Ephrem here also take over the language of the first Ode and not merely illustrate it: the reference to the 'weaving for you' a crown is very like the language of the Odist.

In that case Ephrem has interpreted the language of the Ode baptismally, as he did with everything that he could lay his hands on in the Old Testament.

Two other points of interest come up in connexion with this first Ode. One is the question as to the origin of the expression about 'the full and perfect fruits of God' at the close of the hymn. The other is a suggestion that a line, or perhaps a couple of lines, has been dropped at the end of the Ode, and wrongly restored. We are in the region of speculation, but not, we hope, aberrant or wanton speculation.

First with regard to the full and perfect fruits. To explain these, we start from the position that the Odist has been imitating in some of his lines the first Psalm in the canonical Psalter. The unfading leaves of his crown are reminiscent of

'His leaf also shall not wither, And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.'

We suggested that he has understood the second line of the couplet to refer to the tree, and not to the man who is likened to a tree. That is to say, 'doeth' () means 'produceth'; (it is, in fact, the ordinary word for bringing forth fruit, and finds its

equivalent in the New Testament as ποιῶν καρποῖς). In what sense is the word to be understood that

'All the fruit it produces is prosperous.'

The answer is that the fruit is full and perfect.

Now turn to the Targum on the Psalms. We find that the Targumist takes this very view. For him, also, it is the tree that prospers, and not the man; and he explains that it means,

'Every seed-germ germinates and prospers.'

This is a striking and unexpected confirmation of our suggestion. Moreover, when we turn to the Peshitta version of the Psalms, we find a curious reminiscence of or parallel to the 'perfect' fruits of the Ode. Here we find

'And all that he does (or makes) he perfects (or is perfected).' I-III]

Here again it is quite possible that the translator interpreted the prosperity to belong to the tree; but the vocalizers have referred it to the man.

This, then, is our tentative explanation of the closing sentences of the Ode. It is an interpretation of the first Psalm.

Now with regard to the stray verse. In Ode iv the sequence of the Hymn is broken by the insertion of the fourth verse:

3 'Thou hast given thy heart, O Lord, to thy faithful:

4 [never wilt thou be barren (idle) nor be unfruitful]:

5 For a single hour of thy faith Is better than all days and years.'

Suppose we remove the intrusive matter (so as to restore the sequence in the fourth Ode) and put it at the end of the first Ode.

'Thou livest upon my head, And thou hast blossomed upon my head: Never wilt thou be barren nor unfruitful: Thy fruits are full and perfect: Full of thy salvation.'

We suggest, then, that the verse has dropped out of the first Ode, and having been written on the margin has been wrongly restored to the fourth Ode.

Ode 3.

1 I clothe (them) with:

2 And (His) members are with Him, And on them do I hang; and He loves me.

3 For I should not have known how to love the Lord, If He had not loved me.

4 For who is able to distinguish love, Except one that is loved?

5 I love the Beloved, and my soul loves Him.

And where His rest is, there also am I.

6 And I shall be no stranger (there);

For with the Lord Most High and Merciful, there is no grudging.

7 I have been united (to Him), for the lover has found the Beloved:

In order that I may love Him that is the Son, I shall become a son.

8 For he that is joined to Him that is immortal, Will himself also become immortal.

9 And He that hath pleasure in the Living One, Will become living.

10 This is the Spirit of the Lord, which doth not lie, Which teacheth the sons of men to know His ways.

11 Be wise and understanding and vigilant. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 2. Labour proposes to change ’on them’ into ’on him’.

v. 5. Labour suggests unnecessarily ’his sign’ for ’his rest’. See, however,

:

’They knew thy law and they refused thy rest.’

Ephrem iii. 454, R. E.

v. 7. The word ’I was mixed up’, and by extension possibly ’I was united’, is of doubtful meaning.

III]

The verb is used also in an absolute manner by Ephrem, without any complement, and its meaning cannot be clearly established:

’And if thou joinest, they will count thee as a deceiver.’—ii. 468, R. E. In this verse of the Odes there is reason to believe that it has the notion of mixture, union, and participation.

In the next line, the translation is given by eliminating the dālath before , as we have suggested to be probable. In maintaining the reading of the MS. we could translate ’Because I shall love that Son, in order that I may be son (myself)’.

v. 9. The MS. has the siamē-points over the word living, which implies that the word is to be understood in the sense of ’life’. The copyist’s punctuation seems, however, not to be well adapted to parallelism with the preceding verse. To call the Christ ’the living one’ is one of the characteristics of the Syrian Church, e. g. ’O Living One, who went down to the abode of the dead’ (Breviar. Chald. ii. p.). Cf. Acta Thomae, p. 235, and see also Ephrem iii. pp. 33, 135, 149 (R. E.). On the other hand, in view of some other passages of the Odes (cf. xxviii. 6, &c.) it would be wiser not to take the above view as irrefragable, and it is even possible that the reading of the MS. may be right.

v. 10. The dālath before is quite correct (against Frankenberg).

Expository Notes.
The scope of this Ode as a genuine mystical product has been pointed out in the notes to the previous Ode. In verse 2, there is confusion in the MS. between ’my members’ and ’His members’. As it is not easy to see how a person can hang on his own members, we have adopted the second reading. In that case, we have a Pauline reminiscence in 1 Cor. vi. 15, &c.

In verse 7 the translation proposed by Flemming, ’For the Lover has found the Beloved’ has been accepted, although it interferes somewhat with the parallelism of the verses, which seem to require us to take in the same sense in successive stanzas. We have suggested as an alternative to read ’that I may be found a lover to the Beloved’. After the words ’I have been united (or mingled’), the necessary expletive [III-IV

has been added in the translation. We may compare Acta Thomae (ed Wright, p. 11) ’that with thy humanity he might be mingled (or united)’.

In verse 9 the ancient name of Jesus, 'the Living One', has been restored as has been done in the Revised Version of Apoc. i. 17 ('The First and the Last and the Living One'). For another example we may take Acta Thomae (p. 11). 'Thou art the Living One, the Son of the Living One.' Note that the expression can be traced again in Ode viii. 22. if we translate the verse

'Ye who are kept abide in Him that liveth,'

the Living One referred to being clearly Christ.

The strongly Johannine cast of the Ode will have been noted. The Ode is a hymn written on the theme, 'We love Him because He first loved us' (1 John iv. 19), with perhaps a reference also to the doctrine that 'he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit' (1 Cor. vi. 17). Whether we are to recognize actual quotations or distinct references depends on the general decision as to the priority of the Odes to the Fourth Gospel and the Pauline Epistles, or the contrary. These questions are discussed in the Introduction.

The whole Ode, like the first Ode, is of the nature of an epithalamium. Bacon described it rightly (Harvard Theol. Rev. for 1916. p. 382) as 'a song in the vein of Canticles'.

Ode 4.

1 No man, O my God, changeth thy holy place;

Nor is (one able) to change it, and put it in another place.

2a Because he hath no power over it;

2b For thy sanctuary Thou designedst before thou didst make places:

3a That which is the elder shall not be changed by those that are younger than itself:

Cf. 2 Chron. vii. 16. 3b Thou hast given thy heart, O Lord, to thy believers.

4 Thou wilt never fail,

Nor wilt Thou be without fruits:

5 For one hour of thy Faith

Is more precious than all days and years.

6 For who is there that shall put on thy grace, and be injured?

7 For thy seal is known:

And thy creatures are known to it.

8 And the hosts possess it:

And the elect archangels are clad with it.

9 Thou hast given us thy fellowship:

It was not that thou wast in need of us;

But that we are in need of thee.

10 Distil thy dews upon us;

And open thy rich fountains that pour forth to us milk and honey.

11 For there is no repentance with thee:

That thou shouldest repent of anything that thou hast promised.

12 And the end was known to thee:

13 For what thou gavest, thou gavest freely:

So that thou mayest not draw back and take them again.

14 For all was known to thee as God;

And set in order from the beginning before thee:

15 And thou, O Lord, hast made all things.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.

v. 1. Grammatically, it is more natural that the Syriac sentence should mean 'No one changeth thy place, my holy God', which paralleled with the second member of verse 2 would give, 'Because Thou designedst thy holiness before Thou madest places'.

The linguistic construction of the second member of this verse as compared with the first seems somewhat strange. This syntactic anomaly is sometimes found in Syriac, e. g.

'He can love, bless, speak the truth, and pray well.'

Spic. Syr. 5 (Cureton).

To make the sentence run more fluently we have suggested in the first member; even the simple addition of or will suffice.

v. 3. Barth proposes 'the holy' for 'the old'. On this hypothesis the note on verse 1 to the effect that the Syriac sentence means also 'my holy God' would be confirmed. In adopting this interpretation the adjective

'The shamefulness which they exhibited towards the temple of the Holy.'

Ephrem (ed. Mitchell, p. 128).

The Syriac of the Ode may also be rendered, 'He who is the elder shall not be changed by those who are inferior to himself'. And instead of the future tense, the optative form may be adopted: 'Let that which (or, the one who) is elder not be changed by those who are inferior to Himself (or, itself).

In the next line Gressmann's suggestion of 'thy side' for 'thy heart' is not necessary.

v. 4. The language is nearly the same as that used to describe Paradise in Ode xi. 23. We might, therefore, translate

'Never wilt thou be idle (or inoperative).'

v. 6. Grimme's suggestion of for is possible but not necessary.

v. 7. The MS. has 'are known to' for which we have suggested '(thy creatures) know'. This is, perhaps, a daring emendation, since the translation of the text as it stands, 'And thy creatures are known to it', i. e. 'and it knows thy creatures', is sufficiently clear.

v. 8. The MS. does not warrant 'and thy hosts' printed in the text; it is more probably 'and the hosts'. Cf. Ode xvi. 14. In the second member of the verse the word which the text gives between parentheses is unwarranted by the MS., and is useless. Instead of 'are clad with it', Connolly suggests 'hold it', which is plausible.

v. 13. of the MS. probably stands for . Frankenberg's derivation of the word from is improbable. Barth unnecessarily suggests the eliminating of the waw before . The objective pronoun is used by Synesis for , the subject being .

Expository Notes.

This Ode is the most important in the whole collection on account of the historical detail with which it appears to commence. The natural explanation would be that there had been some attempt to deny the sanctity of the Temple at Jerusalem, or to transfer that sanctuary to some other spot. The writer resists any such attempts as impious, and is quite sure that they are outside the sphere of human power: for God cannot contradict or withdraw His promises. His promises are His predestination. The Sanctuary was designed from the beginning and known to the Lord from the first. Whatever may have happened in apparent contradiction of God's promises regarding His continual dwelling in the Sanctuary, is itself to be regarded as a part of God's design, and the writer concludes His song by saying that 'God has done it all'.

The sanctuary itself has right of prescription against all other sanctuaries.

It is a pre-existent creation. The proof of this is on the Jewish side in Pirge Aboth, vi. 10:

'Five possessions possessed the Holy One, blessed is He, in this world; and these are they: Thorah, one possession; Heaven and earth, one possession; Abraham, one possession; Israel, one possession; the Sanctuary, one possession . . . the Sanctuary, whence is it proved? Because it is written, The place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established (Exod. xv. 17); and it saith, and He brought them to the border of

His sanctuary, and even to this mountain which His right hand has possessed.'—Ps. lxxviii. 54.

To these proofs, which the Rabbinical writers give, might be added a reference to Psalm lxxiii. (lxxiv.) 2, 'Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old . . . . This is Mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt' (cf. LXX ἧς ἐκτήσω ἀπ' ἀρχῆς)

The situation in this Psalm is exactly similar to that which occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. The sanctuary is in ruins and burned by fire; and the similarity of the former and the latter desolations (which the Jews recognized to be even a similarity of date) provoked a similarity of prayer and complaint. Hence the earliest Psalmist entreats the Lord 'not to withdraw His hand' (Ps. lxxiii. 11) and to 'have respect unto His covenant' (v. 20). The later writer says, 'Do not withdraw thy gifts nor repent of thy promises'. Thus the Temple as the outward dwelling-place of God and the symbol of His covenant, is before the mind of the Odist, as it was before the Psalmist.

It is clear that the Temple in the Ode is a real temple, with which the Odist is in a sympathetic relation. Neither here, nor in the language of the sixth Ode, where the Temple is spoken of, have we any right to explain it away. The actual Temple is necessary in the explanation of the fifth verse:

'Thou hast given thy heart, O Lord, to thy believers,' where a reference to God's message and promise to Solomon that

'My eyes and heart shall be there continually.' (2 Chron. vii. 16.) removes the apparent discontinuity of the Ode, and relieves us of the resort to interpolation which Harnack suggests.

In the fifth verse one could not miss the reference to Psalm lxxxiv. 10, where 'A day in thy courts' is imitated by the Odist into 'An hour of thy faith superior to all days and years'. The reference ought not to be made without observing that the Psalm imitated (the 84th Psalm) is from the beginning a Temple Psalm; and that the opening sentence, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles' would acquire a sorrowful and a poignant meaning in the time of a national disaster. We shall probably, then, be safe in placing the writer within sight of Jerusalem, and of Jerusalem in ruins. The Scriptural references which lie behind our Odes are references to the actual temple at Jerusalem, the Salomonic temple. Just as in Ode vi, where the mighty stream that overflows everything has for its goal the actual Temple, we cannot start with allegory: the actual Temple must be there in the first instance, and it was natural enough that the Salomonic Odes should contain reference to the Salomonic building, especially in the time when the foremost thought in many religious minds was the question, what has become of the Temple, or what is going to become of it.

This state of mind which, in our view, has a chronological element in it, is quite consistent with a spiritual interpretation, either on the part of a pious Jew, that the real Temple is the ideal, heavenly structure, or the interpretation of the Christian that it is the Church.

Returning to our Ode, we see that a series of fresh questions is raised in verses 6-10: what is meant by the grace, the seal, the fellowship, the dew, the milk and honey? We seem here to be in another region of thought quite away from the question of the mutability of the Temple service. Two solutions have been offered for the apparent discontinuity: one is Harnack's, that the Ode is a Jewish one interpolated by a Christian hand; the other is that of Bernard that the Ode must be interpreted in the light of the ritual of baptism. We have discussed these views in our Introduction, and the trend of our investigation is in favour of the belief that the Odes are Christian throughout and have not been interpolated. Whether they are baptismal to the extent that has been suggested appears to us to be, at least, doubtful. For instance, in the verses to which we were referring, it is difficult to see the sense in which an early Christian writer could speak of the heavenly hosts as possessing the baptismal sign, or the angels as being clad with baptismal grace. There is, however, some slight evidence for such a belief, and Dr. Bernard has underestimated it.

Not only have we the testimony of Clement of Alexandria that Theodotus the Gnostic taught that 'the angels were baptized at the beginning into the redemption of the name of Him that came down in the Dove upon Jesus and redeemed Him' (and this evidence of a gnostic interpretation does not exclude a correspondingly Christian thought), but we have the still more surprising belief in Jewish circles that the angels were circumcised, and every Patristic student knows, and our Odes themselves may be in evidence upon the point, how keen the early Christians were to carry over the ideas attaching to circumcision and re-translate them into the language of the New Faith. It is not, then, impossible, that a Christian writer should have restated the Jewish belief concerning angels in a Christian form.

The Jewish belief is found in the Book of Jubilees, c. 15, as follows:

'And every one that is born, the flesh of whose foreskin is not circumcised on the eighth day, belongs not to the children of the Covenant which the Lord made with Abraham, but to the children of destruction: nor is there, moreover, any sign on him that he is the Lord's, but (he is destined) to be destroyed and slain from the earth, and to be rooted out of the earth, for he has broken the covenant of the Lord our God. For all the angels of the presence and all the angels of the sanctification have been so created from the day of their creation, and before the angels of the presence and the angels of sanctification He hath sanctified Israel, that they should be with Him and with His holy angels.'

Here, then, the angels are represented as circumcised. Dr. Charles does not suggest the reason for this belief, nor point out its polemical necessity; but in a footnote he adds the important observation that 'our book knows nothing of the later traditions that the patriarchs such as Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Terah, Jacob, and six others were born circumcised'. The reference is important, because it takes us into the region of polemic. Every Patristic student knows that one of the points of attack of the early anti-Judaic writers was precisely this question of the uncircumcised righteous of the days before Abraham. And the obvious reply of the controversialist Jew on the opposite side was to say that the patriarchs were really circumcised. Why is it not mentioned? The answer is that they were born so. To which there is no further reply. Cadit Quaestio. It is natural to suppose further that the circumcised angels who were born so is an exaggeration of this very defence of the uncircumcised Just. They were as the angels in Heaven. But this opened up the further challenge, 'Quomodo circumcisi sunt, qui non habebant membrum virile?' If any one doubts whether this question was actually raised, let him turn to the Ethiopic Book of the Secrets of Heaven and Earth where he will find the necessary detail as to the virility of the angels with Scripture proof and dimensional observation.

It is necessary to go into this in some detail, because the doctrine of the necessity of circumcision, which is emphasized so strongly in Jubilees, is of necessity a Jewish doctrine. And if an early Gnostic writer like Theodotus maintains that the angels were baptized, he is converting Judaic arguments to anti-Judaic uses.

If it had not been for this curious preservation of the fragment of Theodotus by Clement of Alexandria, we should have said without hesitation that the verses about the angels in the Ode before us were definitely Jewish, and, in that case, we should have established Harnack's position that we are not dealing with a genuine Christian product. That fragment of Theodotus (the importance of which Dr. Bernard did not sufficiently realize) calls for a stay of judgement on the points at issue.

The investigation, so far as it has gone, will at least serve to remind us of the importance of the right understanding of the primitive anti-Judaic polemic, especially on its fundamental points, Circumcision, the Sabbath, and the Sanctuary. The question of Circumcision was raised in Judaism long before Christianity appeared. It was one of the features of the Hellenistic movement before the rise of Pharisaism, when the Jews took such pains to get rid of the sign, and to assimilate themselves to Greek manners. It is, therefore, extremely likely that part of the Christian polemic against Circumcision, say the objection on the score of the uncircumcised patriarchs, is prae-Christian; and we need to keep this possibility in mind when discussing what is said on the subject by early Christian writers or early Christian books of Testimony. The person who is not familiar with anti-Judaic propaganda

may be reminded that anti-Circumcision is not only in the New Testament, but that it pervades the first deposit of the literature. We do not, indeed, find it argued in the way Theodotus suggests. Justin Martyr is content to say that Enoch and the rest of the Patriarchal Company had the spiritual circumcision like ourselves. He does not say that they were baptized; he seems to avoid the inference, for he says that it is we, who had been sinners, who receive the covenant of circumcision through baptism. The contrast should be noted as well as the concordance.

In the earliest known forms of the Testimony Book anti-circumcision is one of the prominent articles. In verse 3 we have something like an imitation in Theophilus, ad Autolycum, iii. 15:

a reference which may help us to restore the lost Greek.

For the Baptismal parallels, we may take:

Baptism as grace (verse 6). Basil (P. G. col. 373):

For baptism as seal; and as mark of ownership. Greg. Naz. (P. G. 36, 361-4):

For baptism as dew: Ephrem, Hymn V in Epiph., verse 15:

(from thy dew besprinkle my lowliness), &c.

We need not suppose that 'dew' acquires a merely baptismal connotation in the Syrian service books. Here are a few stray references from a volume of Jacobite prayers and sequences.

'Thy dew () of grace and mercy

Bedew () upon the faces of thy worshippers.'

This reference is important on account of the parallelism with the eleventh Ode v. 14 ('my face received the dew'), as well as with this fourth Ode:

and it is certainly not baptismal.

Again :

'Let thy dew (), O Lord the Saviour, descend to Sheol, and bedew () upon the bones of the faithful departed.'

Here, again, there is no question of baptism, for the faithful dead are assumed to have been baptised. Apparently the ultimate origin of the expression as applied to the dead rests on Isa. xxvi. 19 :

Note above the repetition of the idea : 'let thy dew bedew'. Here is another sentence to be used as a preface to the 35th Ode :

'Bedew, () O Lord, the dew () of thy grace upon the thirsty minds of our souls, that are dried up by sin.'

v. 9. The thought in verse 9 that God does not need us, but that we need God, is a common religious expression in Greek and early Christian literature. It occurs, for instance, in the Apology of Aristides, c. 1 : 'There is no deficiency in Him, and He stands in need of nought, but everything stands in need of Him.'

In the fourth book of Irenaeus against Heresies the doctrine becomes a text upon which Irenaeus dilates for many pages, often in language suggesting the use of the Odes, and like the Odes, explaining that God gives us His fellowship, though He does not need us, nor our love, nor our gifts, nor our sacrifices. For example :

'Non quasi indigens Deus luminis, plasmavit Adam.'—Ed. Massuet, p. 243.

'In quantum enim Deus nullius indiget, in tantum homo indiget Dei communione.'—p. 244.

'et communionem habere cum Deo : ipse quidem nullius indigens ; eis vero qui indigent eius, suam praebens communionem.'—p. 244.

'Ipse quidem nullius horum est indigens.'—p. 244.

'Nihil tamen indigente Deo ab homine.'—p. 247.

'Haec autem gloriosum quidem faciebant hominem, id quod deerat ei adimplentia, id est amicitiam Dei ; Deo autem praestabant nihil ; nec enim indigebat Deus dilectione hominis.'—p. 247.

'Non indigens Deus servitute eorum . . . . . non indiget Deus oblatione eorum.'

Q 2 Sed et suis discipulis dans consilium primitias Deo offerre ex suis creaturis, non quasi indigenti.'—p. 249.

'Offerrimus autem ei, non quasi indigenti. sed gratias agentes: . . . . . Deus non indiget eorum qui a nobis sunt, sic nos indigemus offerre aliquid Deo.'—p. 251.

The same formula recurs in Bardaisan:

'Everything that exists is in need of the Lord of all.'—Patr. Syr. ii. 548.

And in Ephrem (perhaps in criticism of Bardaisan), we find the statement:

'The Sons of Heresy strove to interpret (or proclaim) concerning Him, that He is in no need whatever.'—ed. Rom. ii. 522.

The formula turns up again in the (late) Hebrew Testament of Naphtali:

'It is not that He hath need of any creature, but that all the creatures in the world have need of Him.'—Test. XII. Patr., ed. Charles, p. 237. 6.

v. 10. The reference in verse 10 to 'milk and honey' may be taken allegorically of the experience of souls who reach the spiritual Land of Promise, or symbolically by the sacramental use of milk and honey in the reception of newly-baptized persons, or in the Eucharist of certain non-Catholic bodies. There are certainly traces of a milk-and-honey sacrament in the early Church. For example, in the Epistle of Barnabas, we have a question raised as to the meaning of the milk and honey in the Old Testament. And after some preliminary allegorising to show that the believers in Jesus are themselves the good land, he asks 'Why milk and honey?' And the answer is that 'the young child is first quickened with honey and then with milk.'

Probably this refers in the first instance to a folklore custom in connexion with newly-born children, but it seems to have very early developed into a Christian sacrament for new converts, who had been born again into the Kingdom of God.

IV-V]

The baptismal liturgy of the Ethiopic Church will furnish a good illustration of the reception of the neophyte with milk and honey:

'Discedentibus lac et mel datur et manu capiti imposita hac benedictione dimittuntur; ite in pace, filii baptismi.'

It is not, however, by any means clear that the 'milk and honey' passages in the Odes will bear this interpretation. Ephrem attacks certain heretics (probably his favourite sport, the followers of Marcion and Bardaisan), who practice an actual Eucharist in milk and honey.

'Instead of bread, (figure of) the show-bread, they offer the sacrifice of honey and milk, but although these are pure, they had no right to disturb by these (the order of the Church). For honey was not sufficient for a sacrifice, nor milk for aspersion and libation.'—Ephrem., R. E. ii. 543.

Ode 5.

1 I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord; Because I love thee:

2 O Most High, do not thou forsake me, For thou art my hope.

3 Freely I have received thy grace; I shall live thereby.

4 My persecutors will come but let them not see me.

5 Let a cloud of darkness fall on their eyes, And let an air of thick gloom darken them.

6 And let them have no light to see, That they may take hold upon me.

7 Let their counsel become thick darkness: And what they have cunningly devised, let it return upon their own heads.

8 For they have devised a counsel, And it has come to nought.

(Powerful as they were, they were overcome).

9 They have prepared themselves maliciously, And were found to be ineffective.

10 For my hope is upon the Lord; And I will not fear:

11 And because the Lord is my salvation, I will not fear.

12 And He is as a garland on my head, And I shall not be moved;

13 Even if everything should be shaken, I stand firm:

14 And if (all) things visible should perish, I shall not die;

15 Because the Lord is with me, And I am with Him.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. In comparing the Coptic and Syriac texts of this Ode, we are struck at once by the Coptic opening; the natural translation of the Coptic verb is ’manifestabo tibi’; and we should at first sight conclude that this is a misunderstanding of the Syriac

text by the substitution of for ; i.e. 'I will make known' for 'I will give thanks'. It should, however, be noted that if the Coptic is a translation from the Greek, it is certain that we have here the rendering of the Greek ἐξομολογήσομαι exactly as in Gen xxix. 35 and elsewhere. There is, therefore, no difference between the Coptic and the Syriac.

v]

In verse 8 the Coptic has the equivalent of 'nec factum est illis',

which is suspiciously like good Syriac.

Expository Notes.

The interest of this Ode lies in the fact that at this point we begin to strike the coincidences with the Pistis Sophia. The latter part of the Ode from the twelfth verse was similar in its language to the first Ode of the collection, and led to a misunderstanding on the part of the Gnostic Commentator, who mistook one Ode for the other, and so, providentially, preserved for us in his comments the missing first Ode in the collection. Whether this fifth Ode is Christian or not did not appear decisively at the first reading. It contains a somewhat Jewish section in verses 4-9, with prayer for the discomfiture of one's enemies. If there is a definite Christian feature, it is, perhaps, the garland upon the singer's head, which occurs in several Odes, sometimes in a definitely Christian context. The close of the Ode is a noble expression of trust in the Lord, amidst adverse circumstances, which one instinctively compares with the close of the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. We do not doubt, therefore, that it is a Christian composition.

The writer is dependent upon the Davidic Psalter, either directly or through the medium of a book of extracts. The prayers for the confusion of one's enemies are taken ultimately from Psalm lxviii. (lxix.) 22, &c., from which Psalm loans are made in Romans xi. 9, 10 (the anti-Judaic section of the Epistle, chiefly made up out of Testimonia). In verse 10 the model is in Psalm xxvii. 1: 'The Lord is my light and my salvation, [V-VI

whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?'

The Syriac is a little nearer to the Hebrew ('my salvation'): the Coptic and the Greek, ('thou art my Saviour').

In verse 2 the Coptic has 'O Lord' for the Syriac, 'O Most High'; The Gnostic Targum has in a neighbouring clause, 'O light (i.e. God) of the height'; it has been suggested that this is a reflexion from the Syriac 'Most High'; it is not clear, however, that the clauses are parallel.

In verse 4 the relation between the Sahidic and Syriac texts is again obscure: the Sahidic has 'fall' for the Syriac 'come', and the Gnostic Targum appears to know

both readings: for it has ’Let them fall . . . . . let them come and not see me’. But the Syriac also has ’fall’ in verse 5 for the Coptic ’cover’. It is not safe, under such confusions in the text to draw any conclusions as to the relations between the Gnostic Targum and the Text.

Ode 6. As (the hand) moves over the harp, and the strings speak;

2 So speaks in my members the Spirit of the Lord, And I speak by His love.

3 For He destroys what is foreign, And everything is of the Lord.

4 For thus He was from the beginning, And (shall be) to the end.

5 That nothing should be His adversary, And nothing should stand up against Him.

6 The Lord has multiplied His knowledge; And was zealous that those things should be known which by His grace have been given to us.

7 And the praise of His name He gave us: Our spirits praise His holy Spirit.

8 For there went forth a stream,

And became a river great and broad:

It swept away everything, and broke up and carried away the Temple.

9 And the restraints (made) by men were not able to restrain it,

Nor the arts of those whose (business it is to) restrain water.

10 For it spread over the face of the whole earth,

And it filled everything.

11 All the thirsty upon earth were given to drink (of it):

And thirst was done away and quenched:

12 For from the Most High the draught was given.

13 Blessed then are the ministers of that draught,

Who have been entrusted with that water of His:

14 They have assuaged the dry lips,

And the will that had fainted they have raised up:

15 And souls that were near departing

They have held back from death:

16 And limbs that had fallen

They have straightened and set up:

17 They gave strength to their coming

And light to their eyes.

18 For everyone knew them in the Lord,

And they lived by the water an eternal life.

John iv. 14.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.

v. 1. 'hand' is not found in the manuscript, where a small erasure has caused a word to disappear, leaving only the final alaph. This alaph seems to have a certain stroke joining it with the preceding letter; in this case the word could not have been but perhaps 'spirit' (so Barnes), or another short vocable; cf. the following:

Bar Penkāyé, p. 147; MS. in John Rylands Library.

'Behold I am like a pen in the hand of the writer: that is to say, a harp, and the Holy Spirit sings in me.'

We have a possible reminiscence of the Odes in this sentence of John of Phenek.

v. 3. In view of the rules dealing with the attributive adjective Schulthess has suggested a dālath to be added to of the MS. In poetry, one meets occasionally with a word before which this dālath has been omitted. This same dālath is eliminated frequently after as in

(Bar Penkāyé, p. 70.)

'Something strange happened to thee.'

In the next line, Gressmann's reading 'recalcitrant' instead of 'of the Lord', and Grimme's suggestion of 'bitter', are not necessary.

v. 6. Grimme's emendation of for of the MS. is grammatically erroneous. The addition of a yōdh to the third pers. fem. plur. also frequently used by copyists is not warranted by the Syriac Grammar (cf. Ode vii. 20).

v. 8. The translation which would make the object of the three verbs , , , and which would take the lāmadh of as dative as if 'it swept everything, broke up (everything) and brought (everything) to the temple' is the less probable, because (1) it would have been more natural in Syriac to put at the end of the verbs, (2) the verb would be logically in the wrong place; what would 'break up everything to the temple' mean in Syriac? That the verb is used in the Odes with the sense of '(waters) carried' is evident from Ode xxxix. 1. The Coptic text is perplexed over this verb, and omits the translation; and, wrongly taking the lāmadh as a sign of dative and reading for , exhibits: 'Attraxit eos omnes (?) et conversa est super templum.' Bacon, quoting Torrey, suggests for the last words an Aramaic original which would have been misunderstood by the translators; the theory is that the original was a Biblical Aramaic, 'and there was nobody to impede'. The negative would have disappeared by loss or by neglect, and the translators would have taken the as a verb 'to carry', whereas it simply meant 'there was nobody to restrain'. This makes an excellent introduction to the following verses about the restrainers.

v. 18. This is the only meaning the Syriac sentence can have. In adding a before we obtain the sense of the Coptic 'the water of the eternal life'.

Expository Notes.

This is the second of the 'Temple' Odes, if we do not get rid of the reference to the Temple in the text: by means of the ingenious suggestion made by Professor Torrey that the words 'and it carried away the Temple' might be a perversion of an original Aramaic expression 'and there was none to restrain'. We do not propose, however, to alter the text at this point; it is intelligible as it stands.

The Ode appears, at first sight, to exhibit a change of subject at the eighth verse, where the stream of living water is introduced. The discontinuity disappears on a closer study of the preceding verses, in which the writer shows, by way of preface, that it is impossible to resist God, and that the diffusion of His knowledge is certain, in fact, it is already accomplished. He has in mind Habakkuk ii. 14, 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea'; and Psalm lxxii. 19, 'Blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory'. The first of these passages is the key to verse 6, 'The Lord has multiplied his knowledge', and to verse 10, 'It spread over the face of the whole earth and it filled everything'. The tenth verse is anticipated in the sixth.

The passage in the Psalm is the reason for the reference to the praise of His glorious name in verse 6. We can see the mind of the writer at work. He then proceeds to describe the flowing out of the waters and their destination. The Greek term employed in the Coptic Ode (out of which the writer of Pistis Sophia makes such extraordinary Gnostic developments) describes the flood as ἀπόρροια. This takes us to the language of the Wisdom of Solomon, vii. 25, where wisdom is described

as 'an effluence of the glory of the Creator'. Here again we have the idea of the diffusion of the knowledge of the glory of God.

Further, the restrainers who build dykes to stop the flow of the stream are anticipated in verse 5 ('Nothing shall stand up against Him').

In this Psalm we are again fortunate in having a large part of the Coptic text preserved to us; and as is common in Coptic texts, Greek words are exhibited in it. It was the occurrence of the Greek word ἀπόρροια, and the use of it by the Gnostic writer Pistis Sophia, which led Ryle and James to suggest, with some hesitation, that the Odes are Gnostic, in which supposition they were followed for a time by Harnack (Hist. of Dogma, i. 207, note). Ryle and James were, however, careful to say that 'We cannot see that there is anything unmistakably Gnostic in the doctrine'; and Harnack has also, since the publication of the complete Odes, withdrawn the suggestion.

The comparison of the Syriac and Coptic texts in this Ode is very instructive. In verse 9 the Coptic has a text which involves a Syriac ('buildings') in place of ('restraints'). Clearly the latter is the right form, and corresponds to the presence of and .

In verse 14 the Coptic has converterunt, which suggests a Syriac text or instead of , which is clearly the right reading. In the latter half of the verse the translation of the Coptic text is in error and there are two letters missing in the text itself: 'accipiebant gaudium cordis qui soluti erant', should be corrected to 'propositum cordis', which would answer to the Syriac; and instead of accipiebant the addition of the letters ce to the verb give us clevabant which answers to the Syriac .

More difficult is the variation in verse 17, where we have apparently παρουσία underlying the Syriac, and παρρησία underlying the Coptic. The parallelism between the second clauses of the 14th and 16th verses should be noted (ἀνάσθοι), and it is natural to infer that to the paralysed will we should affirm paralysed limbs. But this takes us, as suggested in the margin, into Isaiah xxxv (τὰ παραλελυμένα γόνατα), and makes it increasingly likely that for παρουσία we should read some word expressing 'paralysis'.

