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The Journal of Theological Studies

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THE ODES OF SOLOMON.

THE Odes of Solomon are mentioned among the Antilegomena of the Old Testament in the sixth-century *Synopsis Sanctae Scripturae* of the pseudo-Athanasius, and also in the ninth-century *Stichometry* of Nicephorus. Five of them are quoted and mystically explained in the Gnostic treatise known as *Pistis Sophia*, extant in Coptic (said to be of the third century); and a sentence about the Virgin Birth of Christ is quoted from another of the Odes by Lactantius,^a the fourth-century Apologist. Nothing more was known about them until last year, when Dr Rendel Harris printed from a late manuscript in his possession the text of a Syriac translation of the Odes themselves, forty-two in number, and enriched his edition^b with an elegant English version, and many learned and suggestive annotations. This year Dr Harnack has edited the Odes afresh^c from a translation by J. Flemming; and Dr W. E. Barnes has printed^d a new version of Odes 3, 6, 12, 23, 33.

That the Odes must have had a considerable vogue before the third century is clear from the way in which they are treated in *Pistis Sophia*, where five of them are expounded in the same fashion as is adopted for the Psalms. Dr Harris regards them (or most of them) as the work of a Jewish Christian, writing at the end of the first century; while Dr Harnack considers them in their original form to be purely Jewish, explaining the Christian allusions that they contain as due to a Christian editor. The original work was composed (he holds) while the Temple at Jerusalem was still standing, a conclusion which is derived from his

^a *Div. Inst.* iv 12.

^b *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, Cambridge 1909.

^c *Texte und Untersuchungen* xxxv 4.

^d *Expositor* July 1910; cp. also *J. T. S.* for July.

interpretation of the opening sentences of Ode 4 ; and he fixes the date of the Christian interpolator and of the Odes in their present form at *circ.* A.D. 100.

The New Testament is not quoted *totidem verbis*; but the Messiahship of our Lord, His Virgin Birth, and His Baptism are among the topics introduced. The doctrine of the Word which the Odes express is remarkable, offering many affinities with the Johannine teaching ; and if Dr Harnack's view of their provenance and date be accepted, the Odes provide a highly significant link between the Jewish Wisdom literature and the Christian doctrine of the Logos. From beginning to end there is no mention of sin, repentance, or forgiveness ; the leading thought is the joy of the soul which has found its rest in God. There is no trace of Gnosticism, nor (as it would seem) of any other form of heretical teaching ; but the cryptic and allusive language which is employed makes the task of interpretation a difficult one.

'Of Sacraments,' says Dr Harris, 'the Odes do not seem to know much,'^a and Dr Harnack takes the same view. This suggests a line of investigation which has not, perhaps, been pursued far enough by the learned editors, and I have collected in this essay a number of the allusions, which the Odes seem to me to contain, to Christian beliefs about baptism and to the ceremonies with which the rite was accompanied as far back as we can trace its details. Whether the Odes were originally composed for use in public worship, or were, at the first, private meditations on the spiritual life, the idea at the heart of them seems to be the joy and the privilege of the new-made Christian ; and this appears in so many forms that it is possible that they are nothing more or less than *Hymns of the Baptized*. At any rate, the thought of baptism gives the clue to the interpretation of many passages, some of which have as yet received no explanation from the editors.

That it was a custom in the early Church to receive the newly baptized with Psalmody and singing is stated by Gregory Nazianzen ;^b and we possess, among the works of Ephraim Syrus, a collection of hymns sung on the Feast of Epiphany,^c which are

^a l. c. p. 77.

^b *Oratio* xl 46 : cp. Cyr. Hier. *Procat.* 15.

^c An English translation by Rev. A. E. Johnston is printed in Dr Gwynn's edition of Ephraim (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* vol. xiii p. 265).

placed in the mouths of those just admitted to baptism, and express the joy of the Christian soul. They present many striking resemblances to the Odes which we are studying,* at once in their spiritual exaltation and in their mystical allusiveness. I shall quote here the most remarkable of them, No. 13 of the series, from Dr Gwynn's edition.

ST EPHRAIM :

HYMN OF THE BAPTIZED.

(*Resp.*—Brethren, sing praises, to the Son of the Lord of all ; Who has bound for you crowns, such as kings long for !)

1. Your garments glisten, my brethren, as snow ;—and fair is your shining in the likeness of Angels !

2. In the likeness of Angels, ye have come up, beloved,—from Jordan's river, in the armour of the Holy Ghost.

3. The bridal chamber that fails not, my brethren, ye have received ;—and the glory of Adam's house to-day ye have put on.

4. The judgement that *came* of the fruit, was Adam's condemnation :—but for you victory, has arisen this day.

5. Your vesture is shining, and goodly your crowns :—which the Firstborn has bound for you, by the priest's hand this day.

6. Woe in Paradise, did Adam receive :—but you have received, glory this day.

7. The armour of victory, ye put on, my beloved :—in the hour when the priest, invoked the Holy Ghost.

8. The Angels rejoice, men here below exult :—in your feast, my brethren, wherein is no foulness.

9. The good things of Heaven, my brethren, ye have received :—beware of the Evil One, lest he despoil you.

10. The day when He dawned, the Heavenly King :—opens for you His door, and bids you enter Eden.

11. Crowns that fade not away, are set on your heads :—hymns of praise hourly, let your mouths sing.

12. Adam, by means of the fruit, *God* cast forth in sorrow :—but you He makes glad, in the bridechamber of joy.

13. Who would not rejoice, in your bridechamber, my brethren ?—for the Father with His Son, and the Spirit rejoice in you.

14. Unto you shall the Father, be a wall of strength :—and the Son a Redeemer, and the Spirit a Guard.

15. Martyrs by their blood, glorify their crowns :—but you our Redeemer, by His Blood glorifies.

* The hymns of Cosmas of Jerusalem (*Migne Patr. Gr.* xcvi 462 ff) also present certain similarities in tone to our Odes.

16. Watchers and Angels, joy over the repentant:—they shall joy over you, my brethren, that unto them ye are made like.

17. The fruit which Adam, tasted not in Paradise:—this day in your mouths, has been placed with joy.

18. Our Redeemer figured, His Body by the tree:—whereof Adam tasted not, because he had sinned.

19. The Evil One made war, and subdued Adam's house:—through your baptism, my brethren, lo! he is subdued this day.

20. Great is the victory, but to-day you have won:—if so be ye neglect not, you shall not perish, my brethren.

21. Glory to them that are robed, glory to Adam's house!—in the birth that *is* from the water, let them rejoice and be blessed.

22. Praise to Him Who has robed, His Churches in glory!—glory to Him Who has magnified, the race of Adam's house.

This hymn takes up thoughts which have already been expressed in the baptismal rite, and puts them into verse. It is worth while to compare it with a rubric and prayer in a Latin translation of a rite ascribed to Severus the Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch (512–519 A.D.).^a After the Eucharist is given to the neophytes, there follows the rubric '*et sertis coronat eos . . . et dicunt hymnum hunc: Fratres, canite gloriam Filio Domini universorum qui coronam vobis nexuit, quam reges desiderarunt. Illustrate vestimenta vestra, et candidi estote ut nix: et splendores vestri instar angelorum luceant. Instar angelorum ascendistis, charissimi, e Iordane fluvio per virtutem Spiritus Sancti. Coronas haud marcescentes, fratres, accepistis: et gloriam Adae hodie induistis. Fructus, quem Adam in paradiso non gustavit, hodie in oribus vestris positus est . . .*'

It will be seen that verses 1, 2, 3, 11, 17 of Ephraim's hymn reproduce the language of the hymn which has been cited from the baptismal rite. Certainly this rite, as quoted, is of a much later date than Ephraim, and it may even be that the language of the hymn has been borrowed from Ephraim, rather than *vice versa*; but it is not to be doubted that the imagery of the hymn was originally derived from the details of the baptismal ritual, and the beliefs about the joys of the baptized, prevalent in Ephraim's day. The white robes of the neophytes, the crowning of them with garlands, the idea that the fruit of the tree of life, forbidden to Adam, is offered to the baptized Christian—these are the thoughts which

^a Denzinger *Ritus Orient.* i p. 315; cp. Assemani *Cod. Liturg.* iii 166, 182.

lie behind the hymn of Ephraim. We shall find that these and similar thoughts lie behind the phrases of our Odes, which I now proceed to examine. The quotation from Ephraim has served to shew that hymns of the Syrian Church were sometimes composed in this way, and that it is worth while, when we meet with a new hymn, to examine it for traces of baptismal ideas.

In our Odes two or three phrases challenge attention at once, when the possibility that they are baptismal hymns has been suggested. Take the word *illuminated*. That baptism is an illumination of the soul is an idea that goes back to Heb. vi 4, and is a commonplace in early Christian literature. Baptism is φωτισμός^a and the baptized are φωτισθέντες, *illuminati*. Thus the language of Ode 36³ 'Although I was a son of man, I was named *the illuminate*, the son of God',^b receives a simple explanation. Dr Harris rightly observes that the words which follow shew that this sentence is not to be understood of Christ; but he has not caught the baptismal reference.^c Compare also Ode 34³ 'there is no storm in the depth of the illuminated thought'; Ode 32¹ 'to the blessed there is light from Him that dwells in them'; Ode 41⁶ 'Let our faces shine in His light'; and Ode 10⁷.

