

**An Early
Christian Psalter**

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BY

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P R E F A C E

THE little book from which the following extracts have been made was announced as forthcoming in the *Contemporary Review* for last April, when a brief account was given of its recovery, and some indication of its importance, both for the spiritual interpretation of Christianity and for the right understanding of the early Christian history and doctrine. Since then it has been published in a complete form, in the ancient Syriac version from which it was recovered, and with such annotations as are desired by scholars. It has, however, seemed to me that the book transcends in importance the field of attention of the scholar, and appeals, in its devotional interest, to the 'even Christian' of whom Shakespeare speaks—the man or woman 'in the street' of the spiritual city, the people who know how to sing, better than they understand how to translate an Eastern language or comment upon an ancient book. For them, therefore, these pages

have been prepared, on the assumption that they love the good music of the soul, and have fellowship with the saints therein.

Some omissions have been made from the recovered book of Psalms, on the ground that certain of the pieces did not harmonise with the spirit of devotion, and could not form a part of a perennial Psalter. It is even probable that they did not come from the same author, or authors, to whom the rest of the collection can be referred. It must be admitted, however, that even in modern hymn-writers we occasionally find the grotesque mingled with the sublime, and the commonplace thrust in amongst the inspired; only, when we are preparing a spiritual handbook, we naturally leave such fantastic, or unequal, or unworthy songs on one side, and go our way heavenward with the rest. It is certainly surprising how few compositions of a doubtful character, whether from the standpoint of literature or of spiritual insight, are contained in these Odes of Solomon. If we cannot say of them what John Wesley said of the collection of hymns produced by himself and his brother, that ‘Here you will find nothing turgid, &c.,’ we may confidently

say that we found little that was not helpful in our book, and almost nothing that had not the reek and air of Paradise. What little has been removed matters little, and this is not the place to discuss it further, nor to invite criticism upon the wisdom of the excisions. Along with the Psalms themselves—or Odes, as I think they were originally called—some brief elucidations are printed, chiefly by way of extract from the larger volume to which reference has been made. There seemed to be a necessity for some slight explanations or expansions of the sacred themes upon which the writers of the Odes were engaged; but here again the value of the compositions was seen, in that so very little sufficed by way of explanation, and that so much of what has come to us was universal Christian language and genuine mother-speech.

For the benefit of those who have not followed the earlier announcements of the book, or who may not have access to the larger volume, it may be well to state that these Odes, ascribed artificially to Solomon, have been found in a Syriac MS. in my own possession, along with an already-known collection of Psalms of Solomon. In neither case is the reference to Solomon

anything more than a transparent artifice, many instances of which occur in the Christian literature and elsewhere. In neither case are we carried back into the times of the early Jewish monarchy, for it can be shown that the Psalms of Solomon were written in Jerusalem about half a century before Christ, and I think it can also be proved that the Odes of Solomon belong to Palestine as their origin, and to a date which cannot differ much from the close of the first century after Christ. It is impossible to say whether the name 'Odes of Solomon' was attached to them by the first writer or first editor of the collection. The ascription must, however, be very early, for we find a number of the Odes quoted as from Solomon in a curious Gnostic book, which goes under the name of the *Pistis Sophia*. This strange book, so valuable to us for the precious fragments which it incorporates, cannot be dated later than the third century. The author of the book found these Odes of Solomon bound up with his Psalms of David, so the title must be very early. But neither in the case of the Odes nor of the Psalms ascribed to Solomon is the author's name to be taken seriously.

Both of the collections ascribed to Solomon are of the highest importance for the history of Messianic beliefs. In the one case you have the Messianic song before sunrise, in the other the great hope has been turned into the great reality, and 'the first low matin chirp has grown full quire.'

They are songs of the spring-time, too, as well as songs of the dark and of the dawn. When you hear them, instead of saying, 'That is the nightingale,' you will say, 'I hear a primitive Christian'—who is, indeed, the spiritual analogue of the bird that sings in the 'propitious May.' Of that song it was said that the same hath oft-times

' Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in fairy-lands forlorn.'

But these spiritual songs have the windows open for us upon our own country. Come to the casement, and you will see a land of corn and wine and oil. Here are the wide-spread joys of the kingdom of heaven. Here grow the Divine promises, by which men become holy, and here radiates Divine Grace, by which they become exultant in Christ their Lord, and rejoice in God their Saviour. Am I wrong in

hoping that this little book, unexpectedly recovered from obscurity into daylight, may be one of the means which God, in the present day, has chosen to bring to our remembrance the greatness of our calling and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints?

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ODE 1

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 livest upon my head, and Thou hast blossomed upon my head. Thy fruits are full-grown and perfect, they are full of thy salvation.

ODE 1. This Ode is not in our Syriac MS., but in the Coptic version of the *Pistis Sophia*, where it is said to be the 19th Ode of Solomon. I have identified it with the missing first Ode of our collection, on the supposition that, in the collection of Solomonian Psalms known to the author of the *Pistis Sophia*, the eighteen Psalms of Solomon stood first, and not, as in the Syriac collection, in the last place. The question is discussed, more at length, under Ode 5. The argument of the Psalm is that God is the crown of the soul, whose supreme experience is the knowledge of His truth. This crown is of the amarant variety; it fadeth not away. On the contrary, it buds and blossoms and is full of immortal fruit. The similitude is not uncommon in the book of Odes to which we have placed this Psalm as an introduction.

ODE 3. (*Beginning lost*)

. . . I put on: And his members are with him. And on them do I hang, and he loves me: for I should not have known how to love the Lord, if He had not loved me. For who is able to distinguish love, except the one that is loved. I love the Beloved, and my soul loves Him: and where His rest is, there also am I; and I shall be no stranger, for with the Lord Most High and Merciful there is no grudging. I have been united to Him, because I find love to the Beloved, and because I love Him that is the Son, that I may myself be a son; for he that is joined to Him that is immortal, will also himself become immortal; and he who is accepted in the Living One, will become living. This is the Spirit of the Lord, which doth not lie, which teacheth the sons of men to know His ways. Be wise and understanding and vigilant. Hallelujah.

ODE 3. This Psalm, of which the first verses have disappeared along with the leaves that contained the first two Psalms, is evidently a Christian product; the author is a mystic with a doctrine, or rather an experience, of union with the Son. With him his whole nature has become mingled, as water is mixed with wine. In Pauline language, he has been joined to the Lord, and has become one spirit with him.

In Johannine language, because the beloved lives, he himself lives also. He has, at least in hope and faith, attained immortality through union with the Living One. The name here given to Christ is very ancient; it has been detected by the Revisers of the English New Testament in the Apocalypse ('I am the Living One'), and it is found in the opening sentences of the Sayings of Jesus, recovered in recent years from Egypt: ('these are the words . . . which Jesus the Living One spake,' etc.)

Other Johannine touches are the doctrine that 'we love Him because He first loved us.' For the Psalmist tells us that 'he should not have known how to love the Lord if the Lord had not loved him.'

ODE 4

No man, O my God, changeth thy holy place; and it is not [possible] that he should change it and put it in another place: because he hath no power over it: for thy sanctuary thou hast designed before thou didst make [other] places: that which is the elder shall not be altered by those that are younger than itself. Thou hast given thy heart, O Lord, to thy believers: never wilt thou fail, nor be without fruits: for 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? For thy seal is known: and thy creatures know it:

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and thy [heavenly] hosts possess it: and the elect archangels are clad with it. 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 dews upon us and open thy rich fountains that pour forth to us milk and honey: for there is no repentance with thee that thou shouldest repent of anything that thou hast promised: and the end was revealed before thee: for what thou gavest, thou gavest freely: so that thou mayest not draw them back and take them again: for all was revealed before thee as God, and ordered from the beginning before thee: and thou, O God, hast made all things. Hallelujah.

ODE 4. This Psalm is one of the most important in the whole collection, on account of the historical allusion with which it commences. The reference to an unsuccessful attempt to alter the site of the Sanctuary of the Lord can only be explained by some unknown movement to carry on the Jewish worship outside the desolated and proscribed sanctuary, or by the closing of the Jewish temple at Leontopolis in Egypt, which was, perhaps, itself in the first instance built under the pressure of the situation which resulted in the desecration of the temple at Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes. As the latter explanation leans on fact, rather than on hypothesis, we may accept it provisionally as the real interpretation of our Psalm, which is thus dated soon after

A.D. 73, when the temple of Onias was closed and dismantled by the Romans. The writer of the Psalm, if not of Jewish origin, is, at least, Jewish in sympathy : he holds the Jewish belief that the Sanctuary at Jerusalem was older than the world in which it stood ; it was, according to Rabbinic teaching, prior to all other created things : thus we find in *Bereshith Rabbah* that 'seven things were created before the world—Thorah, Gehenna, the Garden of Eden, the Throne of Glory, *the Sanctuary*, Repentance and the name of Messiah.' The proofs of these pre-existent creations can easily be made from the Scriptures : *e.g.* 'the Lord God had planted a garden in Eden *from afore-time*' (Gen. ii. 8), and so on. The matter is discussed with some detail in *Pirke Aboth* vi. 10 : 'Five possessions possessed the Holy One, blessed is He, in His 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, even to this mountain, which His right hand had possessed (Ps. lxxviii. 54).' This Rabbinical belief has affected the mind of our Psalmist, who comments upon the fall of the Egyptian temple unsympathetically, and evidently has his heart set amongst the ruins of the Sanctuary at Jerusalem. He does not think the covenant between God and the people of Israel is disannulled ; all God's promises are irrevocable ; his gifts and callings are without repentance on his part. But there

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are no lamentations on the part of the writer over the ruins of Jerusalem; the temple which is in his thoughts has not developed a wailing-place. God has sealed His own people with the marks of His ownership. All creation, and both worlds, recognise this seal. And He is able to pour out blessings on His chosen, comparable to the dew of heaven, and the milk and honey of the earth. If we please, we may definitely call it a Judaeo-Christian Psalm: and it might very well have been composed by one of the refugees at Pella. It is not easy to see how it could have been written outside Palestine, nor by a purely Jewish hand.