We cannot, however, regard the question of the reading as satisfactorily settled. There is something to be said for the Coptic παρρησία. It is a word which had almost an esoteric meaning in early Christian circles, and in the New Testament it describes the Christian attitude before the judges of earth and the Judge of Heaven. It may turn out to be the right word; in that case the Syriac is simply a misreading of an original or transliterated Greek from παρρησία to παρουσία. No other satisfactory suggestions have been made. Gressmann suggests ἄρρωστία, which is a long way off either the Syriac or the Sahidic. It would make excellent sense, and a perfect parallel.

The last verse of the Ode is obscure. What does it mean that 'every one knew them in the Lord'? Is it any clearer if we translate 'They all recognized one another in the Lord'?

Perhaps the Odist is drawing upon Isaiah lxi. 9: 'all that see them shall acknowledge them', but then an additional clause is required. We may imagine a sentence

'Every one acknowledged them (That they are the Israel of God)';

and the concluding half-verse might then be an imitation of

'Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation': for 'to live an eternal life' is, in Syriac, a good translation for 'to be saved with an eternal salvation' (Isa. xlv. 17). We leave it as an unsolved problem.

This Ode is one of those that furnish the strongest ground for the belief in a Greek original. The ἀπόρροια of which the Ode speaks has been shown to be a characteristic term, of the Wisdom-Christology; and it has also been pointed out that the Odes are strongly marked in other places by the doctrine of the Divine Wisdom which the Christians identified with Jesus Christ.

As, however, there is a good deal of evidence in favour of the belief that the Odes were originally written in Aramaic and not in Greek, it becomes proper to inquire what re-statement or alternative interpretation ought in that case to be made of the Ode before us.

It will still be true that the flowing stream is the stream of the Divine Knowledge which covers the whole earth as the waters cover the sea, and which is identified by the sequence of the Ode with the Holy Spirit: but ought we any longer to lay stress on the term ἀπόρροια if that term only comes in by way of a translation? Is there any alternative origin for the river?

In this connexion we may observe that amongst the titles given to Christ in the Testimony Books, we not only find that Christ is identified with Sophia, but we find traces of the description of Him under the title of River.

Eusebius in his treatise against Marcellus enumerates a number of titles of Christ with appropriate proof-texts, nearly all of which are traditional Testimonia. Amongst them we find

'And he was called River by the one who said, The rushings of the river make glad the City of God: (Ps. xlvi. 4).'—Euseb. c. Marcel. i, p. 97.

So the suggestion arises whether this passage in the Psalm may be the theme of our Odist. The passage turns up again in the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius, in sequence with the 25th chapter of Isaiah, and Eusebius, having quoted the Psalm, proceeds to say that 'this passage indicates the unremittent flow (ἐπιρροήν) of

the Divine Spirit, which has its source from above and waters the City of God'. We notice how near Eusebius came to calling the river in the Psalm an ἀπόρροια. Augustine, too, in commenting upon the Psalm, asks the question:

'Qui sunt isti impetus fluminis?'

and replies,

'Inundatio illa Spiritus sancti, de quo Dominus dicebat,' &c.

Now let us see whether, on the hypothesis that the 46th Psalm has been used by the Odist, we can find any linguistic agreement between the Ode and the Psalm in Syriac or in the Aramaic of the Targum.

The verse which we have to discuss is translated in English, following the Hebrew, as follows:

'There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the City of God, the holy place of the Tabernacles of the Most High.' The Syriac, however, and the Targum do not translate like this; they begin with 'Streams of rivers', and we notice that the word for 'stream' is precisely the word in the Ode. Here, then, we may, perhaps find the origin of the 'brook' or 'stream' that became a 'river'.

In the next place we notice that the river is to irrigate the City of God, and in particular the sanctuary. Here, then, we have the suggestion that the river which sweeps everything away and brings to the Temple () does precisely what the Psalm says it ought to do: there is, perhaps, no need to alter the text at all, even by the insertion of an object. If, however, we like to make a free emendation, it would be possible to read 'it made glad the Temple'; but this is not quite fair to the existing text. Why should it not simply come to the Temple?

The Targum on the Psalm has a curious interpretation of the streams and the City; it says:

'The peoples are like rivers and their fountains: they come and make glad the City of God; and they pray in the Holy House of God, in the tabernacle of the Most High.'

This brings out again the connexion between the streams and the Temple: they are streams of proselytes, according to the Targum. There is, however, not much linguistic parallel between the Targum and the Ode. On the whole, it appears to be possible that the Odist has the 46th Psalm in mind, especially since we have reason to believe that the 'river' in that Psalm was an ancient Christian testimony.

A further alternative interpretation may be offered. The question arises whether this stream, which we have identified with the Knowledge of the Lord, which is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, is not immediately derived from the 24th chapter of Sirach, where Wisdom enunciates her own praises. In v. 30

she says 'I came out as a stream from a river', and in v. 31 with a change in the metaphor,

'My stream became a river, and my river became a sea!'

The parallel with the Ode is very close and suggestive. We may also compare v. 25

[The Most High] maketh wisdom abundant as Phison and as Tigris, with the language of the Ode,

The Lord has multiplied the knowledge of himself.

Unfortunately the Syriac version of Sirach does not help us here.

Ode 7.

1 As is the motion of anger over evil, So is the motion of joy over the Beloved, And brings in of its fruits without restraint.

2 My joy is the Lord, and my motion is towards Him: This path of mine is excellent.

3 For I have a Helper, to the Lord. He hath shown Himself to me without grudging in His simplicity;

Euseb. D. E. vi. 9.

Because His kindness has minished His greatness.

4 He became like me that I might receive Him. In similitude was He reckoned like me, that I might put Him on.

5 And I trembled not when I saw Him; Because He was gracious to me.

6 Like my nature He became, that I might learn Him. And like my form, that I might not turn back from Him.

7 The Father of Knowledge Is the Word of Knowledge:

8 He who created Wisdom Is wiser than His works:

9 And He who created me when yet I was not Knew what I should do when I came into being:

10 Wherefore He pitied me in His abundant grace

And granted me to ask from Him and to receive from His sacrifice;

11 For He it is that is incorrupt;

The perfection of the worlds and the Father of them.

12 He hath given Him to appear to them that are His;

That they may recognize Him that made them;

And that they might not suppose that they came of themselves. Cf. Ps. c. 3.

13 For it is to Knowledge He hath appointed His way;

He hath widened it and extended it and brought it to all perfection.

14 And He set over it the traces of His light;

And it proceeded therein even from the beginning to the end. Cf. Sap. Sol. viii. 1.

15 For by Him He was served,

And He was pleased with the Son;

16 And because of His salvation He will take possession of cf. Matt. xi. 27. everything;

And the Most High shall be known in His saints:

17 To announce to those that have songs of the coming of the Lord

That they may go forth to meet Him and may sing to Him, Cf. Matt. xxv. 6.

With joy and with the harp of many tones.

18 The Seers shall go before Him,

And they shall be seen before Him;

19 And they shall praise the Lord in His love;

Because He is near and seëth;

R 20 And hatred shall be taken from the earth; And along with jealousy it shall be drowned:

21 For ignorance hath been destroyed; Because the knowledge of the Lord hath arrived.

22 Let the Singers sing the grace of the Lord Most High; And let them bring their songs;

23[a] And let their heart be like the day, And like the excellent beauty of the Lord, their harmonies;

Cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 7, 10. 23[b] And let there be nothing without life, Nor without knowledge, nor dumb.

24 For (the Lord) hath given a mouth to His creation, To open the voice of the mouth towards Him; and to praise Him;

25 Confess ye His power; And show forth His grace. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.

v. 1. We could take the verb in both meanings (a) 'He causes to enter, introduces' from ; (b) 'He gives, yields fruits' (Ar.) from . The second meaning is more appropriate.

v. 3. We have suggested in the text that this sentence might be regarded as an attempt to translate βοηθὸν γὰρ ἔχω τὸν Κύριον, but in taking the lāmadh of as meaning direction to, we should have the good literal meaning 'Because I have a helper to the Lord', as Labourr rightly suggests. In the preceding verse, there is a mention of the way of the Odist to his Lord; his way is easy and good, and he is joyful in walking in it towards God because he has the Christ as a companion and helper who, in his own words, 'showed Himself (or His soul) to me, without grudging in His simplicity'. That this is probably the meaning of the sentence is also attested by the fact that it is the Odist who is speaking here, and not the Lord Christ who showed Himself to him. The Father of the Lord comes in verses 12, 15, 16, where, especially in this last verse, He is called 'The Most High'. It is worth noticing that in Ode viii, verses 6, 8 where the word 'helper' occurs, there is also the same occurrence of both and ; in Ode xxi. 2, this 'helper' who is the Lord is again assisting the Odist. In Ode xxv. 2, God is again the 'helper' of the Odist.

The expression equivalent to ἀφθόνως is frequently used in Syriac literature, e. g.

'In this propitious month Thy bounty overflowed abundantly upon all.'—Ephr. ed. Lamy, II, 773.

Cf. also in the Roman edition II, 453; III, 72, 88 and in Spic. Syr., p. 9. Cf. also

Bar Penkāyé, p. 99 (MS. in John Rylands Library), ibid., p. 2.

'They give without grudging as it was given to them.'

The use of the expression does not necessarily imply translation.

In the next line, Connolly has argued that might be a translation of ἁπλότης, 'liberality' and 'simplicity'. If this surmise is considered as possible, it holds good in Syriac also, where the word has the more appropriate meaning of 'kindness', 'gentleness', 'meekness'; see Vocabulaire chaldéen-arabe, and Dictionnaire de la langue chaldéenne. One might also compare the sense of the word in Odes xxvii. 3; xlii. 2, in the sense of 'outstretching [of hands]', 'extension', and possibly 'crucifixion'

In the third line the opinion expressed by Labourt that instead of we might read is improbable without changing the verb as well.

R 2 The Lord created me (Wisdom) the beginning of His ways,'

to which verse the writer returns in verse 13:

'He hath appointed Knowledge as His way.'

That the writer has the Wisdom passages in his mind appears again from verse 14, where Knowledge is said to 'proceed from the beginning to the end', which appears to be Sap. Sol. viii. 1:

'She (Wisdom) extendeth from end unto end mightily.'

v. 10. Nestle has suggested that the original was the Greek οὐσία which the Syriac translator read ὀνοία. This is a possible but somewhat daring hypothesis. For a right understanding of the Syriac word which means also 'favour', 'gift', the following sentence of Ephrem may be quoted:

'He [Christ] was not ashamed of sleeping and of soliciting benefactions.' II, 514 (R. E.)

Connolly suggests that the word might have been 'His greatness', or 'His likeness'. With less probability Bruston substitutes , Grimme , and Brockelmann . Taking the word in the sense of 'gift', 'munificence', 'favour', which, as we have seen, it possesses in Syriac, the sentence would read 'And granted me to ask from Him and to receive from His largesse'.

v. 12. Wellhausen, followed by Kittel, considers as a reflexive pronoun and translates 'Er lässt sich schauen von den Seinen'. We consider this to be improbable in Syriac; further, in verse 10 of the Ode, and in many other verses, the verb is always used with the pronouns in the sense of 'to give to'.

v. 13. It is possible to translate as above 'For knowledge He hath set as His way' (so also Connolly). The Syriac wording, however, would be somewhat weak. Ode xviii. 7, contains a similar phrase, and in view of the uncertainty of the real meaning of the sentence, we have left in the translation a rendering which is more in harmony with the ordinary course of a Syriac way of expression.

Frankenberg suggests the elimination of the fem. Hé from . This is good but not necessary. When emphasis is intended in a sentence the suffixes may be used redundantly.

v. 14. One could also translate 'and I walked'. We have retained the reading of the MS. which, by exhibiting a dot over the taw, induces us to translate 'it proceeded', referring by it to 'way'. Gressmann proposes to read 'steps', and Frankenberg .

The expression 'the traces of the light' (ἴχνη τοῦ φωτός) is obscure; it occurs again in Ode xv. 6, and evidently has a special meaning: the ἴχνη are footprints which one follows: the context suggests walking.

v. 15. Instead of 'He was served' or 'wrought' of the MS., we have suggested the slight emendation of 'He was sent'.

We cannot say ’By it (knowledge) He was served’, on account of the feminine suffix required in that case; so we render ’By Him’ and refer back to verse 12.

In the last clause of the verse a similar difficulty arises: we have rendered it as ’the Father pleased in the Son’ rather than ’Wisdom (the Mother)’.

It is possible that we have here an allusion to God’s delight in Wisdom as his chief workman (Prov. viii. 30), the ’Son’ having displaced the original Wisdom-idea. In that case we should have read for (the mere addition of a single dot).

v. 17. Frankenberg’s suggestion that we should eliminate the dālath of and consider the word as a direct complement to is not necessary, in spite of the plausible meaning which the sentence would have: To announce the coming of the Lord to . . .

Bruston proposes to read ’announce well’. This emendation is, however, improbable, inasmuch as an expletive particle is commonly placed after the verb; further, it is obviously erroneous to use here the particle in the sense of ’well’.

v. 18. The suggestion made by Gressmann and followed by Kittel that can be taken as a past participle , is not very good as far as the Syriac is concerned. The paronomasia in the text should be noted.

v. 19. Gressmann unnecessarily proposes ’and He is seen’ for ’and He sees’ of the MS.

v. 20. Cod H has . A yodh is frequently added by the copyist at the end of the 3rd pers. fem. sing. of the aorist. Its insertion is more frequent in modern than in ancient manuscripts, and in the case of the two MSS. of the Odes, it is much less used by B than by H. Grammatically this yodh is erroneous. See Mingana, Syr. Gram., No. 204.

v. 23. Gressmann proposes unnecessarily ’their breath’ for ’their harmonies’. Grimme, favoured by Kittel, considers to be a mistake for ’etwas Widerstrebendes’. This emendation does not seem, however, to be in harmony with the verse. Probably a which appears twice in the following member of the verse, has by inadvertence been omitted by the scribe. The meaning it gives is obvious and appropriate. Connolly’s suggestion becomes unnecessary.

v. 24. Gressmann unnecessarily proposes ’voice and mouth’ instead of ’the voice of the mouth’ of the MS.

v. 25. In the text we have printed and added the following note, ’Perhaps ’. As it happens, this is actually the reading of the MS.!

Expository Notes.
There are a number of obscurities in this Ode, both in the text and in the translation.

We have not succeeded in resolving them all. It is clear that the Odist is occupied in the first instance with the Incarnation, considered as a diminution of Deity for the sake of the human race, who are thus made capable of an elevation that should correspond with the Divine descent. Salvation consists in the right understanding of this mystery; it is a case of Salvation by Knowledge, so that on the surface it might seem as if the Hymn were Gnostic: but not all that affects Gnosis is Gnostic.

The word which we have translated 'impulse' in verse 1 is literally 'running'. The suggestion arises as to whether the language may not be based upon Cant. i. 3, 'Draw me, we will run after thee', where the person addressed is the Beloved. Thus the identification of the Beloved leads to the identification of Canticles as the source of the 'running'. It is a 'chase of joy', because the text in Canticles goes on with 'we will rejoice and exult in thee'. The 'helper' in v. 3 of the Ode may, perhaps, be involved in 'draw me, we will run'.

If the foregoing identification of the sources of the Odist is correct, we need have no doubt that the title Odes of Solomon is primitive, and that the Odes have been attached to the group of Salomonic writings.

Dr. Abbott has made a similar suggestion of dependence upon Canticles (see 139 ff.).

We had the advantage for the interpretation of this Ode in the discovery of quotations made from it by certain early Fathers. The most important was a passage in Eusebius, Demonstratio Evangelica (vi. 9, p. 267), to which we have drawn attention in a previous chapter. We showed that Eusebius, commenting on the 144th Psalm, explains that the Word of God, out of His kindness to men and His knowledge of them, minished Himself of His proper greatness, in order to make the human race worthy of His own knowledge. The coincidence in the language and in the thought with the expressions and ideas of the Ode enabled us to say that Eusebius had the Ode in his mind and was using it. We were able to show that the Ode had also been used in Syriac by the Acts of Thomas, (ed. Wright, p.), a reference which was valuable, in view of the known antiquity of these Acts and their Gnostic character.

The argument of the Odist that the Word became like us in order that we might become like him, may be illustrated from Ephrem's Carmina Nisibena (No. 3, p. 79):

'He Himself in His goodness put on the human form, that He might gather us together and make us like to Himself. . . . . These things were done to our advantage, because that nature (lit. substance) became like to us, in order that we might become like to it.'

It is quite possible that Ephrem is working from our Ode as a base.

The same thing is true of the fourth of the Epiphany Hymns, where the language is used of the putting on of Christ in the act of baptism, by those who have previously put off the old man symbolically by a change of raiment. Thus we are told:

iv. 11. 'How did the great one, who in His love was minished () become persecuted by those who denied Him, and was adored by the watching (angels)'!

12. 'Let us become like Him who made Himself less than all and who being thus minished made all men great.'

(See also Ephrem. R. E. iii. 55, 58, 132).

The Incarnation is regarded as the Incarnation of the pre-existent Logos, who is here spoken of under the term Wisdom, in harmony with the language of Prov. viii. 22 ('the Lord created me'). It is important to note that the verse of Proverbs is here used in the language of the LXX: Κύριος ἔκτισέ με. Elsewhere the Odist uses the same passage in the Hebrew form, 'the Lord possessed me'; see Ode xli. Thus, if the unity of the Odes be conceded, the author was acquainted with both forms of the text, which is more than can be said of the Christian teachers for the next two centuries, who systematically bombard the Jew with the text of the LXX.

As the Incarnation is the incarnation of the Divine Wisdom, it was natural that salvation should consist in the knowledge of the Lord, and that we should have an article in the creed on the Abolition of Ignorance corresponding to the conventional one on the Forgiveness of Sins. The writer says so positively, verse 13:

'To Knowledge He hath appointed His way:'

(which is a variation on Prov. viii. 22, 'The Lord created me His way'); and verse 27:

'Ignorance hath been destroyed because the Knowledge of the Lord has arrived.'

We have shown in a previous chapter that traces of this formula are to be found in the letters of Ignatius:

the new Kingdom is inferred to be the Knowledge of the Lord. We see now that our position in regard to the ἀπόρροια (of Wisdom) in Ode vi, that it represents the Knowledge of the Lord which covers the earth, was a correct one.

Ignatius continues his reference to the abolition of ignorance with the words 'When God was manifested as man for the renewal of eternal life'; the abolition was the result of the incarnation, exactly as in the Odes. And we have shown in a previous chapter that Marcus the Gnostic also taught that the 'abolition of ignorance became the knowledge of Jesus'.

We can now see why the Odist says at the close of his song that 'there shall be nothing without life or without knowledge', for from his point of view eternal life consists in the knowledge of the Lord. We have something to the same effect in the Gospel of John (xvii. 3):

'This is life eternal, that they might know thee . . . . . and Jesus Christ.'

There is nothing necessarily Gnostic about it in a heretical sense; but it might easily become a point of departure for Gnostic teaching.

The term should be the exact equivalent of ἄγνοια; but it is good Syriac and not merely a translation. Cf. Ephrem (ed. Mitchell, p. 173):

Stölten has pointed out that Marcus the Gnostic, of whom Irenaeus has so much to say, has an expression very like that in the Odes. Amongst other silly sports, in some of which early orthodox people also joined, he amused himself with Gematria over the name of Christ and the name of Jesus. The knowledge of the Lord, according to Marcus, was the knowledge of His name, and the letters and numbers thereof. When the name of Jesus with its six sacred letters was disclosed, then 'those who knew him ceased from ignorance, and mounted from death to life; the Name itself became to them the Way to the Father of Truth. For the Father of the universe willed the abolition of ignorance and the destruction of death. But the abolition of ignorance became the knowledge of Him'. (Iren. ed. Mass. 76.)

This is very close to the language of the Ode. It is capable of an orthodox interpretation, and it is possible that Marcus was only stupid and not exactly heretical at this point. He was proving an orthodox truth in a foolish manner: the truth itself was in the Ode. We may, perhaps, take this as an instance of the ill-luck that the Odes had in falling into the hands of the Valentinian Gnostics, of whom Marcus appears to have been one. We cannot with Stölten call it a case of Gnostic parallel. It is a quotation, a Biblical text.

The expression about the singers and seers who are to come before Him and to appear before Him, is obscure as to the seers: but the sentence itself imitates, in a Targumist manner, the language of Psalm xlii. 2:

'When shall I come and appear before God?' The Peshitta says, 'When shall I come to see thy face?' The Targum has a circumlocution, and talks of 'seeing the Majesty': evidently the Syriac Psalter came too near to saying that God could be seen, and various ways were found of avoiding such an expression. The repetition of 'before Him' and the introduction of the passive 'shall be seen' instead of 'see' is in the manner of the Targums. In order to understand the situation more clearly we need to recall to our minds the offensiveness to the monotheistic thinker of such expressions as imply an actual vision of God. For instance, Philo has to explain away the passage in Exodus (xxiv. 10) where the elders of Israel

'Ate and drank and saw God also.'

His solution is:

'They saw the place of God.'—De Somniis, i. 11.

A severer theology would even have taken exception to such an expression as the 'place of God'.

Another instance, which shows how carefully the thought of an actual vision of God was avoided, will be found in the Ascension of Isaiah, where it is a capital charge against the prophet that he said he had seen the Lord. We remember how this is softened in the Fourth Gospel, after the manner of the Targumist, by saying that 'Isaiah said these things when he saw His glory'. Here the 'Glory' is one of the Divine Attributes substituted for God.

This then is the religious atmosphere in which the Odist finds himself. His answer to the question of the Syriac Psalter,

'When shall I come and see God?'

is that the seers will, indeed, come, they will come before God (as the Targumist speech constantly puts it), and they will not see God, but they will be seen before Him. The Authorized Version has drifted into something of the same circumlocutory speech.

In tracing the Biblical affinities of this Ode, special attention should be paid to the passage (v. 12) that is in dependence upon the 100th Psalm:

'He hath given Him (or Himself) to be seen of them that are His:

In order that they might recognize Him that made them,

And that they might not suppose that they came of themselves.' It was evident at a glance that the passage was under the influence of the 100th Psalm:

'It is He that made us, Not we ourselves.'

The late Professor Menzies remarked acutely on this identification, that the influence of the Psalm went further: for the Revisers of the Old Testament have altered the conventional 'not we ourselves' to 'and we are His'. And this emended reading is reflected in the Ode in the form

'to be seen of them that are His.'

At the same time, it is clear that the displaced reading is also in the Ode, in the words,

'that they might not suppose that they came (or were) of themselves.' What then is the origin of this new rendering which turns up so unexpectedly? It is in the Hebrew Bible itself, which advises us to read for

('and not we')

('and to Him are we').

The Keri, as it is called, which the reader is advised to substitute for the written text, is also found in the Targum, or popular exposition of the text. The Targum says very clearly:

'He made us, and His we are.'

The Peshitta text takes the other reading.

From the fact that the Odist knows and uses both readings, we are again confirmed in our opinion of his close and careful scholarship. Remembering, too, his habit of picking up the sequence of his thoughts from the text on which he is working, we see that we must go back to the words

'Know that the Lord, He is God,'

for the motive of the Odist's remark about

'Recognizing Him that made them,'

and the consequent statement that

'It is to knowledge that He hath appointed His way.' The continuity of the Ode is not on the surface, but it is not so far underground that it cannot be traced. The Odist often turns back to strike over again the note of a previous verse: thus in the passage which we have been discussing,

'He hath given Him to be seen of them that are His,' he has turned back to the previous verse, 'I trembled not when I saw Him', sc. the Christ who has assumed human nature.

We have not yet exhausted the influence of the 100th Psalm; for the Odist has worked in the opening sentence of the Psalm:

'Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands: Serve the Lord with gladness, Come before His presence with singing.'

Here we have the clue to the introduction of

'Those that have songs of the coming of the Lord;

That they may go forth to meet Him and may sing to Him with joy,' and to the reference to the question, which we have already discussed, in the 42nd Psalm,

'When shall I come and appear before God?'

The transition from the Knowledge of God to the Song of God, which at first sight is discontinuous, finds its explanation in the closer study of the 100th Psalm. We shall probably be justified in maintaining that the Odist, whom we know to have been acquainted with the Targum, has taken from thence the reading, which was suggested above by the Keri of the Hebrew text.

Professor Menzies, to whom we have referred, thought that the use of the 100th Psalm with its obvious Gentile leanings was an indication that the Odes were what he calls 'Psalms of the Proselytes', viz. of proselytes to Judaism in the first century. We have referred to this theory in our Introduction.

In this Ode and in Ode x there is an expression that occurs twice over, which we have translated by

'The traces of the Light'.

The expression is a curious one, and by its recurrence suggests that it has been introduced into the Odes ab extra. But where shall we find any such expression? Is it Biblical or Mystical or Gnostic? In Ode vii we are told that 'to Knowledge He has appointed His way . . . and set over it the traces of His light, and I walked (or it proceeded) therein from the beginning to the end'. The language suggests that 'traces' are really 'footprints'. In Ode x, the Odist says of the redeemed Gentiles that 'they confessed me in high places; and the traces of the light were set upon their hearts; and they walked in my life', where again there is a connexion between the 'footprints' and the 'walk'.

The nearest Biblical passage that shows any parallelism with the expression in the Odes is Sirach l. 29:

This is not very easy to translate; the English revisers present us with

Blessed is he that shall be exercised in these things; And he that layeth them up in his heart shall become wise; For if he do them, he shall be strong for all things, For the light of the Lord is his guide: (marg. footstep.)

The connexion in Sirach between the underlined words and the language of the Odes should be noted. Further illumination seems necessary.

Ode 8.

1 Open ye, open ye your hearts to the exultation of the Lord: And let your love abound from the heart, and even to the lips: Cf. Hos. xiv. 2, Heb. xiii. 15.

2 To bring forth fruits to the Lord, a holy life, And to talk watchfully in His light.

3 Rise up and stand erect, Ye who were sometimes brought low;

4 Ye who were in silence, speak out, (Now) that your mouth hath been opened.

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5 Ye who were despised, be lifted up; Now that your righteousness has been lifted up;

6 For the right hand of the Lord is with you; And He will be your helper.

7 And peace hath been prepared for you, Before ever your war happened. (Christ speaks.)

8 Hear the word of truth, And receive the knowledge of the Most High

9 Your flesh does not know what I am saying to you; Nor your raiment what I am showing to you;

10 Keep my secret, ye who are kept by it;

11 Keep my faith, ye who are kept by it.

12 And understand my knowledge, Ye who know me in truth:

13 Love me with affection, Ye who love:

14 For I do not turn away my face from them that are mine; For I know them.

15 Before they came into being, I took knowledge of them, And on their faces I set my seal.

16 I fashioned their members; My own breasts I prepared for them; That they might drink my holy milk and live thereby.

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17 I took pleasure in them, And I am not ashamed of them.

18 For my workmanship are they, And the strength of my thoughts:

19 Who then shall stand up against my handywork? Or who is there that is not subject to them?

20 I willed, and fashioned mind and heart; And they are mine. And by my own right hand I set my elect ones.

21 And my righteousness goeth before them; And they shall not be detached from my name: For it is with them.

(The Odist.)

22 Pray and abide continually in the love of the Lord; Ye beloved ones, in the Beloved; And ye who are kept, in Him that lived (again); And ye that are saved, in Him that was saved.

23 And ye shall be found incorrupt in all ages, To the name of your Father.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.

v. 1. Gressmann suggests the possible 'let it gush forth' instead of 'let it be multiplied'. Cf. Odes xvi. 2, xxxvi. 7, xl. 2 (bis). Although is generally used transitively, it is sometimes also used intransitively. v. 2. Schulthess has suggested a dālath before 'of the life'. This, however, is not probable; the 'holy life' is a permutative term ()

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to 'fruits'; and Barth's hypothesis that we must read 'the Living and the Holy' is inadmissible in Syriac. Flemming's reading 'savagery', 'rudeness', instead of 'with watchfulness', 'with diligence', 'with fervency', is not good. Likewise in the case of 'to speak' which Schulthess proposes to change into 'to walk'. In verses 1 and 4 mention is made of speech and not of walk. To change the text so as to give meaning of 'Pour apporter des fruits au Seigneur, vivants, saints, et pour remplir la stupidité de sa lumière' (Bruston) is impossible in Syriac.

v. 9. The MS. has 'your raiment'. We have suggested in the text 'your hearts'. This is possibly a daring suggestion in view of the mention of 'your body' in the preceding line, and of the emphasis laid on the 'coats of skin' in Ode xxv. 8.

v. 12. Influenced by verse 14, Gressmann proposes the possible emendation 'are known to me' to 'know me' of the MS.

v. 20. Barth's suggestion that for we should read is useless; both forms are equally used in Syriac. His hypothesis that we should, perhaps, read or (my fashioned ones) in accordance with the verb previously used, is unnecessary.

v. 21. Instead of it would be better Syriac to read without the slightest change to the meaning.

v. 22. In the text we have placed the erroneous note 'Cod. '. The MS. actually bears the reading of the printed text. We translate pray and abide continually' rather than 'pray continually and abide'. A parallel for the existence of the between and may be seen in Philoxenus, Discourses, i, p. 215:

and Aphrahat (vol. ii, p. 140):

Bruston believes that is to be regarded as a substantive, quaestio: (écartez l'investigation). This is quite improbable.

Expository Notes.
This is the first of the Odes that is clearly marked with a dual personality, the Odist becoming at a certain point in the song the Lord VIII]

Himself. A number of Odes show the same peculiarity, which is common in the canonical Psalter: cf. for example, the change in the second Psalm, where the Psalmist makes way for the Father in verse 8 and for the Son in verse 9. The difficulty will lie in the delimitation of the speakers. In the present Ode the change occurs at the eighth verse; it has been prepared for by an oracular appeal to 'hear the Word of Truth'. Perhaps the poet re-appears in verse 22: all the intervening verses are ex ore Christi.

This is the Ode in which Dr. Bernard suspected allusion to the disciplina arcani, in the words, 'Keep my secret, ye who are kept by it'; and we have shown that there is a striking parallel in the baptismal lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem. But here again we have the difficulty to meet that the formula is an ancient one, and is probably taken from a saying of Jesus in an uncanonical Gospel, and goes back ultimately to the prophet Isaiah (see Isa. xxiv. 16 in the Hexapla). The saying of Jesus will be found in Clem. Alex. Strom. v. 10:

and in Clem. Hom. xix. 20:

Such a saying cannot have had a baptismal reference in the first instance, however much it may have lent itself to such use in later days.

We may also compare Lactantius, Instit. vii. 26, which has much similarity with the language of the Ode:

'Nos defendere hanc(doctrinam) publice atqueasserere non solemus, Deo iubente, ut quieti ac silentes arcanum eius in abdito atque intra nostram conscientiam te-

neamus, ... abscondi enim tegique mysterium quam fidelissime oportet, maxime a nobis, qui nomen fidei gerimus.'

Wensinck, in his recent translation of the Dove of Bar Hebraeus, has some excellent remarks upon mystical reticence, but does not see that in the following passage Bar Hebraeus is quoting from Isaiah:

'The Holy Scripture says concerning them; there is a secrecy between me and my house-mates; and it warns them not to publish

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these things, but to conceal them, and it does not allow the house-mates to scrutinize them, save only in oral discussion.

An acquaintance with mystical language and esoteric teaching makes it clear that the injunction in the Odes has nothing to do with baptismal ritual.

It is to be noted, however, that in Pistis Sophia 377 the rule is applied to baptism : e.g.

'Occulite hoc μυστήριον, ne date id homini cuivis, εἰ μήτι facturo res omnes, quas dixi vobis in meis ἐντολᾶς. Hoc οἶν est μυστήριον ἀληθείας βαπτίσματος horum qui remittent eorum peccata.'

Here the actual reference, and the allusion to Matt. xxviii, show that baptism is the mystery that is to be concealed.

In this Ode and in the next there is an allusion to a state of War from which the saints either have been delivered or may expect to be. We put the two passages side by side for comparison :

Ode viii. 7.

Peace hath been prepared for you, Before ever your war happened.

Ode ix. 6.

For I announce peace to you His saints ;

That none of those who hear may fall in war.

It is hard to say what the war and the peace are to which the Odist refers. It is very difficult to limit the language to purely spiritual conflicts, or to assume that it only means that the saints shall get the victory : but at the end of the ninth Ode he seems to say that 'Victory is yours', and that this victory is due to the inscription of the names of the faithful in a book of life.

In the eighth Ode the saints have gone through a variety of conflicts : they have been brought low, put to silence, despised. Some struggle has evidently gone on, which is not covered by the individual conflict for inward illumination and liberty. But what the battle is we have no means of determining, nor with whom.

As the Odist goes on in verse 9 to describe a crown of precious stones about which wars have arisen, we must probably refer these wars to the one mentioned in verse 7. The crown, however, is the Truth, just as it is in Ode i, where no wars are mentioned. This suggests that after all the reference is to spiritual conflicts. The statement that 'righteousness has taken it and given it to you', would mean, 'the crown is yours as the Victor's right'. There is, however, still much that is obscure in the Odist's language.

Reviewing the whole Ode we see very definite traces of Syriac influence. The assonances in verse 12 ('understand my knowledge', &c.) should be noted, also the reference in verse 21 to Isa. lviii. 8, which is quoted again in Ode xx, where see the argument that the prophet is being quoted from the Syriac. The sentence

'They shall not be deprived of my Name, For it is with them,'

is to be understood as a Targum substitution of the Name for the Person, so that it really means,

'They shall not be without me, For I am with them.'

This is the Odist's way of working over Isa. lviii. 9:

'Thou shalt cry, And He shall say, Here I am.'

Ode 9.

1 Open your ears;

And I will speak to you.

2 Give me your souls;

That I may also give you my soul.

3 The Word of the Lord and His good pleasures,

The holy thought that He has thought concerning His Messiah.

4 For in the will of the Lord is your life;

And His intention is (your) everlasting life;

And your end is incorruptible.

5[a] Be enriched in God the Father, And receive the intention of the Most High;

5[b] Be strong and be redeemed by His grace.