The newly baptized were clad in white robes, or 'robes of light' as they are called by Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechetical Lectures^d and by Gregory Nazianzen.^e So in Ode 21² the singer exclaims 'I put off darkness and clothed myself with light'; 'in me there shall be nothing that is not bright' (Ode 25⁷). We saw above that this ceremony was also alluded to in Ephraim's hymn.

The last quotation from Ode 25 is followed by a phrase to which Dr Harris devotes much attention^f: 'I was clothed with the covering of Thy Spirit, and Thou didst remove from me my *raiment of skin*.'^g He connects the phrase with a various reading in Gen. iii 21: 'coats of light' for 'coats of skin'. But the true explanation is much simpler^h: the reference of the Odist is

^a Cp. Justin Mart. *Apol.* i 61; Clem. Alex. *Paed.* i 6. 25; Greg. Naz. *Oratio* xl 4.

^b Here, and throughout, the version given is that of Dr Harris, save that in a few instances Dr Barnes's rendering has been preferred.

^c See below p. 28.

^d *Procat.* 16 ἐνδυμα φωτεινόν.

^e *Oratio* γ ἐμφώρειος ἐσθῆς.

^f l. c. p. 66.

^g Schwartz translates the Coptic version of this (in *Pistis Sophia*) 'fui super vestes pelliceas'; of which Drs Ryle and James have given a free translation (*Psalms of Solomon* p. 159) ἐπενδύθην στολὴν τιμίαν. This conceals the allusion.

^h Cp. Origen in *Gen.* iii 21, who says that the 'coats of skin' represent the

to the white robe of baptism, as will be seen from the following extract from Jerome ^a: 'Praeceptis Dei lavandi sumus, et cum parati ad indumentum Christi, *tunicas pelliceas deposuerimus, tunc induemur veste lineae*, nihil in se mortis habente, sed tota candida, ut de baptismo consurgentes, cingamus lumbos in veritate'. We shall find a hint of the same idea in a phrase of Cyril, ^b 'the rough garment of their sins,' τὸ τραχὺ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν. So Ephraim, in one of his Hymns on the Nativity, says of Christ, 'He was wrapped in swaddling clothes as Adam with leaves, and clad in garments instead of skins,' ^c viz. at His Baptism in the Jordan. These parallels, I believe, are sufficient to establish the baptismal reference in the phrase 'raiment of skin' in our Ode 25.

More generally, the thought that in baptism Christ is 'put on' as a robe, which is based on Gal. iii 27, ^d and is frequent in Christian writers, appears again and again in our Odes. 'The Lord renewed me in His raiment, and possessed me by His light' (Ode 11¹⁰); 'Love His holiness, and clothe yourselves therewith' (Ode 13²); 'He was reckoned like myself in order that I might put Him on' (Ode 7⁶).

This spiritual garment was often called 'the garment of incorruption'. A prayer for the Catechumens in the Apostolical Constitutions ^e asks that they may be worthy of τὸ ἐνδύμα τῆς ἀφθαρσίας. A similar phrase is found in Cyril of Jerusalem, ^f and in Gregory Nazianzen, the words of the latter being 'If you see any one naked, clothe him, in honour of your own garment of incorruption, which is Christ, for as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ'. ^g So, too, Basil writes that in baptism κατεπόθη τὸ θνητὸν ἐν τῷ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας ἐνδύματι. With these the words of Ode 15⁸ may be brought into comparison: 'I have put on incorruption through His Name, and have put off corruption by His grace.' And again: 'Increasingly helpful to me was the thought

human body, or rather the νέκρωσις or liability to death which it incurred at the Fall. So Gregory of Nyssa (*Or. Cat.* viii). A Greek ode quoted by Mone (*Hymni Latini* ii 367; cp. i 18) has: νεκρώσεως δερματίνους χιτῶνας ἐκδέδνται ὁ πρό-πᾶτωρ.

^a *Epist. ad Fabiolam* lxiv 20.

^b *Cat.* i 2; cp. xv 25.

^c *Hymns on the Nativity* xvi 13.

^d Cp. the recital of this verse in the Mass of the Catechumens in the Liturgy of St Chrysostom (Brightman *Eastern Liturgies* 369).

^e viii 6. See also Brightman l. c. 315, 471.

^f *Cat.* xv 26.

^g *Oratio* xl 31.

of the Lord and His fellowship in incorruption' ^a (Ode 21⁴), and 'They who put Me on shall suffer no harm, but they shall gain the whole world that is incorruptible' (Ode 33¹⁰). These expressions are very like those in a baptismal hymn of Ephraim: 'Ye too in the water, receive from Him the vesture that wastes not.' ^b

It is apposite to cite at this point the phrases of a hymn prescribed to be sung by the Deacons at the close of two baptismal *ordines* of the Syrian Church, printed by Assemani, ^c as it brings out well the prominence given in these rites to the idea that the baptized are clad with the Lord's vesture:—

'Descendite, fratres obsignati, induite Dominum nostrum et commiscemini inclyto ipsius generi, ut ait in sua parabola. De summo natura eius est; vestimentum vero ex imis. Mistum est vestimentum vestrum cum vestimento Domini nostri.'

We may take up next the frequent references in the Odes to the garlands or crowns with which the newly baptized (*coronati*) were decked. A passage ^d has already been cited from the baptismal *Ordo* which bears the name of Severus of Antioch, in which the crowning of the neophyte is definitely prescribed. The same ceremony is found in the Armenian Rite, ^e as it is in the present Egyptian and Abyssinian rituals ^f; but early evidence for it is scanty, perhaps the earliest being that of the hymn already quoted from Ephraim Syrus: 'Crowns that fade not away are set on your heads; hymns of praise hourly let your mouths sing.' ^g Compare Ode 5¹⁰ 'He is as a garland on my head, and I shall not be moved'; Ode 9^{8f} 'An everlasting crown for ever is Truth. Blessed are they who set it on their heads . . . put on the crown in the true covenant of the Lord'; Ode 17¹ 'I was crowned by my God; my crown is living'; Ode 20⁷ 'Come into His Paradise, and make thee a garland from its tree, and put it on thy head and be glad'; and (most remarkable) Ode 11^{1f} 'The Lord is on my head like a crown, and I shall not be without Him. They wove for me a crown of truth, and it caused Thy branches to bud in me. For it is not like a withered crown which buddeth not: but thou

^a Compare also Ode 3¹⁰ 'He that cleaveth to Him that dieth not shall himself be free from death', and Iren. *Haer.* III xvii 2.

^b *Epiphany Hymns* iv 3.

^d p. 4 above.

^e Denzinger *Rit. Orient.* i pp. 210, 231.

^c *Cod. Liturg.* ii 299.

^f Conybeare *Rituale Armenorum* p. 103.

^g *Epiphany Hymns* xiii 11.

livest upon my head, and thou hast blossomed upon my head.' If we had not the clue provided by the baptismal chaplet, the number of these references to 'crowns' would be difficult to explain.

The allusions in our Odes to 'living water' and to 'the seal' must next be considered. Of these Dr Harris writes: 'The only directions in which one could look for reference to Baptism would be (i) the Living Water, and (ii) the allusion to the Seal. Of the former it is unnecessary to speak. It is frankly impossible that the living water which the thirsty are invited in the Scriptures to come and take freely can be any outward affusion.'^a He proceeds to examine and to dismiss the idea that the 'seal' in the Odes is the baptismal *σφραγίς*. I shall take these separately.

1. As to the Living Water mentioned in the Odes (6, 11, 28, 30) it must be observed at the outset that the interpretation which a modern commentator would place upon the 'Living Water' of Scripture is not in question. What we have to ask is not 'What does the Living Water of the Bible signify?', but 'What did our Odist mean by the phrase?' And to answer this question, we must look into the context in which he uses it, as well as into the phraseology of early Christian writers.

Let us, then, take Ode 6^{ff} in Dr Barnes's translation:—

'For there went forth a stream and it became a river great and broad :
⁸ for it overwhelmed everything, and it ^b . . . ⁹ And those of the sons of men who would have restrained it, could not restrain it, nor could the contrivances of those who restrain waters. ¹⁰ For it came over the face of the whole earth, and filled everything and all the thirsty upon earth drank thereof. ¹¹ And their thirst was quenched and was extinguished, for drink was given from the Most High. ¹² Blessed therefore are His ministers, who are entrusted with His waters. ¹³ They have given drink [lit. *resē*] to dry lips, and the enfeebled will they have confirmed. ¹⁴ And the souls that were nigh to departing they have held back from death. ¹⁵ And the limbs that stumbled they have set upright and established. ¹⁶ They gave life to their dead, and light to their eyes. ¹⁷ For each man acknowledged them in the Lord, and they lived by the living waters which are for ever.'

^a l. c. p. 77.

^b This verse is translated by Dr Harris 'It flooded and broke up everything, and it brought [water] to the Temple'; a rendering confirmed by the Coptic version in *Pistis Sophia*, in which this Ode is found.

