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man as son to God as Father, man has only what God gives. He thinks truly only as God's truth takes possession of him; he loves fully only as God's love makes his heart its home; he acts rightly only as he wills God's will in himself. And this fulness of God comes to man in Jesus Christ. There may be a genuine Christian experience and a sincere Christian character in which this immediate contact, intimate communion, and indispensable communication with Christ is not prominent in the consciousness—the man knows himself living rather than having Christ in his life. But in the more intense types of piety this constant indwelling and continuous inworking of Christ in the human progress in goodness and grace is ever frankly confessed.

There is an exclusiveness in the Christian faith which is found in no other religion. It makes claims for Christ which no other religion makes for its founder. The monopoly of sole Mediatorship that it asserts is not an exaggerated compliment which a fond fancy for Him inspires. It is

an echo of His voice; and if the claim made for Him is unwarranted, the blame must fall on Him. 'No man cometh unto the Father but by me.' He is, as the true and living way, the only way to the Father. It is a historical fact that religion as a filial relation to God is found only where Christ's revelation of God's Fatherhood is known. No other religion has offered the world the same gospel. This fact is the inspiration of the foreign mission enterprise. If human personality is to fulfil its promise in union with Divine Personality, if the sinner is to be changed into the son of God, Christ must be known, trusted, and obeyed as Saviour and Lord. If the claim He makes for Himself, which the history of man's religion justifies, that He alone brings men to God as Father be true and not false, it must be the constant purpose and the strenuous effort of all in whom this relation to God has been realized to secure its universal realization. The path of duty is clear.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Garvie, *The Master's Comfort and Hope*, 85.

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## The Early Christian Interpretation of the Passover.

BY J. RENDEL HARRIS, LITT.D., LL.D., D.D., BIRMINGHAM.

THE modern student of the history of the Church, whether he is occupied with its antecedent Judaism, or its recrudescence and neo-Judaism, has no difficulty in assigning an origin to the Passover, or to the Easter Festival which has taken its place. He knows from the twelfth chapter of Exodus, with the assistance of the happy translator's instinct of the English Bible, that Passover means what it says, that the word is jointed in the middle and will easily come apart; some one or some thing passed over some other person or things, and the historical explanation in the Book of Exodus is that the Destroying Angel of the offended Jahweh passed over the blood-marked houses of the Israelites, and that this motion of the Destroyer is called in Hebrew *Pesach*, or, as we say, Pass-over.

But even in the English Bible there is a suspicion that the incident recorded need not be the Judgment upon the Egyptians. In the Song of Triumph by the Red Sea, which is the original Paschal Hymn,

the singers affirm that 'the enemy will be as still as a stone, until thy people pass over, thy people whom thou hast redeemed.' If the English Bible were an accurate reflex of the Hebrew, we should say at once that the real Passover was the *passage* of the Israelites *through* the Red Sea. At this point a difficulty arises: the word translated Pass Over is not the word previously used (*Pesach*), but another word (*Abar*). The same word, however, has been used previously (Ex 12<sup>23</sup>) as an alternative to the more usual word, and the translators have given us their perception of the linguistic variation by saying:

'The Lord will pass *through* to smite the Egyptians; . . . The Lord will pass *over* the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.'

It seems clear, then, that the word *passover* might describe either the motion of the Destroying

Angel or the Crossing of the Red Sea. To the average student of divinity it will be the former explanation that is accepted. He will not even notice that there is another.

That is all very well for English scholars ; it is, however, easy to show that such a simple solution did not present itself to the early Fathers of the Church, many of whom knew little Hebrew, and despised what little they did know. Suppose, however, we turn to St. Jerome, who did know Hebrew, and let other people know that he knew it. In his commentary on Micah (*Opp.* vii. 530) we have as follows :

‘ exterminator in Aegypto *transcendit* populum Israel, et non vastavit eum (unde a *transitu*, *Phase*, id est, *pascha*, nomen accepit).’