6 For I announce peace, to you His saints; That none of those who hear may fall in war.

7 And that those who have known Him may not perish, And that those who receive (Him) may not be ashamed.

8 An everlasting crown is Truth; Blessed are they who set it on their heads:

9 A stone of great price (it is); And the wars were on account of the crown.

10 And righteousness hath taken it, And hath given it to you.

11 Put on the crown in the true covenant of the Lord; And all those who have conquered shall be inscribed in His book.

12 For their inscription is the victory, which is yours; And she (Victory) sees you before her, and wills that you shall be saved. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 7. Gressmann suggests for . The meaning of both is identical and the change is possible but not necessary. The case would be similar if we proposed to substitute for it the verb as Wellhausen has done. Cf. Ode xix. 5, &c.

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v. 11. Flemming's suggestion of 'truth' for 'true', 'firm', the adjective referring to covenant, is not sound. v. 12. It is possible to read with Frankenberg 'your' for 'to you'.

The important verses in this Ode from a critical point of view are verses 8-11, in which Truth is spoken of as an everlasting crown and a crown of victory to be placed on the head of the believer. The Odist makes an apparent discontinuity of expression by saying (1) that Truth is a crown; (2) that this crown is a stone of great price. The discontinuity disappears when we observe the source from which the writer is working: it is the LXX rendering of Ps. xx. (xxi.) 4:

Here the 'precious stone' is an attempt to translate the perplexing of the Hebrew, which in the English Bible appears as 'pure gold'. Our Odist has in his presentation of the Hebrew treated 'the precious stone' as an apposition to the 'crown'. In his translation by 'precious stone' he follows the LXX very closely, and it is to be observed that this is not the reading of the Peshitta, which says 'a glorious crown'. This is the more curious, because the Peshitta when it translates in Psalm xviii. (xix.) 10 renders by , , , ('of gold and precious stones'). We cannot, therefore, be sure that there is no influence from the Peshitta on the Ode.

Expository Notes.
We referred in the previous Ode to the prevalence or possibility of a state of war that may affect the saints, and which occurs in this Ode also. The Ode is spoken by the poet as prophet or orator. The reference to 'those who hear' (i. e. 'you who hear') depends on verse 1, 'open your ears'.

This Ode is one of the group of coronation Odes mentioned under the first Ode. It is a royal crown in one point of view, for the language is borrowed from Ps. xx. (xxi.), in which it is said in the opening verse: 'the King shall joy in thy strength, O God'. The crown is, then, the King's, and apparently the Odist regards the Psalm as Messianic, with Christ for King; it can thus be described as 'the holy thought which God has thought concerning his Christ'. The Odist also describes the Crown as a Victor's crown, so that this Ode does not come under the description of epithalamium. It certainly is not the baptismal circlet which is described in these terms.

The reference to the 20th Psalm will help us to explain not only the 'crown' and the 'King Messiah', but the apparently irrelevant verse 4:

'The Lord's intention is everlasting life, Your end is incorruption.'

For this Psalm was in very early times taken as predictive of immortality, not only of the King, who asks life and gets it, but also of the believer. Irenaeus has a special section, in which he discusses the question how souls, which admittedly have a beginning, can become incorruptible:

quomodo animae cum sint generabiles in futurum incorruptibiles perseverant.

Amongst the considerations which he adduces are the following:

Ps. xx. (xxi.) 4. Et iterum de salvando homine sic ait; Vitam petit a te et tribuisti et longitudinem dierum in saeculum saeculi.—Iren. (ed. Mass. 169).

Here then the Psalm in question is applied to man generally; and to establish the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. But this is not all that we learn from Irenaeus. He not only proves immortality of the soul from the Scripture, but he argues it as follows. Immortality is not natural: it is the gift of the Father and the gift of grace:

'Tanquam Patre omnium donante et in saeculum saeculi perseverantiam his qui salvi fiunt: non enim in nobis, neque ex nostra natura vita est; sed secundum Dei gratiam datur.'

This is exactly what the Odist has been saying; the obscurity of whose sentences and sequences disappears when we put the passage of Irenaeus alongside with them. Both of them are trying to say on the basis of the 20th (21st) Psalm that the gift of God is eternal life: the immortality of the soul is in the will of the Father by His grace.

It appears, then, that the ninth Ode of Solomon is based on the 20th Psalm of David. From this Psalm comes the Christ, the gift of immortality, and the crown of precious stones. The discovery is an IX-X]

important one, for we had already shown that the first Ode was a pendant to the first Psalm; now we say that the ninth Ode is a pendant to the 21st Psalm. We shall come across more cases presently of the dependence of the Odist upon the Psalter: the 28th Ode, for example, will require the 22nd Psalm for its key; and so, no doubt, in other cases. We may not be able to generalize the dependence into a formula: but it is at least conceivable that just as Bardaisan made a Psalter of 150 Psalms in imitation of the Davidic collection, so we have a similar practice on the part of the Odist, though we may not know how far the imitation goes.

The identification of the underlying Psalm may help us to a conjectural solution of the wars that issue in peace to which we alluded above. Is it not possible that the

writer is simply affirming the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, who will attain peace after the wars of this life? This would explain the sequence:

’that none of those who hear may fall in the war: And that those who have known Him may not perish, And that those who receive Him may not be ashamed.’

Ode 10.

1 The Lord hath directed my mouth by His Word;

And He hath opened my heart by His Light.

2 And He hath caused to dwell in me His deathless life;

And gave me to speak the fruit of His peace:

3 To convert the souls of those who are willing to come to Him; Cf. Ps. lxvii. (lxviii.) 18.

And to lead captive a good captivity for freedom.

(Christ speaks.)

4 I was strengthened and made mighty and took the world captive;

And (the captivity) became to me for the praise of the Most High and of God my Father.

5 And the Gentiles were gathered together who had been scattered abroad:

And I was unpolluted by my love (for them),

Because they confessed me in high places.

6 And the traces of the light were set upon their hearts;

And they walked in my life and were saved,

And they became my people for ever and ever.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. Instead of ’hath directed’ we may also translate ’hath rectified’. The verb has always more the meaning of ’rectification’ than of ’direction’.

v. 5. The MS. has the two dots of the plural on ’by my love’, and this gives ’by my sins’, which may be found in harmony with the preceding verb, ’I was un-polluted’.

The application of this meaning to Christ does not seem to be very suitable, and consequently we have suggested the elimination of the siamē points, and translated 'by my love'. We might, in accordance with Ode viii. 22, read 'in my beloved ones', but this is a violent emendation. Barnes suggests 'by their sins'. In the following line, Gunkel proposes without necessity for .

v. 6. The word might be translated 'my people' from , and might also be taken as the preposition and be translated 'with me', 'and they became with me for ever and ever'.

Expository Notes.
In this Ode again the writer, after a short preface in which he declares himself an evangelist of the new faith, begins to speak in the Person of Christ and so continues to the end of the Ode.

The chief point to be noticed in this little Ode is the allusion to the conversion of the Gentiles. The language is apologetic. Their presence in the Church has not polluted the Christ, whose love had won them. The sympathy with the Gentiles is touched with irony of a delicate kind x-xi]

towards those who thought them a pollution. The Gentiles are still somewhat on sufferance, shall we say at Antioch? The language does not seem to belong to a late period of ecclesiastical growth; the Scriptures, too, which underlie the statements of the Odist are either Old Testament passages which are already in use in the New, or, which is much the same thing, extracted from early collections of Testimonia. The 'leading captive captivity' is Ps. lxvii. (lxviii.) 18, and is in use in Eph. iv. 8. The Gentiles who confess Christ should be understood in the sense of ἐξομολογοῦνται (as in Ode v. 1); and the underlying Scripture is Ps. xvii. (xviii.) 50, where the Psalmist, speaking in his own person at the end of the Psalm says

The testimony is known to us from Rom. xv. 9, where it is introduced as follows:

'And that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy, as it is written, I will give thanks to thee among the Gentiles and will sing Psalms in thy name.'

Here St. Paul treats the ancient Psalmist as a representative Gentile. That the Gentiles should become 'my people' is from Hosea (ii. 23):

For the 'traces' or 'footprints' of the Light, see Ode vii.

Ode 11.

1 My heart was cloven and its flower appeared;

And grace sprang up in it;

And it brought forth fruit to the Lord.

2 For the Most High clave (my heart) by His Holy Spirit,

And exposed towards Him my affection.

And filled me with His love.

3 And His cleaving of (my heart) became my salvation, And I ran in the way, in His peace, In the way of truth.

4 From the beginning and even to the end I received His knowledge.

Cf. Aphrahat i. 416. 5 And I was established upon the rock of truth, Where He had set me up.

6 And speaking waters drew near my lips From the fountain of the Lord plenteously.

7 And I drank and was inebriated With the living water that doth not die;

Cf. E hes. v. 17, 18. 8a And my inebriation was not one without knowledge,

8b But I forsook vanity: 9 And I turned to the Most High my God, And I was enriched by His bounty; 10 And I forsook the folly cast away over the earth; And I stripped it off and cast it from me.

Cf. Ps. civ. (ciii.) 2. 11 And the Lord renewed me in His raiment, And possessed me by His light;

12 And from above He gave me rest without corruption; And I became like the land which blossoms and rejoices in its fruits:

13 And the Lord (was) like the sun (shining) upon the face of the land;

14 My eyes were enlightened, And my face received the dew:

XI]

15 And my nostrils had the pleasure Of the pleasant odour of the Lord.

16 And He carried me into His Paradise, Where is the abundance of the pleasure of the Lord;

17 And I worshipped the Lord on account of His glory;

18 And I said, Blessed, O Lord, are they That are planted in thy land, And that have a place in thy Paradise,

19 And that grow in the growth of thy trees; And have changed from darkness to light. Cf. Ps. Sol xiv. 2.

20 Behold! all thy servants are fair, They who do good works, And turn away from wickedness to thy pleasantness.

21 And they have turned away from themselves the bitterness of the trees, When they were planted in thy land. Cf. Ephr. (R.E. iii. 588).

22 And everything became like a remembrance of thyself, And a memorial for ever of thy faithful servants.

23 For there is abundant room in thy Paradise; And nothing is useless therein: But everything is filled with fruit; Ephr. (R.E. iii. 584). Cf. 2 Pet. i. 8.

24 Glory be to thee, O Lord, the delight of Paradise for ever. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
'for there is nothing there that is vain (or useless)'; he was speaking of Paradise, and the quotation is unmistakable.

As it stands we must translate:

'Glory to thee, O God, the delight of Paradise for ever.' If, however, we imagine to have dropped after we have:

'Glory to thee, O God; with thee is the delight of Paradise for ever.' This is very near to the Targum of Psalm xvi. 11:

'In thy right hand is delight for ever.'

The Targum is like the Odist in his fondness for introducing the delight of Paradise. In the 90th Psalm, at the end, he paraphrases the expression

'Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us', and says:

'Let the delight of the Garden of Eden be upon us before the Lord.' x1]

Expository Notes.

This lovely Psalm was known to Ephrem, as we have shown in one of our introductory chapters, and perhaps also to Ignatius and Barnabas. For the inebriation which is caused by the living water we may compare Cyril of Jerusalem:

'They are drunken, yet sober . . . a drunkenness contrary to that of the body; for this last even causes forgetfulness of what was known.'—Cyril, Cat. xvii. 19.

Cyril is speaking of the gift of the Spirit, from the day of Pentecost onwards, but he discloses the origin of his own language as to the God-intoxicated folk, and incidentally the origin of the language of the Odist; for he refers to Psalm xxxv (xxxvi):

Here we have clearly the key to the Odist's expressions; here is the fountain of the Lord of which the believer drinks plenteously, and here is the divine intoxication.

We should compare the Odist's treatment of the Psalm with a similar passage in the 28th Ode. Here we have as follows:

'I have been set on his immortal pinions; And deathless life embraced me And gave me to drink; And from that life is the spirit within me, And it cannot die, for it lives.'

Here again we are in dependence on the Psalm, and the previous verse has been imitated,

We have restored in the comparison the reading of the editio princeps; 'gave me to drink' corresponds to ποτιεῖς αὐτούς of the Psalm. Both of the Odes in question then go back to the same Psalm.

In verses 4, 5 the Odist has been imitating Sap. Sol. vi. 22:

'I will trace her [sc. Wisdom] from the beginning of Creation, And bring the Knowledge of her into clear light; And I will not pass by the truth.'

v. 13. The comparison of the Lord to the Sun and its shining, although altogether Biblical, appears to have been resented by Ephrem, who attacked Bardaisan for comparing God the Father to the Sun, e. g.

('He compared the Father to the Sun').—Eph. R.E. ii. 558.

This eleventh Ode has in it elements that lend some support to Dr. Bernard. Here are traces of the garment of light, of the dew of the Lord, and the delight of Paradise, as well as, perhaps, an allusion to the new circumcision. It is difficult, however, to bring a spiritual Ode like this within the terms of ritual. Even if some of the terms are baptismal, the Odist is not detained by them. The language is ecstatic, and the writer confesses to spiritual intoxication. At the close he finds God everywhere,

and exults in the discovery. Here we may add a couple of modern statements that come near to the thought of the Odist: the first is from Charles Kingsley:

'Everything seems to be full of God's reflex, if we could but see it. Oh! how I have prayed to have the mystery unfolded at least hereafter: to see, if but for a moment, the whole harmony of the great system.'—Letters, p. 28.

The other is from a little-known Quaker Journal, the writing of Thomas Story:

'Come sing with me, O ye Valleys, and Flowers of the Plain, let us clap our hands with Joy: for the King of the East hath visited us, and smiled on our Beauty: for He sees His Holy Name on every Flower, and glorious Image on every lovely Plain.'—Story, Journal, p. 18.

It will be convenient to add at this point the references to the 'talking water' of Daphne, which Lightfoot depreciated, in his desire to find a quotation from the Fourth Gospel in the Ignatian Epistles. Lightfoot quotes from Jortin (Eccl. Hist. i. 356) the reference to Anacreon 11 (13):

for the expression 'talking water', and for the prophetic inspiration that XI]

was supposed to be produced by drinking it: but objects to Jortin's inference that, as there was one of these 'speaking' fountains at Daphne, the famous suburb of Antioch, Ignatius may have borrowed his image from thence. Lightfoot thinks the reference doubtful, even if the text of Ignatius ad Rom. 7 ὕδωρ ζῶν καὶ λαλοῦν were correct. Lightfoot was quoting Jortin by way of Jacobson. A reference to Jortin himself shows that Lightfoot has not done justice to Jortin, whose statement of the case for λαλοῦν and against ἀλλόμενον is admirable.

Jortin says:

'The expression ὕδωρ λαλοῦν resembles the vocales undae which inspired the poets and prophets, e. g.

Et de Pieriis vocalem fontibus undam.—Statius, Silv. i. 2. 6.

An oracle of Apollo Delphicus given to Julian, and preserved in Cedrenus,

In these verses, which, to do them justice, are elegant, Apollo, to raise Julian's compassion, deplores the silence of his oracles and speaking streams. In the first line read βασιλῆι.

Anacreon xiii.

Jortin then proceeds to discuss the passage in Ignatius and its variant readings; he shows that the Greek Menaeum had both readings, and goes on to say against Le Clerc that 'the λαλοῦν ὕδωρ must not be altered; it is sufficiently confirmed by the quotations of Cotelier in this very note where he is inclined to reject it, and it

is more elegant and proper than Le Clerc imagined'. References to Antioch and Daphne follow.

It is important, both for the criticism of the Ignatian Epistles and of the Odes, that the misleading argument of Lightfoot should be set on one side. When this is done, we have an important clue for locating the Odes as well as the Ignatian Epistles in contact or connexion with Antioch.

Ode 12.

1 He hath filled me with words of truth, That I may speak the same.

2 And like the flow of waters, flows truth from my mouth, And my lips showed forth its fruits.

3 And it has caused its knowledge to abound in me, Because the mouth of the Lord is the true Word, And the door of His light;

4 And the Most High hath given Him to His Worlds. (Worlds) which are the interpreters of His own beauty. And the repeaters of His praise, And the confessors of His thought, And the heralds of His mind, And the instructors of His works.

5 For the swiftness of the Word is inexpressible (?) And like His expression (?) is His swiftness and His sharpness: And His course has no limit.

6 Never (doth the Word) fall, but ever it standeth; His descent and His way are incomprehensible.

7 For as His work is, so is His limit; For He is the light and the dawn of thought.

8 And by Him the worlds spake one to the other: And those that were silent acquired speech.

9 And from Him came love and concord; And they spake one to the other what they had (to tell).

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10 And they were stimulated by the Word, And they knew Him that made them, Because they came into concord.

11 For the mouth of the Most High spake to them; And the interpretation of Himself had its course by Him. Cf. John i. 18.

12 For the dwelling-place of the Word is man, And His truth is love. Cf. John i. 14.

13 Blessed are they who by it have comprehended everything, And who have known the Lord by His truth. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.

v. 1. Newbold suggests the elimination of the siamē points from and that we translate, 'The Word of Truth hath filled me that I may proclaim Him (or it)'. This is grammatically more correct, because it provides a subject for the first sentence, and for the second member of verse 2 (His [or its] fruits). Cf. also v. 3. Further, all the Ode deals with 'the Word'. The copyist was possibly puzzled, as every other Syrian Christian would be, with the fact that λόγος was expressed by the inadequate vocable , and put the plural dots over it, signifying that it meant 'words' in concreto.

v. 2. The MS. has the present tense, 'flows'; instead of of the MS. we have punctuated ; both punctuations are used, although that of the MS. is more frequent, in the sense of 'flow', and the other is more generally said of a 'river', 'stream'.

v. 4. We have punctuated the text 'of His servants'. The MS. by putting three dots over the word instead of two, has 'of His works', which, joined with the preceding gives a better sense.

Frankenberg unnecessarily suggests to read in singular with

T reference to λόγος. In the first line Bruston proposes to read 'to His young men' for . This, however, is not probable.

v. 5. Barth and Connolly have rightly pointed out that the translation of by 'inexpressible' or 'indescribable' was not warranted in Syriac, but that it meant, according to the first scholar, 'ohne Erzählung' (Ps. xix. 4). If 'inexpressible' or 'indescribable' was intended, we should have had or simply . The text of this verse is certainly corrupt, because (1) it is said that the 'swiftness' of the Word is without , and, immediately after, 'swiftness' is compared with that : because (2) the term of comparison, which is the word 'His swiftness' is repeated again in the enumeration of the two things with which it is compared, which are 'swiftness' and 'sharpness'. The copyist himself was so bewildered with an incomprehensible text that he puts the dots of the feminine over the suffixes of all the words, and as we shall see in the note to verse 7, he was even undecided between and . Our resort to a Greek ἀνεκδιήγητος as an original of cannot (any more than the Syriac text) account for these difficulties.

The only way of escape would, perhaps, be to resort to the probable hypothesis that a dittographical error from the copyists has crept into the text of the second line; on this hypothesis the text and the translation would run:

:

'The swiftness of the Word is without record; And like His swiftness so also is His sharpness, And His walk (course) is without limit.'

To establish the parallelism the words might be changed into the natural ’without circumscription’, so that the verse should be: ’The swiftness of the Word is without circumscription’.

In the second line Gressmann suggests that we should read for , as rendering the ἀτμία of Sap. Sol. vii. 25. The term ἀτμία is not infrequently used of the Logos in the early patristic writings, which is identified with the Sophia of the seventh chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon. The influence of the chapter in question upon our Ode appears to be very decided: here we find the epithet ἀξί for the ’sharpness of the Word’, while its ’swiftness’ and its ’illimitable course’ are a xii]

reflection from the Wisdom that ’moves more rapidly than any motion, and passes and penetrates through all things’ (Sap. Sol. vii. 24), so that an allusion to the ἀτμία in verse 25 would be quite appropriate.

v. 6. We have suggested in a note to read (’His breadth’); but there is no need to make the change: is used of the Logos in Incarnation several times in the Odes; so we read ’His descent’.

For similar reasons there is no need to emend (’His length’) for (’His way’).

v. 7. The MS. seems to have . Possibly the copyist was perplexed between ’His expectation’ and ’His limit’; or possibly he was writing and under the influence of the above another yodh slipped in before the waw.

v. 8. Our rendering is the only meaning the Syriac sentence can have.

v. 10. We have suggested in the text for ; ’and they were justified’ for ’and they were stimulated’, ’goaded’; this is possibly a daring emendation in view of the fact that in the previous lines mention is made of the ’sharpness’ of the word. Labourt’s opinion that ’est une observation marginale qui se rapportait primitivement à l’état du ms.’ is improbable.

v. 11. ’its course (lit. it proceeded) by Him’; perhaps we have here the translation of the Greek ἐν ἐκείνῳ, sc. τῷ λόγῳ.

Expository Notes.

This Ode is a Hymn concerning the Divine Logos, or the Divine Wisdom which becomes the Logos. It is not an easy Ode to translate nor to understand. It comes very close in one sentence to the Gospel of John, ’the dwelling-place of the Word is Man’. This is very near to the statement that the ’Logos dwelt among us’, but does not involve the personal incarnation nor the assumption of flesh. It may be related to the doctrine in the Wisdom of Sirach that the Divine Wisdom found her dwelling place in Jacob and at Jerusalem. This same chapter (Sap. Sirach, xxiv) helps to explain the opening sentences about the ’Mouth of the Lord, the true Word’, for here Wisdom is made to say that she ’came forth from the mouth of the Most High’.

The writer appears also to be drawing on a number of Sapiential terms which occur in the seventh chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon,

T 2 where the sharpness, force, and swiftness of the Word are described. Certainly the Ode must be grouped with the rest of the Wisdom Odes; when taken together they will do much to furnish us with the theology of the writer.

In verse 6 there is some obscurity in the statement that 'His descent and His way are incomprehensible'. If the writer means to describe in these words the appearance of the Logos among men, we have probably a reaction from the verse in Isaiah liii, 'Who shall declare His generation?' a passage commonly used by the early Fathers to show that the Birth of Christ is ἀνεκδιήγητος.

In verses 3, 11 we have allusions to Wisdom as being the Mouth of the Lord, or the Mouth of the Most High, which are parallel to the language of Sirach xxiv. 3 sqq. We compare Ode xii. 3:

and Ode xii. 11:

with Sirach xxiv. 3:

The Peshitta of Sirach has , where again we see the Odist to be independent of the Peshitta. The whole of Ode XII is a Wisdom composition, showing striking parallelism with the Praises of Wisdom in Sirach xxiv.

Ode 13.

Cf. Sap. Sol. vii. 26. Cf. Ephr. Hymn. in Fest. Epiph. i. 93 also R.E. ii. 511-13.

1 Behold! the Lord is our mirror: Open your eyes and see them in Him.

2 And learn the manner of your face; And tell forth praises to His Spirit:

3 And wipe off the filth from your face; And love His holiness and clothe yourselves therewith:

4 And you will be without stain at all times with Him. Hallelujah.

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Critical Notes. — Expository Notes.
This little Ode, like the preceding one, is Sapiential in character: the 'mirror' which the Lord is declared to be, is the 'unspotted mirror of the operation of God' in the seventh chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon. We have shown in the introductory chapters how familiar Ephrem was with this Ode, and how he manipulated it into liturgical language. If we keep the Sapiential language before our mind, we shall see the meaning of the close of the Ode as well as its opening: the believer, who clothes himself with the Divine Holiness, becomes also a spotless person (ἀκπλίδωτος), and is enjoined to be 'without stain' at all time before Him.

In the Acts of John there is a curious hymn sung by the Apostle to his disciples before his apprehension; at the close of the hymn, which seems to belong to Christ speaking in him, we read

'I am a Lamp to him that sees me:

I am a Mirror to him that considers me:

I am a Door to him that knocks to me:

I am a Way to thee the passer by.'

Here the 'Mirror' is accepted as one of the titles of Jesus; so it seems that this Ode also passed into Gnostic hands, in the form in which we know it. It would be a great

mistake to call the Ode itself Gnostic: it is a clear and beautiful call to a redeemed and Christ-like life.

Another parallel to the Lord being our mirror is I. Ep. Clem. c. 36: 'Through Him let us look intently on the Heavenly Heights; through Him we behold as in a mirror that unblemished and most lofty visage of His; through Him the eyes of our heart were opened.' Here the parallelism is very pronounced with Ode xiii; 'the Lord is the mirror; by Him the eyes are opened; an unblemished form is perceived.

Ode 14.

1 As the eyes of a son to his father, So are my eyes at all time towards thee, O Lord.

2 For with thee are my consolations and my delights.

3 Turn not away thy mercy from me, O Lord: And take not thy kindness from me.

4 Stretch out to me, my Lord, at all times, thy right hand; And be my guide even to the end, according to thy good pleasure.

5 Let me be well-pleasing before thee, because of thy glory: And because of thy name let me be saved from the Evil One.

6 And let thy gentleness, O Lord, abide with me, And the fruits of thy love.

7 Teach me the Odes of thy truth That I may bring forth fruit in thee.

8 And open to me the harp of thy Holy Spirit, That with all (its) notes I may praise thee, O Lord.

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9 And according to the multitude of thy mercies

So shalt thou give to me:

And hasten to grant our petitions.

10 And thou art able for all our needs.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 5. The Syriac word in the text is commonly used in Syriac literature to render ’the Evil One’; ’evil’ being, on the other hand, expressed by the neutral (fem.) . See also Ode xxxiii. 4.

v. 6. Frankenberg proposes to eliminate the waw of .

v. 10. Labourt suggests 'because thou' instead of 'and thou'. It is a possible but quite unnecessary hypothesis.

Expository Notes.
This Ode and the two which follow are grouped together by the similarity of their opening verses, which are in each case of the nature of a similitude. In the Ode before us, the motive is found in an imitation of the 122nd (123rd) Psalm in the canonical Psalter:

'as the eyes of servants . . .

as the eyes of a maid . . .'

The writer has also borrowed in verse 4 the language of another Psalm, Ps. xlvii. (xlviii.):

'Our God for ever and ever,

He will be our guide even unto death.'

This is one of the Odes in which the similitude of the harp is introduced: e. g. in Ode vi, the Odist is the harp, and the Spirit of the Lord speaks in his members: in Ode vii the singers go forth to welcome the Lord at His coming with the harp of many tones (κιθάρα πολύφωνος), &c. The figure is one that was used by Syriac writers both orthodox and heretical. Ephrem says of the teaching of Bardaisan and Mani that 'they saw that there is in the heart an instrument for the impulses of the soul, and that there is in the tongue a harp () of speech' (ed. Mitchell, p. xc).

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'By the mouth of the body the soul preaches truth in the world; and it is a pure harp for it, by means of which it sounds forth truth in creation.'

In verses 4, 5 we have distinct traces of the influence of Ps. xlvii. (xlviii.) 15 and Ps. xxx. (xxxi.) 4. The Odist prays that the Lord may be his guide even to the end; he has substituted 'the end' for 'death', but agrees with the Hebrew and its dependent Peshitta in the use of the verb ('to guide'), while the LXX has the more remote ποιμανεῖ. After the manner of the Odist, we have in the next verse the influence of Ps. xxx. (xxxi.), 'For thy name's sake lead me and guide me', where the Peshitta does not mention the idea of guidance, which is involved in the Hebrew and the LXX. Here again the Odist shows independence of the Peshitta tradition.

In verse 10 the Odist concludes with the sentiment that 'God is able for all our needs', which is nearly parallel to Phil. iv. 20, 'My God shall supply every need of yours'. 'Need' (χρεία) is in the Ode , in the Peshitta . Further, the Peshitta follows the Greek in rendering πληρώσει ('shall fulfil') literally, which the Odist explains in the sense of Divine ability ().

Ode 15.

1 As the sun is the joy to them that seek for its daybreak So is my joy the Lord:

2 Because He is my Sun, and His rays have lifted me up; And His light hath dispelled all darkness from my face.

3 In Him I have acquired eyes, And have seen His holy day:

4 Ears I have acquired, And I have heard His truth.

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5 The thought of knowledge I have acquired, And I have been delighted by Him.

6 The way of error I have left and I went towards Him, And I have received Salvation from Him abundantly.

7 And according to His bounty He hath given to me: And according to His excellent beauty He hath made me.

8 I have put on incorruption through His name, 1 Cor. xv. 54. And I have put off corruption by His grace.

9 Death hath been destroyed before my face; And Sheol hath been abolished by my word. 1 Cor. xv. 55.

10 And there hath gone up deathless life in the Lord’s land; And it hath been made known to His faithful ones; And hath been given without stint to all those that trust in Him.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 5. The MS. has ’I was delighted’. In view of the next verse where mention is made of salvation we have suggested the probable ’and I was saved’. The opinion of Labour who thinks that ’by His hand’ is to be attached to the following verse, becomes unnecessary.

v. 10. Schulthess suggests (pl.); this is very good, but not necessary; we have maintained the reading of the MS. (cf. xxxv. 3).

Expository Notes.
It was suggested in the editio princeps that the Odist in his opening sentences strikes the note of Psalm cxxix. (cxxx.) 6, and this is probably the case: but if so, he is not using the LXX text, which says, 'from the morning watch till night my soul hopes in the Lord'. Moreover, he has given the Psalm quite a different turn, changing the painful and prolonged sense of waiting for the dawn into a song after sunrise, out of which all sadness has disappeared.

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Kleinert suggested that the Ode was composed for the Sunday, as being the day of the Sun, and remarked that the Mandaeans reported the Sunday as holier (because older) than the Sabbath. He need not have gone so far as the Mandaeans, for Ignatius advises the Christians of his day not any longer to Sabbatize, but to live according to the Lord's day. Probably Kleinert was trying to explain the term 'His holy day' in verse 3. It may be doubted whether any explanation is really necessary.

It is probable that the acquaintance of Syriac writers with the Odes of Solomon can be traced through many centuries. Here, for example, is a passage which is suggestive of dependence upon the Odes in the Preface to the Marganitha or 'Pearl' of 'Abdisho'. The writer prays 'That we may be lifted up to the Holy of Holies, the dwelling-place of the Divine mysteries, and may be transformed into that likeness which is above all likeness; and that through the rays of thy essential light we may shine forth for ever, and be rejuvenated, and may become the companions of those who are near to thy greatness in theory and in practice: and that we should be seen by the illustrious and blessed here and there, and amongst those who are of the right hand.'

It will be recognized that this passage is in close dependence upon the thoughts and expressions in the Odes. The coincidence is striking with those passages where the Odist speaks of being lifted up into Divine light (Ode xv, and Ode xxi) and becoming one of the neighbours of God (Ode xxi, and Ode xxxvi); and the allusion to believers as those who are on the right hand, is also remarkable. The language does not show the same coincidence as the thought. Instead of we have the equivalent , and instead of for neighbours we have the equivalent . But these variations do not invalidate the dependence of 'Abdisho' upon the thought of the Odist.

Ode 16.

1 As the work of the husbandman is the ploughshare; And the work of the steersman is the guidance of the ship; So also my work is the Psalm of the Lord in His praises;

2 My craft and my occupation are in His praises; Because His love hath nourished my heart, And even to my lips His fruits He poured out.

3 For my love is the Lord And therefore I will sing unto Him.

4 For I am made strong in His praise, And I have faith in Him.

5 I will open my mouth, And His spirit will utter in me The glory of the Lord and His beauty;

6 The work of His hands And the fabric of His fingers;

7 For the multitude of His mercies, And the strength of His Word.

8 For the Word of the Lord searches out the unseen thing, Cf. I Cor. ii. 10. And scrutinizes His thought.

9 For the eye sees His works, And the ear hears His thought.

10 It is He who spread out the earth, And settled the waters in the sea:

11 He expanded the heavens, And fixed the stars;

12 And He fixed the creation and set it up: And He rested from His works.

13 And created things run in their courses, And work their works: And they know not how to stand (still) and to be idle.

14 And the hosts are subject to His Word.

15 The treasury of the light is the sun, And the treasury of the darkness is the night.

16 And He made the sun for the day that it might be bright; But night brings darkness over the face of the earth:

17 And (by) their reception one from the other They speak the beauty of God.

18 And there is nothing that is without the Lord; For He was before anything came into being.

19 And the Worlds were made by His Word, And by the thought of His heart.

(Doxology.)

20 Glory and Honour to His name.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.

v. 1. Schulthess suggests 'the mast' for 'the steering'. This, however, is not sound. The verb is very frequently used to express 'the steering' of a ship, e. g.

(Ephr. R.E. i. 314).

'He steers ships to the harbour.'

Further, is generally used in the plural and refers to tools whose function is to strengthen the construction of a ship.

v. 2. Frankenberg unnecessarily proposes to eliminate the beth of .

v. 8. The verb is not duly catalogued in the Thesaurus, and this has given rise to many inadmissible theories about this sentence. It is, however, an obvious Syriac triliteral root with the meaning of 'to fathom, to scrutinize'. See Dictionnaire de la langue chaldéenne, and Vocabulaire chaldéen-arabe (sub voce). The following quotation from Gregory of Cyprus, a fourth-century writer, is sufficient:

'And now behold my eyes fly over the countries of the luminaries, and see clearly all that is found in the bottom and in the depths of the abysses.'—MS. of the Rylands Library, p. 117.

The meaning of the word had been divined by Tondelli, who refers to Brun's Lexicon.

In a recent paper by Dr. P. Haupt in the Journal of Biblical Literature (xxxvii, 1918, pp. 229-232) the Assyrian root Dagālu, 'to see, to look for', is discussed, and it is shown that it existed in Hebrew, and that it can be restored in Cant. v. 10 and Ps. xx. 6. It is curious that Dr. Haupt does not seem to have noticed its occurrence in the Odes of Solomon.

v. 9. Barth unnecessarily proposes to read to make it conform with .

v. 15. The printed text has ; but the MS. reads , and we should correct accordingly.

v. 17. It is more grammatical to read .

In the next line we have adopted in the translation for of the MS. The elimination of the letter lāmadh when reduplicated is frequent in the old manuscripts. Those who prefer the reading of the MS. will translate ’complete’ or ’fulfil’.

For the understanding of the somewhat mysterious inter-reception of the sun and moon, who borrow light from one another, we must turn to the teaching of the Manichaeans and Bardaisan. In the Bardesanian tradition we certainly have an alternate reception of light between the sun and the moon: it must be admitted, however, that the Ode does not exactly say this. It says that the sun and the night receive from one another. Probably the night has displaced the moon in the sentence, ’the treasury of the darkness is the night’. If this should be contested we shall have to resort to emendation in another direction, and instead of ’and their reception’ () we would read () ’and by their succession’, for which we can find abundant illustrations.

Expository Notes.