The primary reference is doubtless, as Drs Ryle and James suggested,^a and as Dr Harris recognized,^b to Ezek. xlvii 1 ff, which describes the river flowing out from under the Temple and gathering volume as it goes, bearing the waters of healing and fruitfulness. But the water of this river appears in the LXX of Ezek. xlvii 3 as ὕδωρ ἀφέσεως, 'the water of remission,' and many of the Fathers interpret it of the water of baptism. Thus Melito of Sardis writes: ^c οὕτω καὶ Ἰεζεκιήλ ἐν τῷ τέλει ὕδωρ ἀφέσεως ἐκάλεσε τὸ ἐκτυποῦν τὸ ἅγιον βάπτισμα. Earlier than Melito, Barnabas^d quotes Ezek. xlvii 1, 7, 12, to typify the baptismal stream (the passage is one to which we shall return), and of later writers Theodoret^e and Jerome^f take the same line. Another pertinent reference is that of Ephraim Syrus in one of his Rhythms. Of Christ he says: 'Out of the stream whence the fishers came up [an obvious allusion to Ezek. xlvii 10] He was baptized, and came up, Who incloseth all things in His net.'^g It is, then, reasonable to think that our Odist means his allusion to Ezek. xlvii to be understood in the same sense, and that we have here a reference to baptism, as Dr Harnack acutely suggested,^h when only that part of the Ode which is contained in *Pistis Sophia* was before him, although now he writes: 'An die Taufe ist nicht zu denken.'ⁱ

Dr Harris, indeed, and Dr Harnack find in the language of the obscure verse 8 an indication of the Judaism of the writer which might be thought to exclude such an interpretation. As rendered in their editions (Dr Barnes, as we have seen, marks the passage as corrupt) it runs 'It flooded and broke up everything and it brought to the Temple', thus suggesting that the goal of the

^a *Psalms of Solomon* p. 160.

^b l. c. p. 96.

^c *Routh Rel. Sacr.* i 124.

^d § 11. Barnabas is here collecting O. T. *testimonia* to baptism, and he quotes Jer. ii 12 f and Isa. xvi 1 and proceeds: καὶ πάλιν λέγει ὁ προφήτης· ἐγὼ πορεύσομαι ἔμπροσθεν σου; καὶ ὄρη ὁμαλιῶ καὶ πύλας χαλκᾶς συντρίψω καὶ μοχλοὺς σιδηροῦς συνκλάσω, καὶ δώσω σοι θησαυροὺς σκοτεινοὺς ἀποκρύφους, ἀδράτους... (Isa. xlv 2, 3). Next Isa. xxxiii 16-18 and Ps. i 3-6 are quoted, and finally he adds: εἰτα τί λέγει; καὶ ἦν ποταμὸς ἔλκων ἐκ δεξιῶν, καὶ ἀνέβαινεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δένδρα ὠραία· καὶ ὃς ἂν φάγη ἐξ αὐτῶν ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα [Ezek. xlvii 1, 7, 12; cp. John vi 51]. τοῦτο λέγει ὅτι ἡμεῖς μὲν καταβαίνομεν εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ γέμοντες ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ ῥύπου, καὶ ἀναβαίνομεν καρποφοροῦντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ κτλ.

^e *Comm. in Ezech.*

^f *Comm. in Ezech.*; cp. also Ep. lxix ad Oceanum.

^g Rhythm III (Morris *Select Works of Ephraim* p. 16).

^h *Hist. o Dogma* i 207 (Engl. Tr.).

ⁱ *Texte u. Untersuch.* xxxv 4 p. 32.

life-giving stream is the Temple at Jerusalem. But this is only a reminiscence (even if the translation be correct) of the concluding words of the LXX of Ezek. xlvii 1, the passage on which the Odist is working, ἀπὸ νότου ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον: and so it cannot be held as setting aside the interpretation, which this *locus classicus* of the early Christian Fathers received from all who touched it.

Verse 12 confirms the interpretation. 'Blessed are the δῖάκονοι of that draught of His'—δῖάκονοι being the original word, as we see from its preservation in the commentary of *Pistis Sophia*—naturally refers to the Christian clergy^a who ministered the rite.

It might be urged as a further objection to the view here taken of Ode 6, that the waters of Ezek. xlvii, interpreted by the Fathers of the waters of baptism, are waters of *healing* and *fruitfulness*, while the Living Water of the Odist is for *drinking*, a draught for the thirsty. And all through our Odes this is the purpose of the Water which the singer has in his thought. 'Fill ye waters for yourselves from the living fountain of the Lord, for it is opened to you; and come all ye thirsty and take the draught and rest by the fountain of the Lord. For fair it is and pure and gives rest to the soul. Much more pleasant are its waters than honey' are the opening words of Ode 30.

So again in Ode 28⁷ we have 'Immortal life will come forth and give me to drink, and from that life is the spirit within me'. And more particularly in Ode 11^{6 f}: 'Speaking waters touched my lips from the fountain of the Lord without grudging, and I drank and was inebriated with the living water that doth not die.'^b

^a Dr Barnes sees in these δῖάκονοι an allusion to the Montanist prophets. He finds Montanism in Ode 6, mainly on the ground of verse 1, which Dr Harris translates 'As the hand moves over the harp, and the strings speak, so speaks in my members the Spirit of the Lord', but Dr Barnes emends so that it runs 'As the wind goeth in the harp, &c.'. Thus, in his view, the Ode begins with a statement of the Montanist view of inspiration: 'the prophet is as passive as the harp, while the Spirit speaks through him' (l.c. p. 57). But such language may be found in other Syrian writers who were not Montanists. Thus Narsai, the Syriac homilist, was called by his friends 'the Harp of the Holy Spirit'; and in one of Ephraim's *Rhythms*, he prays: 'Do thou, Lord, play on my harp with all Thy edifying strains' (*Rhythm XXI*, *Morris Select Works of Ephrem* p. 175). Our Odist frequently uses this image, but without any heretical suggestion. Thus he says 'Open to me the harp of Thy Holy Spirit, that with all its notes I may praise Thee, O Lord' (Ode 14⁸), a sentence very like that just quoted from Ephraim. Cp. also Ode 7²⁰ and Ode 26³.

^b I do not cite here Ode 39, for it is doubtful if the turbulent waters of that Ode have any reference to baptism, although the language is not unlike that of Jerome,

The Living Water of our Odes is represented as a life-giving draught. But however strange it may seem to us to think thus of the baptismal waters, the early interpreters of the Gospel were not so precise in their metaphors. We need not go beyond Ephraim, who presents at every point parallels to the thought of our Odes. In one of the baptismal hymns, to which allusion has frequently been made, he has a reference to the story of Num. xx 14-21, which tells how the Edomites refused Israel a passage through their territory, with the privilege of drinking at the wells: 'To the sons of Lot Moses said, "Give us water for money, let us only pass by through your border." They refused the way and the temporal water. Lo! the Living Water freely given and the path that leads to Eden.'^a And in the same hymn (at ver. 21) Ephraim interprets the words of Christ to the Samaritan woman, 'Whoso drinketh of this water that I shall give him shall never thirst again' (John iv 14), as signifying mystically that baptism cannot be repeated—a fantastic comment, but apposite here to shew that the baptismal waters were conceived of by the early commentators as a draught for the thirsty, just as they are in our Odes.^b

Moreover, the curious phrase '*inebriated* with the living water' (Ode 11⁷) is one which is actually applied to the effects of the baptismal waters by Hilary. He expounds Ps. lxiv (lxv) 11, which runs in the Vulgate *Riuos eius inebria, multiplica gemmina eius*, 'We ourselves are thus inebriated when we receive the Holy Spirit Who is called the River,' and he proceeds to speak of the joy of the newly baptized.

The passage about Living Water in Ode 11, then, may bear a baptismal reference. But it is by no means the only allusion in this Ode to the sacrament of initiation. Another phrase from it has been quoted already: 'The Lord renewed me in His

when interpreting Ezek. xlvii 5 of the baptismal waters. The idea in Ode 39 is, perhaps, the same as that expounded by Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat. Myst.* v 17) 'Temptation is like a winter torrent, difficult to cross'. Origen uses the same image in *Ps.* xxxv (xxxvi) 8.

^a *Epiphany Hymns* vii 7.

^b Cp. St Cyprian *Ep.* lxiii 8 'quotienscumque autem aqua sola in scripturis sanctis nominatur, baptisma praedicatur, ut apud Esaiam significari videmus': and he proceeds to quote and expound in this sense Isa. xliii 18-21, xlviii 21, St John vii 37-39.

raiment and possessed me by His light' ^a (ver. 10). Let us now take its opening sentences: '*My heart was circumcised*, and its flower appeared; and grace sprang up in it; and it brought forth fruit to the Lord, for the Most High *circumcised me by His Holy Spirit*.' It is not necessary to quote a host of passages from the Fathers which liken baptism to spiritual circumcision; the idea is quite familiar to students of patristic literature. One parallel is enough, and it shall be from Cyril of Jerusalem: ἀγίῳ πνεύματι διὰ τοῦ λουτροῦ περιτεμνόμενοι.^b These are the actual words of our Odist, save that he suppresses, after his cryptic fashion, the technical term λουτρόν.

Probably another reference to spiritual circumcision may be discerned at the beginning of Ode 10, which Dr Harris translates, 'He hath *opened my heart* by His light.'

