

THE ODES OF THE LORD'S REST.¹

I. THE PROBLEM OF THEIR ORIGIN.

DISCUSSION of Rendel Harris' great discovery of the *Odes of Solomon* has reached the stage of "second thoughts." Appreciation of the immense importance of the new material to the history of religion in general, and of Christian thought in particular, has not declined. It has rather increased. But appreciation of the exceptional difficulty of assigning to the forty-two hymns their true place in the period of transition from late Jewish to early Christian sentiment has increased concomitantly. We realize that results of far-reaching significance are sure to follow as soon as it can be certainly determined whether in their primitive form (for interpolations are admitted to exist by nearly all critics, including the discoverer himself) the Odes may not be pre-Christian; but even on this fundamental point there seems as yet to be small promise of agreement. Harnack,² Charles,³ Diettrich,⁴ Spitta⁵ and Staerk⁶ are as positive that the Christian elements are merely redactional in character as Harris,⁷ Barnes,⁸ Haussleiter,⁹ Bernard,¹⁰ Wellhausen¹¹ and Gunkel¹² that they are fundamental.

¹ *Odes of Solomon*, 26. 3.

² *Ein Psalmbuch aus dem ersten Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, 1910.

³ *Review of Theol. and Philos.*, Oct., 1910.

⁴ *Reformation*, xix. p. 306.

⁵ *Zts. f. ntl. Wiss.*, xi. 3, pp. 193 ff., and 4, pp. 259 ff.

⁶ *Zts. f. Wiss. Theol.*, lii. pp. 289 ff. (Oct., 1910).

⁷ *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1909.

⁸ *EXPOSITOR*, July, 1910. ⁹ *Theol. Litbl.*, xxxi. No. 12, col. 265-276.

¹⁰ *Journ. of Theol. Studies*, Oct., 1910.

¹¹ *Gott. Gelehrter Anzeigen*, 1910, pp. 629 ff.

¹² *Zts. f. ntl. Wiss.*, xi. 4 (Oct., 1910), pp. 291 ff.

Of all types of literature none afford datable points of contact with known historical events and conditions so few and so elusive as mystical poems of the inner life. None are more exposed to change and adaptation to new conditions and sentiments than "spiritual songs,"¹ especially when unprotected by the standard of canonicity. In the present case both the inherent difficulty of dating, and the probability of alteration from the primitive form, first in process of ritual use, second in process of literary transmission, including translation from Greek to Syriac, if not from Hebrew or Aramaic into Greek as well, approximate the maximum. Gunkel's warning against precipitate verdicts is therefore most timely. Seldom, if ever, have critics, philologists, and students of the history of religion been confronted with a more difficult task—great as are the results to be hoped for—than the exact location in date and literary environment of these deeply spiritual Odes. It is not wholly impossible that the problem may be solved by appeal to particular words, phrases or passages, which may seem to offer clues, linguistic or historical; but such as have hitherto been advanced have proved less convincing than was hoped by their advocates. The opposite method of approach, consideration of the collection as a whole—for apart from redactional additions and textual corruption the Odes are admitted to be the work of a single author—seems now to be the more promising. At least there seems to be justification for utterance on the part of those who are not primarily philologists, and must rely upon scholars better versed in Syriac than themselves where questions of text and translation are involved.²

¹ Ephesians v. 19, *ὕδαλ πνευματικαί*.

² The present writer desires to express his indebtedness in this respect to Prof. C. C. Torrey of Yale, as Harnack has expressed his to Flemming and Gunkel his to Schultheiss and Gressmann. Throughout the present discussion it must be understood that the translation and text of Harris

