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*THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE FOURTH
GOSPEL.*

XI. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE FOURTH
EVANGELIST.

THE story of the ministry of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel differs from that in the Synoptists chiefly in these two respects: (1) Whereas from the Synoptic narratives it might appear that Jesus gathered no disciples about Him until after the imprisonment of the Baptist, the Fourth Evangelist states clearly that Jesus made disciples and entered upon an active ministry when John was not yet cast into prison. (2) Whereas the Synoptists make Galilee and the north the scene of the ministry of Jesus until near the time of His visit to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast at which He was crucified, the Fourth Evangelist represents Jesus as visiting Jerusalem repeatedly, there being five Feasts, including the fatal Passover, which, according to him, gave Jesus occasion to go to the holy city.

Now, as regards the first of these two differences, it must be carefully noticed that the Synoptic narratives, though they do not mention a period of ministry prior to the imprisonment of the Baptist, yet do not exclude the possibility of such. For it is important to observe that the Fourth Evangelist does not locate this earlier ministry of Jesus in Galilee. It is true that he takes Jesus to Galilee after He has gathered to Himself certain of the Baptist's disciples (i. 35-51), and that he records the miracle wrought at the marriage feast in Cana, and also a sojourn of not many days in Capernaum. But we must be careful to notice that there is no *public* activity in Galilee at this time. The occasion of the marriage feast was a private one, and

only His mother, and brethren and disciples are mentioned in connexion with the stay in Capernaum.

From Capernaum our Evangelist takes Jesus to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover (ii. 13 ff.), and after this Jesus and His disciples came into "the land of Judaea." Here He tarried with them and they—presumably with His authority (comp. iii. 22 with iv. 2)—baptized. At this time, the Evangelist says expressly, John was still baptizing, for he was not yet cast into prison. This statement reads like a deliberate correction of a possible misunderstanding that might arise from the Synoptic narrative, respecting the time when the public teaching of Jesus began.

Now it is a matter of some importance that we should notice how both Mark and Matthew imply that, before the public Galilean ministry of Jesus began, He was elsewhere than in Galilee, though they do not say where. Mark has : "After that John was delivered up, Jesus came (ἦλθεν) into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, etc." (St. Mark i. 14), and Matthew speaks of a *withdrawal* into Galilee : "When he heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew (ἀνεχώρησεν) into Galilee." The wording in Matthew might suggest that it was in consequence of the imprisonment of the Baptist that Jesus withdrew to Galilee. St. Mark, however, mentions the imprisonment only as a point of time, and does not say that it was the reason why Jesus came into Galilee. So then even though the author of 'Matthew' may have intended his words "When he heard that John was delivered up, etc." to give the explanation why Jesus retired to Galilee, we need not regard the statement as authoritative, for he may only have drawn an incorrect conclusion from St. Mark, who is his authority here.

But the Fourth Evangelist gives as the reason why Jesus departed into Galilee that He "knew that the Pharisees had heard that He was making and baptizing more disciples than

John " (iv. 1). These words leave it undetermined whether the writer means that the move was made while John was still baptizing. "Baptizing more disciples than John" might mean baptizing more disciples than John *had* done, and not *was* doing. The reason of the withdrawal of Jesus to Galilee may then be given correctly in the Fourth Gospel, and the time of it, which is left undetermined here, may well be, as St. Mark says, after John was delivered up. Only a too keen scent for discrepancies between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptists will detect one here.

But then we are confronted with the objection that St. Mark, followed by the author of 'Matthew,' places the call of Andrew and Simon Peter, to be disciples of Jesus, after the Galilean ministry had begun, whereas the writer of the Fourth Gospel brings them into discipleship some time before, representing them, as we have seen, as having been previously followers of the Baptist. This seems at first sight a serious objection, particularly as St. Mark was the 'interpreter' of Peter and is reputed to be the reporter of that Apostle's teaching. But I think that it is possible to make too much of the influence of St. Peter upon St. Mark's Gospel. It must not be so exaggerated as to make the Apostle almost the author of that Gospel. And we have already pointed out in the second of these papers how insufficient the account given by St. Mark of the call of Peter and Andrew by the sea of Galilee is to explain their readiness to obey. We must surely prefer here the fuller narrative of St. Luke who had some other source of information on this point than St. Mark's Gospel. It may justly be argued that the story of the miraculous draught of fishes as given by St. Luke (v. 1-11) is the natural prelude to the promise of Jesus: "From henceforth thou shalt catch men." The very fragmentary account, then, given by St. Mark, who depicts Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee and calling Andrew and Peter

to follow Him, and He would make them fishers of men, needs to be supplemented as in St. Luke's Gospel it is. But there is no reason for regarding this supplement as in any way artificial and the invention of the writer. It has all the appearance of historical truth. Nor, as I have already pointed out, does St. Luke's account suggest that when this incident took place Simon Peter was still a stranger to Jesus. On the contrary, it is more probable than not that Peter already knew Jesus and so had learnt to place confidence in Him, as he shows himself ready to do when he says : " Master, we toiled all the night, and took nothing : but at thy word I will let down the net."

