



**THE BEGINNINGS OF GNOSTIC
CHRISTIANITY**

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BY
L. GORDON RYLANDS,
B.A., B.Sc.(Lond.)

Author of
A Critical Analysis of the Four Chief Pauline Epistles,
Did Jesus Ever Live? The Christian Tradition, etc.

"Die Gnosis ist zunächst eine vorchristliche Bewegung, die ihre Wurzeln in sich selber hat. Sie will daher auch aus sich selber heraus und nicht in erster Linie als ein Seitenzweig oder eine Nebenbildung der christlichen Religion verstanden werden."

W. BOUSSET, *Kyrios Christos*, p. 222.

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PREFACE

LITTLE need be said by way of preface to this book, which will, I hope, sufficiently explain itself. I had better, however, state, in order to guard against possible misapprehension, that by *Gnostic Christianity* I mean the Christianity of Paul and of the Fourth Gospel as distinguished from the doctrines of such writers as Basilides and Valentinus, which I term *Christian Gnosticism*.

There is surprisingly little general knowledge of the results of modern criticism of the Bible; but, if I had to begin by demonstrating the conclusions of such theological commentators as Wellhausen, Bousset, Reitzenstein, Loisy, and Guignebert, two or three volumes would be required instead of one. The only feasible course is to take their principal conclusions for granted, with references where necessary. I think I may fairly do this because, as they are not in agreement with the main thesis of the present work, their reasoning cannot have been biased in favour of it.

On the whole I have preferred Dr. Bernard's version of the *Odes of Solomon*. Rendel Harris in his translation of them was influenced by a presupposition as to their character which I believe to be erroneous.

To avoid interruption of the argument, and to spare the reader the trouble of referring back to an earlier page, I have, where necessary, repeated a quotation previously made.

I should like this book to be regarded as a continuation, however imperfect, of the work of W. B. Smith, to whom my indebtedness is great.

L. GORDON RYLANDS.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

1. INFLUENCE OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY UPON JEWISH RELIGION

SEVERAL writers have remarked upon the impetus given to theosophical speculation by the contact between Jewish religion and Greek philosophy; and a few have seen in the resulting fermentation of thought a preparation for the emergence of the Christian religion. Particularly among Jews of the Dispersion the mental horizon was widened by knowledge of Greek cosmological theories and of a metaphysical monotheism which tended to create dissatisfaction with the anthropomorphic Jehovah of the Pentateuch. Concurrently with the intellectual advance an ethical movement was in progress which in many people passed into an extreme asceticism. This became an important factor among the influences that were bringing about the formation of sects in Jewry.

Among the finer minds the progress of thought and a quickened sense of human misery and oppression gave rise to a passionate desire to understand life and death, and the problem of evil, to attain happiness or salvation. We see the birth of a moral crisis in a restless and troubled world as the Christian era draws near.¹

A growing conviction that formal observances in religion had little value in comparison with purity of living was stimulated by the higher conception of the godhead, and resulted not only in a spiritualization of religion, but also in an intense longing for righteousness. Thus there came into existence communities of Jews who set themselves apart as God's elect and as the saints through whom the world was to be saved. Some of them, while rejecting formal

¹ Henri Berr; Preface to Guignebert's *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*, p. vii.

Judaism and the Mosaic Law, thought of themselves as a new "chosen people," upon whom had devolved the obligation to redeem, first of all their fellow-Jews and then the rest of the world.

An important result of the new attitude of mind was the transformation which it produced in the conception of the character and function of the Messiah, who became in the most Hellenized of the communities an entirely spiritual and metaphysical being. In the more conservative the change of view was naturally much less. Preparation had already been made for it by some of the later prophets, who taught that the victory to be won under the leadership of the Messiah would not be a military one of Jews over Greeks or Romans, but a victory of Yahveh over the gods of the heathen. Yahveh would come to be worshipped throughout the world, the Gentiles would resort to his temple, and the Jews be honoured as his chosen people.¹ A corollary of this belief was that the people must be worthy of their god. It was incumbent upon them to demonstrate in the superiority of their own moral standards the superiority of the god whose chosen people they claimed to be. Unfortunately increase of wealth and of luxury had brought about a serious relaxation of moral standards among the inhabitants of Judæa, and—which was even worse—unfaithfulness to the national god, as we may learn from the denunciations of the prophets. Then came into existence the communities of saints, differing much in doctrine, but applying to themselves the idea that the Jews had been chosen by God not merely for the sake of their own material advantage, but chiefly in order that they might make him known to the world and win over the Gentiles to his worship, and the related idea that by their superior righteousness they should prove themselves worthy of their high mission. The capture of Jerusalem by Pompey was a severe blow to those who still hoped for material domination; but the Jewish idealists who thought of the Messianic kingdom as the Kingdom of God upon earth decided that the divine promises could not be broken, though they must remain in

¹ Isa. lv, 5; lvi, 6, 7. Zech. viii, 20–23.

abeyance until the people had become worthy of their fulfilment. Meanwhile the wicked must be punished and the nation chastened for its amendment. The foregoing observations may be illustrated by extracts from the *Psalms of Solomon*, composed within a community of saints of a comparatively very conservative type.

Distress and the sound of war mine ears have heard. . . . And I heard a sound in Jerusalem the Holy City. . . . God lay bare their sins before the sun, and to all the earth were known the righteous judgments of the Lord; for in the secret places of the earth were they doing evil . . . and they left no sins which they did not commit and even worse than the Gentiles. For this cause God mingled for them a cup of error. . . . And he decrees war against Jerusalem and against her land. . . . And they took possession of the towers and walls of Jerusalem . . . and the saints of God were as innocent lambs in their midst. (Ps. viii.)

Behold, O Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David, and let him reign over Israel thy servant . . . that he may gather together a holy people who shall exult in righteousness . . . and he shall purify Jerusalem as it was in old time, that the Gentiles may come from the ends of the earth to behold his glory . . . and he, the righteous king, is over them, and there is no wicked person in his days among them because they are all righteous and their king is the Lord Messiah (Ps. xvii).

In the last of these extracts we see in a pre-Christian Jewish writing the idea of the future Kingdom of God which became so important in Christian doctrine. The Kingdom of the psalm is evidently not the eschatological Kingdom of the apocalypses. It is the Kingdom of primitive Christianity, which was composed of the Christian communities and would grow with their growth until it had permeated the world, as the leaven permeates the meal (Matt. xiii, 33). Both conceptions of the Kingdom are found in the Gospels, but the eschatological conception was a later importation. Hellenized Jews who no longer expected a messianic "Son of David" were obliged to adjust their conception of the Kingdom to their widened religious outlook, and they substituted for the Judaic ruler a supernatural—in some cases an invisible spiritual—Messiah (Christ). These Jews had begun to classify men as righteous and unrighteous

irrespective of race, and to conceive of a spiritual ruler of the universe who had no nationality and whose "elect" were not necessarily Jews.

The loftier conception of godhead was, as will be shown hereafter, largely the result of Greek influence; the Jews of the Dispersion were forced to realize that they were not the only monotheists. Josephus maintained that the Greeks had acquired their knowledge of God from Moses. The Hellenized Jews who compared the god of the Pentateuch with "the One" of Greek philosophy could not be of that opinion; but, since they desired a religion and not merely a philosophy, they gradually worked out a theosophy which, though shaped in the main by foreign influences, never lost certain characteristics which had been impressed upon it in its Jewish origin. Naturally the system arrived at took different forms in different minds; but even Philo, who clung to the religion of his forefathers, was able to do so only by investing the ancient beliefs with a new significance.

An analogous transformation of religion was taking place in the Pagan world. The period in which Christianity had its birth and infancy was intensely religious. Perhaps there has never been one more so; and religion was becoming a more individual and personal concern. The ancient gods and goddesses had been made ridiculous by the satirists; but, just as many Jews endeavoured to abolish the crudities of the Old Testament theology by allegorical interpretation of the Pentateuch, so did Pagans by symbolical interpretation of ancient myths extract from them cosmogonical theories and occult revelations of a spiritual relationship between God and man. For the common people the public ceremonial was too formal and too much a State affair to satisfy an individual spiritual need, especially as the loss of political liberty and the dissolution of national boundaries were destroying men's interest in the State. The terrible distresses of the civil wars had intensified the longing for a Saviour. The great gods seemed too remote and the God of the philosophers too metaphysical and colourless for a personal relationship. The average man desired a god whom he could not only worship but also love; one whom he

could imagine as having sympathy with the poor and oppressed and who would help him in his genuine endeavour to lead a better life. Gods of the second rank thus came into prominence as saviour-gods, for whose worship communities were formed on a democratic and fraternal basis, providing the members with an interest which was no longer to be found in political life. The primitive Christian communities did not, in their general character, differ essentially from these.¹ They were all products of the same environment and the same spiritual need—a need which led to the establishment and growing popularity of Mystery cults in which immortal life was guaranteed conditionally upon the worship of some god and upon the performance of rites by which his help could be secured and the attacks of evil dæmons repelled. Purity of life was required, though the standard of purity was rather an oriental than a modern one, and undoubtedly the rites and incantations did tend to degenerate into mere magic and to assume undue importance. The immortality believed to be assured by them might become the predominant attraction to the weakening of the effort to live well. Nevertheless the reliance upon magic was neither so exclusive nor so exclusively Pagan as some Christian writers have thought. It is certain at least that as a rule in the Mystery cults admission to the highest grade of “the perfect” and participation in the innermost “Mystery” would be granted only to persons who had been leading blameless lives. It is doubtful whether in respect of general conduct there was much practical difference between the members of the Christian and Pagan religious communities;² but the former had a very important distinguishing mark, which they had inherited from their Jewish ancestry—viz., the belief that they had received a divine commission to convert the world to the worship of the one true God, and the related belief that the gods of the Pagans were false gods. They did not, however, deny the existence of these gods; they said they were dæmons.

¹ A good account of the “Thiasic” or “Eranistic” religious-social communities will be found in Kalthoff’s *Rise of Christianity*, chaps. iv and v.

² Cp. 1 Cor. v, ii; vi, 7, 8; 2 Cor. xii, 20, 21; xiii, 2, 10.

To many of the Hellenistic Jews it seemed unbecoming that the pure abstraction into which they had refined their deity should have direct contact with gross matter, nor did they consider it possible that he could be immediately known. Hence it became necessary to imagine an intermediary and revealer—a spiritual being who could bring God into relationship with the world. A mediator in the later Christian sense of the term they did not require, because their God was not a judge. For spiritual men, the saints, salvation was assured; the unspiritual, having no immortal part, must necessarily perish. The thought of the loving kindness of God was not a new one at the beginning of the first century. It would be a mistake to suppose that Jews in general just before the rise of Christianity had regarded Yahveh as a severe judge before whom men could feel only fear. Certainly they believed that he would punish the wicked, but they also believed that his justice would be tempered with mercy, and that every one who was redeemable he would chasten in love. The love and mercy of God are a frequent theme of the canonical Psalms, and in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* we find evidence that a hundred years before the Christian era there were some Jews who did not limit the love of God to their own people. In the *Psalms of Solomon* God is termed Saviour and is said to be kind and merciful for ever. The writer of these Psalms, being Judaic, no doubt thought of God as especially the God of the Jews, but he felt no need of a mediator to stand between men and the severity of God. The point of view of the writer of the second half of the *Wisdom of Solomon* was quite similar, but more universal:—

Thou hast mercy on all men, and thou overlookest the sins of men to the end that they may repent. For thou lovest all things that are. . . . Thou sparest all things, because they are thine, O Sovereign Lord, thou lover of men's lives (xi, 23 ff.).

2. THE WISDOM LITERATURE

The Hellenization of Jewish religion, resulting in a universalistic and highly spiritualized conception of deity, was

already in progress a hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era, and is exemplified in what is known as the Wisdom literature. During the last pre-Christian century the theosophy of that literature was being developed. The growing conviction, among Pagans as well as Jews, that God is not to be placated like an earthly monarch by ceremony and gifts, but that salvation is to be attained through some kind of spiritual union of men with God, was producing that type of religious emotionalism which we call mysticism. Religion of this type early took root in Egypt, where the *Wisdom of Solomon* was written, and in Asia Minor it found a congenial soil. From the writings of Philo of Alexandria we can infer the attraction which it had for enfranchised religious thinkers among the Jews; and there were some who had liberated themselves much more from tradition than he had. A tendency of the age which in some Greek minds was transforming Platonism into Neo-Platonism operated among Jews to bring into existence a theosophy which was a species of Neo-Platonism of an intensely religious kind. The Jewish mystics sought to know God, not by the exercise of reason, but by inward spiritual vision, and to achieve union with him by rites to which they attached symbolic significance. From this point of view the ritual of the Mosaic Law seemed to be valueless.

The subordination of sacrifice and ritual to right conduct had already been made even by some Jews who continued to practise those ceremonial acts; but the higher conception of deity naturally brought with it a gradual rejection of rites which had been rooted in a different order of religious ideas, varying in extent according to the intensity of the reforming spirit, which, then as now, inspired different people in different degrees. The belief that sacrifices can give no pleasure to God is expressed in some of the later Psalms. For example :—

Sacrifice and burnt offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required (Ps. xl, 6).

The writers of the Wisdom literature have a very great

deal to say in praise of wisdom but very little indeed about the Law. In the first half of the *Wisdom of Solomon* the word does not occur at all. The distinctive feature of the literature is the prominence given to Wisdom, the Greek *Sophia*, which is personified. In the *Wisdom of Solomon* the Word of God, the *Logos*, is also personified, though not prominent. It seems likely that originally the personification was little more than poetic metaphor, but it is so thoroughly and graphically done that the subsequent literalization of the metaphor is not at all surprising. Pure abstraction, indeed, seems to have been an impossibility for ancient thinkers. In the first quarter of the first century *Sophia* and the *Logos* had definitely become spiritual beings who were believed to have a real existence. Through them—or one of them—the requisite “revelation” was supposed to have been made. With the personification of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs all readers of the Bible are familiar. The personification is continued in the book of “the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach,” known as *Ecclesiasticus*, in which Wisdom is so concretely represented as to have become a participating agent in the creation of the world. She is made to declare :—

I came forth from the mouth of the Most High and covered the earth as a mist. I dwelt upon the height and my throne is in the pillar of the cloud. Alone I compassed the circuit of heaven and walked in the depth of the abyss (xxiv, 3-5).

Two expressions in these verses are of particular importance. The statement that Wisdom “came forth from the mouth of the Most High” foreshadows the assimilation of Wisdom to the Word which afterwards came about. In fact, the writer must already have been thinking of the Word of God as the expression of his wisdom. And the statement that Wisdom “covered the earth as a mist” may have contributed by comparison with the statement in Genesis that “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” to the subsequent identification of Wisdom with the Holy Spirit. The result of this readjustment of conceptions was that eventually the qualities and operations of Wisdom were

transferred to the Logos, while Wisdom remained the Holy Spirit.

In *Ecclesiasticus* a belief in the dual nature of man has not yet been reached. There is no future life, and no thought of the resurrection of the body. Belief in a bodily resurrection never in fact makes its appearance in the Wisdom literature; nor was it held by the Gnostics who were inspired by that literature. "All that is of earth," it is said, "shall go back to the earth" (xli, 10). "The son of man is not immortal" (xvii, 30). "All men are dust and ashes" (*ib.*, 33). Men therefore cannot be encouraged by the writer to be virtuous through the promise of future reward in a life of eternal bliss. The reward of virtue is honourable fame. "The bodies of honourable men are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore" (xliv, 14). The others "have perished as though they had never been" (*ib.*, 9). In chapter li there is mention of the soul and of Hell; but that chapter is evidently a later addition to the book.¹ The writer of *Ecclesiasticus* was still far more Jew than Greek. The terms in which he writes of God savour of anthropomorphism, and the problem of the unknowability of God does not seem to have troubled him. But it was not long before more philosophically-minded Jews began to think of the Most High as a spiritual being, remote and unknowable. The agent through whom God had made himself known was then found in Wisdom, who was supposed to have mystically imparted the knowledge to the pious by entering into their souls. Perception of the difference between the metaphysical deity thus made known and the Yahveh of the Old Testament afterwards led many Gnostics to the opinion that the god of the Jews was an inferior being, responsible for the evil that exists in the world. Eventually the revealing function of Wisdom was, with her other qualities and functions, transferred to the Logos. The knowledge of God's nature and purpose so brought became known by the Greek term *Gnosis*, from which the Gnostics derived their

¹ It does not, of course, follow that belief in personal immortality did not exist at all in the writer's lifetime.

name. The idea is already found in the Book of Proverbs, where it is written :—

If thou wilt incline thine ear unto Wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, then shalt thou find the knowledge of God (ii, 2-5).

Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets . . . scorners and fools [i.e., sinners] hate knowledge. . . . Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices (i, 20-31).

My son, let not them [Wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord] depart from thine eyes . . . so shall they be life unto thy soul (iii, 21, 22).

It will be evident from these quotations that Gnosis was something very different from the intellectual knowledge that can be acquired by learning and the application of reason. An unrighteous man might have that kind of knowledge. But Gnosis, it is said, is life unto the soul. This, in the passage above quoted, is possibly a figure of speech; but it did not remain so; later religious thinkers held very decidedly and literally that Gnosis was the condition of eternal life, and the reception of it by those who had not previously possessed it a "resurrection from the dead," the only kind of resurrection which they recognized. The doctrine of the redemption of men through the knowledge of God was of the essence of Gnosticism.

Proceeding to an examination of "*the Wisdom of Solomon*,"¹ we find that in the interval the Hellenization of Jewish religious thought has been advancing. We can trace the influence of Greek speculative ideas with regard to man and the cosmos, such as the Platonic doctrines of the human soul and the divine Reason (Logos) and the stoic doctrine of a world-soul, which certainly are not simply borrowed, but combined and transformed under the action of the Jewish preconceptions of the writer. Thus we may account for the appearance of the belief in an immortal spirit in man which is related to the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God is identified with Wisdom. There is evidence that the writer was acquainted with Plato's description of the Just

¹ Written at Alexandria, probably about 100 B.C.

Man persecuted and slain by the unrighteous. Wisdom, although pure spirit, is still very definitely personified and accessible.

She is easily beheld by those who love her. He that riseth up early to seek her shall find her sitting at his gates. She goeth about, herself seeking those who are worthy of her. To give heed to her laws confirmeth incorruption; and incorruption bringeth near unto God (*Wis.* vi, 12-19).

The writer's exaltation of the laws of Wisdom may be taken as an indication that he had no great regard for the Mosaic Law, which, as before observed, he never mentions. The "beholding" of Wisdom is obviously not a case of physical vision; it must be some kind of intuitive knowledge. It is important to bear this in mind for the proper understanding of similar expressions in the works of later Jewish and Christian mystics. Notwithstanding the writer's personification of Wisdom, in his innermost thought she was no more a person than the world-soul or the Logos of Plato.

She is more mobile than any motion; yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty. She is an effulgence from everlasting light; and, being one, she hath power to do all things. And remaining in herself reneweth all things; from generation to generation passing into holy souls (*Wis.* vii, 24-27).

It is clear from this passage that the assimilation of Wisdom to the Holy Spirit adumbrated in *Ecclesiasticus* has now been accomplished. In another verse the equivalence of the two is even more definitely stated:—

Who ever gained knowledge of thy counsel except thou gavest Wisdom, and sentest thy Holy Spirit from above (*ib.*, ix, 17).

God's incorruptible Spirit is said to be in all things—an opinion which was held in some form or another by later Gnostics. Gnostic doctrine in embryo is also seen in viii, 13—"By her I shall obtain immortality"—for receiving Wisdom is receiving the knowledge of God, which is Gnosis.

Logos in this book, as in Christian doctrine, is the Word of God, not the divine Reason which is Plato's Logos. It is Wisdom who is the divine Reason as well as being the world-soul. But the Logos partially displaces Wisdom as the agent of God in the work of creation. God, it is said, made all things by his Word, but by Wisdom he made man (ix, 1). Here we see the first stage of the process in which the Logos eventually became nearly all that Wisdom had been before. In Christian literature Wisdom subsists as the Holy Spirit, which in some Gnostic Christian doctrine is feminine and the mother of the Logos, the Christ. But as Sophia she became very prominent in the theosophical speculations of Philo and of many Christian Gnostics.

In the *Wisdom of Solomon* the Word is personified as thoroughly as Wisdom. He sits beside God upon the throne of Heaven and descends to execute the decrees of God upon earth :—

While peaceful silence enwrapped all things, and night in her own swiftness was in mid course, thine all-powerful Word leaped from Heaven out of the royal throne, a stern warrior into the midst of the doomed land, bearing as a sharp sword thine unfeigned commandment (xviii, 14-16).

The growing contempt for a ritual which consisted of prescriptions directed to material objects and concerned with material operations was fostered by the doctrine which founded upon the incorruptible divine spirit—pneuma—the assurance of immortality for men, contrasting this immaterial spirit with corruptible matter. Solomon in *Wisdom* is made to say : “ Because of her [Wisdom = Holy Spirit] I shall have immortality ” (viii, 13); but of the wicked it is said : “ they shall become a dishonoured carcase ” (iv, 18). And again : “ The hope of the ungodly is like the dust that is blown away by the wind; but the righteous live for ever.” According to this doctrine death of the unspiritual man is extinction. But in one section, which is perhaps a later insertion, a different doctrine makes its appearance, in which the souls of the wicked are after their death confined in Hades. The apparently discrepant expressions are not, however, absolutely incompatible. The

writer could have regarded the eternal confinement of the soul in Hades as equivalent to annihilation. In this doctrine we may see the beginning of the Gnostic tripartite division of the nature of man into pneumatic, psychic, and carnal. The psychīc man was supposed to have a soul (psyche), but only pneumatic people were capable of eternal life in the sense in which Gnostics used the term. We are not precisely informed with regard to Gnostic opinion about Hell; but it is certain that those of them who contemplated the confinement of souls in an under-world did not admit the possibility of any return from it. The compositeness of the *Wisdom of Solomon* has been recognized by some scholars. It is fairly evident that chapters x to xix are a later addition to the work. The inferior literary merit of these chapters has been commented upon even by some critics who do not dispute their originality. The closing verses, 13 to 18, of chapter ix have all the appearance of having been written as a conclusion. The point is not of great importance. The difference of religious outlook exhibited in the two halves of the work is not considerable; but recognition of the difference of authorship is conducive to a right understanding of the book.

The writer of *Wisdom* did not believe that sin and death came into the world through the disobedience of Adam. So that he anticipated the Gnostics in not accepting the Pentateuch as the inspired word of God. Death of the body is not in his view a penalty, but rather a release and the natural consequence of the corruptibility of matter. The only kind of life with which he is concerned is the eternal life of the spirit.

God hath not made death. For he created all things that they might have their being; and the generations of the world are healthsome. And there is no poison of destruction in them; nor hath Hell royal dominion upon earth, for righteousness is immortal; but ungodly men by their hands and their words called death unto them (*Wis.* i, 13-16).

We also find in this book the germ of that extreme asceticism which was afterwards so prominent a feature of certain

Gnostic sects. It left its mark upon the Pauline Epistles,¹ and even affected the practice of the Catholic Church in the celibacy of the clergy. This asceticism is a consequence of the theory of the dual nature of man, which was not of native origin in the Hellenistic sects. The basis of the asceticism is the hampering of the pure life of the spirit by the lusts of the flesh, which accordingly must be mortified in order that the spiritual nature may attain its perfect development. "A corruptible body is heavy unto the soul and the earthly mansion keepeth down the mind that is full of cares" (*Wis.* ix, 15). We find even the preference for the single to the married state which is exhibited in 1 Cor. vii, 8 and in the doctrine of the Gnostic Marcion.

Happy is the barren that is undefiled, she who hath not conceived in transgression; she shall have fruit when God visiteth souls.

And happy is the eunuch who has wrought no lawless deed with his hands, nor imagined wicked things against the Lord. For there shall be given him for his faithfulness a peculiar favour, and a lot more delightful than wife and children (iii, 13).

The writer, like the Essenes and the writer of 1 Cor. vii, 8, 27, 28, does not condemn marriage, but he evidently held that no material condition is in and for itself comparable in importance to perfection of the spiritual life, and that the body and material joys are a hindrance to the working of the spirit.

In addition to the features already described, there is a noteworthy indication of the view previously held by Jews in a more Judaic form but now universalized, that God had specially chosen the Jews to carry to the Gentiles the knowledge of himself.² And the feeling of responsibility thereby engendered was intensified in such men as the writer of the *Wisdom of Solomon* by their conviction that only in the latter days had God in large measure revealed

¹ Rom. viii, 13; 1 Cor. vii, 8. In the former of these verses a Catholic editor, scenting Gnostic doctrine, has substituted "deeds of the body" for "body," making nonsense of the verse. How can "deeds" be mortified?

² Cp. Isa. xlix, 6; lx, 1-4.

himself through Wisdom. They were spurred on by the abhorrence of idolatry which for some time men of their race had passionately felt. Partly fired by indignation, partly impelled by compassion, on beholding the Pagan world sunk, as it seemed to them, in the darkness of religious error, worshipping false gods and ignorant of the true, they imagined that their own better knowledge was a guarantee of their divine mission to carry light into the darkness. "Verily," says the writer of *Wisdom*, "all men by nature are but vain who have had no perception of God." With these words he introduces an eloquent condemnation of idolatry and polytheism which occupies three chapters—xiii to xv. He may not himself have been an active propagandist, but the opinions which he expressed and which must have been shared by many of his contemporaries inspired with reforming zeal men of a later generation. Isaiah prophesied that Israel would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles." Hellenistic Jews substituted for Israel the congregation of the saints, and for the Judaic Messiah, as the bringer of truth and light, the Logos. Ultimately, however, in Catholic Christianity the Logos was merged into the Messiah.

3. HELLENISTIC JEWISH SECTS

There can be no doubt that to the *Wisdom of Solomon*—ostensibly the composition of King Solomon himself—was ascribed a very high value in certain circles, and that the ideas expressed in it exerted a powerful influence upon the thought of Hellenistic Jews in the last pre-Christian century and afterwards. Not that these ideas were absolutely new; but it is likely that there was some originality in the form in which they are poetically expressed. The book must have helped to intensify a fermentation that had already begun, the outcome of which was a revolution in the sphere of religion comparable in importance with the Protestant Reformation. The factors in operation have already been sketched. And just as some Catholics in the sixteenth century thought that abuses in the Church could be and should be reformed from within, so there were Jews who,

like the writer of the *Psalms of Solomon*, looked forward to the coming of a messianic king who would bring to an end every kind of unrighteousness and religious laxity among their fellow-countrymen, leading at the same time the whole world to the knowledge of, and into subjection to, the Jewish god. But there were Jews of the Dispersion who could not share these anticipations. They saw that the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the god of one nation, could not be expected to win the admiration of Greeks. They no longer believed in the future reign of a messianic king. And they realized fully that it was not by the Judaic religion, with its ritual purifications, its circumcision, its formal observance of seasons, and its distinction between clean and unclean meat, that the Pagan cults would be superseded. They had risen, as they thought, to a higher conception of the godhead than had hitherto entered the minds either of Jews or Pagans taken as a whole. They aimed, like the Protestants, at the establishment of a reformed religion which would not only satisfy themselves, but also have power by its obvious superiority to abolish the idolatrous polytheism of the Gentiles. Their zeal was quickened by an eager longing for righteousness, which, they believed, would not be confined to themselves, but would necessarily flow out into the world from a knowledge of the true God. Ritual they did not entirely reject; for they attached considerable value to certain ceremonial acts, which they were able to invest with symbolic significance.

It is a law of human nature that when members of a community are powerfully agitated by new ideas, whether in religion or in politics, which conflict with those held by the majority, they are impelled to group themselves in parties or associations for mutual encouragement and, it may be, for more effectual propagandist activity. And just as among the Protestants at the Reformation some were satisfied with moderate changes while others were more radical, and a few were carried away into an extreme policy and embraced ideas which appear fantastic, so also, as we learn from contemporary authorities, there were in existence at the commencement of the Christian era Jewish sects in

which there was much diversity of doctrine and practice. The Essenes practised an extreme asceticism derivable from the doctrine of *Wisdom* that indulgence in physical pleasures is a hindrance to the life of the spirit. Josephus terms them a sect of the Jews, but as he thought it necessary to begin his account of them with the words: "these are Jews by birth," it is inferable that, although they continued to practise some Judaic ritual customs, in doctrine they differed considerably from other Jews. Certain it is that their religious tenets were of a Hellenistic type. They had rejected the Pharisaic doctrine of the resurrection of the body in favour of the teaching of *Wisdom* that the spirit only is immortal. Pliny termed them philosophers, whence we may conclude that he had discovered in their opinions the influence of Greek philosophy; but they were too intensely religious for the term to be appropriate. The desire to know God and to lead a holy life was the motive-force which actuated them, impelling them to separate themselves from all who were not of their own communion. Holding that all men are equal, they condemned not only slavery, but also a paid servitude, and they possessed all things in common. They would not take an oath, and their asceticism led them to discountenance marriage, though they did not forbid it. They had a sacred meal to which only those among them who had undergone a long probation were admitted. At these meetings the scriptures were expounded by approved teachers. Of the character of their esoteric doctrine very little is known, since members were forbidden to divulge it; but we know that they interpreted the Old Testament symbolically, regarding the letter as a husk within which a spiritual meaning was enshrined. In spite of the fact that they considered themselves in danger of pollution when they came into contact with people whose discipline was not so rigid as their own, some of them travelled about a good deal, and it has been inferred that these journeys were missionary journeys and that the sect carried on an active propaganda.¹ It is at any rate certain that small commu-

¹ Friedländer, *Die Religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judentums im Zeitalter Jesu*, p. 145.

nities, here and there perhaps even rather large ones, were scattered over an area of considerable extent; and not only in the open country. For the travelling Essenes, when they visited a town, were able to obtain free lodging from some one of their own persuasion. Their principles forbade them to eat with any one else.¹

Another important sect was that of the Therapeuts, of whom Philo wrote that they would strip themselves of their property and flee from their relatives and their fatherland to avoid the disturbing attractions which life in common with others can exert. "They do not, however, wander into another town, since every town is full of unrest and unspeakable impulses which he who has once been possessed by Wisdom cannot endure." In this statement we see an indication of the influence of the Wisdom literature. The Therapeuts, like the Essenes, strove to put into operation the idea of the natural equality of all men, maintaining that the injustice and avarice of individuals who endeavour to organize inequality, the primary cause of all evil, have put into the hands of the stronger power over the weaker.² The Therapeuts also had a common meal at which the scriptures were expounded, the principle of interpretation being that the literal expressions are symbols of a secret nature revealing truth allegorically.³ The method remained in favour with early Christians who probably did not doubt the literal truth of passages thus expounded, as we may learn from the *Epistle of Barnabas*. The same method of interpretation was used by Philo himself and by the later Gnostics, who, however, more consistently rejected the letter in favour of what they conceived to be the spirit.

The information furnished by Philo and Josephus leaves very little room for doubt that the mental attitude of these two sects was that which appears later as Gnosticism.⁴ In them and in their like it had its breeding-ground. Philo,

¹ Cp. Matt. x, 11.

² Philo, *De vit. cont.* II, 482.

³ *Ibid.*, 475.

⁴ Guignebert drew attention to affinities between Essene doctrine and Gnosticism. *The Jewish World, etc.*, p. 187.

writing of a sect unnamed but inferably Therapeuts, says of them that they are possessed by an unspeakable love of contemplation and of being conversant with matters divine, proceeding always from the visible and corporeal to the incorporeal and abstract; letting go all that is irrational in the sentient soul and clinging to that which is called mind (*nous*) and reason.¹ This description would apply to Gnostics in general, many of whom personified *Nous*, and the people were obviously mystics. Another Gnostic trait in the sect referred to was their contempt for the flesh. "They strive," says Philo, "to loosen the bond of the psyche and to become incorporeal in thought." Elsewhere, naming the Therapeuts, he says that, like corybants, filled with holy inspiration, they long for contemplation of the truth until they see what they have longed for. Evidently the spiritual truth so desired is no other than Gnosis, for its attainment was considered by them to be the means of securing eternal life. As Jews, both sects no doubt believed in some kind of Messiah, whom they must have connected in some manner with their theosophical system.

In relation to official Judaism the Essenes and Therapeuts were as Protestants in relation to Roman Catholicism; but Protestants of a moderate type. There were others whose non-conformity went farther—e.g., the Naassenes and the Peratai, who were already Gnostics in the full sense of the term. It was possibly such sects as these that Philo had in mind when he wrote: "But there are people who, holding the writings of the Law to be symbols of a spiritual life, carefully search for the latter but condemn the former. Such men I cannot but blame." All these sects were undoubtedly of pre-Christian origin. Philo tells us that the Therapeuts possessed writings of the men of an earlier day, who had been their leaders and had left many records of their allegorical interpretation of Scripture. And, as Philo says of them that they "philosophized,"² we may infer that they, like himself, brought to bear in their allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament some knowledge of Greek

¹ *De praem. et poen.* II, 412.

² *De vit. cont.* II, 475.

philosophy. Some pre-Christian Gnostics, probably Cainites, are attacked in the *Book of Enoch*.¹ Philo knows nothing of Christians as such; no doubt because in his time there was no organized Christian Church. There were scattered communities from the union of which the Christian Church was ultimately constituted. As it is written in the preface to Guignebert's book: "In these sects [Gnostic], these exclusive circles which believed themselves to be the depositories of absolute Truth and of Salvation, we may find the true explanation of Christianity."

Of all the pre-Christian Gnostic sects the one which occupied the most extreme position of anti-Judaism was that of the Mandæans, who stigmatized the Pentateuch as an abomination and explicitly rejected the god of the Jews, regarding him as an evil being. Most of the sects named attached symbolic importance to baptism. They had all of them discontinued the offering of sacrifices and would not participate in the Temple worship. In these sects, in others which will engage our attention, and in Philo, however much their opinions may have differed in detail, we have evidence, not only of widely-ranging theosophical speculation, but also of an exalted ethical ideal. Such was the environment in which Christianity first took shape.

Anyone who can form a mental picture of the fermentation of thought which was in progress at the commencement of the Christian era should be able to see that something remarkable was on the eve of being produced. Groups of God-intoxicated men, believing that God—an indefinable spiritual Being who desired no sacrifices—had revealed himself to them alone, setting up an ethical standard upon a foundation of asceticism and the belief that all men are by nature equal, hating Polytheism, and declaring a holy war against it, had brought into the world a force which was not likely to ebb quietly away leaving no more than a ripple upon the tide of human progress. Philosophy was not for the masses. The Saviour-cults satisfied a widely-felt spiritual

¹ Friedländer, work cited, p. 62.

need. It remained to be seen whether the new theosophy, which was certainly superior to the idolatrous and in some cases sensual worship of the Pagans, could so adapt itself as successfully to compete with it.

It is *a priori* quite likely that in addition to the sects named, and some others of which we have information, there existed in the larger towns of Greece and Asia Minor smaller and less prominent communities of reforming Jews—"saints" or "elect"—either connected with these or independently arising, concerning whom we could have knowledge only if some of their religious literature had survived. We could hardly expect direct evidence of the kind when account is taken of the certainty that a considerable quantity of contemporary literature must have perished. But in the catacombs at Rome some valuable indications of the existence there of Hellenized Jews have been discovered. In a Jewish catacomb Pagan emblems, to which no doubt symbolic significance was attached, and pictures of Orpheus together with those of Moses, David, and Daniel, have been found. In the Jewry of Alexandria Orpheus was identified with David and with Adam, presumably by Jewish Gnostics who saw in these persons a prefiguration of the Christ-Logos. Orphism seems to have disappeared as a distinct cult at the commencement of the Christian era, having been absorbed into the cult of Dionysus; it is evident, however, that in the syncretism of the period Hellenized Jews had been influenced by it. Now there is evidence that some of these Jews afterwards became Gnostic Christians. For in Christian catacombs specifically Christian figures and emblems do not make their appearance before the second century, but prior to that pictures of Orpheus are found. There is evidence that before the Christian era in certain Jewish circles Yahveh and Dionysus had been fused together; and in those circles there must have been affinity with the religious outlook of the worshippers of Dionysus. It is therefore, in an investigation into the pre-Christian environment, important to note the fact, mentioned by Cumont, that in the Christian catacomb of Prætextatus a priest of the Thracian god Dionysos Sabazios was buried with his

Jewish wife Vibia.¹ We thus have evidence that a Jewish Mystery-cult closely related to a Pagan Mystery-cult subsequently became Christian; and certainly the community would be Gnostic Christian.

Accordingly we have to think of the border centuries as a period of religious syncretism, influenced by Greek philosophy and oriental theosophy, giving rise to sects among the Jews, mystic in character, having certain fundamental ideas in common but expressing them in various forms. Fortunately we are not entirely dependent for our knowledge upon information supplied by Philo and Josephus and derived from inscriptions and pictures. The psalm book of one of the communities has been discovered. The members were not Essenes or Therapeuts, but they were Hellenistic Jews nurtured principally upon the Psalms and the Wisdom literature. They were religious reformers and mystics who, though anti-Judaic, had not ceased to consider themselves Jews. These statements I shall endeavour to make good by a careful examination of the book, the title of which is *The Odes of Solomon*.