This Ode again belongs to the group of Wisdom-Odes; it is occupied with the praises of the Logos as the creative and providential instrument of God. All things were made by the Logos, and He was pre-existent before creation. The language is parallel to that of the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel, but it also shows coincidence with Colossians, and with Hebrews: thus verse 19 ’the worlds were made by His word’ is almost exactly Heb. i. 2, ’by whom also He made the worlds’; verse 18, ’He was before anything came into being’ is very nearly Col. i. 17, ’He is before everything’; and verse 18, ’There is nothing that is without the Lord’ (he clearly means the Logos), has its analogue in John i. 3, ’Without Him was not anything made that was made’. Evidently in this Ode we see the Logos-theology in its making. Some persons will, perhaps, object and say that we see it already made. But that raises the question as to what it was made out of, and takes us back to Prov. viii. 22 ff.

In verse 17 we showed in our Introduction that the language had possibly been borrowed by Bardaisan to illustrate a curious astronomical belief that the sun and moon exchanged illumination, the sun giving light to the moon when the latter is waxing and taking it back again when it is waning. There is a possibility, therefore, of literary dependence of Bardaisan on the Odes at this point. What is curious about the use of the passage is that the Ode does not say that the sun and moon receive one from the other, but something quite different, viz., that the day and night influence one another alternately, like a pair of closely matched powers, of which now one and now the other prevails. But he has the sun to rule the day without introducing the moon to rule the night. This is not in accordance with the book of Genesis. There is, then, room for a suspicion that the moon has been got rid of by the Odist or lost from his text. If we please, we may imagine that the text originally stood:

'The treasury of the Light is the Sun;

And the treasury of the darkness is the Moon;

And He made the Sun for the day that it might be bright,

But the night brings darkness over the face of the earth:

And their reception one from the other,' &c.

Agreeably, that is, at once with the book of Genesis and with Bardaisan.

We have interpreted the expression about 'reception one from the other' in accordance with the sense put upon the words by Ephrem and Bardaisan.

In the editio princeps the translation was offered, that

'their alternations one to the other speak the beauty of God.'

There is evidence for such a statement by way of parallel, if the translation itself could have been justified. For instance, Eusebius, arguing the evidence for design in the universe, and the consequent necessity for a pervading Logos, says that the world cannot be a chance product to the eyes of him who observes the alternate motions of day and night (ἡμέρας τε καὶ νυκτὸς ἀμοιβαίας ὀρῶντι κινήσεις). Probably the argument was something of a commonplace. In Victorinus's tract De fabrica mundi the work of the Creator in forming the sun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night was in order that day might bring on night (superduceret) as a place of rest for the labours of men, and then that day might again prevail, and thus by alternation (alterna vice) labour might be comforted by the rest of night, and rest again regulated by the exercise of the day'. It is natural that there should have been a stress laid upon the alternation of day and night. There is some parallelism between the language of Victorinus (based originally on Papias?) and the language of our Ode with regard to 'night bringing darkness over the face of the earth'.

In verse 17 we have made a slight emendation so as to bring out the dependence of the Odist on Ps. xviii. (xix.). 'The heavens are telling the glory of God'. The Odist is repeating what he said in verse 5:

'His spirit will utter in me The glory of the Lord and His beauty.'

Here 'His beauty' is an alternative term for 'His glory'. The Odist was contemplating the 'spacious firmament' on high when he said that; for in the next verse he is imitating Ps. viii.:

'Thou hast set thy glory upon thy heavens, When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers.'

Or as the Odist says (verse 6):

'The work of His hands And the fabric of His fingers.' Thus the Odist is working from these two Psalms and from the first chapter of Genesis. From this quarter also (the book of Genesis) comes the reference to God's resting from His works: the 12th verse is a reflex of Gen. ii. 8: 'He rested from all His work which God had created in the making'; notice the omission of the reference to the seventh day, and what follows as to the activity of the heavenly bodies on that day as well as on other days of the week.

In the editio princeps the case was stated as follows:

'On examining the Ode more closely we detect an unmistakable case of anti-Judaic polemic. The writer, after describing the beauty of creation, and the Lord's rest from His works, goes on to say something which shows that he does not mean to deduce the Jewish Sabbath from the statements in Genesis. "Created things run in their courses and do their works and know not how to stand or to be idle." Suppose we turn to Justin's Dialogue with Trypho, c. 22, where Justin is arguing with Trypho for the non-necessity of circumcision and the Sabbath; "I will declare to you, and to those who wish to become proselytes", says Justin, "a divine word, which I heard from the old man to whom I owe my conversion. He said, 'You observe that the heavenly bodies do not idle nor keep Sabbath. Remain, therefore, as you were born; do not keep Sabbath, nor practice circumcision'.

'It is clear, then, that the 16th Ode means to say that the Sabbath is not kept by the Heavenly bodies; and as it goes on to say, "and the (Heavenly) Hosts are subject to His word" it follows that God is regulating the motions of the world on the Sabbath days as well as on the week-days: a point which Justin expressly makes in c. 29, "God undertakes the regulation of the world on this day exactly as on other days".'

To this reasoning exception was taken by Harnack, on the ground that the Odist does not say with Justin οὐκ ἀργεῖ οὐδὲ σαββατίζει, consequently we are not to think of anti-Judaic polemic in the Ode, which is like the rest of the collection, Jewish in character.

Suppose we ask the question how an early Christian of the type of Justin Martyr would present his case against the Jew who pointed him to the law, and emphasized its unchangeability. We naturally turn to the early collections of Testimonies against the Jews, to pick up the counter-quotations and the rebutting arguments. Here is an instructive passage from the section which the Testimonies, ascribed to Gregory of Nyssa, devote to the Sabbath.

The writer enumerates a number of cases in which the Sabbath was broken historically, or cannot be literally kept in ordinary life; and then he asks this question: 'How is it that the Sun and Moon and Stars fulfil their appointed course even on the Sabbath?'

One might almost say that the Odist and the Testimony-collector had been in collusion, so close is their agreement; it is, therefore, useless to maintain that the Sabbath was not intended by the idleness or standing still of the creation.

The argument that the Ode is Jewish and therefore could not have been spoken in an anti-Sabbatic manner, or that the Ode, not having an anti-Sabbatic sentence, must be Jewish, hardly needs further consideration.

Ode 17.

1 I was crowned by my God;

And my crown is living:

2 And I was justified by my Lord;

And my salvation is incorruptible.

3 I was loosed from vanities,

And I am not condemned.

The choking bonds were cut off by His hand;

4 I received the face and the fashion of a new person;

And I walked in Him and was redeemed.

5 And the thought of truth led me;

And I walked after it and did not wander.

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(Christ speaks.)

6 And all that have seen me were amazed; And I was supposed by them to be a strange person.

7[a] And He who knew and brought me up, Is the Most High in all His perfection:

7[b] And He glorified me by His kindness, And raised my thought to the height of Truth.

8 And from thence He gave me the way of His steps; And I opened the doors that were closed:

9 And I broke in pieces the bars of iron: But my own iron (bonds) melted and dissolved before me.

10 And nothing appeared closed to me; Because I was the opening of everything.

11 And I went towards all the bondsmen to loose them; That I might not leave any man bound and binding;

12 And I imparted my knowledge without grudging; And their request to me with my love.

13 And I sowed my fruits in hearts, And transformed them through myself:

14 And they received my blessing and lived; And they were gathered to me and were saved.

15 Because they became to me as my own members; And I was their head.

(Doxology.)

16 Glory to thee our Head, the Lord Messiah. Hallelujah.

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Critical Notes.

v. 4. It seems clear that we must alter (’by her hands’) to (’by his hand’). The writer seems to have thought that he was emancipated ’by the thought of Truth’ (fem.) which follows in the next verse, and so added the feminine suffix.

v. 7. The Syriac sentence is difficult to understand, and in the text we have suggested that some words might have been lost after . In following H and in adding a yodh to we shall have the meaning ’But He who knew and brought me up is the Most High in all His perfection’. We could not safely take as an adjective and translate ’is high’; because, as is demonstrated by of the following line, it would have had the contracted form. Instead of ’and He is glorified’, B has ’and He glorified me’, forming possibly a parallel with above suggested. ’He brought me up and glorified me’. The parallelism would even be better preserved if, instead of we were to read ’and He exalted me’, with the simple addition of an alaph. The sense of the whole verse would be:

’But He who knew and exalted me, is the Most High in all His perfection; and He glorified me by His kindness,’ &c.

v. 8. There is no need to change into as Gunkel has done, and we do not understand the un-Syriac verb which Grimme substitutes for the natural ’He gave me’.

v. 9. Frankenberg proposes to change the particle into a form of verb derived from the verb , but Grimme substitutes for it the dative ’to me’, and considers the first as a dittographical error on the part of the copyist.

v. 12. The sense is very doubtful. The MS. has ’and my prayer’, ’request’, ’intercession’. In Syriac one may consider this as the beginning of a new sentence, and in adding the attributive verb which can be omitted we would translate ’And my prayer (for them?) (is or was) in my love’, which is not a good parallelism. We may also consider the word as a complement of ’and I gave’, and translate ’And I gave them my knowledge without grudging and my prayer (or intercession) (for them?) in my love’. In this last meaning ’in my love’

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refers to both members of parallelism, and the whole phrase means: In my love I gave them without grudging my knowledge and my intercession (or prayer). This last sense would be greatly improved, and all linguistic difficulty would vanish if were translated by ’consolation, comfort’, as in the Lewis text of Luke ii. 25, 100 (and he was waiting for the consolation of Israel’). The meaning of the sentence would in that case be ’In my love I gave them abundantly my knowledge and my comfort’.

v. 13. This sense is by no means certain. The indirect complement of the verb is always expressed with like the English ’to, into’, and the particle used here offers some difficulty. It is this difficulty which has no doubt caused Barth to translate ’und verwandelte sie durch mich’. It is not easy, however, to realize how the Odist would change ’through himself’. With the verb the is used to express the change of one thing for another, or an ’exchange’, and such a meaning would not suit the context very well. Possibly, therefore, we might read the verbs and in the third person, and in eliminating the waw before we should have the following text and translation:

: : .

’And my prayer, by my love, sowed my fruits in hearts, and transformed them through me.’

This is grammatically and lexicographically correct, and explains also the difficulties of the preceding note.

Expository Notes.

In this Ode we have again the coronation of the Odist spoken of, with a crown that does not wither, just as in the first Ode. Also there is some confession of a personal salvation. The latter part of the Ode, however, is certainly ex cre Christi; we can see this from the closing doxology to ’our head, the Lord Christ’, and the reference which precedes to the headship of Christ with regard to His members. Christ also is the speaker who describes himself as the ’door of everything’ and the universal XVII]

liberator, and the opener of closed doors. This takes us back to the beginning of verse 9. After this we are in difficulties over the delimitation of the speakers in verses 6-8. Comparison with similar situations in Ode xxviii. 8 and Ode xli. 8 makes it probable that the person who causes amazement and appears to be of another race is Christ Himself. On this account we have put the change of speakers between verses 5 and 6. The transition, however, is very awkward.

At first sight it might seem as if the reference to the 'breaking of bars of iron' in verse 9 had to do with the descent into Hades, but it is much more probable that the language is taken from the 107th Psalm:

the Peshitta version corresponding to which is

and agrees exactly with the Odes; the use of μοχλοί () shows that the Ode and the Peshitta transliterate the Greek of the Psalms.

If we have correctly defined the passage of Scripture which was in the Odist's mind, we can now go back to verse 4 with its obscure allusion to the cutting off of choking bonds: this is taken from verse 14 of the same Psalm, which runs in the Greek,

We may compare the Syriac of the Ode at this point with the Peshitta:

Ode xvii. 4:

The coincidence in the rendering of δεσμούς and διέρρηξεν is very striking, and raises once more the question of possible connexion between the Odes and the Syriac Old Testament.

We may, at all events, be sure that the Odist is working from this Psalm as a base, just as we found him doing in the case of the 21st Psalm. We are entitled to explore for further coincidences.

In verse 5 the Odist says that

'the thought of Truth led me, I walked after it and did not wander.' [XVII

This is imitated from the Psalm:

v. 4. 'They wandered in the wilderness

v. 7. And he led them by a right way To go to a city of Settlement.'

When the Odist says that he did not wander, he means that he did not wander again; a previous wandering is assumed as in the Psalm. And now let us compare the Ode again with the Peshitta version:

Ode xvii. 5:

Here we have a very curious coincidence: the ’right way’ is reflected on the Ode as a ’thought’ or ’counsel’ of ’Truth’; and in the Peshitta as a ’way of Truth’, with different words to express the ’Truth’.

Whatever may be the explanation of this coincidence in thought, we may be sure we have one of the keys in our hand for the interpretation of the Ode. To the three striking coincidences already noted, we may, perhaps, add the reference to the ’loosing of all bondsmen’ in verse 11, which answers to the 10th verse of the Psalm:

Notice also the way in which the reference to spiritual fruits and blessing in verses 13 and 14 has been grafted on verses 37, 38 of the Psalm:

Enough has been said to show the dependence of the Ode upon the Psalm.

In the introduction we pointed out that there were some striking parallels in this Ode to the Letter of Ignatius to the Philadelphians. We may also note the parallel (no doubt one of many similar ones) with the Epiphany Hymns of Ephrem:

’Ye have become children of the Holy Spirit,

(sc. through baptism):

Christ has become your head;

Ye have become members to Him.’—Hymn in Epiph. 9. 1.

Ephrem is imitating the 24th Ode at this point, and may have actually imitated the 17th also. We may also refer for the ’loosing of the bondmen’ to Ephrem, R. E. iii. 130.

Ode 18.

1 My heart was lifted up and enriched in the love of the Most High;

That I might praise Him by my name.

2 My members were strengthened That they might not fall from His power.

3 Sickness removed from my body, And it stood for the Lord by His will; For His Kingdom is firm.

4 O Lord, for the sake of them that are deficient, Do not deprive me of thy word:

5 Nor, for the sake of their works, Do thou restrain from me thy perfection.

6 Let not the luminary be conquered by the darkness; Nor let truth flee away from falsehood.

7 Let thy right hand bring our salvation to victory, And receive from all quarters, And preserve whomsoever is affected by ills.

8 Falsehood and Death are not in thy mouth, my God; But thy will is perfection.

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9 And vanity thou knowest not, For neither doth it know thee.

10 And error thou knowest not, For neither doth it know thee.

11 And ignorance appeared like dust, And like the scum of the sea:

12 And vain people supposed that it was (something) great; And they came to resemble it and became vain:

13 And the wise understood and meditated (thereon), And were unpolluted in their meditations; For such were in the mind of the Lord.

14 And they mocked at those who were walking in error:

15 And on their part they spake truth, From the inspiration which the Most High breathed into them.

(Doxology.)

16 Praise and great comeliness to His name. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. The Syriac can also be taken intransitively, 'my heart rose up and abounded in the love of the Most High'. Schulthess has suggested 'His name' instead of 'my name'; this is possible but not necessary. Still more unnecessary is its change into or or as as Bruston has suggested.

v. 3. Diettrich suggests 'His promise is firm'. The Syriac word is, however, very seldom used. Further, the idea of the Kingdom of God being firm is expressed in Ode xxii. 12.

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v. 3. B has 'and they stood for', referring to 'sicknesses'. H exhibits 'and it stood for', the subject being 'my body', which seems to be more appropriate.

v. 4. H has 'do not loose (lit. dissolve)'.

v. 7. Both MSS. have which we have changed into . The note to the printed text must be changed accordingly. The meaning of the sentence is not affected by the change. If the manuscripts are right, is to be considered as having been used expletively, as meaning possibly, 'as if'. The reader is asked to remember that the sentence 'all affected by ills' is complement of both and . This disposes of some unnecessary theories about this verse. Literally means 'to cling to evils (or) sufferings, (or) tribulations'.

v. 10. Connolly suggests that ought to be superseded by 'my God'. This is good, but not necessary, inasmuch as the use or this particle here adds energy to the sentence, like the corresponding Arabic 'It is because thou knowest not error, that it does not know thee'. B omits it entirely; and for that reason it is perhaps better not to take any notice of it in the translation.

v. 12. The expression 'they came to its resemblance; they came to resemble it' simply means, 'they resembled it' in Syriac. This peculiarity of style should be noted.

Expository Notes.
This is a very difficult Ode to interpret: we have not succeeded in finding any Scripture coincidences that could be depended upon. There is a quasi-parallel to the passage in the first chapter of John ('the darkness overcame it not'). It is equally difficult to detect the Christian elements in the Ode. Perhaps the writer is speaking as a Christian in the first verse ('that I might praise Him by my name', i. e. by the name of a Christian). In that case he should be a Christian of a universal

type, since he says that the Lord will ’receive men from all quarters’, verse 7). We repeat what was said of this Ode in the first edition:

’The writer of this Psalm speaks as a prophet, who has known the Divine visitation, and has felt its effect both on mind and body, in the dispelling of error and the healing of disease. He prays for a continuance of the Heavenly gift for the sake of the needy people to whom he gives his message. He has evidently been regarded by them as a light and foolish person, whose talk is like the foam of the sea. But there are others who are inspired like himself, and who mock at the unbelievers for their stupidity and ignorance. We catch the echo of some serious controversy upon religious matters, but the subject of the dispute is unknown.’

In verse 4 there appears to be a reflection of the 119th Psalm; we may compare:

’O Lord, for the sake of the deficient do not remove thy word from me.’

Ode xviii.

’Take not out of my mouth the word of truth utterly.’

Here the Ode says for ’word’, and the Syriac says ; but we notice that the Targum has .

In the same verse there is also a reference to Ps. li:

’Cast me not away from thy presence,

And take not thy Holy Spirit from me.’

The Nitrian MS. reads for , and this should be right; for the Syriac of Ps. li. 13 has

where the Targum has a different word.

Ode 19.

1 A cup of milk was offered to me;

And I drank it in the sweetness of the delight of the Lord.

2 The Son is the cup,

And He who was milked is the Father;

And He who milked Him is the Holy Spirit.

3 Because His breasts were full;

And it was not desirable that His milk should be spilt to no purpose.

4 And the Holy Spirit opened His bosom And mingled the milk of the two breasts of the Father,

5 And gave the mixture to the world without their knowing: And those who take (it) are in the fulness of the right hand.

6 The womb of the Virgin took (it) And she received conception and brought forth:

7 And the Virgin became a mother with great mercy; 8a And she travailed and brought forth a Son without incurring pain: 8b For it did not happen without purpose; 9 And she had not required a midwife, For He delivered her. 10 And she brought forth, as a man, by (God's) will: And she brought (Him) forth with demonstration And acquired (Him) with great dignity; 11 And loved (Him) in redemption; And guarded (Him) kindly; And showed (Him) in majesty. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 4. Both MSS. read 'her (i.e. the Holy Spirit's) bosom' under the influence of the preceding and following feminine verbs. We can easily read the masculine 'His (i.e. the Father's) bosom'.

v. 5. Grimme and Gressmann want 'to the worlds', cf. Odes vii. 11; viii. 23; xii. 4, 8; xvi. 19. The plural form of the following verb gives weight to their view, although, strictly speaking, grammatically it may refer also to used in the singular.

v. 6. Much has been written about the Syriac verb which prima facie does not seem to yield good sense. Barnes has suggested , which would answer to the problematic infirmatus est of Lactantius. The Syriac verb, however, is mostly used in the sense of 'to faint', 'to be exhausted from fatigue' or 'hunger'; moreover, even in accepting it in the sense of infirmatus est, the meaning of the sentence remains obscure. We think that the following should be accepted as a plausible interpretation. Taking the verb as used in the MSS., we can find in it a reduplicated root with an intransitive meaning of 'to be closed, restricted', and a concave root with a transitive meaning of 'to gather', 'to take furtively', 'to attract', 'to catch' (this last meaning is mostly used of fish). Generally speaking it is a tendency of our author to use a transitive verb without complement. The preceding verse of this Ode contains two such verbs, and . Following the same rule, we may take the verb in its concave form and translate: 'And those who take [it] (the mixture) are in the perfection of the right hand; the womb of the virgin caught [it], and conceived and brought forth'. Schulthess proposes tetigit uterum. This, however, would require other changes to make the Syriac correct. Labourt would suggest alas produxit, but besides the changes which the text would have to undergo to be grammatical, the Syriac verb is used of a bird (mostly a hen) sitting on its eggs (and seldom of its nestlings). Newbold's suggestion of 'they formed' is improbable. The opinion above vindicated is rightly upheld by Connolly, and grammatically and lexicographically there is little doubt that his translation is the right one. There is also reason to believe that the very verb was before the translator of the text of which Lactantius was availing himself; hence the incomprehensible infirmatus est derived from .

It will be seen from what precedes that we incline to believe that the correct explanation of the peculiar language of Lactantius lies in the fact that the reference made by Lactantius has come from a misunderstood Syriac text. The balance of the evidence is that way, now that we have shown that Lactantius was really giving an extract from a book of Testimonia. Hence there is no need to emend the text of Lactantius from 'infirmatus est uterus Virginis' to 'insinuatus est uterus Virginis', on the faith of the preceding sentence in which Lactantius says: 'Descendens itaque de caelo sanctus ille spiritus sanctam virginem cuius utero se insinuaret elegit.'

It is, however, not a little curious that in the Altercation of Simon and Theophilus, which is based throughout on the traditional Testimonia, the very same expression turns up in an introductory sentence on the Ascension of Christ:

'At illi qui nesciebant Christum verbo in virginem insinuatum, mirantes,' &c.—Altercatio, c. 25.

v. 8. In the text the number 8 ought to be placed before , if we take of the second member as only explicative, because in this case it has to be linked with some-

thing preceding it. Labourt's opinion that this particle has here the meaning of 'eo consilio ut' is inadmissible.

v. 9. The Syriac is curiously well worded, and the Odist seems almost to derive the verb 'to make live', to vivify, from 'midwife', called in Syriac 'the living one'. On this hypothesis, has certainly the meaning of 'to vivify' in the sense of to deliver a woman in travail; to facilitate her pains (cf. Exod. i. 16, 17). Generally the word is used in the Old Testament for the deliverance of children and not for that of their mother. The partisans of a Greek original might explain this happy sounding of words through a combination of and , but if the Odist had in mind, when using the verb , any idea of deliverance in the sense of salvation, as implied by of verse 11, the Syriac sentence would involve a mental conception and a play upon words which could be accounted for exclusively through a Syriac channel. Otherwise we should imagine a Greek original something like the following poetical form:

v. 10. It is not certain from the context whether the virgin brought forth a child 'by her own will' or 'by the will of God'. Strictly speaking, the Syriac 'by will' although frequently meaning 'by one's own will' leaves the question undecided. When the word is used without suffixes, it is an exaggeration to say that it is the natural and usual expression for 'by one's own will'. There is no linguistic reason, however, impeding us from translating it here 'by her own will'. The substantives used in the following lines with the prefix seem to refer to the Virgin, and if this be so, it is grammatically more correct to refer also to the same Virgin.

The Syriac construction induces us to believe that is to be translated by 'as if', or 'as it were a man', a rendering adopted by Labourt-Batiffol, the particle being used to mean a comparison with the reality and not the reality itself. 'As a man', or 'like a man' in the sense of 'courageously', would account for the uselessness of the midwife; but in the next verse it is stated that her Son, or more probably God Himself, took the place of a midwife. Further, this interpretation would be untenable in verses 10-11 where the word is almost certainly the object of all the Syriac verbs.

In the next line, the sentence translated by 'and she brought forth with demonstration' is not sufficiently clear. Linguistically, we might translate it by 'ostensibly': in this case we should have the following meaning:

'She brought forth, as it were a man by (her own) will and she brought (him) forth ostensibly.'

The translation 'en exemple' adopted by Labourt is not probable; we should have had . His suggestion that the word might have been (sic!) 'hilarity' is impossible. If is meant, the change would be very violent.

Another explanation has been offered for the words ’as a man’, which we shall refer to the Davidic Psalter as origin. It is suggested that instead of ’a man’, we should read ’a giant’: and there is something to be said for the suggestion.

Ephrem frequently speaks of the Virgin as bringing forth ’a giant’, e.g. in the Hymns on the Virgin:

’Mary bowed down and brought forth the giant of the worlds, the giant of the powers.’

: .

Ed. Lamy, ii. 553.

’The womb carried thee; the manger sufficed thee; Simeon carried thee, O giant God.’

.

Ed. Lamy, ii. 559.

’Like a child hast thou arisen from me: And like a giant hast thou become strong.’

.

Ed. Lamy, ii. 623.

The ultimate origin of the figure, if the emendation be correct, is Ps. xix. 6: ’as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, exulting like a giant,’ &c. (), or more probably Ps. lxxxvii. 5, which reads in the Peshitta Version: ’a giant man () was born in her, and He established her’.

v. 11. Instead of ’with salvation’, Gressmann proposes ’with administration’, and (by extension) ’with care’. If an emendation is to be introduced into the text, a choice between or ’by (divine) decree’ would be better Syriac.

For ’she guarded Him in kindness’, we should by a slight correction, reading , translate ’she crooned over Him affectionately’.

The confirmation comes from Ephrem:

’She loved Him and crooned over Him

When He began to cry, she rose and suckled Him, Loved Him tenderly, crooned over Him.’

:

.

Ed. Lamy, ii. 553.

'She carried Him, she crooned over Him, she embraced Him.'

.

Ed. Lamy, ii. 621.

'Since thou art my Son I will croon over thee; since I have become thy mother, I will honour thee.'

Ed. Lamy, ii. (ibid.).

If this emendation be accepted, it is likely that Ephrem will take us a step further. For in the first of the passages quoted (and elsewhere), Ephrem refers to the 'swaddling clothes' and the 'manger'.

Expository Notes.

This Ode is, in modern eyes, altogether grotesque, and out of harmony with the generally lofty strain of the rest of the collection. It is not surprising that it was supposed on the first discovery of the Odes to be a later addition. Unfortunately for this hypothesis it happens to be one of the best attested; it was not only quoted by Lactantius through the medium of a primitive collection of Testimonia, but, as we have shown in the Introduction, it was known to Eusebius and elsewhere. So there is no ground, in our present state of knowledge, for detaching it from the rest of the collection. It stood as Ode xix in the early source to which we have traced it.

There is a further reason for not detaching it from the rest of the collection. The first half of the Ode is a parable or allegory of the milk from the breasts of God. We have already had an allusion to the divine breasts in the eighth Ode, where the Lord says 'My own breasts I prepared for them that they might drink my holy milk and live thereby'. Something to the same effect is implied in Ode xxxv:

'He gave me milk, the dew of the Lord.'

So that if the 19th Ode is to be ejected, the eighth and the 35th will have to be expelled at the same time. Moreover, if the figures employed seem harsh and unnatural to us, they do not appear to have been so to the early Christians. Clement of Alexandria, in his Paedagogus (lib. i, c. 8, p. 124) has a long discussion of the milk with which Christ's babes are nourished. Our nourishment, he says, is the Divine Word, it is 'the milk of the Father, by which alone the babes are fed. Through the Word we have believed in God, to whose care-allowing breasts we have fled'. And again (p. 125) 'to the babes, who seek for the Word, the breasts of the Father's kindness supply the milk'. Thus Clement employs the figurative language of the Ode, while avoiding its crudity.

The two parts of the Ode, the milk-section and the section on the Virgin Birth, appear to be two separate compositions on the first examination: closer study shows them to be in sequence; and the mysterious verb with which the second part of the Ode opens, being in the feminine, takes as subject the 'Spirit', the subject of the previous sentence. So the two parts were connected by the author himself.

The second part of the Ode is really more perplexing than the first: the first is grotesque, without an evolution of ideas: it might easily have been produced at a single sitting; but the second part appears to present the doctrine of the Virgin Birth in a highly evolved form; as, for instance, Virgin Birth, plus painlessness, plus non-necessity of a midwife; this is the sort of thing that we come across in the Apocryphal Gospels of the Infancy. Can we really refer this kind of speculation to the borders of the first century?

One thing has emerged clearly from the study of the Odes. We have shown in the Introduction that the Odist was not working without a Scriptural base: he was operating on the text of the 22nd Psalm, when he was talking so fantastically about the non-necessity for a midwife, and about the Father acting as midwife. This use of the 22nd Psalm is very important. In the 28th Ode the very same Psalm is applied as predictive of Christ, so that we have one more link between the 19th Ode and the rest of the collection. And it is not merely Eusebius who discloses to us the meaning of the text 'Thou art He who didst draw me out of my Mother's womb', and who uses obstetric language. The text had a place in controversy; for, as soon as the Virgin Birth was conceded, a dispute arose as to the nature of the flesh of Christ, and Valentinus enunciated the heresy that the Lord passed through the Virgin as water through a tube, without taking substance from the Virgin. So when Tertullian comes to deal with Valentinus in his treatise De carne Christi, he produces this very verse from the 22nd Psalm, and comments upon it with a wealth of anatomical knowledge and obstetrical detail! He uses the strongest translation possible for ἐκσπάν, and says:

'Avulsisti me ex utero. Quid avellitur, nisi quod inhaeret,' &c.— De Carne Christi, c. 20, p. 322, ed. Rigalt.

11 The text in the Psalm had acquired a polemical value in the Valentinian controversy, but it was a text which Valentinus himself was assumed to accept. So what seems to us to be late may turn out to be very much older than it looks. As to the painless delivery, one can find parallels to that in pagan literature; the idea, at all events, is not a Christian invention. We have discussed this obstetric matter sufficiently in the Introduction; it remains to elucidate one or two remaining points.

In verse 10 we have some obscure and allusive matter in the words:

'She brought forth, as a man, of the Will.'

We have referred the last words, with some probability, to the Will of God, considering that the thought involved is parallel to that in the Western text of John i. 14; (’who was born . . . not of the will of man, but of God’).

For the words, ’as a man’, we must probably go to Dan. vii. 13, where ’one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven’; for this passage was very early interpreted of the Incarnation. Thus Justin, Dial. 76 says:

The language of Justin again recalls the terms of John i. 13.

The concluding sentences of the Ode are almost unintelligible, and without adequate motive. The conjecture in the editio princeps to read

’She loved him in his swaddling clothes’

was too violent a change to find acceptance; but there is something to be said for it. If we recall the natural hostility of the docetic mind to the Incarnation through a Virgin, and the objections of Marcionites and others to any natural birth at all as unworthy of the Son of God, we may, perhaps, be able to throw a ray of light on these concluding sentences. Thus Tertullian makes Marcion say:

’Indignum hoc Dei Filio.’

and he goes on to say:

’Dedigneris quod pannis dirigitur, quod unctionibus formatur, quod blanditiis desidetur.’—De carne Christi, c. 4.

Thus the last sentences of the Ode might be paraphrased:

’It was a great honour (not a dishonour) to have borne him: She loved him in his swaddling clothes, And watched over him with fondling, And exhibited him proudly.’

But this is not to be taken as criticism of the same order as the first part of this note. We concede the obscurity of the last clauses: but we have cleared up the difficulty of the Divine accoucheur. That is certainly from the 22nd Psalm.

The statement that the Virgin brought forth her Son without assistance is an early article of the Testimony Book, where it is deduced from Daniel ii. 45, the stone in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar having been cut out without hands (which is a supplementary inference to the identification of Christ with the Stone of the Scriptures). The term ’without hands’ (ἄνευ χειρῶν) appears to have been interpreted in two different ways, each of which was meant to emphasize the miracle of the birth: one way was to say that the Virgin had no consort, and so conceived without human co-operation; the other, that she had no woman’s help at the time of the birth.

Thus in the Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus, c. 114, we have the matter introduced as follows:

'Zacchaeus said: From what mountain was the stone cut out? Athanasius: The mountain means the Virgin Mary. And that is why it says without hands, because she begat (γεννήσαι) the Stone, i. e. the body (of Jesus), without human χειρουργία. For the prophet says: "Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream,"' &c.

Mr. Conybeare, writing in 1898, remarked on this passage that 'one is tempted to render "without surgical aid of man"', but finally decides for the alternative meaning, 'without man's assistance' and refers to Justin, Dial. 76. The passage in Athanasius and Zacchaeus is based upon a primitive Testimony; and as soon as we have found the key-passage in Daniel, the whole matter becomes clearer, and we see the meaning of the language in the Ode and of the parallel passage in Justin.

When the Ode says of a Virgin that 'She brought forth a Son without incurring pain, for it did not happen without purpose'; we may understand the words 'without purpose' (= κενῶς?) to mean, 'not without prediction on the part of the prophets', or 'independently of God's expressed will'. When it says:

'She had not required a midwife, For He delivered her',

that is in its ultimate origin a comment on ἄνευ χειρῶν. When it says, 'She brought forth, as a man, of (her own) will', we should understand 'as a man' to mean the 'one like a son of man' in Daniel, who comes on the clouds, and is presented to the Ancient of Days: and in that case the 'Will' is not the Virgin's, but the 'Will of God'.

Now turn to Justin, Dial. 76, where we find that the 'Stone cut out without hands' means that He is no work of man, but of the will of the God of the Universe who sends Him forth. The whole passage is interesting:

Both the Odist and Justin are operating on primitive Testimonies, which will be found also in the collections of Cyprian, Gregory Nyss., &c. In the case of Gregory Nyss. (c. 8) the explanation given is the same as in Justin:

'The Stone which is cut out without hand (ἄνευ χειρός) is the one who was begotten without human seed'.

In Cyprian, Test. ii. 17, the hands are explained as 'Manus concidentium', i. e. hands of stone-cutters, and there appears to be no immediate reference to the Virgin.

The reference to the Virgin is not, however, excluded: for when Irenaeus discusses the Testimonies which identify Christ with the Stone, he makes the same expansion as Cyprian, and then goes on to explain the ἄνευ χειρῶν, not of the absence of a

midwife, but of the non-cooperation of Joseph. The passage is very interesting, for the context shows that Irenaeus also is working from the Testimony Book:

'Propter hoc autem et Daniel praevidens eius adventum, lapidem sine manibus abscissum advenisse in hunc mundum. Hoc est enim quod sine manibus significabat, quod non operantibus humanis manibus, hoc est virorum illorum qui solent lapides caedere, in hunc mundum eius adventus erat, id est, non operante in eum Ioseph, sed sola Maria co-operante dispositioni. Hic enim lapis a terra et ex virtute et arte constat dei. Propter hoc autem et Esaias ait: sic dicit Dominus: Ecce ergo immitto in fundamenta Zion lapidem pretiosum, electum, summum angularem, honorificum: uti non ex voluntate viri, sed ex voluntate Dei, adventum eius qui secundum hominem est intelligamus.'—Iren. Haer. (iii, p. 217, Mass.).