It does not then seem to me reasonable to consider the Fourth Gospel incredible in so far as it brings Simon Peter and Andrew into a position of discipleship with Jesus at a time earlier than the public Galilean ministry. It is a remarkable fact that if we exclude the account given in the Fourth Gospel of the passing of disciples from the Baptist to Jesus then we have no record anywhere of any such thing. It is surely unlikely that he who made it his work to prepare the way for the Christ should not have passed on some of his disciples to follow Jesus.

And before we go on further, it may be pointed out that we have evidence from another source that the ministry of Jesus does not (even in the view of one of the Synoptic Evangelists) date from the imprisonment of the Baptist, but rather goes back to the time when John was still baptizing. I refer to the reported words of St. Peter in Acts i. 21 f., where we read : " Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, *beginning from the baptism of John*, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection." The words here italicised seem to me an indirect but not an

uninteresting confirmation of what is reported in the Fourth Gospel respecting the time at which Jesus began to gather disciples about Himself.

But, an objector will say, granting that Jesus may have made disciples prior to His public Galilean ministry, there is a serious difficulty in the way of the acceptance of the account of this in the Fourth Gospel. For the recognition and confession of Jesus by His disciples as the Messiah at this early stage is, in view of the Synoptic narratives, an anachronism. This recognition, it is said, only came later. Moreover, in the Synoptists Jesus is represented as unready to declare Himself to be the Messiah, whereas in the Fourth Gospel the Messianic claim is in the foreground everywhere.

I have already pointed out in the second paper of this series that the recognition of the first disciples of Jesus as the Christ is more a hope than an assured faith, and that the discipline of their training under Jesus was necessary in order that it might pass from the one to the other. Even in the Fourth Gospel itself the faith of the disciples is shown to be of gradual growth (ii. 11, vi. 68 f.). At first it was the belief of hope, and this, as they gained experience, developed into the faith that comes of knowledge.

In reference to the general objection that in the Fourth Gospel Jesus puts Himself forward from the first as the Messiah it may be said that this is an objection which is easily overrated. As we shall see when we come to consider the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem, He did not declare Himself as the Christ to the Jews sufficiently clearly for them. And so late as the last visit but one we find them challenging Him to assert Himself: "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ tell us plainly."

It seems to me as clear as anything well can be, if once we accept the Synoptic story of the Baptism of Jesus, that He was fully conscious of His Messiahship before He began His

ministry. And when He came forward to gather disciples to Himself, He must have meant to present Himself to them as the Messiah, to make them 'believe in Him.' That the conception which the people had of the Messiah was a wrong one, and one that Jesus could not entertain, is apparent enough. And as wrong notions manifested themselves, caution was needed—even the Fourth Gospel shows this to have been the case (ii. 24, vi. 15)—and injunctions to silence such as we find in the Synoptists may have become necessary. As Professor Stanton ¹ well observes, Jesus "set before Himself a twofold object—to implant in the hearts of men faith in Himself as the Christ, and at the same time to change their conception of the Christ, to prevent His countrymen receiving Him merely as the Christ of their expectation."

It must be borne in mind that the time when Jesus came forward was one of expectation. People were looking for the Messiah, and the preaching of the Baptist must have quickened the hope of the coming of the Christ. Some of the Baptist's disciples then were ready to follow one to whom their master had pointed them. With this little band of disciples Jesus went to Galilee not, as we have seen, to come forward there publicly as a Teacher. At the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee He turns the water into wine. It is interesting, I think, to note one particular in our Evangelist's account of this event. I refer to the hesitation, which Jesus shows, to exercise His power. When His mother tells Him that the supply of wine has failed, He answers her, almost reprovingly: "Woman, what have I do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Shall He, or shall He not, relieve their want? He cannot unless the right moment has come for the manifestation of His power. Now the Fourth Evangelist tells us nothing of the story of the Temptation of Jesus, as we have it in the Synoptists, but we observe

¹ *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, part ii. p. 196.

here a striking agreement between him and them. The author of *Ecce Homo* was right, I think, in making the temptation of Jesus a matter having to do with the way in which He should exercise His miraculous powers. He had refused in the wilderness to turn stones into bread for the satisfaction of His bodily wants. And it seems to me that He hesitates, for the moment, as to whether He shall use His power at the marriage-feast. He must first be assured that His hour has come, and that the occasion is a right one for so doing. There is at first sight an apparent contradiction between the gentle rebuke addressed to His mother and His subsequent readiness to take the course He did. But deliberation was needed. He would not be dictated to save from above. There was only hesitation until the Divine will was clear. Then an immediate response was made.

The miracle then was wrought, and the Evangelist records that in consequence of it, His disciples (of whom we believe he was himself one, and so qualified to speak on the point) believed on Him. They who had joined themselves to Jesus, because of the testimony of the Baptist to Him, were now finding that their allegiance was deserved.