There are no Scripture references; perhaps the nearest parallel is Rom. xi. 29 ('the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.')

ODE 5

I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, because I love thee; O most High, thou wilt not forsake me, for thou art my hope: freely I have received thy grace, I shall live thereby. My persecutors will come and not see me: a cloud of darkness shall fall on their eyes; and an air of thick gloom shall darken them: and they shall have no light to see: that they may not take hold upon me. Let their counsel become thick darkness, and what they have cunningly devised, let it return upon their own heads: for they have devised a counsel, and it did not succeed: they have prepared

themselves for evil, and were found to be empty. For my hope is upon the Lord, and I will not fear, and because the Lord is my salvation, I will not fear: and he is as a garland on my head and I shall not be moved; even if everything should be shaken, I stand firm; and if all things visible should perish, I shall not die: because the Lord is with me and I am with Him. Hallelujah.

ODE 5. The interest of this Psalm lies in the fact that at this point we begin to strike the region of coincidences with the Gnostic book, known as the *Pistis Sophia*. The Ode has been used, apparently, in the composition of two Odes or Prophecies of Solomon, quoted respectively by Salome and the Virgin.

Salome recites nearly the whole of the Ode, with some slight variations and expansions: and it is possible that one or two clauses may be missing in the Syriac and may be capable of restoration from the Coptic.

The remaining portion of the Ode before us appears, at first sight, from the parallelism of the first sentence, to be the same as what is given in the *Pistis Sophia* as the recitation of the Virgin from the 19th Ode of Solomon. But we have suggested that the supposed 19th Ode of the Coptic writer is the first of our collection, and that it followed on the eighteen Psalms of Solomon.

Whether this fifth Ode is Christian or not, does not appear decisively at the first reading. It opens in a rather Jewish strain of praise, accompanied by prayer for the discomfiture of

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enemies. If there is a definite Christian feature, perhaps it is the garland upon the singer's head, which appears in several other Odes. In the 17th Ode, for example, we get the same figure, and here the theme is the praise of the Messiah for His triumph over Hades. This must, of course, be Christian.

The crown is a crown of life—that is, a living crown or garland: and this meaning is carefully brought out in the Coptic Ode, which explains that the crown does not wither, but (like Aaron's rod), it buds and bears fruit. We have similar allusions and explanations to the crown of life in the New Testament, as in 1 Pet. v. 4—'a crown of glory, *or* glorious crown, which does not fade away.' 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. It may be regarded as a Christian composition, on account of its affinity with other Odes that are certainly Christian, as well as on account of its intrinsic spiritual value.

ODE 6

As the hand moves over the harp, and the strings speak, so speaks in my members the Spirit of the Lord, and I speak by His love. For He destroys everything foreign, and everything that is bitter: for thus it was from the beginning and will be to the end, that nothing should be His adversary, and nothing should stand up against Him. The Lord has multiplied the knowledge of Himself, and is zealous that

these things should be known, which by His grace have been given to us. And the praise of His name He gave us. Our spirits praise His holy Spirit. For there went forth a stream and became a river great and broad; for it flooded and broke up everything and it brought [water] to the temple: and the restrainers of the children of men were not able to restrain it, nor the arts of those whose business it is to restrain waters; for it spread over the face of the whole earth, and filled everything: and all the thirsty upon earth were given to drink of it; and thirst was relieved and quenched: for from the Most High the draught was given. Blessed then are the ministers of that draught who are intrusted with that water of His: they have assuaged the dry lips, and the will that had fainted they have raised up; and souls that were near departing they have caught back from death: and limbs that had fallen they straightened and set up: they gave strength for their feebleness and light to their eyes: for every one knew them in the Lord, and they lived by the water of life for ever. Hallelujah.

ODE 6. In this Psalm again we are fortunate in having a large part of the Coptic text preserved to us. What is described in the Psalm is 'the preaching of the Gospel which

no human effort can avail to hinder.' We must also recognise a reference to the waters in Ezekiel which go forth from the temple. But there is a suggestive difference in our Psalm from the parable in Ezekiel: in the Syriac text the stream appears to rise elsewhere than in the temple, and part of its function is to water the temple. It is a river deep and broad before it reaches the temple. If this be what is intended, then the restrainers who build dykes to keep waters out or cisterns to keep them in are very likely the temple officials themselves, who were often hard put to it to hinder the propaganda of the new religion within the limits of the Holy Place.

The writer is exultant in his universalism; the stream of living water has gone out into all the earth: thirsty souls everywhere have been refreshed by it: dying souls have been revived.

The writer is as universal as St. Paul. But he is not so detached from Judaism as not to know that the living water was connected with the temple. Perhaps, then, he is a Judaeo-Christian of an enlightened type. Some things seem to intimate the presence of Johannine phraseology and ideas. The Johannine features, however, do not appear to us to be directly due to the Gospel: if such a long composition had been under Johannine influence, it would have betrayed its ancestry more definitely. Neither here nor elsewhere does it seem possible definitely to convict the Psalms of having borrowed from St. John. On the other hand there is one expression which recalls a sentence in 1 Cor., where the writer says that God is zealous 'that those things should be known, which have been given us by His grace': this is very like 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'that we may know the things

that have been freely given us of God.' Whether the coincidence should be pressed will depend to some extent upon the existence of further and similar echoes of New Testament speech.

ODE 7

As the impulse of anger against evil, so is the impulse of joy over what is lovely, and brings in of its fruits without restraint. My joy is the Lord and my impulse is toward Him: this is my excellent path: for I have a helper, the Lord. He has caused me to know Himself, without grudging, by His simplicity: the greatness of His kindness has humbled me. He became like me, in order that I might receive Him: He was reckoned like myself in order that I might put Him on; and I trembled not when I saw Him: because He is my salvation. Like my nature He became that I might learn Him and like my form, that I might not turn back from Him: the Father of knowledge is the word of knowledge: He who created wisdom is wiser than His works: and He who created me, when yet I was not, knew what I should do when I came into being: wherefore He pitied me in His abundant grace: and granted me to ask from Him and to receive from His sacrifice: because He it is that is

incorrupt, the fulness of the ages and the Father of them.

He hath given Him to be seen of them that are His, in order that they may recognise Him that made them : and that they might not suppose that they came of themselves. For He hath appointed to knowledge its way, He hath widened it and extended it ; and brought it to all perfection ; and set over it the traces of His light, and it goeth from the beginning even to the end. For by Him it was wrought, and it was resting in the Son, and for its salvation He will take hold of everything : and the Most High shall be known in His Saints, 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 with joy and with the harp of many tones. The seers shall come before Him and they shall be seen before Him, and they shall praise the Lord for His love : because He is near and beholdeth, and hatred shall be taken from the earth, and along with jealousy it shall be drowned : for ignorance has been destroyed, because the knowledge of the Lord has arrived. They who make songs shall sing the grace of the Lord Most High ; and they shall bring their songs, and their heart shall be like the day : and

like the excellent beauty of the Lord their pleasant song. And there shall neither be anything that breathes without knowledge, nor any that is dumb: for He has given a mouth to His creation, to open the voice of the mouth towards Him, to praise Him: confess ye His power, and show forth His grace. Hallelujah.

ODE 7. In this Psalm the writer dilates joyfully on the theme of the Incarnation, and the combination of lowliness and wisdom that are involved therein. The condescension of Christ to human form is not only a sympathetic approach to human conditions, it is also a divine welcome. He says 'Come unto me' by coming unto us. 'Like my nature He became that I might learn of Him.'

But the incarnate Messiah is still the maker and sustainer of all things, in whom all things consist. The knowledge of this revelation produces praise and expectation—praise for those who sing His advent, expectation for those who look for His triumphant rule among men. All evil is to pass away, and all hate. The saints who sing are already exulting in the new life which He has bestowed upon them.