Approached thus in the large, and subject to all possibilities of subsequent correction from textual and philological discovery, the Odes are capable of affording no small degree of evidence as to their origin, environment and significance in the development of religious thought. Indeed the very fact that some forty religious poems known to date between 50 B.C. and 200 A.D., not written to mystify, but transparently sincere in motive as well as beautiful in expression, can afford to modern scholars the utmost difficulty to determine whether their author were Jew or Christian, is itself very highly significant. It confirms the conclusions to which all modern research into the history of religious ideas in the Hellenistic world has been leading up. The transition from national to universal religions, from pagan mystery-cults to "the mystery of godliness," from eclectic theosophy and quasi-Jewish "piety" to worship of the Galilean Redeemer, in short the change from Judaism and kindred cults to Christianity, was far less abrupt than we have fancied. There were gradations and nuances that time has almost obliterated. There certainly was no "pre-Christian Jesus"; but there was a "Preparatio Evangelica" which students of the history of religion ("comparative religion" is an inadequate term) are teaching us to read in a new light. Even if we fail to decide the question: Christian, or pre-Christian, the *Odes of Solomon* have a vast deal to tell us about the progressive teaching of that Spirit which "spake by the prophets," and whose greatest outpourings came at the meeting-point of Semitic and Aryan religious thought.

The learned and able discoverer of the Odes has antici- have been compared with those of Barnes, Flemming, Unguad (Unguad und Staerk, *Die Oden Salomos*, 1910), Wellhausen, Schulthees, Bernardt Sprengling (*Am. Journ. of Theol.*, xiv. 4) and Gunkel, so that the writer's very inadequate firsthand knowledge of Syriac may perhaps be regarded as not altogether unfitting him for the particular task in view.

pated reversal of his judgment on some of the minor points of his argument for date and authorship. Since the weighty declaration of Harnack that the problem is insoluble save on the supposition of a Jewish original adapted by interpolation to Christian use, he will not think it strange if even some of the passages on which both he and his opponents have chiefly relied for evidences of date prove illusive. Among these must in our judgment be reckoned Ode 6, with its supposed allusion to "the Temple." To those of Harris' way of thinking Ode 6 gives evidence of Jewish proclivities in a Christian author of Gentile birth. Ode 41. 8 according to Harris is an explanation by the poet of "his position in a Christian community as a Gentile among Jews."¹ According to Harnack all possible permutations of the terms Jew, Christian, Gnostic, proselyte are inadequate to rescue the integrity of the text. But Harnack, too, thinks the reference to "the Temple" in Ode 6 an important datum. The author in his view was a pre-Christian Jew. "The goal of all knowledge of God is attained in men's coming to the temple. Herewith the author's Jewish nationality is proved."² Harris is unquestionably correct in saying: "We must recognise a reference to the waters in Ezekiel which go forth from the temple" (Ezek. xlvii. 1-12). Harnack is also unquestionably right in identifying these "healing streams" as "the knowledge of the Lord." Gunkel confirms and enlarges this view by adding:—

The tradition taken up is that well known to students of the Old Testament, the originally mythological idea of the waters which in the last days issue from the sanctuary: they are properly the waters of the stream of life, which flow forth from Paradise. The poet symbolises in this spirited figure the triumphant progress through the world of the knowledge of God.³

¹ P. 65.

² Note on vi. 8.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 297; cf. Spitta, *Zts. f. ntl. Wiss.*, xi. 3, p. 195.

It is in fact the figure of Ezekiel *as interpreted by Isaiah xi. 9*¹ which gives us the key to his thought. We may transcribe the Ode in Harris' translation, dividing according to strophic construction and parallelismus membrorum, appending variant renderings in footnotes, and placing certain instructive references in the margin :—

ODE 6. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AS LIVING WATER.

- i. ¹ As the hand moves over the harp
and the strings speak
² So speaks in my members the Spirit of the Lord,
and I speak by His love.
³ For He ³ destroys what is foreign,³
and everything is of the Lord ⁴ ;
⁴ For thus it was from the beginning
and will be unto the end,
That nothing should be His adversary,
and nothing should stand up against Him.

Ode 12. 1-3. Isa. liii. 10.

- ii. ⁵ 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.
⁶ And the praise of His name He gave us :
our spirits praise His holy spirit.
- iii. ⁷ For a streamlet went forth
and became a river great and broad,
⁸ For it flooded and broke up all
and *brought* [water(?)] *to the Temple*.⁵
⁹ Neither dikes nor levees could restrain it,⁶
nor the arts of those who build dams.
¹⁰ Over the whole earth it spread and filled all ;
and all the thirsty on earth were given to drink of it.
¹¹ And thirst was relieved and quenched ;
for from the Most High the draught was given.