We continue our examination of Ode 11. The continual exhortation of Christian teachers to the newly baptized was that they should 'bring forth fruit', as it was the exhortation of the Baptist in the beginning^c; and thus prayers for the neophytes that they may be fruitful in good works are to be found in the baptismal *ordines*. In the Epistle of Barnabas there is a typical passage.^d The writer is recalling Old Testament foreshadowings of baptism, and he quotes Ps. i 1 ff (of the tree planted by the waterside which brings forth its fruit in due season), and Ezek. xlvii 1, 7, 12 (the passage that has already been before us when discussing Ode 6). His conclusion is τοῦτο λέγει ὅτι ἡμεῖς μὲν καταβαίνομεν εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ γέμοντες ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ ῥυποῦ, καὶ ἀναβαίνομεν καρποφοροῦντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, i. e. 'we rise up from the waters of baptism bearing fruit in the heart'. Or, as Cyril puts it, καρποφορήσωμεν τοίνυν ἀξίως.^e Let us place beside these passages the opening words of Ode 11: 'My heart was circumcised and its fruit appeared; and grace sprang up in it; and *it brought forth fruit to the Lord*.' The idea appears in several other Odes; e. g. Ode 8² 'Let your love be multiplied from the heart and even to the lips, to bring forth fruit to the Lord, living, holy'; Ode 14⁷ 'Teach

^a The striking phrase of Optatus, who calls Christ 'tunica natans in aquis', may be recalled here (*De schism. Donatist.* 5).

^b *Cat.* v 6; cp. Justin *Tryph.* 43; Basil *Orat. exhort. ad baptismum*; Aphrahat *Dem.* xii 3; and Chrysostom, who expounds Col. ii 11 as relating to baptism.

^c Matt. iii 18.

^d § 11; see above p. 9 n.

^e *Cat.* i 4.

me the Psalms of Thy truth, that I may bring forth fruit in Thee'; Ode 38¹⁸ 'He set the root and watered it and fixed it and blessed it; and its fruits are for ever'. When the patristic parallels are considered, they give good reason for concluding that the 'fruit-bearing' in the Odist's thought is the 'fruitbearing' which the baptized Christian is expected to exhibit.

Lower down in the same Ode (11¹⁴) we have another veiled allusion: 'He carried me to His Paradise,' with which we may associate 'Come into His Paradise' of Ode 20⁷. That the baptized had been, in a sense, restored to Paradise and its privileges is a frequent thought with the Eastern Fathers. Thus in his Sermon on Christ's Baptism, Gregory of Nyssa exclaims: 'The Jordan is glorified by regenerating men, and planting them in the Paradise of God; and of them, as the words of the Psalmist say, ever blooming and bearing the foliage of virtues "the leaf shall not wither" and God shall be glad receiving their fruit in due season.'^a In like manner, Paradise is described as the place of habitation of the baptized by Basil,^b who asks: *σὺ δὲ πῶς ἐπανεῴθης εἰς τὸν παράδεισον, μὴ σφραγισθεὶς τῷ βαπτίσματι*; Once again, in the Hymn of the Baptized already^c quoted from Ephraim we have: 'He opens for you His door, and bids you enter Eden (ver. 10) . . . the fruit which Adam tasted not in Paradise, this day in your mouths has been placed' (ver. 17). It is in the same spirit, and surely with the same thoughts, that our Odist goes on with his song of joy: 'He carried me to His Paradise, where is the abundance of the pleasure of the Lord; and I worshipped the Lord on account of His glory; and I said, Blessed, O Lord, are they who are planted in Thy land! and those who have a place in Thy Paradise, and they grow by the fruits of Thy trees . . . there is abundant room in Thy Paradise . . . I am altogether filled with fruit.'

We may take up next the cognate idea of *rest*^d which appears very often in the Odes. 'He gave me rest in incorruption' (Ode 11¹⁰); 'Recline on His rest' (Ode 20⁸); 'I believed, there-

^a Cp. St Cyr. Hier. *Cat.* i 4 *καταφυτεύη λοιπὸν εἰς τὸν νοητὸν παράδεισον*.

^b *Hom.* xiii 2; it is a frequent topic with Cyril Alex.

^c See above, pp. 3, 4, with the phrases of the hymn from the baptismal *Ordo* of Severus.

^d Cp. the *ὑδωρ ἀναπαύσεως* of Ps. xxii (xxiii) 2, which Theodoret interprets of baptism.

fore I was at rest, for faithful is He in whom I have believed' (Ode 28⁴); 'Rest by the fountain of the Lord' (Ode 30²); 'The truth . . . made me rest' (Ode 38⁴), are phrases which we interpret best when we place them beside the more instructive sentences, 'It suffices to know and to rest' (Ode 26¹³), and 'Where His rest is, there also am I' (Ode 3⁶). I call these instructive, because they remind us at once of what Clement of Alexandria has to say of baptism. The *locus classicus* is *Paedagogus* i 6: 'As soon as we are regenerated, we are honoured by receiving the good news of the hope of rest.' More close to the language of Ode 26 is this: 'Where faith is, there is the promise; and the consummation of the promise is rest. So that in illumination (sc. baptism) what we receive is knowledge, and the end of knowledge is rest.'^a The 'rest' of the Odes is, as with Clement, the baptismal consummation.

It should not be overlooked that this 'rest' is also conceived as the rest promised to those who take up the yoke of Christ,^b to which clear allusion is made in Ode 42⁸: 'I lifted up over them the yoke of My love: like the arm of the bridegroom over the bride, so was My yoke over those that know Me.' At the beginning of the baptismal *Ordo* of Severus, already quoted more than once, the words 'Take My yoke upon you . . . and ye shall find rest' are prescribed for recitation; and among the prayers for the Catechumens in the Liturgy of St Basil^c is this: *ὁὗς αὐτοῖς τὸν ἐλαφρόν ζυγόν*. The references to 'rest' in the Odes receive a new significance when this is borne in mind.

One other phrase in Ode 11 may be noted: 'My face received the dew' (ver. 13), with which may be compared 'Distil Thy dews upon us, and open Thy rich fountains that pour forth to us milk and honey' (Ode 4¹⁰). 'The dew of the Lord in quietness He distilled over me' (Ode 35¹). This, again, is a baptismal expression. Basil speaks of baptism as *δρόσος ψυχῆς*^d; and Lactantius^e says that as Christ saved the Jews by being circumcised, so He saves the Gentiles by baptism, i.e. 'by the perfusion of the purifying dew'.

^a This is quoted by Dr Harris, but he does not note the significance of *ἐν φωτίσματος*, or that Clement is speaking of baptism.

^b Matt. xi 29 (so Basil *Hom.* xiii 1).

^d *Hom.* xiii 2.

^c See Brightman l.c. 315.

^e *Div. Inst.* iv 15.

When all these allusions are gathered together, I submit that it has been established that Ode 11 is a baptismal Ode, and therefore that the 'living water that doth not die' is meant to describe the baptismal waters.

2. We go on next to examine the references in the Odes to a Seal, of which also Dr Harris deprecates the sacramental significance.^a

These are few in number, and their meaning is not as clear as is that of the Living Water. I shall only cite two at this point, one from Ode 4 and the other from Ode 8, neither of which would be conclusive, unless the context were carefully examined; although the description of baptism as a *σφραγίς* is so early and so frequently met with,^b that the sacramental interpretation always suggests itself.

Ode 4^{7f} is as follows:—

'For who is there that shall put on Thy grace and be hurt? ⁸ For Thy seal is known and Thy creatures know it; and Thy 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.'

Ode 8^{15f} runs:—

'I do not turn away my face from them that are mine; ¹⁶ for I know them, and before they came into being I took knowledge of them, and on their faces I set my seal: ¹⁷ I fashioned their members: my own breasts I prepared for them that they might drink my holy milk and live thereby.'

If the words of Ode 4⁸ 'the elect archangels are clad with it' represent exactly the original text (and this is always doubtful in the case of a collection of poems preserved only in one late manuscript, and that a manuscript containing a translation only), it is difficult to interpret the seal of Ode 4 of baptism, for that archangels are baptized is not, I believe, anywhere alleged.^c But there is a passage in the Catechetical Lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem, which is so like the phrasing of Ode 4⁸, that it suggests a slightly different significance for the words 'are clad'. Cyril is speaking^d

^a 1. c. p. 78.

^b See, e.g. *Hermas Sim.* ix 16 (a section from which the word *σφραγίς* is absent, just as it is from our Odes); 2 Clem. 8; and Ephraim *Epiphany Hymns* ix 6 and *passim*.

^c Unless the Valentinian doctrine quoted by Clem. Al. (*Exc. Theodot.* 22) be admitted.