ODE 8

Open ye, open ye your hearts to the exultation of the Lord; and let your love be multiplied from the heart and even to the lips, to bring forth fruit to the Lord, living fruit, holy fruit; and to talk with

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watchfulness in His light. Rise up, and stand erect, ye who sometime were brought low : tell forth, ye who were in silence, that your mouth has been opened. Ye, therefore, that were despised, be henceforth lifted up, because your righteousness has been exalted. For the right hand of the Lord is with you : and He is your helper : and peace was prepared for you, before ever your war was. Hear the word of truth, and receive the knowledge of the Most High. Your flesh has not known what I am saying to you : neither have your hearts known what I am showing to you. Keep my secret, ye who are kept by it. Keep my faith, ye who are kept by it. And understand my knowledge, ye who know me in truth. Love me with affection, ye who love : for I do not turn away my face from them that are mine ; for I know them, and before they came into being, I took knowledge of them, and on their faces I set my seal : I fashioned their members : my own breasts I prepared for them that they might drink my holy milk and live thereby. I took pleasure in them and am not ashamed of them : for my workmanship are they and the strength of my thoughts : who then shall rise up against my handiwork, or who is there that is not subject to them ? I willed and

fashioned mind and heart: and they are mine, and by my own right hand I set my elect ones: and if my righteousness had not been before them . . . and they shall not be deprived of my name: for it is with them. Ask and abound, and abide in the love of the Lord, and ye beloved ones in the Beloved: those who are kept, in Him that liveth: and they that are saved in Him that was saved. And ye shall be found incorrupt in all ages to the name of your Father. Hallelujah.

ODE 8. This Psalm again is Johannine in many of its ideas and expressions. But, even when this is conceded, it is difficult to prove a direct dependence on the Fourth Gospel.

The Psalm is, like a number of others, marked by a sudden transition of personality from the Psalmist or Prophet to the Lord Himself: after the writer has addressed those who have been lifted up out of affliction and have found peace after war, he suddenly, in prophetic manner, cries out, 'Hear the word of the Lord,' 'Receive the heavenly knowledge,' and then proceeds to speak in the person of the Lord. The same abrupt transitions are found in the canonical Psalter, and they appear to have characterised the Montanist inspirations. It will be remembered that Montanus describes his own spiritual exaltation in the words: 'Behold! the man is as a lyre, and I sweep over him as the plectrum. The man sleeps and I wake. Behold! it is the Lord, who estranges the souls of men from themselves, and gives men souls.' The same address by the Lord in the first person is in the utterance of Maximilla, the Montanist prophetess, who said, 'I am chased as a wolf from

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the midst of the flock. I am no wolf ; I am word, and spirit, and power.'

The language of Montanus finds a close parallel in the opening of the sixth Psalm, where the writer says, 'As the hand moves over the harp, and the strings speak, so speaks in my members the Spirit of the Lord.' This might easily be claimed as a Montanist utterance, and I can imagine that on account of these and similar sayings, the whole Psalter might be claimed as a Montanist product. But the sentiments are simply Christian, on a high experimental plane ; and we must not forget that one of the chief characteristics of Montanism is its attempt to perpetuate the life of the primitive Church. Towards the end of the Psalm the prophet returns abruptly to speech in his own name. There seems to be some breach of continuity in the discourse, as well as a change of personality, and I have suggested that a sentence has dropped in the Syriac text.

I do not know whether the allusion to an actual war, from which the saints have emerged or escaped, is to be taken literally. If it be a literal, and not a spiritual reference, the choice will lie between the Jewish war under Titus or that under Hadrian ; in either case we should be in Judaeo-Christian circles. It is, however, quite possible that the 'war' and the 'peace' refer only to spiritual experiences.

ODE 9

Open your ears and I will speak to you. Give me your souls, that I may also give you my soul, the word of the Lord and His good pleasures, the

holy thought which He has devised concerning His Messiah. For in the will of the Lord is your salvation, and His thought is everlasting life; and your end is immortality. Be enriched in God the Father, and receive the thought of the Most High. Be strong and be redeemed by His grace. For I announce to you peace, to you His saints; that none of those who hear may fall in war, and those again who have known Him may not perish, and that those who receive may not be ashamed. An everlasting crown for ever is Truth. Blessed are they who set it on their heads. A stone of great price it is; and there have been wars on account of the crown. And righteousness hath taken it and hath given it to you. Put on the crown in the true covenant of the Lord. And all those who have conquered shall be written in His book. For their book is victory which is yours. And she, (Victory) sees you before her and wills that you shall be saved. Hallelujah.

ODE 9. This Psalm is, from a historical point of view, somewhat colourless. The only definite points are the allusions to the Lord's Messiah, or Christ: and a promise of peace and deliverance from war, which is made to the

saints. Of the first of these allusions, we may say that while it makes the Psalm a Messianic one, this does not mean that it is not Christian. The promise of everlasting life which follows must be the holy thought of God concerning the Christ. And this seems to definitely mark out the Psalm as Christian.

What, then, are we to say of the wars and victory to which the Psalm refers; are they spiritual or are they outward, or a mixture of both? We shall have the same problem before us in other Psalms. From the fact that Victory is personified and writes a book, with which we may compare Apoc. iii. 5 ('He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name from the book of life'), we may perhaps conclude that the Victory spoken of is a spiritual one. This is in harmony with the references to redemption by grace and to the will of Victory that the saints should be saved. These are Christian expressions. On the other hand, the promise that none of those who obey the Lord's word shall fall in war might have been very strikingly illustrated in the case of the Christians who escaped to Pella. But even then the Psalm is a Christian one, and it remains an open question whether outward allusions may not have been coupled with inward victories.

ODE 10

The Lord hath directed my mouth by His word :
and He hath opened my heart by His light. And
He hath caused to dwell in me His deathless life ;

and gave me that I might speak the fruit of His peace : to convert the souls of them who are willing to come to Him : and to lead captive a good captivity for freedom. I was strengthened and made mighty and took the world captive ; and it became to me for the praise of the Most High, and of God my Father. And the Gentiles¹ were gathered together who were scattered abroad. And I was unpolluted by my love for them, because they confessed me in high places : and the traces of the light were set upon their heart : and they walked in life and were saved and became my people for ever and ever. Hallelujah.

ODE 10. In this vigorous little Psalm Christ must Himself be accounted the speaker through the mouth of His prophet ; unless we should prefer to say that any of the opening sentences are spoken in the Psalmist's own name, and that after them there is an abrupt alteration of personality, such as we have already referred to. It is certain, however, that the one who gathers the peoples together by his love must be the Messiah : '(unto him shall the gathering of the peoples be²).' And it can be no psalmist or prophet who declares that the Gentiles became his people for ever and ever. The one who goes forth to lead captivity captive is again the Christ : we have in the New Testament (Eph. iv. 8) the Messianic interpretation of Ps. lxxviii. 18, 'He

¹ Christ has accepted the Gentiles.

² Gen. xlix. 10.

ascended up on high, he led captivity captive'; and the same explanation underlies the Ode before us. The Ode is, therefore, a Christian one: and its soteriology is universal in character. But we are still in the region where apologetic is necessary for the reception of the Gentiles, and where it does not suffice to quote a verse of the Old Testament and say that such reception was foretold. In our Ode Christ explains that the reception of the Gentiles has not polluted Him. Such language does not belong to the Hellenic world, nor, we think, to the second century. But it is quite natural in a Judæo-Christian community in Palestine in the first century.

ODE II

My heart was cloven and its flower appeared; and grace sprang up in it: and it brought forth fruit to the Lord. For the Most High clave my heart by His Holy Spirit and searched my affection towards Him: and filled me with His love. And His opening of me became my Salvation; and I ran in His way in His peace, even in the way of truth: from the beginning and even to the end I acquired His knowledge: and I was established upon the rock of truth, where He had set me up: and 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; and my

inebriation was not one without knowledge, but I forsook vanity and turned to the Most High my God. And I was enriched by His bounty, and I forsook the folly which is diffused over the earth; and I stripped it off and cast it from me: and the Lord renewed me in His raiment, and possessed me by His light, and from above He gave me rest in incorruption; and I became like the land which blossoms and rejoices in its fruits; and the Lord was like the Sun shining on the face of the land; He lightened my eyes, and my face received the dew; and my nostrils enjoyed the pleasant odour of the Lord; and 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! And they have changed from darkness to light! Behold! all thy servants are fair, who do good works, and turn away from wickedness to the pleasantness that is thine. And they have turned back the bitterness of the trees from them, when they were planted in thy land; and everything became like a relic of thyself, and a memorial for ever of thy faithful works.

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For there is abundant room in thy Paradise, and nothing is useless therein; I am altogether filled with fruit; glory be to Thee, O God, the delight of Paradise for ever. Hallelujah.