¹ "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

² Or "It."

³ Schulthess would read $\text{בְּיָדוֹ} \text{לְהַרְסוֹ}$.

⁴ So the codex. Harris proposes an unwarrantable emendation.

⁵ Coptic : "turned itself to the Temple."

⁶ Following Gressmann-Gunkel.

Isa. xiv. 3.

- iv. ¹² Blessed then are the ministers of that draught
 who are entrusted with that water of His :
¹³ They have assuaged the dry lips,
 and the will that had fainted they have raised up ;
¹⁴ And souls that were near departing
 they have caught back from death ;

Isa. xxxv. 3-7.

- ¹⁵ And limbs that had fallen
 they straightened and set up.
¹⁶ They gave strength to their weakness,
 and light to their eyes :
¹⁷ For every one knew them in (?) the Lord,
 and they lived by the water of life forever. Hallelujah.

But equally unanimous with the appreciation of the figure is the sense of the difficulty created by the words italicised in verse 8. Gunkel rightly objects to the interpretation of his predecessors that the poet does not begin until verse 10*b* ff. with the healing effects of the water of life. Verses 7-9 are concerned with its irrepressible growth. "The Temple" in verse 8*b* is certainly an obstacle ; for in spite of Harnack it is certainly not the "goal" (issue ?) of the stream. The figure demands rather that if the Temple appear at all it should be the *source* of the river of the water of life. A tribute of wreckage from overturned obstacles and drowned victims would hardly be an acceptable offering. But the fact that we feel the word as an obstacle to the sense does not justify us in diverting the poet's stream to sweep it away. Gressmann's proposed emendation (||ⲓⲃⲓⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲃⲓⲟⲩ παρήνεγκε τὸν ναόν) "it swept away the temple" is a remedy worse than the disease. There is no trace elsewhere in the Odes, even on the most Christian interpretation, of such an iconoclastic spirit. It would be better to have the half verse untranslated than to adopt so violent an expedient.

But Professor Torrey proposes a much simpler explanation, which in addition throws a much needed light upon

the question of the original language of the Odes. We are permitted by his kindness to present it for the first time to the public. The original had simply וְלֵאמֹר (לֵא) אֵתִי לְהַכְלִיל. Either by loss or neglect the negative לֹא disappeared, leaving for the Greek translator no choice but to render "and brought to the temple" (וְאֵתִי לְהַכְלִיל = καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν πρὸς τὸν ναόν). Such is already the rendering followed by the Coptic, as well as by the Syriac, and it has been followed unquestioningly by the modern translators. The true rendering of the passage would have been:—

- * For it flooded and broke up all,
and there was no holding it in check.
- * Neither dikes nor levees could restrain it,
nor the arts of those who build dams.

Ode 6, accordingly, has for its subject the Living Waters which flow forth from Zion into all the earth. This life-giving stream is the "knowledge of the Lord," as in Isaiah xi. 9. In strophe i. the singer speaks of its effects in his own heart. It impels him to song as a hand sweeping the strings of the lyre. In strophe ii. his personality is merged in that of the community to which he belongs. Their function is the praise of the Lord's name, because they have in a special way been recipients of His favour, and it is His desire that the knowledge of this should be spread abroad. They are His "witnesses." Their function is that of the servant of Deutero-Isaiah, who in Isaiah xliii. 10 to xlv. 5 is Yahweh's witness to the peoples, through whom they receive the living water and become members by adoption of Yahweh's people.¹ We shall have later to consider whether "the prophet speaketh this of himself or of some other."

¹ Cf. Ode 26. 13 f. Those who know the Lord and stand in His Rest make this their song; and their song becomes "like a river which has a copious fountain, and flows to the help of them that seek it." Cf. also the message of the "priest of the Lord" in Ode 20, and its effect in 17. 12-14, and 10. 1-3.

In the meantime it is well to observe that this missionary calling of the community which the poet represents is one of the constant and distinctive features of the Odes. Thus Ode 12 combines the Isaian figure of the knowledge of God as living water with those of Psalm xix., His Word in nature and in man :—

ODE 12. TRUTH AND LIGHT AS THE WORD OF THE LORD.

ii. ¹ He hath filled me with words of truth ;
in order that I may speak the same.