After this event at Cana, whether immediately or not we cannot stay, for the connecting link *μετὰ τοῦτο* does not determine this, Jesus went with His mother and brethren and disciples to Capernaum, for what purpose we are not told, but there is no hint of any public teaching on this occasion. Thence He went up to Jerusalem for the Passover (ii. 13), His disciples accompanying Him (ii. 22). It was on this occasion that, for the first time, He protested against the profanation of the temple. The account of this we have already considered in a previous paper, and we have seen that there is good reason to regard it as historical. The action of Jesus aroused the resentment of 'the Jews' and we see here the beginning of their hostility towards Him,

which thus dates from a very early stage of His public life. For this is His first appearance in Jerusalem since this began. But all were not hostile. "When He was at Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did." The Evangelist does not tell us what signs these were. The cleansing of the temple may well have been one of them. But though many were ready 'to believe on His name'—which means probably that they were ready to welcome Him as Messiah—"Jesus did not trust himself unto them." We may read into this statement of the Evangelist the fact that there were false conceptions of Messiahship in the minds of the people in Jerusalem, and these Jesus detected from the first.

It was during the time in Jerusalem that the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus by night occurred (iii. 1-21). There is nothing incredible or at all improbable in this visit, nor do I see any reason to doubt that the *purport* of the conversation, which, indeed, the Evangelist may himself have heard, is correctly reported. I say deliberately 'purport,' for, as has often been pointed out, the style of the writer himself marks even the words of Jesus which He records. Indeed it is not always easy to decide where Jesus ceases to speak, and the reflections of the Evangelist on His words begin. Thus verses 16-21 of this chapter may well be the writer's own comment, rather than words of Jesus.

"After these things"—these events at Jerusalem—Jesus sojourned with His disciples in the land of Judæa (iii. 22) and baptized, while John was still baptizing. And "there arose a questioning on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purifying" (iii. 25). They come to John and tell him of the activity and growing popularity of Jesus. This gives the Evangelist the opportunity to record the further testimony of His former master the Baptist: "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ,

but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom : but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice : this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, I must decrease." There seems no sufficient reason for the invention of this incident and we may well believe that it really did occur. The concluding words of this chapter (iii. 31-36) are no argument against it, for they need not be understood as part of the Baptist's answer. Rather do they read like a reflection of the writer.

We now come to the withdrawal of Jesus from Judaea into Galilee. We have already considered the reason which our Evangelist gives for this. The journey to Galilee was made through Samaria, and the chief incident in it is the conversation with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well. The story of this is told circumstantially and with remarkable detail, and I should find it difficult to believe that it can be invention and not fact. It was in accordance with our Lord's method to use passing circumstances to teach important truths, and in this case He engages the woman in conversation arising out of her employment at the time. The story is, however, open to the objection that Jesus plainly declares Himself to this woman to be the Christ. It must, however, be noticed that He does not so declare Himself until the woman has spoken of the expectation of Messiah among her own people.

We have now reached the time when the public ministry of Jesus in Galilee begins. "The Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast : for they also went unto the feast." So writes our Evangelist. He does not narrate the details of the work of Jesus in Galilee at this time except the single miracle of the healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum. We cannot decide why he is so reticent about the work in

Galilee, nor why he singles out this particular miracle as worthy of narration. It seems to have been impressed upon his mind that on each of the two occasions when Jesus had come into Galilee He had wrought a sign at or from Cana (iv. 54). But after all why should the Evangelist have told again the story of the Galilean ministry? It had already been written at some length and there was no need to repeat what the Synoptists had already written. It is true that he does later on repeat the story of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, and that of the walking upon the sea, but these he introduces, I believe, only because they led up to the discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum. This seems to be the Evangelist's centre of interest in that section of His Gospel.

We are all familiar with the view that the Fourth Evangelist wrote to supplement the Synoptists, and, though this would be an insufficient explanation to give of his purpose in penning his Gospel, we may well believe that there is an element of truth in it. The interest of the Evangelist turns on the belief and the unbelief which the presence and person of Christ called forth. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews, though given in the Synoptic narratives, is inadequately explained. The steps by which the crucifixion ultimately came about are not shown. The Fourth Evangelist is careful to trace the hostility of the Jews from its first beginnings to its culmination in the crucifixion. His Gospel is a historic commentary on his own words: "He came unto his own (*εἰς τὰ ἴδια*) and his own (*οἱ ἴδιοι*) received him not." Not that his Gospel gives only a dark picture of unbelief. There were those who believed, and of them he writes: "As many as received him to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name."

As we have already said, there were five festal occasions

when Jesus visited Jerusalem. The first of these has already come before us. It was a Passover, the first since He had begun to make disciples. The chief incident of it was the cleansing of the temple. The next occasion was after the public Galilean ministry had begun. The feast is an unnamed one (v. 1). It has been conjectured to be (1) Pentecost, (2) Purim, (3) the Feast of Trumpets. Certainty is impossible in the matter. Our Evangelist tells how Jesus on this occasion offended the Jews by healing an impotent man on the Sabbath day. They 'persecuted' Jesus—by reproaches we may suppose. The answer Jesus gave them was: "My Father worketh even until now and I work." They were offended at this saying and now sought to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath but also made Himself equal with God.