¹ Van den Bergh van Eysinga, *De Wereld van het Nieuwe Testament*, pp. 178 ff.

CHAPTER II

THE ODES OF SOLOMON : THEIR CHARACTER AND PROBABLE DATE

1. THEY ARE JEWISH

THE first point to be established is that the community which used the Odes was originally composed of Jews and that when they were written it was still predominantly Jewish. Few perhaps would deny this; but with regard to the book there has been much controversy. The controversy, however, is to some degree a verbal one arising out of the ambiguity of the term *Jewish*. When Rendel Harris, for example, denies that the Odes are Jewish it is evident from his argument that his real meaning is that they are not Judaic—which is certainly true. They are in fact anti-Judaic; but Harris's inference that since they are anti-Judaic they must be Christian is unsound; for we have seen reason to believe that early in the first century there were non-conformist Jewish sects, some of which might even be anti-Judaic. As we shall see, they could be called Christian in a certain sense; but that would depend upon our definition of the term *Christian*. When commenting upon the Odes with no controversial object in view, Harris makes it clear that his recognition of the Jewish character of the community and of the man who wrote its psalm-book is quite definite. Thus he expresses the opinion that "the poetical style, or the poetry, of the Odes is more Hebraic and more early Syriac than Ephremic; and with some reserve . . . we would venture to add that it is more Hebraic than early Syriac."¹ In another place he writes: "the Odist lives next door to the Synagogue and in the Jewish quarter," and he infers that the Odes were written at a time "when the Church was still adjacent to the Synagogue."

These are the observations of an acute scholar; but one

¹ *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, Vol. II, p. 131.

must record the objection that in using the term "the Church" Harris was reasoning beyond his data. The admissible inference is that the community whose doctrines are embodied in the Odes, which for convenience of reference I shall term the community O, was "adjacent to the Synagogue"—in other words, had not long separated itself from orthodox Judaism. There was no Christian "Church" in the sense in which Harris uses the term even at the date to which he assigns the Odes—near the end of the first century of our era. As Dr. W. Voelker wrote, "The 'great Church' [second century] is not, as scholars assume, the Catholic Church, but a loose federation of communities which had not yet assumed the highly organized forms of government and theology which are called Catholic."¹ The community O was probably one of these communities; and whether it had even yet entered into the "loose federation" depends upon the date at which the Odes were written. There are good reasons for thinking that Harris's date is too late.

Grimme argued that the original language of the Odes was Hebrew. Dr. J. H. Bernard's comment is that "Grimme's arguments tend to support the theory of a Semitic original for the Odes—not necessarily or probably in Biblical Hebrew, but in Aramaic or Syiac." According to Dr. Menzies they are Jewish throughout. Some other critics think they are Christian. Harnack, who considered that in their original form they were purely Jewish, supposed that they were interpolated by a Christian *ca.* 100 C.E. Grimme also advanced a theory of Christian interpolation. The weight of expert opinion is, however, opposed to that theory. It has been discredited by the arguments of Clemen² and of Dom. Conolly.³ Harris lays stress upon the unity of style which the Odes exhibit and considers them to be the work of a single author. In reference to the suggestion that strata of late theological thought are to be found in certain of the Odes he observes that it is these very Odes that may turn

¹ *Das Bild vom nichtgnostischen Christentum bei Celsus.*

² *Theologische Rundschau*, Jan., 1911.

³ *Journal of Theological Studies*, Jan., 1912.

out to have the earliest literary attestation. Dr. Bernard wrote, "The style and manner of the Odes is the same throughout."

The theory of extensive interpolation may therefore be dismissed; but it is not necessary to agree with the opponents of it in assuming that there are no interpolations at all. An ancient book used by Christians for a considerable length of time entirely free from interpolations would be something of a curiosity, and we may expect to find a few. The positive reasons for characterizing the Odes as Jewish, in addition to the linguistic evidence previously referred to, are these: four books of the Old Testament, either canonical or apocryphal, were in ancient times ascribed to Solomon—viz., Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, and Wisdom. Since all of these are indisputably Jewish, the presumption is that the *Odes of Solomon* was also a Jewish work. The presumption is very much strengthened by the fact that in the extant MSS. the Odes are bound up with *Psalms of Solomon*, as to the Jewish character of which there is no question. In a sixth-century catalogue of Sacred Books published under the name of Athanasius, an enumeration of the canonical books of the Old Testament is followed (col. 239) by: "Besides these there are also other books of the Old Testament, not regarded as canonical but read to the catechumens." This sentence is very similar to a sentence of the genuine Athanasius in his list of sacred Books, and both writers then proceed to mention the books of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Esther, Judith, and Tobit. But Pseudo-Athanasius adds at a later period (col. 432) "Maccabees . . . Psalms and Odes of Solomon, Susanna."¹ "The *Stichometry* of Nicephorus is a list of scriptural books reduced to its present form, according to Zahn, about the year 850. The second part of the list runs as follows: those which are not rejected but not accepted as canonical—Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of the Son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Psalms and Odes of Solomon, Esther, Judith, Susanna, Tobit, and Tobias. These writers may have been copying an older list."² It will thus be seen that at an early

¹ Dr. Bernard, *Texts and Studies*, Vol. VIII, No. 3. ² *Ibid.*

date no distinction was made between the *Odes of Solomon* and other uncanonical books of the Old Testament. Furthermore, passages from the Odes are quoted as Scripture by Lactantius and in *Pistis Sophia* (270–300 c.E.). In the latter work the Odes are quoted in just the same manner as the canonical Psalms. And Harris has shown¹ that Lactantius probably took his quotation from a *Testimony Book*, in which Christian dogma was supported by quotations from the Old Testament. Harris infers that early in the second century the Odes could be quoted as Scripture. His inference is cautious, since in his opinion the *Testimony Book* in question was pre-Gospel. Hence it would be unreasonable to doubt that the Odes are a Jewish work and more nearly related to the Old Testament than to the New. Admittedly the doctrine found in them is farther removed from orthodox Judaism than that of the *Wisdom of Solomon*. The conclusion to be drawn from the known facts is that the book was the psalm-book of a non-conformist Jewish sect. The sharp disagreement of critics as to whether it is Jewish or Christian proves that the circumstances of its origin have not been understood. A theory which will explain and reconcile the difference of opinion has a prima facie claim to favourable consideration.

An approximation to the correct solution was reached by Dr. Menzies, who concluded that the Odes are entirely the work of Jews, but of Gentile—by which we may understand Hellenistic—Jews with a universalistic outlook. A certain measure of assent can also be given to Harris's opinion that they are early Christian, but it will first be necessary to answer the question: how early? Christian in the full sense they certainly are not. Dogmas so characteristically Christian as those of Vicarious Atonement, Justification by Faith, the Resurrection of the Body, including therein the Resurrection of Christ, and a Last Judgment, are entirely absent from the Odes. The name "Jesus" never occurs. And the writer is completely ignorant, not only of the Gospels as literature, but of all the details of the Gospel story. Such similarities as commentators have detected lie entirely

¹ Work cited, Vol. II, pp. 8 f.

in the region of dogma. Also the dogmas which could be regarded as Christian do not appear to have been derived from any known Christian document; on the contrary, the form in which they are presented seems to be independent and more primitive. In fact, no doctrine is discoverable which could not have been derived from the Wisdom literature, the Psalms, and Isaiah. The assumption that the writer was acquainted with any Christian literature is unnecessary and therefore logically unjustifiable. He did not, indeed, simply take over the doctrine that he found. A noticeable development has been in progress between the date of *Wisdom* and that of the Odes, but the basic ideas are essentially the same. In the case of the Psalms it is different; there the agreement is frequently merely verbal, the Odist using the same words in a different sense, or, where necessary, varying the phraseology. In order to show how thoroughly dependent upon the Old Testament he was I will place in parallel columns passages from the Odes and those which suggested them.

Ode I

The Lord is on my head like a crown and I shall not be without him. A crown of truth has been woven for me. . . . It is not like a withered crown which blossometh not.

Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head. He asked life of thee and thou gavest it him. Ps. xxi, 3.

And thy majesty was upon the diadem of his head. *Wis.* xviii, 24.

Wisdom shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. Prov. iv, 9.

III

3. I should not have known how to love the Lord, if he had not loved me. 5. My soul loves him and where his rest is, there also am I. 12. This is the spirit of the Lord which doth not lie, which teacheth the sons of men to know his ways.

I will love thee, Jehovah my strength. Jehovah is my deliverer. Ps. xviii, 1.

O love Jehovah, all ye saints; for Jehovah preserveth the faithful. Ps. xxxi, 23.

Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest. Ps. xcv, 11.

Wisdom is a spirit that loveth man. *Wis.* i, 6.

Who ever gained knowledge of thy counsel, except thou gavest Wisdom. *Wis.* ix, 17.

Show me thy ways, Jehovah; teach me thy paths. Ps. xxv, 4.

V

My persecutors will come and not see me, a cloud of darkness shall fall upon their eyes. Let their counsel return upon their own heads. They have prepared themselves for evil and were found to be empty. If all things visible should perish I shall not die because the Lord is with me. And because the Lord is my salvation I shall not fear.

For their wickedness blinded them. *Wis.* ii, 21.

The ungodly shall be requited even as they reasoned. *Wis.* iii, 10.

The light of the wicked shall be put out . . . his own counsel shall cast him down. *Job* xviii, 5, 7.

Void is their hope and their toils unprofitable. *Wis.* iii, 11.

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God . . . their hope is full of immortality. *Wis.* iii, 1, 4.

Jehovah is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? *Ps.* xxvii, 1.

VII

6. He [the Logos] was reckoned like myself in order that I might put him on. 16. Knowledge he hath appointed as his way—and set over it the footprints of his light, and I walked therein from the beginning to the end. For his salvation he will take hold of everything.

Thou shalt put her [Wisdom] on as a robe of glory. *Ecclus.* vi, 31.

Put on righteousness as a long robe of glory. *Ib.* xxvii, 8.

Thou wilt show me the path of life. *Ps.* xvi, 11.

Being compared with light she is found to be before it. Her I loved and sought out from my youth. *Wis.* viii, 2.

He shall make the whole creation his weapons for vengeance on his enemies. *Wis.* v, 17.

XIV

As the eyes of a son to his father, so are my eyes at all times towards thee, O Lord. Stretch out to me, my Lord, at all times, thy right hand; and be my guide even unto the end.

As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters . . . so our eyes wait upon Jehovah our God. *Ps.* cxxiii, 2.

This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death. *Ps.* xlvi, 14.

XV

His light has dispelled all darkness from my face. I have heard his truth. The way of error I have left. I have put on incorruption through his name. Death hath been destroyed before my face; and Sheol hath been abolished by his Word.

God is Jehovah who hath shown us light. *Ps.* cxviii, 27.

For thy holy ones there was great light. *Wis.* xviii, 1.

The wicked shall say, Verily we went astray from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness shined not for us. *Ib.* v, 6.

Teach me thy way, Jehovah, I will walk in thy truth. *Ps.* lxxxvi, 11.

Save me, O God, by thy name.
Ps. liv, 1.

God made not death. Nor hath
Hades royal dominion upon earth,
for righteousness is immortal. *Wis.*
i, 13.

Thou wilt not leave my soul in
Sheol, nor wilt thou suffer one who
trusts in thee to see corruption.
Ps. xvi, 10.

XVI

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 strength of his Word.

For the Word of the Lord
searches out all things.

He expanded the heavens
and fixed the stars.

The treasure chamber of
the light is the sun and the
treasury of the darkness is the
night. By their reception one
from the other they speak the
glory of God. And the worlds
were made by his Word.
And created things run in
their courses and know not
how to stand and be idle;
and his heavenly hosts are
subject to his Word.

There is a spirit in man; and the
inspiration of the Almighty giveth
them understanding . . . therefore
I will open my lips and answer.
Job xxxii, 8, 20.

I will make mention now of the
works of the Lord. In the words
of the Lord are his works; and the
work of the Lord is full of his glory.
Ecclus. xlii, 15, 16.

He searcheth out the deep and
the heart . . . no thought escapeth
him. *Ecclus.* xlii, 18.

Hast thou with him spread out
the sky? Job xxxvii, 18.

Hast thou entered into the
treasures of the snow? or hast thou
seen the treasures of the hail? Job
xxxviii, 22.

The heavens declare the glory
of God. Day unto day uttereth
speech, and night unto night show-
eth knowledge. Ps. xix, 1, 2.

By the word of Jehovah were the
heavens made. Ps. xxxiii, 6.

Even in the sea thou gavest a
way and in the waves a sure path.
. . . And it is thy will that the
works of thy wisdom should not be
idle. *Wis.* xiv, 3, 5.

XVII

I have been delivered from
vanity. I received the face
and fashion of a new person,
and all that have seen me
were amazed and I was re-
garded by them as a new
person. And the thought of
Truth led me, I walked after
it and did not wander.

I have hated them that regard
lying vanities. Ps. xxxi, 6.

The life [of the righteous] is unlike
other men's, and his paths are of
strange fashion. *Wis.* ii, 15.

For thy sake I have borne re-
proach. I am become a stranger
unto my brethren. Ps. lxix, 7.

I am as a wonder unto many.
Ps. lxxi, 7.

I opened the doors that were closed and brake in pieces the bars of iron.

XX

Thou shalt not seek to deceive thy neighbour, neither shalt thou deprive him of the covering of his nakedness.

Thou shalt receive of his kindness and of his grace; and thou shalt be flourishing in truth in the praise of his holiness.

XXI

And my helper had lifted me up to his grace and his salvation. And increasingly helpful to me was the thought of the Lord, and his fellowship in incorruption. He made my heart overflow; and it was found in my mouth; and it shone upon my lips.

XXIII

Grace is of the elect.

His will descended from on high and it was sent like an arrow which is violently shot from the bow.

A wheel received it and it was coming upon it; and everything that shook the wheel it was mowing and cutting down. And a sign was with it of Dominion and Government. . . . And he inherited and took possession of everything.

XXV

I became admirable by the name of the Lord and was justified by his gentleness.

Show me thy ways, Jehovah. Lead me in thy truth. Ps. xxv, 4.

Verily we [the wicked] went astray from the way of truth. Wis. v, 6.

I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. Isa. xlv, 2.

Thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought and stripped the clothes of the naked. Job xxii, 6.

They that trust in the Lord shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love; because grace and mercy are to his chosen. Wis. iii, 9.

Jehovah, be thou my helper. Ps. xxx, 11.

I will extol thee, Jehovah, for thou hast lifted me up. Ib. 1.

To give heed to the laws [of Wisdom] confirmeth incorruption; and incorruption bringeth near to God. Wis. vi, 18.

My heart is inditing of a good matter; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. . . . Grace is poured into thy lips. Ps. xlv, 1, 2.

Grace and mercy are with his chosen. Wis. iii, 9.

Thine almighty Word leaped from heaven, a stern warrior, bearing as a sharp sword thine unfeigned commandment. Wis. xviii, 15.

I have made thee like new wheels of a threshing wagon having teeth; and thou shalt thresh the mountains. Isa. xli, 15. LXX.

I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Ps. ii, 8.

I will set him on high because he hath known my name. Ps. xci, 14.

Thy gentleness hath made me great. Ps. xviii, 35.

XXVI

Who is able to interpret the wonders of the Lord? For he who would interpret them would be dissolved and would become that which is interpreted.

XXX

Fill ye for yourselves from the living fountain of the Lord, for it is opened to you. Come, all ye thirsty, and take the draught; and rest by the fountain of the Lord. Much more pleasant are its waters than honey; and the honeycomb of bees is not to be compared with it. For it flows from the mouth of the Lord. And it came forth infinitely and invisibly.

XXXIII

Grace stood on a lofty summit and uttered his voice from one end of the earth to the other.

There stood a perfect virgin who was proclaiming and calling and saying: O ye sons of men, return ye, and ye daughters of men, come ye. Forsake the ways of corruption and draw near unto me and I will enter into you and make you wise, that ye be not destroyed nor perish. Hear ye me and be redeemed. I am your judge. They who have put me on shall not be injured; but they shall possess the new world that is incorrupt. My elect walk in me, and my ways I will make known to them that seek me.

To none hath he given power to declare his works. . . . As for the wondrous works of the Lord . . . it is not possible to track them out. When a man has finished he is but at the beginning, and when he ceaseth, then shall he be in perplexity. *Ecclus. xviii, 4-7.*

With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. *Isa. xii, 3.*

Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters. *Isa. lv, 1.*

For my memorial is sweeter than honey and mine inheritance than the honeycomb . . . and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty. *Ecclus. xxiv, 20.*

I came forth from the mouth of the Most High. *Ib. 3.*

I covered the earth as a mist. In every nation and people I got a possession. *Ib. 3, 6.*

I came out as a stream from a river. And, lo, my stream became a river; and my river became a sea. *Ib. 30, 31.*

Doth not Wisdom cry? . . . She standeth on the top of high places. *Prov. viii, 1, 2.*

The spirit of the Lord hath filled the world. *Wis. i, 7.*

She reacheth from one end of the world to the other. *Ib. viii, 1.*

Wisdom crieth. . . . Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. *Prov. viii, 4.*

Turn you at my reproof, I will pour out my spirit into you. *Ib. i, 23.*

When Wisdom entereth into thy heart . . . understanding shall keep thee, to deliver thee from the way of the evil man. *Ib. ii, 10-12.*

Come, eat of my bread. Forsake the foolish and live. *Ib. ix, 5, 6.*

For whoso findeth me findeth life. *Ib. viii, 35.*

It was thus that the ways of them which are on earth were corrected, and through Wisdom were they saved. *Wis.* ix, 18.

Thou shalt put her on as a robe of glory. *Ecclus.* vi, 31.

To give heed to her laws confirmeth incorruption. *Wis.* vi, 18.

Wisdom is easily beheld by them that love her and found by them that seek her. *Ib.* vi, 12.

XXXV

The dew of the Lord in quietness he distilled upon me . . . and it was to me for salvation.

All things were shaken and were affrighted; and there came forth from them a smoke and a judgment. But I was at rest in the Lord's commandment. More than a shadow was he to me and more than support.

The dead shall rise and shall be raised up in the tombs, and those that are in the earth shall be gladdened; for the dew from thee is their health. *Isa.* xxvi, 19. LXX.

When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And Jehovah will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion a cloud and a smoke by day . . . for upon all the glory shall be a canopy. And there shall be a pavilion for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge. *Isa.* iv, 5, 6.

XXXVIII

I went up to the light of truth as if into a chariot; and the truth took me and led me. From the rocks and the waves it preserved me; and it brought me to the haven of salvation.

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. And the Lord alone was glorified in his planting and his husbandry.

O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me. *Ps.* xliii, 3.

He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. So he bringeth them unto their desired haven. *Ps.* cvii, 29, 30.

I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever. *Ps.* lii, 8.

Those that are planted in the house of Jehovah shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age. To show that Jehovah is upright; he is my rock. *Ps.* xcii, 13-15.

XXXIX

Great rivers are the power of the Lord. . . . Those who cross them in faith are not moved. The Lord has bridged

Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. *Amos* v, 24.

When thou passest through the

them by his Word . . . and his footsteps stand on the water and are not erased. . . .

waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. *Isa. xliii, 2.*

Thus saith Jehovah, who maketh a way in the sea and a path in the mighty waters. *Ib. 16.*

Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters. *Ps. lxxvii, 19.*

XLI

All the Lord's children will praise him. . . . We live in the Lord by his grace; and life we receive in his anointed [the Word]. And his children will be known to him. Let our faces shine in his light; and let our hearts meditate in his love, by day and by night. All those will be astonished that see me. Light dawned from the Word that was before-time in him. The anointed is truly one, and he was known before the foundation of the world that he might save souls for ever.

In God will I praise the word. *Ps. lvi, 10.*

For thou hast delivered my soul from death. *Ib. 13.*

For he knoweth them that they are all the children of God. *Ps. Sol. xvii, 30.*

[The wicked say] the light of righteousness shined not for us. *Wis. v, 6.*

In his law doth he meditate day and night. *Ps. i, 2.*

I am as a wonder unto many. *Ps. lxxi, 7.*

As many were astonished at thee. *Isa. lii, 14.*

The entrance of thy words giveth light. *Ps. cxix, 130.*

When there were no depths I was brought forth. *Prov. viii, 24.*

And she being one, hath power to do all things, from generation to generation passing into holy souls. *Wis. vii, 27.*

It will have been noticed that the Odist hardly ever quotes. His mind was saturated with the knowledge of certain books of the Old Testament, and he brings out that knowledge in his own manner, freely paraphrasing, and expressing his own ideas in language which in its original context may have had a different meaning. In some cases the resemblance is slight, and if the resemblances had been few they might be thought to be accidental. But the very large number of them puts coincidence quite out of the question. For that reason I have considered it necessary to quote copiously. Some early Christian writers quote freely from the Old Testament; but their method is quite different. Their quotations are made with the object of

proving the correctness of their dogmatic position. And the dogmas they seek to establish are more precisely defined than those we meet with in the Odes, in which the ideas of the Wisdom literature are in process of being fashioned into a consistent theosophy. The Odist is nearer to his sources than any known Christian writer. He does not employ them in support of doctrine previously existing, but he is developing a new form of doctrine out of them. In the mind of the Odist—and no doubt also in the minds of some of his contemporaries—the ideas of the Wisdom literature have been undergoing modification; yet there appears to be little essentially new. Knowledge of the Psalms has contributed to the development, but these are often too Judaic to be congenial. Hence, while there is frequent reminiscence of the original phraseology, the content is no longer always the same.

It will be worth while noting some differences which illustrate the method of the writer and furnish a clue to his mental outlook. In Ode XIV we have the paraphrase of a verse from Ps. cxxiii, where the attitude of men towards God is described as that of servants to their master. Since the Odist regarded the relationship of God to men as that of a loving father to his children, he altered the simile accordingly. But this view of the relationship was not spontaneously reached by him. It is given in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and that in no narrow Judaic sense. The loving kindness of God is expressed in some of the Psalms, and even if there a limitation may have been intended, the Odist, with his universalistic attitude of mind, would necessarily transcend it. In the same Ode there is an almost verbal quotation of the words "he will be our guide even unto death" from Ps. xlviii. But the Odist objected to the implication contained in the introductory statement that God is particularly the God of the Jews, "our God"; so he turned the statement into a prayer to "my Lord." And, Jew though he was, God was not for him "my Lord" on that account, as will appear when we examine his doctrine more in detail. His universalistic outlook is indeed apparent in the extracts already given. An indication of this can be

seen particularly in Ode XXXVIII, where the idea of "planting" has clearly been suggested by Ps. xcii, 13-15. But the expressions "house of the Lord" and "courts of our God" are carefully avoided as signifying the temple of Yahveh at Jerusalem. The writer substitutes "hand of the Lord." Another distinction found here is also important. For the Psalmist life was ended with the death of the body, so that "fruit-bearing" could not in his view continue later than "old age." The Odist, who believed in the continuous life of the spirit, corrected his statement into "its fruits are for ever."

The anti-Judaic attitude of the writer is seen in his avoidance of the words "covenant" and "law." We see this in Ode XX, but the avoidance is especially marked and clearly purposive in Ode XLI, where a phrase from Ps. i is almost literally quoted, and where the Odist instead of "In his law doth he meditate day and night" wrote "let our hearts meditate in his love day and night." In Ode XVII the words "I have been delivered from vanity" seem to have been written with Ps. xxxi, 6 in mind; and the suppression of the phrase "I have hated them" may be taken as an indication that although the Odist did not think it wrong to pray that the counsel of his persecutors might recoil upon themselves (Ode V), he did not think it right to hate anybody. There is in the Odes not the faintest trace of the savagery which disfigures so many of the Psalms. Another interesting alteration is observable in Ode XVI, where the writer has corrected the Psalmist's "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made" into "the worlds were made by his Word." But in order to preserve the mention of "the heavens" he added later "his heavenly hosts are subject to his Word." The addition shows that he had the verse of the Psalm in mind when he wrote. The description of the creation in the same Ode, not all of which has been quoted, was founded upon the two chapters of Job, xxxvii and xxxviii. The chapters have been very freely paraphrased and the verbal resemblance is slight; but the expression "treasure chamber" is a reproduction of "treasures" in Job xxxviii, 22. Evidently the writer thought that the

word treasure would be more appropriately applied to the sun and moon than to snow and hail, since he thought of God as pre-eminently the giver of "light."

2. THEY ARE Gnostic

The second important point to be established is that the Odes may properly be characterized as Gnostic. If we define Gnosticism as a system of theosophy of which the kernel is the high value attached to Gnosis, knowledge of God, in a very special sense, including the belief that Gnosis is life, they are unquestionably Gnostic. The thought expressed in *Ecclus.* xvii, 7-11: "He added unto them knowledge . . . to show them the majesty of his works, and they shall praise the name of his holiness," is emphasized and expanded in Ode VI into: "The Lord has multiplied the knowledge of himself and is zealous that those things should be known which by his grace have been given to us. And the praise of his name he gave us." Again, in Ode VII we read: "Knowledge he hath appointed as his way and set over it the footprints of his light." That Gnosis is the essential condition of salvation and the means of eternal life is a constantly recurring theme. Synonymous terms and metaphorical expressions for Gnosis are frequently found. It is truth and it is light. "His light has dispelled all darkness from my face. I have heard his truth." The darkness is the darkness of ignorance, but ignorance in a special sense. It is ignorance of the true God, whom not only Pagans but even Jews have not known. For knowledge of the true God and of his "ways" is not to be gained from the Pentateuch or the historical books of the Old Testament. According to Ode XXXIII it was brought to men by the "Perfect Virgin," Wisdom, or the Holy Spirit, who, though she is said poetically to be proclaiming and calling, really makes men wise—i.e., imparts Gnosis to them—by entering into them. And this, as we see from the same Ode, is, in accordance with Gnostic doctrine, the condition of "life." Elsewhere it is the Word of God, the Logos, who is the bringer; and that continued to be the doctrine of

Gnosticism throughout its history. The antitheses of light and darkness, truth and error, so prominent in the Odes, are characteristics of later Gnosticism.

There are references to light and truth in the Psalms, but the words have not there the specialized sense which they have acquired in the Odes. This may be seen by a comparison of the first part of Ode XXXVIII with the verses upon which it is founded. A single word has been added, but that word makes all the difference. The haven to which the writer is led by the light of truth (the Gnosis) is the "haven of salvation." The writer has a doctrine of salvation or redemption; but it is not Catholic Christian doctrine; it is the Gnostic doctrine that the reception of Gnosis is the condition of eternal life. In Ode XXXV by a poetical metaphor Gnosis is likened to the "dew of the Lord." "The dew of the Lord in quietness he distilled upon me . . . and it was to me for salvation." The word "dew" is taken from Isaiah, but given a different significance. In Isaiah the dead are raised and the dew is their "health." Instead of this the Odist wrote, "it was to me for salvation," and by "salvation" he meant the eternal life of the spirit. From Ode XXXIII we see that "redemption" is the same thing as "salvation." "Hear ye me and be redeemed. They who put me on . . . shall possess the new world that is incorrupt." This statement involves the Gnostic doctrine that only the spirit is capable of "life," and that death of the body is in no real sense death. So also, when the Odist wrote (Ode V), "if all things visible should perish I shall not die," he was evidently thinking of himself as an immortal spirit whose life remains unbroken when the "visible" body perishes. The notion of a death and resurrection separated by an interval of time during which the body is dissolved is negatived in Ode XV: "I have put on incorruption through his name. Death has been destroyed before my face and there has gone up deathless life in the Lord's land." The conception of the body as a perishable garment is found in Ode XXV: "I was clothed with the covering of thy spirit, and thou didst remove from me my rayment of skin." These quotations

express the doctrine that, for the spiritual man, there is no death and consequently no "resurrection." This is the doctrine which Justin was condemning when he wrote (*Dial. LXXX, 5*):—

If you meet people who call themselves Christians . . . and who say there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their souls are raised to Heaven at the moment of their death, do not consider them to be Christians.

The same Gnostic doctrine was attacked by Tertullian in his treatise *De Carnis Resurrectione*. Tertullian of course believed in the immortality of the soul, but in quite a different sense; and he protested vigorously against the Gnostic antithesis of body and spirit. He argued that not only the soul, but the body also, must go down into Gehenna to be punished, because the body has been a participant in the actions of the soul. It would have been impossible for him to write that death had been "destroyed," and to use such an expression as "deathless life"; because what he understood by death was the termination of the earthly life. In one passage of his argument against the Gnostic view of death he wrote: "No one can speak of the dead who are in tombs otherwise than as of bodies and flesh." He believed that Jesus by his resurrection had "conquered" death, not that he had "destroyed" it. Many modern Christians seem to be able to reconcile the Gnostic and the Catholic view, but confused thinking upon this matter was impossible at the beginning of the Christian era, when it was a subject of keen controversy.

Some theological critics—e.g., Gunkel, von Stölten, and Bousset—have recognized the Gnostic character of the Odes, but by others it is disputed on the ground that the Gnostic doctrine of the emanation of Æons and the myth of Sophia are not found in them. But so elaborate a set of doctrines as those of the second-century Gnostics did not come into existence full-grown. They must have had a comparatively simple beginning and a rather long period of development. We meet with a simpler form of Gnosticism in the latter part of the first century, but even there we are clearly not at the beginning. The fact that, while

we find in the Odes some of the basic principles of Gnosticism, we do not find there the fanciful cosmogony of Basilides and Valentinus simply proves that the members of the community O were Gnostics of a primitive type. Pallis¹ describes the Odes as "a collection of Gnostic hymns" and he draws attention to analogies between them and the Mandæan writings, observing, however, that the correspondence only proves that the Odes as well as the Mandæan writings belonged to the Gnostic movement.

Bousset endeavours to derive Christian Gnosticism from the East. In the second century there does seem to have been some rather rapid borrowing from Babylonian mythology. But that mythology was not simply taken over to build up a system *ab initio*. Western Gnosticism cannot be explained from oriental borrowings alone. The elements must have been worked into a system already existing. The seven planetary Archons, for example, are not found in the most ancient Jewish Gnostic documents. Bousset considers that dualism is the distinguishing quality of the Gnosis. It is true that Gnosticism always was dualistic; but originally the dualism was not of the oriental type, attributing the supposed evil character of matter to its having been created by a maleficent deity or dæmon. Neither in Philo's writings nor in the *Wisdom of Solomon* nor in the *Odes of Solomon* is any such theory discernible, although the three writers did believe that sin has its root in the imperfection of the flesh. That no doubt was a Gnostic view, but not so distinctively Gnostic as to justify the definition of Gnosticism in terms of it. The name *Gnostic* was chosen by Gnostics for themselves, and must therefore be taken to indicate that which they themselves held to be their distinguishing mark. And the opinion which, according to their own belief, separated them from others was that the possession of Gnosis—divine knowledge mystically revealed—is the condition of eternal life. For that reason the *Odes of Solomon* may properly be termed Gnostic, even if we were not to take into account their other specifically Gnostic features.

¹ *Mandæan Studies*, p. 153.

The incorrectness of the opinion that oriental dualism is of the essence of Gnosticism is demonstrable from the example of the Gnostic Ebionites, who believed that the Universe had been created by God. They attributed sin to the instigation of dæmons. Jewish belief in dæmons may have come from Babylon, but that belief was by no means confined to Gnostics. Further proof that this type of dualism is not primitive in Jewish Gnosticism is found in the fact that in an early book of the Naassenes men are said to have been spontaneously produced from the earth. In connection with this statement we find the pure unadulterated Gnostic doctrine that the cause of vice is ignorance of God. That is substantially the doctrine of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, which teaches that in order to be virtuous men must get "wisdom," which in later Gnostic parlance = Gnosis. In the early Naassene doctrine, moreover, the "Chaos," the basis of material things, is poured forth from the Self-born, the divine origin of all things. There is no oriental dualism in the earliest discoverable cosmogony of these Gnostics. There is also evidence that creation by an "Archon" was not part of the original doctrine of the Peratai.

Bousset makes a good deal of the fact that the antithesis of light and darkness is a feature of the oriental as it is of the Christian Gnosticism. In the *Odes of Solomon* light is frequently named as a quality of God and "darkness" appears as a synonym of error. But there is no reason for deriving these ideas directly from the East; they would easily occur to a religious thinker and they are given in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the Psalms, and Isaiah. In chap. ix, verses 1-3, of the Prophet the dissipation of religious darkness by the light which is to shine forth from Israel is foretold, and in Ps. xxxvi, 9, we read: "In thy light shall we see light." We may term the ideas in question Gnostic, but they were derivable by early Jewish Gnostics from Jewish sources, some of which no doubt had been influenced by Greek or Helleno-Egyptian thought. In the later Gnosticism these ideas became much more definite and Persian influence may be accountable for that. Light is no longer merely a quality of God; it has become a name in regular use both for the

Supreme Being and for the Saviour. Prayers are addressed to Zoe (Life) and Phōs (Light). We may infer an early date for the *Odes of Solomon* from the fact that in them this stage has not been reached. God is thought of as "Life" and "Light," but the latter name in particular has not become stereotyped as a title for him, and neither of them is applied to the Word at all.

Later Gnostics again superimposed upon their doctrine of Redemption an apparatus of magical rites by which they thought redemption could be more certainly secured. The Marcosians are particularly mentioned by Irenæus as having done this, but he says that some of them kept to the original idea that Gnosis alone was the redemption of the inner man.¹ W. Anz² holds that the significance of Gnosis is to be learnt from the definition contained in the Naassene Hymn. If so the *Odes* could perhaps hardly be classed as Gnostic. But the difference between Gnosis in the *Odes* and in the hymn is not generic; it is specific. The connotation in the latter is fuller and more complex, but the fundamental significance is the same. In both, Gnosis is a special kind of saving knowledge divinely revealed. Possession of it is the one and only means of redemption. In the later conception of Gnosis, upon the knowledge of the nature of God and of the conditions of salvation appointed by him was grafted the knowledge of certain incantations and secret names available for the quelling of dæmons and planetary powers. The content of Gnosis was enlarged, but its essential character and purpose were not changed. The mistake of Anz and Bousset, right as they are in many respects, consists in their not having taken account of the Jewish sources of pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism. A distinction between Jewish and oriental Gnosticism may legitimately be made. The former is traceable to the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the foreign influence which shaped it is mainly Greek. Post-exilic Jews had knowledge of the Babylonian and Persian religions, but for the purpose of the present inquiry it is unnecessary to go farther back than the *Wisdom* literature. That the funda-

¹ *Cont. om. Haer.* I, xxi, 4.

² *Ursprung des Gnostizismus*, p. 10.

mental doctrine of the Odist is the saving power of knowledge of truth divinely revealed is abundantly demonstrated in the Odes. The evidence previously given may be supplemented from Ode XXXVIII :—

Truth 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 did not make an error in anything because I obeyed the truth. . . . Whatever I did not know it made clear to me, all the plagues of error and the plagues of death, which are thought to be sweetness. And I was made wise so as not to fall into the hands of the deceiver; and I congratulated myself because the truth went with me, and I was 'established and lived and was redeemed.

This is merely an expansion and accentuation of what is said about Wisdom in the Wisdom books. To become wise is to follow divine truth and be redeemed. The later Gnostic fables concerning the emanation and passion of Sophia were elaborated from Plato and other sources, but the basic ideas that she was an emanation from the Pleroma and that through her a spark of the divine spirit was imparted to men are given in *Wisdom* (vii, 25, 27) :—

[Wisdom] is a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty, from generation to generation passing into holy souls.

This doctrine is found in the *Odes of Solomon* in the form that the Word, a spiritual emanation from God, becomes incorporated in the saints.