ODE 11. This lovely Psalm is altogether personal and experimental: the writer describes the visitations of Divine Grace, which he calls the cutting open of his heart, and his establishment upon the rock of eternal truth. He is renewed by these visitations, as if he had been newly clad in light and had already reached the eternal rest. He becomes like a land that drinks in the dew of heaven, and brings forth fruit to God. He finds himself at last in the Paradise of God and amongst the fragrant trees of a new creation. He breaks out into exultant praise of the good things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

There are no scriptural references in the Psalm that can be claimed as quotations, however closely the language approximates to that of the ancient Scriptures. Perhaps the nearest parallel would be the promise in Apoc. ii. 7, that the one who overcomes, shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

ODE 12

He hath filled me with words of truth; that I may speak the same; and like the flow of waters flows truth from my mouth, and my lips show forth His fruit. And He has caused His knowledge to abound in me, because the mouth of the Lord is

the true Word, and the door of His light; and the Most High hath given it to His worlds, [worlds] which are the interpreters of His own beauty, and the repeaters of His praise, and the confessors of His counsel, and the heralds of His thought, and the chasteners of His servants. For the swiftness of the Word is inexpressible, and like its expression is its swiftness and force. And its course knows no limit. Never doth it fail, but it stands sure, and it knows not decline nor the way of it. For as its work is, so is its end: for it is light and the dawning of thought; and by it the worlds talk one to the other; and in the Word there were those that were silent; and from it came love and concord; and they spake one to the other whatever was theirs; and they were penetrated by the Word; and they knew Him who made them, because they were in concord; for the mouth of the Most High spake to them; and His explanation ran by means of it. For the dwelling-place of the word is man: and its truth is Love. Blessed are they who by means thereof have understood everything, and have known the Lord in His truth. Hallelujah.

ODE 12. This Psalm rises to a high level of spiritual thought, but for that very reason its language is occasionally

obscure. The writer describes his own inspiration and how his heart and lips become filled with the words of God. Here, as elsewhere, God's fruit is found in the lips of the faithful, and we are often reminded in these Psalms of the expression which is borrowed in Heb. xiii. 15, from the prophet Hosea,¹ about offering to God the 'fruit of lips that confess to His name.' From the general thought of the words of God, the writer rises to the abstract idea of the Word of God, or Logos, which is the totality of God's revelation and which interpenetrates all things, so that even things that are silent find their speech in it. But especially this Word, which is both truth and love, finds its dwelling-place in man. Happy are they that have come to know Him. Here, perhaps, we are nearer to Gnostic ideas, such as the doctrine of the Word and the Silence, than in any other part of the Psalter : yet there is nothing that can fairly be called Gnostic. We are also very close to the doctrine of the Logos as we have it in John, where the Logos becomes flesh and dwells amongst us : but it is not the Johannine thought of the Incarnation that is imitated or reproduced. The dwelling of the Logos with man is personal and not collective ; and we cannot infer from this Psalm a direct statement of the doctrine of Incarnation, for the writer does not go beyond Inspiration ; but his thought is noble, even if, as we have said, it is sometimes obscure, at least in a translation.

ODE 13

Behold ! the Lord is our mirror : open the eyes
and see them in Him : and learn the manner of your

¹ Hos. xiv. 2.

face : and tell forth praises to His spirit : and wipe off the filth from your face : and love His holiness, and clothe yourselves therewith : and be without stain at all times before Him. Hallelujah.

ODE 13. This strange little Psalm is an exhortation to holiness : we are to behold the Lord in the beauty of His holiness, but we are also to see ourselves reflected in God as in a mirror ; then we shall behold our natural face in an unexpected glass and know what manner of men we are : and in that glass we shall cleanse the dirt from off our faces, and attain to purity. We are reminded of St. Paul's statement that we behold, as in a mirror, the glory of our Lord and are transfigured into the same image ; though here the thought is not as high as in Corinthians, where holiness is found by the Vision of God rather than by the scrutiny of ourselves.

ODE 14

As the eyes of a son to his father, so are my eyes, O Lord, at all times towards Thee. For with Thee are my consolations and my delight. Turn not away Thy mercies from me, O Lord : and take not Thy kindness from me. Stretch out to me, O Lord, at all times Thy right hand : and be my guide even unto the end, according to Thy good pleasure. Let me be well-pleasing before Thee, because of Thy glory and because

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of Thy name: Let me be preserved from evil, and let Thy meekness, O Lord, abide with me, and the fruits of Thy love. Teach me the Psalms of Thy truth, that I may bring forth fruit in Thee. And open to me the harp of Thy Holy Spirit, that with all its notes I may praise Thee, O Lord. And according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, so Thou shalt give to me; and hasten to grant our petitions; and Thou art able for all our needs. Hallelujah.

ODE 14. In this Psalm the canonical Psalter is somewhat more closely imitated than is generally the case with our collection. The opening sentences recall Ps. cxxiii. 2, 'As the eyes of servants to the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so are our eyes to the Lord our God.' The prayer that the Lord will be 'my guide even to the end,' recalls Ps. xlviii. 14, 'This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.' But the Psalm is by no means a cento from the canonical Psalter, even though it does not contain anything that could, at the first reading, be definitely labelled as Christian.

ODE 15

As the sun is the joy to them that seek for the 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. In Him I have acquired eyes and have seen His holy day : ears have become mine and I have heard His truth. The thought of knowledge has been mine, and I have been delighted by means of it. The way of error I have left, and have walked towards Him and have received salvation from Him, without grudging. And according to His bounty He has given to me, and according to His excellent beauty He hath made me. I have put on incorruption through His name : and have put off corruption by His grace. Death hath been destroyed before my face : and Sheol has been abolished by my word : and there has 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.

ODE 15. This beautiful Psalm, like so many others in the collection, opens with a similitude : these openings are characteristic of the book, and betray a single writer. This does not mean that they do not sometimes imitate the opening of the canonical Psalms. In the present case the 130th Psalm seems to have furnished the key-note, viz. the watchers for the morning. It is an experimental Psalm of the first order : the Sun has risen upon the soul of the writer. Eyes, ears, and heart have all been opened. Salvation has been

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realised : the comeliness of the Lord has been put upon him : death has lost its terrors, the grave its power.

There is one passage which is either obscure, incorrect, or extravagant, where the writer says that 'Sheol has been abolished at my word.' Unless there has been a transition of personality, this seems extravagant, and invites the correction 'has been abolished at His word.' In any case, I think the Psalm is a Christian one, though the positive or dogmatic identifications are not forthcoming, apart from the victory over death and the grave.

ODE 16

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 : 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. For my love is the Lord, and therefore I will sing unto Him : for I am made strong in His praise, and I have faith in Him. I will open my mouth and His spirit will utter in me the glory of the Lord and His beauty ; the work of His hands and the operation of His fingers : the multitude of His mercies and the strength of His word. For the word of the Lord searches out all things, both the invisible and that which reveals His thought. For

the eye sees His works, and the ear hears His thought. He spread out the earth and He settled the waters in the sea : He measured the heavens and fixed the stars : and He established the creation and set it up : and He rested from His works : and created things run in their courses, and do their works : and they know not how to stand and be idle ; and His heavenly hosts are subject to His word. The treasure-chamber of the light is the Sun, and the treasury of the darkness is the night : and He made the Sun for the day that it may be bright, but night brings darkness over the face of the land ; and their alternations one to the other speak the beauty of the Lord : and there is nothing that is without the Lord ; for He was before any thing came into being ; and the worlds were made by His word, and by the thought of His heart. Glory and honour to His name. Hallelujah.

ODE 16. This Psalm is in its closing sentences specifically Christian, and it is clearly from the same author as those that have immediately preceded. The theme is the beauty of God's creation ; especially the writer considers the heavens which are the works of God's fingers, he contemplates the 'spacious firmament on high.' We frequently catch refrains from the story of Creation. But curiously the writer appears to avoid the mention of the moon : instead

of saying that God appointed the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night, he says that 'the treasury of the light is the sun, and the treasury of the darkness is—the night': and he tries to work out this broken parallel by a further statement about the offices of the sun and the darkness. It would be, perhaps, too much to assume that he had some reason for neglecting the moon: but the omission is curious. The Psalm is certainly a beautiful one, especially in its opening verses. These find an appropriate parallel in Clement of Alexandria, who tells us: 'We do not force the horse to plough nor the bull to hunt, but we allure each species of animal to the craft that suits it. So we also invite man to the vision of the open heaven, and to the knowledge of God, because he is of celestial birth. . . . Plough, indeed, if ploughman thou be, but know God while thou plougest: sail, if thou love to voyage the seas, but make thy appeal to the steersman on high.'

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 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 may 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, there-

fore, as you were born, do not keep sabbath or practise 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 worlds 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.’

The writer, then, is a Christian of the type of Justin Martyr, who accepts the Gospel without the obligation of the Law, and makes a quiet intimation of the position which he takes towards the stricter Judaism. But we notice, further, that the argument which underlies his verse is older than Justin Martyr; it is contained in the reply of the ancient Christian whom Justin consulted on the question of sabbath and circumcision; he calls it a Divine word or Oracle. It may, then, have come from some early Christian handbook; but, whether this be the case or not, it is a dictum of the first century; for the very old man who talked with Justin was not inventing a solution for immediate perplexities, but giving him a rule which prevailed in the Church to which he belonged.