Now it has been objected that the manner in which Jesus speaks to the Jews in Jerusalem does not accord with the style of His teaching, as the Synoptists represent it. Indeed, I have heard it said that Jesus' manner of address in the Fourth Gospel is irritating and not worthy of Him. The saying put into the mouth of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, "My Father worketh until now, and I work" is contrasted with His words on a similar occasion: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." And we are told that it is highly improbable that Jesus would have spoken to the Jews in Jerusalem about His Father, as in the Fourth Gospel He does. It is said that the argumentative tone of the Gospel reflects the thoughts of a later time, and cannot be reconciled with the Synoptic teaching. It seems not simple enough, but is altogether too theological.

This complaint is made against the long discourse of Jesus which follows immediately upon the incident we have been considering. But I do not think that we have any right to judge *à priori* how Jesus would speak in Jerusalem. Even

the Synoptists, when they take Him to Jerusalem for the last Passover, put into His mouth very stern and uncompromising words. And I see no reason why from the first Jesus should not have adopted towards the religious teachers in Jerusalem the attitude which the Fourth Evangelist sets Him forth as exhibiting. It is not fair to compare the manner of teaching given by Jesus to the simple folk in Galilee with His manner of speaking in Jerusalem where the conditions were so entirely different. A breach with the authorities there was inevitable from the first. Jesus comes to offer Himself to them for their acceptance and He does not conceal His claims, which run counter to all the prejudices and selfish ambitions of Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees.

It is not necessary to suppose that the Fourth Evangelist gives us the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. But we may not unreasonably think that he sets forth the purport of the Master's appeal and claims. It is to be noticed that he does not represent Jesus as coming to Jerusalem and giving out with no uncertain voice : I am the Christ. It would seem that Jesus never so styled Himself in Jerusalem until He was challenged at His trial before the high priest, and then He only did so in answer to the high priest's question. To have proclaimed Himself as the Christ in the face of the mistaken ideas as to the nature of the Messianic office would have been mischievous. But Jesus did come forward acting with authority, as in the case of the cleansing of the temple, and claimed to speak authoritatively in the name of God, whom He calls publicly His Father. He asserts too that His miracles are signs of His divine mission. From the first He claims the allegiance of Jerusalem for Himself, though He knows what the claim is to cost Him.

The discourse then given in v. 19-47, and completed in vii. 15-24, this latter passage having seemingly become dis-

placed from its proper context,¹ marks a crisis in the life of Jesus. He sees that the attitude of the rulers in Jerusalem towards Him is irreconcilable. Henceforth, Galilee is His hope, and the scene of His labours. Apparently He did not attend the next Passover Feast, but He waited until the Feast of Tabernacles was well advanced and then came forward and preached boldly in the temple courts, inviting attention to Himself. He does not now address Himself to the rulers but to the people generally: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." There is much speculation among the people as to whether He is the Christ and many were ready to believe on Him. The Pharisees are alarmed by the readiness shown to accept Him as the Christ and they send the temple officers to take Him. These, however, are unable to obey the order, so impressed are they by the manner of Jesus' teaching: "Never man spake like this man." Jesus continues to teach, directing men boldly to Himself as the light of the world (viii. 12). The Pharisees resent the testimony He bears to Himself, and an altercation ensues, which ends in an attempt to stone Him, because He had spoken blasphemy in claiming to be one with God (viii. 58). But He escaped. Then follows the story of the healing of the man born blind, which is told with remarkable vividness and detail, that it is difficult to believe it can be an invention of the writer. The questioning by the Pharisees of the man himself and his parents, and their attempts to intimidate by threats of excommunication are clearly and logically brought out. The man receives his sentence of excommunication and Jesus offers Himself to him as the object of his personal faith (ix. 35-38). Jesus still speaks boldly to the people and asserts Himself as the true leader and shepherd of Israel in opposition to the hirelings who

¹ See *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1909. On two dislocations in St. John's Gospel.

but seek their own (x. 1-18). Many think Him mad and possessed, but some reason more soberly: "These are not the sayings of one possessed with a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

All this happened at the Feast of Tabernacles. The Evangelist does not tell us what happened meanwhile, but he passes at once to the Feast of Dedication, some two months later. "It was winter," he says, "and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch." The Jews seek to draw from Him a direct claim to be the Messiah: "If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." But Jesus refers them to the works He has done, and reproves their unbelief. Again He repeats His oneness with the Father, and they again try to stone Him (x. 22-39).

This is the last time that Jesus comes to Jerusalem until He offers Himself as Jerusalem's King of peace (xii. 12-16). He retires now beyond the Jordan to the place where John had at the first baptized. Here many came to Him; and they said: "John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spoke of this man were true." And many believed on Him there.

Next follows the story of the raising of Lazarus, the objections to which we will consider later. This miracle, persuading, as it did, so many to believe on Jesus, finally decided the Pharisees to put Him to death. Their opportunity came when Jesus presented Himself publicly before the Feast of the Passover.