Gnosticism was consistently anti-Judaic and it disparaged the Old Testament. Catholic Christianity, although it rejected institutional Judaism, and in spite of its condemnation of the Jews, accepted the Old Testament as divinely inspired and absorbed in considerable quantity Judaic ideas.¹ The *Odes of Solomon* are anti-Judaic in the same sense as the Gnostics were. Direct allusion to the Old Testament, other than to the Prophets, the Psalms, and

¹ "There are various grounds for the opinion that the polemic of the Gnosis against the Old Testament and Judaism has deeper roots in its own general outlook than in the contacts with Christianity." W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, p. 231.

the Wisdom books, is extremely doubtful. The implication of Gen. iii, 5, appears to be deliberately contradicted in Ode XVIII: "Evil thou knowest not, nor doth it know thee." To the evidence of anti-Judaism previously given may be added an interesting example from Ode XXV: "I became the Lord's by the name of the Lord." The reader who has compared the passages quoted from the Odes with the corresponding passages of the Old Testament will have observed that in every case where the term "the Lord" is used it means God. That is the writer's almost invariable rule, as it is the rule in the books he used. Hence the assumption of some commentators that "the Lord" in the phrase above quoted must mean Christ [= Jesus] and that the Odist intended to say that he was named a Christian after Christ is entirely gratuitous. His meaning and intention can be interpreted from Isa. xlv, 5:—

One shall say, I am Jehovah's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe himself with his hand unto Jehovah, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

The meaning of this is that, as one of the chosen people, a man could claim to be Jehovah's by the name of Jacob or of Israel. In accordance with his anti-Judaism and with his belief that the congregation of the saints—not necessarily all of them Jews—had superseded the congregation of Israel as the chosen of God, the writer substitutes "the name of the Lord" for "the name of Jacob" or "of Israel." His motive for making the statement he did was to emphasize his conviction that not because he was an Israelite was he the Lord's; otherwise he would not have had to *become* the Lord's, he would have been the Lord's already. The verse of Isaiah may not, however, have been the writer's only incentive. In his day very great importance was ascribed to names, especially to divine names, which were kept secret and believed to have mystical efficacy. The Egyptians thought that any one who knew the secret name of a god acquired an influence over him, as though he possessed a part of the god himself. In a Gnostic prayer occur the words "I know thy name." It is evident from several passages in the

Odes that the writer of them in some measure shared this view of the mystical power of the divine name. For example, "I have put on incorruption through his name," in Ode XV. The point of his remark is further illustrated by a verse in the *Psalms of Solomon* (IX, 17) : "Thou hast chosen the seed of Abraham rather than all the Gentiles, and thou hast put on us thy name, O Lord." Here it is plainly stated that the name was given to the people because they had been chosen. The Odist says the exact opposite, "We, whether Jews or Gentiles, became the elect by putting on the name." If it could be inferred—and, as will appear later, there is some slight evidence of it—that the Odist and the Psalmist occasionally wrote a verse controversially, the one against the other, the inference would help very much in fixing the approximate date of composition of the Odes.

3. THEIR PROBABLE DATE

The question of date cannot be finally decided until the doctrine of the Odes has been examined in detail. From what has been so far written the reader will probably have gained the impression that they must be early. From the fact that they were at one time included among the books of the Old Testament one may infer that they were written before the year 70, after which date Jewry became Pharisaic and all Jewish writings deemed heterodox were proscribed. Only those which Christians found more or less congenial have survived. And since the community O, like the Essenes, the Therapeuts, and the Mandæans, was certainly a Jewish sect, though a heterodox one, it must have been in existence for some time before the capture of Jerusalem by Titus. After that event no Hellenistic Jews can have been allowed within the pale of Jewry, which then took on the very exclusive character that it has preserved until now ; and no Hellenistic sect can have come into existence within it.

The very primitive character of the Gnosticism, which has closer affinity with the doctrine of the *Wisdom of Solomon* than with that of the earliest Gnostic heretics known to us, indicates a date which cannot be later than the middle of the

first century and may be a good deal earlier. The Wisdom-Word doctrine of the Odes seems to have grown up in the same region of Jewish Hellenistic speculation which produced the Sophia-Logos doctrine of Philo; but in Philo the doctrine is seen to have reached a somewhat later stage of its development. W. Bousset detects in Philo's doctrine the direct influence of that oriental mysticism which is so much more evident in the later Gnosticism; but the advance in complexity observable in passing from the *Wisdom of Solomon* to the Odes is so slight that a considerable interval of time between the dates of composition of these two works is improbable. We could thus reasonably infer for the Odes a date not later than the early years of the first century. Harnack came to the conclusion that in their original form they were produced somewhere about the year 30; and the bias of theologians being to date them as late as possible, this date could be taken as the lower limit. It was in fact so taken by Grimme, according to whom they were written between the years 100 B.C. and 30 C.E. It is, however, possible to bring his limits closer together, since the *Wisdom of Solomon* must have been known to the writer, and some time must be allowed for development, on which ground 80 may be substituted for Grimme's upper limit of 100 B.C., and there is reason to think that his lower limit is rather too low.

The facts that in the ancient catalogues the *Psalms* and the *Odes of Solomon* are always coupled together and that in the extant MSS. they are bound up together and even numbered right through consecutively, the first of the *Psalms* being numbered XLIII to follow the last of the Odes, which is XLII, may be taken as an indication that they were produced in approximately the same period. Similarities in thought and expression are perceptible, as though they had been moulded under a common influence. The fundamental religious outlook is certainly very different; but the *Psalms*, in spite of their Judaic character, appear to have been influenced to a certain degree by the religious thought which has expressed itself in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. They agree with the Odes in the denial of a resurrection for the body and

in proclaiming the immortality of the soul. For comparison a few verses from the Psalms are appended.

The life of the righteous is for ever. But sinners shall be cast into perdition and their memorial shall no more be found.

Those who fear the Lord shall rise to eternal life and their life shall be in the light of the Lord and shall not fail any more.

The hope of the poor and miserable, who is it except thyself, O Lord? And thou wilt answer him because thou art kind and gentle.

Blessed is the man who is prepared to call upon the name of the Lord and when he shall remember the name of the Lord he will be saved.

With the last verse may be compared particularly the phrase in Ode XXV, quoted above : " I became the Lord's by the name of the Lord." And in some of the Odes we read of the " kindness " and the " gentleness " of the Lord. But the resemblances go sufficiently beyond generality to make it probable that the writer of one of the works was acquainted with the other, and it seems even not impossible that passages in at least two of the Psalms are dependent upon passages in the Odes. It is known from internal evidence that the Psalms were composed over a series of years during which occurred the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey, and in Psalm II the death of Pompey (B.C. 48) is referred to. In the opinion of the best critics the probable limits of date are 70 and 40 B.C. Now as there are forty-two Odes, compared with eighteen Psalms, it is likely that the composition of the former also extended over a period of years, in which case the periods could have overlapped, so that a few of the Psalms might have been written at a later date than the oldest of the Odes. In Psalm XIV we find the following :—

The Paradise of the Lord are the trees of life which are his saints. And the planting of them is sure for ever ; nor shall they be rooted up all the days of the heavens. For the portion of the Lord and his inheritance is Israel. Not so are the sinners and evil men.

If these verses are compared with those previously quoted from Ode XXXVIII, it will be seen that both passages are

based upon the canonical Psalms lii and xcii; but there is a curious divergence in the case of the Solomonic Psalm. In the Ode, as in the canonical Psalm, the righteous man is likened to a fruitful tree, a natural and appropriate simile. But in the Solomonic Psalm we have a reference to Paradise, in which the saints are said to be the trees of life. We may therefore inquire whence the Psalmist derived this idea; and on searching the Odes we find in Ode XX mention of Paradise and of the tree of the Lord growing therein. If there is dependence here it is the Psalmist who was dependent on the Odist. Venturing a little farther, however, and speculating as to the motive of the writer, we may perhaps detect it in the rather unnecessary emphasis with which, unless he was writing controversially, he asserts that the saints in Paradise, the portion of the Lord and his inheritance, are the people of Israel. The Odist, with his universalistic outlook, invites all who will put on the grace of the Lord to come into his Paradise and make a garland from his tree. It is possible to imagine the Psalmist objecting to this and replying: "No! the trees of life are not for any one to pluck. The trees of life *are* the saints and the saints are the chosen of Israel." The identification of the saints with the trees of life in Paradise is very artificial. It is decidedly more natural to think of the tree of life as one from which can be gathered a life-giving garland. So far as it goes, therefore, the comparison appears to indicate the priority of the Ode.

There is a reference to Paradise also in Ode XI:—

He carried me into his Paradise. Blessed, O Lord, are they that are planted in thy land and that have a place in thy Paradise; and that grow in the growth of thy trees.

The first and last lines show that in this passage the saints are not identified with the trees that grow in Paradise. The word "planted" is thus only a figurative way of saying that the saints are placed by the Lord in his Paradise and established there.

Another case is in Ode XLI, a verse from which—"his children will be known to him"—was previously compared with *Ps. of Sol.* XVII, 30, which there is reason to believe to

be of comparatively late date. The thought of the Odist is one which would be quite natural to him, and there is not the slightest reason to suppose that it was suggested by the corresponding verse of the Psalm, in which the thought is, in fact, not the same. The statement expresses the writer's universalism; the meaning is that God knows his own children, of whatever race they may happen to be. It would not have been necessary to say that God knew his own chosen people, the Jews. The Psalmist, however, is writing of the holy people—Jews, of course—who will be gathered together by the Messiah, and then he says, rather unnecessarily: "For he knoweth them all that they are the children of God." Here again, if there is a dependence, there is a slight presumption that the Ode was written earlier than the Psalm.

These coincidences seem to create some measure of probability, but their character is not such as to admit of a confident inference with regard to the relative priority of the Psalms and Odes in question. Reviewing the evidence as a whole, however, we may find in it sufficient justification for a constriction of Grimme's limits at least so far as to place the composition of the Odes in the period between the year 80 B.C. and the closing years of the last pre-Christian century. When we have examined the doctrine of the Odes more minutely and compared it with that of the oldest Christian documents, we shall obtain confirmation of this dating.

The Odist was bilingual, for though the best opinion seems to be that he wrote in Syriac and used both Hebrew and Syriac sources, in some passages there is evidence of the use of the Greek Septuagint. This circumstance could be explained by supposing that there was more than one writer. The unity of style might then perhaps be due to the fact that phraseology of a certain kind had become stereotyped in the community. Some slight variation of doctrine is observable, though hardly sufficient to prove that the Odes were not all written by the same person. It might be accounted for by the supposition that the period of composition extended over a number of years; or that the doctrine was still somewhat

fluid, not yet having crystallized into rigidly defined dogmas. A critical investigation free from existing prepossessions is desirable.

Harris gives reasons for thinking that the place of composition of the Odes was Antioch. They seem to have been known to Ignatius. An interesting piece of evidence is the mention in Ode VI of "speaking waters." Harris points out that there was a "speaking fountain" at Daphne, a suburb of Antioch. The expression is found also in the Ignatian *Epistle to the Romans*, 7: "Living and speaking water." It is worth noting in this connection that according to the Acts of the Apostles there was at Antioch at a very early date an important community of Christians who had rejected the Mosaic Law. Paul, it appears, was a teacher in this church, which is said to have consisted principally of Greeks. Nothing can be inferred from the statements in Acts with regard to the date of its foundation, or its primitive doctrine.

CHAPTER III

THE ODES OF SOLOMON : THEIR DOCTRINE

1. THE INDWELLING WORD AND GNOSIS

To understand properly the doctrine of the *Odes of Solomon* it is necessary continually to bear in mind that the composer of them was a poet and a mystic. Commentators have erred through taking him too literally. A poet will personify abstractions, and a mystic will see them as something concrete; and in the minds of the Jewish mystics the boundary between poetic metaphor and the concrete representation of an abstract quality was fluctuating and ill-defined. There were Gnostics who personified the "Beginning" which appears in the first verse of Genesis. In Proverbs and the *Wisdom of Solomon* Wisdom is pictured as a woman who seeks, loves, and proclaims; but the writer of *Wisdom* at any rate did not really believe she was a woman, although for him she was something more than an abstraction. She was an all-pervasive spirit which enters into the souls of the pious and makes them wise. In the *Odes of Solomon* it is the Word who does this; and though the Odist sometimes writes of him as if he were a person, he is no more a man in the *Odes* than the Wisdom of the earlier writer was a woman. The vivid imagination of a writer for whom abstractions had a real existence, like the "Ideas" of Plato, and who personified Grace and Truth, may possibly have visualized the Word as a man, but never as a man who had lived upon the earth. The writer's doctrine, concisely stated, was that the Word, like the Wisdom whose place he had taken, is a spiritual emanation from God, unlimited in space and capable of entering into the minds or the souls of men. This view of the Word and the substitution of the Word for Wisdom is quite possibly due to Egyptian influence; for in ancient Egyptian thought the spoken word had objective reality. The highest god was believed

to have "uttered" the inferior gods—i.e., brought them into being by speaking their names. In a very ancient Egyptian hymn preserved in the British Museum it is said that "All men, all cattle, all reptiles live because Ptah thinks and utters whatever he will." The thought [= Wisdom] and the utterance [= Word] are personified as Horus and Thot respectively, but in the mystical doctrine of the writer they are not separable from Ptah.¹

In Ode XII it is written: "The dwelling-place of the Word is man." The writer does not say and he cannot mean that the Word dwells *among* men. He is saying of the Word what had been previously said about Wisdom—that from generation to generation she passes into holy souls. The statement might be taken to imply that Wisdom is multiple; the writer guards against the misconception by saying in the same verse (*Wis.* vii, 27): "And she, *being one*, hath power to do all things." We may see from this example that we are moving in a realm of thought where logical precision is not to be demanded. The writer of the Odes to a greater extent than the writer of *Wisdom* is endeavouring to express metaphysical conceptions in the language of metaphor, the only kind of language in which they can be expressed; and, unless we can bring our minds into tune with his mysticism, his concrete representation of abstractions, and the mentality of the ancient world in general, we shall never understand him. The *Wisdom* literature will frequently furnish a clue to the real thought which lies hidden beneath his symbolic language. A phrase in Ode XLI which has been misinterpreted by some commentators—"the Christ is truly one"—is illuminated by the verse of *Wisdom* referred to above. The Christ [= the Word] is said by the Odist to be truly one for the same reason as that for which Wisdom was said to be one. In the soul of every holy man the Word has his dwelling-place; nevertheless the Word is not multiple but truly one.

The same conception is found in the doctrine of the Sabians, a Mesopotamian sect. As they expressed it, the

¹ Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 63. The word of God is objectified in Ps. cxlvii, 15: "His word runneth very swiftly."

Creator is both single and multiple. He is one as regards his essential nature, priority of existence, and eternity, but multiple in that he diffuses himself throughout the material forms into which he enters, especially the bodies of good, wise, and distinguished men.¹ Although no mention of this sect is found before the rise of Mohammedanism, with which it came into conflict, its doctrine, as Reitzenstein has shown, is traceable to the Helleno-Egyptian theosophy of the first century and earlier. Since the divine Wisdom could be regarded as the Thought of God, it would be easy to assimilate the Word to the Thought of which it is the expression. In this manner in some of the Hermetic writings, the doctrine of which is pre-Christian in origin, Logos was identified with Nous, the divine Mind. The substitution of "the Word" for "Wisdom" appears in another verse of Ode XLI by comparison of the statement that "he [the Christ]² was known before the foundation of the world," with Prov. viii, 24: "When there were no depths I [Wisdom] was brought forth."

The thought that righteous men are the dwelling-place of the Word recurs in Ode XXXII:—

To the blessed there is joy from their hearts, and light from him that dwells in them; the Word from the Truth who was self-originate. For he is strengthened by the holy power of the Most High and he is unshakable for ever and ever.

The Word in these Odes is "the Saviour," but not through a vicarious sacrifice and "atonement." He saves men by bringing to them the knowledge of the true God; not by teaching them as the word teaching is ordinarily understood, but by entering into them. In Ode XII we read:—

He hath 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. The swiftness of the Word cannot be expressed . . . and they were penetrated by the Word, and they knew him who made them.

¹ Reitzenstein, *Poim.*, p. 169.

² The significance of the term "the Christ" in these Odes will be considered later.

The phrase "the swiftness of the Word" is noteworthy because it shows that, however the Word may be poetically personified, he is really conceived as an all-pervasive, "penetrating" Spirit. This appears clearly on a comparison with Wisdom :—

For Wisdom is more mobile than any motion. Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things (*Wis.* vii, 24).

Substitute "the Word" for "Wisdom" in this quotation, and you have the doctrine of the Odist. To complete the comparison *Wis.* i, 7, and ii, 10 may be quoted :—

The Spirit of the Lord [Wisdom] hath filled the world. When Wisdom entereth into thy heart . . . understanding shall keep thee.

It is a proof of the very early date of these Odes that although on the whole "the Word" has replaced "Wisdom," yet the thought of the writer sometimes fluctuates between the two in a way which would have been impossible for a "Christian." Since each of them is "the Spirit of the Lord," either term may be used. The substitution has, however, advanced so far that the name Wisdom is not actually found. That Wisdom is meant is clearly perceptible by comparison with the *Wisdom of Solomon* or with Proverbs. The difference is rather one of aspect than an essential difference. In one or two places the distinction is made for the purpose of illustrating some point in the writer's theosophy. But it is quite possible that a gradual re-orientation of doctrine was in progress during the period over which the Odes were composed. One example occurs in a passage of Ode XXXIII previously quoted, where it is said that a "perfect virgin" enters into the sons and daughters of men to make them wise, that they perish not. This virgin is obviously Wisdom. In *Ecclus.* vi, 31, it is said: "Thou shalt put her on as a robe of glory." "Putting her on" is another way of saying "taking her in." And we find the same variation of expression in reference to the Word in Ode VII: "He was reckoned like myself in order that I might put him on."

According to the ancient mode of thinking the spirit which entered into a body would take the shape of the body.¹ Hence in order that the Word might be "put on" he was "reckoned like myself." The same thought is found in Ode VI :—

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.

The Spirit of the Lord which "speaks" is the Word. Gnosis and "life" are acquired through "union" with the Spirit of God by the person into whom the Word has entered. Thus in Ode III :—

He that is joined to him that is immortal will also himself
become immortal. . . . This is the Spirit of the Lord which
doth not lie, which teacheth the sons of men to know his
ways.

The supreme value of Gnosis and its life-giving power are illustrated in various forms of speech. In Ode VI it is the water of life :—

All the thirsty upon earth were given to drink [of it];
and thirst was done away and quenched. For from the
Most High the draught was given.

We may compare with this Prov. xvi, 22 : "Understanding is a well-spring of life." Again, in Ode XXX :—

Fill ye for yourselves from the living fountain of the
Lord. . . . 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 given in the midst they did
not know it.

Note particularly the last sentence. It teaches that Gnosis, the knowledge of God, did not come through audible or visible instruction, neither through the voice of a man nor the letters of a book—hence not from the Old Testament. The doctrine is the doctrine of mystics in all ages—viz.,

¹ This mode of thinking is not yet obsolete, since the "ghost" of a person is supposed to be a facsimile of that person.

that God must be immediately known by spiritual intuition. For the Odist it is the Spirit of the Lord, the Word of God, who imparts the knowledge of God by an inward communication with the mind or the soul of the person who receives him. Since the word of God is the expression of the divine mind, there is no clear separation between the Word, the Will, and the Thought of God. "The Word of the Lord and his Will is a holy Thought . . . and his Thought is an everlasting life." It is plain that we are not dealing here with the realities of the material world but with metaphysical abstractions. With the phrase, "it flows forth from the lips of the Lord," we may compare: "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High" (*Ecclus.* xxiv, 3). Whether the writer of *Ecclesiasticus* thought of God as having a mouth it is rather difficult to say. From his statement that God made man according to his own image one might infer that he did. The writer of *Wisdom*, on the other hand, says that God made men an image of his own "proper being," or, according to some authorities, of his own "everlastingness," which looks like a deliberate correction of the account in Genesis. The Odist had certainly rejected that story, and since his God was spirit, he can have written "the lips of the Lord" only as poetic metaphor. This may seem too obvious to call for mention; but, in view of the fact that some commentators have erred through a tendency to literal interpretation, it seems necessary to reiterate and emphasize a caution with respect to the symbolic character of the writing. The being, or beings, whom the writer worshipped, in spite of occasional personification or metaphorical materialization, are spiritual beings, or rather spiritual substances, since for the ancient mind spirit was attenuated matter. We may go farther and say that essentially they are metaphysical abstractions more or less concretely conceived and represented.

Comparison of the above-quoted phrase from Ode XXX with the corresponding verse of *Ecclesiasticus* shows that in the former "the Lord," as usual in the Odes, means God. We may also interpret the giving "in the midst" from verse 2 of the same chapter, where it is said: "In the congregation

of the Most High shall she open her mouth." Gnosis is likened also to dew in Ode XXXV :—

The dew of the Lord in quietness he distilled upon me . . .
it was to me for salvation . . . and I was made right with
the Most High and I was redeemed with him.

Note again how the distillation "in quietness" indicates a spiritual infusion. In other Odes Gnosis is "milk" which came from the breasts of the Father. Evidently poetical metaphor. God in these Odes is spirit, unconfined in space and capable of unlimited extension. He is therefore able to pass into the souls of men. By the designation "Spirit of the Lord" we are to understand this same Spirit. In reality there is only one. But the writer, holding the Gnostic view that God would be contaminated by direct contact with matter, distinguishes between the Most High, the Spirit which remains in Heaven, and the Word, that extension of the divine Spirit which enters into the souls of men. We read of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Word, but we should make a great mistake if we were to suppose that the writer had any knowledge, or even thought, of the Christian dogma of the Trinity; though it is quite likely we here have the germ of it. There are not three persons in one person. Strictly speaking, there is no "person" at all. There is one Spirit which is viewed under different aspects. Just as the Word, though present in many, is "truly one," so is the Word one with the Most High. That portion of the divine Spirit which becomes incarnate in men is termed "the Word," "Grace," "the Light of Truth," the "Thought," or the "Will" of God. The Word is God as he directly affects men—the spiritual link, so to speak, by which men become united with the immediately unknowable Most High, and so get knowledge of him. The statement is made categorically and without possibility of misconception in Ode VII: "The Father of Gnosis is the Word of Gnosis." Like Wisdom the Word is

A vapour of the power of God and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty . . . an effulgence from everlasting light (*Wis.* vii, 25).

—consequently a portion of the divine Spirit. The same conclusion can be drawn from Ode XXXII previously quoted, where it is said that he in whom the Word has a dwelling-place “is strengthened by the holy power of the Most High.”

2. THE TERM “THE LORD”

Commentators who come to the study of these Odes with the determination of finding in them the Jesus of the Gospels, than which there is no more certain way of failing to understand them, take the term “the Lord” wherever there is the slightest possibility of doubt—and sometimes when there is none—as referring to a human Christ. The term occurs very frequently, but in one Ode only—Ode XXXI—does it appear necessary to take it as referring to the Word; and there is a possible explanation of the apparent exception. Considering the intimate dependence of the Odes upon the Wisdom books and the Psalms, in which of course “the Lord” always means God, the sound critical principle is to understand the term as meaning God wherever there is no clear evidence to the contrary. Since the Odes are the production of a sphere of religious thought which contributed to the growth of Christian doctrine, we necessarily find in them ideas and phrases which are reproduced in the later Christian literature; but frequently when such is the case the expression of these ideas recurs with some modification or development indicative of progress in the thought. And a similar transformation is observable when we go back to the literature in which the religious ideas of the Odes had their birth. Consider, for example, the phrase “I know that my redeemer liveth” (Job xix, 25). This phrase of course was written of God and the writer had no thought of the Christian doctrine of redemption through Christ. In the Odes also God is Redeemer, Saviour, and the “Living One,” and it is necessary to beware of the assumption that the term “the Saviour” has any relation to Jesus.¹ Here,

¹ In *Ps. of Sol.* also God is several times called “Saviour”—e.g., III, 7: “The stability of the righteous is from God their Saviour.”

however, an advance in thought has occurred. The Word is the means by which God has offered salvation to men; for by union with the Word they become united with God and thus secure eternal life. It is natural and easy but quite uncritical for people, when they meet in the Odes with certain stereotyped Christian terms and phrases, to impute a developed Christology which is entirely foreign to them. A case in point is found in Ode III, where it is written: "I should not have known how to love the Lord, if he had not loved me." The insecurity of the assumption that "the Lord" in this statement means Christ is seen by comparison with Ode XVI, 3: "For my love is the Lord." It is quite plain from the verses which follow that "the Lord" here is the Most High:—

And therefore I will sing to 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 fabric of his fingers; and the multitude of his mercies, and the strength of his Word.¹

As a matter of fact, the continuation of Ode III, from which "I should not have known how to love the Lord, etc.," was quoted, makes the matter clear. For immediately following these words we read, "I love the Beloved." "The Beloved" is plainly "the Lord," who had been mentioned just before. Then the Odist continues: "And my soul loves him, and where his rest is, there also am I." We may see that "the rest" is God's rest by comparison with Ps. xcv, 11. And any possible doubt is banished by the next verse of the Ode, "And I shall be no stranger there—sc. in "his rest,"—for with the *Lord Most High* and merciful there is no grudging." Then there follows immediately: "I have been united with him." The "him" can only be the Lord Most High. Finally we read in verse 9: "And he that hath pleasure in the Living One will become living." Thus we have in all desirable clarity the writer's doctrine of salvation. Salvation, or redemption, is the attainment of the certainty of

¹ The phraseology here, as elsewhere, is reminiscent of the phraseology of the Psalms; it has very little affinity anywhere to that of the New Testament.

eternal life through union with the Living One, who is the Lord Most High. But, as pointed out previously, the union is secured through the mediation of the Word—also termed the Spirit of the Lord—who enters into the soul of the worshipper, incidentally bringing to him the knowledge of the otherwise unknowable God. The Word is named “the Christ,” but he is certainly not regarded as “a person.” He is also termed “the Saviour” in Ode XLI :—

His Word is with us all our way, the Saviour who makes alive and does not reject our souls.

The final phrase can be interpreted from an Ode (VII) previously quoted. It probably means that the Word does not disdain to enter into the souls of men. It could be said that he humbles himself. But if there are any interpolations at all in these Odes the immediately following sentence—“The man who was humbled and exalted by his own righteousness”—is certainly one. The phrase jars with its context like a false note in music. Nowhere else at all is the Word called “a man,” and such a designation is totally at variance with the writer’s doctrine. Nor do we anywhere else find “righteousness,” or any similar human quality, ascribed to the Word. He is not “righteous” but the cause of righteousness in men. He might be thought of as a personification of the abstract quality of righteousness; but it is very significant that the term is never used in connection with him; rather is he, as a divine being, the personification of “grace” and “truth,” and the bringer of “light” and “life.” The quoted phrase suggests the mentality of a Christian of the second or late first century. Grammatically it is completely detachable from its context. The practical identification of the Word with God is found in Ode XXIX :—

I believed in the Lord’s Christ; and it appeared to me that he [i.e., the Christ] is the Lord [= God].

It is plain from this identification that the Word must have been conceived as Spirit; we have seen in fact that “the Word” and “the Spirit of the Lord” are synonymous

terms; and there is no doctrine of "incarnation" discoverable anywhere other than the doctrine of the incarnation of the Word in God's elect, the congregation of the saints.

In Ode XIV we read: "Let thy meekness, O Lord, abide with me." Meekness is a quality so frequently ascribed to Jesus in Christian literature that a Christian on reading this phrase is naturally inclined to assume that here at any rate we have a prayer addressed to Christ and that the writer may have been thinking of the Jesus of the Gospels. But the verses which follow show that the assumption would have been wrong:—

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 I may praise thee.

Evidently the Lord who is addressed is God. To apply the term "meekness" to God would be quite natural for a writer so well acquainted with the Psalms as the Odist was, for in Ps. xviii, 35, we read, "thy meekness hath made me great," addressed to God. The writer—as Harnack concluded—was certainly unacquainted with any Gospel and there is no evidence at all that his Christ was derived in the slightest degree from a knowledge of the Christian Jesus. Consequently any attempt to interpret the Odes in the light of qualities or epithets conventionally connected with Jesus can only lead us astray.¹ We are now in a position to examine in closer detail the important Ode VII.

2. My joy is the Lord and my impulse is towards him.
 3. This path of mine is excellent, for I have a helper, the Lord.
 4. He hath caused me to know himself without grudging by his simplicity; his kindness hath humbled his greatness.
 5. He became like me in order that I might receive him;
 6. He was reckoned like myself that I might put him on.
 7. And I trembled not when I saw him, because he was gracious to me.
 8. Like my nature he became that I might learn him, and like my form that I might not turn back from him.
 9. The Father of Gnosis is the Word of Gnosis.
 10. He who created wisdom is

¹ Cp. *Ps. of Sol.* v. The hope of the poor and miserable, who is it except thyself, O Lord? And thou wilt answer him because thou art *kind* and *gentle*.

wiser than his works, for knowledge he hath appointed as his way. 11. 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. 13. Because he it is that is incorrupt, the fulness of the ages and the Father of them. 14. He hath given himself to be seen of them that are his, in order that they may recognize him who made them.

The language of the Ode is highly poetical and metaphorical. In spite of the terms "simplicity" and "kindness," "the Lord" is God all through, "he who created me when yet I was not." Compare, for example, verses 4 and 10: "He hath caused me to know himself without grudging . . . for knowledge he hath appointed as his way." The subject of the second of these sentences is "the Father of Gnosis," "he who created wisdom," whence we must infer that it is the Father who "caused me to know himself." The same conclusion is reached from a comparison of verses 7 and 14. In the latter verse it is obviously the Father who "hath given himself to be seen"; consequently the subject of verse 7 must also be the Father. The English versions of the Odes read "him" instead of "himself" in verse 14; but that makes nonsense and is grammatically untenable. There is no previously-mentioned person to whom "him" can refer; and the Creator could not cause people to recognize "him who made them" by showing them someone else. Wellhausen translated the phrase correctly, "Er lässt sich schauen von den Seinen." And when we compare "he hath given himself to be seen" with "he hath caused me to know himself" in verse 4 we obtain confirmation of the opinion that in that verse also "He" is God. We are also given to understand that "seeing" is poetically written for knowing, just as in *Wis.* vi, 12, it is written of Wisdom that "easily is she beheld by those who love her." The writer had never literally "seen" Wisdom; nor did the Odist suppose that anyone had ever seen God or the Word.

The metaphorical "beholding" of God and the presence of God in the congregation is given in some of the Psalms.

For example, Ps. xvii, 15: "I will behold thy face in righteousness." xvi, 8: "I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand." lxxiii, 23: "I am continually with thee." lxxxii, 1: "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty." We may also compare *Wis.* i, 2: "[The Lord] is manifested to them that do not distrust him." In the *Wisdom of Solomon* knowledge of God is imparted by Wisdom, "for she knoweth all things and hath understanding thereof." In the Odes the manifestation is through the Word; and since the Word is not literally seen it would be quite irrelevant to say in a literal sense that "he became like me," which would imply an objective appearance. We must interpret the phrase from expressions found elsewhere. And the doctrine of the Odist being, as has been shown, that God becomes known through the entry of the Word as a portion of the divine Spirit into the inner man, the statement "he became like me" must mean that he assimilated himself to me by entering into me.

In this Ode it is implied that to receive the Word is to acquire knowledge of God; and, as if to leave no doubt as to his meaning, the writer adds: "The Father of Gnosis is the Word of Gnosis." The sentence in verse 12—"granted me to ask from him and to receive from his sacrifice"—is obscure. The text is in a good many places corrupt and in some the original reading is not certainly recoverable. The idea that Christ died as a "sacrifice" is quite alien to the thought of the Odist; and if it were not, "receiving from" his sacrifice would be a peculiar expression. But the writer is here referring, not specially to the Word, but to the "Father of Gnosis," "he who created wisdom," "the fulness of the ages and the Father of them," and the receiving from his sacrifice is something which it was granted to the writer "to ask from him." The words that follow seem to be intended as an explanation: "because he it is that is incorrupt . . . he hath given himself to be seen"; and it was from the incorruptibility of the Father and the emitted Word that the writer had put on incorruption. "His sacrifice" probably means sacrifice *to* him, from which he who

offers it will receive benefit.¹ One can understand how the lively imagination of men for whom purely abstract thinking was uncongenial would transform the reception of the wisdom and the word of God by the minds of men into the idea that they had been permeated by the divine Spirit. As was pointed out previously, an analogous idea is found in the Egyptian Gnostic Hermetic literature. And there also Logos and Nous are not essentially separable from God or from one another.

The word "simplicity" in verse 4 of Ode VII probably does not mean simplicity of mental or moral character. The corresponding Greek word is *haplotēs*, which, though it can mean simplicity in the ordinary sense, is also the contrary of *complexity*, signifying oneness or the absence of parts. There is support for this interpretation of the word in Tatian's *Oration to the Greeks*, 5, where the thought is similar to that of the Ode and may have been derived, either directly or indirectly, from it. Tatian wrote :—

With him [God] through rational process the Logos also itself which was in him subsisted. By the will of his *haplotēs* springs forth the Logos; and the Logos, not having gone into vacuity, becomes the first-born work of the Father.

The word "simplicity" would be appropriately used in this sense in the Ode, because in the doctrine of the writer it is through the oneness of the Word with the Father that God himself becomes known. In Tatian's *Oration*, as in the Odes, the Logos is originally "in God," a part of the spiritual substance of God, from whom he issues as a spiritual emanation, separable in thought, but not essentially, and is hence metaphorically termed the "first-born work of the Father," leading to the conception of the Word as the Son of God. The conception is much older than Christianity. That, "the tongue" [= Word], comes into being *in* the primal god, and when all created things have proceeded from Horus and That (Wisdom and Word), That unites himself

¹ Cp. Ps. 1, 14, 15, 22, 23, where "offer"—in vv. 14 and 23—is, in the Hebrew, *sacrifice*.

with Ptah.¹ In the *Odes of Solomon* also the Word is termed "Son of God" :—

The Son of the Most High appeared in the perfection of his Father, and light dawned from the Word that was before-time in him—sc. the Father; the Christ is truly one.

When this passage is compared with *Wis.* vii, 26, 27, it becomes evident that those two verses were in the mind of the Odist while he was writing, and that his Logos is Wisdom under another name :—

She is an effulgence from everlasting light, and an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness. And she, being one, hath power to do all things.

3. THE MESSIAH (CHRIST)

Before proceeding to an examination of the significance of the term "the Christ" as used in these Odes, the consideration of two more examples of the writer's anti-Judaism will not be irrelevant. Harnack thought that there is a reference to the Temple in Ode IV :—

No man, O my God, changeth thy holy place, and it is not possible that he should change it and put it into another place . . . for thy sanctuary thou hast designed before thou didst make places.

It does not seem possible to reconcile Harnack's opinion with the attitude of the Odist as exhibited in some verses previously quoted, to which the following may be added from Ode XX :—

I am a priest of the Lord, and to him I do priestly service; and to him I offer the sacrifice of his thought. . . . The sacrifice of the Lord is righteousness and purity of heart and lips.²

Here we see a repudiation not merely of sacrifices, but also of a priestly order, carrying with it a complete rejection of

¹ From the Egyptian inscription in the Brit. Mus., supposed date eighth century B.C., translated by Reitzenstein, *Poim.*, p. 62.

² A comparison of these verses with Ps. 1, 14, 23, seems to throw light on the meaning of "sacrifice" in Ode VII.

the Temple ritual. The Odist, moreover, is not protesting against a change of place; he says it is not *possible* that anyone should change it; which, as applied to a material building, would not be true. Nor would the idea that God could need or desire a material habitation be consistent with his metaphysical doctrine. The "sanctuary" of which he wrote may with far better reason be supposed to have been a habitation not made with hands; in which case the change of which he denies the possibility would be the removal of God's "holy place" from Heaven to earth, actually involving the denial that the Temple at Jerusalem was God's holy place. The statement that God had designed his sanctuary before he made places—i.e., before the creation of the world—applies better to a heavenly sanctuary than to a building. Since the conception of a heavenly temple was already given in the Psalms, there should be no doubt about the meaning of the phrases in the Ode. The relevant passages are Ps. xi, 4, and xxxiii, 13 and 14:—

Jehovah is in his holy temple, Jehovah's throne is in Heaven. Jehovah looketh from Heaven. . . . From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

Zahn understood these verses of Ode IV correctly. If now the purpose of the Odist was to deny the sanctity of the Temple at Jerusalem, we could infer that it was still standing when the Ode was composed. However, there is sufficient internal evidence of the early date of the composition of the Odes without relying upon that. Another, not certain but very probable, indication of the writer's anti-Judaism is found in Ode IX: "Put on the crown in the true covenant of the Lord." Considered in the light of all the unambiguous evidence of the writer's attitude, the expression "*true covenant*" may reasonably be taken as implying that the covenant of Yahveh with Abraham, or with Israel, was not a true covenant. Now it is a sound critical principle that when we find in an ancient document an isolated statement which runs counter to the whole tenor of that document we should hold it to be an interpolation. Application of this

principle necessarily leads to the rejection of the concluding verse of Ode XXXI : " And that I might not make void the promises to the fathers, to whom I promised the salvation of their seed." The Odist cannot have written that even if the above suggested implication of " true covenant " be not correct. The " promises to the fathers " were promises of salvation valid for Jews only. It is true that when Christians had taken over the Old Testament they felt obliged to transfer by sophistical arguments the " promises " to themselves. In Romans and Galatians it is argued that those who had the faith in God which Abraham had become heirs to the promises made to Abraham ; and the writer of the *Epistle of Barnabas* asserted that a purpose of the Son of God in manifesting himself in the flesh was to prepare a new people for himself that " he might redeem the promise made to the fathers." The Odist was not under the same necessity. His avoidance of reference to the earlier books of the Old Testament appears to be intentional ; and he could not reason in the manner of the Christian writers referred to. The idea that the Word had manifested himself in the flesh in the sense in which Barnabas used the phrase is not reconcilable with his doctrine. Nor in his doctrine is salvation the consequence of " faith " ; it is the result of " knowledge." Another objection is the writer's evident disinclination to represent God as speaking in person. As a matter of fact, although the phraseology of the quoted verse requires that God should be the speaker, the immediately preceding verses make it impossible that he can be. Hence there is a discontinuity in the sense which by itself is evidence of interpolation. As a Jew the writer would naturally desire the salvation of his own people ; and there is in one of the Odes evidence of this ; but it would have been impossible for him to believe that salvation could come either to the Jews or to Gentiles in consequence of the promises of Yahveh to the patriarchs.