The whole chapter is headed, Quid est apud Danielem lapis sine manibus excisus? There can be no doubt of the use of the Testimony Book in this section; the reason for turning to Daniel at this point is clear from the close of the previous chapter, in which it was stated that the Incarnation was not the will of man, but the will and work of God. Compare the following sentences with what has been just quoted:

'Sed quoniam inopinata salus hominibus inciperet fieri, Deo adiuvante, inopinatus et partus Virginis fiebat, Deo dante signum hoc, sed non homine operante illud.'

Here we take the words 'Deo adiuvante' to refer to the 'birth from the Virgin', the sense being the same as in the Ode:

'She did not need a midwife For He brought her to bear.'

It will not have escaped notice that all these references to a birth, not from man but from the will of God, are strongly supported by the Western text in John i. 13, where the will of man and the will of God are contrasted in the birth of Christ, 'who was born not of the will of man but (of the will) of God'. The thought of the 19th Ode and the ἄνευ χειρῶν of Daniel are behind the language of the Fourth Gospel.

The fantastic opening of this Ode will, perhaps, appear less fantastic and more in harmony with the rest of the collection if we keep two points before our minds: the first is the proved use of Sapiential matter by the Odist, for, as we have seen, Ode after Ode becomes intelligible as we examine the parallels in Proverbs and the other Sapiential books, as well as the proofs of the early Fathers that Jesus (or the Holy Spirit) was regarded as the Wisdom of God; the second point is the preference which the Odist shows for the symbol of 'milk' over that of 'wine', a preference so decided that it has sometimes led to the suspicion that the author was patronizing a milk-sacrament, like that of certain early heretics.

Let us then imagine that the Holy Spirit in this Ode is the Divine Wisdom, the Sophia of the Sapiential books. We shall hear her call clearly enough in the 33rd Ode, and

find proofs there and elsewhere that the Odist is borrowing from the eighth and ninth chapters of Proverbs.

In this latter chapter, Wisdom sends out an invitation to a feast, and in particular to a cup which she has mingled,

'She hath mingled her wine.

Come and drink of the wine which I have mingled.' where the LXX has the curious expansion,

and the 'cup' appears again in the following verse,

What the Odist has done is to lay emphasis on this 'cup', and at the same time to explain that it is a 'cup of milk': hence he begins:

'A cup of milk was offered to me.'

Now he is in difficulties; for the Scripture calls it a 'mixed cup'; and how can a cup of milk be a mixed cup? The solution is that the milk has been taken from the two 'care-allaying breasts of the Father', as Clement of Alexandria would say.

If this is the right line on which we are to find the origin of the allegory of the cup of milk, we might be obliged to allow for this Ode a Greek origin, in view of the fact that it is the Septuagint that lays special emphasis on 'the cup'. We should also, in that case, hesitate to change the reading of the MS. from

'The Holy Spirit opened her bosom,' for the LXX has an emphasis on the person of Wisdom who

'mingled into a cup her own wine',

where, if we read 'milk' for 'wine', we must also read 'her bosom' for 'his bosom'.

And why is the mixture given to the world without their knowing? We have the same difficulty in Ode xxx, again a Sapiential Ode, where the living water comes invisibly, and 'until it was set in the midst they did not know it'. The obvious parallel is John i. 10:

'He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.'

That is not far from the expression that

'the Holy Spirit gave the mixed cup to the world without their knowing.'

There seems to be a missing link to connect all these passages together somewhere in the Old Testament. From the fact that the Fourth Gospel interjects the words 'and the world was made by him', which is the Sapiential definition of Christ, we

should be disposed to look for the missing reference somewhere in the Sapiential books. We have not yet found it.

The emphasis on the cup which Wisdom mixes is due to the fact that the passage in Proverbs was a very early testimony, one of the proof-texts that Christ was the Wisdom of God. Thus in Cyp. Test. ii. 2 the passage is transcribed as in the LXX with

'miscuit in cratere . . . . . convocans . . ad craterem.'

The heading of the section, which is evidently a translation from Greek, is:

'Quod Sapientia Dei Christus, et de sacramento concarnationis eius et passionis et calicis et altaris et apostolorum qui missi praedicaverunt:'

Thus the 'cup' is a part of the primitive proof that Christ is the Wisdom of God.

If we are right in our explanation that the Odist substituted 'milk' for 'wine' in the sentence [XIX-XX

thus giving 'her own milk' for 'her own wine', we must recognize similar expressions in Ode viii:

'my own breasts I prepared for them that they might drink my own holy milk.'

This would bring Ode viii also into still closer connexion with Prov. ix. 2, and, as before, it would be the text of the LXX that furnishes the explanation of the emphatic ἑαυτῆς or ἐμαυτοῦ, or the text of an early Testimony Book.

With regard to the painlessness of the Divine Birth, it may be of interest to observe that in one striking passage at least Ephrem contests the belief, e. g. R. E. iii. 6: 'The First Born entered the womb and the Pure One suffered not: He descended and came forth with pains; and the Fair One was agitated over Him.'

Ode 20. I am a priest of the Lord; And to Him I do priestly service;

2 And to Him I offer the offering of His thought.

3 For His thought is not like (the thought of) the world, Nor (like the thought of) the flesh; Nor like them that serve carnally.

4 The offering of the Lord is righteousness; And purity of heart and lips,

5 Offer your reins (before Him) blamelessly; And let not thy heart do violence to heart; Nor thy soul do violence to soul.

6 Thou shalt not acquire a stranger . . .; Neither shalt thou seek to deal guilefully with thy neighbour; Neither shalt thou deprive him of the covering of his nakedness.

7 But put on the grace of the Lord without stint;

And come into His Paradise and make thee a garland from Cf. Gen. ii. 9 and His tree; Apoc. ii. 7.

8 And put it on thy head and be glad;

And recline on His rest;

9 And His glory shall go before thee;

And thou shalt receive of His kindness and His grace:

And thou shalt be fat in truth in the praise of His holiness.

(Doxology.)

10 Praise and honour to His name.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
vv. 1, 2. The Semitisms should be noted.

v. 6. This verse presents peculiar difficulties, and none of the proposals for its identification or interpretation appears to commend itself widely. We cannot, for instance, translate it as it stands:

'Thou shalt not acquire a stranger by the blood of thy soul.'

for this has no meaning: nor can we say that ? means 'in that he is what thou art'. We might possibly emend it to the form

and translate:

'Thou shalt not hate the stranger who is in thy own likeness.'

The changes required are not violent; and the meaning might be that of Exod. xxiii. 9, 'Thou knowest the soul of a stranger, for thou wast a stranger.'

If we maintain the reading of the MS. the expression suggests acquisition for a price (), and the question then is as to the price to be paid for the stranger. The suggestion in the editio princeps to read

'Thou shalt not acquire a stranger by the price of thy silver,' has been weakened by the discovery that the Nitrian MS. shows the very same text as Cod. H. This criticism applies, however, to most emendations that may be proposed. So we leave the matter with a margin of uncertainty. The verses which follow certainly find their parallel in the 22nd chapter of Exodus, where we meet with the prohibition of keeping a man's pledged garment after sundown.

Expository Notes.
This Ode has caused a good deal of difficulty both as to its text and as to its interpretation. In the fifth verse, both the extant MSS. read:

'Thou shalt not acquire a stranger by the blood of thy soul.'

The editio princeps suggested an emendation to this on the hypothesis that the word 'soul' had been accidentally repeated from the previous verse, and that we ought to read 'silver' instead of 'soul'; the sentence then runs with a microscopic change:

'Thou shalt not acquire a stranger by the price of thy silver.'

This would make excellent sense, and lead to the suggestion that the writer was an Essene, in harmony with the known prohibition of slave-holding amongst this austere sect.

The correction suggested was thought too violent by Flemming, who agreed, however, that 'by the blood of thy soul' should be corrected to 'by the price of thy soul', reading, that is, for .

To this Diettrich took further exception. There was, according to him, no need of change at all. It was merely a case of a wrongly divided word. The unintelligible was to be resolved into and , and translated: 'So that he is what thou thyself art,' or 'in that he is the same as thyself'; and Diettrich also endorsed the suggestion of an Essene prohibition of slavery. That was, we believe, the furthest point the discussion of the verse had reached textually, with any approach to probability.

Now let us see whether we can throw light upon this sentence in the Ode and upon the Ode generally from any other direction.

Recalling our observation of the way the Odist takes up a Scripture passage (say a Psalm), and works his own ideas into it and out of it, let us see if we can find his leading motive in the composition of the Ode.

Two directions suggest themselves to us; one was that of the first editor, who thought the Ode was inspired by the ethical prohibitions in Exod. xxii. 25, 26 against slavery, usury, and the retention of the pledged garment. The other we have marked on our margin that the inspiration comes from that very noble ethical outburst in the 58th chapter of Isaiah. The ninth verse of our Ode is, in fact, coloured by Isa. lviii. 8: we compare:

Ode xx. 9. 'His glory shall go before thee

And thou shalt receive of His kindness and His grace.'

The glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward.'

It is easy to see how the Odist has handled the text of the prophet.

The next question is whether he has made any further use of the text of his author, or if the reference is merely a casual reminiscence.

In the sixth verse the Odist says that one is not to deprive one's neighbour of the covering of his nakedness: this finds a good parallel in Isa. lviii. 7, as follows:

Ode xx. 6. 'Neither shalt thou deprive him of the covering of his nakedness.'

The previous sentence in the Ode says that we are not to deal guilefully with our neighbours. Now turn to Isa. lviii. 6, and we find the injunction to 'loose the bands of wickedness'; where the Peshitta version has

bands of guile.

the same root that we have in the Ode. This passage, then, is the origin of the sentence we have in the Ode, and the suspicion arises that the Odist has been working from a Syriac text. We can go one step further, for we notice the same word in verse 9 of the Prophet, where it apparently answers to the Greek ἄδικία. It is the Peshitta version that invites the parallel. Now turn back again to the Peshitta text in verse 7. We find the injunction 'that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh', in the form

i. e. 'and do not neglect the son of thy flesh.'

The expression 'son of thy own flesh' attracts our attention; if we write soul' for flesh, we have an expression which is very nearly the same in sense as the Odist's expression, 'He is what thy soul is'. So we suggest again that the Odist has been imitating the Syriac text of Isaiah; Isaiah has certainly been imitated elsewhere, which makes our conjecture probable. We can now remove the discontinuity in the writer's thought in passing from the sixth verse to the seventh. This discontinuity was recognized in the first edition in the words: 'then he leaves morals and is away in search of the honey-dew and the milk of Paradise. There glory waits the soul that enters into the Divine rest'. Even this discontinuity may have its motive; as we read on in the great chapter of Isaiah, we are told that 'the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul in dry places, and make strong thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden'. For 'garden' the LXX reads κῆπος, but the Peshitta says Paradise, and gives the clue to the language of the Odist:

'Come into Paradise and make thee a garland from its tree.'

Now we see the reason for the discontinuity of the Ode; or rather, the apparent discontinuity has disappeared. The Odist concludes with the promise:

'Thou shalt be flourishing (lit. fat) in truth in the praise of His holiness.'

The word for 'fat' in the Ode () is taken from the Peshitta rendering of Isaiah lviii. 11:

'and he shall satisfy thy soul with fatness.'

The case is not quite so conclusive as previous cases for the use of the Syriac, for the LXX has in the next sentence

'thy bones shall be made fat.'

On the whole, the argument appears to be decisive in favour of a Syriac original for this Ode. The structure of the Ode appears also to be disclosed.

This particular section of Isaiah was much used by primitive Christians in arguing against the Jews and their ritual: Barnabas, for instance, uses it in c. 3, where he is arguing for a new fast, having previously argued for a new sacrifice and a new law.

And it is clear that Barnabas is working from a collection of written Testimonies against the Jews. It is quite likely, since the Odist begins the 20th Ode with a statement of the kind of sacrifice that pleases God, that he also has been using Testimonia: in other words, the passage of Isaiah on which he worked need not have come immediately from the Peshitta. The doctrine of the 'new priesthood' is also in the Ode.

For a Syriac parallel which seems to be based directly upon this Ode we may take Ephrem, Hymni in S. Epiphan. iii. 12:

'The anointed priests used to offer the slaughtered bodies of beasts: you, resplendent anointed ones, your bodies are your offerings; the anointed Levites offered the reins of beasts, you are more resplendent than the Levites, and you have consecrated your hearts.'

We note, in conclusion, that the opening verse of the Ode contains two strong Aramaisms:

'a priest . . . . . I priest:' 'I sacrifice . . . . . the sacrifice.'

Such forms of speech are possible in Greek; they are at home in Syriac.

In the foregoing study of the influence upon the Odist of a famous passage in Isaiah, we note that the very same coincidences (or nearly the same) had been detected by Connolly in an article in the Journal of Theological Studies for July, 1913 (pp. 530-8). It is curious that the writer had used the coincidences to establish the exactly opposite conclusion to the one reached by ourselves, viz. that 'Greek is the original language of the Odes', a conclusion which was promptly challenged (though not very convincingly) by Dr. E. A. Abbott.

Connolly evades the force of the Odist's translation of 'garden' by 'Paradise' in harmony with the Peshitta rendering of Isaiah, and says 'that the Odist should put "Paradise" for "garden" is not surprising, for he devotes a whole Ode (xi) to Paradise'. We should have said that it was very striking that he should do so.

In dealing with the words 'thou shalt be fat', he takes the clause in the LXX for reference,

when he should have taken the previous clause: but he omits to notice that the words used for 'fat' in the Odes is certainly the Peshitta word in the passage in question, when it might easily have been any one out of a group of three or four possible words: that is, he ignores linguistic coincidence at the very point where coincidence counts. See also the further points to which we have referred. In passing from this point we may say that, while we quite agree with Connolly's criticism of Dr. Abbott's supposed Hebrew original for the Odes, we cannot agree with him that the Scriptural allusions of the Odes escape capture. He says (p. 535):

'It is unfortunate that—whether of set purpose or not we cannot say—the author has only too successfully disguised his Scriptural allusions. Sometimes the disguise is transparent enough, as when he says "as the eyes of a son to his father" (Ode xiv. 1): but though we can occasionally find the passage he is using, it is as a rule impossible to say whether he is working with any particular form of text.'

Exactly the opposite is the case, as we have shown by recovering a number of references to the Scripture (especially to the Psalms) and by indicating the particular version that is being followed.

The natural explanation of the Ode, as regards the priesthood which the author affirms in his opening sentence, is the spiritual explanation which is suggested in the first epistle of Peter, according to which the new race which follows Christ is also a new and royal priesthood. There is a residual possibility that the writer might have been a person of dignity in the church for which he composes his hymns, affirming his office towards God and against all other priesthoods, Jewish or pagan. As we have said, it may be doubted whether this is the simple and natural explanation; but in a theme so full of obscurities as the exegesis of the Odes one must fish all waters. It is something like the suggestion that the person who has the Lord on his head and has been thus crowned with a crown of truth, is the Apostle John, who, according to tradition, actually wore the high-priestly mitre and head-band with the Incommunicable Name. The question is raised whether such an explanation for St. John or some other one of the early Christian leaders, might not elucidate the interpretation of the Odes. For instance, the parallel with the passage in the Wisdom of Solomon, where Phinehas is said to bear the Divine magnificence 'upon the diadem of his head' (Sap. Sol. xviii. 24) would acquire fresh relevance. The reference for St. John similarly crowned is found in a fragment of Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, who, writing in the time of the Antonines, says that John 'became (or was) a priest wearing the πέτυλον, and a martyr and a teacher'. It is noteworthy that Polycrates does not call him a high priest, though Jerome, in translating the words of Polycrates, makes him xx-xxI]

say so. But Jerome may very well be correct in saying 'Pontifex eius', so far as the added pronoun is concerned. According to Eusebius, upon whose extract of Polycrates Jerome is working, the language of Polycrates is

Is it possible that αὐτοῦ has dropped from the text of Eusebius after ἱερεύς? It would make an excellent parallel to the opening of this 20th Ode, where the Odist begins by saying 'I am a priest of the Lord'. But Jerome may have added the pronoun on his own account. In the Ode, the priesthood is expressly set in antithesis to the carnal priesthoods of the old law, and the affirmation that one was God's priest would be a negation of 'God's high priest' elsewhere.

The supposition that the early Christian teachers did actually wear visible emblems, comparable to those of the cult from which they had their origin, has been much discussed: see Routh, Reliquiae, ii. 27, for the evidence of Epiphanius that St. James also wore the πέταλον, and an anonymous statement to the same effect for St. Mark. It is within the bounds of credibility that some such custom prevailed. It would not follow, even if we accepted Polycrates and his Ephesian tradition, that St. John is himself the Odist, or the person of whom the Odist is thinking. Polycrates might have applied the language of the Odes about 'priesthood' and πέταλον to his great predecessor.

We are not, however, in a position yet to abandon the ordinary reference of the Odes to the Christian believers generally.

Ode 21.

1 My arms I lifted up on high; Even to the grace of the Lord:

2 Because He had cast off my bonds from me; And my Helper had lifted me up to His grace and His salvation.

3 And I put off darkness, And clothed myself with light:

4 And my soul acquired members Free from sorrow, Or affliction or pain.

5 And increasingly helpful to me was the thought of the Lord; And His incorruptible fellowship.

6 And I was lifted up in the light, And I passed before Him;

Sap. Sol. vi. 19; cf. Ode xxxvi. 6; and Koran iii. 40.

7 And I became near to Him, Praising and confessing Him.

8 He made my heart overflow; and it was found in my mouth; And it shone upon my lips.

9 And upon my face the exultation of the Lord increased, And His praise likewise.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 8. Three hypotheses are possible in the translation of the sentence . It may either mean 'my heart ran over, or came forth', or 'I will make my heart run over, or come forth', or 'He made my heart run over or come forth'. Against the first translation we have the linguistic fact that when this verb is used in the form Aphel, it has always a transitive meaning and never an intransitive sense of 'he ran over, or came forth, gushed forth'. It is so used in Ode xxvi. 1. Against the second translation militates the fact that the sequence of the verbs would be impaired, for its rendering would then be, 'I will make my heart run over (or gush forth) and it was found in my mouth'. The future tense joined in the same phrase with the past tense is not very alluring linguistically. So far as the linguistic elements of the sentence are concerned, the only alternative left is to adopt the third XXI]

rendering 'He made my heart run over (or come forth) and it was found in my mouth and it shone upon my lips'. However unnatural the idea of God making a heart come to the mouth and shine upon the lips may seem to be, it is the genuine meaning of the Syriac text. If we were allowed to suppose that a word has disappeared from the text and that 'my heart' is the subject of the verb 'he made to run over' the object would be a dropped word or as in Psalm xlv. 1. In this hypothesis we should have the following sense, 'my heart eructavit (sc. a word), and it was found in my mouth and it shone upon my lips'.

Expository Notes.
In determining the meaning of this Ode our best plan will be to follow the method which has been so successful in previous Odes. Let us see if we can find the writer's literary model.

In the first place we notice a certain assonance running through the Ode. Compare:

- v. 1. 'My arms I lifted up:' - v. 2. 'My helper had lifted me up.' - v. 6. 'I was lifted up in His light.'

The repetition at once betrays the origin of the Psalm; it can be detected even in the English version:

'I will extol thee, O Lord, For thou hast lifted me up.'

Thus the 30th Psalm should be the key to the 21st Ode. Let us now see whether this assonance in the Ode is derived from the Hebrew, the Greek, the Targum, or the Syriac of the Psalm. In Hebrew the language is:

i. e. 'I will exalt thee, O Lord, for thou hast drawn me up (out of Sheol).' In the LXX, too, the words are different:

'I will exalt thee, O Lord, for thou camest to my help.'

The Targum also shows two different words.

Now turn to the Syriac, and we find:

11 where we find the very assonance that the Odist has imitated. He was working, then, on the Syriac Psalter.

In verse 3 the Odist says that 'he has put off darkness and clothed himself with light'; this is a paraphrase for verse 11 of the Psalm:

'thou hast loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness';

the Odist turns the 'sackcloth' to mean 'darkness'; ('as black as sackcloth of hair'): and 'gladness' naturally to be the 'body of light'. 'My Helper' () in verse 2 is related

to ’more exceedingly helpful’ in verse 5 (). The motive for it is in verse 10 of the Psalm:

’Hear, O Lord, have mercy upon me.

O Lord, be thou my helper ().’

’Praising and confessing Him’ (or giving thanks to Him), might be thought a merely conventional expression in verse 7; but we notice that the Psalm in the concluding verse of the Syriac version has:

’For this I will sing () praise () to Thee and not be silent:

O Lord God forever will I confess (or give thanks) to thee.’

Thus the condition of dependence of the Ode on the Psalm can be seen in its texture throughout.

There are still some obscure turns in the Ode. What does it mean that ’I passed before Him and became near to Him’? We shall find something like this in the 36th Ode, where Christ is said to be one of the Divine neighbours; but the present Ode can hardly be ex ore Christi? If the Ode expressed a baptismal experience, as Dr. Bernard would urge, we could compare the language of Cyril of Jerusalem:

Perhaps Cyril is quoting from the Ode before us. But perhaps also it is merely a reproduction of the language of Sap. Sol. 6. 19:

’Incorruption [sc. immortality] makes one near to God.’

The reference which precedes in the Ode to ’fellowship in incorruption’ (verse 5) or ’fellowship incorruptible’ should be noted. We must leave the matter for further investigation.

For an exact baptismal parallel we may take Ephrem, Hymns for xxi]

Epiphany, vii. 22, ’Cast off the darkness that is upon you. The secret darkness ye have cast off; from the water ye have clothed yourself with light.’ But as we have shown, Ephrem uses our Odes, and deliberately re-baptizes them.

The expression ’my heart ran over and was found in my mouth’ (verse 8) requires some explanation. It is evidently based on the opening words of the 45th Psalm, either in the Targum or in the related Peshitta Version.

The Targum has the same root which we have translated by ’ran over’, and so has the Syriac; we may set the sentence of the Ode side by side with the other two as follows:

Ode xxi. 8:

Targum (Ps. xlv. 2):

Peshitta (Ps. xlv. 2):

There can be no doubt, then, that the Odist is imitating the 45th Psalm; what has 'run over' is the 'good word', and this is what was 'found in the mouth'. The opening of the 45th Psalm, as is well known, is one of the proof passages for the doctrine of the Logos, and as such acquired great currency. The Odist, working from a Syriac original, indulges his fondness for paronomasia by contrasting the verb which is used in the Psalm (= eructavit) with a similar verb (= quaesivit); the word-play cannot be reproduced in any other language. It is clear that the Odist was working from the Syriac or Aramaic Psalter.

Looking more closely at the texts we see that the Targum has done something of the same kind. Instead of a root it has substituted which appears to require translation,

'My heart sought after a good word.'

It is in this direction, then, that we are to find the clue to the meaning of the Odist's words:

'My heart (ran over with) sc. a good word:

(sought after)

And it (the good word) was found in my mouth.'

Now that we have once again found out the canonical Psalm on which the Odist is working, we are in a position which is favourable for further

Y 2 investigation. For example, the 45th Psalm will find us the motive for the next clause:

'And it dawned upon my lips';

this comes from:

'grace is poured into thy lips.'

Nor is it to be neglected that this great Psalm, which the Christian tradition has, from the first, interpreted Messianically, is an epithalamium for King Solomon, and therefore peculiarly likely to be the subject of an Ode. When we come to the 26th Ode, the knowledge which we have acquired with regard to the composition of the 21st Ode in its closing verses, will help us to catch the motive of the opening verse in that Ode also. For we may regard the Syriac expression 'My heart poured out' ('eructavit cor meum') as a recognizable formula, just as we should recognize 'eructavit cor' if we came across it in Latin.

A conjecture may be offered as to the reason why the Targum substituted for the form with which our Odist seems to have been acquainted. May it not be that , in the sense of eructavit was vulgar and unsuited to public reading or recitation, and that for that reason a change was made to a closely related word? One often feels the vulgarity of the language in reading the 45th Psalm in Greek or Latin, or the 78th Psalm, with its similar opening

when quoted by the Gospel of Matthew (Mat. xiii. 35). The Targum does not, however, avoid the word where it occurs in Ps. lxxviii, and is certified by the Hebrew. On the other hand in this Psalm the Peshitta avoids the strong expression and says 'I will speak parables'. Evidently there was some trouble over .

Not only is the Psalm to which we refer a Salomonic Psalm, and on that account one that the Odist might naturally study, but it is also the Psalm from which the Early Church, or the early Messianic preachers, took one of the titles of the Messiah, the title of 'the Beloved'. And whoever first employed this title, it certainly acquired Christian connotation; it is employed in the New Testament and it occurs in the Odes. The Psalm is headed in the Septuagint

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a very striking headline, which brings 'Ode' and 'Solomon' very near together.

The Hebrew does not bring out 'the Beloved' quite as clearly; it says:

which we may render 'a song of loves' or 'epithalamium'; but a very slight change would restore 'Song of the Beloved' as in the LXX.

That the early Christians interpreted 'the Beloved' to be one of the titles of Jesus is certain. For example, Eusebius, c. Marcellum, says:

'This very one (sc. Christ) was the Beloved of God, as the title of the 44th (45th) Psalm discloses by its contents, viz.: An Ode for the Beloved.'

So also Euseb. D. E. iv. 15:

'Consider the matter more closely and see how according to the preface of the Psalm (Ps. xliv (xlv) ut sup.) he makes his discourse to open with the words concerning the Beloved.'

And in the same strain Eusebius speaks elsewhere.

Now this is not fourth-century theology; the Psalm in question is constantly appealed to by early Patristic writers. They could not have ignored its conventional heading.

Ode 22.

(Christ speaks.)

1 He who brings me down from on high;

And brings me up from the regions below;

2 And who gathers the things that are betwixt,

And throws them to me;

3 He who scattered my enemies

And my adversaries;

4 He who gave me authority over bonds,

That I might loose them;

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5 He that overthrew by my hands the dragon with seven heads, And set me at his roots that I might destroy his seed—

6 Thou wast there and didst help me; And in every place Thy name was round about me.

7 Thy right hand destroyed his wicked venom; And thy hand levelled the way for those who believe in thee;

8 And it chose them from the graves, And separated them from the dead.

9 It took dead bones, And covered them with bodies;

10 And they were motionless, And it gave (them) energy for life.

11 Thy way was without corruption and thy face; Thou didst bring thy world to corruption; That everything might be dissolved and renewed,

12 And that the foundation for everything might be thy rock; And on it thou didst build thy Kingdom; And thou becamest the dwelling-place of the saints. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 5. The MSS. have 'Thou hast set me at his roots', which is possible but not very grammatical. The copyists might have added the taw under the influence of the following verse. We have, therefore, suggested as a probable emendation . On the other hand, note that the Coptic text is against the emendation.

v. 10. We do not see why we should eliminate the waw before as Grimme has done.

v. 6. Schulthess suggests, as in the Coptic, the addition of 'with me'. The text, however, can do without the particle.

v. 7. B, has 'destroyed the poison of evil'.

vv. 8-10. Instead of the third person fem. sing., we can very well use the second person singular in verses 8-10; these two persons are distinguished one from another in the verbs employed in these verses only by a diversity of punctuation. The Coptic has used the second person.

Expository Notes.
We now come to one of the Odes which has become incorporated in the Pistis Sophia. Whatever hesitation we might have had as to the speaker in the previous Ode, we are confident that Christ Himself is the speaker in this Ode, and apparently Christ ascending from Hades. The opening sentence suggests Him that descended and ascended again; and the account of dead men taken from their graves and clothed again with flesh can hardly be anything else than the emancipation of the souls that are imprisoned in Hades. The Odist has no knowledge of a general resurrection (and in this respect, Bardaisan appears to have held the same view); but he has a belief in the immortality of the soul and the gift of God which is eternal life: and he has a strong doctrine of the Descent into Hades (see Ode xlii, for example).

It does not appear as if the Odist is deliberately working over a Psalm, as in previous cases. Where shall we find in a Psalm of the Old Testament a dragon with seven heads? We can, indeed, find a good reference in Psalm lxxiv. 13 'Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters', a passage which with the addition of the seven heads, and the expansion of the waters by the addition of Jordan or some equivalent term, is commonly referred by the Patristic writers to the waters of baptism, and the enemy who is exorcised therein. But can we find an early instance of this exegesis? Here are some late examples that we have noted: the Greek ritual for the Blessing of the Waters at the Festival of the Epiphany says: 'Thou didst sanctify the streams of Jordan by sending from Heaven thy Holy Spirit, and by breaking the heads of the dragons lurking there'.

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In a Homily ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus (tr. by Conybeare in Expositor for 1896, pp. 161 ff.) we find:

'Not any more let the race of men fear the craftiness and deceit of the serpent, because the Lord hath bruised the head of the dragon in the water of baptism.'

In the Armenian ritual for baptism (ed. Conybeare, p. 101) some manuscripts have:

'Thou, Lord, didst bruise the head of the dragon upon the waters. We humbly pray thee, look down upon this water, and send the gift of thy grace, and the benediction of the Jordan,' &c.

But here is something of an earlier date which bears upon the destruction of the poison of the serpent: Cyprian, in one of his epistles (Ep. 68, ed. Hartel, p. 764):

'diaboli nequitiam pertinacem ad aquam salutarem valere, in baptismo vero omne nequitiae suae virus amittere; quod exemplum cernimus in rege Pharaone.'

Here Pharaoh and the devil divide the honour of posing as the dragon: it is certainly curious that Cyprian's language 'nequitiae virus' should come so near to the 'wicked poison' of the Ode. The reference to Pharaoh is taken from Ezek. xxix. 3, 'Pharaoh, King of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers'.

So much for the baptismal gnosis of the fathers and the rituals.

Turning to the Ode, we recognize in the story of the raising of the dead from Sheol the influence of Ezekiel, ch. xxxvii. Now we begin to strike linguistic parallels: the Ode says: verse 9 '(thy right hand) took dead bones and spread bodies upon them' (). The Peshitta says: 'and I will spread skin upon you' (). Here the Odist has used the same root as is employed in the Peshitta and the Hebrew (Gk. ἐκτενῶ) to express the spreading of skin over a body, and he has used it for the bringing of flesh upon bones. It was not the right word to use, but he took it from his context, i. e. from the Hebrew or the Syriac. We take it that he was using a Syriac text of Ezekiel. The next sentence, 'and thou gavest them energy for life', represents the Syriac 'and I will give you spirit and you shall live': but the sentence has a Greek look, for stands for ἐνέργεια, and the word is actually preserved in the Coptic.

In verse 8 the sentence:

'Thou didst choose them from the graves, And separate them from the dead.'

is under the influence of verse 62:

'I will open your graves, And bring you up out of your graves';

but there is no preference for one version over the other.

The expression ’they were without motion’ () is obtained from the seventh verse of the prophecy, ’there was a moving’ (). The Greek σεισμός would not furnish the required parallel. On the whole, we suspect Syriac origin for the Ode, but the case is not nearly so strong nor so convincing as some which we had from the Psalms.

If we are right in recognizing the influence of Ezekiel in the middle of the Ode, it would seem to be either on account of the liberation of souls from Hades or of the raising of the dead generally. The Syriac Bible heads the chapter ’Resurrection of the dead’. Ephrem used it to describe the escape from Hades. In the Nisibene Hymns (37, 5) he speaks as follows:

’I saw in the valley that Ezekiel who quickened the dead when he was questioned; and I saw the bones that were in heaps, and they moved; There was a tumult of bones in Sheol, bone seeking for his fellow, and joint for her mate; . . . Unquestioned, the voice of Jesus, the Master of all creatures, quickened them.’

The Ode itself suggests the release from Hades in the words:

’He gave me authority over bonds, That I might loose them.’

We have not, however, been able to find the thread of the sequence of the Ode, either for the opening verses or its close.

The perplexity concerning the Dragon and his roots and his seed (verse 5) may perhaps be illuminated by a reference to the Greek Acts of John (ch. 98) where the Gnostic writer of the Acts refers to Σατανᾶς καὶ ἡ κατωτικὴ ῥίζα, which root he identifies with the nature of created things. There is no need to accept his Gnostic interpretation of the ’root’; the point for us is the existence of an expression like the ’root of Satan’; for Satan as the dragon compare Apocalypse xii. 9:

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Suppose we identify the Dragon with Satan and the Serpent in Genesis, as the Apocalypse suggests. We find that the Apocalypse also knows that the Dragon has seven heads. It is natural, then, to infer that we are dealing in some respects with an interpretation of the third chapter of Genesis (Gen. iii. 15). This, then, is the place where the reference to the ’seed’ comes from, that is to be destroyed; for,

’I will put enmity between . . . thy seed and her seed.’

The woman and her seed are to be at war with the devil and his brood.

The word which is used of the ’overthrow’ of the Dragon answers on the one hand to the repeated ἐβλήθη of the Apocalypse, and to συντρίψει of Romans xvi. 20; (Pesh.). As to the ’root’, it is probably a Syriac or Aramaic variation of (root) for ’heel’ of Genesis iii. 15.

If this is the right direction for the explanation of the Conflict with the Dragon in Ode xxii, we need not refer to the baptismal gnosis on the dragon in the midst of the waters, or the Patristic allusions to a dragon in the Jordan. There are no 'waters' in the curse on the serpent in Genesis. The allusions to the dragon in the baptismal rituals will belong to a later date, and to subsequent reflection.

The objection may be made that the dragon with seven heads ought not to be equated with the relatively terrorless snake in Genesis. The answer to this objection is (1) that the two are expressly identified in Apocalypse xii, (2) that the same variation between 'snake' and 'dragon' is found in Exodus iv, where it is noted by John Lightfoot as follows: 'Moses' rod at Sinai is said to be turned into "Nahash", a common or ordinary snake or serpent; but when he casts it down before Pharaoh, it becometh "Tanin", a serpent of the greatest dimensions, belike a crocodile.' So, if more evidence is wanted than that of the Apocalypse, let Exodus be offered.