Now, whatever objections may be made to the account in the Fourth Gospel of the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem on the ground that they do not fit into the Synoptic frame of events, and that the teaching in Jerusalem does not accord with that in Galilee we have a right to demand that critics should concede that at any rate our Evangelist gives a picture consistent in itself, and that the progress of events is not un

natural. In other words, the events do 'march.' There is no halting. We can see opposition developing; and the final issue flows naturally out of the beginning. The unbelief and hostility of the Jews and their final rejection and crucifixion of Jesus stand out clearly and consistently. But something more will have to be said in our next and concluding paper in answer to objections which are made to the Fourth Gospel on the ground of its inconsistency with the other three.

E. H. ASKWITH.

AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN HYMN BOOK.¹

DR. RENDEL HARRIS has made a notable contribution to our knowledge of early Christian literature by his recent discovery and publication of forty canticles or hymns, which were known in the third century (if not still earlier) under the title of *Odes of Solomon*. Apparently the title is lost in Dr. Harris's MS., but the identification is established by passages of the *Pistis Sophia* in which Odes vi., xxii. and xxv. are quoted in whole or in part expressly as Odes of Solomon. The *Pistis Sophia*, a Gnostic work, is usually assigned to the third century, A.D., and accordingly the Odes (which seem to form a homogeneous collection) may be provisionally assigned to some earlier date in the third century, or, more probably perhaps, to the second century. The language of the MS. is Syriac, but Dr. Harris shows that the Syriac text is a translation from the Greek. Forty second-century Christian hymns! It is a very welcome discovery.

For even now our knowledge of the Christian hymnody of the first 350 years of the Church's life is disappointingly meagre. "The Christian Church," writes Mr. W. H.

¹ *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, now first published from the Syriac version by J. Rendel Harris. Cambridge, 1909.

Frere, " may be said to have started on its way singing " ¹ ; but (apart from the Psalms of David) we know very little about the words of its songs. Pliny in 112 A.D. tells the Emperor Trajan that the Christians were accustomed on a fixed day to assemble together and to sing antiphonally a hymn to Christ as to a God.² Of the text of the hymn thus sung we know nothing ; it may have been a Messianic Psalm from the Old Testament ; it may have been the fruit of the Christian inspiration of the first century ; but the knowledge of it is lost for us. Indeed from the first three and a half centuries hardly anything of Christian hymnody is preserved. In Greek there remain the ὕμνος ἐωθινός, " hymn for the dawn," preserved in the Codex Alexandrinus and printed in Swete's Septuagint (vol. iii. pp. 832 ff.), and also the evening hymn, φῶς ἱλαρόν, quoted by St. Basil, *de Spiritu Sancto*, 29, and printed in Greek and English in *Hymns A. and M.* (Historical edition, p. 25). In Syriac the beautiful Gnostic *Hymn of the Soul* survives. These three poems with one or two others have hitherto been for us almost the sole remains (of importance) of the multitude of Christian hymns which were in use before the middle of the fourth century.

But the evidence which proves the existence of early Christian hymns also supplies (in part) the explanation of the loss of most of them. The authorities of the Church were jealous of the use of " Psalms " other than the Psalms of David in public worship. The well-known canon (no. 59) of the Council of Laodicea (363 A.D.) forbids the public recitation of " private " Psalms.³ The Muratorian Fragment, a damaged document of the beginning of the third

¹ Introduction to *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (Historical edition).

² *Epist.* x. 96 [97]. Stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem.

³ Οὐ δεῖ ἰδιωτικὸς ψαλμοὺς λέγεσθαι ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ.

century,¹ in distinguishing books which ought to be received into the Church for public use from others repudiates with vigour a certain "new book of Psalms." The reason of this repudiation is manifest, if the corrupt words with which the Fragment closes are rightly read as attributing the *novum psalmorum librum* in part to the pen of the Montanists and in part to that of certain admirers of Marcion the Gnostic. Readers of Tertullian will hold this conjunction of Montanist and Gnostic to be a strange thing, but it is hardly stranger than the meeting of authors in our modern hymn books. Finally in the East we find Ephraim the Syrian inveighing against Bardaisan (Bardesanes the Gnostic) for having composed a Psalter. In prosaic verse Ephraim complains :

"He desired to imitate David and to rival the beauty of the Psalter.

"Being covetous of the same praise he composed like him
"A hundred and fifty hymns."

No wonder that the authorities of the Church exerted themselves against the use of "new Psalms."

But the action of the authorities would probably have failed, if it had not been forwarded by the nature of these early compositions. The hymns perished, but not merely because some of them were written by heretics or by Montanists. Hymns beyond other religious literature are the expression of feeling, and feeling changes. The earliest Christians, in their "new Psalms," let themselves go to a degree which seemed excessive to later generations. The rich freedom of expression which marked the joyful thankfulness of the first two centuries was checked, when Christian reflection began to give a more restrained and definite form to Christian teaching.

¹ So Zahn.

The

Infantine

Familiar clasp of things divine

seemed too daring, as the Church grew up into riper theological knowledge.