It is also obvious that the writer's Christ is not the Judaic Messiah ; yet, knowing as we now do that he derived his phraseology from certain books of the Old Testament, investing it wherever his theology required with a new

meaning, we conclude that in this case also he borrowed the title. And it is easy to see why he did so. We have had evidence in a quoted passage from the *Psalms of Solomon* that just before the beginning of the Christian era the best Jewish thought was connecting the Messiah not nearly so much with an expected political supremacy of the Jews as with the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth, the inauguration of the reign of righteousness. The messianic king as the representative of Yahveh would conquer the minds of men by the power of righteousness and truth; so that men of every race would seek out the Jews and every Jew would find ten Gentiles eager to say to him: "We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you."¹ Hellenistic Jews, who had broken down the barriers of race, could with greater confidence hope for the establishment of a universal Kingdom of God in which righteousness would be the rule and monotheism the only creed. They carried over from their national preconceptions the notion of the founding of the new Kingdom by a Messiah, a Christ, but their Christ was no longer a messianic son of David; he was the Word of God, personified in thought, but in actual belief a spiritual emanation from the Most High, the "Spirit of the Lord." And, since as a Spirit he would be neither seen nor heard, he could act upon the world in general only through "the elect" who had received him, in whom he had become incarnate; and it was for them to make him known. This view is quite clearly expressed in Ode VII: "The Most High shall be known in his saints." And these words are not to be understood in the sense in which they might be used by a modern rationalizing thinker. A more detailed expression of the belief is found in Ode X:—

The Lord hath directed my mouth by his Word, and gave me that I might speak the fruit of his peace, to convert the souls of those who are willing to come to him. I was strengthened and made mighty. . . . And the Gentiles were gathered together who were scattered abroad. And I was unpolluted by my love for them . . . and they walked in my life and were saved and became my people for ever and ever.

¹ Zech. viii, 23.

Although the closing sentences are in the past tense they are of course prophetic. They foretell the conversion of the Gentiles through the agency, not solely of the writer himself in person, for he writes as the representative of his community which has replaced the Jewish nation as his "people." And the conversion is to be brought about by the Word which inspires the saints and operates through them. He pointedly demonstrates his universalism not only by the words "my people," but also in the statement that, although a Jew, he is unpolluted by his love for Gentiles. The statement is further evidence of early date. Even in the oldest Christian Epistles fellowship with Gentiles is so much a matter of course that no apology for it is thought necessary. No doubt there were already Gentile converts in the community. Most of the Odes were written to be sung by the congregation, so that any member of it may be imagined to be the speaker, or even the congregation as a whole. And the statement that "the Lord hath directed my mouth by his Word" explains an occasional ambiguity as to whether it is the Word or the writer who is supposed to be speaking. The Word, not having literally a mouth, speaks by the mouth of the congregation. The idea is given in *Ecclus.* xxiv, 2: "In the congregation of the Most High shall she [Wisdom] open her mouth"; which of course means that the words of Wisdom are in reality uttered by members of the congregation. The theme of Ode X—viz., that the congregation, inspired by the Word, is the agent for the establishment of the Kingdom of God—recurs in Ode XXIX :—

[The Lord] showed me his sign; and he led me by his light, and gave me the rod of his power; that I might subdue the imagination of the peoples, and the power of men of might to bring them low; and to make war by his Word, and to take victory by his power. And the Lord overthrew my enemy by his Word.

One can understand from the experience of Paul at Ephesus that a community which attacked Pagan idolatry would be likely to make enemies, some of whom would be "men of might." Note how the writer has taken his imagery from the

Jewish conception of the Messiah and applied it symbolically to the Word. In the Wisdom literature the words "error" and "folly" are consistently used to signify unrighteousness, and as the antitheses of the wisdom which is knowledge of God. In Ode XXXI they are used in this sense, but probably with a special reference to false worship, which is to be abolished through the coming of the Word. In this Ode the term "the Lord" seems to be applied directly to the Word; but the "appearance" of the Word is in reality God's revelation of himself, so that practically it is the Lord Most High before whom the abysses are dissolved. "The truth of the Lord" certainly means the truth of God. The "abysses" and the "darkness" are obviously synonyms of error and folly :—

The abysses were dissolved before the Lord and darkness was destroyed by his appearance; error went astray and perished at his hand, and folly found no path to walk in and was submerged by the truth of the Lord [He opened his mouth and spoke grace and joy; and he spoke a new song of praise to his name. He lifted up his voice to the Most High, and offered to him the sons that were in his hands.]

The subject of the concluding sentences is ostensibly the Word. But there is something rather strange about these and the immediately following verses—so much so, indeed, that interpolation may be suspected, based upon Jn. xvii, with special reference to verses 11–15. The Word is here individualized to a degree which is found nowhere else in the Odes, and the sentence is ungrammatical. If, as I think is really the case, the meaning of the writer is that it was before God that the abysses were dissolved, and "the truth of the Lord" is God's truth, then the pronoun "He" with which the next sentence begins ought to stand for God; but it does not. On the other hand, if we take "the Lord" to mean the Word and the pronoun "He" to refer to him, "his name" must mean God's name; but, by the hypothesis, God had not been previously mentioned. The two following verses, 6 and 7, may be part of the interpolation, for the transition from 7 to 8 is exceedingly harsh :—

6. Come forth, ye that have been afflicted and receive joy ;

7. And possess your souls by grace; and take to you immortal life.

8. And they condemned me when I rose up.

Who are the "they"? If, however, we read verse 8 immediately after the words "truth of the Lord," the pronoun can be understood from "error" and "folly," which are poetical synonyms for wicked and unbelieving people. It cannot be doubted that there is a connection between these verses and the passage of John, and the peculiarities observable in the former make it probable that it is they which are secondary. Moreover, it is scarcely possible that the Odes were written later than the Fourth Gospel.

The initial verses may be regarded as in some measure prophetic. The dissolution of the abysses and the destruction of darkness are to be brought about through the agency of the saints inspired by the Word. The abysses and error are met with again in Ode XIV, where, in very figurative language, the abolition of error and the closing of the abysses through the voice of the community speaking under the inspiration of the Word are vividly foretold. The annihilation of polytheism appears to be the dominant theme :—

The dove fluttered over the Christ, 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 opened themselves and were hidden [or, were opened and closed]. And they were asking for the Lord like women in travail; and he was not given them for food, because he did not belong to them. The abysses were sealed up with the seal of the Lord; and they perished in thought, those who had existed from ancient times; for they were corrupt from the beginning, and the end of their corruption was the Life. . . . 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.

In this Ode "the Lord" is God. The "way of the Lord" is mentioned several times in the Psalms; "his grace" and

“ his holiness ” are the grace and holiness of God ; and the “ seal of the Lord ” is his seal. It is to be remembered that the text of these Odes is in a good many passages corrupt, and that may sometimes be the cause of ambiguity. But even where the text is sound the highly figurative style occasionally makes comprehension difficult. The obscurities which have baffled commentators are, however, in some cases of their own making, because they have not begun by placing themselves at the right point of view. It is perfectly certain that the opening sentence of this Ode does not involve a reminiscence of the Gospel account of the baptism of Jesus. In the Gospel the dove is the Holy Spirit, and there is no reasonable sense in saying that Christ is “ the head ” of the Holy Spirit. Nor, at the baptism of Jesus, did the dove “ sing ” over him. But the Lord, whether as God or the Word, is the spiritual head of the community, and of what else could he be the head ? Moreover, since the community sings praises to the Lord, it could figuratively be said to sing “ over him.” It may be thought that to figure the community as a dove is a flight of fancy too bold even for the writer of these Odes. To think so would be to err. In Ps. lxxiv, 19, we read : “ O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked ; forget not the congregation of thy poor.” The Psalm was written in a time of national distress, hence the qualification of “ thy poor.” That “ the congregation ” is Israel appears clearly from verse 2 : “ Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old.” Now, seeing that the Odist had a perfect knowledge of the Psalms and that he has substituted his own congregation of the saints for the congregation of Israel, the figure in question was not an unnatural or an unlikely one for him to use. In 2 *Esdras* v, 26, again, Israel is designated under the figure of a dove : “ Of all the fowls that are created thou hast named thee one dove.” And, when the congregation had been pictured as a dove, fluttering would not be inappropriate. Doves do not sing, but congregations do. This example shows how necessary it is to take account of the exuberance of the writer’s fancy.

The sealing up of the abyss is very possibly correctly

understood as foretelling the termination of the power of the evil spirits of the underworld. It is also extremely probable that "those who had existed from ancient times" and "were corrupt from the beginning" are the pagan deities whose corruption would be ended with "the Life." And "the Life" is God. In the Mandæan hymns the word is similarly used—e.g., "The Life is glorified and victorious." The victory of the Life or the end of corruption is evidently to come about in the future through the disclosure of the "way of the Lord," and the agent of the disclosure is the congregation which has been inspired by the Word; hence the statement that the voice of the dove was heard. The picture of the ultimate despair of those who should not have understood the way of the Lord and his grace, who would be rejected because they were deficient in wisdom, is evidently founded upon the description of the despair of the wicked in *Wis. of Sol.*, chap. v :—

When the wicked shall see [the salvation of the righteous and their own imminent ruin] they shall be troubled with terrible fear and shall be amazed at the marvel of salvation and for distress of spirit shall they groan and shall say : Verily we went astray from the way of truth and the way of the Lord we knew not.

The thought that the knowledge of God would be given to the world by the saints is also to be found in *Wis.* xviii, 4 :—

Thy sons, through whom the incorruptible light of the Law was to be given to the race of men.

The Odist has substituted Gnosis for Law. But the writer of the second half of *Wisdom* was, it would seem, less of a Hellenist than the writer of the first half. In Ode XXIII we have a similar theme, presented in different imagery. The Ode opens with a song of exultation :—

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 ?

This prelude would have no relation to the body of the Ode, and would therefore be pointless, unless the elect who had received and "put on" Grace and Love had been regarded as the effective agents in the establishment of God's Kingdom. The Word operates through them. The Odist continues :—

And the Thought [of the Most High] was like a letter. His Will descended from on high . . . 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 seals was greater than they. . . . A wheel received it and it was coming upon it, and a sign was with it of Dominion and Government; and everything that shook the wheel it was mowing and cutting down; and the multitude of opposing forces it overwhelmed. . . . The letter was one of command, for there was included in it all districts; and there was seen at its head the head which was revealed, the Son of Truth from the Most High Father; and he inherited and took possession of everything; and all the apostates hasted and fled away. And those who persecuted and were enraged became extinct.

The unsubstantiality of the elements of the writer's theosophy is clearly perceptible. He will not say literally that God speaks to men; and so he says that God sends his Word to them. He then imagines that the Word has objective reality. In this Ode, since a message of supreme importance had to be brought, the Word comes upon a letter as the written, instead of the spoken, word of God. But we are so far away from physical realities that the letter is the "Thought" and the "Will" of God. The seal upon the letter is, of course, the seal of God. And the letter, being addressed to the community of saints, cannot be seized by any one else. As the letter and the seal are poetical images so also is the "Son of Truth" a poetical metaphor for the Word which had issued from "the Truth who is self-originate." Since the "taking possession of everything" was certainly in the future, this Ode, like the one previously considered, must be prophetic—an expression of the writer's confident anticipation. The figure of the wheel, as was shown

previously, was taken from Isaiah. As it is the wheel which receives the letter it must represent the congregation of the elect, to whom the Dominion and the Government are assigned. The congregation is thus the visible vicergerent of the invisible Word. The reader is prepared for this interpretation by the terms of the prelude in which it is said that it is the elect who receive "Grace"; for Grace is a synonym of the "Son of Truth." The cutting down and overwhelming of opposing forces by the wheel is a metaphorical paraphrase of the later statement that those who persecuted and were enraged became extinct. It is probable that in this and in some others of the Odes the writer had particularly in view orthodox Jews as persecutors, though doubtless there were other opponents. The revelation of the Word to the congregation was the divine authorization of their inheritance of the earth as the depositories of the truth. We may observe how the writer, although his Son of Truth is not the Jewish Messiah, has adopted the messianic phraseology—"Dominion and Government," "he inherited and took possession of everything." But the Dominion is a spiritual Dominion, and the Messiah is the Spirit of the Lord. The metaphysical character of the writer's conception of the Word is again clearly perceived in Ode XII, in which no distinction is made between the uttered word of God and the Word as a spiritual substance :—

The descent of the Word and his way are incomprehensible. . . . He is the light and dawn of thought. . . . By him the worlds spoke to one another. For the mouth of the Most High spoke to them.

Such words were never written of a known person.

The use of the past tense in relation to a future event is common in Hebrew and its kindred languages. The writer for the sake of vividness projects himself imaginatively into the future. An example may be given from *Ps. of Sol.*, XI :—

Stand up on high, Jerusalem, and behold thy children who are being gathered from the east and the west by the Lord; and from the north they come to the joy of their

God; and from the far distant islands God *gathered* them. Lofty mountains has he humbled and made plain before them; and the hills fled away before their entrance.

The Odist emphasizes his opposition to this view in his statement in Ode X that it was the Gentiles who were gathered together. There is another sense in which the term "his Christ" with the meaning "his anointed" is used in these Odes. It can be understood from the canonical Psalms whence the writer has borrowed so much of his phraseology. The term is found in Ps. xx, 6 :—

Now know I that Jehovah saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of Jehovah our God.

In these verses "his anointed" is the personified Israel; hence the singular pronoun "him." The "we" in the following verse proves that it is not one person but the nation which trusts in Jehovah and is saved. The correctness of this interpretation emerges even more clearly from Ps. ii, 2 and 3 :—

The Kings of the earth set themselves against Jehovah and against his anointed, saying, Let us break *their* bands asunder, and cast away *their* cords from us.

In two other Psalms Israel is termed God's anointed; one of these is Ps. lxxxiv, 9 :—

Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

It would perhaps be possible to suppose that the Psalm was written as a Psalm of David, who is imagined in this verse to be referring to himself; but the character of the Psalm as a whole does not favour this supposition. And it is quite excluded in the case of Ps. xv, 15, where the Psalmist is writing of the Israelites before their entry into Canaan, and says :—

He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes; saying: Touch not mine anointed.

Now in the *Odes of Solomon* the chosen people, the elect,

are no longer Israel but the congregation of saints; consequently, Israel in the Psalms being "his anointed," in the Odes the congregation naturally becomes "his anointed." The conclusion thus reached is confirmed by the fact that it clears up a phrase in Ode IX which has occasioned some perplexity :—

Give me your souls that I may also give you my soul, the Word of the Lord and his good pleasure, the holy thought which he has devised concerning his anointed. For in the will of the Lord is your life, and his thought is everlasting life; and your perfection is incorruptible. 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.

This Ode is evidently an address by the writer to his congregation, of which he may therefore be supposed to be the head—this is an important inference. He begins by announcing that he will declare the good pleasure and the holy thought of God concerning "his anointed." He then proceeds to make known the pleasure and the thought of God concerning the community, "his saints." It is to them that peace is announced, and it is they who are to receive the thought of the Most High. Hence "his anointed" [= his Christ] is in this Ode the community. And the "thought" which is received is really equivalent to the Word as the expression of God's thought. For the Word is also "my soul," which is to be given by the speaker to his fellow-members if they will give him their souls. The idea being, we may suppose, that the Word—the holy Thought, or the Will—of the Most High is to be transmitted from the soul of the speaker into the souls of those addressed, who, perhaps, were new members, since later on they are exhorted to "put on the crown" which is said to be "Truth." Comparable with this allocution is a Marcosian formula quoted by Irenæus (I. xiii, 3): "I wish to give you a share of my grace. . . . But the place of the greatness is within you. Receive first grace from me and through me . . . that thou mayest be what I am and I what thou art." The address may have been composed for a ceremony of initiation, one item of which may have been a symbolic crowning. There

is some reason to think that another feature of it may have been an anointing with oil. Moreover, since receiving the Thought of the Most High is being "enriched in God the Father," we see again that to receive the Word is to receive God. And to do this is to be "redeemed" and to have "everlasting life."

The foregoing quotations make clear the transformation of the messianic hope which has come to pass in the minds of the Odist and his congregation. Instead of the Judaic conception of a material victory or of a cataclysmic establishment of the Kingdom of God we have the notion that a new world order is to take root in the community of the elect and to grow with the expansion of that. As in the earlier belief, it is still the Messiah, the Christ, who comes to found the Kingdom of God, but he is already here—the Word—invisibly incarnate in the elect. And there is also a visible Christ, God's anointed, the community itself, which under one aspect is God's agent for the establishment of the universal reign of righteousness, and under another aspect the Kingdom itself in embryo. The renewal of a corrupt world through the divine life inherent in the community is metaphorically foretold in Ode XXII, to be quoted later. In that Ode the Kingdom of God is definitely equated with the congregation of the saints.

4. THE SON OF GOD

One would naturally suppose that Jews at the commencement of the Christian era could not readily imagine that God had a son except in the figurative sense in which the chosen people might be regarded as the children of God. Orthodox Jews would surely have repudiated the idea that Yahveh could have a son in any other sense. Judging from the contemptuous manner in which the Pharisees and the Rabbis spoke of the peasantry of Palestine we can infer that most of these were not strictly orthodox Jews, and it was apparently among this class of people that apocalyptic ideas found a congenial soil. But it does not seem likely that it would have occurred even to them to imagine that any man, however powerful the impression he might have

made upon their minds, was the only-begotten Son of God. There is in fact evidence that in the more Judaic section of the early Christian Church Jesus was not believed to have been the Son of God in that special sense. He is not so named in the Epistle of James; and according to Acts (iv, 27) Peter preached Jesus as the "holy Servant" of God. One passage which professes to report the words of Peter excludes by implication the unique Sonship of Jesus:—

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew. . . .
Him did God exalt to be a Prince and a Saviour. (Acts v,
30.)

The connection of "Son of God" with "Logos" indicates that the term originated among Hellenized Jews of the Dispersion. Throughout the Pauline and Johannine literature it is found; and it is probably not without significance that the first appearance of it in Acts is in ix, 20, where it is said that Paul "proclaimed Jesus that he is Son of God." The Pauline Epistles have been catholicized and so has the Fourth Gospel; but even so the Pauline and Johannine writings are classed by biblical scholars as "Hellenistic." There seems then to have been a confluence of two streams: a duplex Judaic stream in which Jesus was preached either as the messianic "Son of David" or as the "Servant of God" (*pais Theou*), and a Hellenistic stream in which he was preached as the "Son of God." And it was long before the two streams completely coalesced. Coalescence had not occurred when the *Epistle of Barnabas* was written, for the writer of that Epistle denies that Jesus was "Son of David." In the *First Epistle of Clement* also Jesus is "Son of God" but not of David, and he is said to have been "sent forth from God" with no mention of Mary. Catholic Christianity may be said to have begun with Ignatius. In the Ignatian Epistles Jesus is both "Son of David" and "Son of God." But there were still Hellenistic Christians a good while after the time of Ignatius.

Now the Pauline and the Johannine doctrines, though each of them may be classed as Hellenistic, have some very distinctive features which mark them off the one from the other.

Hence, just as we know that the specific differences between a chimpanzee and a gorilla can be explained only by postulating an evolutionary period between these species and a common ancestor, so also we must postulate a period of development between the Pauline and Johannine doctrines and a more primitive form of Christianity in which the common factor, the belief that Jesus—or at any rate the Christ—was Son of God, was already present. It is not necessary to suppose that either of those doctrines was directly derived from the *Odes of Solomon*; but, to continue the evolutionary parallel, we may liken the discovery of the *Odes* to the discovery of an extinct species which furnishes information with respect to an earlier stage in a certain line of physiological development. In the *Odes* the Christ is Son of God, but the name *Jesus* has not yet been introduced.

The Jewish writer of the *Odes of Solomon* was not more likely than less Hellenized Jews to have come spontaneously to the belief that the Christ was the Son of God in any sense analogous to that in which a man is the son of his father. Later Christianity appears to have been influenced by the Greek Mystery religions and thus to have reached a more definite—eventually, one might perhaps even say, a somewhat more literal—conception of the relationship between the Son and the Father. During the second century a continuous process of literalization is perceptible of which there is no trace in the *Odes of Solomon*; and moving, as the writer did, in a world of metaphor, it would be easy for him to regard the effluence of the Word from the Most High as a kind of birth, without any infringement of his monotheism. It is probable, indeed, that the idea was not a spontaneous product of his own mind. There is evidence that Helleno-Egyptian theosophy was beginning to influence Jewish religious speculation as early as the last pre-Christian century. In some of the Hermetic writings Logos is the son of Nous, and the relationship is just of that metaphysical character which would harmonize with the religious ideas of the Odist. But his knowledge of literature of that kind could merely render more definite the suggestion which he must have found in his own particular field. For the

relationship is indicated in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. The writer of that book, after having in the previous chapter described Wisdom as an "effluence of the glory of the Almighty," says in viii, 3 : "She glorifieth her noble birth in that it is given her to dwell with God." The effluent Wisdom thus being regarded as the daughter of God, in the Odes the effluent Word would quite naturally become in the same metaphorical sense the Son of God.

The Odist was not the first writer in his own line of thought to use the term "Son of God"; it is found in the Psalms and in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, but with a different meaning from that which we have just been considering. In the former (Ps. ii, 7-12) the Son is Israel :—

Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. . . . Be wise now therefore, O ye kings. . . . Kiss the son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way. . . . Blessed are they that put their trust in him.

The final clauses certainly tend to create the impression that the son is a single person and even a divine person. And the promise of inheritance and possession suggests the Messiah. The text has, of course, been so interpreted. There is no evidence that the Odist interpreted it in that sense and it is very unlikely that he did. The interpretation is obviously incorrect, for the exhortation to the kings to "kiss the son" implies that he is continuously present. It is to Israel that the inheritance is promised. Israel is termed Son of God also by Hosea (xi, 1) : "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

Now, since the Odist has frequently transferred to his congregation expressions which in the Old Testament were applied to Israel, it is quite likely that he also transferred this. Hence it would be a mistake, whenever we meet with the term Son of God in an Ode, to assume as a matter of course that a divine Son of God is denoted. Above all, if we find that to apply it to the community makes better

sense and is more appropriate to the context, we should do so. A case of this kind occurs in Ode VII :—

Knowledge he hath appointed as his way . . . and brought it to all perfection, and set over it the footprints of his light ; and I walked therein from the beginning to the end. For by him it was made, and it rested in the Son. He was pleased with the Son, and for his salvation he will take hold of everything ; and the Most High shall be known in his saints. Ignorance hath been destroyed, because knowledge of the Lord hath arrived.

In this case to take “ the Son ” to mean the Word creates a difficulty, whereas if we understand the term as designating the community, the meaning is clear and conformable to the known doctrine of the writer. Gnosis was undoubtedly brought by the Word ; but it *rested* in the congregation. That must surely be the significance of the statement, “ the Most High shall be known in his saints.” Otherwise the sudden mention of “ the saints ” would be irrelevant and unprepared for. The meaning is that the knowledge of the Most High, brought by the Word, resides in the congregation of the saints, who are thus able to make him known. “ Ignorance hath been destroyed, because knowledge of the Lord hath arrived.” And it was of course into the congregation that it had arrived ; and there it “ rested.” Again, as applied to the Word, the divine Christ, no reasonable sense can be attached to the words “ for his salvation he will take hold of everything.” Even if we were to suppose—which is certainly not the case—that the writer had in view the crucifixion of the Christ, he could not have thought it necessary for his salvation that God should “ take hold of everything.” According to Christian dogma God raised Christ from the dead by his mere irresistible will. He did not need to take hold of everything. The future tense also is inconsistent with the supposition that the writer was referring to an event which was past. If, on the other hand, we suppose the Son in this Ode to be the community, all difficulty disappears. The statement that God “ was pleased with the Son ” is completely out of accord with the metaphysical doctrine of the Odist, if “ the Son ” means “ the Word.” Nothing of

the kind is found anywhere else at all. On the other hand, the statement that God was pleased with his elect would be quite appropriate.

At the beginning of the Christian era we find among broad-minded Jews the belief that God's purpose in choosing their race was that they should make him known to the Gentiles. The writer of the *Testament of Levi* (c. 14) says to the Jews : " Ye are the lights of heaven, like the sun and the moon ; what will the Gentiles do if ye darken yourselves with ungodliness ? " Philo, again, says : " The Jewish race received as its portion the priesthood of all mankind." ¹ It would follow from that conception that the Jews must necessarily be preserved. God sent affliction upon them to purify them for their great work, but he would not allow them to be destroyed. The Odist, believing that, not Israel but his own community had been made by God the depository of " knowledge " for the benefit of mankind, would of course also believe that God would use all means for its preservation. And he found in *Wisdom* a passage which he could apply :—

The righteous live for ever . . . because with his right hand shall [the Lord] cover them . . . and shall make the whole creation his weapon to repel their enemies (v, 15-17).

By the expression " rested in " we are directed to *Ecclus.* xxiv, 8 :—

He that created me [Wisdom] made my tabernacle to rest, and said, Let thy tabernacle be in Jacob and thine inheritance in Israel.

The Odist has paraphrased the statement that God made Wisdom to rest in Israel into the statement that he made Gnosis " to rest " in the congregation of the elect, naming it " the Son." The immediately preceding words " for by him it was made [created] " render it more than probable that the writer had this verse of *Ecclesiasticus* in mind. Thus in the doctrine of the Odist there is an invisible spiritual Christ the Son and a material one, the latter being the community ; and the two are united as spirit and body are united. The

¹ *De Abr.* II, 15.

realization of this fact helps to a better understanding of Ode III, which is evidently a Psalm of initiation. It has both a literal and a symbolic significance. The neophyte sings, "His members are with him and on them do I hang." In the congregation which he has joined he "hangs" upon the members of the Christ; and there finds upon earth the "rest" which corresponds with God's rest. As he sings the words "I shall be no stranger there" he is made to realize the brotherly welcome with which he is received. And in joining the community he becomes united with the Son both in the literal and in the spiritual sense of the term.

In later Catholic Christian belief the union of the Christ with the congregation was less intimately conceived. The congregation received the Holy Spirit, but the Christ was thought of not as being "within" the members, but as standing "in the midst" of them. The primitive conception was too metaphysical to subsist when Christianity had become popularized. The metaphysical conception was certainly the earlier since it was directly derived from the *Wisdom of Solomon*. In Ode XIX the Son is the Word :—

A cup of milk was offered to me; and I drank it in the sweetness of the delight of the Lord. The Son is the cup and he who was milked is the Father; and the Holy Spirit milked him . . . and the Holy Spirit opened his bosom and mingled the milk from the two breasts of the Father, and gave the mixture to the world without its knowing it; and they who receive it are in the perfection of the right hand [of God].

The concluding sentence makes it plain that the milk here, as in some other Odes, is Gnosis; for the writer's doctrine is that redemption comes through, and only through, the knowledge of God. In Ode XXX we read that the living water, which is Gnosis, came "invisibly, and until it was given in the midst they did not know it." The means of transmission was the Word. "It flows forth from the lips of the Lord" and "the mouth of the Lord is the true Word and the door of his light." Accordingly the Word is likened to a cup. In some of the Odes the Holy Spirit is masculine; in others it is feminine. A difference of authorship might be

inferred. But it is evidence of the antiquity of these Odes that the Holy Spirit is extremely ill-defined. The Father and the Word are both Spirit and both holy; and usually it is impossible to detach the Holy Spirit from them as a separate entity. For example, where it is written in VI, 7 that "Our spirits praise his holy Spirit," we must understand that it is the spiritual God himself who is praised. Again, in XI, in the verse "tell forth praises to his Spirit and love his holiness," just as loving the holiness of God is a paraphrastic expression for loving the holy God, so also praising his Spirit is the same thing as praising himself. Hence it will not do to literalize a poetical expression, involving certainly to modern taste a strange metaphor,¹ and think of the Father and the Holy Spirit as two persons standing apart from one another. The meaning is that the Father, who cannot have direct contact with men, gave them the milk of Gnosis through the mediation of his Spirit, and that it was carried into their souls in the cup which is the Word—the Word itself, however, being an extension of the same Spirit. Where the Holy Spirit is represented as feminine the Odist is writing under the influence of the Wisdom literature, in which Sophia, the divine Wisdom, is a Spirit effluent from God. In the continuation of the Ode there is mention of "a son," who is not necessarily *the* Son :—

The womb of the Virgin was enfeebled [?] and she conceived and bore and became a mother with many mercies. She became pregnant and brought forth a son without incurring pain. And because it happened not without purpose and she had not sought a midwife—because he [God] delivered her—she brought forth of her own will, as it were a man. And she brought him forth ostensibly, and acquired him in great power, and loved him in salvation, and guarded him in kindness, and made him manifest in greatness.

The apparent lack of continuity between these verses and those which immediately precede them suggests that they were added by another hand. If the writer intended by the Virgin the Virgin Mary, then without doubt they have been

¹ The metaphor may have been suggested by Job xxi, 24 : "His breasts are full of milk."

interpolated. For in that case the two sections do not fit at all. The Virgin, in these Odes—as appears from Ode XXXIII—is Wisdom; and the Holy Spirit mentioned just before, being feminine, is also Wisdom; so that, if the Virgin of the second section were Mary, the sole thread of connection between the two sections would be snapped, and we should have to decide that the second section was not written by the Odist. The text is evidently corrupt and the correct translation of some words is uncertain. In particular the word “enfeebled” in the opening phrase is very dubious. Emendations have been proposed by commentators. Harris’s emendation “the womb of the Virgin took it”—sc. the milk—has the merit of establishing continuity between the two sections, but makes it impossible that the son born to the Virgin can be the Christ. For before the Virgin received the milk, the Son, as we are told, had been the cup which contained it. How could the Son have transmitted the milk to the Virgin before he was born? Moreover the milk is Gnosis, which was brought to mankind by the Son; it was not the seed from which the Son had his birth.¹

Since these Odes were more valued by Gnostics than by Catholics it is possible that the section was added by a Gnostic; in which case the Virgin would be Sophia, and thus a link would be created with the preceding section, since we know that Gnostics—e.g., Bardesanes—who were apparently acquainted with the Odes, identified the Holy Spirit with Sophia as the mother of the Saviour.² Inconsistency in the representation would be explicable if the second section had a different author from the first. But one of two conclusions must be true: either the second section is a later insertion, or the son born to the Virgin was not the Christ.

The self-contradiction pointed out above is not the only reason for concluding that the Odist cannot have written the section if the birth of the Christ is the subject of it. Through-

¹ It seems fairly certain that drinking a cup of milk was an item in one of the rites of this community. In a Berlin papyrus is found the prescription: “Taking the milk with the honey, drink it up before the rising of the sun and something divine shall enter into thy heart.”

² Hippolytus, *Ref. Omn. Haer.*, vi, 35.

out these Odes the Word is a direct emanation from God. The idea that Wisdom was his mother would be an inconsistent idea. Inconsistent also with the writer's conception of the Word are the bringing forth "ostensibly—with demonstration" or "openly," as some have translated it—the "guarding" and "the manifesting." The Word is invisible Spirit, he is "Thought" and "Will." His descent and his way are "incomprehensible." His "swiftness" is inexpressible. He becomes known intuitively, not by physical vision. In Ode XLI it is said that "he was known before the foundation of the world"—evidently, therefore, not known to men at that time, whereas the bringing forth openly and the making him "manifest" would surely imply that. It is to be remembered that if Wisdom, the Holy Spirit, was his mother, this birth was not his introduction into the world but his original birth. Moreover in the being known—i.e., really, having his existence—before the foundation of the world, birth and infancy and the need for being "guarded" seem to be excluded by implication. A material being is indicated by the terms of the concluding sentence of the quotation; but to explain this birth—assuming the section to be original—from the Gospel account of the birth of Jesus, whose name never occurs and of whose recorded deeds and words the Odist betrays not the very slightest knowledge, would be quite arbitrary and contrary to the whole spirit of the Odes, in which the Christ is never localized, except in the souls of the elect.

If the verses are genuine—and they may be—it is possible that they were misunderstood by Gnostics of the second century as a description of the birth of the Logos from Sophia. But, since that cannot be, the explanation must be sought in another direction; and we may obtain some light from Philo, whose doctrine was probably not altogether peculiar to himself. There is evidence, to be referred to later, that speculations similar to his were current among other Hellenistic Jews of his time; and in several respects there is an affinity between his thought and that of the Odist. Now Philo terms Sophia an immaculate perfect virgin [cp. Ode XXXIII] and says that she, having received the seed of God in some

incomprehensible metaphysical sense, conceived and bore the only and beloved visible son, this cosmos.¹ With even better reason could the Odist have regarded spiritual man as the beloved son of the perfect Virgin. Some Gnostics did in fact hold that Gnosis was the seed of God from which was begotten the pneumatic man.² The metaphor of the Odist can be so interpreted. The womb of the Virgin, having taken the milk of God—Gnosis—conceived and produced the pneumatic people. The idea was actually suggested by *Wis. of Sol.* (ix, 1 and 2), where it is written that God created all things by his Word and formed man by his Wisdom. From this statement when Wisdom was pictured as a virgin, the transition to the description in the Ode was easy. We can also trace to *Wisdom* some of the expressions used—e.g., “Wisdom is a spirit which loveth man”; “she is unto men a treasure that faileth not”; “she makes them friends of God”; “Because of her I shall have glory among multitudes”; “She shall *guard* me in her glory”; “Through Wisdom were men *saved*.” The explanation here given is proved almost conclusively to be correct by evidence found in Ode XXXVI:—

I rested on the Spirit of the Lord; and she raised me on high, and made me stand on my feet in the height of the Lord, before his perfection and glory. . . . She brought me forth before the face of the Lord; and although a son of man I was named the illuminated one, the son of God. . . . For according to the goodness of the Most High she made me; and according to his own newness he renewed me; and he anointed me from his own perfection.

We see in the above-quoted extract the connecting link between *Wis.* ix, 2, and Ode XIX; for here we have given as equivalent the two statements that Wisdom (the Spirit of the Lord) “made me” and that she “brought me forth.” Traces of this original view are found in the later Gnosticism. In the *Acts of Thomas*, in an invocation at the end of chapter xxxix, Sophia is addressed as “the Mother of all creatures.”

¹ According to Philo, God had two sons, an elder, the invisible Logos, and a younger, the visible cosmos. In the Hermetic writings the cosmos is the visible image of the invisible Logos.

² Cp. 1 Jn. iii, 9.

There were some Gnostics who named *Sophia Barbelo*. According to these, *Barbelo* was the mother of living beings.¹ The origin of the belief is very ancient.² In a cuneiform inscription *Ishtar*, with whom *Sophia* was identified, is addressed as "the compassionate mother of mankind." The prevalent Gnostic opinion was that men derived their soul from *Sophia*; but while some traced the *pneuma* also to her, others believed that people become pneumatic through the *Logos*. The doctrine of the Odes appears to vacillate between the two opinions. It seems necessary to suppose that during the period of their composition the substitution of Word for Wisdom was gradually taking place. The statement in Ode XXXVI that "she brought me forth before the face of the Lord," may be compared with the statement in Ode XIX that "she needed no midwife because God delivered her."

I can hardly imagine that many readers will have supposed that the verses quoted from Ode XXXVI are intended to record an utterance of the Christ. It seems fairly obvious that the writer was speaking for himself and for the members of his congregation. The birth referred to in the one Ode must surely be that referred to in the other; some critics, therefore, who take the second part of Ode XIX to be a description of the virgin birth of Christ maintain that the Christ is the speaker in Ode XXXVI, in spite of the lack of appropriateness in most of the expressions. The only apparent reason for this opinion, apart from the pre-supposition with regard to Ode XIX, lies in the verse "I was named the illuminated one, the son of God." But this statement need not cause any difficulty at all. In Ode XLI the saints are termed "the Lord's children"; and in Ode III we read: "Because I love him who is the Son I shall become a son." Through the ceremony of initiation each member of the community became a "son of God," like the righteous man of *Wis. ii, 16*. Such apparently was also the case in the Pauline communities; for in *Rom. viii, 16, 17*, those to whom the Epistle is addressed are named "children of God and

¹ Epiphan., *Haer.* xxvi, 10.