In the same connexion Lightfoot offered a weighty illustration of the truth that the bruising of the serpent's head belongs to the Messiah, for, as he says, 'It is worth the observing, that Moses is commanded to "take it by the tail", for to meddle with the serpent's head belonged not to Moses, but to Christ, that spake to him out of the bush"! No doubt Christ, as the seed of the Woman, is peculiarly set apart for the conflict with the head of the dragon. Does not the study of the Ode show that Genesis iii was already interpreted Messianically in the days of the Odist?

To this there can hardly be any other than an affirmative answer, seeing that it is so interpreted in the Apocalypse. In the Odes, we have the seed of the Woman engaged in the destruction of the seed of the serpent; in the Apocalypse, we have the serpent plotting to destroy the residue of the seed of the Woman; the two interpretations are complementary. The seven heads of the dragon which are common to both of the interpretations belong to folklore rather than to Bible story: for this mythical creation ranges from Japan to the Scotch Highlands: its tale is told, as Professor Elliot Smith points out, in the 'Celtic Dragon Myth' of J. F. Campbell, as well as in the story of Herakles and the daughters of Hesperus: and it goes back to an original Octopus or devil-fish, which may well have been a terror to the inhabitants of the Levant or the Persian Gulf. That we have found the right meaning may be seen from Ephrem's Hymns to the Virgin (Lamy, ii. 606), where it is said that 'the boy trod on the cursed one and broke (the head of) the serpent, and cured Eve of the poison cast at her by the murderous dragon, who by his guile had overthrown her () in Sheol'.

In reading this Ode we must pay careful attention to the periphrases which the Odist employs to describe the Divine Nature and the Divine Action. In the compass of this single Ode there is a rich harvest of Targumisms; we have the 'hand of God', the 'name of God', the 'right hand of God', the 'face of God'. The Odist will not even say that 'God is round about him'; he says that 'thy name was all round

me everywhere'. He will not say that 'God is his rock'; he says 'Thy rock is the foundation of everything'. If we look at Psalm cxxv. 2, ('so the Lord is round about his people'), we shall find the origin of the Odist's language; the coincidence with the Syriac is very close:

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The Targumic variation on the part of the Odist is very clear. It is not the official Targum that is here drawn on: that interpreter proceeds to get rid of the doubtful 'circumference' of God, by saying that 'the Majesty of the Lord is round about his people'. The same phenomenon appears in the closing verse of the Ode: the Odist will not say 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place': he has, indeed, the expression and as in the Peshitta, but it is equated not with God, but with the Kingdom that is founded. The official Targum alters the language of the Psalm in another direction: 'O Lord' he says, 'thy dwelling is the place of thy Shekinah in the heavens'. The Odist is clearly an independent Targumist in his manner of glossing the text, but as regards the text itself, he appears to depend on the Peshitta.

Here is another curious point with regard to the circumlocution noted above, according to which the Odist does not speak of God as his Rock in the same way as the Psalter so commonly does, and in spite of his proved dependence upon the Psalter. The Peshitta version is in the same case: it never translates 'God my rock', or the 'Rock of my salvation'. It always either omits or paraphrases the reference to God as Rock. The natural explanation is furnished us by the Targum, which does the same thing in its own way, commonly substituting 'fortitude' or some non-material expression. It seems, then, that the Odist and the Peshitta version are both under Targumist influence; the Odist was not independent of the Peshitta, and was working, for the most part at all events, on that text as his base. He was evidently speaking in the name of Christ.

Ode 23.

1 Joy is of the saints!

And who shall put it on but they alone?

2 Grace is of the elect!

And who shall receive it but they who trust in it from the beginning?

3 Love is of the elect!

And who shall put it on, but those who have possessed it from the beginning?

4 Walk ye in the knowledge of the Most High;

And ye shall know the grace of the Lord without grudging; To His exultation and to the perfection of His knowledge.

5 And His thought was like a letter,

And His will descended from on high;

6 And it was sent like an arrow

Which is violently shot from the bow;

7 And many hands rushed to the letter,

To seize it and to take it and to read it.

8 And it escaped from their fingers,

And they were affrighted at it and at the seal that was on it.

9 For it was not permitted to them to loose the seal;

For the power that was over the seal was greater than they.

10 But those who saw it went after the letter,

That they might know where it would alight,

And who should read it,

And who should hear it.

11 But a wheel received it,

And (the letter) came over it;

12 And there was with it a sign

Of the kingdom and of the government.

13 And everything which was moving the wheel

It mowed and cut down;

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14 And it destroyed many things that were adverse; And it spanned the rivers:

15 And crossed over and rooted up many forests, And made a broad path.

16 The head went down to the feet; For down to the feet ran the wheel; And that which had come upon it.

17 The letter was one of recommendation; For there were included in it all districts:

18 And there was seen at its head, a head which was revealed Even the Son of Truth from the Most High Father;

19 And he inherited and took possession of everything; And the thought of the many was brought to naught,

20 And all the apostates became bold and fled away, And the persecutors became extinct and were blotted out.

21 And the letter became a great tablet, Which was wholly written by the finger of God;

22 And the name of the Father was upon it; And of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, To rule for ever and ever.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.

v. 5. The idea that the 'will of God' descended from heaven is very common in Syrian Fathers and Syriac breviaries: 'His will descended and inhabited with its servants' (Ephr. iii. 248, R. E.); 'His will descended for men' (Ephr. ibid., 249, &c.).

The expression that 'His Will descended from on High' is to be referred to the Incarnation, and the Lord is frequently referred to in the Nestorian rituals as the

'Invisible or Hidden Will'. Here are some extracts from Mar Abd 'Isho', which will illustrate the point.

'In a befitting way His Will descended towards men: He sent His Beloved, the Begotten of Himself, that is, His Express Image.'

'The Will of the Creator descended and united itself to the will of the creature: the Divine nature clothed itself with the human nature.'

'The Invisible Will came down, took a parsopa, and appeared openly, and thereby renewed that which was broken up.'

It is clear, then, that the Descent of the Will is another way of saying Incarnation. Probably the starting point for such a line of thought is Psalm xl. 5: 'Lo, I come: to do thy Will, O God.'

v. 13. The opinion of Bruston who suggests for is improbable.

v. 14. Both MSS. have ; and the note to the text must therefore be changed accordingly. As far as the meaning is concerned, the word does not differ from , of which it is only the relative adjective.

v. 16. Gressmann's suggestion that the verb 'he came down' is the fem. sing. of 'he rested', is not good in the context.

In the next line we remark that H has the singular ('foot' not 'feet').

For the belief that the head which went down to the feet represents the descent of the Divinity upon the Humanity of Jesus, we may find some support in the following glosses:

Melito, Clavis, 6. 1 'Caput Domini, ipsa Divinitas, eo quod principium et creator sit omnium rerum.'

In Daniele, ii. 21 'Pedes Domini homo assumptus a verbo vel sancti apostoli.' [XXIII

In Deuteronomio: 'Qui appropinquant pedibus eius accipient de doctrina illius.'

Et in Psalmo. 'Adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes eius.'

Eucherius, Liber Formularum (P. L. 50. 733 B): 'Sicut per caput divinitas, ita per pedes humanitas eius exprimitur: de qua humanitate in Exodo scriptum erat.' (Exod. xxiv. 10.)

v. 18. H has , 'his (or its) head' as referring to the other head mentioned in verse 16. According to this MS., therefore, it would seem that another head had sprung forth upon the first head. For the second Barnes suggests , which, however, would render the sentence ungrammatical.

v. 20. The verb 'they dared', 'they became bold' has been changed by Barth into 'they were hurt', 'wounded', 'maimed', or 'they perished', and by Wellhausen into 'sie wurden zerstreut'; which verb is commonly used in Syriac in the sense of 'to squander possessions', 'to dilapidate'.

Expository Notes.

This Ode is the most difficult of all the hymns in the collection. It contains an account of a mysterious letter, shot from heaven like an arrow from a bow, sealed with a terrible seal, written with the finger of God, and inscribed with the name of the Trinity. No one, so far, has succeeded in breaking this seal; it is too strong for the critics.

The opening sentences of the Ode in which the Odist prepares for his special message are quite intelligible. They take us to the Wisdom of Solomon: in the third chapter we read as follows:

Sap. Sol. iii. 9.

And again:

Sap. Sol. iv 15.

This is the passage which has suggested to the Odist the refrain:

'Joy is of the saints: Grace is of the elect: Love is of the elect.'

and he goes on in the language of Wisdom

'Walk in the Knowledge of the Most High . . . . . to the perfection of Knowledge.'

So far we might classify the Ode as one of the Wisdom Odes, and as half-Gnostic. Now comes the mystery, for the preface is ended. Various explanations have been offered of the letter, and the wheel that comes over it, or on to which it comes. Some have compared the flying roll in Zechariah, some the mysterious letter in the Hymn of the Soul, or the letter carried by an eagle in the Baruch story: but the obscurity is undispelled, and we can only give the best translation that seems possible and offer a tentative elucidation.

There is an explanation suggested by the Syrian Fathers, and especially by St. Ephrem, that the mysterious letter is the message which Gabriel brought to the Virgin. As we have shown abundantly the acquaintance of Ephrem with the Odes, which he quotes and misquotes, understands and obscures, it will be proper to examine what he has to say on the subject of a letter from Heaven. In the Hymns on the Virgin, Ephrem says expressly that Gabriel brought with him a letter:

'He brought a letter which was sealed with the mystery hidden from the ages; and its contents were peace to the maiden and good hope to all the ages.'

(Ed. Lamy, ii. 593.)

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We get the same thought in the Oriental Breviary as follows:

'[God] sent a letter which He sealed with His essence, which has no beginning.'

'[Gabriel] entrusted to her [Mary] the letter which had been entrusted to him by the Father.'

'Gabriel was sent by the Father to Mary, he took a letter and descended. This letter contained a mystery hidden from the Ages.'

The Letter appears, then, to be something of a documentary character; for the Odist reminds us in concluding his story that it was written by the finger of God, like the Ten Commandments. Where shall we find a missing document that answers to the conditions? And what is the meaning of all the strife that is provoked by the Letter and its attendant Wheel? The only clue that seems worth following, as we have just seen, is the Syriac reference to the Salutation of the Virgin by the angel Gabriel, as being in the form of a letter. In that case, the Ode is a dramatic representation of the Incarnation. Let us see if there is any light thrown upon the Ode in this direction.

According to the Odist, the Letter was a great volume or tablet; 'tablet' is the best explanation for the Syriac word that is employed, in view of the parallel with the tables inscribed by the finger of God. When we write down the word 'a great tablet' we are confronted with Isaiah viii. 1, the prologue to the story of the Birth of the Messiah:

'Take thee a great tablet.'

No doubt, then, we are on the right track. The Hebrew and Peshitta texts use a different word, the former of necessity (for is of Greek origin), the latter because it imitates the Hebrew: the Targum has also a different word, which also means 'tablet'. The LXX prefers 'a roll of paper'. The language of the Odist appears to be independent of these possible sources, but his meaning is the same.

Isaiah continues with an injunction of the Lord to write on the tablet 'with the pen of a man'. This is the starting-point for the next statement of the Odist, that the Letter was altogether written by the finger of God.

He often works with antitheses of this kind, and appears to have thought that a human pen was not adequate to the mystery that he was unfolding. So far, we appear to be on the right track; it is the coming of Christ that is being described, and the Scripture is drawn upon that describes that coming.

Now we begin to see daylight in some other directions. The Will of God that descends from Heaven answers to another Scripture:

'Lo! I come,

In the volume of the book it is written of me . . .

To do thy will, O God.'—Ps. xl. 7, 8.

It may, then, be very properly said that 'His will descended from on High'.

Then, in the next place, it is probably from the fifth verse of the same Psalm:

'Thy thoughts which are to us-ward;'

that this Odist derives his expression:

'His thought was like a letter;'

the same word, , being used here by the Odist and the Peshitta version.

The third verse of the Psalm has also been drawn upon somewhat perversely, for the sentence really belongs to the previous verses:

'Many shall see it and shall fear.'

Accordingly the Odist has a rush of hands to seize the sealed letter, which escapes them, and they are frightened at the Letter and the terrible seal that was on it. (The Peshitta says, 'they shall see it and rejoice'.) The reason for the introduction of the seal takes us back to Isaiah viii. 16:

'Bind up the testimony,

Seal the law among my disciples.'

The Odist goes on to explain that the reason why the many who saw the letter went after it was in order that they might know where it would alight and who should read it. Here we have probably an echo of a controversy as to the place where the Messiah was to be born.

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We know the evangelical solution of the problem: but the Odist has his eye on the time when the problem was still unsolved.

The references to the Kingdom and the Government are easily made from the tablet of Isaiah, e. g.

Isa. ix. 7. 'The increase of His government, . . . the throne of David . . . and His Kingdom.'

So also the references to the Trinity, and to ’rule that is for ever and ever’, are all deducible from the same section, for ’of the increase of His government there shall be no end . . . from henceforth even for ever’. No reference to the New Testament is necessary.

There remains the mysterious ’wheel’ and the conflicts that are associated with it. All the rest of the Ode appears to be cleared up. How does the Wheel and its warfare come into the story of the Nativity? And who are the persecutors and the apostates?

Is it possible that Wheel stands for Angelic Being? There is some ground for this in Syriac. See the Thesaurus under . Examples might be multiplied.

The expression ’there was seen at its head the head which was revealed’, is an attempt to avoid saying something of an anthropomorphic character. Whenever we come across the expression with or without , we may expect to find traces of Targumism; for this is the way in which one avoids saying that God knows or that God sees. Say rather, it is revealed before Him, or it is seen before Him. The language of the Ode is then a periphrasis: it probably means that ’God was seen at the head of the letter, and the Son of Truth from the Father’, but this is what the Odist does not like to say even parabolically; so he produces a sentence in the style of the Targums.

Ode 24.

1 The Dove flew over the head of our Lord the Messiah, Because He was her head;

2 And she sang over Him, And her voice was heard:

3 And the inhabitants were afraid, And the sojourners trembled;

4 The birds took to flight, And all creeping things died in their holes.

5 And the abysses were opened and closed; And they were seeking for the Lord, like (women) in travail:

6 And He was not given to them for food Because He did not belong to them:

7 And the abysses were submerged in the submersion of the Lord: And they perished in the thought which they had existed in from the beginning.

8 For they travailed from the beginning, And the end of their travail was life.

9 And every one of them that was defective perished; For it was not permitted to them to make a defence for themselves that they might remain:

10 And the Lord destroyed the imaginations Of all them that had not the truth with them; H, over the Messiah.

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11 For they were defective in wisdom, They who were lifted up in their hearts.

12 And they were rejected, Because the truth was not with them.

13 For the Lord disclosed His way, And spread abroad His grace;

14 And those who understood it Know His holiness.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 3. This verse appears to have been derived from the song of Moses at the Red Sea, e. g. Exodus xv. 29 (Syr.):

'The peoples heard it and trembled. Then the chieftains of Edom () were afraid; and the strong men of Moab, shaking took hold of them; and the dwellers () of Canaan were all defeated.'

If this is a correct identification of the language, the Ode is in part an Ode of deliverance at the Red Sea; and the abysses in verses 5, 7 which are submerged, are to be sought for in the same song. Cf. verse 8:

'the abysses sunk down in the heart of the sea.'

v. 4. The expression means literally 'left its wings', and therefore can hardly be translated linguistically by 'dropped its wings'. The verb is used in Ode xxxiii. 3, and frequently by other writers, in the sense of 'to give freedom to an object in order to accomplish the function assigned to it with all its energy'. It is so used in the vulgar Syriac of our days. Following this sense the meaning of the sentence would be, 'Fowl flew swiftly'. This meaning is rendered necessary by B, which instead of has 'it (the dove) flew'. We could with difficulty evade this sense with the last reading, which seems preferable, corresponding as it does with of the first verse.

The opinion of Bruston, who regards the verb as a 'substantive': 'Un mal mortel le retenait', is very improbable.

v. 5. We think that the verb 'and they were closed', 'and they hid themselves', or 'they were hidden, covered' is good in the sentence, and we do not see why we should change it to 'and they looked', as Labourt has done.

Gressmann has suggested that instead of

v. 6. Cod. H omits before , which gives the sense, 'and no food was given to them'.

v. 7. This is the only meaning the Syriac sentence can have.

It is clear that the Odist wishes to say that when Christ was baptized something depressing happened in the lower world. The passage and its correct meaning was known to Ephrem Syrus, who in his Carmina Nisibena (35, p. 59) makes the devil say that 'when Christ was submerged in baptism, He broke away and swamped me'.

The Odist has the same thought in his mind in Ode xxxi, 2:

'The abysses were dissolved before the Lord:

Folly was submerged by the truth of the Lord.'

v. 9. Bruston erroneously reads for or and believes that the word stands for 'tablet'.

v. 12. The suggestion of Grimme, who regards all the second member of this verse as dittographical error, is not necessary.

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Expository Notes.

Another Ode thick with obscurity. Its opening describes the descent of the Spirit upon Christ at His baptism, and describes it in unorthodox language, by making the Spirit subordinate to the Son. We have shown how Ephrem corrects the Odist for his lapse from correct theology. It was suggested in the first edition that there was uncanonical matter involved in the account of the fluttering and singing dove. However that may be, the baptismal incident is soon ended, and we are apparently plunged into Hades along with Christ whom the abysses are expecting to devour. As Cyril of Jerusalem says:

'His body was made to bait death withal, to the end that the dragon, lying in wait to devour Him, might cast forth those whom he had already devoured.'—Catech., xii. 15.

This quaint belief, that Hades desired to devour and was compelled to disgorge, appears to have been a favourite conceit of the ancients. We shall find it again in Ode xlii. 11: 'Death cast me up and many along with me'; and it is dilated on at length by Ephrem in his Carmina Nisibena, e. g.

'I, Sheol, was fed upon the dead; yea, I feasted upon corpses: Elijah slew the prophets of Baal and gave them to me'; 'The righteous constrained me to devour, but Jesus has compelled me to disgorge.'

There seems to be some occult connexion of ideas between the baptism of Christ and the descent into Hades; what else does it mean when it says 'the abysses were submerged in the submersion of the Lord'?

Almost every sentence in this Ode is obscure, and we have failed to get completely into the Odist's world of ideas. Kleinert and Harris have suggested that there is some allusion to the Flood, especially in verse 4; but the arguments are not satisfactory nor conclusive.

v. 6. 'He was not given to them for food, because He did not belong to them.'

The meaning is brought out more clearly by a comment of Victorinus on Apocalypse xii. 4, where the seven-headed dragon tries to devour the seed of the woman. Victorinus (is he here quoting Papias, as in so many other cases?) says that:

'He who was not born of seed, owed nothing to death, therefore He could not devour Him, that is, detain Him in death,—for on the third day He rose again.'

As this reference of Victorinus, with its possible dependence on Papias, and its certain allusion to the dragon that would devour the seed of the woman in the Apocalypse (xii. 4), is of critical importance, we transcribe the Latin of Victorinus:

'Sed qui de semine natus non erat, nihil morti debebat, propter quod devorare eum non potuit, id est in morte detinere, nam tertia die resurrexit.' (P. L. v. 336, D.)

If this is based on Papias, it throws the Odist into the same current of beliefs with the millenarians who first expounded the Apocalypse. We have, however, found nothing eschatological or millenarian in the Odes. This suggests that the Odist is not a commentator on the Apocalypse, but that he shares certain Messianic ideas with the author of that book, as, for example, the fight between the dragon and the woman, and between his seed and her seed.

Is it possible that Victorinus (or Papias) may have drawn on the Odes?

Certainly there is another Ode whose meaning is much clearer after reading Victorinus. In the 31st Ode (v. 8) Christ is made to say:

'They made me a debtor,

(though I rose up):

Me, who had not been a debtor.'

If we take this to mean that Christ was made to pay the debt to death, which he could not really pay, and that He rose from the dead, we have the very meaning in the passage from Victorinus.

We see a further link between the Odist and the author of the Apocalypse: for Victorinus says that the dragon could not devour the Messiah, i. e. he could not hold Him in death. Thus the devouring of the man-child in the Apocalypse means the death of Christ, and the Odist says the same thing. He also believes that Death could not devour Him; He was no food for that abyss.

Ode 25.

1 I was rescued from my bonds; And unto thee, my God, I fled.

2 For thou wast the right hand of my salvation, And my helper.

3 Thou hast restrained them that rise up against me, And they were seen no more:

4 Because thy face was with me, Which saved me by thy grace.

5 But I was despised and rejected in the eyes of many: And I was in their eyes like lead;

6 And I acquired strength from thyself, And help.

7 Thou didst set me a lamp at my right hand and at my left, That in me there may be nothing that is not bright;

8 And I was covered with the covering of thy spirit; And I removed from me the raiment of skins.

9 For thy right hand lifted me up, And removed sickness from me.

10 And I became mighty in thy truth, And holy by thy righteousness;

11 And all my adversaries were afraid of me: And I became the Lord's by the name of the Lord:

12 And I was justified by His gentleness, And His rest is for ever and ever. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 2. The opinion of Labour, who thinks that instead of 'we should read is unnecessary. v. 5. like lead' is not a very happy image. Would it not be possible to suppose that it was the Biblical word 'like a lost, damned (man)' as in Ode xxviii. 9? Or does the Odist mean that Christ's enemies thought he had sunk like lead into the great abyss? Cf. Exodus xv. 10 'they sank like lead in the mighty waters'. v. 8. The verb may very well be understood in the second person, 'Thou hast taken off'; the Coptic has the first person. So is the case with of the next verse, which may be

taken as the third person feminine referring to ’thy right hand’, or as the second person singular referring to God. v. 10. Frankenberg proposes to read ’and strong’ for, which is possible. v. 11. The second line is wanting in the Coptic.

Expository Notes.
This Ode is of a much more intelligible structure than those which immediately precede. It appears to be a song of personal redemption and illumination. One or two verses have an appearance of being ex ore Christi. For example, in verse 5 one recognizes the refrain of ’despised and rejected’; and if we may make a slight correction in the Syriac and read ’instead of, we should have a parallel to I was in their eyes like a lost man’, in the 28th Ode (verse 9), where Christ says

’I seemed to them as one of the lost.’

The objection would be that the Coptic, as well as the Syriac, has ’lead’. But this objection is not final, as the texts in question are closely related. Moreover, we get the same refrain again in the 42nd Ode (verse 10), where Christ is certainly the speaker:

’I was not rejected, though I was reckoned to be so:

I did not perish, though they thought it of me.’

Evidently these Odes are by the same author, and they must be early, for they convey an impression of surprise at the recovery and resurrection of Jesus, which would not have been natural in times very long after the foundation of the Christian Church. It is not, however, easy to see how to refer this Ode generally to the mouth of Christ.

For the enemies who have been turned back, and who are seen no more, we have also parallels in the rest of the Odes. For instance, in Ode xlii. 5:

’all my persecutors are dead.’

Again in Ode xxiii. 20:

’The persecutors became extinct and were blotted out.’

Again in Ode xxii. 3:

’He scattered my enemies and my adversaries,’

followed as in Ode xlii by a descent into Hades.

If these sentences refer to Christ and his enemies and persecutors we may, perhaps, regard them as written during an interim peace of the early Church; but we are still in difficulty as to the division of the 25th Ode between the prophet and Christ.

In another direction, we are encompassed with interpreters' difficulties. The Ode appears to come from a Semitic hand; the writer is 'covered with the covering of thy Spirit'; and there is a Semitic play on words in verses 8, 9:

'I removed () from me the raiment of skins:

Thy right hand lifted me up ().

But, on the other hand, as we have shown in the Introduction, the writer concludes with a statement that he is a Christian justified by the kindness (χρηστότης) of God. This seems to require a Greek authorship.

The closing verse of the Ode has, in fact, been interpreted in the Introduction as covering a Greek play on the words χριστός and χρηστός, which is taken up in the reference to justification by the gentleness (χρηστότης) of the Lord. The argument is a very strong one, and thoroughly harmonious with an Antiochian origin for the Odes.

But there stands against it the strikingly Semitic language of the previous verses, such as

'covered with the covering of thy Spirit,' and especially the play on words involved in

'Thou didst remove () from me.'

'Thy right hand lifted me up ().'

It is not easy to reconcile the two points of view. If the Syriacisms are not to be got rid of, we must find some other method of dealing with the closing verse, or say that the writer was bilingual and thought in two languages. Perhaps there may be in the closing sentences a reference to Isaiah xliv. 5:

'One shall say, I am the Lord's,

And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob,' &c.

This would make a very good starting-point for the verse:

'I became the Lord's

By the Name of the Lord.'

v. 7. The key to this passage was suggested in the editio princeps, which adds a foot-note referring to Psalm cxxxii. 17. Apparently it was regarded as a case of the use of biblical language by an author who was familiar with the Psalms.

Now that we know more about the Odist's methods, we inquire whether he has the actual Psalm before him, and is making use of it.

The Odist goes on from the mention of the lamps to the right and to the left and discourses about the covering or enduement of the Spirit which he has received; when we turn to the Psalm we find two references to clothing adjacent to the verse which we are discussing: the previous verse says:

'I will clothe her priests with salvation;'

the following verse says:

'His enemies will I clothe with shame.'

Thus the Psalm furnished the suggestion for the 'covering' in the Ode.

In the ninth verse of the same Psalm we find again an allusion to the clothing of God's priests with righteousness. Suppose we now look for closer coincidences in language or ideas. Our guides are the Peshitta version and the related Targum.

The first thing we notice is that the Targum regards the Psalm as a prayer made by David over Solomon as the anointed or Messiah: thus in verse 10:

'Turn not away the face of Solomon thy Anointed.'

The Peshitta has a trace of the same identification, for it ends the seventeenth verse of the Psalm with

'I will make bright a lamp for his (sc. David's) anointed.'

This is very remarkable; it seems that Solomon has been interpreted as the Messiah of the Psalm, and equated with the Christ of the New Testament Then we notice that the allusion to the Odist's adversaries,

'All my adversaries were afraid of me,'

is derived from the closing verse of the Psalm,

'His enemies will I clothe with shame.'

So much for the transference of ideas: we now look for linguistic imitations and parallelisms. The Odist speaks of being covered with the covering of the Spirit: three times over the Targumist changes the word 'clothe' of the Hebrew into clothe with the clothings, verses 9, 17, 18: and note that the Odist has the same duplication and has also imitated the plural in the 'clothings of skin' which follow.

About the 'coats of skin' we may compare the Manichaean tenets as exposed by Ephrem (Mitchell, p. xxx). According to them the 'sons of Darkness' had skins; the father 'Darkness' became intoxicated and perverted the pure souls (cf. Odes xxxviii. 9-15 and xxxiii. 5-13, and xxi. 3). The work of God consisted in taking off the garments of 'skin-darkness' and replacing them with 'soul-light'. From p. lxviii (ibid.) we learn that the Manichaeans and Bardesanites believed that 'This

body with which we are clothed is of the same nature as the Darkness, and this soul which is in us is of the same nature as the Light'.

The Odist has the lamp of the Anointed set; but uses a different word from the Hebrew or Targum: the word which occurs in the Peshitta (= I will make to shine, I will kindle), is responsible for the clause:

'That in me there may be nothing that is not shining.'

()

For the lamp that shines, both the Targum and the Peshitta coincide in the form with the Odist. It seems, then, that there is some interdependence between the Odist and the Targum and the Peshitta Version. We need not be surprised at the prominence which this Psalm acquires in the Christian tradition. As a matter of fact, it is one of the first Messianic Psalms in the New Testament usage, and is quoted by St. Peter in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles: it contained the promise to David that from his seed one should sit on his throne. This Salomonic prediction is repeated by the earliest Christian fathers, and is a part of the public preaching of the Church. It is easy to see how Odes which affect to relate to Solomon, but which really refer to Christ, should have incorporated matter from the Psalm in question.

If we are correct in this interpretation, we may have to abandon the idea of a Greek play upon the name of Christ in the closing verse of the Ode. We will not do so too hastily, for there is some suspicion that the Odist, though writing in Aramaic, was also acquainted with Greek, and if so, the popular play upon χριστός and χρηστός may very well have occurred to him in discussing a Psalm whose theme was recognized to be the Messiah of the house of David.

It may be asked why the Odist in borrowing the lamp of the anointed has duplicated it, 'a lamp at my right hand, and a lamp at my left'. Possibly he remembered that the Law was spoken of as a lamp, e. g. Proverbs vi. 23:

'The commandment is a lamp and the law a light;'

and it may have occurred to him that there were two laws, the Old and the New, the Law and the Gospel. Thus he makes a duplication something like that in the nineteenth Ode, where milk is taken from the two breasts of the Father. This is a speculation, it is true, but not altogether a wild surmise. In any case, we appear to have found the Biblical origin of the lamp in the twenty-fifth Ode; and we may be satisfied that it has nothing to do with the late baptismal ritual, which Dr. Bernard assigns as its origin.

That the lamp at the right hand is the Law may be seen from the Targum on Psalm xlv. 10; for

’At thy right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir,’ we have

’The book of the law is ready at thy right hand and is written in the gold of Ophir.’

There seems to be a survival of this belief that the law stands at the right hand and the gospel at the left, in the custom which prevails in the Roman Catholic Mass of placing the book of the Gospels successively at the right and left hand of the officiating priest. It may also be said that the language is mystical, and is parallel to a prayer for illumination in Abū Ṭālib. I. 6.

’O God, give me light in my heart, . . . light in my flesh, light in my bones, light before me and light behind me, light at my right hand, light at my left hand, light above me, light beneath me. O God, augment my light and give me light and procure me light.’

It is permissible to punctuate the text so as to read ‘I set to myself a lamp’.

Ode 26.

1 I poured out praise to the Lord; For I am His:

2 And I will speak His holy song, For my heart is with Him.

3 For His Harp is in my hands, And the Odes of His Rest shall not be silent.

4 I will cry unto Him from my whole heart; I will praise and exalt Him with all my members.

5 For from the East and even to the West Is His praise:

6 And from the South and even to the North Is His confession:

7 And from the top of the hills to their utmost bound Is His perfection.

8 Who can write the Odes of the Lord, Or who read them!

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9 Or who can train his soul for life, That his soul may be saved?

10 Or who can rest on the Most High, That from His mouth he may speak?

11 Who is able to interpret the wonders of the Lord? For he who interprets would be dissolved, And that which was interpreted will remain.

12 For it suffices to know and to rest; For in the rest the singers stand;

13 Like a river which has an abundant fountain, And flows to the help of them that seek it. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. The opening reflects Psalm xlv. (xlv.) 1 in the Syriac, not only in the use of the verb , but in the sequence of a future tense to a past; 'I poured out', 'I will speak'. There is therefore no need to change the tense of the opening verse as Charles suggests.

v. 7. Frankenberg unnecessarily proposes to eliminate the corroborative Hé of .

vv. 8-10. We may translate this construction as optative:

'Oh! that one could write the Odes! Or read them! Oh! that,' &c.

v. 11. If meaning 'because' is separated by a particle from the noun, verb, or pronoun, the letter can be omitted, although its retention is preferable. In the present verse H has no before but B has it. In the text the note 'B ' must be changed accordingly to H '.

v. 13. The Ode here returns to its keynote ('I poured out'), with the reference to the 'abundant fountain' ().

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Expository Notes.

This beautiful song of praise is founded on various passages in the canonical Psalter and elsewhere; in particular, the Odist has in his mind the 107th Psalm in which the writer calls upon men to praise (ἐξομολογεῖσθαι, give thanks to) the Lord for his goodness; especially the redeemed are exhorted who have been gathered from the East and West and North and South. Accordingly the Odist says:

'From the East and even to the West

Is His praise:

From the South even to the North

The refrain of the 107th Psalm is in the words,

'Oh! that men would praise the Lord for His goodness:

And for His wonderful works to the children of men.'

This provokes the question on the part of the Odist:

'Who is able to write the Odes of the Lord?'

Who is able to interpret the wonders of the Lord?'

Gressmann has suggested that for □□□□□ □□□□ ('Psalms of the Lord') we should read □□□□□ □□□□ ('mirabilia domini'); we should thus have two slightly different translations of the 'wonderful works' of the Psalmist: so the Odist may have been working from the LXX (θαυμάσια) or translating the Hebrew text or its Targum. (The Peshitta appears to have omitted the word altogether.) In verse 24, however, where the word occurs again ('his wonders in the deep'), the Peshitta renders it by □□□□□ exactly as in verse 11 of the Ode.

In the concluding verses the Odist equates or couples together Knowledge and Rest; something of the same kind occurs in Clement of Alexandria (Paedagogus, i. 6, p. 115):

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This divine Rest is here described as a river with an abundant fountain by which the singers stand. It is the same as the plenteous fountain of the Lord in Ode xi, and we shall find it again in Ode xxx, where there is an invitation to 'rest by the fountain of the Lord', and those who drink therefrom find rest thereby. Thus these Odes are internally connected and have the same author.

Eusebius in his Theophania (Bk. i, c. 23) uses the same figure of the Word of God, the Logos, which is

'as a river flowing from an unlimited fountain . . . to those who were perishing.'

This is taken from his de laudibus Constantini (c. xii, p. 462, ed. Heinechen):

If we assume as suggested in the critical note that the passage in verses 8–10 is to be translated by a series of optatives, we must find a more harmonious translation of the words, 'He that could interpret would be dissolved'. Now there is no doubt that the refrain of the 107th Psalm which the Odist is imitating is optative: all the great English interpreters, except the Geneva translators, render it, 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, &c.' and so did the Coptic translators of the LXX. Amongst modern translators Wellhausen (in the Polychrome Bible) renders it:

'May they give thanks to J H V H for His goodness and for the wonders which he does for men.'

No doubt this is the right line for the translator; and the coincidence with the Odes in optative expression is very clear. To be consistent with the thought of the Odist we should then translate the concluding part of the optation as follows:

'O that one were able to interpret the wonders of the Lord! For though he who could interpret were to be dissolved, yet that which is interpreted would remain.'

We have seen that this Ode is, to a large extent, based on the Syriac of Psalm cvii; but the opening clauses which constitute the Odist's own prelude, are an imitation of the opening of the 45th Psalm, similar to what we came across in the 21st Ode.