Nor is this all that may be said. If on the one hand the language of early hymns was too bold and too free, on the other hand it was also too cryptic for a later age; indeed expressions which may appear cryptic to us, were signs of an open and familiar vision to earlier Christians. The use of veiled expressions was forced upon the early Church by Pagan opposition and persecution, and presently it became a habit asserting itself even under circumstances which did not require it.

Dr. Harris's newly found canticles fully answer to the description we have given of early Christian hymns. They are in the first place fervent in spirit; they are whole-hearted in thanksgiving; their joy is like that of the first days. They show again the want of restraint in expression which was natural while Christian theology was still in its infancy. Lastly, their language is often symbolic or even cryptic. Though they are certainly Christian, the name *Jesus* never occurs in them. It is very difficult to decide what events of the human life of Christ are or are not referred to. Mystic waters and mystic Divine milk and a mystic seal are mentioned, and yet it cannot be said positively whether there is any allusion to the sacraments or not.

The MS. from which the Odes are taken is but meagrely described by Dr. Harris. "Its age," he writes, "may be between three and four hundred years. . . . In spite of its relatively late date, the text is a good one" (pages 2, 3).

This judgment of the Editor may be correct in general, but seeing that *ex hypothesi* thirteen or fourteen hundred

years intervene between the composition of the Odes and the writing of the MS., it is reasonable to suppose that a good number of errors, including some of importance, have crept into the text during the course of so many hundreds of years. In fact not a few places may be found, in which a slight change of reading is either necessary for the grammar, or advisable for the sense. As a contribution, therefore, to the emendation and better understanding of the Syriac text, a few Odes are given here in a revised rendering taken from Dr. Harris's printed text. Where an emendation is followed a footnote is appended.

Words supplied to fill an apparent gap in the Syriac text are inserted within square brackets. *Italics* are used on the same principles as in the Revised Version of the Bible.

Dr. Harris's MS. is defective at the beginning, and the first of the Odes which is preserved in it is numbered as the Third in the Collection. It tells simply and yet beautifully of the mystical union between the Lord and his follower.

ODE III.

1. [With the spirit of the Lord] I am clothed, and they that are His ¹ members are with Him.
2. To them do I cling, and He loveth me.
3. (For I should not have known how to love the Lord, if He had not loved me.)
4. Who is able to discern love, but he that is loved ?
5. I love the Beloved, and the Beloved ² *loveth* my soul.
6. And where His rest, ³ is, there am I.
7. And I shall be no stranger, ⁴ for with the Lord merciful, ⁵ and compassionate there is no grudging.
8. I am united to *Him*, because the *Lover* hath found the Beloved.
9. Because I love the Son, I shall become a son. ⁶
10. He that cleaveth to Him that dieth not, shall himself be free from death. ⁶
11. And he that delighteth in life, shall live.

¹ Or, my members.

² By a slight emendation.

³ Matt. xi. 29 (Syriac).

⁴ Heb. xii. 8 (Syriac).

⁵ By a slight emendation.

⁶ *Lit.* without death.

12. This is the spirit of the Lord which cannot lie, which teacheth the sons of men to know His ways.

13. Be wise, and know, and watch.

HALLELUJAH.

The Sixth Ode is written in cryptic language, and it is not easy to decide to what school of Christian thought it belongs. Dr. Harris repudiates Harnack's suggestion that it is Gnostic. "Neither here," he writes, "nor anywhere else is there anything definitely Gnostic in the book." Harnack's view was based on the latter half of the Ode, all in fact that is quoted in the *Pistis Sophia*; but now that the beginning of the Ode is before us it seems possible or even probable that it is a Montanist utterance, and that the Beatitude with which it closes is intended for the Montanist prophets. Most unfortunately the reading of an important word is uncertain in the opening clause. Dr. Harris gives, "As the *hand* moves over the harp," but the verb which he renders "moves" means rather *to go*, and "hand" as the subject of the verb seems hardly appropriate. If, however, we read *ruḥa*, "the wind," we have a word which fills the gap in the Syriac quite as well as *'ida*, "hand," and the subject matches the verb somewhat better. Moreover the correspondence of "wind" in verse 1 with "spirit" in verse 2 allows full force to the "So, thus" (*hākannā*) which introduces the simile. If such a reading of verses 1, 2 be correct, the Ode begins with a statement of the Montanist view of inspiration: the prophet is passive as the harp, while the Spirit speaks through him. In verse 3 it is explained that as the prophet speaks the merely human element, "strange" to the Divine, is destroyed, so that the words uttered are wholly the Lord's. This was the case (it says) with the ancient Scriptures, from Genesis onwards (ver. 4), and now this same inspiration is renewed in the saints of a later age (ver. 5).

In the last six verses is celebrated the ministerial work of the Montanist prophets. Such, at any rate, is the interpretation offered in this paper of this beautiful but cryptic Ode.

ODE VI.