^d *Cat.* i 3.

of the gift of baptism: τὴν σωτηριώδη δίδωσι σφραγίδα τὴν θαυμασίαν, ἣν τρέμουνσι δαίμονες καὶ γινώσκουσιν ἄγγελοι. That the hosts of heaven and hell recognize the power of the baptismal seal is Cyril's thought, and it is not certain that our Odist intended more than this. In one of the baptismal *ordines* printed by Assemani,^a as used in the Church of Jerusalem, the words occur: 'exercitus caelestium circumadstant baptisterio, ut ex aquis suscipiant filios Deo similes,' which would express the similar idea of the interest of the angels in the sacrament of initiation.^b

This conclusion is much strengthened if a passage from Basil's Homily on Baptism (§ 4) be compared with the words quoted above from Ode 4. There is no need, Basil says, to despair because of sin, for grace abounds. If demons draw men to evil, angels draw them to good. And as to soldiers a *tessera* is given that their friends may recognize them in the battle, so is it in the Christian conflict. Baptism is the seal, without which hardly will heavenly guardians be able to recognize the Christian soldier. πῶς ἀντιποιηθῇ σοῦ ὁ ἄγγελος; πῶς δὲ ἀφέλῃται τῶν ἐχθρῶν, ἐὰν μὴ ἐπιγνῶ τὴν σφραγίδα; πῶς δὲ σὺ ἐρεῖς, τοῦ θεοῦ εἰμὶ, μὴ ἐπιφερόμενος τὰ γνωρίσματα; This is exactly the thought set forth in Ode 4⁷⁻⁹; the 'seal' which is 'known' by the hosts of heaven is the seal of baptism, with its protecting grace.

Again, the words which follow the mention of the seal in Ode 4, 'Thou hast given us Thy fellowship; it was not that Thou wast in need of us, but that we are in need of Thee; distil Thy dew upon us,' are entirely appropriate to the thought of the baptism of Christ, by which His fellowship with man was specially asserted. 'I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?' was the question of the Baptist (Matt. iii 14). But Christ was baptized, nevertheless, says Epiphanius,^c ἵνα δείξῃ, ὅτι ἀληθινὴν σάρκα ἐνεδύσατο, ἀληθινὴν ἐνανθρώπησιν. κατερχόμενος εἰς τὰ ὕδατα, διδοὺς ἥπερ λαμβάνων, παρεχόμενος ἥπερ ἐπιδεόμενος κτλ. This is very close to the thought of Ode 4⁹.

We have, next, mention of breasts of milk in Ode 8 and of fountains of milk and honey in Ode 4, which will go far to confirm

^a *Cod. Liturg.* ii 226; cp. Cosmas l. c. 470.

^b Cp. Cyr. Hier. *Procat.* 15 ἥδη μοι χοροὺς ἀγγελικοὺς ἐννοήσατε . . . θρόνους δὲ καὶ κυριότητας λειτουργούντας: see also Tert. *de Baptismo* 4, 6.

^c *Adv. Haer.* III ii 15.

our conclusion, when the references in other Odes to *milk* are scrutinized.

Ode 19 (which speaks later on of the Virgin Birth of Christ and is therefore certainly Christian) begins thus: 'A cup of milk was offered me: and I drank it in the sweetness of the delight of the Lord. The Son is the Cup, and He who was milked is the Father: and the Holy Spirit milked Him; because His breasts were full, and it was necessary for Him that His milk should be sufficiently released; and the Holy Spirit opened her bosom and mingled the milk from the two breasts of the Father.' This is harsh and crude language, as Dr Harris observes, while he provides us with an interesting parallel from Clement of Alexandria,^a 'the milk of the Father by which only the babes are fed'. But it should be added that Clement proceeds on the same page to speak of *baptism*: 'With milk, the Lord's nutriment, we are nursed directly we are born; and as soon as we are regenerated, we are honoured by receiving the good news of the hope of rest, even the Jerusalem above, in which it is written that milk and honey fall in showers.' And, again, a little lower down: 'The Holy Spirit in the Apostle, using the voice of the Lord, says mystically, "I have given you milk to drink".^b For if we have been regenerated unto Christ, He who has regenerated us nourishes us with His own milk, the Word.' A parallel that is even more apposite for our present enquiry, as it comes from Syria and not from Alexandria, is a sentence from the Homily of Narsai on the Mysteries of the Church and of Baptism:^c 'As milk he sucks the Divine mysteries, and by degrees they lead him, as a child, to the things to come. A spiritual Mother [*sc.* the Church] prepares spiritual milk for his life; and instead of the breasts she puts into his mouth the Body and the Blood.' And again, a Poem on Easter, ascribed to Fortunatus (saec. vi), speaks of the newly baptized as 'fed with abundant milk at the Church's bosom'. This is the same thought as we have in Ode 8: 'My own breasts I prepared for them that they might drink my holy milk and live thereby'; and the key to that Ode is to recollect that the Church is the speaker, and that she is addressing the neophytes whom she has received.

^a *Paed.* i. 6.

^b 1 Cor. iii 2; cp. Iren. *Haer.* IV xxxviii 1.

^c *Hom.* xxi (c) p. 52 (Cambridge *Texts and Studies*).

The words of Ode 4¹⁰, 'Open thy rich fountains that pour forth to us milk and honey,' seem to carry an even more specific allusion. There are many traces in early Christian literature from the second century onward of a rite of administering milk and honey to the newly baptized, to symbolize their entrance into the 'land flowing with milk and honey', the land of promise which the chosen people reached after passing through the waters of Jordan. So Tertullian writes: 'inde suscepti lactis et mellis concordiam praegustamus,'^a and the passage of Clement of Alexandria just quoted should be compared.

The argument, then, which I have been elaborating in regard to Odes 4 and 8 is that their language about 'milk', 'milk and honey', fellowship with God, &c., most naturally relates to baptism, which therefore may be taken to be represented by the 'seal' of which they speak.

There is, however, an objection taken by Dr Harnack to the view that Ode 4 is in any sense a Christian Ode which requires notice. It begins thus: 'No man, O my God, changeth thy holy place; ² and it is not [possible] that he should change it, and put it in another place: because he hath no power over it: ³ for Thy sanctuary Thou hast designed before Thou didst make places: ⁴ that which is the elder shall not be altered by those that are younger than itself.' This has reference, in the view both of Dr Harris and of Dr Harnack, to the Temple at Jerusalem, and its unique claims as the Sanctuary; and the passage shews, in Dr. Harnack's opinion, that the author was a Jew and that the Temple was still standing, which would give us a date before A.D. 70 for the Ode. If this conclusion can be substantiated, it is of the highest importance for the criticism of our Odes; and there is no doubt that the language of the first four verses lends itself to such an interpretation. Yet if this be the meaning, we have here a phenomenon which does not present itself again throughout the whole collection of Odes, viz. a reference to definite times and localities. The singer praises God in all the other Odes *sub specie aeternitatis*; his songs are timeless; his thought is not bounded by the conditions of the country in which

^a *De Cor.* 3; cp. *adv. Marc.* i 14. See also *Egypt. Ch. Ord.* can. 46; *Can. Hippol.* xix; *Concil. Carthag.* iii can. 24; Jerome *ad Lucifer.* Opp. ii 180, and in *Esai.* lv. The rite is still retained in Abyssinia (*Denzinger Rit. Or.* i p. 232).

his lot is cast. And, moreover, such a view of vv. 1-4 accords very ill with what follows; ^a there is, apparently, no connexion at all with: 'One hour of thy Faith is more precious than all days and years. For who is there that shall put on Thy grace and be hurt?' That the singer should set such store by the situation of the Temple is hardly consistent with Dr Harnack's view that he everywhere appears as one for whom 'alle Vermittelungen, Ceremonien und die religiösen Apparate sind unter seinem Fusse; er ist was man heute einen *liberalen* Frommen nennen würde; . . . er ist ein mystischer Prophet'.^b I should doubt if the Odist is really quite independent of religious 'apparatus', for the heart of his thought seems to me, as I have said, to be the grace of baptism; but I find a difficulty in reconciling this view of his position with his supposed veneration for the material Temple. And hence it is natural to look about for some other explanation of words, admittedly obscure, which point that way.

May not the key to the opening verses of Ode 4 be that the Odist is thinking of the unique dignity of the *Church*, the company of the baptized, rather than of the buildings of the Jewish temple? ^c A prayer for the candidates for baptism near the beginning of the *Ordo* of Severus ^d proceeds: 'Planta eos in ovilibus haereditatis tuae, in domo illius habitationis tuae perornatae, quam erexisti in sanctuario illo quod appararunt manus tuae.' Certainly in this prayer, the sanctuary which God's hands have prepared is the Church, foreshadowed and typified in the hymn of Exod. xv 17; the sanctuary which is reached when the people, like Israel of old, have passed through the waters. That the unchangeable sanctuary of Ode 4 may be just this, and no other, is, I believe, a tenable view, and more consistent with the context than the interpretation which Dr Harnack assumes as inevitable.

Let us proceed to handle Ode 22, an Ode that is very obscure, and of which the interpretation given in *Pistis Sophia* does not help us. The subject of the singer's praise is '4 He who gave me

^a Since this article was written, Dr Barnes has printed a similar criticism on Ode 4 (*J. T. S.*, July 1910, p. 617).

^b l. c. p. 105.

^c With Ode 4³ cp. 2 Clem. 14; and also Basil in *Ps.* xxix 3.

^d See above p. 4.

authority over bonds that I might loose them ; ⁵ He that overthrew by my hands the dragon with seven heads ; and thou hast set me over his roots that I might destroy his seed'.