The very first word betrays its origin: it is the equivalent of the Greek ἐξερεύξατο and its companion Latin eructavit. Only there is this variation from Ode xxi; the 'heart' is left to the next verse:

'I will speak His holy song, For my heart is with Him.'

Here we have two verses in the Ode made out of a single clause in the Psalter. The link between the two is the Peshitta version.

The expression

’I will speak His holy song’,

probably goes back to the Targum, where we find

’my heart pours out a good speech ()’,

where the Peshitta has , which does not as readily give the meaning of ’discourse’ though it is in the Odes one of the equivalents of the Greek ’Logos’.

Ode 27.

1 I expanded my hands: and I sanctified (them) to my Lord: For the expansion of my hands is His sign.

2 And my expansion Is the upright wood.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. Linguistically it is possible to translate 'and I sanctified (them) to the Lord', i. e. my hands; the pronoun in the case, , being frequently omitted by the writers of such sentences.

v. 3. In view of the unwarranted assertions of some scholars it is useful to remark (a) that the word 'wood' refers frequently in Syriac literature to the Cross, and (b) that this wood-cross is commonly compared with the wood-tree of Paradise, the one as being the source of death, and the other of life (see Ephrem, R. E. ii 13, &c.; Breviarium Chaldaicum, ii, p. ,□ &c.).

Expository Notes.
There can be no doubt that this Psalm is based upon the early Christian attitude in prayer, which was cruciform, and upon the habit of the early Christians of finding the Cross everywhere in the outward world; e. g. in the handle of the labourer's plough and in the mast and yards of the seaman's ship. The figurative language employed is characteristic of the second century and not unknown in the first. Justin Martyr, for instance, and Barnabas, see the Cross in the outspread arms of Moses in the battle against Amalek; and it is possible that our Nitrian MS. had this in mind in reading

'the extension of my hands is weary;'

the reading of the other MS. would require correction to ,□□□ for □□□ (extension) is masculine. We find the same figure in the Teaching of the Apostles as the sign of the Advent, perhaps the same as the sign of the Son of Man in Matthew.

Very nearly the same language as that of our little Ode is used to introduce the closing Ode of the collection, where it is not a mere repetition, but an integral part

of the Ode, as we shall see. So we note again the interdependence and unity of the separate elements of the collection.

Ode 28.

1 As the wings of doves over their nestlings, And the mouths of their nestlings towards their mouths; So also are the wings of the Spirit over my heart.

2 My heart is delighted and leaps up,

Like the babe who leaps up in the womb of his mother: Cf. Luke i. 44.

3 I believed; therefore I was at rest: For faithful is He in whom I have believed.

4[a] He has richly blessed me; And my head is with Him.

4[b] And the sword shall not divide me from Him, Nor the scimitar.

5 For I was ready before destruction came; And I have been set on His immortal pinions;

6 And deathless life embraced me And kissed me.

7 And from that (life) is the Spirit within me; And it cannot die, for it lives.

(Christ speaks.)

8 They who saw me marvelled at me, Because I was persecuted;

9 And they supposed that I was swallowed up; For I seemed to them as one of the lost.

10 But my oppression Became my salvation.

11 And I was their scorn, Because there was no wrath in me.

12 Because I did good to every man I was hated;

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13 And they come round me like mad dogs; Who ignorantly attack their masters.

14 For their thought is corrupt And their understanding perverted.

15 But I was carrying water in my right hand, And their bitterness I endured by my sweetness.

16 And I did not perish, for I was not their brother, Nor was my birth like theirs.

17 And they sought for my death and could not (accomplish it); For I was older than the memorial of them; And vainly did they cast lots against me.

18 And those who came after me Sought without cause to destroy the memorial of him who was before them.

19 For the thought of the Most High cannot be anticipated; And His heart is superior to all wisdom. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. H has the singular (’and the mouth’).

v. 15. Perhaps a half-verse has dropped and we should restore,

’I carried water in my right hand, That I might put out their flame;

()

And their bitterness I endured By my sweetness.’

For the antithesis in the last lines, cf. Aphrahat, i. 423, ’Sweetness overcomes bitterness.’ The text of the MS. is much better than the unnecessary emendations by Frankenberg of (which he considers meaningless) into , and of into .

v. 17. If we follow the reading of B and the margin of H, there is perhaps a parallel to the casting of lots over the Saviour’s raiment, but the contexts are not similar. In verse 18 we are near to the language of the 119th Psalm [Ps. cxviii. (cxix.) 161], but there is no special coincidence with the Peshitta.

v. 19. The contracted form of the manuscripts is much more forceful in the sentence than the absolute proposed by Diettrich and Grimme.

Expository Notes.
This Ode, opening with a similitude, belongs in that regard with Odes xiv-xvi: but it may also be grouped with those Odes in which Christ becomes the chief speaker, for here the change of personality can clearly be made out. At the eighth verse, and until the end of the Ode, we are listening to the poet-prophet who speaks for Christ and as Christ. Perhaps the last verse of all may be detached for a choral refrain. The parallel between the ’wings of doves’ and the ’wings of the Spirit’ arises from the symbolism of the Spirit as a dove. We may compare Bar Hebraeus, The Dove (introd.): ’The Dove abides in the East but the West is full of her. Her food is fire, and he who is crowned by her with wings will breathe forth flames from his mouth.’

There may be a cross-reference here to Ps. liv. (lv.). 7: 'O that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest'; for the Odist goes on, 'I believed, therefore I was at rest'.

It is comparatively easy to detect the Old Testament passages which are in the mind of the Odist: we have shown in the Introduction the use that is made of the verse

'They came round me like mad dogs

Who ignorantly attack their Master:'

and how it is quoted, from the Ode, by Eusebius and others; but it was also clear that the origin of the passage was to be sought in the 22nd Psalm:

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We may correct the reading of the manuscripts from 'their masters' to 'their Master', in accordance with the Patristic evidence; but the meaning can be deduced without any alteration of the text. The change had already been divined by Flemming and Labourt.

This recognition of the use of the 22nd Psalm carried with it the justification of the reading of the Nitrian MS. and the margin of the Rylands MS.:

'they cast lots against me.'

We can also see now the reason why in verse 15 the Odist says:

'Their bitterness I endured by my sweetness.'

The 'bitterness' comes from the companion Psalm (lxix. 22) where

'They gave me gall for my meat

And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.'

The Peshiṭṭa actually has 'bitterness' () in this passage.

The statement that 'those who saw me marvelled at me' (verse 8) with which Christ's address begins, occurs again in Ode xvii (again as the opening words of Christ); and in Ode xli (a similar opening); it is derived from the 71st Psalm:

Let us compare the language of the Ode with the Peshiṭṭa:

Ode xxviii. 8.

The agreement in the use of shows the dependence of the Odist upon the Peshiṭṭa.

In Ode xli. 8 the coincidence is equally exact, for here we have:

In Ode xvii another word is used.

The reference to the carrying of the water in one's right hand in verse 15 is explained above by the insertion of a conjectural clause,

'that I might put out their flame';

perhaps no explanation is necessary; the thing explains itself; the dogs were mad and would run away at the sight of water. Hydrophoria, if we may say so, was the natural cure for hydrophobia.

v. 4. This verse has been quoted to show the manner in which the Odist makes use of passages from the Scripture, notably from the Psalms: he takes what he wants and changes what he wishes. Thus the quotations are disguised, and are only recognized in the unaltered portions. Connolly uses this passage to prove a Greek original for the Odes; for in the LXX as well as in the quotation of the LXX in 2 Cor. iv. 13, we have

Now this διό is wanting in the Peshitta of the Psalm that is being imitated: so it is suggested that the Odist depends directly on the Septuagint and not on the Syriac version. There is, however, another possibility: the connecting particle may come from the Targum. A reference shows as follows:

so it seems that we are not obliged to relate the Odist to the Septuagint.

This does not mean that the Odist was unacquainted with the Septuagint; that is another matter.

In verses 16, 17, we have strong theological statements that the Christ is the Only-begotten (Monogenēs) and that he was miraculously born. Illustrations of these points will be found in our Introduction.

Ode 29.

1 The Lord is my hope:

In Him I shall not be confounded.

2 For according to His praise He made me,

And according to His goodness even so He gave unto me.

3 And according to His mercies He exalted me;

And according to His excellent beauty He set me on high.

4 And He brought me up out of the depths of Sheol;

And from the mouth of death He drew me.

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5 And I laid my enemies low;

And He justified me by His grace.

6 For I believed in the Lord’s Messiah;

And He appeared to me that He is the Lord.

7 And He showed me His sign,

And led me by His light;

8 And He gave me the rod of His power;

That I might subdue the imaginations of the people:

And to bring down the power of the men of might.

9 To make war by His Word;

And to take victory by His power.

10 And the Lord overthrew my enemy by His Word;

And he became like the stubble which the wind carries away. Ps. i. 4.

11 And I gave praise to the Most High;

Because He exalted His servant and the Son of His Ps. cxv. (cxvi.) 16. handmaid.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 5. Instead of 'and I have laid low', or 'Thou hast laid low', to put the verb in harmony with the context one might suggest 'And He laid low'.

v. 6. In the Syriac versions of the New Testament, and in Syriac literature in general, " has been sometimes used in the sense of 'I saw', 'I noticed', instead of 'He was seen by me', 'He appeared to me' (John ix. 11). This applies also to Ode xvii. 10. We could therefore translate here, 'And I saw that He was the Lord'.

vv. 8, 10. In these two verses the language is certainly borrowed from the Psalter; but, strange to say, in neither case is the phraseology that of [xxix

the Peshiṭṭa: one would have supposed that at least the first Psalm would have had its language imitated. It is to be noted, however, that Aphrahat quotes Psalm i. 4 with as in our Ode (ii. 117).

v. 10. Grimme believes that the word is a dittographical error of the copyist.

Expository Notes.
This Ode is more like a cento from the Psalter than an interpretation of a single Psalm, such as we have had several cases of.

The first verse is imitated from the opening verse of the 31st Psalm:

The closeness of the agreement with the Peshiṭṭa may be noted:

Ode xxx.

In verses 3, 4, we may, perhaps, see the influence of the 85th Psalm:

In that case we may take verse 7:

'He led me by His light.'

as dependent upon the 11th verse of the Psalm,

The eighth verse of the Ode is composite. The first clause:

'He gave me the rod of His power,'

is certainly based on Psalm cix. (cx.) 2, and Christ should be the speaker. For 'rod of power' the Ode has

while the Peshiṭṭa has:

The next clause is from the 33rd Psalm. We may compare the Ode and the Peshiṭṭa:

Ode xxix. 8:

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We cannot be quite sure about the dependence of the Ode on the Syriac Psalm from the coincidences, which appear to be natural.

The closing verse of the Ode may be due to the 116th Psalm (v. 7), or perhaps to the 85th Psalm:

The discrimination of the parts of the Ode in which Christ speaks is difficult. In some ways it looks more like a dialogue. Verses 6, 7 might be the poet's experience, verses 8-10 the Lord's, and the closing verse again the poet.

v. 7. The recognition of the fact that in this verse the Odist is under the influence of the 110th Psalm will help us to clear up some of the sentences which follow; twice we have a reference to the Word of God:

'To make war by His Word;' 'The Lord cast down my enemies by His Word.'

From these two clauses it is clear that the war at the instance of the Word has the consequence of victory by the one who orders the war to commence. But this is the opening verse of the Psalm, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make thy enemies the footstool of thy feet'.

Now turn to the Targum, and observe that in the opening verse the explanation is made, that the Lord said 'by His Word'. This is very interesting and important; it shows that the Word in our Ode is to have a capital letter: in the Syriac it is Melletha, and not in this case Pethgama; that is the word which finally takes its place in Syriac to express the Logos.

This appears finally to rule out the idea that Christ is the speaker in this part of the Ode: for the speaker who gets the rod of power and takes the victory, gets it from the Word and therefore is not himself the Word. It appears, then, that the 110th Psalm could be used to express the experience of a believer in Christ as well as of Christ Himself.

In the Targum the Word is represented by Memra; this is the first instance we have found of the appearance of the Memra in the history of the doctrine of the Logos.

Ode 30.

1 Fill ye water for yourselves from the living fountain of the Lord: For it has been opened to you:

2 And come all ye thirsty and take a draught; And rest by the fountain of the Lord.

3 For fair it is and pure; And it gives rest to the soul.

4 Much sweeter is its water than honey; And the honeycomb of bees is not to be compared with it.

5 For it flows from the lips of the Lord, And from the heart of the Lord is its name.

6 And it came unlimited and invisible; And until it was set in the midst they did not know it.

7 Blessed are they who have drunk therefrom; And rested thereby. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. The language of this verse, 'Fill yourselves water', for 'draw water' or 'get water' is decidedly Aramaic; we may compare Isa. xii. 3, 'ye shall draw water out of the wells of salvation'; here the Hebrew and the Greek suggest 'draw' but the Peshitta agrees with the language of the Ode: 'ye shall fill water'; thus the Aramaism is indisputable. The parallel adduced shows, however, that it would arise in translation. The same thing occurs in John iv. 7, where ἀντλησαι is rendered by 'fill,' in the Syriac versions.

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v. 4. Note that the writer, while using Biblical terms (Ps. xix. 11), does not follow the Peshitta, but may very well be interpreting the Hebrew (pleasant or sweet). v. 5. 'Its name' does not seem to offer a satisfactory meaning; it may perhaps be 'its overflow'.

Frankenberg has suggested that 'name' (ὄνομα) is a misunderstanding of νᾶμα, 'flow', 'stream': an excellent case for the defenders of the hypothesis of a Greek original.

v. 6. Connolly suggests that the Syriac word means simply 'the middle' without any meaning of 'in medio ponere', which is attached to τιθέναι, 'to publish, to bring forward openly'. If the phrase of the Odes seems to some critics to require such an interpretation, it is useful to remark that Syriac literature abounds in expressions such as or precisely in the sense of 'in medio ponere'; e. g. in Ephrem, (R. E. ii. 388, iii. 179, 192, &c.).

Expository Notes.

We have already alluded to this Ode as containing the same doctrine of the abundant fountain of the Lord as is found in other Odes (and, we may add, in the Epistle of Barnabas, v. supra). We also referred to the Ode as containing in itself a strong suggestion of a Greek original, if we were to accept Frankenberg's suggestion that in verse 5 ὄνομα has been misread for νᾶμα. We might illustrate the language from Theodoret (P. G. 80, 869).

The reference to the honey and the honeycomb in verse 3 takes us naturally to the 19th Psalm; there is, however, another possible source: in the Wisdom of Sirach, we have in the chapter on the Praise of Wisdom as follows:

And since the speech of Wisdom begins with the words:

'I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,' we have a good parallel to:

'It comes forth from the lips of the Lord.'

This would mean that the water is the knowledge of the Lord, as it is in the sixth Ode, and that the Odist has been studying this chapter of Sirach.

We have noticed above the Syriacism which is involved in the words with which the Ode opens, 'Fill ye water'; e.g. Isaiah xii. 3, 'and ye shall fill water with joy from the fountains of salvation'.

If the language of the Ode is that of a translator, it is good idiomatic translation.

It will be noticed that the coincidence between Ode xxx and Sirach xxiv is more clear when we translate literally, and instead of saying, as in the first rendering, 'It flows forth from the lips of the Lord', we say 'It comes forth' or 'it came forth'. This brings us very close to the language of Sirach. It may be noted in passing that the statement in Sirach, as in so many other cases, is an adaptation of the Hebrew in Prov. ii. 6:

'The Lord giveth Wisdom:

Out of His mouth (LXX ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ) cometh knowledge and understanding.'

This is what the Wisdom of Sirach meant by ’I came forth from the mouth of the Most High’; and this is what the Odist took from Sirach. It is abundantly clear that the flowing stream of which the Ode speaks is the Knowledge of the Lord, as it has been equally recognized in Ode vi.

We give special attention to Frankenberg’s emendation (νᾶμα for ὄνομα) in verse 5, because the parallelism of the verses seems to require a correction; moreover, since we have no evidence for an early Syriac text of Sirach, the claim is very strong for a Greek original and a Greek emendation. On the other hand, a Syriac emendation might be ventured, as above, and one which would have support in the existing Peshitta text of Sirach which Frankenberg’s emendation does not. Suppose that instead of (’His name’) we read (’its outflow’) this would answer to the Syriac

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’I pour out like the river (Jordan) my teaching.’ The corresponding Greek word is not νᾶμα but διῶρνξ. Evidently we must be on our guard against too rapid conclusions or generalizations. What we are certain of is the use by the Odist of the Sapiential books. We may, for instance, be as sure that he uses Sirach as we are certain that Sirach imitates Proverbs.

Ode 31.

1 The abysses were dissolved before the Lord; And darkness was destroyed by His appearance.

2[a] Error went astray And disappeared from Him,

2[b] And (as for) Falsehood, I gave it no path, And it was submerged by the truth of the Lord.

3 He opened His mouth and spake grace and joy; And He spake a new (song of) praise to His name.

4 And He lifted up His voice to the Most High, And offered to Him the sons that were in His hands.

5 And His face was justified; For thus His Holy Father had given to Him. (Christ speaks.)

6 Come forth, ye that have been afflicted, And receive joy.

7 And possess your souls by grace; And take to you immortal life, [XXXI

8 And they condemned me when I rose up; Me who had not been condemned.

9 And they divided my spoil, Though nothing was due to them.

10 But I endured and held my peace and was silent, That I might not be moved by them.

11 But I stood unshaken like a firm rock, That is beaten by the waves and endures.

12 And I bore their bitterness for humility's sake; That I might redeem my people and inherit it.

13 And that I might not make void the promises to the patriarchs To whom I was promised for the salvation of their seed. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 2. The second member of this verse is very difficult owing to a possible corrup-

tion of the text. As it stands in B it runs: 'Wickedness received immobility, and was submerged by the truth of the Lord'. The suffix , however, makes the Syriac wording very harsh and ungrammatical. For we have suggested

For which more generally means 'meanness', 'lowliness', we should, perhaps read as in Ode xi. 10. The 'run of error', 'evil', 'truth', &c., is a favourite metaphor of the Odist, see Odes xxxviii. 6, xviii. 6; but the change is, perhaps, somewhat violent.

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However this may be, a good meaning is given in H if we translate: 'And wickedness gave to it (to error) no path, and it was submerged by the truth of the Lord,' or 'And vanity (or falsehood), I gave to it immobility, and it was submerged by the truth of the Lord.' This meaning is grammatically good, and we can adopt it in the absence of a better one. In our note to the text: 'H (sic!)' is erroneous. The reading of H is contained in the text itself.

v. 6. Labourt suggests that instead of 'joy' we might read 'liberty'; this, however, is not necessary; the beginning of the verse is speaking of people in pain.

v. 8. More generally the verb means 'to condemn' (as culprit); the sense of making somebody debtor to a creditor is usually expressed in Syriac by means of a periphrase. That in this sentence the meaning of the verb refers probably to 'a condemnation' is borne out by the participle which is seldom found in the sense of a debtor in money; is used in this last sense, and is also commonly used in both senses of 'debtor' and 'culprit'. Notice in the text of the next line the Syriacism instead of ('they condemned me, him who . . .').

v. 9. The verb with a is always used in the sense of something being due to somebody; about this there is no doubt. It seems, therefore, as if there was a play on the different meanings of the verb as used in the preceding verse. If there is no such paronomasia, we maintain parallelism by translating 'debt' and 'debtor' throughout.

v. 12. There is no need to read with Grimme for .

v. 13. The rules laid down by the grammarians from the 11th century onwards to the effect that in the passive form we should redouble the of the Hamzed or assimilated verbs in the form is not much followed in the manuscripts. It is possible, therefore, that is used here by the scribe for . This is even the case in the old manuscripts for any other verb; e.g. the Lewis text has in Luke i. 4 for ; ibid., 16, 25, for , &c.

Expository Notes.

This Ode is somewhat like the 28th Ode in that it contains a selection of statements from the 22nd Psalm, for the most part expounded by

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Christ in His own person. The writer opens with a couple of introductory verses on Truth and Error; then he approaches the 22nd Psalm in the verse:

'I will declare thy name unto my brethren;

In the midst of the Church I will sing praise unto thee;'

This he reproduces as:

'He spake a new song of praise to His name.'—Ode xxxi. 4.

He follows this with a reference to the 'children that God had given Him'; this is exactly the sequence which we find (awkwardly introduced) in Hebrews ii. 13, where it comes as a quotation from Isaiah viii. 17, 18. The Odist is not quoting Hebrews, but the sources of Hebrews in a collection of Testimonia. The reference to God's gift of children is in the next verse:

'Thus His Holy Father had given Him.'

Very likely this is implied in the previous verse, if we follow the Nitrian MS., for here we have:

'The children who were by His hand,' i. e. the children given by God.

There is no doubt, then, that the Odist is working on the 22nd Psalm.

Christ now becomes the speaker, and his address is marked by further reference to the same Psalm; for instance, the words 'they divided my spoil', i. e. 'they despoiled me and divided the plunder', is an adaptation of the 18th verse of the Psalm:

'They divide my garments among them, they cast lots upon my vesture.'

In verse 12 the Odist repeats very nearly what he had said in Ode xxviii about 'bearing their bitterness', but the word for 'bearing' is now instead of . Apparently the Odist has changed the word; the origin of the 'bitterness' is, as we have shown, to be sought in the Psalm. The word endure should be noticed, because the writer emphasizes it, and because it occurs in the quotation which Barnabas makes of the last verse of the Ode.

Probably there are more loans from the Canonical Psalter to be traced.

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Ode 32.

1 To the blessed the joy is from their hearts, And light from Him that dwells in them;

2 And the Word from the Truth who is self-originate.

3 For He hath been strengthened by the Holy Power of the Most High,

And He is unperturbed for ever and ever.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 3. It is difficult to ascertain who is the 'unshakable' or 'unperturbed'. The pronoun can refer to 'the Word', or to 'the strength of the Most High', or to the 'Most High' Himself. The first meaning is, however, the more tempting. There is no necessity to read with Grimme in plural.

Expository Notes.
We have edited in the second verse in the singular, as expressing the Logos, for, as we have seen, the Odes use this term as well as to express it. The 'Word from the Truth' is possibly the equivalent for the 'True Word', and finds its parallel in Ode xii:

'The Mouth of the Lord is the True Word, And the door of His light.'

For, as the Odist explains, the saints have 'light from Him that dwells within'. This Ode belongs to the group of Wisdom-Odes or Logos-Odes, and so does the one that immediately follows.

Ode 33.

1 Grace again ran and left the Corruptor And came down upon him to bring him to naught:

2 And he made utter destruction from before him And devastated all his array:

3 And he stood on a lofty summit and cried aloud From one end of the earth to the other;

4 And drew to him all those who obeyed him: And he did not appear as an evil person;

5 But a perfect virgin stood Who was proclaiming and crying and saying:

(Wisdom speaks.)

6 O ye sons of men, return ye; And ye their daughters, come ye;

7 And leave the ways of that Corruptor, And draw near unto me;

8 And I will enter into you And bring you forth from destruction; And I will make you wise in the ways of truth.

9 Be not destroyed; Nor perish.

10 Hear ye me and be saved; For the grace of God I am telling among you:

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11 And by my means you shall be redeemed and become blessed:

I am your judge;

12 And they who have put me on shall not be injured:

But they shall possess incorruption in the new world.

13 My chosen ones have walked in me,

And my ways I will make known to them that seek me;

And I will make them to trust in my name.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. The verb is difficult to understand if we read the word ’corruption’ as we have punctuated it, and as it is in the manuscript. If we punctuate it we should have ’the corruptor’ (cf. Ode xxxviii. 9) with a sense appropriate to the context. This disposes of many theories involving the change of the verb into , , and , &c.

v. 2. The Semitism of ’he made utter destruction’ should be noted.

The expression ’to devastate one’s array, preparations, or possessions’ is frequent in Ephrem, see Mitchell’s edition, p. 5.

v. 4. Labour’s suggestion that the text should be ’and he did not appear to them as the head’, is not necessary.

v. 5. It is unnecessary to change ’virgin’ into ’in the generation’, as Grimme has suggested.

That the perfect Virgin is Wisdom (or Christ speaking as Sophia) may be seen by comparing the language with Proverbs i. 20, 21, or Proverbs viii. 1 sqq.

v. 8. ’I will make you wise in the ways of truth’. That Wisdom is here considered as Light may be inferred from the expression ’those who put me on shall not be injured’, where the language should be [xxxiii]

compared with Ode xxi. 3, ’I put off Darkness and clothed myself with Light’. We may also compare the ’Light of Truth’ in Ode xxxviii. 1.

Bardaisan is credited with a belief in a similar Virgin of Light, or Light-Virgin (see Mitchell, Discourses of Ephrem, p. 67).

v. 11. We have punctuated the word ’your judgement’; the manuscript has ’your judge’, which suits better the context. Connolly suggests ’your armour’, which is appropriate. Less probable is the hypothesis of Barth, who reads (yours).

v. 12. Grimme unnecessarily suggests the change of the text of the manuscript into and .

Expository Notes.
This Ode seems to begin abruptly and unintelligibly; we suggest that something has been lost at the opening. Apparently it is Christ who appears as Grace, and then as Divine Wisdom, in whose person He speaks from the sixth verse onwards, confuting the Corruptor mentioned in the preceding verses.

The key to the Ode lies in the Proverbs of Solomon, and especially in the eighth chapter. We may compare:

Ode xxxiii. 3. 'He stood on a lofty summit and cried aloud:'

Ode xxxiii. 5. 'A perfect Virgin stood proclaiming, and crying, and saying':

For on the lofty summits is Wisdom:

She standeth . . .

She saith . . .

Unto you, O men, I cry.' xxxiii]

Ode xxxiii. 6. 'O ye sons of men, return ye, And ye, their daughters, come ye.'

Ode xxxiii. 8. 'I will make you wise in the ways of truth.'

v. 11. 'By my means you shall be redeemed and become blessed':

Hear instruction and be wise.'

Thus one principal motive of the Ode is the invitation of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs, and with that Wisdom Christ is identified.

There are some unexplained allusions and unrecognized references, e. g. there is the 'Corruptor' who is twice referred to, who will turn up again in Ode xxxviii in just as perplexing a form.

Some further light on the obscurities that remain may probably be obtained by picking up the Sapiential clue. For example, in verse 7:

'Leave the ways of that corruptor and draw near unto me,'

we are very close to the language of Proverbs ix. 4:

'Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither,'

where the LXX says 'let him turn aside to me', but the Syriac has 'let him come unto me'.

Again, in the sixth verse of the same chapter of Proverbs we have:

'Leave off, ye foolish (or leave off foolishness) and live, And walk in the way of understanding;' where the LXX has for the first line

('Leave off Folly, that ye may reign for ever'),

and the Syriac has

'Cause to rest from your folly, and live.'

Evidently the Odist has personified Folly as the Corruptor; clearly also he has found Everlasting Life in Proverbs.

Ode 34.

Ephr. R.E. ii. 486.

1 There is no hard way where there is a simple heart; Nor is there any barrier where the thoughts are upright:

2 Nor is there any storm in the depth of the illuminated thought

3 The one who is surrounded on every side by open country, Is freed from doubts.

Moses Bar-Kepha (B.M. Add. 2121, f. 51 b).

4 The likeness of that which is below Is that which is above;

5 For everything is above; And below there is nothing, but it is believed to be by the ignorant.

6 Grace has been revealed for your salvation: Believe and live and be saved.

Hallelujah.

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Critical Notes.
v. 1. About the word 'simple', &c., Connolly has argued that it was not the notion of simplicity which was meant by the Odist, but that of 'generosity' underlying the Greek ἁπλοῦς; cf., however, the following sentence of Ephrem:

ii, 486 (R. E.)

'The way is plain to the simple.'

In the next line (with a Zakāf or a Pathāh on the Mīm) in the sense of 'fence, barrier, partition, obstacle to view', is catalogued in the Thesaurus on the authority of the Lexicographers, but unfortunately without any illustrations. The first illustration is this sentence of the Odes of Solomon. Gressmann has changed it, perhaps unnecessarily, into 'Sturz'.

v. 3. This meaning is given by a slight change of into , which would make the sentence grammatical and in harmony with the preceding verse, where it is spoken of hard ways, adversities, and tempests. In maintaining as Connolly does, we should be obliged to take the adjective as a substantive-subject, and the place which it occupies would then render the Syriac wording somewhat weak. The meaning, too, which it would give 'where the good is surrounded on all sides, there is in Him nothing divided', is not very clear. Labourt's suggestion that instead of we should read is not probable.

Expository Notes.
It is curious that this little Ode should have, as we have shown, Syrian attestation in two quarters, Ephrem and Moses Bar-Kepha.

It is quite unlike any other Ode and does not proceed from any Scriptural base. Only in the last verse the language of the New Testament appears, and the doctrine of salvation by faith and grace. For the rest, the writer asserts that it is possible to rise out of the apparent world into the real world, and that all hard things become easy when the soul itself is right.

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Ode 35.

1 The dew of the Lord distilled rest upon me, And a cloud of peace it caused to rise over my head;

2 That it might guard me continually;

And it became salvation to me:

3 Everybody was shaken and affrighted;

And there came forth from them a smoke and a judgement:

4 But I was keeping quiet in the ranks of the Lord;

More than shadow was He to me, and more than support:

5 And I was carried like a child by its mother;

Aud He gave me milk, the dew of the Lord.

6 And I grew great by His bounty:

And I rested in His perfection:

7 And I spread out my hands in the lifting up of my soul;

And I directed myself towards the Most High,

And I was redeemed with Him:

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. The verb [scribble] is commonly derived from ’shadow’ and means ’to overshadow’. The natural meaning of the sentence is therefore ’the dew of the Lord overshadowed me in quietness’. Here the Odist seems to derive it from [scribble] ’dew’, except if we suppose that he is purposely xxxv]

indulging in the uncommon theme of a dew giving shadow. On the one hand the word ’dew’, of the first line requires a verb implying the sense of rain, on the other

the word ’cloud’ of the second line may combine both meanings of shadow and rain, unless in verse 2 we should understand the sentence ’that it might guard me’ in the sense of warding off the heat of the sun from the Odist. The sense of ’dew’ appears also in verse 5, ’And he gave me milk, the dew of the Lord’: but verse 6, ’And I rested in his perfection’ might possibly imply the sense of ’shadow’. In verse 4 the manuscripts are at variance, for whereas H gives ’More than shadow was He to me’, B exhibits ’More than dew was He to me’. The Odist is possibly playing in all these verses on the two words and derived from a common root , perhaps related both to ’shadow’ and to ’dew’. This assonance seems to have pleased him so much that he thought it expedient to enhance it by the use of ’child’ in verse 5. On the whole, the natural sense of overshadowing is preferable in the first line.

v. 2. The expression ’it was to me for salvation’ is good idiomatic Syriac, but the rendering ’It became my salvation’ is preferable, for the expression is taken from Isaiah xii. 2, exactly as in the Targum, 2. Note that the twelfth chapter of Isaiah is familiar to our Odist (how could it fail to be, since it is so entirely in his manner?), and the opening sentence in the 30th Ode is imitated from it (’Fill ye water for yourselves from the living fountain of the Lord’). v. 3. Both manuscripts have ’smoke and judgement’. The meaning is very doubtful, and without violent change we are unable to find a better translation. Gunkel changes to ’and smell’. v. 4. We might probably read ’with the Word of the Lord’, instead of ’in the rank of the Lord’. The elimination of the letter is possibly due to a slip of the copyist.

Expository Notes.

This Ode appears to express in poetical language some peculiar spiritual experience. Some of the figures of previous Odes recur; there is the milk of God, and twice, if not three times, there is the dew of [XXXV

the Lord. No adequate explanation has yet been found of the Divine dew. It is a Biblical expression used in the prophet Isaiah to represent the grace that raises the dead; but this is the text of the LXX:

and this does not seem to apply to the present situation.

The solution of this Ode cannot be detached from that of the Ode which follows; for here also there is a ’cloud of dew’; here, too, some one speaks of becoming great according to the greatness of the Lord, and being anointed from His perfection. We shall see that the 36th Ode is probably spoken in the name of Christ; and if so, that should carry the 35th Ode to the same conclusion. But this does not seem to be likely, nor a very defensible position. Evidently there is something missing in the explanation.

We have seen that the Odist has been making word-play out of the assonance of ’to overshadow’, ’shadow’, ’dew’, and ’child’. We can probably find a motive for his word-play; ’the cloud of peace’ in verse 2 is parallel to the ’cloud of dew’ in the

next Ode; and the 'dew' is, in fact, alluded to in verse 1 of this Ode. But this 'cloud of dew' is taken from Isaiah xviii. 4:

'As a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest,'

where the Peshitta and the Targum supply us with the very expression which is in the Odes to which we refer. Thus the 'cloud of dew' is a shelter: now we understand why the Odist says, 'More than shelter he was to me'. But this is not all: there is a parallel passage of Isaiah which has been employed by the Odist. At the end of the fourth chapter of Isaiah we have the following statement:

'The Lord will create over the whole habitation of Mount Zion and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be spread as a canopy. And there shall be a pavilion for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a refuge, and for a covert from storm and rain.'—Isaiah iv. 5, 6, R. V.

Here we pick up fresh references to the covering from the heat, and we also see the reason for the allusion to the 'smoke' that came forth in verse 3. Suppose, then, we look at this passage of Isaiah in the Syriac xxxv-xxxvi]

version and in the Targum. We shall find the same assonance between the 'dew' and the 'shelter' which the Odist has been developing; and we shall also find the motive for the verse:

'More than shelter he was to me, And more than foundations.'

For the Targum reads:

'The Lord shall create over every sanctuary of Mount Zion, and over every place of the House of His Shekinah, a cloud of glory (); and it shall be shadowing () over him by day and thick darkness and glory as of a flame of fire by night; because more than the glory which () He said He would bring upon Him, the Shekinah shall be protecting Him with (its) protection: and upon Jerusalem there shall be the shelter of clouds to shelter over her by day,' &c.

It will be seen that the Odist has closely followed the language of Isaiah, imitating even such an expression as 'more than the glory', which is peculiar to the Targum. Here, then, we have a further key to the meaning of the Ode, and a further proof of the dependence of the Odist on the Targum.

Ode 36.

1 I rested on the Spirit of the Lord;

And (the Spirit) raised me on high:

2 And made me to stand on my feet in the high place of the Lord;

Before His perfection and His glory;

While I was praising (Him) by the composition of His odes.