So it seems clear that the Ode is really Christian, and that its Christianity is of a very early type, to judge from the arguments involved in it.

ODE 17

I was crowned by my God : my crown is living : and I was justified in my Lord : my incorruptible salvation is He. I was loosed from vanity, and I was not condemned : the choking bonds were cut off by His hands : I received the face and the fashion of a new person : and I walked in it and was saved ; and the thought of truth led me on. And I walked after it and did not wander. And all that have seen me were amazed : and I was regarded by them as a strange person. And He who knew and brought me up is the Most High in all His perfection. And He glorified me by His kindness, and raised my thought to the height of His truth. And from thence He gave me the way of His precepts and I opened the doors that were closed, and brake in pieces the bars of iron ;¹ but my iron melted and dissolved before me ; nothing appeared closed to me : because I was the door of everything. And I went over all my bondmen to loose them ; that I might not leave any man bound or binding : and I imparted my knowledge without grudging : and my prayer was in my love : and I

¹ Ps. cvii. 16.

sowed my fruits in hearts, and transformed them into myself: and they received my blessing and lived; and they were gathered to me and were saved; because they were to me as my own members and I was their head. Glory to Thee our head, the Lord Messiah. Hallelujah.

ODE 17. This Psalm is one that we alluded to above in connection with 'the crown of life' that has been put upon the writer's head. That it is a Christian Psalm is evident: the Messiah or Christ is definitely referred to, and he is spoken of as being to believers in the relation of the head to the members. But we have again in this Psalm the peculiar change of personality: this time it comes so imperceptibly that we might be tempted to doubt the reality of the transition, if it were not for the abruptness of the return from it at the close of the Psalm. The breaking of the bars of iron must surely refer to the Messiah: it need not be an allusion to the descent into Hades; for the problem of liberation of souls is stated in general terms: all men are to be free; there is to be no more one that binds and one that is bound. The transformation of believers into Christ's nature is also referred to: 'I transformed them into myself . . . they became my own members.'

ODE 18

My heart was lifted up in the love of the Most High and was enlarged: that I might praise Him for His name's sake. My members were strengthened

that they might not fall from His strength. Sicknesses removed from my body, and it stood to the Lord by His will. For His Kingdom is true. O Lord, for the sake of them that are deficient do not remove Thy word from me! Neither for the sake of their works do Thou restrain from me Thy perfection! Let not the luminary be conquered by the darkness; nor let truth flee away from falsehood. Thou wilt appoint me to victory; our Salvation is Thy right hand. And Thou wilt receive men from all quarters, and Thou wilt preserve whosoever is held in evils: Thou art my God. Falsehood and death are not in Thy mouth: but Thy will is perfection; and vanity Thou knowest not, nor does it know Thee. And error Thou knowest not, neither does it know Thee. And ignorance appeared like a blind man, and like the foam of the sea; and they supposed of that vain thing that it was something great; and they too came in likeness of it and became vain; and those have understood who have known and meditated; and they have not been corrupt in their imaginations; for such were in the mind of the Most High; and they mocked at them that were walking in error; and they spake truth from the inspiration which the Most High breathed

into them. Praise and great comeliness to His name.
Hallelujah.

ODE 18. 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 on the wave 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. There are no definitely Christian features in the Psalm.

ODE 20

I am a priest of the Lord, and to Him I do priestly service: and to Him I offer the sacrifice of His thought. For His thought is not like the thought of the world nor the thought of the flesh, nor like them that work carnally. The sacrifice of the Lord is righteousness, and purity of heart and lips. Present your reins before Him blamelessly: and let not thy heart do violence to heart, nor thy soul to soul. Thou shalt not acquire a stranger by the price of thy silver, neither shalt thou seek to devour thy neighbour, neither shalt thou deprive him

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of the covering of his nakedness. But put on the grace of the Lord without stint ; and come into His Paradise and make thee a garland from its tree, and put it on thy head and be glad ; and recline on His rest, and glory shall go before thee, and thou shalt receive of His kindness and of His grace ; and thou shalt be flourishing in truth in praise of His holiness. Praise and honour be to His name. Hallelujah.

ODE 20. This Psalm is a mixture of ethics and of mysticism, of the golden rule and of the tree of life. The writer, whether Jew or Christian, is wholly detached from external ritual ; he calls himself a priest of God, but explains that this means the thinking of God's thought, and that the sacrifice he offers is the pure heart and life. He might be an Essene, one of that strange company who did not frequent the temple because they had purer sacrifices of their own. He drops a few ethical maxims, such as we find in the Pentateuch, protests against the owning of slaves (another Essene tenet) and against taking the neighbour's garment in pledge. Then he leaves morals and is away in search of the honey-dew and milk of Paradise. There glory waits the soul that enters into the Divine rest.

It is a beautiful Psalm, but one could not say of it, taken by itself, that it was necessarily Christian ; though its affinities are with Psalms that are definitely Christian. For the sacrifices which the good man offers to God we may compare what Lactantius says at the sixth book of his Divine Institutes : ' The real gift is mental soundness, the real sacrifice praise and

hymn ; for if God is invisible, then He must be worshipped with things that are invisible. No religion, then, is true, except that which stands in virtue and justice.'

ODE 21

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 : and my Helper had lifted me up to His Grace and to His Salvation. And I put off darkness and clothed myself with light, and my soul acquired a body free from sorrow or affliction or pains. And increasingly helpful to me was the thought of the Lord, and His fellowship in incorruption : and I was lifted up in His light ; and I served before Him, and I became near to Him, praising and confessing Him. My heart ran over and was found in my mouth : and it arose upon my lips ; and the exultation of the Lord increased on my face, and His praise likewise. Hallelujah.

ODE 21. This Psalm is short, and somewhat obscure. The reason for this lies in the fact that the writer is assuming a mystical explanation of the 'coats of skin' in the third chapter of Genesis, which are held to represent the ordinary human body which has replaced a body originally clad in light. See Ode 25, where the same idea is more definitely expressed,

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of the acquisition of a light-body, and of its freedom from pain. It is impossible to decide definitely from the reading of the Psalm whether it is Christian or Jewish : if he was a Christian, he was a very joyous Christian ; if he was a Jew, he knew the salvation of Israel that comes out of Zion, and had the dew of heaven upon his vineyard.

ODE 22

He who brought me down from on high, also brought me up from the regions below ; and He who gathers together the things that are betwixt is He also who cast me down : He who scattered my enemies and my adversaries : He who gave me authority over bonds that I might loose them ; 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 : Thou wast there and didst help me, and in every place Thy name was blessed by me. Thy right hand destroyed his wicked poison ; and Thy hand levelled the way for those who believe in Thee ; and Thou didst choose them from the graves and didst separate them from the dead. Thou didst take dead bones and didst cover them with bodies ; they were motionless, and Thou didst give them energy for life. Thy way was without corruption, and Thy face brought Thy world

to corruption : that everything might be dissolved, and then renewed, and that the foundation for everything might be Thy rock : and on it Thou didst build Thy Kingdom ; and Thou wast the dwelling-place of the saints. Hallelujah.

ODE 22. In this Psalm we seem to be nearer to the known Psalter of Solomon than elsewhere. There is a pointed reference to a dragon with seven heads whose seed is to be destroyed, and whose wicked poison has found its antidote in the Divine power. We think at once of the description of Pompey as the great dragon in the second of the published Psalms of Solomon. But dragons generally are difficult to identify. Who, for instance, is the dragon in Ps. lxxiii. 14, whose heads are broken ? Is it Tiamat, the Babylonian cosmic monster, or the Leviathan, whom the faithful are to eat in the last day, or is it a real person ? In Ezekiel xxix. 3 it is Pharaoh of Egypt that is called the great dragon in the midst of the waters, but it might not be so easy to say which Pharaoh : any political monster may be a beast or a dragon : so in the present case we have to hunt around among the fallen gods to find him. There has evidently been a great slaughter of Jews, for the writer uses the imagery of the Valley of Dry Bones in Ezekiel, in order to show that God can raise up His people from the gates of death : the ruin of all things becomes the occasion for a new Kingdom founded upon the rock.

The Psalm is one of those which are transferred to the pages of the Pistis Sophia, where it is recited by Matthew from an Ode of Solomon. It is suggested by Ryle and James that

the opening sentences are of a Gnostic character, from the allusion to things above and things below and things between. But the whole tenor of our Psalms is foreign to Gnosticism, and I do not see any reason to introduce it as a factor in the interpretation. If the Psalm is really the expression of some person triumphing over a fallen tyrant, or of Israel personified in such a situation, we have to search the political crises for such a time of trial and recovery. And it is not easy to find the solution. The Hadrianic wars are too late, and they were followed by no recovery on the part of the Jews in Palestine. Antiochus Epiphanes is too early, in every respect. The next cases to examine are those of Pompey and Titus. Pompey is already known as the dragon, and the destruction of the dragon is historical. Titus, on the other hand, is a triumphant dragon without a subsequent collapse: nor does there seem to be in his case a sufficient recovery of Judaism to justify the triumphant language of the Psalm. The statement that God levelled the way for those who believe in Him seems to imply a return from exile, in greater or less degree; but this also is not easy to justify from a historical point of view.