First let us find out who the dragon is. Dr Harris makes various suggestions as to the historical allusion involved, although as he truly says : 'dragons are difficult to identify.'^a But the explanation is ready to hand for any one who remembers the phrases of the baptismal service books. 'Collidatur caput draconis illius homicidae subter signaculum crucis' is a petition just before the *insufflatio* upon the baptismal waters in the *Ordo* already cited of Severus of Antioch. The dragon appears in like manner in the two Syrian *ordines* printed by Assemani^b; and also in the Armenian rite.^c And Cyril of Jerusalem explains to the catechumens in his Catechetical Lectures^d that the dragon with seven heads of Job xl 23 is the devil whom Christ overcame in His baptism : ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔδει συντρίψαι τὰς κεφαλὰς τοῦ δράκοντος [Ps. lxxiii (lxxiv) 13], καταβὰς ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι ἔδησε τὸν ἰσχυρόν [Matt. xii 29], ἵνα ἐξουσίαν λάβωμεν πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὀφείων [Lk. x 19]. Nor does Cyril stand alone. Methodius^e says that the dragon with seven heads of Apoc. xii is the devil who lies in wait to destroy the baptized. The point need hardly be laboured further. There is no need to search for the dragon in Greek or Roman or Egyptian history; to the Odists, as to the compilers of the baptismal offices, to Cyril and to Methodius, he is always a danger, for he is the spiritual enemy of the baptized, overcome in the Baptism of Christ Himself.

The dragon of Ode 22 being then the 'old serpent' who is vanquished in baptism, we have no difficulty in realizing that the 'bonds' which are 'loosed' at the same time that the dragon is overthrown are the bonds with which the devil binds us. Baptism says Cyril is αἰχμαλώτοις λύτρον,^f a phrase that is repeated often by the Fathers, e.g. by Gregory Nazianzen^g; it is a Ransom for captives, for those that are bound. So in other Odes, as well as in Ode 22, the singer speaks of this release. 'He had cast off my bonds from me' (Ode 21¹); 'I was rescued from my bonds' (Ode 25¹); 'He gave me . . . to lead captive a good captivity'

^a l. c. p. 119.

^c Conybeare *Rituale Armenorum* p. 101.

^e *Banquet* viii 10.

^b *Cod. Liturg.* ii 214, 226.

^d *Cat.* iii 11.

^f *Procat.* 16.

^g *Oratio* xl 3.

(Ode 10³); 'I went over all my bondmen to loose them: that I might not leave any man bound' (Ode 17¹¹).

A study of the baptismal service books will also help us with Ode 24, which begins, 'The Dove fluttered over the Messiah'. This refers, of course, to the Baptism of Christ, as Dr Harris points out.^a But the rest of the ode is obscure, and of the later part no full explanation has been offered. This is Dr Harris's translation:—

'¹The Dove fluttered over the Messiah, because He was her head; and she sang over Him and her voice was heard: ²and the inhabitants were afraid and the sojourners were moved: ³the birds dropped their wings, and all creeping things died in their holes: and the abysses were opened which had been hidden; and they cried to the Lord like women in travail: ⁴and no food was given to them, because it did not belong to them; ⁵and they sealed up the abysses with the seal of the Lord. And they perished in the thought, those that had existed from ancient times; ⁶for they were corrupt from the beginning; and the end of their corruption was life: ⁷and every one of them that was imperfect perished: for it was not possible to give them a word that they might remain: ⁸and the Lord destroyed the imaginations of all of them that had not the truth with them. ⁹For they who in their hearts were lifted up were deficient in wisdom and so they were rejected, because the truth was not with them. ¹⁰For the Lord disclosed His way, and spread abroad His grace; and those who understood it, know His holiness. Hallelujah.'

We notice, first, the reference to the Dove descending, and Dr Harris calls special attention to the verb 'to flutter' which is used, comparing the expression of Justin,^b ἐπιπτήναι ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὡς περιστρέψαν τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα. The *Ordo* of Severus, to which allusion has so often been made,^c introduces the same idea. 'Spiritus sanctitatis in similitudinem columbae *volans* descendit mansitque super caput Filii et super aquas *incubavit*.'^d

Next, it is to be observed that all the Eastern Baptismal rites bring in the idea that the waters were terrified at the coming of Christ for baptism. They quote * Ps. lxxvi (lxxvii) 17, 18 εἶδοσαν

* Dr Harnack prefers to emend the text, which he thinks may have run 'The Dove fluttered over the earth'. But this emendation is quite unnecessary, as shall see.

^b *Dial. c. Tryph.* 88.

^c Above p. 4.

^d This passage is quoted by Dr Harris (l. c. p. 86).

* It is hardly necessary to give references. The *Ordo* of Severus quotes all three passages. The first is quoted in Assemani's *Ordo Alexandr. Copt. et Ethiop.*;

σε ὕδατα καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ ἐταράχθησαν ἄβυσσοι, or Ps. cxiii (cxiv) 3 ἡ θάλασσα εἶδεν καὶ ἔφυγεν, ὁ Ἰορδάνης ἐστράφη εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω, or Ps. xxviii (xxix) 3 φωνὴ Κυρίου ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων, as forecasting the terrors inspired by the Coming of the Christ to the Jordan. In the Armenian baptismal rite printed by Mr Conybeare^a there is a prayer to Christ which takes up this thought: 'By Thy dread command *Thou didst close up the abysses* and make them fast . . . thou didst bruise the head of the dragon upon the waters.' It will be noticed how close the words which I have italicized are to ver. 5 of our Ode, as also to Ode 31¹ 'The abysses were dissolved before the Lord: and darkness was destroyed by His appearance'. Nor is this idea peculiar to the Rituals, ancient or modern; it appears in Hippolytus,^b and in Origen, who paraphrases Ps. lxxvi 17 αἱ ἄβυσσοι τὰς καταθονοὺς δύνανται δηλοῦσιν, αἰτῶντες ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ Χριστοῦ ἐταράχθησαν.

This last quotation introduces us to a new point, viz. that not only were the waters afraid, but the demons and evil spirits were scared away, which is the thought of the singer towards the end of Ode 24. Thus there is a special prayer in the baptismal *Ordo* of the Church of Jerusalem^c . . . 'fugiant itaque umbrae invisibiles et aereae, quaeso te, Domine, neque delitescat in aquis istis tenebrosus daemon'.

Is it then, having regard to these parallels, doubtful that by 'the seal of the Lord' with which the abysses were sealed up (ver. 5) the Odist means to indicate Christian baptism?

A 'seal' is also mentioned in Ode 23, but here the reference does not seem to be to the baptismal σφραγίς, although I confess that I am unable to offer any interpretation, with confidence, of this very obscure piece. Dr Harris and Dr Harnack both give it up as unintelligible, nor does Dr Barnes explain its difficulties.

This Ode tells of a sealed letter, representing the Divine thought, which was shot down from heaven. It was 'a great tablet, wholly written by the finger of God', a phrase which suggests that it was a New Commandment; it 'embraced all districts', and upon it was the Name of the Trinity. So far, these

the second in the Mass of the Catechumens in the Liturgy of Chrysostom; the third in the modern form of Blessing the Waters, and in the modern Nestorian rite.

^a *Rituale Armenorum* p. 101.

^b *De Theoph.* 2.

^c Printed by Assemani l. c. ii 228.

indications would agree with the conclusion that this Letter was the Commission to the Church of Matt. xxviii 19 'Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost'; and I am inclined to think that we are here on the right track.

Many tried to seize the letter, but failed; they were afraid and could not loose the seal. ⁹ But those who saw it went after the letter that they might know where it would be loosed, and who should read it, and who should hear it. ¹⁰ But a wheel ^a received it and came over it: ¹¹ and there was with it a sign of the Kingdom and of the Government: ¹² and everything which tried to move the wheel it mowed and cut down: ¹³ and it gathered the multitude of adversaries, and covered the rivers and crossed over and rooted up many forests and made a broad path.' That is to say, the Wheel which received the Letter moved on to victory and triumph. This would fall in with the idea that the Wheel is the Church. The Church alone could break the seal, and read the Divine message.

Even yet, however, we have not exhausted the difficulties, for ver. 14 proceeds: 'The head went down to the feet, for down to the feet ran the wheel, and that which was a sign upon it.' If the Wheel is the Church, are we to interpret the Head of Christ, and the Feet of His members—a distinction which possibly is suggested in Ode 42¹⁸? Or should we rather look for a clue in a fancy of Cyril of Jerusalem who in one place ^b represents the Deity of Christ as the Head, and His Manhood as the Feet? Either interpretation seems farfetched, although we must remember that in Christian exegesis of the early period 'anything may be the cause of anything', a maxim which I shall proceed to illustrate by a passage from Basil that provides yet another possible explanation of the Wheel.

The Greek expositors interpreted Ps. xxviii (xxix) 3 φωνὴ Κυρίου ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων of the Voice which was heard at the Baptism of Christ.^c Basil (l. c.) proceeds to connect this with the φωνὴ

^a Dr Barnes suggests that this word may mean 'sickle', and that there is some allusion to Apoc. xiv 14 f; but this does not solve our difficulties.

^b *Cat.* xii 1.

^c Hippol. *Theoph.* 7; Greg. Nyss. *De Baptismo Christi*; and Basil *Hom. in Ps. xxviii*. Cp. the use of the words at the Consecration of the water of Baptism, in the Coptic rite (Denzinger *R. O.* i p. 207), and in the Greek 'Great Consecration'.