² And like the flow of waters flows truth from my mouth,
and my lips show forth His fruit.

Odes 8. 1-3, 14. 7, 16. 3. Cf. Isa. lvii. 19.

And He has caused the knowledge of Him to abound in me
because the mouth of the Lord is the true Word and the
door of His Light.

Strophe iii. deals, as we have seen, with the irresistible power of the healing stream given by the Most High, while strophe iv. returns to those entrusted with the ministration of it (cf. Rom. iii. 2), congratulating them on their mission of enlightenment and philanthropy.

But if the supposed reference to the Temple in Ode 6 thus disappears, submerged in the general concept so characteristic of the Odists of a mission to spread the saving " knowledge of the Lord " over all the earth, the supposed reference in Ode 4, whether to the temple in Jerusalem (Harris, Spitta) or that in Leontopolis (Harnack), is at least equally elusive.

ODE 4. THE CHANGELESS ELECTION OF GOD.

i. ¹ No man, O my God, changeth Thy holy place ;
² and there is none that could change it
or set it in another place,

Because he lacketh the power.

³ For Thou didst design thy Sanctuary before the creation of
places ;

⁴ the elder place shall not be changed by those that are
younger.

- ii. "Thou hast given thy heart, O Lord, to thy believers :
 never wilt thou fail, nor be without fruits :
 "For a single hour of thy faith is more precious than all days and
 years.

Isa. xi. 9. Odes 13, 15. 8, 20. 7.

- "For who is there that shall put on thy grace and be hurt ?
 For thy seal is known, and thy creatures know it :
 And thy [heavenly] hosts possess it :
 and the elect archangels are clad with it.

- iii. Thou hast given us thy fellowship :
 it was not that thou wast in need of us
 but that we are in need of thee.

Ode 30.

Distil thy dews upon us,
 and open upon us thy rich fountains
 that pour forth to us milk and honey.

- iv. For there is no repentance with thee
 that thou shouldst repent of aught thou didst promise,
 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.

Tempting as it may be to find a "historical allusion" in the opening strophe of this Ode we must demur to Harnack's positive assurance that "Harris is right in taking the reference to be to the temple in Jerusalem."¹ No structure built with hands enters the poet's mind ; otherwise he could not say (to adopt Harris' translation) "Thy sanctuary thou hast designed before thou didst make other places" (*τόπους*). On the other hand Gunkel goes much too far in denying any earthly basis or geographical location to this "sanctuary."² It may be true that the word *τόπος* is employed by the Gnostic writers of "superterrestrial regions" ; but the promised "milk and honey" for which our Odist prays in verse 10, while employed in a symbolic sense (cf. Ode 30) are still the milk and honey of the Promised

¹ Note *ibid.* p. 29.

² P. 296 f.

Land. The dews which distil upon God's chosen are primarily the fertilising dews of Palestine. A little more careful attention to the very passages quoted by Harris from *Pirqe Aboth* would have made this perfectly apparent; for when Exodus xv. 17 and Psalm lxxviii. 54 are quoted in proof that "the Sanctuary" is a pre-existent "own possession" of God, it is perfectly obvious that it is not the Temple that is meant, but the mountain range of Judaea, the land flowing with milk and honey, the place of Yahweh's own dwelling which He promised to give to Israel's forefathers, and into which He brought them to dwell in His presence.

The Sanctuary: whence [is it proved a possession of God]? 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 He brought them to the border of His Sanctuary, even to this mountain (range), which His right hand had possessed (Ps. lxxviii. 54).

In neither quotation is there any reference to the Temple. Both refer to the bringing of Israel into the promised land of Yahweh's rest. This "holy hill" is that of Psalm xv. 1, where none are admitted to "dwell" with Yahweh save such as have "clean hands and a pure heart." To "abide in Yahweh's tabernacle" there is not to live in the visible temple but to become tent-guests in His territory. The "holy mountain" of Yahweh is spoken of similarly in the Isaian passage we have already had occasion to refer to as in the Odist's mind. Even the wild beasts there will become like lambs, says the prophet, in the Messianic time. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."¹ The argument of *Pirqe Aboth* vi. 10 is directed to proving that God designed this "mountain" for himself to dwell in before He made the other lands, just as the navel of creation and the tomb of Adam are still shown in the Church of the Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The

¹ Isa. xi. 9.