² Cp. Reitzenstein, *Poim.*, pp. 227 ff.

joint-heirs with Christ"; and in Gal. iv, 7, we read: "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son." In the First Epistle of John again Christians are declared to be "children of God" and "begotten of God." Since the term "begotten" implies a mother, and the writer also mentions the seed of God, we may infer his concurrence with the belief of the Odist that the spiritual mother of pneumatic people is the Holy Spirit. That certainly is Johannine doctrine, as we may learn from Jn. iii, 6 and 8. Where the singer of the Ode boasted that, although a son of man, he was named the illuminated one, he was probably thinking of the rite, baptismal or other, in which he was "named"—not having previously been—the son of God. Among the Gnostic sects illumination was a prominent feature in the "Mystery." This holds good both for Christian and non-Christian Gnostics and is probably the origin of the statement in the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* that a bright light shone upon the Jordan when Jesus was baptized. In fact baptism was frequently termed *photismos* (illumination)¹; the person baptized could therefore be called "the illuminated one." In Ode XXV, which has been thought to be a baptismal ode, there is evidence that "illumination" was a feature in the ritual of the community O. The singer appears to be referring to his initiatory experience. "Thou didst set a lamp at my right hand and at my left . . . thou didst remove from me my rayment of skin . . . and I became admirable by the name of the Lord." The removal of the rayment of skin may have been visibly accomplished through some symbolic act. The phrase "as it were a man" in Ode XIX, which is probably the correct translation, can be understood from Daniel vii, 13, "I saw one like the son of man"—i.e., "like a man," or "as it were a man"—the apparition being so described because the imaginary being was not a single man but the figure of a nation, Israel.

¹ W. Bousset, *Kyr. Christ.*, p. 199. We may also compare 2 Cor. iv, 6: "Seeing it is God who shined in our hearts to the illumination [*photismos*] of the Gnosis."

5. THE CHRIST AS SUPPOSED SPEAKER : RESURRECTION

We find in the Odes references to persecution. It has been pointed out previously that people who were making war against idolatry were likely to incur the resentment of those who had a vested interest in the worship of Pagan deities, and they would also become obnoxious to popular superstition. It is fairly certain, too, that so anti-Judaic a community would be liable to persecution at the hands of bigoted orthodox Jews. No doubt the accounts of riots instigated by Jews against Paul have historical foundation, and we read of Jewish rioting at Rome under Claudius. Such outbreaks would be sporadic and possibly not organized by the Jewish leaders, particularly not by the Pharisees. It is probable that a few of the phrases have reference to spiritual adversaries, as in Ode V : " My persecutors will come and not see me." But they cannot all be explained in that way. In some cases the persecution seems to be existent or recent; in others to have ceased. Rioting against the community would no doubt be repressed by the authorities and be intermittent. Such repression may be referred to in Ode XXV :—

Thou hast restrained those that rise up against me. . . .
But I was despised and rejected in the eyes of many.

We may note again how persistently the writer borrows his phraseology from the Old Testament; the second clause is obviously a reminiscence of Is. liii : " He is despised and rejected of men." The afflicted servant of God in this chapter of Isaiah is Israel; to apply the imagery of Isaiah to his own congregation was quite in accordance with the usual procedure of the Odist. Christian writers of the second century applied the description to the rejection of Jesus by the Jews; but there is no evidence in the Odes that the writer had ever heard of Jesus, and it is not sound critical method to interpret this very early work in the light of later Christian dogma. A consequence of bias of that kind is that certain Odes in which the sufferings of the community are referred to in language derived from the *Wisdom*

incomprehensible metaphysical sense, conceived and born^{stood} only and beloved visible son, this cosmos.¹ With even better reason could the Odist have regarded spiritual man as the beloved son of the perfect Virgin. Some Gnostics did in fact hold that Gnosis was the seed of God from which was begotten the pneumatic man.² The metaphor of the Odist can be so interpreted. The womb of the Virgin, having taken the milk of God—Gnosis—conceived and produced the pneumatic people. The idea was actually suggested by *Wis. of Sol.* (ix, 1 and 2), where it is written that God created all things by his Word and formed man by his Wisdom. From this statement when Wisdom was pictured as a virgin, the transition to the description in the Ode was easy. We can also trace to *Wisdom* some of the expressions used—e.g., “Wisdom is a spirit which loveth man”; “she is unto men a treasure that faileth not”; “she makes them friends of God”; “Because of her I shall have glory among multitudes”; “She shall *guard* me in her glory”; “Through Wisdom were men *saved*.” The explanation here given is proved almost conclusively to be correct by evidence found in Ode XXXVI:—

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We see in the above-quoted extract the connecting link between *Wis.* ix, 2, and Ode XIX; for here we have given as equivalent the two statements that Wisdom (the Spirit of the Lord) “made me” and that she “brought me forth.” Traces of this original view are found in the later Gnosticism. In the *Acts of Thomas*, in an invocation at the end of chapter xxxix, Sophia is addressed as “the Mother of all creatures.”

¹ According to Philo, God had two sons, an elder, the invisible Logos, and a younger, the visible cosmos. In the Hermetic writings the cosmos is the visible image of the invisible Logos.

² Cp. 1 Jn. iii, 9.

12. For their thought is corrupt and their understanding perverted.

14. 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.

15. For I was older than their recollection.

16. And vainly did they cast lots against me.

17. But I was carrying water in my right hand; and their bitterness I endured by my sweetness.

18. And those who came after me sought without cause to destroy the memorial of him who was before them. For nothing is prior to the thought of the Most High.

Thus reasoned they and they were led astray, for their wickedness blinded them. And they knew not the mysteries of God. *Wis.* ii, 21.

His life is not like other men's. And he vaunteth that God is his father. *Wis.* ii, 16.

They devised to take away my life; but I trusted in thee, O Lord. *Ps.* xxxi, 13.

They cast lots upon my vesture. *Ps.* xxii, 18.

They gave me also gall for my meat. *Ps.* lxix, 21.

I shall leave behind an eternal memory to them that come after me. *Wis.* viii, 13.

It can be inferred from the parallel passages that the theme of the Ode is the sufferings of the righteous. To assume that, because Christian writers of the second century applied some of these verses and similar ones to Jesus, the Odist must have been applying them to his Christ is quite illogical. The Ode must be judged on its own character without prepossession. The writer had never breathed the atmosphere of the New Testament. His affinities are with certain books of the Old. He borrows their phraseology, but never treats their language as prophetic. Some of the expressions used in the Ode are inapplicable to the crucifixion of the Christ. Verse 14, "They sought for my death and did not find it," could only by a very forced interpretation be taken as referring to the Resurrection. The plain meaning of the words is that the speaker did not die at all. The "salvation" mentioned in verse 9 is evidently the writer's own salvation; and the term "oppression" could not be appropriately used of the Crucifixion. The lack of zeal (verse 9) can be understood from the Biblical phrase, "the

zeal of thy house has eaten me up." The Gnostic community had no zeal either for the Temple or for the Law; and to Jews who believed that salvation could come only through the Law, men who had rejected the Law would necessarily seem to be among "the lost." The Odist, holding the Gnostic opinion that the body is merely the perishable garment of the soul and that the real Ego was the immortal spirit which he had received from "the Life," would naturally declare that his birth was not like the birth of his persecutors and could boast that God was his father. A writer for whom the "Thought" of God was a kind of spiritual substance—equivalent in fact to the *Nous* of the Hermetic writings—would imagine his pre-existence in the Thought of God as a real existence. That is the point of his statements that he was "older than their recollection," "for nothing is prior to the thought of the Most High." We may compare a "word of the Lord" concerning the elect in Ode VIII: "Before they came into being I took knowledge of them." Belief in the pre-existence of the soul is found in later Gnostic writings—e.g., in the *Hymn of the Soul*. The idea that the saints are of a different race from ordinary men was also prevalent among Gnostics. Basilides named the elect of the world "foreign" as belonging by nature to the world above.¹ Valentinus wrote of "the superior race" of the Gnostics, which, he said, had descended from above into this world for the annihilation of death.² According to the Marcosians the ascending soul, whose race has been derived from the pre-existent God, returns to its own.³ In the Hermetic literature again we read: "Gnostics appear to the multitude to be mad and are ridiculed, hated, despised, and even killed."⁴

The water carried in the right hand may symbolize Gnosis, the water of life. Whoever carried that water must needs be sweet. To what degree the members of the community were able to attain to the ethical level of their leader cannot of course be told. He at any rate believed it to be wrong to return evil for evil and hatred for hatred. It would be very

¹ Clem. Alex., *Strom* IV, xxvi, 165.

³ Iren., I, xxi, 5.

² *Ib.*, IV, xiii, 89.

⁴ *Corp. Herm.*, IX, 4.

unreasonable to suppose that no one but a divine Christ could have such thoughts. Pagans could cherish them, as we know. We find again in Ode XLI the idea that the elect are of different birth—sc. spiritual birth—from the carnal man :—

1. All the Lord's children will praise him . . . and his children will be known to him. 3. We live in the Lord by his grace; and life we receive in his Christ. . . . 8. All those will be astonished that see me, for from another race am I. 9. For the Father of truth remembered me; he who possessed me from the beginning. 10. For his bounty begat me and the thought of his heart. 11. And his Word is with us all our way.

There is really no justification for the supposition that the Christ suddenly begins to speak with verse 8 and as suddenly ceases to do so at verse 11, notwithstanding the change in the number of the personal pronoun. The change is quite easy to understand when we picture to ourselves the whole congregation singing the hymn together. Each member could speak for himself separately in the singular or for the united body in the plural. There is, however, another possible explanation of the change of number. Philo says that at the close of the common meal of the Therapeuts a hymn was sung, and that the head of the community and the members sang alternately. We may suppose that in this and others of the Odes the same thing happened, in this case the members singing verses 1 to 7 and verses 11 ff., and the leader verses 8 to 10 by himself.¹ Verse 8 is sufficiently explained by verse 1. People who believed themselves to be peculiarly the children of the Lord must of course have claimed to be of a different race from those who were not considered by them to be children of the Lord. Verse 9 applies very well to the singer or the writer of the Ode, but not well to the Christ. And it is only necessary to read consecutively verses 10 and 11 to see how extremely unlikely it is that the Word, who is the subject of 11, should have been the speaker of 10. The idea that the children of the

¹ Since a similar change of number is found in some of the canonical Psalms no certain inference can be deduced from it. Cp. Ps. xliv, lxvi, lxxiv, cviii.

Lord must in some manner differ in appearance from other men was in the days of the Odist not an unnatural one, or even one for the existence of which there is no independent evidence. It is found again in Ode XVII :—

I was crowned by my God; my crown is living. . . . I have been delivered from vanity. . . . My chains have been cut off by his hands; I received the face and fashion of a new person 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.

There is contemporary evidence that Gnostics were thought by some people to be mad. The Word is *speech*; it cannot therefore be *speaker*. It is the speech of God; personified, it is true. It can, however, be received and uttered by those who are qualified to receive it. Hence it is possible to find in the Odes an “utterance of the Word,” but in such a case it is not the Word which “utters”; it is “uttered,” as the Word of God. The conception of utterance divinely inspired in a far more literal way than that in which a modern would think of it was Greek and pre-Christian. The technical term for the state of mind which produced it was *enthusiasm*. We find the conception fully developed in Philo—e.g., “The instrument of God is a giver of sound which is struck invisibly by him”; and again: “For in reality the prophet even when he seems to be speaking is silent as regards utterance of truth; it is one not himself who uses his organs of speech, his mouth and tongue, to reveal what he wishes.” We may see from Ode VI that this was precisely the view of the Odist :—

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.

Hence an ostensible utterance of the Word in any Ode is not the speech of an individual Christ, but the inspired utterance of the writer. We learn this also from some verses of Ode X previously quoted, which I quote again because they contribute materially to the comprehension of the very important Ode XLII :—

The Lord hath directed my mouth by his Word, and gave me that I might speak the fruit of his peace, to convert the souls of those who are willing to come to him. . . . And the Gentiles were gathered together . . . and they walked in my life and were saved and became my people for ever and ever.

In these verses the theme of Ode XLII is foreshadowed. In this case again I place in a parallel column the sources of the writer's phraseology.

1. I stretched out my hands and approached my Lord; for the outstretching of my hands is his sign.

2. My outstretching is the outspread wood which was set up on the way of the righteous one.

3. And I became of no account to those who did not take hold of me; and I shall be with those who love me.

4. All my persecutors are dead, but they have sought me who set their hope upon me because I live.

5. And I stood up and am with them; and will speak by their mouths.

6. For they have despised those who persecuted them.

7. And I cast upon them the yolk of my love; like the arm of the bridegroom over the bride so was my yolk upon those that know me.

13. And I was not rejected though I was reckoned to be so. I did not perish though they thought it of me.

Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Ps. lxxxviii, 9.

If thou prepare thine heart and stretch out thine hands towards him. Job xi, 13.

If the righteous man is the Son of God, he will uphold him. . . . Let us condemn him to a shameful death. Wis. ii, 18, 20.

The righteous man shall stand in great boldness before the face of them that make his labours of no account. We fools accounted his life madness. Wis. v, 1, 4.

So we [the wicked], as soon as we were born, ceased to be. Because the hope of the ungodly man is as chaff carried by the wind. But the righteous live for ever. Wis. v, 13-15.

Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of them that afflicted him. Wis. v, 1.

Thou didst teach thy people that the righteous must be a lover of men. Wis. xii, 19.

The ungodly shall see a wise man's end, and shall not understand what the Lord purposed concerning him. Wis. iv, 17.

In the eyes of the foolish they [the righteous] seemed to have died,

14. Sheol saw me and became miserable; and Death gave me back and many with me.

15. I was gall and bitterness to him.

17. And I made a congregation of living men among his dead men, because my word shall not be void.

19. And those who had died ran towards me, and they cried and said, Son of God, have pity on us.

20. And bring us out from the bonds of darkness and open to us the door by which we shall come out to thee; for we see that our death has not touched thee.

21. Let us be redeemed with thee; for thou art our redeemer.

22. And I heard their voice; and my name I sealed upon their heads; for they are free men and they are mine.

but their souls are in the hands of God. Even if in the sight of men they be punished their hope is full of immortality. *Wis.* iii, 1-4.

Nor hath Hades royal dominion upon earth. *Wis.* i, 14.

Thou [God] leadest down to the gates of Hades and leadest up again. *Wis.* xvi, 13.

Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, nor wilt thou suffer one who trusts in thee to see corruption. *Ps.* xvi, 10.

Hades from beneath was embittered on meeting thee [Israel]. *Is.* xiv, 9. LXX.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. *Ezek.* xxxvii, 10.

The ungodly shall become a dishonoured carcase. And when they see [the righteous man] they shall be amazed at God's salvation, and for distress of spirit they shall groan.

And shall say within themselves repenting: How was he numbered among sons of God? And how is his lot among saints? Verily we went astray from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness shined not for us. *Wis.* iv, 18-v, 6.

This Ode is considered by all the commentators to be a description of the descent of the Christ into Hell. There are, however, some weighty reasons for doubting whether that opinion is correct. One ground for hesitation is that there is no support for it in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. The conception of Wisdom in that book is incompatible with the supposition that she descended into Hades to awaken any of the dead; and so is the general doctrine of the writer.

But that doctrine, with the substitution of the Word for Wisdom, was substantially the doctrine of the Odist, and the descent of the Word into Hades is equally difficult to reconcile with it. The doctrine of *Wisdom*, clear and explicit, is that the righteous live for ever; those who trust in the Lord are assured of eternal life, and would never have found themselves in Hades at all. The ungodly, who do not trust in the Lord, "shall become a dishonoured carcase." There is no possible return from Hades for them. "Death" and "life," both in this doctrine and in that of the Odist, are spiritual death and life. In *Wis.* v, 13, quoted above, the wicked are made to say: "So we, as soon as we were born, ceased to be." They are spiritually "dead" from the first moment of their lives. Presumably there is hope for them so long as they are physically alive; but when their body has become "a dishonoured carcase," they are irrevocably dead. As it is written in iii, 10 and 11:—

The ungodly shall be requited even as they reasoned, and void is their hope and their toils unprofitable.

The righteous on the other hand are spiritually alive and remain alive, whatever may be the fate of the body. In the eyes of the foolish "they seem to have died" (*Wis.* iii, 2). Death of the body, therefore, is not really death as the writer understands the word; so that it is unnecessary for a divine being to go down into Sheol for the salvation of the righteous. Again we read: "Hades hath not royal dominion upon earth, for righteousness is immortal," *Wis.* i, 14. Consequently the Christian doctrine that death had to be "conquered" by Christ has no application. The doctrine of the descent of Wisdom, or of the Word, into Hades implies the temporary death of all men with a future resurrection of the righteous; and that belief is as foreign to the Odes as it is to the *Wisdom of Solomon*. Nor does it fit in at all well with the Odist's conception of the Word. Ode XV seems to be conclusive on this point:—

I have put on incorruption through his name; I have put off corruption by his grace; Death has been destroyed before my face; Sheol has been abolished by his Word.

There can be no doubt in this case who is the speaker, and the meaning is plain. He who has received "grace" is deathless. For him Sheol has been abolished, since he has received from the "Life" an immortal spirit which will never go down into Sheol. The body perishes without hope of resurrection. Those who have not received the divine spirit must perish eternally; "corruption" is their inevitable end; if they have not received "grace" before their death they cannot be imagined to receive it afterwards; Sheol has not been abolished for them. The writer's doctrine in this respect is characteristically Gnostic.

It is evident that in verses 1 and 2 of Ode XLII the speaker is the writer himself, or perhaps rather the singer of the verses. Now verses 2 and 3 are coupled by the conjunction "And." It is very unlikely that the verbs in these two verses should have a different grammatical subject. In verse 13 expressions are repeated which have been found in another context where the writer was speaking of himself. The tenor of the whole is explicable from the parallel passages of *Wisdom* of which the subject is the experience of the righteous man.

How then, it may be asked, could the writer say that "Sheol saw me"? That question must now be considered. The generally accepted explanation of the Ode assumes that by "life" the writer meant mortal life, by "death" the death of the body, and by Sheol a real place. But, considering his habitual employment of figurative expressions, it cannot be right to take any description of his literally as a matter of course; particularly when a description taken literally cannot be brought into harmony with his fundamental doctrine. Verse 1 of the Ode is a paraphrase of Ps. lxxxviii, 9. In the same Psalm we find the following: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit [= Sheol], in darkness, in the deeps." If the Psalmist could write of himself as metaphorically dead, the Odist could write of the ungodly as metaphorically dead. And dead in his sense of the word they would be.

Let us, then, make the hypothesis that the language of this description is symbolic, and that "I" in this Ode

means the writer or the congregation he represents, and see whether so interpreted the description is consistent with the writer's doctrine, and in its details probable and intelligible. "They have sought me," he writes, "who set their hope upon me because I live." That would be quite a likely thing for him to say regarding proselytes who have become convinced that to him and his congregation had been revealed the means of securing eternal life. No doubt he would have in mind the thought that the source of his life was the indwelling Word, and that those who sought him sought the Word through him. He "lives" because he has received from "the Life" the "Spirit of the Lord" which is within him (Ode XXVIII). By implication those who have not received the Spirit of the Lord do not live; they are "dead men." In the vision of Ezekiel, which the writer certainly had in mind, the dry bones symbolize the erring and scattered "house of Israel," spiritually dead. The breath of God makes of the people who were metaphorically dead and in their graves (verse 12)—in other words, in Sheol—an army of the living. So could the congregation of the elect by receiving Pagan proselytes and enabling them to be quickened by the Spirit of the Lord (the breath of God) make of Death's dead men a congregation of living men. These proselytes would be the people who "took hold of me." The explanation of the statement "I did not perish though they thought it of me" is given in the parallel verse of *Wisdom*, "In the eyes of the foolish they [the righteous] seem to have died." The writer is not speaking of himself individually, but as a type of the righteous in general. The member of the congregation who sang the words "Sheol saw me . . . and Death gave me back" would apply them to his own conversion in accordance with the Gnostic conception of ignorance of God as spiritual death. In Ode XXI we read :—

My arms I lifted up on high, even to the grace of the Lord ;
because he had cast off my bonds from me . . . and I put
off darkness and clothed myself with light.

Are we to take this as meaning that an individual Christ

had cast off from the writer material bonds and brought him out of physical darkness? Bringing out of darkness into light is a variant metaphor for bringing out of Sheol. If one is figure of speech, so is the other. A similar metaphorical use of "bonds" is found in the *Prayer of Manasses*: "I am bound down with many iron bands, that I cannot lift up my head by reason of my sins."

The Ode under consideration could be regarded as expanding the thought of Ode X. There the writer declares that he has been commissioned to convert the souls who were willing to come to the Word; which of course means to become members of his congregation; and he rejoices—probably in large measure in anticipation—over those who walked in his life and were saved. And, since being saved is equivalent to becoming participants in the eternal life which the community has secured through the Word, it is in a very important sense a resurrection from the dead. This conception of "resurrection" was characteristic of Gnostics, disbelieving as they did in a resurrection of the body. According to Tertullian the disciples of Basilides held that death is not separation of body and soul, but ignorance of God, and that believers have already risen from the dead. This must also have been the doctrine of the Odist, because in Ode XLI he speaks of "the Saviour who makes alive." There is no difference between "making alive" and raising from the dead. In Ode XXXIV again we read: "Grace has been revealed for your salvation. Believe and live and be saved"—which implies that those who do not believe do not live; they are "dead men." Irenæus (II, xxxi, 2) says that Gnostics understood by resurrection from the dead knowledge of that which is called by them the truth. And Philo in several passages identifies "Hades" with the life of the godless here upon earth. There is reason to think that in one at least of the passages (*De Somn.* I, 151) he may be reproducing an opinion already current in his time. Anyone who held that opinion could, of course, say that conversion of the godless was bringing them out of Hades. Hence we are not obliged to suppose that the speaker is the Christ or that a literal descent into

Hell is in view. The Saviour is, no doubt, the Word; but if we are to interpret the passage in conformity with the spirit and doctrine of the Odes we must conclude that the Word operates through the community, the visible Christ, and that the "resurrection" is a spiritual and metaphorical one.

Tertullian¹ complains that heretics deceive people by using expressions which, when literally understood, sound orthodox, while attaching to them in their own minds a peculiar significance. "They confess," he says, "that resurrection must be in the flesh; but tacitly their meaning is that everyone while in the flesh must have learnt the heretical secret doctrines, for that is what they mean by resurrection." Similarly the Odist while appearing to say one thing meant something different. Not, however, with any intention to deceive, but because metaphorical expression was natural to him. His own readers would not be deceived, but modern commentators have been.

Verses 18 to 22 appear to have been written with the corresponding verses of *Wisdom* in view; but the appeal of the dead to the Son of God has been grafted upon those verses, and it is pretty clearly implied that all the dead are brought by the Son of God out of Sheol. It is impossible that such an idea can have been in the mind of the original writer. It is inconsistent with the statement in verse 17 that "I made a congregation of living men *among* his dead men." Obviously all carnal men would not be supposed capable of being made spiritual, nor could it be supposed that every wicked man who had gone down to Sheol for his sins would be brought out thence. The writer of these verses may perhaps have been thinking of some future day when everyone would be spiritual or when the wicked would have been sufficiently punished; but neither possibility was in the mind of the writer of verse 17. Moreover, is it likely, or

¹ *De Carn. Res.*, 19. Hoc denique ingenio etiam in conloquiis saepe nostros decipere consuerunt, quasi et ipsi resurrectionem carnis admittant. "Vae," inquit, "qui non in hac carne resurrexerit: . . . Tacite autem secundum conscientiam suam hoc sentiunt: Vae, qui non, dum in hac carne est, cognoverit arcana haeretica; hoc est enim apud illos resurrectio."

even possible, that the writer, after recording his revival of the dead in verses 14 to 17 and sealing his record with the final-looking phrase "because my word shall not be void," would have thought it necessary to begin all over again and describe a second—this time an indiscriminate—redemption of dead men? And when we observe that the second description concludes with the only verse of the whole section which can be attributed more naturally to the Christ than to the writer, we are compelled to suspect that the verses were added by a Christian whose Son of God was more of a real person than the Word of the Odist, and who had in mind the later Catholic Christian dogma of the literal descent of Jesus into Hell.

There is no reason, apart from the knowledge that the dogma read into it did exist in the second century, for taking this Ode as literally meant. The chief motive for the formulation of the dogma was the thought that salvation should be offered to the righteous who had died before the coming of Christ. But there is no indication in the Odes that this thought had occurred to the writer; and there is no reference to the dogma in the earliest Christian literature. Justin (*Dial.*, 46) says that all who lived righteously and pleased God before the coming of Christ will be saved; also that death will be "destroyed" at his second coming. Among Gnostics there was a belief that the Logos had appeared to saintly men before he became generally known. The oldest trace of the dogma is found in a Syrian fragment of the *Apology* of Aristides (125 C.E.): "When our Lord rose from the dead and ground Death beneath his feet and conquered him, powerful though he was, and set man free." This statement, however, does not imply that Christ, when he rose, brought up souls out of Hell with him. The doctrine is not Gnostic. Bousset¹ traces the belief to the very widely spread myth of a combat between the prince of life and the princes and powers of the underworld. No doubt, as he observes, many such myths were absorbed and were popularly current in the communities before they made their appearance in the literature. The leaders, he supposes,

¹ *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 34.

would be likely to refine upon the popular mythology. Gnostics in particular interpreted it symbolically. The doctrine in question could more easily have originated in Judaic circles in which there was belief in a bodily resurrection. In fact, in the Apocalypse of John, a Jesus who is unrecognizable as the Jesus of the Gospels proclaims, "I was dead and am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

Proof that the symbolic interpretation of Ode XLII is correct is found in Ode XXIX, where the context admits of no doubt that the member of the congregation who sings the Ode is speaking of himself :—

The Lord brought me up out of the depths of the underworld [Sheol] and from the jaws of death he withdrew me. And I caused my adversaries to bend down, and he pronounced me righteous in his kindness, for I believed in the Lord's Christ.

Since he who believed in the Lord's Christ was certainly not the Christ, and the singer cannot have been literally brought up out of Sheol, the necessity for symbolic interpretation is demonstrated. We see also that "the Lord," in spite of the attribution of kindness, is God. The meaning of the delivery from the jaws of death must be the same as of the liberation from the "bonds of darkness" which are bonds of spiritual error. The "adversaries" in this Ode are spiritual adversaries of the soul. The statement that "the Lord brought me up out of the depths of the underworld" illuminates Ode XXII, in which the speaker has been thought to be the Christ :—

1. He who brought me down from on high also brought me up from the region below; 2. and he who gathers together the things that are betwixt is he also who cast me down. [Coptic : he who removed those who were in the midst has taught me concerning them.] 3. He who scattered my enemies and my adversaries; 4. he who gave me authority over bonds that I might loose them; 5. he that overthrew by my hands the dragon with seven heads; and thou hast set me over his roots that I might destroy his seed; 6. thou wast there and didst help me and in every place thy name was a rampart to me. 7. Thy right hand has destroyed his wicked poison; and thy hand has levelled the way for those

who believe in thee; 8. and thou didst choose them from the graves and didst cover them with bodies; 9. they were motionless and thou didst give them energy for life. 10. Thy way was without corruption, and thy face; 11. thou didst bring thy world to corruption, that everything might be dissolved and then renewed, 12. and that the foundation for everything might be thy rock; and on it thou didst build thy kingdom; and it became the dwelling-place of the saints.

Verses 1, 2, and 6 are sufficient to show who the speaker is supposed to be. The Christ might have said that God had "brought him down"—though "sent" would have been more appropriate—but he cannot be imagined to have said that God "cast him down." The verse is obscure and perhaps corrupt, but the casting down must have been into the region below whence the singer had been "brought up." The agent would be a spiritual adversary—perhaps the dragon mentioned later on. Nor, if we accept the Coptic reading—though that is not likely to be original—did the Christ need to be "taught" concerning "those who were in the midst"—i.e., planetary evil powers. And surely it must have been the writer, or the singer, who needed God's name as a "rampart." There is nothing in the Ode inconsistent with this supposition. We have seen in another Ode the writer's belief that as an immortal spirit he had been in existence before his physical birth. That was a Gnostic idea of which we have evidence in the *Hymn of the Soul* :—

When quite a little child I was dwelling in the house of my Father's kingdom. . . . From the East, our home, my parents sent me forth with journey provision. . . . They girt me with adamant that hath power to cut even iron.

The hymn is an allegorical account of the journey of the soul from Heaven to earth in search of a pearl (Gnosis). Eventually the soul, having found and secured the pearl, returns to Heaven. Belief in the pre-existence of the human soul was current in Philo's time; for he in several passages expresses the opinion that the soul had quitted Heaven and was a temporary sojourner here below in a foreign land.¹

¹ Esp. *De Somn.*, I, § 181.

The second half of verse 1 can be understood from Ode XXIX, previously quoted, in which it is the singer himself who says he had been "brought up." In neither of these Odes nor in XLII is it meant that a soul having descended literally into Sheol was afterwards rescued. It is through their holding that erroneous opinion that the literalizing commentators imagine the speaker in this Ode to be the Christ; but the Ode as a whole does not require that assumption.

Verse 4 of Ode XXII—"he who gave me authority over bonds that I might loose them"—must be understood as a metaphorical restatement of some verses in Ode X, previously quoted, which affirm the writer's divine commission to convert the Gentiles. And that work could be regarded as an overcoming of the dragon, a symbolic expression for "the Destroyer." The seven heads may symbolize the seven sins which in later Gnostic doctrine were connected with the seven planetary Archons. The dragon is probably the dragon of Revelation xii, 9; but of course the conception is much older than that book. The enemies and adversaries of verse 3 are no doubt, like the adversaries of Ode XXIX, spiritual adversaries of the soul. Since verses 8 and 9 are based upon the vision of Ezekiel there can be no reason for doubting that verse 17 of Ode XLII is based upon that vision, and it would be perversity not to recognize the fact that in both these passages, as in Ezekiel, the reviving of the dead signifies the bringing of men out of the darkness of error and sin into the light of truth. "Those who believe in thee" (verse 7) cannot be people who had been literally "chosen from the graves." The Ode is perfectly intelligible on the supposition that the writer himself is the speaker throughout. Verses 11 and 12 are clearly an address to God from the writer or the singer of the Ode.

The "adamant" of the *Hymn of the Soul* which had power to cut even iron illuminates the reference to "bonds" in Ode XXII, and also a phrase in Ode XVII, thereby furnishing a clue for the understanding of the whole. The bonds are bonds of religious error, "bonds of darkness," which could figuratively be imagined to be of iron. In fact in the verse previously quoted from the *Prayer of Manasses* the

bonds of sin are termed "iron bands." Earlier in the Ode the writer prepares for the understanding of his figurative language by saying that his own chains had been cut off by the hands of God. Having thus himself been freed from the chains of error, he was in a position to free others :—

8. I opened the doors that were closed, 9. and I broke in pieces the bars of iron; but my iron melted and dissolved before me. 10. Nothing appeared closed to me; because I was the door of everything. 11. And I went over the bondmen to loose them, that I might not leave any bound or any bonds. 12. And I imparted my Gnosis without grudging and my prayer was in my love; 13. and I sowed my fruit in hearts and transformed them into myself¹; and they received my blessing and lived; 14. and they were gathered to me and were saved; 15. because they were to me as my own members and I was their head. 16. Glory to thee our head the Lord Christ.

The theme is the same as in XXII and XLII—viz., the conversion of Pagans and their reception into the community. "They were gathered to me and were saved." The writer no doubt may have been thinking of himself as the representative of the congregation which was the visible body of the Christ. The congregation of saints was "the door of everything," because initiation into it and its mysteries was the condition of union with the Word and the reception of Gnosis, guaranteeing eternal life. We see again in verse 13 the writer's conception of religious error as death and entrance into the congregation as becoming alive. He was a Jew and the congregation must have consisted originally of Jews; but he had no racial prejudice, his love was for all who would accept it, and converted Pagans were to him as his "own members." It was inferred from the character of Ode IX that the writer was the head of his congregation. This inference clears up a possible ambiguity in verses 15 and 16. The community would have two heads: the visible, official head, and the invisible spiritual head.

The thought that the Word would be the spiritual head of

¹ Cp. the Marcosian formula previously quoted: "Receive first grace from me and through me, that thou mayest be what I am and I what thou art."

the community is not incompatible with the doctrine of the Odes, but the originality of the expression "Lord Christ" may properly be questioned because it occurs only here and in one other Ode. Rendel Harris, indeed, renders the first line of Ode XXIV: "The dove flew over the head of the Lord Messiah"; but Dr. Bernard, with better judgment, omits the word "Lord." The word is not to be found here in one of the MSS. (H), and it is more likely to have been inserted by a Christian copyist than to have been omitted. The German translators Ungnad and Staerk also did not consider the expression "Lord Christ" to be original in that Ode. The only other Ode in which the expression is found is XXXIX, which therefore calls for critical examination:—

Great rivers are the power of the Lord. . . . Those who cross them in faith are not moved. The Lord has bridged them by his Word; and he walked and crossed them on foot. And his footsteps stand on the waters and were not erased. They are as a beam that is firmly fixed. And the waves were lifted up on this side and on that, and the footsteps of our Lord Christ stand, and are not obliterated and are not defaced.

The phraseology is highly metaphorical, and the meaning not particularly clear. But for our present purpose the important point is that the footsteps of the Word are imagined to lie upon the surface of the water like a solid beam upon which the faithful can cross. Then superfluously follows an entirely incongruous idea, no doubt suggested by the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. Now the faithful might be supposed to cross the river by the bridge to which in a very bold metaphor the footsteps of the Word are likened, or alternatively he might be supposed to cross on the dry river-bed left by the lifting up of the waves. But the one method of crossing excludes the other. Moreover the repetition observable in the sentence "And are not obliterated and are not defaced" is clumsy and inappropriate. In the first case it is important that the footsteps on the surface of the water should remain, since they act as a beam for the crossing. But if the water is heaped up, leaving the

bottom dry, the footsteps become unimportant. There is, to say the least, very strong ground for the suspicion that the second similitude was added by a Christian copyist. Then again the passage concludes with the words "a way has been appointed . . . for those who agree to the course of his faith." A believer could have faith *in* the Word; but the expression "faith of the Word" (his faith) cannot have been written by the Odist. The phrase "those who agree to the course of his faith" is not at all in his style. Since therefore the title "the Lord Christ" was in all probability inserted in two places in the Odes, the originality of the third may well be doubted. The line "Glory to thee our head the Lord Christ," with which Ode XVII terminates, may be inferred to be a later addition to the Ode.

Another Ode in which the speaker has been thought to be the Christ is XXXI. It has been shown previously that this Ode has probably suffered interpolation. The exceptional individualization of the Word in the interpolated verses has contributed to the belief that he is the speaker of those which follow. But the chief reason for the belief is the affinity between the phraseology of the Ode and certain phrases in the Gospel account of the Passion. These phrases, however, as critics of the New Testament have recognized, were taken from the twenty-second Psalm and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It is certain that the source of the Odist's phraseology was the same. The two chapters referred to depict poetically and symbolically the sufferings of Israel. Why, then, should not the Odist have employed their phraseology to express the sufferings of his own congregation? We have seen that in some of the Odes the writer complains of persecution, probably chiefly by orthodox Jews. To anyone who has appreciated the writer's conception of the Word it must appear impossible that he could have represented him as speaking in the terms here found :—

Error went astray and perished at his hand, and folly found no path to walk in and was submerged by the truth of the Lord. And they denounced me as a criminal when I showed myself, me who had never been a criminal; and they divided my spoil, though nothing was due to them. But I

endured and held my peace and was silent, 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].

In the Gospels Jesus is not denounced as "a criminal": nor is it the denouncers who divide his garments. No one has any right to say that in this Ode "spoil" means "garments." It is most improbable. The Odist is no doubt depending directly upon the Psalm, and it is a reasonable inference that he deliberately substituted "spoil" for "garments" because the latter word was not applicable to his case. He had never seen a Gospel; and since, in the opinion of the best critics, the dividing of the garments of Jesus was an invention prompted by the supposed prophecy and never really happened, the Odist can have known nothing about it. The concluding verse is intelligible if the persecutors were Jews and the writer, as a Jew himself, desired their conversion; but his universalistic anti-Judaism would certainly have prevented him from allowing the Christ to speak of the Jews as "my people." His Christ had no nationality.¹

In Ode VIII we have an "utterance of the Word" in the sense previously explained. The prophets who introduced their proclamations with the phrase "Thus saith the Lord" could equally well have said "Hear the word of the Lord"; and that is what the Odist does. If the Word may be imagined to be the speaker, he is speaking by the mouth of the writer, and the utterance is in reality "the word of God."

8. Hear the word of truth and receive the knowledge of the Most High. 9. Your flesh does not know what I am saying to you; nor your rayment what I am showing you. . . . 14. I do not turn my face away from those who are mine, for I know them. Before they came into being I took knowledge of them, and on their faces I set my seal. 16. I fashioned their members; my own breasts I prepared for them, that they might drink my holy milk and live

¹ Since it was shown previously (p. 66) that the two immediately following verses have been interpolated, the possibility that this line is part of the interpolation cannot be excluded.

thereby. 17. My workmanship are they and the strength of my thoughts. . . . 19. I willed and fashioned mind and heart; and they are mine. 20. And by my own right hand I set my elect ones; and my righteousness goes before them. . . . 24. Abide ye beloved ones in the Beloved, those who are kept in him that liveth, and they that are saved in him who saves.