Here we have two Latin renderings of the Hebrew word for Passover, which would answer to the two Greek words *ὑπερβαίνω* and *διαβαίνω*, and we have each word applied to the Destroying Angel, unless the second word is an anticipation of the Passage of the Red Sea. Now let us turn to Jerome's commentary on Matthew (*Opp.* viii. 210), where he is discussing the same philological problem. He tells us :

‘ *Pascha*, quod Hebraice dicitur *Phase*, non a *passione*, ut plerique arbitrantur, sed a *transitu* nominatur, eo quod Exterminator, videns sanguinem in foribus Israelitarum, *pertransierit*, et non percusserit eos. Vel quia Dominus praebens auxilium populo suo *desuper* ambulaverit. . . . *Transitus* autem noster, id est *Phase*, celebratur, si terrena et Aegyptum dimittentes, ad caelestia festinemus.’

The explanation which Jerome gives is interesting, and like a good commentator he is multiplex. First of all, he warns us off from a popular derivation of *πάσχα* from *πάσχω* (or *Passover* from *Passion*): then he has two translations which correspond to the Greek *διαβαίνω* and *ὑπερβαίνω*. Of these the first is applied to the Destroyer, and to the people crossing the Red Sea ; the second is proper to the Lord, aiding His people *from above*. Then Jerome adds a mystical explanation according to which the Passover is the flight from Egypt, which is the real *διάβασις*. It is very like the language of Heb 11, where Moses keeps the *Passover*, to avoid the Exterminator (*ὁ ἀλοθρευτῶν*), and where the Israelites *passed through* (*διέβησαν*) the Red Sea, as

on dry land. We begin to suspect that the explanation of *Passover* as *Passing through* is very early.

Now let us see what Gregory of Nazianzus will say on the subject, from the standpoint of Greek theology.

In his *Oration on the Holy Passover* (*P.G.* 36, col. 636) he tells us that this great and venerable *Passover* or *Pascha* was called *Phasca* by the Hebrews, and in their language it signifies transit (*διάβασις*). The transit in question is the Flight from Egypt, and Return to Canaan. Spiritually it is an *Anabasis* as well as a *Diabasis*, an ascent from things below to things above. Gregory then goes on to explain, half apologetically, that names in the Scripture are often changed from obscurity to clearness, and from rusticity to elegance. That is why Christians changed *Phasca* to *Pascha*, because they saw in the word, when Hellenized, a remembrance of the Lord's Passion (*τὸ σωτήριον πάθος*). Gregory is much more friendly than Jerome to the derivation from *πάσχω*. On the one hand, he is a Greek, and likes a Greek play on words, and on the other, he is the author of the poem which he calls *Christus patiens*. He differs from the modern exegete in making the Passover the act of the Israelite people, and not of the Destroying Angel.

It is pretty clear that the explanations referred to have a long ancestry, and we propose to show that they are substantially the interpretations of the New Testament itself. Suppose we begin with the suggestion which Jerome disallows and which Gregory of Nazianzus patronizes, that *πάσχα* has something to do with Passover and with the Greek verb *πάσχω*.

We will begin with Irenæus. In the twentieth chapter of the fourth book against Heresies, he tells us that Moses foretold the advent of Christ, the time of the Passion, and the place in which Christ suffered. The chapter is based upon a collection of *Testimonies against the Jews*. It opens with our Lord's words to them, in which He advises them to search the Scriptures for *Testimonies* concerning Himself. Irenæus goes on to say that Moses foretold the day of the *Passion*, calling it *Pascha*, and that on that very day, so long foretold by Moses, our Lord fulfilled the *Passover* by *Suffering* on it : (*passus est Dominus adimplens Pascha*). It is quite clear that Irenæus, or the collection of *Testimonies* which he is using, must be held to have acquaintance with the equation between *πάσχα* and *πάσχω*.