Odist thinks of the divine election as a foreordaining choice of land and people together. Like Ode 26 this too is one of the "Songs of the Lord's Rest," the Rest (i.e. resting-place) to which Israel was led up through the wilderness, as the shepherd leads his flock across the desert to the oases. Ode 22. 12 expresses a similar thought :—

That the foundation of everything⁷(in the renewed creation) might
be thy rock,
And on it thou didst build thy Kingdom.

Ps. xc. 1.

And thou wast the dwelling-place of the saints. Hallelujah.

He thinks of it, like the seer of the *Apocalypse of Baruch*,¹ as Paradise restored, a regained Garden of Eden whose chief blessing is the companionship of the Highest; it is to him as to the author of Hebrews "a rest that remaineth to the people of God," a rest of His into which they "enter." But it is not, as to the New Testament author, a super-terrestrial region. It is not as in *Ep. Barn.* vi. 10 a "renewed earth." It is not subdivided into three as in the exposition of Matthew xiii. 9 reported by Papias² from "the elders the disciples of the apostles," where, though "in every place the Saviour shall be seen," there is a highest realm of "heaven," a lower of "paradise" and a lowest of "the City."³ To the Odist the paradise of "the Lord's Rest" is still the land flowing with "milk and honey" and watered with the "dew" of heaven (ver. 10; cf. Deut. xi. 9-11). It is the "holy mountain" of Isaiah xi. 9, where even the wild beasts have ceased to ravin, and have learned to respect the image of God, as promised in Genesis ix. 5 (ver. 8). It is the "Promised" land; and because the

¹ iv. 2-6.

² Reported by Irenæus, *Her.* v., xxxvi. 1f. Lightfoot, *Harmer*, xvii.

³ *Apoc. Baruch*, v. 2-6, has the same doctrine of Paradise and the City. Papias' "elders" coincide again with *Apoc. Baruch* xxix. 5 in the fragment preserved in *Iren. Her.* v., xxxiii. 3f. (xiv. in Lightfoot, *Harmer*).

promise was with foreknowledge it is inalienable (ver. 11-14). Here the Odist aspires, like the Psalmist, to "dwell in the house of the Lord forever," because "in His presence there is fulness of joy forevermore" (ver. 9). But it is not super-terrestrial. It is Palestine. It is idealised, metamorphosed, even as those who have "put on the Lord's grace" to inhabit it are glorified into the divine image like the elect archangels. Of this transfiguration of the redeemed we hear more in Odes 8. 16, 17. 4, 6, 20. 7. The gradual transition of later Judaism from a restoration of the *national* life in perpetual felicity in Yahweh's Rest (Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14; Isa. xxvi. 16-19, *Shemoneh Esreh* ii.) to *individual* resurrection (Dan. xii. 2 f.; *Eth Enoch*, II Esdras, *Apoc. Baruch* passim) is here complete. We have the full Pharisean doctrine of the resurrection body and the "age to come." But the Odist's metamorphosis of the land is less transcendental than the apocalyptic New Jerusalem of Ezekiel or that of the Revelation of John. It is the land which the Creator chose to put His name there, designing it before the other lands which He made. Its "memorial" therefore is "older" than other lands. It is a chosen land, as its inhabitants are a chosen people. Alongside this exultation in the land where the Lord chose to dwell should be placed that of Ode 28. 14-18 on the elect and their "memorial."

II Esdr. vi. 57-59.

¹⁴ And I did not perish, for I was not their brother,
neither was my birth like theirs.

¹⁵ And they sought for my death and did not find it:
for I was *older than the memorial of them*.

¹⁶ And vainly did they assail me and those who came after me,
¹ Vainly they sought to destroy *the memorial of him who was before them* :

¹⁷ For the thought of the Most High cannot be forestalled:
and His mind is superior to all wisdom. Hallelujah.