Κυρίου which gave the Baptismal commission in the Name of the Trinity, i. e. Matt. xxviii 19. The Voice of the Lord in nature, he goes on, is thunder; and the delivery of the Gospel after baptism may also be called 'thunder': δυνατὸν δέ σοι καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἐκκλησιαστικὸν λόγον τὴν μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα γινομένην ἐκ τῆς μεγαλοφωνίας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν ἤδη τελειουμένων παράδοσω βροντὴν ὀνομάζειν. Basil says, parenthetically, that the title 'Sons of Thunder' justifies this comparison of the voice of thunder to the voice of the Gospel.^a But it is not every one who can claim that his voice is this thunder of the Gospel. It is only a man such as is alluded to in Ps. lxxvi (lxxvii) 19 φωνὴ τῆς βροντῆς σου ἐν τῷ τροχῷ,^b 'The Voice of Thy thunder is in the wheel.' The voice of the thunder of the Gospel is only in him who is worthy to be called a 'wheel', who 'presses on to the things that are before' as a wheel does, only touching earth with a little part of him. And so, for Basil, the 'wheel' of Ps. lxxvi (lxxvii) 19 is the soul inspired by the spirit of the Gospel—a curiosity of exegesis which is also found as one of Origen's alternative explanations of the τροχός of this verse, viz. τὴν καθαρὰν καὶ αἰώνιον ψυχὴν.^c

If we accept this clue from Basil, the Wheel is the devout Christian, and the reception of the Letter by the Wheel would be an allusion to the delivery of the Gospel to the catechumens. The seal upon the Letter would not be the baptismal σφραγίς, which is rather the interpretation of the 'sign of the Kingdom' that is 'with' the Wheel, the newly baptized being signed with the sign of the Cross. The difficulty in this interpretation lies in vv. 12, 13; for while the Church as a whole moves irresistibly to its final triumph, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, such language is not so applicable to the individual Christian, however devout and bold. If a patristic interpretation of the τροχός of Ps. lxxvi (lxxvii) 19 as representing the Church were forthcoming, comparable to that just now derived from Basil, the explanation of the Wheel as the Church would probably be the best available. As things are, the Ode remains obscure; but

^a All this is also in Theodoret's Commentary *in loc.*

^b This is the LXX.

^c It should be observed that this interpretation was current in the West as well as in the East. Thus Jerome (*Tract. de Ps. lxxvi*, ed. Morin *Anecdota Maredsolana* III ii 55) has: 'Rota modico quodam vestigio stat in terra, et non solum stat, sed quasi percurrit: non stat, sed tangit et praeterit; denique cum volvitur, semper ad altiora conscendit. Ita et sanctus vir,' &c.

perhaps enough has been said to shew that, whatever be its precise meaning, it deals with baptismal thoughts.

We now go back to the seal on the Letter. I suggest that this refers to the jealousy with which the deeper Christian truths were concealed from the unbaptized. 'It was not permitted to them to loose the seal,' for the *disciplina arcani* was strictly observed. To this *disciplina arcani* there is an apparent reference in Ode 8¹¹, 'Keep my secret, ye who are kept by it.' Dr Harris quotes a good parallel from Lactantius,^a but he has not explained its significance: 'nos defendere hanc (doctrinam) publice atque asserere non solemus, Deo iubente, ut quieti ac silentes arcanum eius in abdito atque intra nostram conscientiam teneamus . . . abscondi enim tegique mysterium quam fidelissime oportet, maxime a nobis, qui nomen fidei gerimus.' Of this there can be only one interpretation, viz. of the *disciplina arcani* before baptism.^b And in Cyril of Jerusalem we have an even closer parallel; it is his exhortation to the Catechumens τήρησον τὸ μυστήριον (the exact words of our Odist) τῷ μισθαποδότῃ.^c This 'secret' which is to be kept has the same reference as the 'seal' on the letter of Ode 23, viz. to the *disciplina arcani*.

Ode 17, as Dr Harris observes, is Messianic, but he has not noticed (nor has Dr Harnack) the Old Testament quotation which it contains. Vv. 8-10 are as follows: 'I opened the doors that were closed, and brake in pieces the bars of iron, but my iron melted and dissolved before me: nothing appeared closed to me: because I was the door of everything.' Now in Isa. xlv 1-3 we have: 'I will loose the loins of kings to open the doors before him and the gates shall not be shut . . . I will break in pieces the doors of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places,'^d which is obviously behind our Odist's language. These words were originally spoken of Cyrus 'the anointed', but they are applied by Lactantius explicitly to Christ, and in the section of his work in which he quotes Ode 19.^e We may, indeed,

^a *Div. Inst.* vii 26.

^b Dr Harris appositely cites a saying ascribed to Christ in Clem. Alex. *Strom.* v 10 μυστήριον ἐμὸν ἐμοὶ καὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς μου, which goes back to a Hexaplar reading in Isa. xxiv 16.

^c *Procat.* 12.

^d The LXX representing the last six words is ἀπάροvs ἀνοίξω σοι.

^e *Div. Inst.* iv 12; see p. 1 above.

go two centuries behind Lactantius. The verse from Isaiah is quoted by Barnabas in a passage already cited,^a where he is collecting Old Testament *testimonia* to baptism. Thus here, again, we are in the region of baptismal thoughts. Verses 1, 4, 11, 14 from this Ode have elsewhere been cited,^b as containing baptismal allusions, so that it is not surprising to find the Odist quoting the same passage from the Old Testament Scriptures as that which Barnabas adduces as foreshadowing the life of the baptized.

Some further allusions in our Odes to the baptismal ritual, and to early beliefs about the Sacrament, may next be marshalled, *valeant quantum*.

The first act of the baptismal ritual was the renunciation of the devil; and then the catechumens with outstretched and uplifted hands faced eastward and professed their covenant with Christ.^c To this we have repeated allusions in the Odes. 'My arms I lifted up to the Most High, even to the grace of the Lord, because He had cast off my bonds from me' (Ode 21¹); 'I stretched out my hands and approached my Lord; for the stretching of my hands is His sign' (Ode 42¹; cp. Ode 27¹); 'I spread out my hands in the lifting up of my soul' (Ode 35⁸; cp. Ode 37¹).

The time of baptism was before daybreak on Easter Day, to which Cyril alludes: 'May God at length shew you that night, that darkness which shines like the day.'^d This may be the allusion in Ode 15¹: 'As the sun is the joy to them that seek for its daybreak, so is my joy the Lord; because He is my Sun, and His rays have lifted me up, and His light hath dispelled all darkness from my face.' Cp. Ode 18⁶: 'Let not the luminary be conquered by the darkness.'

Unction was a feature of the baptismal rite.^e It is possible that this is alluded to in Ode 36⁵: 'Like His own newness He renewed me, and He anointed me from His own perfection'; but the reference is not certain.

The ceremony of the *traditio* or the delivery of the Gospel to the catechumens was called in the West 'the Opening of the Ears'^f;

^a § 11; see p. 9 n.

^b pp. 7, 21, 29.

^c Cyril *Cat. Mystag.* i 2; Jerome in *Amos* vi 14.

^d *Procat.* 15.

^e Tert. *de Bapt.* 7; Cyril *Mystag.* iii 1.

^f See Duchesne *Christian Worship* (Engl. Tr.) p. 301 for a description of this ceremony. Cp. Chrys. *Hom. 2 in 2 Cor.* 5 *ἵνα διαβολῇ τὰ ὦτα τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν* (in the litany for the catechumens; see Brightman *Litt. E. and W.* pp. 4, 471).

and perhaps there is an allusion to some rudimentary form of this at the beginning of Ode 9: 'Open your ears, and I will speak to you.' The expression is, of course, too vague to build upon, if it stood alone. But there are other phrases in Ode 9 which may be significant. It speaks of *Truth* as a crown: 'blessed are they who set it on their heads; ^a a stone of great price is it,' and it goes on to promise that 'all those who have conquered shall be *written in His book*'. Now we find in the *Testamentum Domini* that one of the first things the neophyte is taught is the Resurrection, which is described as the '*white stone* upon which is a new name' of Apoc. ii 17; and there is a prayer in the baptismal *Ordo* of Severus for those who have been called from the darkness of error to the knowledge of *the truth*, that their names may be written in *the book of life*. We are certainly, again, in the region of thoughts very appropriate to the newly baptized, as I think will be acknowledged by any one who reads through Ode 9, with its appeals and its encouragements.

Torches or tapers were placed in the hands of the newly baptized, as they moved in joyful procession. This is explicitly stated by Gregory Nazianzen,^a and Cyril of Jerusalem calls the torches *λαμπάδες νυμφαγωγίας*.^b There is, apparently, an allusion to this in Ode 25⁷: 'Thou didst set me a lamp at my right hand and at my left,' a sentence of which neither of the editors of the Odes has offered any explanation, for it explains nothing to refer to Ps. cxxxii 17. This Ode, be it remembered, is the one in which the Odist rejoices that his 'raiment of skin' has been removed, a phrase which, I believe, has been shewn to carry a quite certain baptismal reference.