The same thing can be observed in Tertullian's treatise *against the Jews* (c. 10) where he uses the *Testimonies* in a similar manner to show the Christian significance of the Passover; he says:

'Moses prophesied that you (*i.e.* the Jews) would do this thing in the beginning of the first month, when all the populace of the children of Israel were to sacrifice the lamb in the evening; and the solemnity of this day, that is the Passover of unleavened bread, which you were to eat with bitterness, he chanted beforehand and added the words, It is the *Lord's Passover*, that is *Christ's Passion*.'

So here we have the parallel between Passover and Passion, a parallel which must have been made in Greek, which has been shown to be at least as early as the second century. We shall now show that it is a first-century explanation, and at the same time that the explanation of *Passover* alternatively as *πάσχα* or *Passing Over* of the People, and the spiritual interpretation of the Transit, which we saw in Jerome and Gregory, belong to the same period.

First of all we turn to the Gospel of St. Luke, where our Lord is represented as saying to His disciples at the Last Supper,

'I should much have liked to eat this Passover with you before I suffer'; *τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν* (Lk 22<sup>15</sup>).

No person of Greek birth and training could miss the play on words which St. Luke here introduces. It is not, and cannot be, Aramaic. St. Luke represents our Lord as having made the connexion between the Passover and His own Passion. The importance of this observation for the criticism of the Lucan account is very great. If St. Luke is correct, our Lord is aware of the parallel between *πάσχα* and *πάσχω*, and may even be responsible for it.

But now let us turn aside and see what non-Christian writers of the first century have to say about the Passover, when they are explaining the Festival to Greek readers. Let us turn to Philo and Josephus.

Josephus naturally keeps as close as possible to the Biblical account, and Philo as naturally avoids the literal interpretation. Josephus translates *Passover* by *ὑπερβασία*. 'We call this Festival Pascha, and it means the *Passing Over* (*ὑπερβασία*), because on that day God *passed us over*, and sent the plague upon the Egyptians.' We note the use

of the verb *ὑπερβαίνειν*, which we detected also in Jerome's explanation. What Josephus calls *ὑπερβασία* Philo describes as a *διάβασις*. The Passover is the migration of the mortal and corruptible to the immortal and incorruptible (*διάβασις . . . τὸ πάσχα εἶρηται*). Evidently Philo is not interpreting the Passover of the Destroying Angel, but of the emigrant Israelites, returning to their own country; and he interprets it mystically, and shows at the same time that he knows of the linguistic connexion between *πάσχα* and *πάσχω*. 'It was ordered that the Passover should be kept, a *Passing Over* from the *Passions* to the virtuous and disciplined life'; *καὶ γὰρ τὸ πάσχα, τὴν ἐκ παθῶν εἰς ἀσκήσιν ἀρετῆς διάβασις προστέτακται ποιεῖσθαι* (Philo, *de sacr. Abelis et Caini*).

We have seen, then, that all the explanations, literal and mystical, of the word Pascha, can be found in the first century.

We will now give a further illustration from the New Testament of the way in which the Passover was put into a Greek dress, over and above the *πάσχα-πάσχω* of Luke, the *διάβασις* of Philo and later writers, and the *ὑπερβασία* of Josephus.

The thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John opens with the statement that Jesus knew the time was come for His return to the Father, and in the sense of that removal He emphasized by sacramental acts and speech the love which He had for His disciples. The section of the Gospel is sharply divided from what precedes, and opens as follows:

'Now, before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knew that His hour was come, to migrate from this world to the Father' (*ἵνα μεταβῆ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα*).

Here we have a slight variation on the Greek words which we found in use for the Passover, such as *ὑπερβασία*, *διάβασις*, but the same interpretation. We now add *μεταβαίνω*, observing that the Evangelist himself invites us to see that it is Passover language that he is using. Jesus' hour is equated with the Passover on the one hand, and with the Passover migration on the other. The language is Philonian rather than Lucan, and there is no suggestion of a play on words between *πάσχα* and *πάσχω*.

These, then, are the two chief early Christian interpretations of the Passover; one of them leads to the Lamb without blemish, the other to the City of God.