There is much then in Ode 4 to justify the comment of

¹Harris, margin; Spitta.

Harris (p. 92): "It is not easy to see how it could have been written outside Palestine." Indeed it is not in this Ode alone, but repeatedly, as in Ode 11. 11-13, 26. 7, 35. 1-6, 36. 6 f., 40. 4 f., that the poet delights in figures of the mountain land, whose hill-tops pierce the clouds, their flanks streaming with fertilising showers. Its fountains pour down into the valleys (Ode 30), torrential floods sweep the unwary from their feet (39. 1-4), while all fertility and blessing are from the dew and rain upon the mountains, or the springs which gush from the rock (11. 5-7, 11-16). Were it determined that Greek and not Aramaic or Hebrew was the original language of the Odes,¹ there is much in the external attestation to commend Egypt as the place of origin. But so far as the evidence of imagery and atmosphere is concerned no country of the world is so ill adapted as the rainless, torrentless, alluvial valley of the Nile, with its border of low desert cliffs.²

But from Harris' further remark that it is also not easy to see how this Ode could come from "a purely Jewish hand" we must emphatically dissent. On the contrary we can find nothing that goes beyond the expectations of later Judaism.

The *Apocalypse of Baruch*, e.g., anticipates a similar glorification of both land and people.³ Rather is it difficult to conceive a Christian hand, of however Jewish type, so completely uninfluenced by the universalising tendencies which

¹ Professor Torrey cites besides the probable translation error of Ode 6. 8 another possible one in verse 9. Schmidt's translation of the Coptic has here *aedificatio*, where the Syriac has *sons* (of men); suggesting confusion with some derivative of the word בָּנָה "build" (perhaps בְּנֵי־בָנָה, confused with בְּנֵי־בָנָה). This would necessitate the theory of two Greek translations from the Aramaic.

² This imagery is so largely dependent on the Old Testament as to make inferences precarious.

³ With Ode 4, 8 cf. *Apoc. Bar.* li. 10, with Ode 4. 9-14 cf. *Apoc. Bar.* iv. 2-6.

from the very earliest times (Acts vii. 5-16) ¹ more and more delocalised the Christian conception of the inheritance.

Thus far we have done little more than indicate the illusive character of the supposed "historical allusions" of the Odes. As Sprengling remarks, "The problem hinges largely on Odes 4 and 6." Harris, Haussleiter and Harnack all seem to agree to this opinion. But we can find no "allusions" here. So far as others have been discerned in individual phrases they are even more untrustworthy. Notably is this the case with supposed references to the gospel narrative. Ode 39. 6-10 has no reference whatever to the incident of the Lake of Gennesaret, but repeats the classic theme of the passage through the Red Sea.² As in Psalms cvi. 8-12, cxiv. 3, 5, *Ps. Sol.* 6. 5, the Odist's model is the "Song of Moses" (Exod. xv. 1-18). Again, Ode 24. 1 is utterly unintelligible. If it really contains a reference to the baptism of Jesus it can serve to date nothing but itself, for independently it would lie under strong suspicion of having been affected by that Christianising editorial revision which has admittedly left its impress upon the Odes.

Preliminary study of mere individual phrases having thus proved unfruitful of convincing results, it remains to apply the alternative method to the determination of the primary question. First of all we need to know to what age, environment, stream and development of religious ideas the Odes must be assigned. To determine this we must make more careful definition of their general character, nature and purpose. In substance they form a literary unit. Their discoverer presents a list which might easily

¹ See the writer's article "Stephen's Speech" in the volume of Contributions.