There are some expressions in the Odes which seem to have reference to the supposed beneficial effect of baptism on the health of the *body*. 'Sicknesses removed from my body,' says the Odist (Ode 18³); 'my soul acquired a body free from sorrow or affliction or pains' (Ode 21³); 'thy right hand lifted me up and removed sickness from me' (Ode 25⁹); 'limbs that had fallen they (sc. the ministers of baptism) straightened and set up: they gave strength for their feebleness' (Ode 6¹⁵). That such consequences not infrequently followed baptism was believed (*inter alios*) by Augustine^c; and even in the modern Nestorian office

^a *Oratio* xl 46.^b *Procat.* I.^c *De Civ. Dei* XXII viii 4, 5.

for the administration of baptism we find such a thanksgiving as this: 'Praise be unto Thee Who hast healed the diseases of our bodies with the oil and water which Thou hast poured into our wounds, and by Thy Spirit as with a sponge hast wiped off the filth of sin from our souls.'^a

Ode 36 is treated by Dr Harnack as one of the many in the collection which contains Christian interpolations. But it is here submitted that the Ode is quite coherent and presents no difficulty, if we regard the singer as speaking throughout, not in the name of God or of Christ, but of the baptized Christian. We have already seen^b that the title 'the illuminate' (ver. 3) is one which was commonly used of the baptized; and the words which precede, though strange to modern ears, do but express the same thing: '[The Spirit] brought me forth before the face of the Lord.' In Syriac literature, it was customary to speak of the Spirit as feminine,^c as is well known. But the Spirit was also, at times, spoken of as the Mother of the baptized. Thus Ephraim sings in his crude verse^d: 'The Holy Spirit has brooded in baptism and in mystery has given birth to eagles (virgins and prelates), and to fishes (celibates and intercessors),' i. e. to the more notable of the Christian host. This is an idea similar to that which we find in the *Ordo* of Severus, where prayer is made that the baptismal waters 'sint *spiritualis* uterus nativitatis filiorum corruptionis expertium'.^e The singer of Ode 36^f is exulting in this new birth.

Allusions to baptism as a new birth may probably be found in two other places: 'I was not their brother, nor was my birth like theirs' (Ode 28¹⁴); and 'All those will be astonished that see me, for of another race am I' (Ode 41⁸).

Less recondite, but perhaps not less convincing, are, finally, the passages which speak of union with Christ (cp. Rom. vi 5): 'His members are with Him . . . I have been united to Him'

^a Badger *The Nestorians and their Rituals* ii 200.

^b p. 5 above.

^c See Burkitt *Early Eastern Christianity* p. 89.

^d *Epiphany Hymns* viii 16.

^e Cp. Cyr. *Cat. Mystag.* ii 4 τὸ σωτήριον ἐκεῖνο ὕδαρ καὶ τάφος ὑμῶν ἐγένετο καὶ μήτηρ.

^f With Ode 36⁷ 'my heart poured forth as it were a gushing stream of righteousness' we may compare Narsai (l. c. p. 40) who speaks of the 'mortal in whose mouth is set a mighty spring'.

(Ode 3⁸); 'They were to me as my own members, and I was their Head' (Ode 17¹⁴); 'they shall not be deprived of my Name for it is with them' (Ode 8²²); and we may also compare Ode 17⁴: 'I received the face and the fashion of a new person.'

My thesis, then, is that the 'Odes of Solomon' are a collection of hymns, packed with allusions to baptism, and comparable to Ephraim's Hymns on the Epiphany. The use of the word *baptism* is avoided (Ephraim does not scruple to employ it), perhaps because of the *disciplina arcani* which guarded the Christian mysteries.* But I believe that there may be found in *every* Ode some allusion to the privileges, the joys, the hopes, of the baptized, to the ceremonies of the baptismal ritual, or to the passages of the Old Testament which were believed to typify Christian baptism. I would specially direct attention to the circumstance that several of the most enigmatical phrases in the Odes are patient of explanation by this clue; e.g. the 'raiment of skin' in Ode 25, the Dragon in Ode 22, the 'circumcision', 'Paradise', and 'fruit-bearing' of Ode 11, with the quotations from Isaiah in Ode 17 and from Ezekiel in Ode 6.

Perhaps we ought to ask why these pieces are called 'Odes' in the catalogues and in *Pistis Sophia*, in contradistinction to the 'Psalms' of Solomon with which they are associated. 'Psalms' and 'Hymns' and 'Spiritual Odes' are enumerated in Eph. v 19 and Col. iii 16^b; 'Psalms' being apparently the canonical songs of the Hebrews, as contrasted with other sacred songs. But 'Odes' are not necessarily uncanonical. The 'Song of Moses' in Apoc. xv 3 and the 'Song of the Lamb' are *ᾠδαι*, and this term is regularly applied to the nine great 'Odes' or 'Canticles' of the Eastern Church. There is an interesting reference to Psalms and Odes in Eusebius,^c in an extract which is probably from Hippolytus: 'How many Psalms and Odes written by the faithful brethren from the beginning hymn Christ as the Word of God, speaking of Him as Divine.' This would serve well as a description of our collection; Odes 7, 12, 15, 16 being specially emphatic in their commemoration of the doctrine of the Word. But, although the Church naturally called these beautiful poems

* The word 'baptism', however, is rare in Syriac theological literature, the expression 'the sign' being generally used in its stead.

^b See Lightfoot *in loc.*

^c *H. E.* v. 28.

'Odes' (the same title which she gave to *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*), the original author would have made no distinction between 'Psalms' and 'Odes'. For him these 'Psalms of the Lord' (Ode 26) which are 'Psalms of Thy Truth' (Ode 14) may equally be called 'Odes of His Rest' (Ode 26).

The Syriac MS from which Dr Harris has given us these hymns is defective at the beginning, and we cannot tell what title it prefixed to the collection. But it is clear from the quotations in *Pistis Sophia* and in Lactantius that they were called 'Odes of Solomon', although why they should have been given his name is not apparent. Certainly, they have no affinity with the Judaic 'Psalms of Solomon', with which they were associated in the Stichometries, and in Dr Harris's manuscript, probably for no other reason than supposed identity of authorship.

That Solomon composed 1005 'Odes' is the statement of 1 Kings iv 32, and it was perhaps not unnatural that the Odes of the Baptized, newly admitted to the Church, of which he was believed to have sung in mystic phrases in the Song of Songs (*ᾠσμα ᾠσμητρων*), should be called after him. His authority over the demoniacal powers of evil was a Jewish belief that lingered long in Christendom, and it may even be that the virtue of 'Solomon's seal' was associated by Christian simplicity with that of the seal of baptism. But this is mere speculation. The difficulty as to the ascription of these Odes to Solomon remains, whether we regard them, with Dr Harris, as private hymns of the spirit,^a or the view of their composition which is here adopted, be accepted.

There is a rubrical direction in the *Testamentum Domini*, in the Morning Office there given,^b which not improbably contains a reference to one of our Odes. It runs: 'Let them sing Psalms and four Hymns of praise, one by Moses, and of Solomon, and of the other prophets. Thus: little singing-boys, two virgins, three deacons, three presbyters. And so let the hymn of praise be said by the bishop or by one of the presbyters.' The editor (Bishop Maclean) in his note upon this, points out that the Hymns of Moses are the well-known Songs of Exod. xv 1-21 and Deut. xxxii 1-43, while the Hymns of the prophets are pre-

^a l. c. p. 8.

^b p. 81 of the English edition by Cooper and Maclean.

sumably the Song of Isaiah (xii), the Song of Habakkuk (iii), the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii 1-10), and *Benedicite* or the Song of the Three Children. But his identification of the Hymn of Solomon to which the rubric refers, with the Canticles or Song of Songs, is very improbable. The Song of Songs is quite different in character from the other *ᾠδαί* which are mentioned; these are strictly Hymns, suitable for public worship, while the Song of Songs is not so. I suggest that it is much more likely that one of the 'Odes of Solomon' in the collection before us is indicated by the rubric in the *Testamentum Domini*. They resemble, in regard both to length and to their general tone, the other Hymns of Praise which are recommended, the *ᾠδαί* of the Eastern Churches. If this suggestion be accepted, we have here not only a hitherto unobserved reference to our Odes, but a hint of the manner in which they were used. From being chanted in this way, they became very familiar, and began to be associated with the canonical Odes of Moses and Habakkuk and the rest. This would help to explain the authoritative position which they seem to occupy in *Pistis Sophia*, as well as their inclusion in the Stichometries of the Scriptures.

Dr Harris dates these hymns (or most of them) at the end of the first, or the beginning of the second century. Ode 19 (which enters into details as to the Virgin Birth) he would be willing to put a little later. I do not think that the evidence here gathered as to their allusions to baptism helps us much in attempting to determine the date, but it is hardly consistent with the earliest age; as it is inconsistent with Dr Harnack's view of their Jewish character. How soon the *disciplina arcani* became established, and the details of the baptismal ritual fixed, it would not be easy to say, but probably by the middle of the second century at latest. And we may not be far wrong if we reckon the Odes as of the time of Justin Martyr. However, into this question I do not propose to enter now. I would only ask that the meaning and occasion of the Odes be examined in the light of the patristic parallels which are here collected.

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