There is, however, nothing definitely Christian about the Psalm, except that it is found in the company of Christian Psalms. It seems to be a Jewish product, or at least the work of a Judæo-Christian.

ODE 23

Joy is of the saints! and who shall put it on, but they alone? Grace is of the elect! and who shall receive it, except those who trust in it from the

beginning? Love is of the elect! And who shall put it on except those who have possessed it from the beginning? Walk ye in the knowledge of the Most High without grudging: to His exultation and to the perfection of His knowledge. And His thought was like a letter; His will descended from on high, and it was sent like an arrow which is violently shot from the bow: and many hands rushed to the letter to seize it and to take and read it: and it escaped their fingers and they were affrighted at it and at the seal that was upon it. Because it was not permitted to them to loose its seal: for the power that was over the seal was greater than they. 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. But a wheel received it and came over it: and there was with it a sign of the Kingdom and of the Government: and everything which tried to move the wheel it mowed and cut down: and it gathered the multitude of adversaries, and covered the rivers and crossed over and rooted up many forests and made a broad path. The head went down to the feet, for down to the feet ran the wheel; and that which was a sign upon it. The letter was one of command, for there were included

in it all districts; and there was seen at its head, the head which was revealed, even the Son of Truth from the Most High Father, and He inherited and took possession of everything. And the thought of the many was brought to nought, and all the apostates hastened and fled away. And those who persecuted and were enraged became extinct.

And the letter was a great volume, which was wholly written by the finger of God: and the name of the Father was on it, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, to rule for ever and ever. Hallelujah.

ODE 23. This is the most difficult of all the Psalms in the collection, and I have almost despaired of being able to explain it. It describes the descent from heaven of a sealed document, with a message from God in it. The description is something like that of the little sealed book in the Apocalypse, which no one can open, except the triumphant Lamb. If the allusion in the Apocalypse is to some previous document which the author has incorporated, perhaps the same thing may be true here. Some book may have been published, claiming Divine Authority. What can it have been? A Gospel? An Apocalypse? It appeared suddenly, unexpectedly, and met with opposition rather than with universal acceptance. It came from the head and it went down to the feet. If we may use the language of a later Psalm in which the saints in Hades are called the feet of Christ, we should say that the mysterious little book

conveyed a message to those below from one above, and that it interpreted the region below to include the invisible world. Was the little book then a 'Descensus ad Inferos'? It is impossible to decide with certainty. It contained some pronounced statement concerning the Trinity, for we are expressly told that it had the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost upon it. When any one writes in cipher, about a document which itself appears to have been written in cipher, for that is the natural meaning of a sealed book, we ought not to be surprised if it is not quite obvious, two thousand years later, what the writer meant or what he was referring to.

ODE 24

The Dove fluttered over the Messiah, because He was her head; and she sang over Him and her voice was heard; and the inhabitants were afraid and the sojourners were moved: the 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: and no food was given to them, because it did not belong to them; and they sealed up the abysses with the seal of the Lord. And they perished in the thought, those that had existed from ancient times; for they were corrupt from the beginning; and the end of their corruption

was life : and every one of them that was imperfect perished : for it was not possible to give them a word that they might remain : and the Lord destroyed the imaginations of all them that had not the truth with them. For they who in their hearts were lifted up were deficient in wisdom, and so they were rejected, because the truth was not with them. For the Lord disclosed His way, and spread abroad His grace : and those who understood it, know His holiness. Hal-lelujah.

ODE 24. The Psalm opens with a reference to the Baptism of the Lord, when the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a Dove on the head of the Messiah. The occasion was one of great dread to all created things, man and beast and creeping things shared the terror. The abysses, personified as living creatures, cried out in pain. They were sealed up and ended, as belonging to the order of non-existent things. Men also whose hearts were proud were rejected, when the way of the Lord was revealed and His holiness known.

In this Psalm, with its reference to the abysses, and the things which are not and are brought to nought, we seem to be nearer to the world of Gnostic ideas : but it would be difficult to say that any of the catchwords or peculiar terms of Gnosticism are here. If we are right in referring the Psalm to the Baptism of the Lord, we are only furnishing one more proof of the extraordinary prominence given to that event in the early Church, for which it was the beginning of the Preaching :

and we need not be surprised that the event should be treated in many ways, both theological and hymnological.

If it is not the Baptism that is alluded to, it must be the Crucifixion, and in that case we must assume an unknown incident connected with the Crucifixion, comparable with the appearance of the Dove at the Baptism. In that case the plaint of the Abysses is another allusion to the descent into Hades.

But there is a special reason why I feel sure that the Baptism must be the incident to which reference is made: I think we can say that a written Gospel has here been employed, but not a canonical Gospel. It will be remembered that Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, c. 88, takes his account of the Baptism from a source which is either uncanonical, or, if canonical, is interpolated. When Jesus went down into the water, a fire was kindled in the Jordan, and when he came up from the water, the Holy Spirit, like a dove, *fluttered upon him*: and Justin says expressly that this was recorded by the Apostles of our Christ. This 'fluttering down' of the dove is very near indeed to the language of our Ode. And the peculiar expression turns up so often in the early Fathers, that we are sure it had a written origin in a book that was widely accessible—that is to say, in a lost Gospel.

ODE 25

I was rescued from my bonds and unto Thee, my God, I fled: for Thou art the right hand of my Salvation and my helper. Thou hast restrained those that rise up against me, and I shall see him no more:

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because Thy face was with me, which saved me by Thy grace. But I was despised and rejected in the eyes of many : and I was in their eyes like lead. And strength was mine from Thyself and help : Thou didst set me a lamp at my right hand and at my left : and in me there shall be nothing that is not bright : and I was clothed with the covering of Thy Spirit, and Thou didst remove from me my raiment of skins. For Thy right hand lifted me up and removed sickness from me : and I became mighty in the truth, and holy by Thy righteousness ; and all my adversaries were afraid of me ; and I became admirable by the name of the Lord, and was justified by His gentleness, and His rest is for ever and ever. Hallelujah.

ODE 25. In this Psalm we are back again in the region of personal experience, and there is no allusion to any definite historical event. The writer, whether Christian or Jew, has been brought out of spiritual bondage into liberty : he has had to face contempt and scorn, but the Lord has filled him with brightness and covered him with beauty, and given him health of mind and body : his enemies have turned back, and his portion is with the justified saints of the Most High. It is possible that this Psalm may be meant to express the experience of the Messiah, emerging from His conflicts into victory : in that case it need not be the Christian conception of the Messiah, but might conceivably be such a human

representation as we find in the Psalms of the Pharisees (*e.g.* Ps. 17, which is our Ps. 60). But our collection, as to its first block of Psalms, is certainly of a later period than the Pharisee Psalms, so we ought to hesitate before ascribing the same Messianic ideas to the two parts of the hymnal. For the allusion to the coat of skins, see also Ode 21. Here again we have the statement that the spiritual body, which the writer has recovered, was free from the ills that flesh is heir to.

ODE 26

I poured out praise to the Lord, for I am His :
and I will speak His holy song, for my heart is
with Him. For His harp is in my hands, and the
Odes of His rest shall not be silent. I will cry unto
Him from my whole heart : I will praise and exalt
Him with all my members. For from the east and
even to the west is His praise : and from the south
and even to the north is the confession of Him : and
from the top of the hills to their utmost bound is
His perfection. Who can write the Psalms of the
Lord, or who read them ? or who can train his soul
for life, that his soul may be saved, or who can rest on
the Most High, so that with His mouth he may
speak ? Who is able to interpret the wonders of the
Lord ? For he who could interpret would be dissolved

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and would become that which is interpreted. For it suffices to know and to rest: for in rest the singers stand, like a river which has an abundant fountain, and flows to the help of them that seek it. Hallelujah.

ODE 26. This beautiful song of praise recounts the goodness and greatness of the Lord. All within the writer magnifies the great Name, but all within is insufficient to tell out what waits to be told. His praise is wide-spread to the utmost bound of earth and beyond the bound of the everlasting hills. The creature cannot express God's praise perfectly; if he could, he would be no longer a creature: he would be the Word, and not the interpreter of the Word. So it suffices to know and to rest, while at our feet the river of grace rolls on, an unchanging flood:

'Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis aevum.'

It is impossible to say whether the Psalm, as detached from the rest of the collection, is Jewish or Christian.

ODE 27

I stretched out my hands and worshipped¹ the Lord: for the extension of my hands is His sign: and my expansion is the upright tree (*or* cross).