The Odist could not with his conception of the Most High allow him to speak in person, but it should be obvious that the utterance in this Ode is the utterance of God. We have seen in an Ode previously quoted that the "breasts" and the "milk" are the breasts and the milk of God. With verse 14 we may compare "his [God's] children will be known to him" from Ode XLI; and with "my elect" in verse 19, "grace is of the elect" (Ode XXIII) compared with "Grace and mercy are with his [God's] chosen" (*Wis.* iv, 15). And it is certainly God who "fashioned mind and heart" and set his own seal upon the faces of his chosen. In verse 24 the Odist speaks in his own person. In verse 9 also he is expressing his own contempt for the flesh. God in these Odes as in Job and the canonical Psalms is "Saviour" and "Redeemer." Hence the MS. reading "he who was saved" in verse 24 is almost certainly wrong. Clause 3 paraphrases clause 2. God "saves" because he "lives," and is thus the cause of life to those who "abide in him." The "Beloved," as elsewhere in these Odes, is God. With verse 20 we may compare *Isa.* lviii, 8: "thy righteousness shall go before thee."

In the earlier part of Ode VIII there is reference to persecution which, when the Ode was written, had ceased:—

Rise up and stand erect, ye who were sometimes brought low. Ye who were in silence speak out [now] that your mouth has been opened. Ye who were despised be lifted up, now that your righteousness has been lifted up. . . . Peace has been prepared for you before ever your war happened.

We may see from these verses how rash is the assumption that when the Odist, writing of his persecutors, says that he kept silence before them, or that he was without reason despised, he must have been recording an utterance of the

Christ. Even Harris, who eagerly makes the assumption whenever he thinks he can, admits that in this Ode "the saints have gone through a variety of conflicts. Some struggle has evidently gone on which is not covered by the individual conflict for inward illumination and liberty." But if in this Ode, why not in others ?

6. THE WATER OF LIFE. THE BRIDEGROOM

In Ode VI the triumph of Gnosis and the overthrow of Judaism and polytheism are foretold. The author projects himself in imagination into the future and with the mind's eye beholds the salvation of the world :—

3. He destroys what is foreign and everything is of the Lord . . . 5. that nothing should be his adversary and nothing should stand up against him. 6. The Lord has multiplied his knowledge. . . . 7. Our spirits praise his Holy Spirit. 8. For there went forth a stream and it became a river great and broad. It carried away and pulverized everything ; and has carried away the Temple also. . . . 10. For it spread over the face of all the earth and filled everything. 11. All the thirsty who were upon earth were given to drink of it, and thirst was done away and quenched ; 12. for from the Most High the draught was given. 13. Blessed are the ministers of that draught, who have been entrusted with that water of his. They have assuaged the dry lips. . . . 15. And souls that were in dissolution they have established and restored. . . . 17. For everyone knew them in the Lord and they became living through the perpetual living water.

The signification of the river which is to sweep away error and false worship is given in verse 6 ; it is " knowledge of the Lord "—i.e., Gnosis—and this is the water of life. The ministers of the draught, who have been entrusted with the water, are plainly the community of saints, the recipients of the Holy Spirit. Verses 15 and 17 are important, for they prove the correctness of the interpretation of Ode XLII. The water of life restores dead souls to life ; not the souls of dead people, but souls which were spiritually dead. Metaphorically—and only metaphorically—these souls are " brought out of Sheol." The Christ who brings them out is the community inspired by the Word. A congregation which

had been entrusted with such a gift could quite appropriately be said to be "the door of everything." The sources of the imagery have been quoted previously. They are *Wis.* i, 7; *Isa.* xi, 9; *Ecclus.* xxiv, 30; *Wis.* vii, 30, viii, 13.

In the emphasis laid upon Truth in these Odes, and especially in the personification of it, we see again the genesis of a Gnostic conception. At this early stage Truth has not become, as it became later, a divine being existing independently of God or the Word. In Ode XXXII the "Truth who was self-originate" is God; in Ode XXXVIII Truth appears to be the Word; but God and the Word, as we have seen, are not separable. Afterwards—e.g., by the Marcosians and the Valentinians—Truth is separately personified under the Greek name *Aletheia*. She is termed "the Mother," and by the former she is set at the side of the Father in the highest Heaven. An ultimate connection is inferable from the statement of Irenæus (I, xxix, 2) that in the system of certain Gnostics *Aletheia* is paired with the "Self-born." This pair seems to have been arrived at by splitting the Truth who was "self-originate" into two. In Ode XXXVIII "the light of Truth" is Gnosis:—

I went up to the light of Truth as if into a chariot; and Truth took me and led me, and carried me across pits and gullies; and from the rocks and waves he preserved me; and he became to me a haven of salvation and set me on the arms of immortal Life. And he went with me and made me rest and suffered me not to wander because he 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 him and meets him not; but Truth proceeds in the right path; and whatever I did not know he made clear to me, all the poisons of error and the plagues of death which are thought to be sweetness. And I saw the corruptor of corruption, when the bride who is corrupted was adorned; and the bridegroom who corrupts and is corrupt. And I asked of Truth: Who are these? and he said to me: This is the deceiver and the error; and they imitate the Beloved and his bride; and they lead astray and corrupt the world. And they invite many to the banquet and give them to drink of the wine of their intoxication, and they make them vomit up their wisdom

in the Psalms and in Isaiah. The expression "knowledge of God" is to be found in Isaiah. In the Wisdom literature this "knowledge" with a somewhat expanded significance is personified as "Wisdom." As we read in Prov. ii, 6, "The Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, though wisdom as an abstract quality still includes knowledge as well as understanding, a separation is made by regarding the personified Wisdom as the bringer of knowledge. An advance upon this conception could not fail to come about, because practically it meant that Wisdom brought herself. And since it had been said that wisdom, knowledge, and understanding had come "out of the mouth" of the Lord, the next step naturally was to imagine that they had been brought to men through the word of God. The expression "the word of God" would be familiar to the Odist from the Psalms; and in one passage in the *Wisdom of Solomon* the Word is personified. The Logos had also been personified in the Helleno-Egyptian theosophy, of which it is probable that the Odist had some knowledge. Hence the Word replaced Wisdom, both as the personification of an abstraction and yet also, like Wisdom, as a divine Spirit and the bringer of divine knowledge.¹ The Word, then, as the utterance of God, was conceived as a part of himself, and at the same time as having objective existence. But, since the utterance of God is not physically audible, just as Wisdom was supposed to become known through entering as a spiritual emanation from God into the souls of men, so does the Word bring the knowledge of God by inward spiritual penetration. And notwithstanding the personification, he is no more a "person" than Wisdom is a person. He is said to have "appeared"; but so also did Wisdom "appear."

She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Prov. viii, 3.

The mind of the Odist was steeped in this literature; he wrote in the same spirit and employed the same kind of metaphor. To imagine that when he wrote of the Word he

¹ Justin affirmed the identity of Logos and Wisdom on the authority of earlier writers, including the Book of Proverbs.

was thinking of some historical person or that when he gave to the Word the Jewish appellation "the Christ" he was referring to Christ Jesus, of whom he had certainly never heard, is a most hopeless aberration of criticism.

Wisdom, understanding, knowledge are then fused together into that very special form of life-giving knowledge with which the term "Gnosis" has been connected. The writer's conception of Gnosis is fundamentally the same as that of the later Gnostics. It was brought to men by the Word; but the earlier Wisdom is not entirely superseded. In the *Wisdom of Solomon* she is a holy Spirit; and in the Odes she continues to be the Spirit of the Lord. But since under one aspect wisdom is Gnosis, and the Word is also "the Spirit of the Lord," there is an indefiniteness in the characterization which is evidence of early date. Further evidence of this is the fact that the name of the Word has not yet been specialized. Just as in Greek there are two terms *rhēma* and *logos*, both meaning *word*, of which the latter became specialized as the title of the divine Word, so also in Syriac. One of these always signifies the written or spoken word, the other in Christian writings is invariably used to designate the personified Word, the Logos. But whereas in some of the Odes the second of these terms is found as the designation of the Word, in others the first is found. Similarly, as Harris pointed out, in Syriac translations of the prophetic books of the Old Testament the two terms are employed indiscriminately.

The immense difference between the comparatively simple yet admirable theosophy of these Odes and the complex Catholic Christianity of the second century, with its large admixture of Judaic elements and its doctrine of an expiatory sacrifice, is sufficient proof that the two are separated by a considerable interval of time. In respect of religious thought the Odes are very much nearer to the Wisdom literature than they are to Ignatius. We may not improperly term them Christian, but their Christianity is of a primitive type. It is Christianity just emerging from a Hellenized form of Judaism. There were contemporary Gentile mystics who held very similar opinions and had

set up an ethical standard quite as high;¹ but Pagan Gnosticism was so inextricably bound up with the old polytheism that the time was ripe for the appearance of a new religion springing from another root.² The Jews had been able to suppress all their gods except one. It is well known that some Christian Gnostics tried even to depose Jehovah. Although they did not succeed in that, the Jewish god was denationalized. The men who propagated the doctrines of the *Odes of Solomon* had indeed no idea that they were the pioneers of a new religion, and of course it was not Christianity as we know it. They still considered themselves Jews, and they had in view two aims of paramount importance: the supersession of Jewish legalism and the overthrow of polytheism. It is a pity, but it was inevitable, that their highly spiritualized religion could not preserve its pristine purity. Popularization and the exigencies of competition with rival cults necessarily brought on deterioration.

¹ Evidence of this will be found in Reitzenstein's *Poimandres*.

² The characterization of the first-century Gnostic Christianity as a new religion is not inconsistent with the opinion that the worship of a sacrificed Jesus was a consequence of the emergence of the secret cult of an ancient Palestinian god Joshua. The worship of Joshua was not, and would not by itself have become, Christianity.

CHAPTER IV

THE DOGMA OF THE INCARNATION

1. JEWISH GNOSTIC COMMUNITIES IN THE FIRST CENTURY

THE theosophical speculation which resulted from the interaction of Greek philosophy and Jewish religion expressed itself in a number of systems which, having a few basic principles in common, exhibited, after the necessary period of development, considerable variety in detail. The questions which agitated men's minds were such as these: How can matter have been created, or in any way moulded, by a spiritual Being? How is it possible for men to know, or have any relationship with, an invisible, immaterial God? How is the existence of evil to be reconciled with the goodness of God? If man is not a spiritual being how can he be in any sense immortal? If he is a spiritual being, why is he sinful? How can he extricate himself from the death of sin and attain to the immortality which pure spirit alone can be expected to enjoy? If God is perfectly just, how can any man escape punishment? We have seen how one very early community attempted to answer some of these questions; but, as the *Odes of Solomon* are from their purpose and character an expression of the emotional side of the religion of the community, there may have been a more speculative side to it of which they furnish no information. On the other hand, it is likely that in certain groups there was more interest taken in the purely religious problems of the relationship between God and man and the means of salvation than in the cosmological speculations which exercised the minds of those to whom the name *Gnostic* has been particularly applied. We know a good deal concerning these from Christian writers of the second century and later; but if there were communities of the former type which became merged into the Christian Church in the course of the first

century, we might easily not have learnt anything about them.¹ The fortunate accident of the preservation and discovery of the *Odes of Solomon* has given us information about one community of its type; but is it likely that that was the only one? A sect whose proselytizing zeal was such as we have seen that of the community O to have been must surely, like the Essenes, have been represented in several places. It is even probable that in a period during which there was in process so active a fermentation of religious thought among Jews of the Dispersion communities of a somewhat similar character would have come more or less independently into existence. Travelling Jews would spread abroad current ideas apart from purposive propaganda.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, Paul, when he came to Puteoli on his way to Rome, found "brethren" there. If that is correct it means that there was a Christian community of some kind at Puteoli; but there is no record of its foundation. There was also a church at Rome, since we are told that "brethren" went out from Rome to meet Paul. There is independent evidence in this case, for Onufrius says that Clement, who succeeded Cletus as head of the Roman church, was appointed in the year 68. The head before Cletus was Linus, and according to Epiphanius each of these men held office for twelve years; so that the church was in existence as early as the year 45. And, since Linus is not said to have been the founder of it, the date of its origin is unknown. The probability is that it had been in existence for a good while before Linus became the head of it, because the comparatively late tradition that the church had been founded by Peter and Paul proves that all record of its foundation had been lost. The character of the community at Rome is not certainly known, but there is some evidence that it was Judaic and Messianic, which would explain the fact that the Hellenistic Paul appears to have

¹ Why does the Acts of the Apostles not mention the Essenes and Therapeuts, who were numerous and important? Who on the other hand were the "saints" found by Peter at Lydda and the "disciples" discovered by Paul in various places? It may be suspected that the writer was too politic to give definite information.

had no relations with it.¹ There is evidence however that there was a community of Hellenistic Jews in Rome in the first century. We know more about the community at Corinth. That community was also not founded by Paul; there is in Acts no hint of it. But when Paul came to Corinth he attached himself to a "synagogue," lodging close by, no doubt for the convenience of attending it. In this synagogue, which contained Greeks as well as Jews, Paul preached regularly with acceptance for many months. It does not follow that because the place is named a synagogue it was the meeting-place of orthodox Jews. Jewish Gnostics named their meeting-places synagogues. The Marcionites had "synagogues"; and Irenæus writes of "all the synagogues of the heretics." The synagogue in which Paul preached at Corinth cannot have been a synagogue of orthodox Jews, because we are told in Acts that Paul, after preaching there for several weeks, was constrained by the Word (Logos) to address "the Jews," implying that in some sense the members of the synagogue were not "Jews." These Jews immediately opposed themselves and blasphemed. But when Crispus, a ruler of the synagogue, "believed with all his house," he was apparently able to remain ruler. We must infer that, while the doctrine preached by Paul differed in some respects from that previously held, it cannot have been in essential points opposed to it. In particular it is certain that the community was not Judaic; if it had been, seeing that Paul preached the abrogation of the Mosaic Law, the members, like "the Jews" whom he afterwards addressed, would have opposed themselves and blasphemed. But no opposition whatever in the "synagogue" is recorded. When Paul had been preaching for eighteen months, Sosthenes, either joint ruler with Crispus or his successor, was so far a sympathizer with Paul that he was brought together with Paul before the judgment seat of Gallio by the Jews and even beaten by them there. I have given reasons elsewhere² for believing that it is this Sosthenes whose name

¹ Several critics of the New Testament have concluded that the words "in Rome" in Rom. i, 7, are not original.

² *A Critical Analysis of the Four Chief Pauline Epistles*, p. 152.

is coupled with that of Paul in the superscription to the First Epistle to the Corinthians. In that Epistle it is implied that Paul was not the founder of the Corinthian church, but that he had been a visitor to one already constituted. For he says (ii, 1): "I, brethren, when I came unto you." And when the Epistle was written the community had been in existence sufficiently long for many of its original members to be dead. As we read in xi, 30, "not a few sleep." The Epistle is composite, and chapter viii, 1-4, is probably a portion of the Epistle of Sosthenes. From those verses it can be inferred that the community was Gnostic. For it is there written: "Now concerning things sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge [Gnosis], and we know that no idol is anything in the world." The writer accordingly sees no intrinsic harm in eating meat sacrificed to idols, but he thinks that for the sake of others who have not Gnosis and believe it to be sinful it is better to refrain. It is well known that Gnostics did in fact eat such meat without compunction on the very ground stated by this writer. The "knowledge" in question was not common knowledge, because other Christians believed that the Pagan deities were dæmons. The Naassenes, who also had "knowledge," could without scruple participate in the rites of Pagan Saviour-cults. A later editor, who disapproved of the reasoning, supplies an antidote by a very uncompromising condemnation of the practice in x, 19-21.

We are, then, entitled to conclude that the "synagogue" found by Paul at Corinth was a congregation of Hellenistic Jews and Greeks; that its religious belief may be described as Gnostic; and that it had been in existence for a considerable time when Paul came to it. It was in fact a congregation of the same type as the community O; and there is no reason to suppose that it was not in existence in the earliest years of the first century. The doctrine taught in all these communities of Hellenistic Jews must at first have been very much the same, embodying certain religious ideas which were current in the period of their inception. But as time went on the primitive doctrine was elaborated in various directions and degrees through the influence of

Platonism, Stoicism, oriental Gnosticism, and the neighbouring Mystery Religions. In some of the communities, no doubt, but little development occurred and the doctrine remained comparatively simple. The dogmatic history of the others is a blank until, having become definitely heretical, they attracted the hostile attention of Christian writers late in the second century. But it is not impossible to extract from the information given some knowledge of the earlier doctrine.

2. THE NAASSENES, PERATAI, AND SETHIANS

The sect of the Naassenes may have originated in the last pre-Christian century. Undoubtedly it was in existence very early in the first century. For Hippolytus says that the Naassenes were the first Gnostics, anterior therefore to the Simonians. Some early Christian writers, who could not admit that Gnosticism was pre-Christian, affirmed that the semi-mythical Simon Magus was the father of heresy. This belief, though erroneous, really proves that Gnosticism was not an offshoot from Christianity, because Simon is said to have been a contemporary of the first Apostles ; and from the account of him in Acts, distorted as it is, his original independence of, and indeed priority to, the Christian Apostles is evident. It is said (Acts viii, 11) that the people of Samaria gave heed to him because "for a long time" he had amazed them with his sorceries. From the information we have it can be inferred that the Simonian Gnosticism existed in Samaria before the year 30, and that for some time it was a rival to Christianity. Hence the virulence with which Simon was attacked by early Christian writers. We can learn from a remark let fall by Jerome that Docetism is at least as old as Christianity. "The blood of Christ," he wrote,¹ "was still fresh in Judæa when his body was called a phantasm." But if Docetism existed as early as that, nothing hinders our supposing that it had existed even earlier. Reitzenstein has recognized the fact that the oldest identifiable Naassene document exhibits no trace of Christian influence. He characterizes its doctrine as Pagan ;

¹ *Adv. Luciferum*, 23.

and the "refutation" of Hippolytus consists in a demonstration of its non-Christian origin. Exception may, however, be taken to the application of the term "Pagan" to the Naassene doctrine, for the name of the sect proves that it was Jewish, and, although there are striking resemblances between its doctrine and that of the Hermetic literature, its monotheism was of Jewish origin and it had some affinity with Philo. All three doctrines were moulded to a greater or less degree by religious ideas which must have been prevalent before the commencement of the Christian era. The Naassenes themselves claimed to be the only genuine Christians.

It is evident from the account which Hippolytus gives of the doctrines of the Naassenes that the writings from which he derived his information had been produced over a considerable period of time, during which development was taking place; for some of his statements are inconsistent with one another. He himself was not sufficiently critical to place the books with which he was acquainted in their proper chronological order, or to detect later insertions. Nevertheless it is possible from the information he gives to get some idea of the probable course of development and in particular to extract the fundamental, which must be the primitive, doctrine, though not quite perhaps in its original simple form.

The God of the Naassenes is not a person, though he is incidentally called the Father. He is said to be without shape, incomprehensible, ineffable. He is, in fact, the Most High of the *Odes of Solomon*, become even more indefinite and remote. He is a limitless Spirit of whom—or rather of which—nothing can be predicated except that he may be named "the Good." This designation was not applied in the sense in which moral goodness can be ascribed to a person, for the Greek word used is in the neuter (*to agathon*). Probably with a knowledge of the Platonic doctrine of "ideas," the Naassenes thought of God as the abstract quality of goodness, conceived as having a real existence. Everything good proceeds from him, but he himself is inactive; just as the Most High of the *Odes* operates through the Word. In the

Wisdom books God is said to have created the world by his Wisdom. The Naassenes appear not to have used this name; they substituted for it a term borrowed from Greek philosophy—*Nous*, the Mind of God. And since the Mind of God cannot well be imagined as separable from him, they gave to the divine Spirit Wisdom, which in the *Wisdom of Solomon* penetrates all things, the name *Psyche* (soul). Even stones, they said, possess soul. They were probably acquainted with the Stoic conception of the world-soul, but also they were Jews, well versed in the Old Testament, and their *Nous* and *Psyche* seem to reproduce the two aspects of Wisdom. The Naassene argument that stones must possess soul because they are capable of growth is akin to the statement in the *Wisdom of Solomon* that Wisdom reneweth all things; and the opinion that “all things yearn for *Psyche*” is comparable with the Jewish writer’s eulogy of Wisdom. The *Psyche* of the Naassene Hymn is clearly the *Sophia* of the later Gnostics. Also in that Hymn it is *Psyche* who differentiates the primordial “chaos”—formless matter—into various objects, working out the “law” which was implicit in *Nous*. Hence *Nous*, as inventive, and *Psyche*, as operative, complete the creative Wisdom of God. Simon of Gitta¹ made the same division, but he named the constructive or purposive Mind *Epinoia*. The germ of the distinction is perhaps to be seen in the Odist’s use of the terms “Thought” and “Will” of God.

The Father was named by the Naassenes *Adamas* and *Anthropos* (Man). The Platonic doctrine of “ideas” may have contributed to the application of the second of these names. The highest metaphysical entity was perhaps regarded as the heavenly “idea” of the highest material entity. But it is doubtful whether that is the complete explanation. The notion of a first divine man is traceable

¹ This Simon was confounded by early Christian writers with the Simon of the Simonian Gnostics under the title Simon Magus. The latter Simon—or Semon—was a divine being, as is proved by his being paired with Helene (Selene)—Luna (the Moon) in the *Recognitions*—who is definitely named *Sophia* and has some of the characteristics of *Isis*. See also J. M. Robertson, *The Jesus Problem*, Appendix B. Simon of Gitta affirmed the immobility of the highest God, naming him *ἰστάς* (*stans* = the stationary one).

to the Assyrians (Babylonians), by whom he was named Oannes and believed to have issued from the sea. In the Naassene book it is said that the Assyrians in worshipping Oannes were ignorantly worshipping Anthropos.¹ The name "Adamas" was evidently suggested by "Adam"; and in the doctrine of some other Gnostics Adam was a manifestation of the Christ. The fact that Philo made a distinction between the heavenly and the earthly Adam and equated the former with Nous points to some early lore respecting a primal divine man. There is plainly some connection between Philo's view and that of the Naassenes. In the Hermetic *Poimandres* also we read of a primal "god-man" who descended. According to Reitzenstein an anthropos-doctrine took root in Egypt at about the beginning of the Christian era. It is possible that the final syllable *as* was appended to *Adam* to identify the name with the Greek word *adamas*, which means *unconquerable*, also *diamond*.

The necessary link between the immobile divine Spirit and the material world was found by the Naassenes, as by the Odist, in the Word, who, as the Son of Anthropos, is termed "Son of Man," but there is no connection between this Son of Man and the apocalyptic. Although named the Son, he is a "formless, invisible, immaterial, and ineffable Spirit"—in other words, a spiritual emanation from the Father. As in the *Odes of Solomon*, the Holy Spirit is not absolutely separable from the Father and the Son. They *are* the divine Spirit and essentially a unity. Hippolytus quotes: "For Spirit, they say, is God. . . . And the Spirit is there wherever the Father is named, and the Son born there out of the Father." It was shown previously that in the doctrine of the *Odes of Solomon* the Word is the Father in his relation to men. The doctrine of the Naassenes was similar; for by means of the Word men are brought into relationship with God and obtain knowledge of him. Men are said to become pneumatic through the descent into them of the spiritual Son of Man. Referring to statues of Hermes,

¹ There may be a connection between the Babylonian fable of Oannes and the imagery of 2 *Esdras* xiii, in which the Messiah "in the likeness of a man" comes up "from the midst of the sea."

whom they identified with their Logos, the Naassene writer says, "These statues are images of the primordial Anthropos and of the re-born spiritual man who is in all respects of the same essence as that Anthropos." The re-born spiritual man is, however, the Son of Man. For, after explaining the Eleusinian Mystery as symbolizing the pneumatic generation (birth), the heavenly one, the one above, the writer continues, "because we, the pneumatic people, came from above flowing down from Adamas."

The incarnate Son is termed "the Christ"; and in the Naassene doctrine on this subject we have verification of the opinion, expressed in the previous chapter, that when the Odist wrote that the Word "was reckoned like myself," his meaning was that the Word took the form of men by entering into them. For the Naassene Logos was also formless and extra-spatial, but when as Christ he becomes incarnate in a man he has to that extent spatial limitation. In a passage quoted by Hippolytus we read, "This is the Christ, the Son of Man, who is fashioned from the formless Logos in all who are born." Inferably the Naassenes at a certain stage in the development of their system introduced a nominal distinction between the formless Logos and the incarnate Christ. It does not, however, appear that the Christ who descends is thereby separated from the Father. In fact, the Son himself is occasionally named both Anthropos and Adamas. In one passage the Naassene conception of the relation between God and the spiritual man is expressed in the enunciation of the three fundamental existences: the highest Anthropos, the mortal man below, and the Jordan which flows to the parts above. But this Jordan, it is explained, is the male-female Anthropos who is in all. The Son of Man appears thus to be conceived as an upward-flowing spiritual stream connecting men with God. The language all through is highly figurative, and expressions such as "male-female" in the quoted passage must not be taken literally. Elsewhere it is said, "his form no one knows." The idea may be that Anthropos is universal Mother as well as universal Father. That, perhaps, is why there was no separate "Virgin Mother" in the Naassene

theosophy. It is remarkable how these people took all myths and sublimated them. To the literal-minded Hippolytus they seemed to be lunatics. After the manner of Gnostics generally, they extracted from the books they used hidden meanings by symbolic interpretation, dealing with the Old Testament precisely as they dealt with Homer. For example, they explained Isa. xxviii, 16—"I will lay a precious stone [adamas] in the foundations of Zion"—as signifying the insertion of Adamas into the human frame. Then, citing Homer, the writer says that the inner man who fell down from the primordial Adamas above is contained within the body as within a wall and palisade.¹

The Naassenes had no solution of the problem of the existence of evil other than that which is implied in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. Evil, they supposed, is a quality inherent in matter. They denied that anything but good could proceed from God, so that probably in their earliest doctrine primordial matter, "the chaos," was uncreated, as is the case in the oldest doctrine of the Peratai; later, however, this opinion was altered. In order to exonerate God from the charge of having created anything evil, they adopted the theory that man had been spontaneously produced from the earth. This is carnal or "choic" man, who at first lay motionless like a statue until the sentient and emotional soul (*psyche*) was introduced into him so that he might be disciplined and perfected by suffering. He was at that time ignorant of God and had no vision of higher things. He was idolatrous and vicious. His soul, though divine in origin, was prevented from rising by the matter to which it was bound. Spirit—Adamas, as the Son of Man—then descended from above and, becoming united with the soul, strove to liberate it. He too is thus exposed to the contamination of matter and is held down and tortured in his prison of flesh. By this we must understand the discipline through suffering of the spiritual nature. But not all men are amenable to discipline. The Christ, as we read in a passage quoted above, is fashioned in all who are born. But men can be separated into two classes—the pneumatic

¹ τείχος καὶ χαράκωμα. *Il.*, Bk. IV, 350 and elsewhere.

and the psychic. In the former spirit prevails over matter and liberates the soul. In the latter the Christ is put to death. The writer, symbolically applying a Phrygian dogma, says that the Christ in carnal men is "a corpse dug down into the body as if into a monument and tomb." But a psychic man is capable of becoming pneumatic, and this conversion the Naassenes called resurrection from the dead, and apparently thought of it even as a metaphorical ascension into Heaven by means of the upward-flowing spiritual Jordan. For, they said, those who are spiritually re-born out of carnal bodies are dead men who come forth from their tombs.

This also, they say, is the ascension which takes place through the gate of the heavens, through which all who do not enter remain dead.¹

But it was of course the spiritual Christ in the mortal body who rose and ascended. Hence the words of the Psalm—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates . . . and the king of glory shall come in"—are explained as a description of the entry into Heaven of Adamas, the divine Spirit which had been brought from death to life in the spiritual regeneration of a man. The later Gnostics dealt with the New Testament on the same principles as they did with the Old, adapting the Gospel story to their doctrine by allegorical interpretation. To what extent they accepted it as literally true it is impossible to say. With all their fine intellect and high-soaring speculation, Gnostics were not critical in the modern sense. Marcion, however, denied that Jesus had been "born"; and Gnostics of the type of the Naassenes made no apparent distinction between the Christian story and the fables of the Pagans. There is no evidence of knowledge of a Gospel in the oldest identifiable Naassene document; but in one of their later writings, following the quotation "I am the true gate," it is said:—

But he who spoke this was the perfect Anthropos who was fashioned from the formless one above. The Phrygians tell of this same Man and call him Papa, because he gave

¹ Hippolytus, *Philos.*, V. 8.

rest¹ to all things which before his appearance had been moving in a disorderly and discordant manner.²

Again it is said that "the hidden mystery"—presumably Gnosis—"is the water which Jesus at that beautiful wedding changed and made into wine." But the writer no less confidently identifies the "mystery" with a cup of wine mentioned in a poem by Anacreon. And the virgin who conceived and bore a holy son, whether the virgin of Isaiah or the virgin of the Mysteries, is, it is said, a type of the spiritual generation of the pneumatic people. The holy son, by whatever name in different places he is known, is not an individual person, but the universal Christ, the *pneuma* which came down from Adamas and lives in every spiritual man. Actually in this symbolism there is no "virgin" involved. The "virgin birth," whether Christian or Pagan, symbolizes a process. In the Hermetic literature also Isis is said to mean "generation." The Naassenes, like other Gnostics, named the body Egypt and took the Exodus to be a symbol of the delivery of the spiritual man from the carnal nature.

We may see that the doctrine of the Naassenes, although it elaborated some of the ideas and introduced new nomenclature, is in its origin essentially the same metaphysical doctrine which we found in the *Odes of Solomon*. We have the incomprehensible, ineffable Father, who has become even more indefinite through the practical substitution for him of Nous, the divine Mind. We have the Word, named also the Christ, who, being one with the Father and issuing from him, becomes incarnate in spiritual men, not rejecting their souls but humbling himself to the contamination of flesh, and, being confined within the frame of the body, "was reckoned like myself that I might put him on," bringing also to men the saving knowledge of a God otherwise unknown. We have also the "virgin birth" of the pneumatic people, though the "virgin" has been reduced to a symbol. Finally we have the bringing of the dead

¹ There is a play upon words here in the Greek.

² It is evident from this quotation that the writer was applying to the Gospel narrative a doctrine previously existing.

out of Sheol by the power of the Word. The writer illustrates allegorically his doctrine of "resurrection" by applying some passages of Homer in which Hermes is taken to represent the Logos; citing one of these¹ he says that the "squeaking ghosts" in Hades followed the Logos. But obviously, no more than the Odists did he believe that the Logos had literally gone down into Hades.

Connected with the Naassenes were the Peratai. Hippolytus says that the sect had been long in existence but that its doctrines were little known. These, as Hippolytus presents them, are much elaborated, being contained in many books, no doubt produced at different dates. It is, however, possible to extract from the medley some of the earlier doctrine, which, if primitive, is not so old as that of the Naassenes. That notwithstanding, it is, as Hippolytus avers, of non-Christian origin. At the head of all is the motionless, inactive Father—the Unborn and the absolute Good. There is also the uncreated hylē, primordial matter. Between the Father and the hylē, connecting the one with the other, is the Son, the Logos, whom the Peratai, like the Naassenes, styled the Self-born. The Logos receives from the Father "ideas" of all things and impresses them upon the hylē, thus creating the multiform cosmos. Later this doctrine was modified; the cosmos was then believed to have emanated from the stars and to be subject accordingly to destiny (*heimarmenē*), from which men could be liberated only by Gnosis. A third, apparently still later, opinion was that the Archon, Demiurgus, who was identified with the god of the Jews, took some of the shapes which had been scattered like seeds by the Logos and so brought forth children of his own. An analogous opinion is found in the Hermetic literature, and there also it seems not to be primitive. According to the earlier doctrine everyone is potentially redeemable through having received the seed which was sown by the Logos. The seed sown by the Logos appears in this doctrine to have replaced the Logos himself, who in the doctrine of some other Gnostics is the seed

¹ Od. xxiv, 6 ff.

sown by the Father. The condition of salvation is the following :—

If anyone masters the things of this world and understands that he is a paternal shape brought down from above and embodied, he becomes of the same nature as the Father who is in the heavens, and he goes back and is wholly at home there.

It appears that in the primitive doctrine the Logos was an undefined Spirit, connecting the cosmos with the Father, bringing down the spiritual part of men, and conveying back the spirits of those who have acquired Gnosis. But in the later doctrine the Logos becomes more definitely unified, and as such is believed to have appeared upon earth in the form of Cain and of Esau, also as Joseph the son of Jacob. The latter appearance, according to Hippolytus, was said to have occurred in the days of Herod. We may infer that it was regarded as a reappearance, and it is probable that this duplicated appearance of Joseph was a comparatively late idea. It is not said that the Peratai named their Logos *Christ*.

The system of the Sethians, as described—not at all methodically—by Hippolytus, is so fantastic a mixture of allegory and metaphysical philosophy that it is not easily intelligible. These Gnostics took some pains by the introduction of different terminology to make it more clear that their divine entities were not persons. When this is realized the affinity of their system to those of the Naassenes and Peratai becomes apparent. Thus, avoiding the term *Father*, they named the highest principle of their cosmogony “Light.” Their system is thereby linked with the theosophy of the *Wisdom of Solomon* and the Odes. For in the former Wisdom is said to be “an effulgence from everlasting Light.” And in the latter such phrases as “the mouth of the Lord is the door of his light,” “Light dawned from the Word which was beforetime in him [the Father],” are frequent. Direct dependence need not be assumed. The Odists and the Sethians were under the influence of contemporary thought. In the Hermetic literature also the

highest existences were named "Light" and "Life." The uncreated *hylē* was termed by the Sethians "a dark and terrible water." Between the Light and the water extended *Pneuma*. The writer says that *Pneuma* must not be thought of as "breath" or "air"; it is far more tenuous than these and may be compared rather to "odour." In the beginning, he says, rays from the Light, mingled with *Pneuma*, penetrated the water, and from the "powers" inherent in these, forms of objects were generated by the clashing and commotion caused by them in the foaming water. Light and *Pneuma* are thus entangled in the dark water and so become the spiritual part of men, who are generated in it and from it. This spiritual part of men is termed "*Nous*." *Nous* longs to reascend to the Light and the *Pneuma* from whence it came, but the darkness strives to retain it.¹ *Logos* accordingly descends for its liberation. *Nous* is represented as being mingled with matter like bits of iron with earth, so that the spiritual part of pneumatic men is attracted to *Logos* as to a magnet:—

Thus the power of the Light [*Nous*] which is mingled with the water takes through instruction and teaching its own place and hastens to the *Logos* which came down from above in the form of a slave, and with the *Logos* it becomes *Logos* there where *Logos* is even more readily than iron clings to a magnet.

The Sethian *Nous* is evidently the Naassene *Psyche*, and is thus connected with *Sophia* who is both Wisdom and the human soul. Philo ascribes this same function of the liberation of the soul to the higher spiritual beings whom he names angels, *dæmons*, and *logoi*. According to Philo the soul in some men is so deeply sunk in matter that it can never be liberated. The Gnostic view was of course the same. The later Gnostic fable of the fall of *Sophia* and her rescue by the Christ who descends for that purpose is evidently an allegorizing of the liberation of *Wisdom-Nous-Psyche* by the *Logos*, which is the same thing as the

¹ Cp. Jn., i, 5, of which a more correct translation probably is: "The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness mastered it not."

salvation of the human soul. According to Irenæus (I, xxx, 3) the Ophites taught that Sophia descended into the primeval water, just as Nous does in the system of the Sethians. Gnostic doctrine was extremely plastic; the same themes are found in different forms and in connection with different names. The cosmological system of these Gnostics is obviously dualistic; but the dualism is not oriental. The antithesis is between primordial uncreated matter and spirit, not, in the earliest form of the doctrine, between God and a malign creator. The Jewish dualism was Hellenistic. It was pushed to an extreme in the Ethics of the Neo-Pythagoreans, with whom the Essenes and the Therapeuts were intellectually related.

There is affinity between the Sethian cosmogony and that of *Poimandres*. The simile of "a slave" may be connected with a statement in the same book (I, 14) to the effect that the "god-man" who descended into the primordial matter became "a slave subject to fate." The expression "form of a slave" must be figurative, because the Sethian Logos was certainly not a man.

The oldest Gnostic systems in their simplest discoverable form are not new creations; they are growths whose roots can be seen in the *Wisdom of Solomon* and whose stem is Hellenistic Jewish religious and cosmological speculation with accretions of foreign and particularly Egyptian origin. Some Christian writers have thought to explain Gnosticism from the influence of the teaching of Paul. The affinity of Paulinism to Gnosticism is a fact; but the latter cannot be derived from the former. As Bousset¹ judiciously observed:—

It can hardly be supposed that the few, and in their terminology not easily comprehensible, dissertations of Paul which are to be found scattered in his Epistles could have so powerful an influence upon the most diverse Gnostic systems.