² Note especially ver. 10: "The waves were lifted up on this side and on that," and cf. Isa. xliii. 2. Exod. xiv. 21, 26 f., Jos. 3. 8 ff.

be increased of more or less constantly recurring conceptions and expressions. We must carry the process further and deeper. The lesser must be subordinated to the larger and more fundamental, until we have identified in true perspective the thought-world of the poet. Particularly must we study his doctrines of resurrection, sonship and the world to come. The task is less difficult than might appear. His ideas, while clothed in beautiful form, range over a very limited field; and the symbolism is for the most part inherited. He has *one* theme: Redemption. He sings "to one clear harp in divers tones." As Harris observes, "There is not a note of sadness from beginning to end." There are certain great, vitalising root-ideas which ramify throughout the series, and frequently bind together in subordinate groups a number of successive poems. A really competent judgment on the difficult question of authenticity or interpolation must be based on adequate study of these root-ideas. But this is not all. Once we have clearly in mind the Odist's conception of the Redemption, we shall know where to place him. The question of Christian or pre-Christian is indeed far more difficult, even after settlement of questions of text and translation, than the average reader can imagine. Significantly so. The average reader knows but little of the idea of the Redemption in the forms it assumes after the great poems of the Restoration in Deutero-Isaiah. He knows but little of the development in the Wisdom of Solomon of the doctrine of sonship and immortality, little of the doctrine of Israel as Yahweh's Beloved, the priest-nation, "scattered among the Gentiles that it might do good to the Gentiles,"¹ teaching them the knowledge of the Lord, made "sons" by the spirit of love and obedience as in *Jubilees*.² He knows little of the greater

¹ *Apoc. Bar.*, i. 4.

² *Cf. Jub.* i. 24-26.

redemption as a deliverance from Sheol, a return from the underworld, clothed upon with a glorified body, to a new world "wherein dwelleth righteousness" of the *Apocalypse of Baruch* and kindred writings. Knowing these conceptions only in their Christian form he finds it hard to appreciate the doubt and hesitation of the critics.

Yet this is the true problem, and, for the present at least, the most promising line of approach. Baentsch is justified in placing the burden of proof on the opponents of a pre-Christian (or at least Jewish) origin, on the ground that the whole history of the early currency of the Odes shows that they were so regarded wherever received in the Church. There is not the slightest attempt on the Odists' part to sail under false colours. We are not dealing with pseud-epigraphy. In good faith an Egyptian Christian of ca. 200 A.D. quotes them as utterances of "thy servant Solomon." Similar Jewish writings of the later periods like the *Psalms of Solomon* with which our Odes are associated in transmission, or the still later *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, were disowned by the Synagogue in the period of anti-Christian reaction following the revolt of Bar Cocheba (135 A.D.) along with the current Greek version of the Old Testament and certain other quasi-canonical material relied upon by the Church as "prophecy."¹ It is no rarity to find Jewish writings surviving to us only in the penumbra of semi-canoncity in the Church, disowned by the Synagogue because too late of origin to secure a footing in its canon, and greatly altered through the mutilation and interpolation to which they were thus exposed. In view of the absence of any mention of the name or teaching of Jesus, or any trustworthy reference to any specifically Christian practice or belief, or event of evangelic tradition, "gift of the Spirit" or "powers of the age to come," the prima

¹ Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* lxxi.-lxxiii.

facie case for pre-Christian origin is a strong one. Harnack considers the analytical argument presented by himself still stronger. All his endeavours to fix upon some type of second-century Christian combining the diverse characteristics of the Odes proved futile. Some of the Christian elements on the other hand were admittedly spurious, others showed the marks of interpolation. One in particular (iii. 9) was so manifestly contradictory to its own context that Harnack could say: "The proof is in my judgment conclusive."¹ But we may admit the interpolation—Baentsch is probably right in reducing that of iii. 9 to the single word "the Son"²—without granting the inference. Other critics and philologists of the highest standing pronounce the Odes as a whole to be Christian after all reasonable discounts are made on the score of interpolation.

The question is difficult but not insoluble. It has reached the stage where not the philologist only, but the literary critic and historian of religious ideas must be appealed to. It will be our endeavour in the succeeding articles to present certain considerations based on the method outlined above. We shall at least be turning the new material to good account if we direct our efforts toward an appreciation of the poet's fundamental and dominant ideas. It may be possible when we have brought them into comparison with kindred utterances of the time, canonical and extra-canonical, to determine whether they are rooted in Jewish or in Christian soil.

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¹ *Der Beweis ist m. E. stringent*, p. 28.

² "Because I love Him—the Son—I shall be a son."