ODE 27. This tiny Psalm is Christian, and is based upon the early Christian fondness for finding the Cross everywhere in the outward world: in the handle of the labourer's plough,

¹ *Lit.*, sanctified.

in the mast and yards of the seaman's ship ; and in the human body, when the man stands erect in the act of prayer with outstretched arms. There can, therefore, be no doubt that this is a Christian Psalm, and the figurative language which it employs is characteristic of the second century and not unknown in the first century. Justin Martyr, for example, sees the Cross in the outspread arms of Moses in the battle against Amalek ; but so does Barnabas also : and the same thought is involved in the conclusion of the Teaching of the Apostles, where an outspread cross in the sky is one of the signs of the Advent and answers to the Sign of the Son of Man in Matthew. So it is very likely that the figure in our Psalm is one of the oldest forms of Christian symbolic teaching. We shall find it used again in the 42nd Psalm, which may, therefore, be by the same hand as the present one : otherwise it would be an imitation of it.

ODE 28

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 : my
 heart is delighted and exults :
 I believed ; therefore I
 was at rest ; for faithful is He in whom I have believed :
 He has richly blessed me and my head is with Him :
 and the sword shall not divide me from Him, nor the
 scimitar. For I am ready before destruction comes :

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and I have been set on His immortal pinions. And immortal life will come forth and give me to drink, and from that life is the spirit within me, and it cannot die, for it lives. They who saw me marvelled at me, because I was persecuted, and they supposed that I was swallowed up: for I seemed to them as one of the lost; and my oppression became my salvation; and I was their reprobation because there was no zeal in me. Because I did good to every man I was hated, and they came round me like mad dogs, who ignorantly attack their masters, for their thought is corrupt and their understanding changed. But I was carrying water in my right hand, 'that I might put out their flame'; and their bitterness I endured by my sweetness; and I did not perish, for I was not their brother, nor was my birth like theirs, and they sought for my death and did not find it: for I was older than the memorial of them; and vainly did they make attack upon me and those who, without reward, came after me: they sought to destroy the memorial of him who was before them: for the thought of the Most High cannot be anticipated: and His heart is superior to all wisdom. Hallelujah.

ODE 28. This exquisite Psalm has the music in it of the 'Quis separabit?' of Romans viii. Nor sword nor scimitar

divide the believer from the Lord. In some respects the Psalm appears to be Messianic in a Christian sense, for the writer concludes his exulting strain over enemies who had come round him like mad dogs and had left him for dead, with the remark that it was not possible for them to blot out the memory of one who existed before them, and who was of a different birth from theirs. He also speaks of their attacks as having been directed against his followers as well as himself. Perhaps, then, the writer is speaking, in these verses, as if in the person of Christ.

ODE 29

The Lord is my hope : in Him I shall not be confounded. For according to His praise He made me, and according to His goodness He gave unto me : and according to His mercies He exalted me : and according to His excellent beauty He set me on high : and brought me up out of the depths of Sheol, and from the mouth of death He drew me : and I laid my enemies low, and He justified me by His grace. For I believed in the Lord's Messiah, and it appeared to me that He is the Lord ; and He showed me His sign : and He led me by His light, and gave me the rod of His power ; that I might subdue the imaginations of the peoples, and the power of the men of might to bring them low : to make war by His word,

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and to take victory by His power. And the Lord overthrew my enemy by His word; and he became like the stubble which the wind carries away; and I gave praise to the Most High because He exalted me His servant and the son of His handmaid. Hal-lelujah.

ODE 29. Some one wrote this Psalm, who was a follower of the Christ and had recognised Him to be the Lord. Out of great conflicts he had been brought into the place of victory: his enemies had become like the straw before the wind: he has passed through deep distresses, which he speaks of figuratively as the pains of Sheol and the gates of death. But for the reference to the Lordship of the Messiah and to faith in Him, we might have imagined this Psalm to belong to the ancient Psalter: we shall be justified in regarding it as a Judæo-Christian composition.

ODE 30

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; and the honeycomb of bees is not to be compared with it. For it flows forth from

the lips of the Lord, and from the heart of the Lord is its name. And it came infinitely and invisibly: and until it was set in the midst they did not know it: blessed are they who have drunk therefrom and have found rest thereby. Hallelujah.

ODE 30. The Psalm is an invitation to the thirsty, somewhat in the manner of Isaiah lv. The water of life, which here is explained to be the teaching of the Lord, is flowing from an open fountain, whose waters, to use the language of the 19th Psalm in the canonical Psalter, are 'sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.' The Ode is not so far removed from Old Testament thought and expression that we can positively call it a Christian composition. The writer is fond of the similitude of honey and the honeycomb: we find it, for instance, again in our fortieth Ode, where we have it for the opening similitude.

'Like the honey that drops from the comb of the bees . . . so is my hope on Thee, O God.'

But this Psalm, also, appears at first sight to be destitute of specific Christian colouring.

The fountain, however, whose waters come without limit, and invisibly, corresponds to the unexpected appearance of Christ and Christ's teaching in the world, when there stood in the midst One whom they knew not.

ODE 31

The abysses were dissolved before the Lord: and darkness was destroyed by His appearance: error went

astray and perished at His hand : and folly gave no path to walk in, and was submerged by the truth of the Lord. He opened his mouth and spake grace and joy : and he spake a new song of praise to His name : and he lifted up his voice to the Most High, and offered to Him the sons that were with him.¹ And His face was justified, for thus His holy Father had given to Him. Come forth, ye that have been afflicted, and receive joy, and possess your souls by His grace ; and take to you immortal life. And they made me a debtor when I rose up, me who had not been a debtor :² and they divided my spoil, though nothing was due to them. But I endured and held my peace and was silent,³ as if not moved by them. But I stood unshaken like a firm rock which is beaten by the waves and endures. And I bore their bitterness for humility's sake : in order that I might redeem my people, and inherit it, and that I might not make void my promises to the fathers,⁴ to whom I promised the salvation of their seed. Hallelujah.

ODE 31. The Psalm is Messianic, and records how the Christ fulfilled the promises which, in a pre-existent state, he

¹ *Lit.* in His hands. Cf. Is. viii. 17 ; Heb. ii. 13.

² 2 Cor. v. 21.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 23.

⁴ Rom. xv. 8 ; Luke i. 55.

had made to the fathers. He has closed the abysses and banished error and vanity. With a new song in his mouth, he appears before God with the children whom God has given him. His similitude is the rock against which the waves had beaten in vain. It stands firm, whether the waves advance or retire. Here Christian speech comes near to the language of the Stoics. One thinks of Marcus Aurelius, and his advice to 'be like the promontory against which the waves continually break, but it stands firm and tames the fury of the water around it.'¹ One thinks also of Ignatius, and his advice 'to stand steady like the beaten anvil.'²

ODE 32

To the blessed there is joy from their hearts, and light from him that dwells in them: and words from the Truth, who was self-originate: for He is strengthened by the holy power of the Most High: and He is unperturbed for ever and ever. Hallelujah.

ODE 32. Joy, Light, Inspiration, Strength, and Calmness belong to the believer through Him that dwells within.

ODE 33

Again Grace ran and forsook corruption, and came down in Him to bring it to nought; and He destroyed perdition from before Him, and devastated

¹ *Medit.* iv. 49.

² *Ad Polyc.* 3.

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all its order; and He stood on a lofty summit and uttered His voice from one end of the earth to the other: and drew to Him all those who obeyed Him; and there did not appear as it were an evil person, but there arose a perfect virgin who was proclaiming and calling and saying, O ye sons of men, return ye, and ye daughters of men, live ye: and forsake the ways of that corruption and draw near unto me, and I will enter in to you, and will bring you forth from perdition, and make you wise in the ways of truth: you shall not be destroyed nor perish: hear ye me and be redeemed. For the grace of God I am telling among you: and by my means you shall be redeemed, and become blessed. I am your judge; and they who have put me on shall not be injured: but they shall possess the new world that is incorrupt: my chosen ones walk in me, and my ways I will make known to them that seek me, and I will make them trust in my name. Hallelujah.

ODE 33. Apparently this Psalm is Messianic, though Christ is not named. He must be the one that rises from the dead and sends forth his triumphant voice to the ends of the earth. A virgin also stands and proclaims, who must be either the Divine Wisdom (the language is very like that of the eighth

chapter of Proverbs) or the Church. She promises salvation by Divine Grace and immortality in a new world to those that walk in her ways.

ODE 34

No way is hard where there is a simple heart. Nor is there any wound where the thoughts are upright: nor is there any storm in the depth of the illuminated thought: where one is surrounded by every beautiful place, there is nothing that is divided, the likeness of what is below: He is the one that is above; for everything is really above: what is below is nothing but the imagination of those that are without knowledge. Grace has been revealed for your salvation. Believe and live and be saved. Hallelujah.

ODE 34. All the hard things are easy, where the soul itself is right: no storms invade the hidden place of communion with God. Evil itself becomes unreal, and that which is beneath exists not before that which is above.

ODE 35

The dew of the Lord in quietness He distilled upon me: and the cloud of peace He caused to rise

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over my head, which guarded me continually; it was to me for salvation: everything was shaken and they were affrighted; and there came forth from them a smoke and a judgment; and I was keeping quiet in the order of the Lord: more than shelter was He to me, and more than foundation. And I was carried like a child by his mother: and He gave me milk, the dew of the Lord: and I grew great by His bounty, and rested in His perfection, and I spread out my hands in the lifting up of my soul: and I was made right with the Most High, and I was saved with Him. Hallelujah.