1. As the wind¹ goeth in the harp, and the strings speak,
2. So speaketh in my members the spirit of the Lord, and I speak in His love.
3. For He destroyeth that which is strange to Him, and all that I speak is the Lord's.²
4. For so it was from the beginning³ even unto the end, that there might not be anything contrary to Him⁴; and nothing shall oppose Him.
5. The Lord hath granted an increase of the knowledge of Himself, and is zealous that the things should be known, which are given us by His grace. And His song He hath granted us, a song of praise to His name.⁵
6. Our spirits praise His Holy Spirit.
7. For there went forth a stream, and it became a river⁶ great and broad:
8. For it overwhelmed everything, and it . . . ?
9. And those of the sons of men who would have restrained it, could not restrain it, nor could the contrivances of those who restrain waters.
10. For it came over the face of the whole earth, and filled everything, and all the thirsty upon earth drank thereof.
11. And their thirst was quenched and was extinguished, for drink was given from the Most High.
12. Blessed therefore are His ministers, who are entrusted with His waters.
13. They have given drink⁷ to dry lips, and the enfeebled will they have confirmed.⁸
14. And the souls that were nigh to departing they have held back from death.

¹ The Syriac appears to be illegible; Dr. Harris suggests *hand*. *Wind* and *Spirit* are represented by the same word in Syriac.

² So the MS.

³ Syriac, "from *Breshith*" (the opening word of the Hebrew book of Genesis).

⁴ 1 Tim. i. 10 (Syriac).

⁵ Syriac obscure.

⁶ Syriac text has, *a light*.

⁷ Text corrupt.

⁸ An obvious emendation: Syriac text has, "They have given rest."

⁹ So, if Syriac text be sound.

15. And the limbs that stumbled they have set upright and established.

16. They gave life¹ to their dead,¹ and light to their eyes.

17. For each man acknowledged them in the Lord, and they lived by the living waters which are for ever.

HALLELUJAH.

The Twelfth Ode belongs to the group of those which are more definite than the rest in their statement of Christian truth. The singer sings of the Word, the Son of God, the Revealer of God in language which reminds the reader partly of the Epistle to the Hebrews and in part of the Fourth Gospel. The Coming of the Word has brought peace. The singer concludes with a Beatitude on those who acknowledge the Incarnate Word, and through Him the Lord (the Father).

ODE XII.

1. He hath filled me with the words of truth that I might speak for Him.

2. And as a stream of waters truth floweth from my mouth and my lips declare the fruits thereof.

3. And He hath increased within me His knowledge, for the mouth of the Lord is the True Word and the door into His Light.

4. And the Most High hath given Him to His worlds *to be* the interpreter² of His own beauty, and the teller² of His praise, and the confessor² of His counsel, and the evangelist² of His will, and the purifier² of His servants.

5. For the swiftness of the Word cannot be expressed, and according to Its swiftness so is Its sharpness.³

6. And Its course hath no limit, and It never faileth, but It standeth sure; and no [one] knoweth⁴ the place of Its descent,⁵ nor Its path.

7 For according to . . . ,⁶ for It is the light and dayspring of [His] counsel.

8 And by It the worlds spake one to another, and those who were silent became *skilled*⁷ in speech.

9 And from It came love and concord, and they spake one to another of that which they had, being impelled by the Word.⁸

¹ Syriac text emended slightly.

² Syriac text has *seyame*, but wrongly.

³ Heb. iv. 12 (Syriac).

⁴ By a slight emendation.

⁵ Or, "alighting."

⁶ Syriac, corrupt.

⁷ Acts xviii. 24 (Syriac).

⁸ Cf. Acts xviii. 5.

10 And they know Him who made them, for they are in concord, because the mouth of the Most High hath spoken to them, and through It cometh the interpretation thereof very quickly.

11. For the tabernacle of the Word is a Son of Man, and Its truth is love.

12. Blessed are they who by This One acknowledge All, and know the Lord in His truth.

HALLELUJAH.

The Twenty-third Ode describes the coming of the Word incarnate. For those who are willing to receive it it brings salvation, but those who resist it expose themselves to destruction. Then by a turn of thought strange to us the singer passes on to speak of the written word. The poetry of the Ode suffers, but the necessity of the time forces the writer to claim for the Christian dispensation the same great possession as the Jewish Church possessed. The Hebrew claimed to have a Law written by the finger of God, and the writer of the Ode, a Jewish Christian, claims that Christians too have a book of Divine origin, sealed with the threefold Divine name.

The imagery of the Ode presents no little difficulty to the interpreter. The mixture of metaphors is most perplexing. The counsel of the Lord in the Incarnation is first compared to a letter, but the descent of the letter to earth is compared to the discharge of an arrow from the bow. But the letter is sealed; men fear to break the seal, and the letter escapes from their fingers. It is possible that the book with seven seals of Revelation v. is in the writer's mind, but the sequel of the incident is different. A mysterious Thing receives the letter, and the letter rides upon it. The Syriac word is *gīglā*, which Dr. Harris translates *wheel*. The three verbs, however, which follow describe the operations of harvesting: the "wheel" *reaps*, *cuts down*, and *gathers in heaps* those who stand against it. It is therefore an obvious suggestion that *gīglā* stands in

the place of the cognate Syriac word *maggalthā*, "sickle," either intentionally or by scribal error. If the mysteriously moving thing be in truth a sickle,¹ then it becomes probable that Revelation xiv. 14 is in the singer's mind.