Doubtless the writer knew that his readers would comprehend him, whence it follows that his Gnostic terminology must already have been well known. The Simonian Gnosticism was a kindred growth. The Simon

¹ *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 140.

of Acts was not a man; he was "that power of God which is called Great" (viii, 10)—in other words, the Logos of the Simonian Gnostics; and like the Logos of the Naassenes, he was the liberator of the imprisoned soul, Helene, whom the Christian writers absurdly describe as his female companion. These writers probably misunderstood a Simonian allegory. Justin says that nearly all the Samaritans "worshipped" Simon.

Since Philo named the rational soul "Nous," and held it to have been stamped like a coin from the divine and invisible Spirit, we are carried back to a very early date for the inception of the system of the Sethians. Bousset¹ infers from references to predecessors in the works of Philo that the topics he treats had for some time been subjects of discussion in the schools at Alexandria. He also shows that several of the theories of Philo which have been traced back to Greek philosophers had undergone modification which is explicable only on the supposition that they had come to him through earlier Jewish thinkers. There is textual evidence that the modifications were not all made by Philo himself.² For example, Philo appears to have been acquainted with an interpretation of the birth of Cain as the creation of the world through the action of Nous (Adam) upon matter (Eve); he, however, preferred a different interpretation.³ The suggested interpretation doubtless corresponds with an Egyptian belief that the universe is the result of a metaphysical copulation of a divine creator with nature (*physis*), by which is meant primordial matter. The Sethians regarded the penetration of the water by the ray as an "impregnation." Elsewhere Bousset observes that Philo cannot be explained from Greek and Jewish ideas alone; there must, he says, have been a third and important factor the source of which is at present a problem. Reitzenstein has shown that the third factor was Helleno-Egyptian theosophy; and in the light of the

¹ *Judisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom.*, 1915.

² "Behind his individual conclusions stands almost everywhere the history of a complex tradition." *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 43.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

evidence adduced by him we may legitimately infer the influence of this theosophy upon the early Jewish Gnostics.

3. THE CLEMENTINES

The Gnostics were endeavouring to solve within the frame of religion the problems which the Stoics were trying to solve in philosophy; and they were not likely to be more successful. They built up with words and names a structure of fine appearance, in which people of less imagination would see a solidity it did not possess. Their systems, before they became over-elaborated, were no doubt helpful and adapted to the mentality of many religious thinkers of their day; but it is certain that men of inferior intelligence cannot have comprehended the deeper significance of the symbolic language of the Gnostic writers. However concrete the imagery employed by those writers, they probably knew that fundamentally the names they used, such as Nous, Aletheia, Epinoia, and Sophia, were not the names of persons in any definite sense of the term personality. It was only by ascribing some kind of substantiality to an abstract quality that they could conceive and formulate their cosmological and soteriological theories. The average member of a community would be decidedly more apt to materialize; and the constant use of certain names must by degrees have led to the growth of a belief that corresponding persons had in some manner and place a real existence. Thus it is likely that for many Gnostic Christians the Logos and Sophia gradually became as real as Isis, Dionysus, and Hermes were for the Pagans.

Probably the more speculative Gnostic groups never became popular; but even in them we can detect a tendency towards individualization. Thus the Peratai had advanced from the conception of the universal incarnation of an impersonal Logos to that of a special incarnation in definite historical, or quasi-historical, persons: Cain, Esau, Joseph, and probably Moses. In communities whose less elaborated doctrine could make a popular appeal, the process of individualization must have advanced a great deal farther. What, for example, would the average Pagan convert to the

community O make of the metaphysical doctrine of the incarnation of the Logos? Accustomed as he had been to the worship of a deity who was believed to have appeared upon earth in human shape, would he not be inclined to think of a Christ, the son of God, who had "appeared" to men, as one who had, not metaphorically, but literally at some time appeared, converting the general into a particular incarnation?

Early in the Christian era the conception of isolated appearances of the Christ was beginning to be rather widely held; for it is found in documents which were afterwards taken over by the Christians. There existed at that time a Gnostic Christianity, but no established Christian dogma. Various doctrines were competing with one another. Evidence of this can be found in the *Clementine Recognitions*, which, granting that the book assumed its existing form towards the middle of the second century, comprises sections of much earlier date. The underlying document was Gnostic in character, but its Gnosticism appears to have been of a comparatively conservative Jewish type. In the related *Homilies* the supreme God, held to be both just and good, is not, strictly speaking, Yahveh, but the universal God. The ruler of this world is the devil; not precisely the Christian devil, but rather a subordinate power serving the purposes of God in an imperfect world. That is a Jewish view of Satan which is found in Job i, 6 ff., where he is not a dæmon or the adversary of God. He is one of the "sons of God" and submissive to the divine will.¹ The relationship of the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions* to one another is obscure; but there was evidently an earlier literature which is common to both. The theosophic doctrine of the *Recognitions* differs from the later more specifically Gnostic doctrine in making the supreme Being the Creator, and in abolishing those qualities of Yahveh which offended Marcion and other Gnostics by roundly asserting that all statements in the Old Testament derogatory of God are false. Obviously the underlying document was

¹ Cp. also Num. xxii, 22 and 32. In verse 22 the Hebrew word translated "adversary" is *satan*.

not Catholic; and in neither the *Homilies* nor the *Recognitions* is there any trace of the dogma of a vicarious sacrifice. In opposition to the devil as the king of the present æon is set the Christ as the king of the perfect æon to come. But this king is not Jesus; he is a pre-existent Christ—evidently the outcome of speculation analogous to that which created the Gnostic Christ-Logos.

The doctrine of the *Odes of Solomon* that the Word is an emanation from God which becomes incarnate in men is found in the *Recognitions*. But whereas apparently in the former the Word has his dwelling-place in spiritual men only, in the latter God has breathed his divine spirit into all men; and this spirit is the Christ, the only-begotten. Consequently men are not classified as spiritual and carnal, but according to the degree in which they are taught and guided by the Christ within them. But, as in the *Odes*, through union with the Son men become sons of God by adoption.¹ The spiritual Christ is likened to an odour.

A prominent feature of the preaching of Peter in these two books is "the true Prophet" or "the Prophet of the truth." There must in the first century have been a literature treating this theme. In the *Recognitions* we find inconsistent opinions as to the nature of the Prophet which can be explained most satisfactorily by supposing that they have been derived from different documents presenting stages in the development of the doctrine. The inconsistencies are important because they exhibit a progressive transition from the Logos doctrine of the *Odes of Solomon* to the later specialized dogma of the Incarnation. According to one—presumably the earliest opinion—the true Prophet is the Christ in men. As in the *Odes*, it is through the Christ that men obtain Gnosis. Men cannot, says Peter, discover the nature of God by their intellect; all that can or need be known of God can be learnt from the true Prophet

¹ Deus, cum fecisset hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem suam, operi suo spiramen quoddam et odorem suæ divinitatis inseruit, ut per hoc participes facti unigeniti ejus, per ipsum etiam amici dei et filii adoptionis existerent, IV, 9.

Si vero non pure eum quis nec sancte neque fideliter quaerat, intra ipsum quidem est, quia ubique est et intra sensus omnium invenitur. VIII, 62.

—sc. the Christ within them—in other words, by intuition. The doctrine is pre-Christian in the sense that it is not founded upon the person or the teaching of Jesus. It is quite clear from the terms of the passage previously quoted from Bk. VIII that Peter is not thinking of the teaching of any particular person, since he says that even though the true Prophet be not rightly questioned he is yet everywhere and within the minds of all men. We find in this literature a progressive limitation of the indwelling Christ first to the pious in general and later to a few exceptional persons. We have in the *Recognitions* the two statements that the true Prophet has traversed the centuries from the beginning of the world, and that the Christ through all generations has been present with the pious.¹ We are then led on to the statement found elsewhere, but more explicitly in the *Homilies*, that the true Prophet had manifested himself at different times to certain men of exceptional piety, mention being made of Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.

We may refer this development, in part at least, to the penetration into Greece and Egypt of the oriental idea that a certain god had descended in the form of a man and then, after appeasing the earth, re-ascended into Heaven. Hermes, who was named king and saviour, is an example. In a Gnostic work entitled *Korē Kosmou* (Pupil of the Cosmos) wickedness, it is said, had so gained the upper hand on earth that the very elements—earth, air, fire, and water—approached the throne of the Most High with complaints. Thereupon God sent as human beings to the earth Osiris and Isis, who, after founding temples and cult and establishing laws, re-ascended to Heaven.² Horace must have been acquainted with ideas of this kind when, in Ode I, ii, 48, he hinted that in Augustus Hermes had incarnated himself to bring order into the world. In these myths the incarnate god or Logos has predominantly the

¹ Nam et ipse verus propheta ab initio mundi per saeculum currens festinat ad requiem. II, 22. Christus, qui ab initio et semper erat, per singulas quasque generationes piis latenter licet semper aderat. I, 52.

² Reitzenstein, *Poim.*, p. 178.

quality of Saviour, but he appears also in Gnostic writings as prophet and teacher.

In *Recog.* I, 33, there is found a view of the nature of the Prophet inconsistent with the primitive one. Here the Prophet has become a divine being standing apart from men and making only occasional appearances. For it is said that he appeared to Abraham and gave information which the Patriarch had desired concerning the causes of things.¹ In one or two places the true Prophet is identified with Adam, the primal man (*Anthropos*), reminding us of the Christ *Adamas*, the Son of Man, in the system of the Naassenes. For example, in I, 46, it is said that when man was created, since he was the son of God and the beginning of all, he was the first to be anointed by God with oil extracted from the tree of life; and in consequence of having been so anointed he was called the Christ. In the *Homilies* generally the Prophet of the truth has become definitely a single person, the Jesus of the Gospels, but that this is the view of the redactor and not primitive appears from an illuminating passage (II, 6) which is evidently a fragment from one of the basic documents :—

Now the Prophet of the truth is he who always knows all things—things past as they were, things present as they are, things future as they shall be; sinless, merciful, alone entrusted with the declaration of the truth. Read, and you will find that those [were deceived] who thought that they had found the truth of themselves. For this is peculiar to the Prophet, to declare the truth, even as it is peculiar to the sun to bring the day. Wherefore, as many as have ever desired to know the truth, but have not had the good fortune to learn it from him, have not found it, but have died seeking it.

Comparison with passages of similar import in the *Recognitions* raises a suspicion that the redactor has not reproduced the exact words of his source; but he has left enough of the original form to show that the writer was not thinking of a single person. What we have is a definition, and the term "Prophet" is general. Otherwise

¹ In Philo also we find the statement that the Logos had appeared to the Patriarchs.

we should not have had the word "always," and the verb would not have been in the present tense. Anyone writing of a particular person no longer alive would have said: "The Prophet of the truth is [or was] he who *knew* all things." And the persons who have died seeking the truth are all people, everywhere, and at all times, who have failed to learn it from the Prophet. The implication is that in all ages the Prophet could have been consulted. We are not restricted to inference in this matter, because there is another passage (XVIII, 13) in which it is quite definitely stated that the revelation of truth must—in the past—have been given to all who were worthy; and of course it could have been given only by the Prophet of the truth:—

"No one knows the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son may wish to reveal him." The statement is correct; for he, being the Son from the beginning, was alone appointed to give the revelation to those to whom he wishes to give it. And thus the first man Adam must have heard of him, and Enoch, who pleased [God], must have known him; and Noah, the righteous one, must have become acquainted with him, and Abram his friend must have understood, and Isaac must have perceived him; and Jacob, who wrestled with him, must have believed in him; and the revelation must have been given to all among the people who were worthy.

The redactor quotes the text with the object of identifying the Son with Jesus. But the text is a statement of Gnostic doctrine, and as such occasioned very keen controversy between Gnostics and Catholics.¹ The latter endeavoured to explain away its implication that the true God could be revealed only by the Son—the eternal, indwelling Christ. That is the original meaning of the passage as a whole, for the men named are said to have had direct knowledge of God, and that by "revelation," which, according to the original doctrine of the Clementines, could have been given only by the Prophet of the truth, who is not a person apart, but within. There is a corresponding passage in

¹ The presence in the Gospel of this statement of Gnostic doctrine is part of the evidence that the Primitive Gospel was of Gnostic origin. No Catholic writer would have introduced it.

Recog. II, 47 which differs considerably from the one in the *Homilies*, but it is evident that both have been founded upon an earlier document. In the opinion of Bousset¹ the most original and characteristic view of the Clementines is that the divine Prophet who manifested himself in Adam afterwards manifested himself personally in a series of other men. This is a view, and very likely an early view, of the Clementines; but the passage quoted from *Recog.* IV, 9, proves that the original view was that the Christ has his dwelling in the minds of all men.

We have been able to infer from the *Recognitions* that in one, if not more, of the underlying documents quite exceptional honour was paid to Adam. The same document must have been one of the sources of the *Homilies*, for in III, 18, the writer says that Adam had all knowledge—i.e., perfect Gnosis—and in 21 that he was *the only true Prophet*. The redactor works this into his own Christological doctrine by saying that Adam had the Holy Spirit of Christ, who had reappeared again and again in the world, introducing an ambiguity. He seems to mean that it was the Holy Spirit that was in Christ which had reappeared, since he says that Adam had this Holy Spirit. The original writer cannot have used such an expression, his opinion having been that Christ himself was the Spirit who had “appeared,” not ‘visibly, but in the men in whom he became incarnate. The redactor was undoubtedly dependent upon an earlier Gnostic document, since it is extremely unlikely that a Christian writer, for whom Jesus was uniquely the Prophet of the truth, would of his own motion have described Adam as “the only true Prophet.” The doctrine of the repeated appearances of the Christ, above all in so superlative a degree as is here assigned to Adam, is surely not orthodox Catholic doctrine. The indications are that the doctrine is pre-Christian, Gnostic in its origin, and that it had been reached without any reference to the person or teaching of Jesus.

Epiphanius gives the information that the Clementine *Recognitions* was current among the Gnostic Ebionites, who named the Christ the “Prophet of the truth.” And

¹ *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, p. 173.

their Christ was a Spirit invisible to men. There were two sects of Ebionites, as we learn from Origen. The fact is also clearly apparent from the confused and inconsistent accounts of their doctrines given by early Christian writers who confounded one of the sects with the other. According to Epiphanius, the sect originated very soon after the fall of Jerusalem; but as he says, referring to the Gnostic Ebionites, that they used the same book which the Sampseans, Ossæans, and Nasaræans used, seeing also that these sects agreed with one another on certain important articles of belief, we must conclude that they did not come independently into existence. Rather is it probable that they were subdivisions of an earlier sect, which may therefore be supposed to have existed at least as early as the first half of the first century. Indeed, there is evidence that two of them at any rate were pre-Christian; for Epiphanius (*Haer.* xix, 6) says that "the Ossæans and Nasaræans persisted until the coming of Christ,"¹ also that the book used by these sects named the Christ "the great King"; so that it may have contained the doctrine of the *Homilies* that the Christ is to be the king of the future æon. Epiphanius says further that the books of the *Recognitions* which the Ebionites possessed had been corrupted by them. The meaning of this statement simply is that the version current among the Ebionites differed from his own. It is certainly possible that the Ebionites may have made alterations in the text or have interpolated it, but there is plenty of reason for believing that the extant version is an altered and interpolated version of an earlier document. We have seen that in both the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions* the attempt has been made to obscure an earlier statement that the Christ had manifested himself in certain mythical or semi-mythical Biblical characters. It is therefore very interesting to learn that the Sampsean doctrine included the repeated appearance of the Christ, and first of all in the body of Adam. Being a spirit, he had to clothe himself

¹ Since, by the time of Epiphanius, Gnosticism had ceased to be a serious danger to Catholic Christianity, he could venture to be less guarded than his predecessors and allow some facts previously concealed to appear.

in some sort of body, either material or psychic, in order to be seen. We find among these sects some of the modifications of doctrine which were adverted to in connection with the Clementines. And this confirms the opinion that before the Clementines were written the different forms of doctrine were already current. Thus some of the Ebionites held that Adam was the Christ, others that the Christ endued with the body of Adam appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that he had visited the earth on other occasions.

We have now traced the evolution of the dogma of the Incarnation. It had its root in the teaching of the *Wisdom of Solomon* that Wisdom, a spiritual emanation from God, passes into holy souls. Then for Wisdom was substituted the Word, like Wisdom personified, and named the Christ and Son of God, but really believed to be a formless Spirit, taking the shape of those in whom he becomes incarnate. Gradually the personification was more definitely and more literally conceived. Certain men were thought to have been exceptional manifestations of the Christ. Then by some Adam alone was thought to have been, or to have embodied, the Christ and to have appeared upon earth on several occasions. Possibly there was a difference of opinion as to whether Adam was identical with the Christ or whether the Christ assumed the body of Adam when he wished to visit the earth. Finally Jesus was substituted for Adam as the vehicle. Epiphanius says of the Ebionites who believed that the Christ had appeared in the body of Adam that at other times "when they wished" they said: "No; but the Spirit which is the Christ came and clothed himself in the body of Jesus." We may safely infer that these contrary opinions were not held by anyone simultaneously, but that among the Ebionites the belief that the Christ had been incarnate in Adam was gradually replaced by the belief either that he had been incarnate in Jesus or that the incarnation in Jesus was a subsequent and recent one; just as the Peratai believed that in the days of Herod the Logos had descended in the form of the Patriarch Joseph, whose visible body may not have been supposed to be a material one. So far the doctrine even in its latest stage is Gnostic. The Gnostic

Cerinthus, or his followers, taught that the Christ descended into Jesus at his baptism and left him again before the Crucifixion. But as Christianity became popular these Gnostic subtleties fell into disfavour. Pagan converts could more easily accommodate themselves to the simple and more familiar idea that a divine being became man. And the dogma of "expiation" required that the Son of God should suffer in the flesh. Consequently the doctrine which remained victorious in the second century was the Catholic doctrine that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God.

CHAPTER V

THE NAME *JESUS*

1. IS IT THE NAME OF A KNOWN MAN?

WE have seen that in the *Odes of Solomon* the Christ was not named Jesus. We have also seen reason to infer that in the early books which lie behind the Clementines, whereas the Christ was said to have appeared as Adam, or to have manifested himself in certain other persons named in the Old Testament, the name of Jesus had not been directly connected with the list of those persons. The inference is confirmed by the fact that Jesus was also ignored by the sects among whom these books apparently originated. Epiphanius says that he had not been able to make out whether the Christ of the book of the Ossæans was our Lord Jesus Christ. Evidently therefore the name *Jesus* did not occur in that book. The sect of the Sampsæans is said to have remained in existence to a later date than that of the Ossæans, but there was evidently no Jesus in their doctrine. Epiphanius says they were neither Christians nor Jews. They were, in fact, a Jewish sect, and they were Christians in the sense that they revered a divine Christ. Certainly, however, their Christ had no connection with Jesus. The same may be predicated of the early Gnostic Ebionites; but, as was previously pointed out, they, or some of them, did at some time begin to regard Jesus as a manifestation of the Christ. The same statement may be made concerning the Naassenes and their allied sects. The name "Jesus" is found in the Naassene Hymn, but the character of the fundamental doctrine of the sect renders it practically certain that the name was not primitive. Origen says that the Ophites "would not even hear the name of Jesus."¹ There

¹ *Contra Celsus*, VI, 30.

is no evidence that either the Peratai or the Sethians ever adopted the name. The special cult-hero of the former was evidently Joseph and of the latter, Seth. Another Gnostic sect revered Cain.

The Christology of the Gnostic sects was evolved in complete independence of the Gospel story and of the person of Jesus. Gnostics of the second century adapted their conceptions to some of the articles of orthodox Christian belief, and the use of the name "Jesus" by Basilides and Valentinus can be understood from their acquaintance with a Gospel. Bousset has shown from a consideration of Iren. I, xxx, 11 ff., that with the earlier narrative of the Saviour who rescues Sophia the figure of the Gospel Jesus is artificially bound up. For to the narrative as it was given in an earlier form is appended the statement that Sophia, before the coming of the Saviour, had through Jaldabaoth, the chief Archon, without the knowledge of the latter, produced the emission of two men, one of them from the barren Elizabeth and the other from the virgin Mary. In this manner did Sophia prepare Jesus in advance, so that the Christ, when he descended, might find a pure receptacle. He then united himself with Sophia. Bousset observes that "this strange and mangled Christology becomes comprehensible only if we may assume that here an original independent myth of the union of the Saviour with Sophia has been artificially bound up with the figure of Jesus."¹ Referring again to Iren. I, xi, and I, xv, 3, Bousset shows that the Christ who is said to have become united with Jesus was originally Anthropos.²

The name *Jesus* must, however, have been in use somewhere at a date earlier than that at which the Naassene Hymn, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Didache)*, and the oldest portions of the Pauline Epistles were composed. Those Epistles, even if they are not genuine writings of Paul, include Gnostic documents which may reasonably be dated

¹ Cp. the union of Nous with Logos in the Sethian doctrine. It is possible that the Gnostic fable of the union of the Saviour with Sophia reflects allegorically the amalgamation of the Word with Wisdom.

² *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, pp. 240-6.

about the year 50.¹ These documents are reproduced in the Appendix to this book. The question then arises: "What was the origin of the name?" Most people will, of course, at once reply that it is the name of a man who was crucified in Jerusalem by order of Pontius Pilate. But, if we are to act upon the principle laid down by Prof. Guignebert that the scientific historian must believe nothing in advance, we must test the grounds of the prevalent opinion. Since the Gospels are sacred literature, not historical documents, and since the events recorded in them are not substantiated by the evidence of contemporary profane authors, it would not be scientific [to take for granted the truth even of so much of the record as is left to it by critical theologians. The Gospels cannot guarantee themselves. Well-known examples in the literature of fiction and of drama prove that vividness in the execution is no evidence of truth. A very pertinent question is this: "Would men for whom the Christ was a spiritual being, an emanation from the ineffable Most High, who, if he had ever manifested himself at all, could be supposed to have done so only in the persons of certain mythical or semi-mythical characters such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, or Joseph, have identified him with an obscure person who had been executed in their own lifetime?" We are not now considering the religious value of the Gospels, but their historical truth. If the account which they give of the last days of Jesus is historically true the events recorded must have produced so great a stir throughout Jewry that neither Philo nor Josephus could have remained ignorant of them. Liberal criticism has indeed been progressively destroying the record until hardly anything now remains but the bare fact of the crucifixion, which is consequently left in the air, so to speak, unsupported by any adequate explanation of its motive; and the Jesus of this criticism, however admirable as a human being, may reasonably be described

¹ The *Didachē* in its original form may have been earlier than this, but the date of the passages in which the name "Jesus" occurs, though evidently early, is uncertain.

as a rather obscure person. If Jesus was not an obscure person, then, as some who believe in his historicity have rightly perceived, the manner of his execution by a Roman governor proves that he was put to death as a political agitator; in which case he takes his place by the side of Judas the Galilean, the "Egyptian false prophet," and Theudas "the magician," and there is no valid reason why Josephus, who mentions them, should not have mentioned him. The interpolator of the Slavonic Josephus appears to have appreciated this aspect of the matter.

We thus have to fall back upon the idea that it was the unprecedented quality of the teaching of Jesus which created the belief that he was the Messiah, or the "true Prophet." The true Prophet of the Clementine literature is, however, quite obviously not the Jewish Messiah; and a Messiah, in Jewish expectation, had to be something more than a teacher. The promulgation of ethical doctrine of a new and admirable kind might cause a man to be hailed as a great prophet; but there is no example in history of the exaltation of a prophet to the position into which Jesus was exalted; and unfortunately critics of the New Testament cannot agree as to what Jesus taught or even whether his teaching had any special significance for ethics or sociology. The latest of these is Prof. Guignebert, who in his great work *Jesus* asserts that the only purpose of Jesus was to preach the Jewish eschatological kingdom. It is difficult to see how a new religion could have been founded upon preaching of that kind; unless, as Schweitzer supposes, Jesus had succeeded in implanting the belief that he himself would return as the supernatural Messiah to inaugurate the kingdom—an opinion which Guignebert does not share. A matter upon which there is so sharp a disagreement is a weak foundation for an historical theory, and really no kind of teaching would be adequate to explain the facts. Those who imagine it to have been the dynamic factor are invited to ponder the opinion of Origen, who, instead of protesting against the preference of Celsus for the best ethical teaching of the Greeks, replies that the teaching of Jesus is better adapted to the comprehension of the ordinary

man; just as wholesome food of a homely kind is relished by the poor and is beneficial to them.¹ The ethical teaching of the Gospels does not rise above the high-water mark of contemporary Greek and Jewish morality, and in some respects even falls below that of the former, especially in positing future reward and punishment as a motive for well-doing.² It is the setting in which the Christian maxims are placed, the form in which they have issued from the best Christian minds of the period, and the accord which they consequently awaken in Christian feeling that give to the utterances of Jesus the appearance of uniqueness. It is evident from the Epistles, Pauline and other, and from the Apologies, that the teaching of Jesus occupied a very subordinate position in the early propaganda. And of the personality of Jesus, which, though it is no more than an assumption *ad hoc*, is relied upon by some as an explanation of the whole amazing phenomena, we hear practically nothing. In the book entitled *Octavius*, written by Minucius Felix for the purpose of recommending Christianity to Pagans, the name "Jesus" does not once occur, and there is in it no mention of a Gospel or of any occurrence recorded in one, excepting a slight reference to the Crucifixion which is susceptible of a Gnostic interpretation. In the author's defence and profession of faith "personality" and "teaching" count for absolutely nothing. As he was plainly a highly cultured and intelligent man, it would not be unreasonable to infer that he regarded the Gospels as books written for the edification of Christians, but of no value as a record of real events. In the Epistles there is no evidence of any impression that had been made by a human "personality."

At the present day the historicity of Jesus is no more than an hypothesis unsupported by any document which deserves to be qualified as historical. It is maintained on the ground that Christianity cannot be explained otherwise. The hypo-

¹ *Contra Celsus*, VII, 59.

² For Jewish parallels see J. M. Robertson, *Christianity and Mythology*; and for Greek, Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius *passim*.

thesis is legitimate, but is it adequate? There is at all events sufficient justification for the presentation and impartial consideration of an alternative theory.

2. THE "PROPHET" JOSHUA

Something more exalted than a teacher, however powerful his personality, so long as he is supposed to have been subject to human limitations, seems needed to account for the facts. And when we have noted that in the doctrine of various sects the Christ was believed to have manifested himself in Adam, Cain, Abraham, Enoch, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, we ought surely to find it rather surprising that the list is terminated by Moses and does not include Joshua, especially as Moses is recorded (Deut. xviii, 15) to have promised the Israelites that "the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me." This promise, which of course refers to Joshua, was referred by Christians of the second—possibly of the late first—century to Jesus. If at that time the promise was believed to have been fulfilled in a re-appearance of Joshua, it could easily have happened that we should have no clear and explicit record of the fact. For if any early writer had intended to say that the Christ had manifested himself in Joshua, or that Joshua was the Christ, writing in Greek the only way in which he could have made his statement would be that "Jesus is the Christ," since *Jesus* is the Greek form of *Joshua*. In the second century, after the publication of the Gospels, the statement would as a matter of course have been taken to refer to the Gospel Jesus. How easily the misunderstanding could have arisen will be evident from the following quotation from Origen's commentary upon John:—

Jesus said to the people: Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you. And the priests with the Ark of the Covenant he ordered to pass [over the Jordan] before the people, when the mystery of the dispensation of the Father with respect to the Son was made manifest, the Son who was exalted by the grace which the Father bestowed upon him, in order that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue

should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father. For the same thing is plainly declared through these words written in the Book of Jesus: And the Lord said unto Jesus: "This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel." We have also to hear our Lord Jesus speaking to the children of Israel: "Come hither and hear the words of the Lord your God. Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you" (Josh. iii. 9). For in the being baptized unto Jesus we shall know that the living God is in us.

There is no ambiguity here. The identification of Jesus with Joshua is absolute. Exactly how Origen conceived the identity is uncertain; but it would be quite in accordance with his known doctrine if, as the Peratai believed that the Logos had made a special revelation of himself in a reappearance of Joseph, Origen believed that he had made a special revelation of himself in a reappearance of Joshua. A link between the two views may perhaps be seen in the name which the Christians gave to the father of Jesus. It is significant that according to Matthew the name of Joseph's father was Jacob. Luke was apparently too wary to repeat this.¹ Although as an original thinker Origen may be supposed to have impressed upon the doctrine he received some qualities out of his own mind, in essentials it was very much older. His belief that the Logos dwells within men goes back to the *Odes of Solomon*, and his belief that the Logos had always been present in the world was older than the Clementine *Recognitions*. It is noticeable that after quoting from the Book of Joshua he alters the phrase "God is among you" into "the living God is in us"; and it is clear from his *Commentary upon John* that his meaning is that God is within us as the Word. But apparently, just as some Gnostics thought that the Christ had manifested himself in a particular manner in Adam, so he thought that the Christ had manifested himself in Joshua.

This belief was not a product of his own mind. He must have received it. There was undoubtedly an early expectation among Jews that Joshua would reappear. In John's

¹ Probably the Messiah ben Joseph was thought of as a reincarnation of Joseph himself.

Gospel we are told that Jews who went to question the Baptist asked him: "Art thou the prophet?" (i, 21). Again, in vii, 40, some of the multitude say of Jesus: "This is of a truth the prophet!" Origen¹ perceived that the strictly defined term "*the prophet*" must refer to someone who already existed in the Jewish consciousness, and he identified this prophet with the prophet (Joshua) of Deut. xviii, 15. There cannot be any doubt that the identification is correct. In Matthew we read that some people believed that Jesus was "one of the prophets." This looks like a deliberate alteration of the earlier phrase, made because the identification of Jesus with Joshua had become a source of embarrassment. The "true Prophet" of the Clementines was identified with this prophet. In the *Recognitions* a Hellenistic Jew named Niceta says: "There is mention in our religion of a certain prophet whose coming was hoped for by all who observe that religion. Through him immortality and a blessed life is promised to all who believe." Since this prophet is obviously a divine being, the statement may be taken as evidence that for some Jews at any rate Joshua was the expected heavenly Messiah. We know from Justin that the "prophet" of Deuteronomy was believed by early Christians to have been both Joshua and Jesus. For in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, 62, after quoting Gen. xlix, 10, Justin says: "This was not spoken in reference to Judah but to the Christ, for all people of all nations do not expect Judah but Jesus, *who brought your fathers out of Egypt.*"² In *Hom. III*, 53 the Prophet of the truth is quoted as having said:—

I am he of whom Moses prophesied, saying, the Lord your God will raise up from among you a prophet like unto me. Hearken unto him in all things. And whoever shall not hearken unto that prophet shall die.

The true Prophet of the Clementines, having been originally a spiritual being, could be supposed to have appeared as Adam or Moses or Joshua; but it is very unlikely that a

¹ *Com. on John* vi, 6.

² Cp. Ep. of Jude 5, 6. See also T. Whittaker, *The Origins of Christianity*, 4th ed., p. 29.

recently living Galilean prophet can have been associated with these. In view of the probable relationship between the Petrine and the Ebionite literature it is significant that in a speech of Peter in Acts (iii, 22-23) Jesus is identified with the prophet promised by Moses. This identification, coupled with the fact that Joshua was especially honoured in Samaria, throws light upon the taunting assertion of the Jews (Jn. viii, 48) that Jesus was a Samaritan.

3. THE JESUS OF THE GOSPELS IS ONE OF SEVERAL

If it is inconceivable that Gnostics can have given to their Logos the name of a Galilean peasant, is it any less so that the leader of a small band of humble persons can in so short a time have become the awful Being depicted in the Book of Revelation or the great high priest of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "made higher than the heavens," "after the likeness of Melchizedek" who was "without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life"? Theologians will not be able indefinitely to shirk the enormous difficulties by which their theory is oppressed.

The Jesus of the Naassene Hymn has none of the features of the Jesus of the Gospels. He is not born; he does not come to work miracles or to preach. He descends from Heaven for the liberation of the despairing soul (*Psyche*) from the gross matter in which she is entangled, bringing to men the Gnosis through which they could overcome the adverse supernatural powers. The writer seems to have been acquainted with certain Babylonian incantations in which the saviour-god Marduk begs his Father Ea to send him to earth for the deliverance of men; but he betrays no knowledge of any Gospel.

Another Jesus who is not the Jesus of the Gospels is found in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. It is admitted by several competent scholars, including Harnack, that this document is of Jewish origin. It was certainly in existence in the first century and is probably pre-Gospel. Considerable additions were made to it by Christians.¹ Apart from an

¹ A good account of the *Teaching* will be found in J. M. Robertson's *The Jesus Problem*, Appendix A.

obvious interpolation in chap. VIII there is no reference to the earthly life of Jesus; but in one of the passages which are possibly of Ebionite origin it is written: "We thank thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant (*pais*)."

Whether, as some theologians maintain, Jesus was merely an ethical teacher, or whether, as others believe, his preaching was eschatological, the words quoted are inapplicable to him. A Gnostic could have written them, because knowledge which is "life" was Gnosis. In chap. IX we are told that Jesus had made known "the holy vine of David," of which there is no mention in any Gospel, though in the Fourth, a Gnostic Gospel, he is himself termed "the vine." The "holy vine" has been interpreted to mean the Church. But to say that Jesus had "made known" the Church to the community does not give sense. There is also a vine in the Mandæan *Book of John*, 131-143, which is named Miriaī. Miriaī is no doubt a name for the Mandæan community, and it is symbolically transferred to the vine, which is the living principle or soul of the community; but the vine cannot represent the community itself, because it is said that the members "perch upon it," "eat its leaves," and "drink the wine of its entrails." It must typify the source of spiritual life. "Its leaves are jewels, its fruits are pearls." That would be hyperbole written of the community. Farther on it is called the "Tree of Life." We note the Gnostic love of symbolism. The "holy vine of David" must also be a symbol, and a symbol of something very important. We may infer that it symbolized whatever the wine of the Eucharist symbolized for the community in question; and from the name "Eucharist" and from the statement that Jesus had "made it known," it is clear that the thing symbolized was not the blood of Jesus. In fact in the following chapter the Eucharistic meal is expressly termed "spiritual food and drink," "given through thy servant," and with these is conjoined "eternal life." Hence there is no question here of the Catholic Church or of the Catholic Sacrament. There may have been some symbolic connection between this Eucharist and a "new covenant" suggested

by Ps. lxxxix, 3 : " I have made a covenant with my elect, I have sworn unto David my servant." The Jesus of this document is not " son of David," he is the " servant " (*pais*) of God.

In the Gnostic *Book of Baruch* we have yet another Jesus, who is a shepherd and has practically nothing in common with the Jesus of the Gospels beyond the dogmatic fact of his death. The book expresses allegorically the doctrine of a Jewish Gnostic community. Lipsius concluded that this doctrine could have existed long before Christianity.¹ Lublinski has demonstrated the early date of its origin.²

A reasonable explanation of all this diversity would be that the name *Jesus* had a divine connotation, not having in the above-cited cases been attached to a known person. Evidence that Joshua was expected to reappear, or was believed to have reappeared, is found in the *Sibylline Oracles* :—

Now a certain excellent man shall come again from Heaven, who spread forth his hands upon the very fruitful tree, the best of the Hebrews, who once made the sun stand still, speaking with beauteous words and pure lips.

The section of the *Oracles* in which these words occur is thought to have been written about the year 80, but the belief expressed in them must have been already current. And, as the *Oracles* are prophecies ostensibly made at a very much earlier date, the events predicted had occurred before the book was written. Hence it is not impossible that the reappearance of Joshua was believed to have occurred. The writer was a Jew. Commentators may assume that he was referring to the Jesus of the Gospels; but there is no evidence that he was acquainted with a Gospel. What is proved is the existence of an expectation among Jews that Joshua would come again from Heaven. And since the Peratai believed that Joseph had reappeared as a manifestation of the Christ, other Jews can have believed that Joshua had reappeared as a manifestation of the Christ. The phrase " the very fruitful tree " does not look like a description of the cross of Jesus. It may reflect a knowledge

¹ Drews, *Die Ents. des Chris.*, p. 116.

² *Die Ents. des Chris.*, I, 152.

of the ancient Jewish custom of suspending the body of a sacrificial victim upon a tree. But also it may involve the recollection of a Jesus—Jeshu ben Pandera—who, being reputed a wonder-worker, had actually after stoning been hanged upon a tree. Probably general knowledge concerning this Jesus was very vague, but the fact might serve for the bringing of a religious belief to a focus. Mr. Hugh Schonfield¹ has reproduced for English readers the result of Samuel Krauss's analysis of the Jewish book *Toldoth Jeshu*, showing that a very early work has been overloaded with later additions. The book has been expanded from knowledge of the Gospels, but the kernel of it seems to have been a pre-Gospel story of Jeshu ben Pandera. References in the Talmud to this Jeshu rather suggest that some story of which he was the subject was in existence at a very early date. And if the story was known to early Christians the borrowing need not have been all one way. In *Toldoth Jeshu* iv, 25, we read concerning the death of ben Pandera :—

When they had let him hang until the time of afternoon they took him down from the tree, for so it is written [Deut. xxi, 23]. Then they buried him.