ODE 35. The dew lies on the branch of the man that sings this Psalm: Divine Peace guards him like a sheltering cloud. The Lord is his sure defence in the day of evil. Mother's arms are his place and mother's milk his portion. 'No cradled child more softly lies than I. Come soon, eternity.'

ODE 36

I rested on the Spirit of the Lord: and the Spirit raised me on high: and made me stand on my feet in the height of the Lord, before His perfection and His glory, while I was praising Him by the composition of His songs. The Spirit brought me

forth before the face of the Lord : and, although a son of man, I was named the Illuminate, the Son of God : while I praised amongst the praising ones, and great was I amongst the mighty ones. For according to the greatness of the Most High, so He made me : and like His own newness He renewed me ; and He anointed me from His own perfection : and I became one of His neighbours ; and my mouth was opened, like a cloud of dew ; and my heart poured out as it were a gushing stream of righteousness, and my access to Him was in peace ; and I was established by the spirit of His government. Hallelujah.

ODE 36. This is a perplexing Psalm, from a theological point of view. It is almost impossible to determine whether the Psalmist is speaking in his own name, or in that of the Messiah ; or whether it is an alternation of one with the other. It seems almost a necessity, when the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a Mother, that the offspring should be the Son of God. If this be the right interpretation, then the Illuminated Son of God is Christ. But the latter part of the Psalm seems to be in too low a strain for this interpretation : to be one of those who are near to God is certainly not orthodox theology, though it may conceivably be Adoptionist : and the heart that pours out righteousness and makes its offering in peace seems rather to be the language that describes one of the pious in Israel.

ODE 37

I stretched out my hands to my Lord : and to the Most High I raised my voice : and I spake with the lips of my heart ; and He heard me, when my voice reached Him : His answer came to me, and gave me the fruits of my labours ; and it gave me rest by the Grace of the Lord. Hallelujah.

ODE 37. A colourless Psalm, something like one of the shorter and more elementary Psalms of the Hebrew Psalter. The writer has cried to God : his prayer has been heard : his heart has appealed, and an answer has come. His work has been followed by divine blessing.

ODE 38

I went up to the light of truth as if into a chariot : and the truth took me and led me : and carried me across pits and gullies ; and from the rocks and the waves it preserved me : and it became to me an instrument of Salvation : and set me on the arms of immortal life : and it went with me and made me rest, and suffered me not to wander, because it was the Truth ; and I ran no risk, because I walked with Him ; and I did not make an error in anything because I

obeyed the Truth. For Error flees away from it : and meets it not : but the Truth proceeds in the right path, and whatever I did not know, it made clear to me, all the poisons of error, and the plagues which announce the fear of death : and I saw the destroyer of destruction, when the bride who is corrupted is adorned ; and the bridegroom who corrupts and is corrupted ; and I asked the Truth, ' Who are these ? ' and he said to me, This is the deceiver and the error : and they are alike in the beloved and in his bride : and they lead astray and corrupt the whole world : and they invite many to the banquet, and give them to drink of the wine of their intoxication, and remove their wisdom and knowledge, and so they make them without intelligence ; and then they leave them ; and then these go about like madmen corrupting : seeing that they are without heart, nor do they seek for it. And I was made wise so as not to fall into the hands of the Deceiver ; and I rejoiced in myself because the Truth went with me, and I was established and lived and was redeemed, and my foundations were laid on the hand of the Lord : because He established me. For He set the root and watered it and fixed it and blessed it ; and its fruits are for ever. It struck deep

and sprung up and spread out, and was full and enlarged; and the Lord alone was glorified in His planting and in His husbandry: by His care and by the blessing of His lips, by the beautiful planting of His right hand: and by the discovery of His planting, and by the thought of His mind. Hallelujah.

ODE 38. The Psalm opens with a beautiful description of the power of the truth over those that surrender to it. Truth becomes to them guidance in all difficult and rough and dangerous places. But the Psalm is not merely a Psalm of the Truth, it is a Psalm concerning Truth and Error. They appear to stand like Christ and Antichrist. We are tempted to believe that the writer had at one time been brought face to face with some special outbreak of erroneous teaching, one of the many Antichrists of the first century. There are some things which suggest Simon Magus and his Helena, who went about to mislead the faithful. It is, however, useless to try and define the situation more closely. Whatever form the attractions of Truth and Error took to the Psalmist, he tells us that he escaped the Circean blandishments, and sailed past the Sirens. His foundations were in the holy mountain; his growth was in God and of God. God planted, God watered, God gave the increase. The Father was the husbandman.

ODE 39

Great rivers are the power of the Lord: and they carry headlong those who despise Him: and entangle

their paths : and they sweep away their fords, and catch their bodies and destroy their lives. For they are more swift than lightning and more rapid, and those who cross them in faith are not moved ; and those who walk on them without blemish shall not be afraid. For the sign in them is the Lord ; and the sign is the way of those who cross in the name of the Lord : put on, therefore, the name of the Most High, and know Him : and you shall cross without danger, for the rivers will be subject to you. The Lord has bridged them by His word ; and He walked and crossed them on foot : and His footsteps stand firm on the water, and are not injured ; they are as firm as a tree that is truly set up. And the waves were lifted up on this side and on that, but the footsteps of our Lord Messiah stand firm and are not obliterated and are not defaced. And a way has been appointed for those who cross after Him and for those who perfect the course of faith in Him and worship His name. Hallelujah.

ODE 39. When I first read this Psalm I thought that we had another historical landmark, in the allusion to some great accident connected with the sudden rise of one of the great Oriental rivers. But upon reflection, I have come to the conclusion that the writer is speaking of disasters generally, under the natural figure of a rising and rushing river. In such times

of flood the unbelievers find no footing and are swept away : believers, on the other hand, walk the waters like their Lord and with their Lord. Perhaps there is a reference to Isaiah xliii. 2, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee.' The same promise appears to be quoted in Psalms of Solomon vi. 5, 'When he passeth through rivers, yea, through the surge of the sea, he shall not be affrighted.' Their feet stand firm where His feet had stood unmoved. Here the background of the teaching is the account of our Lord's walking on the sea of Galilee. The reference is valuable, for we have hardly any other allusion to events recorded in the Gospel, beyond the Birth, Baptism, and Crucifixion, to which we have already referred. The paucity of parallels in the new Psalter to the New Testament should be one of the strongest reasons for believing that, as regards the major part of the collection, we are dealing with very early matter.

ODE 40

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. As
the fountain gushes out its water, so my heart gushes
out the praise of the Lord and my lips utter praise to
Him, and my tongue His psalms. And my face
exults with His gladness, and my spirit exults in His
love, and my soul shines in Him : and reverence con-
fides in Him ; and redemption in Him stands assured :

and His abundance is immortal life, and those who participate in it are incorrupt. Hallelujah.

ODE 40. An exquisite Psalm from what St. Bernard would call the 'anima sitiens Deum.' Praise flows out of his life and from his lips as honey drops from the comb or milk from the breast. God's gladness makes his face without to shine, and his soul within to be radiant. If mortality is not quite swallowed up of life, it is irradiated by it. There is assurance of faith and the confident hope of immortality.

ODE 41

All the Lord's children will praise Him, and will collect the truth of His faith. And His children shall be known to Him. Therefore we will sing in His love: we live in the Lord by His grace: and life we receive in His Messiah: for a great day has shined upon us: and marvellous is He who has given us of His glory. Let us, therefore, all of us unite together in the name of the Lord, and let us honour Him in His goodness, and let our faces shine in His light: and let our hearts meditate in His love by night and by day. Let us exult with the joy of the Lord. All those will be astonished that see me. For from another race am I: for the Father of truth remembered me: he who possessed me from the

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beginning : for His bounty begat me, and the thought of His heart : and His Word is with us in all our way ; the Saviour who makes alive and does not reject our souls : the man who was humbled, and exalted by His own righteousness, the Son of the Most High who appeared in the perfection of His Father ; and light dawned from the Word that was beforetime in Him ; the Messiah is truly one, and He was known before the foundation of the world, that He might save souls for ever by the truth of His name : a new song arises from those who love Him. Hallelujah.

ODE 41. This Psalm, again, is Messianic, but certainly not in the prophetic sense. The writer knows that the Son of God is come. The glorious day of which prophets spoke has dawned : the dayspring from on high has become the noon-tide glory. Christ, who was humbled, is now exalted ; the Word, who existed before the foundation of the world, has appeared. The language finds its nearest parallel in the Johannine theology.

The writer seems to say that he is sprung from another race. Is it that he is of Gentile origin and persuaded to dwell in the tents of Shem ? That would agree well with the general Palestinian origin of the Psalms. In that case he has become sufficiently Hebraized to sing Zion's songs in a Zionite manner : and to praise God night and day, where a Gentile would naturally have done it by day and night.

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