(In that passage the Prophet-seer sees one sitting upon a cloud like unto a son of man and bearing a sharp sickle, with which the earth is presently reaped.) On the other hand it is not improbable that the statement that the *gīglā* obstructed rivers and made a broad way contains a reference to the drying up of the Euphrates, "that the way of the kings that come from the sunrising may be made ready" (Rev. xvi. 12). The obscurity of the whole passage, however, leaves us in serious doubt as to the soundness of the text. Probably the Greek had suffered before the Syriac version was made.

ODE XXIII.

1. Joy is of the saints ; and who shall put it on but they alone ?
2. Grace is of the Elect ; and who shall receive it but they who trust in it from the beginning ?
3. Love is of the Elect ; and who shall put it on except those who have possessed it from the beginning ?
4. They walked in the knowledge of the Most High without grudging, *entering into* His joy and the fulness of knowledge of Him.
5. And His counsel was as a letter, His will descended from the Most High,² and it was sent as an arrow from the bow, which is shot with strength.
6. And many hands^rran (?) upon the letter to seize it and take it and read it.
7. And it escaped from their fingers, and they feared it, and the seal that was upon it.
8. For they had no authority to loose its seal, for the power which was upon the seal was more excellent than theirs.
9. But they who beheld it followed the letter, that they might know where it would alight, and who would read it, and who would hear it.

¹ Cf. Zech. v. 2, where a *flying sickle* appears in LXX and perhaps also in the Peshitta.

² Perhaps read, "from above."

10. But a rolling thing received it, and it rode upon it.¹

11. And a sign was with it, *the sign* of kingship and of government.

12. And everything which met² the rolling thing it mowed down and brake in pieces.

13. And many of the enemy it destroyed; and it dammed rivers, and passed over and uprooted many forests, and made a broad path.

14. And that which came upon it (15) was a letter of salvation,³ that all lands might be gathered together.⁴

16. And there appeared at the head of it the sign³ which is revealed, even the true Son from the Father Most High.

17. And he inherited everything and received it, and the device of many was brought to nought.

18. But all the rebellious . . .⁵ and fled, and all who persecuted became extinct and. . .

19. And the letter became a great volume written wholly by the finger of God.

20. And the name of the Father was upon it, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, to give counsel for ever and ever.

HALLELUJAH.

Dr. Harris points out that the subject of more than one of the Odes is the Descent of Christ into Hades in order to preach and to rescue the spirits imprisoned there. To the examples given by the Editor should be added the Thirty-third Ode, for the only difficulty in the way of this explanation is removed, if we accept "Grace" as a cryptic designation of our Lord.

ODE XXXIII.

1. Again Grace hastened and left Hades (corruption), for He⁶ descended into it in order to empty it.

2. And He destroyed Abaddon⁷ before Him, and brought to an end all his power.

3. And he stood upon a lofty summit (i.e. in Hades) and sent forth His voice from one end of the land unto the other.

4. And He drew to Him all who obeyed Him.

¹ Lit., "it came upon it."

² An emendation.

³ Emendation.

⁴ Cf. John xi. 52.

⁵ Syriac text, "acted with audacity."

⁶ In the Syriac *fem.*, the antecedent being "Grace."

⁷ Cf. Rev. ix. 11.

And He did not appear as a malefactor, [5] but He was as a perfect Virgin standing and making proclamation and crying out and saying,

6. Turn ye, sons of men, and live, ye daughters.

7. And forsake the ways of this Hades and draw nigh to me ; and I will enter into you and will bring you forth from Abaddon.

8. And I will make you wise in the ways of truth ; ye shall not be corrupted neither shall ye perish.

9. Hear me, and be ye saved, for I speak among you the grace of God ; and by me ye shall be saved, and shall be blessed.

10. I am your judge, and they who put me on shall suffer no harm, but they shall gain the new world that is incorruptible.

11. Mine elect walk in me, and I make known my ways to those that seek me, and make them trust in my name.

HALLELUJAH.

In conclusion the hope may be expressed that Syriac scholars and students of early Christian history will give their most serious attention to these Odes. Much work remains to be done on the text, but such labour will be worthily expended. These Odes stand very high indeed among the recent discoveries of forgotten Christian literature both for their beauty of form and for the suggestiveness of their teaching.

W. EMERY BARNES.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN TREATMENT OF SIN AFTER BAPTISM.

THE most primitive form of Christian doctrine held that Christians, as such, were free from sin. They had been born again into a state of sinlessness,¹ and it was their duty to see that they never relapsed again into the dangerous state which they had left ; if they should fail in this duty, it was questionable whether they had any further chance of salvation.

¹ Sinlessness is a somewhat ambiguous term ; it is here used as the equivalent of *posse non peccare*, not of *non posse peccare*.