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(Christ speaks)

3 (The Spirit) brought me forth before the face of the Lord. And although a Son of Man, I was named the Luminary, the Son of God:

4 While I was the most glorified among the glorious ones; And the greatest among the great ones.

5 For according to the greatness of the Most High, so she made me; And like His own newness He renewed me:

Koran iii. 40. Cf. Ode xxi. 7.

6 And He anointed me from His own perfection; And I became one of those that are near to Him;

7 And my mouth was opened like a cloud of dew; And my heart gushed out, as it were, a gush of righteousness;

8 And my access (to Him) was in peace: And I was established in the Spirit of Providence. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 3. In view of uncertainties it is safer to follow the reading of the manuscripts.

v. 5. It would be somewhat more grammatical to read with Grimme and refer the verb to the 'Lord' or 'God'. The manuscripts, however, in using the feminine form have referred it to the 'Spirit' of the Lord in verses 1, 2.

Expository Notes.
In this Ode we have assumed that after the usual preface of the poet who composes the Ode, the speaker is the Lord Christ. In that case, the Holy Spirit is the Mother of Jesus, and we actually find a xxxvi]

suggestion to that effect in an early heretical gospel attributed to the Ebionites. Equally doubtful, from an orthodox point of view, is the statement in verse 6 that Christ is one of the Divine neighbours; we have indicated on the margin the reference to the same title which has been preserved in the Kur'ān (), i. e. one of those who are near (to God).

A very slight change in verse 5 will rid us of the obscurity of such a phrase as the Divine newness; read:

'He (or she) made me glad with His own gladness';

this not only relieves the obscure sentence, but makes sequence with the following line,

'He anointed me,' &c.;

for this is the famous early Christian testimony, 'God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness', which is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 8) from Psalm xlv. 6, 7. Now this Psalm is an epithalamium composed for King Solomon; so that we have again in the Odes either Solomon himself or Christ as Solomon.

Justin Martyr, discussing this very Psalm, points out to Trypho that the Holy Spirit here calls Christ God as well as Christ, which agrees with what the Odist says in verse 3:

'Though a Son of Man, I was named Son of God.'

The proof was made (1) from the unction, (2) from the address to the anointed one as God. It is one of the oldest arguments from Scripture in the Christian theology.

If this should turn out to be a correct interpretation of the Ode, we shall have to admit that the name of Solomon attached to the Odes is something more than an outside, bookmaker's or bookseller's, label; it must be used in the internal interpretation of the Odes as Odes of Rest, for that is one of the root-meanings of Solomon's name, and he is supposed to have this name as being historically the man of peace. See what is said on this point in the following Ode.

v. 4. Special attention should be paid to this term (in vulgar Syriac), for it answers to the Targumic , which is the

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translation of Elohim when that word is taken in the plural and does not mean God.

For instance, in Genesis iii. 5, the serpent assures the woman that, if they eat of the forbidden fruit, they will be like the Great Ones who know good and evil. Such a writer, for instance, as our Odist would never interpret this passage of God Himself, whom he affirms not to know evil; probably this explanation was widely current; and it underlies the substitution of 'the Great Ones' for Elohim. As we have said, the point is an important one, for if it carries the sense of Elohim, for the expression in the Ode it shows that the person who is speaking in the Ode is not an ordinary human being.

v. 6. It would be interesting to determine more exactly the origin of the peculiar expression, 'One of those that are near to Him'. Is it possible that it is the Odist's adaptation of the phrase in Daniel?

'One like unto the Son of Man came to the Ancient of Days and they brought him near before Him.'—Dan. vii. 13.

Here we may compare the language of the Ode:

with

of the prophet, the Syriac version being almost identical with the Hebrew [Chaldee]. There is no reason why we should not recognize the Apocalyptic passage in Daniel as the origin of the language in the Ode; in each case it is the Son of Man who is referred to, for we have identified Christ as the Speaker in this Ode, and it is the Messiah that is the person who is brought near to the Highest in Daniel. Moreover, in this very Ode, the speaker has already denoted himself as

'The Son of Man, the Luminary, the Son of God.'

In this point of view, any suspicion of unorthodox leanings in the expression 'one of those that are near' disappears; the Odist is no more unorthodox than the Book of Daniel which he borrows.

This suggestion throws further light on the language of the Ode as well as on the Book of Daniel and its text. To begin with, we recognize in the Aramaic text of Daniel, which is the only text we possess for the major part of the book, the traces of a true Targum. Here, again, we have the expression 'before God' used as a substitute for 'God'. Instead xxxvi]

of 'they brought him near to the Most High', the text says, 'they brought him near before the Most High'. This is genuine Targum which has been substituted for a missing Hebrew text of Daniel in the major part of the book. We may recognize the same tendency in the Ode in verse 3, where the Christ is brought forth , which is a kind of double Targumism and may be itself an imitation of Daniel.

Again we have to recall that it is to this very language of Daniel that we had already referred the expression in Ode xix, where the Virgin 'brought forth, as it were a man', which we interpreted as the equivalent of 'one like to a son of man'.

We have, then, two distinct cases of Apocalyptic in the Odes. It was one of the things we should naturally have expected to find, if the Odes had been rightly assigned to the Eastern Church and to the first century (or even to the beginning of the second century). Here is the elusive factor, almost as clearly recognized as if it had been the Apocalypse of John that we were studying. The Odist tells us plainly that 'Jesus is the Son of Man in the visions of Daniel'. His sources of information are clearly Aramaic or Syriac, and not Greek. There is no possibility of dependence upon a Greek text.

Incidentally we shall raise again the question as to the speaker in Ode xxi. 6, 7, who says:

'I passed before Him and became near unto Him.'

The expression has a Targumist evasion in the words 'before Him' ('from before His face'); but the expression 'became near unto him' may here be called non-Targumic. 'Passed before Him' may be the Odist's imitation of the passage in Daniel which says that the Son of Man

'came () to the Ancient of Days.'

It may be admitted that the suggestion that Ode xxi as well as Ode xxxvi has traces of Daniel is not so convincing as in the case of the latter Ode. So we will leave the matter uncertain in the hope of further and future illumination.

The prophecy of the dominion given to the Son of Man in Daniel, ch. vii, was certainly in the original Book of Testimonies: Cyprian has it, and Gregory of Nyssa; and Justin quotes it frequently.

It may perhaps be asked what is the meaning of the title 'the

C C 2 Luminary', interjected between the terms 'Son of Man' and 'Son of God'. We are far away by this time from Dr. Bernard's explanation that it is the baptized person's description of himself: but this does not relieve us of the duty to find a better solution.

We suggest that this also comes from Daniel. In chap. ii. 23 Daniel praises God because He is the revealer of secrets, and because 'He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him'. A reference to the text shows that the rendering 'the light' () has been derived from a reader's correction. No doubt it was a sound correction, but the text says 'the luminary' (). So does the Syriac version presenting the very same peculiar form that has turned up in our Ode. It is, then, not an unnatural inference that the Odist worked on an uncorrected text of Daniel, and interpreted the 'Luminary' to be the Christ.

Ode 37.

1 I stretched out my hands to the Lord; And to the Most High I lifted my voice;

2 And I spake with the lips of my heart; And He heard me when my voice reached Him.

3 His Word came to me, And gave me the fruits of my labours:

4 And gave me rest by the grace of the Lord. Hallelujah.

Critical Note.

v. 2. The verb of the manuscripts is much better than proposed by Bruston (see Luke i. 44).

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Expository Notes.
At first sight this appears to be a Psalm of the simplest possible character, a brief story of prayer and of the answer to prayer. But there is more in it than appears on the first reading. The stretching out of the hands occurs in the 35th Ode, where we have

'I spread out my hands in the lifting up of my soul,'

and this must be connected in some way with

'I stretched out my hands to the Lord, And to the Lord I lifted up my voice.'

The variation is in the manner of the Odist, when dealing with a Biblical theme, and may equally happen when he is repeating his own formulae. Then we notice that this Ode is also one of the Odes of Rest, and in the 35th Ode, the sentence before the one just quoted is 'I rested in His perfection'. Thus there must be some connexion between the 35th Ode and the 37th. Let us see whether this reference to a 'rest in God' may not give us a clue to the meaning. Imagine that the reference is to Solomon as a man of rest. Then this 37th Ode will refer to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple. 'The King stood before the altar of God and spread forth his hands towards heaven and said' (2 Chron. vi. 12, 14). God's answer to

Solomon is in the words, ’the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said to him, I have heard thy prayer’. The Ode expresses this in the manner of a Targum:

’He heard me when my voice reached Him; His word came to me.’

and the statement, ’I have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice’ would answer to the Odist’s ’He gave me the fruit of my labours’.

Thus this Ode might be labelled an Ode of Solomon in a historical sense, without any need to introduce Christ as Solomon.

Supposing we accept this solution for Ode xxxvii, where it will apply very well, can we carry back a Solomonic interpretation into Ode xxxv or xxxvi? We will take the case of Ode xxxvi. Notice that there is a play on Solomon’s name in the last verse:

’My access to Him was in peace;’ ODES OF SOLOMON [xxxvii-xxxviii]

and the last half of the verse:

’I was established by the spirit of Providence.’

will correspond to 2 Chron. vii. 18:

’I will establish the throne of thy Kingdom as I covenanted with David thy father.’

There is another great Solomonic Psalm in the Psalter, the 72nd (’Give the king thy judgements, O God’). In this Psalm we are told that ’he shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth’. Perhaps it is these showers (’drops of dew’ in the Syriac Bible) that are responsible for the frequent reference to the ’dew of the Lord’ in the Odes.

That the origin of the description of Christ as ’the dew’ may, perhaps, be in the Psalm which we have referred to, can be seen from Eusebius, Theophania, Bk. I, c. 25:

’This is the common Saviour of all (sc. the Logos), on whose account this universal essence is productive and rejoices that it ever drinks from his dewdrops.’

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Ode 38.

1 I went up into the Light of Truth as into a chariot: And the Truth led me and brought me:

2 And carried me across hollows and gulfs, And from the cliffs and reefs it preserved me;

3 And became to me a Haven of Salvation; And set me on the arms of immortal life.

4 And it went with me and made me rest and suffered me not to err; Because it was and is the Truth;

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5 And I ran no risk because I walked with Him; And I made no error in anything, because I obeyed Him.

6 For Error fled away from Him: And would not meet Him:

7 But Truth was proceeding in the right way; And whatever I did not know He made clear to me:

8 All the drugs of Error and the plagues of death which are considered to be sweet (beverage).

9 And I saw the Destroyer of the Corruptor when the Bride who was being corrupted was adorned, Along with the Bridegroom who corrupts and is corrupted.

10 And I asked the Truth, Who are these? and He said to me: This is the Deceiver and the Error:

11 And they imitate the Beloved and His Bride: And they lead astray and corrupt the world.

12 And they invite many to the Banquet, And give them to drink of the wine of their intoxication;

13 And they make them vomit up their wisdom and intelligence; And they deprive them of understanding;

14[a] And then they leave them; And so these go about like madmen and corrupt;

14[b] Since they are without heart; And do not seek after it.

15 And I was made wise so as not to fall into the hands of the Deceiver;

And I congratulated myself that the Truth had gone with me;

16 And I was established and lived and was redeemed;

And my foundations were laid by the Lord;

For He planted me.

17 For He set the root:

And watered it and fixed it and blessed it:

And its fruits will be for ever.

18 It struck deep and sprang up and spread wide,

And it was full and was enlarged.

19 And the Lord alone was glorified,

In His planting and His husbandry:

20 In His care and in the blessing of His lips;

In the beautiful planting of His right hand.

21 And in the splendour of His planting,

And in the thought of His mind.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.

v. 1. In the text we have punctuated the word ’waves’, but it might be read as ’valleys’, ’ridges’, ’reefs’, ’ledges’, ’cliffs’, which gives a sense more in harmony with the rest of the Ode in which land is intended.

As for the word ’erroneously translated in the editio princeps, it is certain that it must be pointed and translated Haven’.

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v. 6. There is no need to change with Grimme into .

v. 8. Both manuscripts have ’sweetness’. Not seeing how torments might be considered as sweetness of death we have changed in the text the word into ’terror’ and we have omitted to place in the foot-note the reading of the manuscripts. The

former translations in following the order of words as found in the text were somewhat unintelligible: e. g.

'All the poisons of error and the plagues which are thought to be the sweetness of death.'

The translation which we have adopted above cannot do the slightest violence to the Syriac grammar, in which we are informed that the two terms of annexion are often separated (Mingana's Gram., No. 420).

In view of the difficulty arising out of the former translations Barth suggested the change of into . The change, apart from being too violent, cannot solve the problem of 'the torments of the sweetness of death'.

If we take in the sense of 'juice of fruits, liquor', we may see in it an underlying Greek οἰνόμελι like the corresponding . This sense would be in harmony with the rest of the Ode which deals with intoxication.

'Plagues of death' may be considered as a Semitism for 'deadly plagues'.

v. 9. The first member of this verse offers some difficulty; it means evidently 'the destroyer of the corruption', because 'the corruptor of the corruption' has no meaning in itself. The author is, therefore, playing on the two different meanings of the verb 'to destroy' and 'to corrupt'. The idea of destroying corruption is expressed again in Ode xxxiii. 1.

Here also it would perhaps be better to punctuate 'of the corruptor' to make it conform with of the end of the verse, and with what we have suggested in our note to Ode xxxiii. 1. Consequently there is no need to change with Grimme the sentence of the manuscripts into .

v. 17. with waw of the manuscripts is better Syriac than suggested by Grimme.

Expository Notes.

This Ode from its first verse is full of difficulties and obscurities. The Odist ascends a chariot, called the Light of Truth, and the Truth guides him through various dangers, by land and by sea, to a haven of salvation. This Psalm of Truth now becomes a Psalm of Truth and Error; the contrary natures of the two are exhibited, and then, by a sudden personification, Truth and Error acquire human forms, and we have before us what looks like a pair of heretical teachers, whose wiles the Odist considers himself lucky to have escaped. Then the Ode ends with praise for the skilful culture of the great husbandman, whose plant the Odist confesses himself to be.

All of this is very difficult to explain; are we dealing with real experience, or is it allegory? Are they real heretics that are being denounced? One reason for thinking

so lies in the fact that Ignatius of Antioch, in dealing with Antiochene and other contemporary heresy, uses language which is similar to that of the Odist: he says that these heretical teachers mingle error with truth, as poisoners or druggists put medicaments into honey-wine. See what has been said on this in the Introduction. Ignatius also calls these heretical teachers mad dogs who bite one unawares; and the Odist also says that they make men mad, and then the victims go about like mad 'men' to hurt other people. Possibly the word 'dogs' has dropped from the text of the Ode at this point.

We have discussed elsewhere (see p. 148) the possibility that the chariot in verse 1 may really be a ship, perhaps a misunderstood ὄχημα of a Greek text. This would argue a Greek original for the Ode; but this evidence for Greek originals has been steadily growing less in the course of our study of the collection, and even ὄχημα might require an explanatory word. This particular Ode has a Greek word κίνδυνος transliterated in it, but the word occurs not uncommonly in Syriac writers. It is certainly curious that the word turns up again in the very next Ode!

The only clear references to the Scripture are the allusion to the 43rd Psalm in verse 1:

'Send out thy light and thy truth. Let them lead me and let them bring me;' and the reference to the 107th Psalm:

'So he bringeth them to the haven where they would be.'

The suggestion was made by Professor Torrey of Yale that the words in the Ode

'It became to me a Haven of Salvation,'

were an Aramaic misunderstanding of 'brought me to the Haven'. If this could be established it would make the Scriptural parallel much closer.

If it were not for the fact that antiquity has been established for the Odes, both as regards individual compositions, and as a collection, we should have been tempted to regard this attack on the heretical teachers who make men mad, as a conventional Patristic attack on Mani and his followers the Manichaeans. Thus Eusebius (Theophania, Bk. IV, chap. 30) speaks of 'that madman of yesterday and of our own times, whose name became the titular badge of the Manichaean heresy'. And Cyril of Jerusalem (Cat. vi. 19): 'Thou must hate all heretics, but especially him who even in name is a maniac, who arose lately under the emperor Probus.' Eusebius plays on the same note in his History.

However, it is clear from Ignatius that heretics had been classed with mad dogs from a very early time. Mani is only a belated illustration.

Ode 39.

1 Mighty rivers are the power of the Lord; Which carry headlong Those that despise Him:

2 And entangle their paths, And sweep away their fords:

3 And carry off their bodies And destroy their souls.

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4 For they are more swift than lightning, And more rapid:

5 But those who cross them in faith Shall not be moved;

6 And those who walk on them without blemish Shall not be afraid.

7 For the sign in them is the Lord; And the sign becomes the way of those who cross in the name of the Lord.

8 Put on, therefore, the name of the Most High and know Him: And you shall cross without danger, While the rivers shall be subject to you.

9 The Lord has bridged them by His word; And He walked and crossed them on foot;

10 And His footsteps stand (firm) on the waters, and were not erased; They are as a beam that is firmly fixed.

11 And the waves were lifted up on this side and on that; And the footsteps of our Lord Messiah stand (firm),

12 And are not obliterated, And are not defaced.

13 And a way has been appointed for those who cross after Him, And for those who agree to the course of His faith; And who adore His name, Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 1. By an oversight the text has been pointed (’They die headlong’ or ’upside down’): but H has certainly pointed it ’they bring headlong’. We may compare

the description of the torrent in Ode vi. 8 which ’carries [away] the temple’. So the meaning of the verse is according to the manuscript, as we have put in the translation ’they carry them (the despisers) headlong’.

Newbold reads for and translates ’mighty rivers are the powers of the Lord’, which is possible.

Expository Notes.
In this Ode the writer speaks the experience of a traveller who is stopped on his way by the sudden rise of a rapid river, which becomes unfordable and is actually unbridged. The Lord, however, is as good as a ford or a bridge: his footprints are as secure to tread in, as if one had a firm beam on which to cross. The Ode is like a little sermon on the text, ’When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee’ (Isa. xliii. 2). Or perhaps it is Psalm lxxvii. 19, ’thy way is in the sea and thy paths in deep waters and thy footprints are not known’.

The description of the Lord’s walking on the waves reminds one of Galilee, but there are parallel expressions in the Old Testament.

We have suggested on the margin that the text of the Ode is under the influence of Amos v. 24 in the Syriac, the ’mighty rivers’ being parallel to the ’mighty torrent of righteousness’.

Ode 40.

1 As the honey distils from the comb of the bees, And the milk flows from the woman that loves her children, So also is my hope on thee, my God.

2 As the fountain gushes out its water, So my heart gushes out the praise of the Lord, And my lips utter praises to Him.

3 And my tongue is sweet in His intimate converse And my limbs are made fat by the sweetness of His Odes.

4 And my face is glad with His exultation; And my spirit exults in His love; And my soul shines in Him;

5 And the fearful one shall confide in Him; And redemption shall in Him stand assured;

6 And his gain is immortal life; And those who participate in it are incorruptible. Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.
v. 5. We have pointed (’fear confides in Him’), but the facsimile shows the vocalization ’the fearer’, which gives the sense, ’the fearful one confides in Him’, as we have translated. Bruston proposes to derive the verb from ; this, however, is not very probable.

v. 6. ’and his gain’ refers to of the preceding note. We may possibly read ’his inheritance’.

Expository Notes.
This beautiful Ode is altogether experimental: it is made up of milk and honey, of joy and gladness, of thanksgiving and the voice of melody. The writer admits that he is a shining soul; ’my soul shines in Him’.

It is not easy to find an underlying Biblical theme, if indeed one exists. In verse 3 (a missing verse recovered from the Nitrian Codex) is a sentence in which the Odist repeats, with variation, something he had said in the 20th Ode;

'Thou shalt be fat in the praise of His holiness.' XL-XLI]

Here it is:

'My limbs are fat in the sweetness of His Odes.'

We showed above that in Ode xx there was a Biblical base in the 58th chapter of Isaiah. The same word for 'fat' is again used in the present Ode.

The Ode is also parallel in many of its expressions to the 21st Ode; here also we have the overflowing heart, the praising lips and heart, and the exultant face. The 21st and the 40th Odes might be hung up side by side.

Ode 41.

1 Let all the Lord’s bairns praise Him,

And let us appropriate the truth of His faith.

2[a] And His children shall be acknowledged by Him;

2[b] Therefore let us sing in His love:

3 We live in the Lord by His grace;

And life we receive in His Messiah.

4 For a great day has shined upon us;

And marvellous is He who hath given us of His glory.

5 Let us, therefore, all of us unite together in the name of the Lord:

And let us honour Him in His goodness:

6 And let our faces shine in His light;

And let our hearts meditate in His love,

By night and by day.

7 Let us exult with the joy of the Lord.

(Christ speaks.)

8 All those that see me will be astonished; For from another race am I.

Prov. viii. 22 (Heb.). 9 For the Father of Truth remembered me; He who possessed me from the beginning.

Cf. Prov. viii. 25 (LXX). 10 For his riches begat me, And the thought of His heart:

(The Odist speaks.)

11 And His Word is with us in all our way, The Saviour who makes alive and does not reject our souls:

Cf. Philip. ii. 8, 9. 12 The man who was humbled, And was exalted by His own righteousness;

13 The Son of the Most High appeared In the perfection of His Father;

Cf. John i. 1. 14 And light dawned from the Word That was beforetime in Him;

Prov. viii. 23, 29. 15 The Messiah is truly one; And He was known before the foundations of the world, That He might save souls for ever by the truth of His name:

(Doxology.)

16 Let a new song arise to the Lord from them that love Him. Hallelujah.

XLI]

Critical Notes.

v. 1. We do not feel justified in adopting the readings or (’let them announce’ or ’let them thank’) suggested by Schulthess, for ’And let them receive’. In the following verse it is intimated that by receiving the truth of His faith the sons of God will be recognized by Him.

v. 4. Strictly speaking the verb means ’it shone’ or ’(He) made to shine’. In the first sense the subject would be ’a great day’, and in the second ’the Lord’. Cf. xi. 14.

v. 15. Connolly has pointed out that the phrase is used in the New Testament Peshitta as a rendering of πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. In the present state of our knowledge it is impossible to know the precise epoch of the appearance of the Syriac word . Can we assert that the author of the Peshitta, an Edessenian, was the first writer who used it? From the fifth century onwards, possibly under the influence of the Peshitta, it is constantly found in genuine Syriac writings. We are also unable to say why it is used in the plural and why it is derived from the form Af’el of the verb. On the other hand, the expression ’he laid the foundations’ of something, is of frequent use among Syrians, and appears to be original, although these same Syrians prefer the use of the verb to . The lexicographers explain the word as meaning the ’first stages’, or ’strata’ of the world; hence, they say, is the reason it is used in the plural. In the West Syrian breviary, and in some writers of lower date, is simply used to mean ’creation’ and is almost synonymous with ; the word has even given birth to the expression ’the beginning of the creation’. Whether it was the author of the Peshitta who derived this word from the author of the Odes, or the Odist from the Peshitta, it is difficult to decide, until the history of both is, through other channels, more fully established. It might even be a fortuitous encounter in a commonplace expression employed in Edessa from the first to the fifth century. (Cf. above, pp. 95 and 122.)

Expository Notes.

In this Ode, Christ is the speaker alternately with the poet. At the eighth verse we recognize the familiar strain, 'all that see me will be

D d astonished'. We must compare the words of Christ in Ode xvii and in Ode xxviii. The origin of the repeated expression is probably Psalm lxx. (lxxi.) 7:

Ode xvii helps us to understand the next clause; the sentences are parallel.

Ode xvii. 6.

Ode xli. 8.

'All that saw me were amazed: And I was regarded by them as a strange person.'

'All those that see me will be astonished; For from another race am I.'

Thus the stranger () is the same as the person from another race (). It refers to Christ, and not to the Odist, conceived of as a proselyte of the gate who has joined the Jewish or Judaeo-Christian community. It is the same statement which Christ makes in Ode xxviii that 'I was not their brother, nor my birth like theirs'. It is an intimation of the Miraculous Birth and Origin.

That is the reason why the Odist (verses 9, 15) now reverts to the eighth chapter of Proverbs, and to the Birth of the Divine Wisdom, for Christ is the Wisdom of God.

At the eleventh verse the Odist takes up the reference to the Word of God, and explains that He was truly of one nature with the Father, unique in Himself and one with God, and that he pre-existed before the foundation of the world. The statement that 'the Christ is truly one', is quoted and dilated on by Ignatius in his epistle to the Magnesians, as we have shown in the Introduction.

In the same verse we have a Targumism for 'God is with us in all our way'. Cf. the Targum on Gen. xxxv. 3, where Jacob says: 'His Word . . . was with me for my help in the way that I went.'

There is a Semitic turn of speech in verse 6, 'Let our faces shine by His shining'. In the same verse there is an adaptation of a verse in the first Psalm:

'And in His law he will meditate day and night;'

for which the Odist suggests

'Let our hearts meditate in His love by night and by day.' Psalm i. 2.

Ode xli. 7.

The coincidence is striking between the two texts; and we may possibly be justified in inferring an actual dependence of the Ode upon the Syriac Psalm, though the

translation is a natural one and the ideas are simple. But it is interesting to note the substitution of Love for Law by the Odist. We had already shown his acquaintance with the first Psalm in our notes on the first Ode. The 41st Ode now reinforces the conclusion.

The Odist never mentions the Law, and here we see that he substitutes for it as well as avoids it. This single consideration is of such weight that we may be sure he is neither a Jew nor a Jewish proselyte.

There is a coincidence in the second verse with the Psalter of Solomon, which, perhaps, is more than accidental. In Ps. Sol. xvii. 30 we have:

'For he knoweth them that they are all the children of God;' and when we compare this with Ode xli: 'All the Lord's children will praise Him. . . . And His children shall be known to Him', we have a close agreement which suggests that the Odist has been using the Psalter of Solomon as he uses the Psalter of David. Or it may be that both writers are working on some unrecognized Old Testament quotation.

Ode 42.

1 I stretched out my hands and approached my Lord; For the stretching out of my hands is His sign;

2 And my expansion is the outspread wood That was set up on the way of the Righteous One.

(Christ speaks.)

3 And I became of no use to those who knew me: For I shall hide myself from those who did not take hold of me:

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4 But I will be with those Who love me.

5 All my persecutors have died; And they sought after me who proclaimed about me; Because I am alive.

6 And I rose up and am with them; And I will speak by their mouths.

7[a] For they have despised those who persecute them.

7[b] And I threw over them the yoke of my love:

8 Like the arm of the bridegroom over the bride, So is my yoke over those that know me.

9 And as the couch that is spread in the chambers of the bridegroom and the bride, So is my love over those that believe in me.

10 I was not rejected, though I was reckoned to be so; And I did not perish though they thought it of me.

11 Sheol saw me and was in distress; Death cast me up and many along with me:

12 I have been gall and bitterness to it, And I went down with it to the extreme of its depth.

13 And the feet and the head it let go, For it was not able to endure my face:

14 And I made a congregation of living men amongst his dead men;

And I spake with them by living lips:

In order that my word may not be void.

15 And those who had died ran towards me;

And they cried and said, Son of God, have pity on us;

16 And do with us according to thy kindness;

And bring us out from the bonds of darkness:

17 And open to us the door

By which we shall come out to thee;

For we perceive that our death does not touch thee.

18 Let us also be saved with thee;

For thou art our Saviour.

19 And I heard their voice,

And I laid up their faith in my heart;

20 And I set my name upon their heads:

For they are free men and they are mine.

Hallelujah.

Critical Notes.

v. 1. For Gunkel proposes 'I was sanctified'. This change would not be in harmony with the particle which follows the verb: it is also a violent change which does not commend itself, although corroborated by a reference to Ode xxvii. 1. Labourt's opinion that means in Syriac 'j'ai sacrifié' is not probable.

v. 2. Gunkel proposes 'and the expansion of' instead of 'my expansion' of the manuscripts, and translates 'und das Ausstrecken des ausgestreckten Holzes, an dem der Aufgerichtete am [XLII

Wege hing'. Labour accepts Gunkel's theory and would have us, therefore, change the text of the second line into what he calls 'corrections excellentes'. These corrections would give us a text

'l'extension du bois étendu, où (sic) a été pendu, sur la route, le Juste'. The Syriac so constituted is exceedingly weak, and even faulty. In the parallel Ode xxvii, the word occurs as 'my expansion', and we do not see any obvious reason to depart from the

reading of the manuscripts. It is said in the first verse, 'I expanded my hands' () and of the second verse is, therefore, a continuation of the same idea. This is common to both Odes. Both Odes also agree to the fact that this 'expansion of hands is the sign' (of the Lord); but instead of both use , which is almost synonymous with it. Both Odes harmonize in their statement that this 'expansion of hands' is a 'straight' or 'extended' wood; but the word used to express 'straight' or 'extended' is in Ode xlii, and in Ode xxvii. That in Ode xxvii we cannot take as a substantive and translate 'of the Just' is shown by its contracted masculine form, which cannot suffer a modification in its adjectival sense; there is little doubt, therefore, that of Ode xlii refers also to 'wood'. The utmost we could linguistically say is that 'my expansion' is a sign of the 'straight' or 'extended' wood; supposing that the word has been omitted, as its repetition may have been considered useless; the text then would have been:

'Because the expansion of my hands is His sign, and my outstretching is (the sign of) the extended wood.'

Ode xxvii ends here; Ode xlii tells that this 'straight' or 'extended' wood has been 'erected', or 'hung up' in the way of the 'Righteous One'. Here the word is used in its emphatic and not contracted form.

We could, however, take as a contracted feminine adjective, referring to 'His way', i. e. the way of the Lord. On this hypothesis the sense would be: 'And my expansion is the extended (or straight) wood, which has been hung up on His straight way'. This is the utmost meaning that the Syriac wording can give.

The reading adopted by Grimme for is improbable.

v. 9. Labour's suggestion that 'sleeping-room of a newly married couple' should be read 'the house of the bridegroom' is not necessary. v. 12. Grimme proposes the plausible emendation of into , thus referring the pronoun to Sheol of verse 11.

Expository Notes.

This closing Ode of the collection describes the Descent of Christ into Hades, and the release of souls there bound and imprisoned. Prefixed to this is a short introduction coinciding closely with the 27th Ode, and this is followed by a meditation of the Risen Christ over His own triumph and a declaration of His love as the Bridegroom towards His bride. We need not suppose that the earlier sentences are an addition, nor remove them as a repetition. The Odist habitually repeats himself; and in the present case we can find the motive for the repetition. The writer is working on the 88th Psalm as a description of the descent into Hades, and in this very Psalm stand the sentences:

'I cried unto thee, O Lord, all day long, I spread out my hands.'

We compare:

Ode xlii. 1.

Psalm lxxxvii. (lxxxviii.) 10.

After this preliminary explanation of his outspread hands, the Odist plunges at once into the Hades theme, in the words

'I became of no use to my acquaintance.'

He is working on the sixth verse of the Psalm, which appears in the LXX as:

with a side-light from verse 9:

The Syriac of the Psalm which answers to ἀβοήθητος is , and the Syriac of the Ode is . The Syriac of the Psalm is nearly a transliteration of the Hebrew: the sentiment is the same. Now we have [XLII

the key in the lock. The previous clause in the Psalm declares that 'I am reckoned with them that go down into the pit'; this is a theme that frequently recurs in the Odes, where Christ is speaking: it is in the tenth verse of this Ode in the form:

'I was not rejected though I was reckoned to be so: I did not perish though they thought it of me.'

The verse in the Psalm (verse 6), which says:

'Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, In darkness, in the deep,'

is responsible for verse 12 of the Ode:

'I went down with him (Sheol) into the extreme of its depth.'

With this Psalm the Odist has also used a sentence from Isaiah, describing the descent of the Morning Star into Hades, which says in the English Version:

'Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming, but which appears in the LXX and in the Syriac as:

'Hades is embittered at thy descent,' (πικραίνεται);

which leads the Odist to say:

'I have been gall and bitterness to him.'

In the Psalm again the Odist found the words 'Free among the dead', perplexing words which the Early Church interpreted of Christ, and these words are at the back of the Odist's statements:

'A congregation of living men amongst his dead men: They are free men, they are mine.'

We have shown in the Introduction that this Ode is quoted by Eusebius and by Cyril of Jerusalem, and it is also responsible for some sentences in the Acts of Thomas. We translate the passage from the Greek and the Syriac for purposes of comparison. One sentence of the Greek Acts of Thomas was quoted in the second edition as a possible parallel, viz. the words

but the passage is of wider interest:

(Syr.) 'Thou didst descend into Sheol with mighty power, and the dead saw thee and became alive, and the lord of death was not able to bear it; and thou didst ascend with great glory, and didst take up with thee all who sought refuge with Thee.' (.)

(Greek) 'Thou didst descend into Hades with mighty power, thou whose sight the lords of death could not bear, and gathering together (συναγαγών) all that fled to thee for refuge (τοὺς εἰς σὲ καταφυγόντας) thou didst prepare the way.'

The Syriac depends altogether on the Ode, and the Greek depends on the Syriac; there is one word in the Greek (συναγαγών) which may, perhaps, be claimed as an independent loan from the Odes, for in verse 15 Christ speaks of making a 'congregation of living men among the dead'. Otherwise the Greek is a working over of the Syriac, as the Syriac Acts are of the Odes. 'Those who sought refuge with Thee' is derived from 'Those who had died ran to me'. Perhaps the Syriac Acts have dropped the word 'gather', and we should read 'Thou didst gather and take up', &c. Evidently the Acts of Thomas have used the 42nd Ode.

Ephrem also has used it freely in his descriptions of the Descent into Hades in the Carmina Nisibena. See especially for 'Sheol made sad':

'The Virgin in her bringing forth He made glad; but Sheol he grieved and made sad () in His resurrection.

Sheol was made sorrowful (!) when she saw them, even the sorrowful dead, made to rejoice'.—Carm. Nisib. 27. 4, 6.

In the Breviarium Chaldaicum (ii. p.) we find a similar strain to the language of the Odes:

'O Living One, who wentest down to the abode of the dead, and didst announce a good message to the souls who were bound () in Sheol.'

Similar sentences are found in the Missale Syr. Orient. (Mosul, 1901), p. , &c.

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