With this may be compared Acts xiii, 29 :—

And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre

—in conjunction with Acts x, 39, where it is said that Jesus was slain and hanged on a tree *by the Jews*. The statement that it was the Jews who, after killing Jesus, took him down from the tree points to some source independent of, and probably a good deal earlier than, the Gospel narrative—a source which had nothing to tell either of Joseph of Arimathea or of Pilate—and it is by no means inconceivable that this source may have been the account of ben Pandera's death which has been included in *Toldoth Jeshu*. It is, however, unlikely that the name itself was taken from this or from any other man. Nor is it likely that the Christ was actually identified with ben Pandera. The knowledge that a wonder-working Jesus had been put to death by the Jews could merely add substance to an evolving dogma. In a

¹ *According to the Hebrews.*

period when beliefs of the kind which have been indicated were held about Joshua, and when the Christ was imagined to have manifested himself in Joseph and in Moses, it would be extraordinary indeed if no one had hit upon the idea that he had appeared as "the best of the Hebrews." We have a right to conclude that the belief existed long before the time of Origen and even before any Gospel had been written. At first the date of the supposed appearance of the Christ in the body of Joshua would be as indefinite as that of his supposed appearance in the body of Adam was among the Gnostic Ebionites.

4. LITERALIZATION OF GNOSTIC SYMBOLISM

In the *Book of Baruch*, probably written shortly after the year 70, it is said that Wisdom "appeared upon earth and was conversant with men." The idea was not then new, and in exactly the same sense Gnostics, following the *Odes of Solomon*, could say that the Word had "appeared upon earth." A descent of the Logos was part of the earliest doctrine of the Gnostic sects in general. The gradual literalization of the idea is perfectly intelligible. The growth and multiplication of cults were the result of the universal longing for a Saviour. There was felt the need of a divine being not too dissimilar or too remote from men, to whom petitions could be hopefully addressed, and through whom immortality might be secured. The poor and the oppressed snatched at any comfortable belief; and their credulity was profound. When the Word had been named Son of God and Christ his individualization became inevitable. Whatever some of the leaders and teachers continued to think had to be reserved as esoteric lore to be revealed only to such as were able to receive it. Origen hints at the existence of esoteric lore suitable only for "the perfect" even in his time.

In the case of the Naassenes we can actually see the individualization in progress. The Naassene Logos was a "formless" spirit which descends for the rescue of the World-soul. In the Naassene Hymn traces of the primitive doctrine are clearly perceptible, but the Soul has been

allegorized into a woman "wandering in a labyrinth" and the Christ into a person, the Son of God, who with the permission of his Father goes down to liberate her. Conjoined with this we have the more developed and more concretely expressed idea that the object of the descent is the salvation of men. And the Christ has now acquired a name. At this stage there arose a difference of opinion as to the nature of the descending Christ. The notion of a disembodied—naked—spirit was repugnant to the ancient mind. Gnostic teachers who supposed that Adam, or Joshua, had come again from Heaven as the visible clothing of the spiritual Christ would reckon the substance of the descending being to be *psyche*, whence came Docetism. Gnostics who believed that matter is intrinsically evil could not admit that Christ had appeared in the flesh. But it must have been the common belief of Jews that Enoch, Moses, and Elijah had been translated in the flesh. There were many Jews in the early Christian communities; and the Catholic party took over the Jewish doctrine of a bodily resurrection. The thought of the eternal life of the spirit did not content them. A salvation which did not include the salvation of the body seemed to them incomplete, and so they insisted upon a resurrection of the whole man. And, since in their view the bodily resurrection of Jesus was the guarantee of this, they fought for it, in the words of van den Bergh van Eysinga, "with all the weapons in their armoury." Doubtless the resurrection narratives, so material in their detail, were invented for the express purpose of establishing the dogma. Expiation, moreover, seemed to them incomplete without the suffering of the divine victim. In the conflict of opinion the materialistic view prevailed and so became the orthodox doctrine of the Churches. We are not definitely told that the Gnostic Ebionites were Docetists, but Epiphanius says that "some of them denied that Jesus was a man."

5. THE NAME A DIVINE ONE BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN ERA

There is evidence that the name *Jesus* was a divine one before the Christian era. The disciples are said to have cast out demons in the name of Jesus in places where he had

never been, so that the power was believed to reside in the name. The ancients imagined that there was some very intimate relation between a name and the person who bore it. Consequently divine names were thought to have great efficacy in certain cases; and so thoroughly was the efficacy considered to reside in the name that a name translated into another language was supposed to lose any divine or magic power that might be inherent in it.¹ Moreover the power was thought to be independent of the belief of the person using the name. Origen says that anyone by pronouncing the formula "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" could bring demons into subjection. Justin advances as evidence of the divinity of Jesus the compelling power of his name. Justin no doubt believed that Jesus had really lived; but he also believed that he had been the Son of God before he appeared upon earth. And, indeed, unless Jesus had been divine before he was human the ascription of such power to his name at so early a date as was the case is very improbable. No one would have ascribed such power to the name of a man, unless it were the name of some very exceptional man of the remote past—Solomon, for example. We are told, however (Mk. ix, 38), that persons who were not followers of Jesus were able to cast out demons by the use of his name. That the name of a man actually living should have been used in exorcisms is incredible. No doubt the episode in the form in which it is presented is unhistorical; but it affords evidence of the use of the name *Jesus* for the purpose stated at a very early date. It is quite likely that the name was used in exorcisms even early in the first century. In a form of conjuration preserved in a papyrus occurs the formula, "I adjure thee by Jesus the god of the Hebrews." No names but those of gods and of more or less mythical persons are ever found in these formulas. The connection between magic and religion was too intimate for anything else to be possible.

Further evidence is found in Acts xix, 13, where it is said that Jews in Asia Minor used to pronounce over those who were supposed to be possessed by evil spirits the formula

¹ Origen, *Contra Celsus*, V, 45.

“I adjure you by Jesus.” The immediately following words, “whom Paul preacheth” were certainly added by the writer. (It is inconceivable that Jews can have attached divine authority to the name of a man not long dead, who, in their opinion, had been an impostor.) The compiler of Acts probably knew more about the state of the case than he cared to admit. He of course believed that Jesus was a divine being; and the Jews who used the name must have believed it to be a divine one; but not in consequence of Paul’s preaching. There is evidence in the Talmud that some Jews employed the name *Jeshu* as a magical name capable of healing diseases; and it would be arbitrary to assume that these Jews were Christians. If the name had been continuously held to be divine from an early period it is not impossible that the origin of it was not known by all those who used it. But it is certain that by some Jews and by Samaritans in general an exalted status was ascribed to Joshua, and to this day he figures in the Jewish New Year ritual as the “Prince of the Presence”—an indication that at one time he was the Metatron, undoubtedly a divine being.

(Of all the names which were applied by any Gnostics to the Christ, Jesus (*Jeshua* or *Jeshu*) was the most likely to secure general adoption, because the name signifies a *Saviour*.) We find in Matthew evidence that the name was chosen for that very reason. The angel says to Joseph, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.” The function assigned is that of a divine being and not within the competence of any man. Justin again in his *Dialogue with Trypho* and elsewhere stresses this meaning of the name. Epiphanius gives information concerning a sect of Nasaræans which, he says, existed long before Christ. Since we know that there were pre-Christian Gnostics who revered a Christ, there is no improbability in the statement; and it may possibly throw some light upon the designation of Jesus as the Nazarene, which term, as scholars have recognized, cannot have been derived from Nazareth. *Nazarene* and *Nazaræan* may be merely different Greek renderings of the Aramaic or Syriac. W. B. Smith pointed out that there is a Hebrew root *nâtsar*

which means *to guard* or *to preserve from evil*. The participial substantive formed from this root is *notser*, which would mean a *preserver* or *saviour*, and is consequently synonymous with *Jesus*. *Nazarene*, of which the Hebrew equivalent is *notsri*, could be formed from the same root by the addition of a Greek adjectival suffix; and thus we get for the meaning of *Jesus Nazarene* *the saviour who preserves*. *Nasaræan* would then quite naturally be the designation of a sect which revered a Saviour. By Greek-speaking people, as W. B. Smith pointed out, the name *Jesus* would readily be connected in thought with *Jesis* (healing) and with *Jaso* (genitive *Jasous*), the goddess of health and healing. Epiphanius observes that "in the Hebrew dialect *Jesus* (*Jesous*) is called *therapeut*—that is, physician and saviour." It is known that the Greek name *Jason* was considered by Jews to be equivalent to *Jeshua* or *Jeshu*; and we know from Strabo and Justin that the cult of *Jason* was widely spread not only in *Asia Minor* but also in the *West*. He too was a healer and a saviour.

Jesus, as the common name for the Christ, then became the chief bond of union among men whose doctrines differed so much from one another as those exhibited in the Gospels of *Mark* and *John*, and in the Epistles of *Paul*, *James*, and *Barnabas*. And the varieties are not exhausted in the mention of these names. As a synthesis of doctrines originally diverse, Christianity can be understood. As a doctrine emanating from a single man and a single place or from a single sphere of thought, it is incomprehensible. Even early in the first century a great diversity of theosophical speculation and of ideas about the Christ were agitating men's minds. The diversity existed before there was unity. Real unity was, in fact, never achieved. The Judaic and the Messianic elements in Christianity must have had an entirely different origin from the Gnostic elements. Jesus nowhere appears as the originator of dogma; he is always the subject of it. Differentiation in Jewish Gnosticism may have begun very early. If, as some scholars are now inclined to think, *Philo* had to some degree come under the influence of oriental mysticism, it may be supposed that some of the

Gnostic sects were also being influenced by it, while upon others it appears to have had but little effect.¹ Those which worked out a simple form of doctrine comparatively free from mythical allegory and cosmological speculation would be likely to make the widest popular appeal. And thus from the welter of competing dogmas there gradually emerged a system of Christology and Soteriology which, though at first it appeared in somewhat different forms, of which the most important are those known as Pauline and Johannine, may be termed Gnostic Christianity. In its most primitive form as exemplified in the Odes and in some other early Gnostic writings, the chief stress was laid upon the descent of the Christ and redemption through union with him, or by reception of the divine Spirit, and through the knowledge of God which the Christ brings. Those conceptions are still apparent in the Pauline and Johannine Christianity.² In this literature knowledge of God is still a prerequisite for the possibility of salvation; but the significance which most of the Gnostic sects were beginning to attach to "Gnosis" would probably render Christians disinclined to continue the use of the term. The supreme importance of "knowledge"—sc. of God—cannot have been a Catholic thought, for the God of Catholic Christianity was Jehovah, who had long been known. The most striking difference between the Pauline and the primitive Gnosticism is the special emphasis laid in the former upon the death of the Christ—not, however, as an expiatory sacrifice. The origin of that conception must next be considered.

¹ The work of Reitzenstein has made it probable that in the first century at any rate the operative influence was Egyptian rather than oriental.

² Rom. i, 28; viii, 9, 14; vi, 5; 1 Cor. i, 5, 30; ii, 12.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEATH OF THE CHRIST

I. THE TRIAL BY PILATE

A SCIENTIFIC treatment of the subject requires that the generally accepted account of the death of Jesus should be critically examined. This has already been done with various degrees of thoroughness by several critical theologians. Theologians necessarily come to this examination with a bias, but the candour displayed by some of them is laudable, and certain important conclusions may be held to have been established. Among these is the conclusion of Loisy that the trial by the Sanhedrin is unhistorical. Schmiedel has come to the same conclusion; and the correctness of it cannot be doubted when we note that by the Jewish law a trial during the night was forbidden, and that before a capital sentence could be pronounced two sittings of the court separated by a night had to be held. It is, moreover, inconceivable that the Jewish leaders could have made an arrest by an armed band during the night on which the Passover was eaten. The law forbade anyone to leave his house on that night. If we accept the chronology of the Fourth Gospel, then, as Schmiedel has observed, "the fourteenth of Nisan had already begun when Jesus was arrested, so that the second trial could not have fallen before the fifteenth of Nisan, which would mean the great Feast-day, on which, we may be sure, no trial could have been held." The best modern critics reject Mk. xiv, 61, 62, as spurious, and when these verses are eliminated no charge entailing the death penalty remains. Guignebert's comment is that "nothing is less certain than the trial before the Sanhedrin."¹ He infers finally that "the probability is that the Nazarene was arrested by the Roman police, judged, and

¹ *Jesus*, p. 460.

condemned by the Roman procurator—Pilate or someone else.”

What, then, of the historicity of this trial? In the first place there is no evidence at all of any political activity on the part of Jesus which could have alarmed the Roman governor. No clear intimation as to the grounds upon which Jesus was accused and condemned is obtainable from the Gospels. According to the record he was charged with having wished to make himself King of the Jews; but the Jesus of the Gospels never laid himself open to that charge; critical theologians do not believe that he ever expressed such a wish, and in the account of the trial no evidence of his having done so is brought forward. Even if it be assumed that Jesus had resolved not to defend himself, is it likely that he would have kept silent when that charge was made? If he was determined to die, his determination must have been for the furtherance of some principle. There would have been no sense at all in his allowing himself to be put to death on a false issue, particularly on that issue. All historical examples of the execution of fanatical idealists make it certain that Jesus would have spurned the false accusation and proclaimed the ideas for which he was ready to suffer. We are told that when charged he answered “Thou sayest,” which would be understood as an admission. The writer of the Fourth Gospel saw that such an admission without explanation was incredible, and he supplied one. According to the Synoptics, Jesus, having made the admission, refused to say another word. The account has not the semblance of reality. Can any intelligible explanation of the silence of Jesus be given beyond Isa. liii, 7? And who can speak of “history” in connection with a narrative so motivated? Some critics explain that the disciples had no means of learning accurately what took place at the trial. But they have not even transmitted to us any knowledge of the principle for which Jesus is supposed to have suffered. If, however, we go behind the Gospels to the earlier Christian literature, in which there is no hint of a judicial execution, we can find the solution of the enigma. Jesus puts up no defence and makes no proclamation, simply because he *had* to die, not

historically but dogmatically, not for any principle or idea, but for the salvation of mankind; and the earliest Christian writers knew no other reason.

The Triumphal Entry may be mentioned. But if that had been the offence Pilate would have taken action at once. According to Bousset this affair was a comparatively harmless and insignificant scene of which the character was afterwards transformed in the tradition of the Christian community. Guignebert, however, gives very good reasons for rejecting entirely both this episode and that of the Purging of the Temple,¹ which no man without official authority would have been allowed to carry out. After a critical analysis which yields no positive result, the French Professor can but fall back upon the vague accusation recorded by Luke that "He stirreth up the people, beginning from Galilee to this place." But what in the teaching ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels could have caused any uneasiness to Pilate? Moreover, as Guignebert observes, "while Luke records this accusation he does not know that it was actually brought forward; he simply infers it from the circumstances." Bousset also, after critically discussing the trial, is obliged to conclude that "we can no longer say definitely on what ground Jesus was condemned by Pilate."² Pilate in fact pronounces Jesus innocent, and on the evidence he could do no other.

Pilate may not have been particularly scrupulous, but it was not in his character to curry favour with the Jews by condemning to death an innocent person. He never showed any regard for Jewish susceptibilities. Some strong motive or prejudice might conceivably have induced him to be unjust, but no sufficient motive can be imagined in the present case. It would have been necessary to put before him, not merely vague accusations, but reliable evidence of political activity. Roman justice, like English, had a tradition. If the modern view of the teaching of Jesus is in any degree correct he must have seemed to Pilate a very inoffensive person; and one can hardly suppose that Pilate would have accepted without testing it any false statement that was made to him, assum-

¹ *Jesus*, pp. 228 f. and 418.

² *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 56.

ing that the Jewish leaders were wicked enough to make false accusations for the purpose of securing the execution of an innocent man. Not only have we no right to assume this; no sufficient reason can be given for an intensity of hatred which would have driven them to that point, and none at all for the hostile clamour of the people which, according to the story, was the deciding factor. Several Jewish scholars¹ have shown that the Pharisees described in the Gospel are Pharisees of the time when the Gospels were written, but not all of them, and that the description does not at all correspond with those of the year 30. The invective put into the mouth of Jesus is the invective of the writers, and the hatred affirmed is the hatred which existed between the Christians and Pharisaic Jewry in the second century. According to Guignebert the accounts of the conflicts between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem are wholly fictitious.² Thus no adequate reason for the execution of Jesus can be imagined. Some theologians have described the trial by Pilate as "a parody of justice." And so it is. But when we read in a document of which even theological critics are obliged to expunge more than half as being fictitious the account of a trial by a Roman procurator for which no reasonable motive can be assigned and which in detail is "a parody of justice"—to which, moreover, there is no reference in any Christian document earlier in its existing form than the second century—we are not entitled to assume its historicity as a matter of course. And there are known facts which justify grave doubt as to whether it took place.

2. THE GOSPEL OF PETER

The writer of the Acts of the Apostles made use of earlier sources, some of which may contain fragments still older. One cannot be sure that the longer speeches recorded in the book have not been expanded; but in a short speech of Peter (v, 30) occurs the statement, "Jesus whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree," addressed to the Jews. Whatever may be read into these words from a presupposition that the

¹ E.g., Chwolson, Friedländer, and Lublinski.

² *Jesus*, p. 421.

trial and condemnation by Pilate are historical, their plain and natural meaning is that Jesus was killed and hung upon a tree by Jews. Consequently, to say the least, they afford reasonable ground for the conjecture that in an early form of the story of the Passion Jesus was put to death by Jews without the intervention of Pilate. There must at one time have existed a somewhat voluminous Petrine literature of which we possess only a garbled remnant. Included in this literature is the *Gospel of Peter*, which, in the opinion of a good many of the best critics, was used by Justin. This writer, indeed, appears to have referred to it by name in *Dial.* 106, where he says that Jesus changed Peter's name and that this is written in his (Peter's) memoirs. Since a very large proportion indeed of Justin's quotations differ more or less from the text of Matthew, whereas it is known that some of them were taken from the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, it is a reasonable inference that he used apocryphal Gospels of earlier date than the canonical, from which no one can be proved to have quoted until after his time, and that one of those he used was the *Gospel of Peter*. A comparison of the Synoptics with one another renders it perfectly certain that they are based upon a common original, which must have been shorter than any of them. This common original, which may be called the Primitive Gospel, has been supposed by critics to have been an early form of Mark. That may be correct in a certain sense, but it does not follow that Mark's name was attached to the Primitive Gospel, and it is not likely that it was.

Both Matthew and Mark attained their present form by a process of growth, and since it is fairly certain that their existing titles are not primitive, there must have been earlier forms of the Gospel, known under different titles, which were eventually superseded, partly because they were shorter and so appeared to be incomplete, and partly because through development of doctrine they had come to be regarded as heretical. From the information we possess concerning the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* it is hardly possible to doubt that there was a rather close affinity between it and the Gospel of Matthew. And since in the *Stichometry* of

Nicephorus Matthew's Gospel is said to have 2500 verses while that according to the Hebrews has only 2200 we must infer that the former represents an earlier stage in the growth of the Gospel. That Gospel is also mentioned by early Christian writers before anything is heard of Matthew. Similarly behind Mark there must have been an earlier form of Gospel which was afterwards classed as apocryphal and fell into neglect. Such was the fate of the *Gospel of Peter*, which is more ancient than Matthew and therefore than Mark in its existing form. As Dr. W. B. Bacon has shown, this Gospel had a history, and he recognizes in it at least three strata. The conclusion of B. Weiss that in a number of cases where passages are common to both Gospels Matthew has preserved the more original form is easily demonstrable. There is internal evidence of the priority of the *Gospel of Peter* to our canonical Gospels—for example, the fact that in it after the crucifixion the circle of twelve disciples is unbroken, proving that the Gospel cannot have contained the story of the betrayal by Judas. There is an interesting statement by Papias (150 C.E.) to the effect that Mark wrote his Gospel from information which he had obtained from Peter. Commentators have found it difficult to reconcile this statement with the actual character of Mark's Gospel. It is generally rejected; yet it seems likely that some fact lies behind the statement. Now Papias does not say that Mark's name was actually attached to the Gospel in question, and there is no external evidence of the existence of Mark's Gospel until a later date. Papias says that Mark wrote down what he had heard from Peter; hence it seems not impossible that Peter's name may have been attached to the Gospel, and that an expanded form of it may have been afterwards named "according to Mark" in consequence of the statement of Papias. But it is evident from the fragment we have that the *Gospel of Peter* itself was independently elaborated. No doubt it continued to be used in certain communities (Gnostic) after the canonical Gospels had been composed.¹

¹ Serapion (ca. 200 C.E.) found a Gospel according to Peter in use at Rhossos, and he expressed his fear that the doctrine of the community was heretical.

Several commentators now agree that the story of the Passion was independently composed. In the existing Gospels it is much amplified.¹ Probably, therefore, the original narrative was little more than an account of the death of Jesus and incidents immediately connected therewith; and a much earlier form of it than we have in the canonical Gospels is recoverable from the *Gospel of Peter*.² Behind the extant account there lies an older narrative which has been amplified in one manner in the Synoptics and in a different manner in John. The discrepancies merely prove that the determining influence in each case was not historical but dogmatic. And there is no reason at all for preferring a particular version because it has been labelled "canonical" to an earlier "apocryphal" one. "Canonical" is not synonymous with "true," and canonicity is not the result of a critical investigation, of which the early Christian Fathers were totally incapable. The men who chose the four had no doubt good reasons for their choice, but historical truth was not the criterion. If it had been, either the Synoptics must have excluded the Fourth, or contrariwise. *Prima facie*, if there were any historical facts at all, the earlier version is the more likely to be correct, even if less complete. It is uncritical to assume that, because the narrative of the *Gospel of Peter* differs considerably from that of the others, it must be a falsification of theirs. There are good critical grounds for a very different opinion. The oldest definite statement on record (Cerinthus) concerning the death of Jesus exhibits a view of his nature which is found in the *Gospel of Peter*. This Gospel may be no more true than the others, but at any rate it presents an earlier form of belief.

According to this Gospel the trial of Jesus was conducted by Herod, who is styled "Herod the King."³ It is assumed that the writer has made a mistake in so styling him, because the only Herod who fits the accepted chronology is Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. There are, however,

¹ Bousset, *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 43.

² Evidence in support of this statement will be found in Appendix A.

³ This title is found also in Mark, though not in the story of the Passion.

three possibilities. The writer, though he mistakenly calls him King, may have known that Herod was ruler of Galilee. In that case, since Herod Antipas had his residence at Tiberias and had no jurisdiction in Judæa, the scene of the trial and crucifixion must have been laid in Galilee. There are certain facts which could be explained on this supposition. Bousset characterizes as very early and incontrovertible the tradition that immediately after the arrest of Jesus the disciples fled into Galilee.¹ The evidence in the canonical Gospels for this "tradition" is found in the statements that the disciples "fled," that they were "scattered" and left Jesus alone, and that the risen Jesus appeared to them in Galilee. It is conceivable that just as the birth-place of Jesus, which in the earliest form of the story was not Bethlehem, was afterwards made so, because it was thought necessary that the Messiah should be born in the city of David, so the scene of his death, which perhaps in an earlier version had been placed in Galilee, may afterwards have been transferred to Jerusalem, because Jerusalem seemed a more appropriate place for him to die in. The belief that the disciples had fled, though probably early, may not have been earliest. For it is under grave suspicion of having been motivated by Zech. xiii, 7. The flight of the disciples from Jerusalem to Galilee would then afford a convenient explanation of their presence in Galilee immediately after the crucifixion.

In the existing texts the "tradition" has been obscured. It is in fact contradicted by implication in Mk. xvi, 7, and explicitly in Lk. xxiv, 2. Probably when the status of the disciples had been elevated from that of poor fishermen to the leadership of the first Christian Church it was felt desirable to remove from them the discredit of a flight. This was done by the statement in Mk. xvi, 7, that the disciples were bidden by the young man whom the women found in the tomb to go into Galilee. In this way their presence in Galilee was still accounted for. But the women, it is added, said nothing to anyone; and there is no intimation that the disciples went.

¹ *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 44. Schmiedel, *The Johannine Writings*, pp. 311 f., assents to Bousset's opinion.

If they had fled they were already there. Inferably this message was an afterthought. The "saying nothing" refers to verses 5 and 6, and verse 7 is an interpolation.¹ There was no doubt a motive for this interpolation, and there is something strange about the whole affair. The disciples would surely have returned to their homes in Galilee without needing to be bidden by an angel to do so; and if they had tarried for a while in Jerusalem it is not easy to imagine a reason why Jesus should not have been said to have appeared to them there. In the Third and Fourth Gospels he does in fact appear to them there. These phenomena are not inconsistent with a suspicion that the narrative was gradually accommodating itself to a crucifixion in Jerusalem.

Mark's omission to record the removal of the disciples is made good in Matthew; but the *Gospel of Peter*, which relates the visit of the women to the tomb and their meeting with the young man, knows nothing of his message to the disciples. It may be confidently inferred that this Gospel was written before the verse xvi, 7 had been interpolated in Mark. In the latter Gospel it is explained that the women had followed Jesus from Galilee. In the *Gospel of Peter* that explanation is not given, and the natural implication of the statement there made is that the women were habitually resident in the town near which the tomb was situated. "Mary Magdalene, a female disciple of the Lord . . . took with her her female friends, and came to the sepulchre where he was laid." A little later on the women say "we will bewail him until we come to our house." Moreover there is no clear intimation of the return of the disciples from Jerusalem to Galilee. In § 12 it is said that the disciples "withdrew every man to his house sorrowing." The expression is not unambiguous, but in the absence of corroborative information one would not take it to mean a journey from Jerusalem to Galilee.

Certainly as the text now stands the crucifixion is said to have taken place at Jerusalem; but, as will be shown in fuller detail in Appendix A, additions have been made to the narrative; and, in particular, in the original Gospel or its

¹ Wellhausen concluded that verse 7 has been interpolated.

source there was no mention of Pilate. The proceedings at the trial are unfortunately not included in the surviving fragment, but at the close of it we are told that "Herod the King commanded the Lord to be taken, saying unto them, 'What things soever I commanded you to do unto him, do ye.'" Herod therefore had full authority to judge and to condemn. Luke was evidently acquainted with a source in which a trial by Herod was recorded and he endeavoured to reconcile the two accounts by saying that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, who, he explains, happened to be in Jerusalem at the time—an impossible story! If Jesus was crucified by order of Pilate the condemnation must have been on political grounds. But then Pilate would have kept the proceedings in his own hands and retained control of the body of Jesus until death supervened. In the *Gospel of Peter* Pilate sits with Herod for the trial—a greater absurdity than the story of Luke! Too great, indeed, to have been perpetrated by the original writer, and explicable only by the determination of a redactor to ascribe to Pilate some participation in the proceedings. On the assumption upon which we are at present working the Herod in question was believed by the writer to have been Herod Antipas, though mistakenly styled King. The writer must at least have known that Pilate had no jurisdiction in Galilee, above all if he supposed Herod to have been king of that country. It is not conceivable that Herod, having jurisdiction in his own tetrarchy, would have invited the Roman procurator of Judæa to sit upon the bench with him. In this Gospel, again, it is said that when Joseph begged the body of Jesus for burial "Pilate sent to Herod and begged his body." The disposal of the body of Jesus thus lay with Herod, which could not have been the case if he had been crucified by Pilate. And Joseph would have known that Herod was the proper person to whom to apply.

A peculiarity of the Gospel is that Joseph begs the body of Jesus *before* the crucifixion. Herod, when the petition is presented to him, observes that he would in any case have had the body buried that day, "for it is written in the Law that the sun set not on one that hath died by violence."

Hence in this version of the story Herod knows beforehand that Jesus would be dead the same day; and yet it was most unlikely and not to be expected that death upon the cross would ensue within so short a time as is stated. Presumably the petition of Joseph, which in the first instance is so strangely addressed to Pilate, was taken from the current version and inadvertently inserted into an inappropriate context. The repetition later on of the words, "it is written that the sun set not, etc.," suggests that the Gospel had not always contained Pilate's request and Herod's reply. It is plain that Pilate has been imported into a narrative which originally knew nothing about him. The contrary assumption that Herod was foisted upon a narrative in which Pilate had been the principal actor is manifestly untenable. On no critical ground could it be sustained. Herod is woven into the very texture of the story. Pilate is not only completely superfluous and a mere supernumerary; he is actually an incongruous figure. In the canonical Gospels the substitution of Pilate for Herod, except in Luke, where traces of the earlier version peep through, has been thoroughly and consistently made; but the result is an account which is essentially incredible.

The other possible explanations of the title "King" are either that the writer confused Herod Agrippa with King Herod the Great, or that King Herod was actually intended. The latter supposition is not so unreasonable as may at first sight appear. In Mark's Gospel no date for the appearance of Jesus is fixed. If, as is likely, that was the case in the earliest form of the story, then, before the introduction of Pilate the death of Jesus could have been placed just as well in the time of Herod the Great as in that of Herod Agrippa. If either of the latter two possibilities be accepted, Pilate is excluded, since it is not conceivable that the writer would not have known that there was no Roman governor in Judæa during the reign of Herod the King.

In the *Gospel of Peter*, Herod, after passing sentence upon Jesus, delivers him to the people, who enact the scene of crowning, mocking, and scourging, which in Matthew and Mark is enacted by the soldiers of Pilate. One may con-

fidently assert that a prisoner formally condemned to death would not have been spontaneously so treated by disciplined Roman soldiers. An officer would have been responsible for him. And the soldiers could have had no motive for so acting. Jesus to them must have been just a condemned prisoner, like any other. They could not have connected with him all the ideas which Christians have about him. Leading modern critical theologians do not in fact believe that Jesus ever claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, or the King of the Jews, in which case there would have been no inducement for the soldiers to crown him and array him in a purple robe. It is well known that this scene is a close copy of an ancient rite practised in connection with the sacrifice of the mock king.¹ Hence the statement in the *Gospel of Peter* that the actors in the scene were the people is by far the more likely to be primitive. Luke, who, as critics are aware, had access to some source or sources not used by the earlier Evangelists, presents us with an intermediate stage in the development of the story, stating that it was Herod and his soldiers, not the soldiers of Pilate, who enacted this scene. Here we have additional evidence of the fact that in Matthew and Mark Pilate has taken the place which Herod occupied in an earlier version. It may be suspected that Luke had some knowledge of the origin of the performance, for he suppressed its distinctive features.

If there is a connection between Jesus and Joshua, who was an Ephraimite rather than a Judæan hero, there is an antecedent probability that a rite which had been attached to his worship was originally practised outside of Judæa.

The narrative of the Crucifixion is a most unsubstantial literary product. A trial which has been pronounced unhistorical by the foremost theological critics is followed by another which for the sake of the historical hypothesis is desperately retained, although it is inexplicable. The Mosaic Law is repeatedly violated by Jews. Details have been supplied from the Old Testament; the betrayal by Judas and other important incidents are rejected by leading critics as fiction; a scene is described at which there was no

¹ See *Golden Bough*, abr. ed., pp. vi and 443.

witness; several critics have concluded that the burial in a rock tomb, and consequently all circumstances connected therewith, are inventions; the Evangelists contradict one another as to the day on which the crucifixion took place, apparently from a dogmatic motive, and even as to the words which Jesus uttered in his dying moments; and no Golgotha by Jerusalem has ever been known. Would any scientific historian consider of the slightest evidential value a secular narrative of a similar character? Why should the trial by Pilate be accepted as a fact? The narrative of the *Gospel of Peter* is quite as likely to be true. If, therefore, the matter were not one of religious belief what confidence could be felt by any unprejudiced person in the historical reality of an event of which the transmitted accounts are so entirely incompatible? One fact only subsists, and that not the fact of the death of Jesus but of the belief in it. Some of the most advanced modern theologians would probably not seriously dispute the statements made above, but, with Prof. Guignebert, would amend the statement that belief in the death of Jesus existed into the statement that knowledge of it existed. But, if that had been the case, surely one might have expected some degree of precision in the details. In the oldest documents, the Epistles, no knowledge is apparent at all, but only dogmatic belief—the belief that the Christ had died voluntarily for the salvation of the world. It seems that modern critical theologians can no more than the old Catholics find satisfaction for their religious emotions in a spiritual Christ; they must have a material one; because a spiritual Christ is not sufficiently “real.”

3. THE DEATH OF HERCULES

In Seneca's *Hercules on Oeta* we have a dramatized account of the death of Hercules which it is instructive to compare with the Gospel account of the death of Jesus. The drama has been summarized by van den Bergh van Eysinga, as follows ¹ :—

The hero is designated the Son of God who appeared upon earth to suffer for men, and to take death upon himself in

¹ *Leeft Jezus of Heeft Hij Alleen Maar Geleefd?* p. 128 f.

order to be exalted to God the Father. Though having the right to dwell in Heaven, he chooses the way to the stars along the fearful path of suffering. He debases himself to the position of a servant to bring peace upon the earth. He takes upon earth the place of the highest God, whom he names his Father. As mortal man shall the divine being taste of death and be buried. Joyfully he brings the offering of his life. Though forsaken by all men he keeps silent under the bitterest suffering, and death has no power over him. When he calls for water his request is not listened to. He speaks to his sorrowing mother—a witness of his suffering—with the encouraging words, “Thy son liveth.” Now his Father calls to him and the Son prays: “Receive my spirit into the height.” Nature shares in the suffering of the god-man in that God causes darkness to reign over the earth, and the thunder to rumble; but the Son can utter the words: “It is finished.” For all things have been made subject to him, over all the evil powers he has triumphed; now at last he conquers even death and the grave. As a god he is exalted to Heaven.

The account of the death of Hercules in Seneca’s drama need not have exercised a direct literary influence upon the Gospel story of the Passion. The parallel shows, however, in any case that the picture of the suffering, dying, and ascending Son of God of the Gospels was to be found even in many of its details in the doctrine of the Stoa and was realistically set forth without any historical background.

A specious appearance of reality has been given to the Gospel narrative by assigning to the death of Jesus a definite date, and by connecting it with some known historical persons. Intrinsicly it has no more claim to be considered historical than Seneca’s account of the death of Hercules. Of no great religion has the central point ever been an historical event. Gnostic Christianity originated in theosophy—“our philosophy”—as Melito termed it. Melito traces the beginning of his “philosophy” into the reign of Augustus, thus making it antedate, certainly the public appearance and possibly even the accepted year of the birth of Jesus.

4. NAASSENE DOCTRINE OF THE DEATH OF THE SON OF MAN

It would be a mistake to suppose that the earliest Christians could not have arrived at the idea that the Christ had been put to death unless some man who had been

identified with the Christ had actually suffered. Gnostic Christianity grew up among Jews of the Dispersion who were in contact with cults of dying and reviving deities. It is not likely that Jewish Gnostics believed in the physical death and resurrection of a divine Saviour; but it was characteristic of their mentality to express their metaphysical doctrine in concrete form, and they were symbolists to the core. Another example of their method may be added to those previously given from the writings of the Naassenes. The stone, they said, which became the head of the corner, was Adamas, because the head contains the brain, the formative brain (Nous) from which all generation proceeds. This kind of exegesis was not confined to Naassenes; it was more or less the Gnostic method in general, and was copiously employed by Philo. It was not of much consequence to Philo if his common sense led him to doubt the truth of some statements in the Old Testament, because he thought he could extract truth from them symbolically. The chief difference between him and most of the Gnostics in this respect was that the latter definitely rejected the Hexateuch as a revelation of the supreme God.

Men of this attitude of mind could take over any myth which they were able to adapt to their own ideas. It was not only the Old Testament to which the Naassenes applied their symbolic method of interpretation. The writings of the Greek poets and the Pagan myths were also believed by them to have a hidden meaning. Hence the question of literal truth or falsehood did not interest them, and they interpreted the death and resurrection of the Pagan cult-gods in their own fashion. So far from sharing the later Christian belief that the gods were demons, they held that when the Phygians called upon Attis they were calling upon Adamas without knowing it. The Egyptians also, they maintained, worshipped Adamas under the name Osiris. "For," said they, "the Egyptians name him the bringer of good (agathephoros), though they do not know what it is that they are saying" (Hipp. v, 7). A conclusion of extreme importance can be drawn from such statements. It follows from the Naassene acceptance of the myths of the death and

resurrection of Attis and Osiris that their own doctrine included belief in the death and resurrection of Adamas—a death and resurrection which, though at first no doubt metaphorically conceived, were concretely exemplified in the myths, and would thus as time went on tend to become more concretely represented in thought. It has been previously mentioned that in the Naassene doctrine the spiritual Adamas [= the Logos] descends into the souls of men to free them from ignorance and vice, and is tortured and even put to death in his prison of flesh. This is a very early Gnostic doctrine of the incarnation and death of the Christ, not peculiar to the Naassenes. In Mark three prophecies of the suffering and death of the Son of Man are put into the mouth of Jesus.¹ Critical theologians do not believe that Jesus uttered these prophecies. W. Bousset wrote :—

What lies before us in the Son of Man passages of the evangelical tradition is primarily a dogma of the community coherent and complete in itself.²

But we have to take into consideration the different meanings of the term *Son of Man* and the character of the community in which each of them is likely to have been used. Good critics have concluded from the absence of the term from the Pauline and other Epistles—even the comparatively late Epistles of Clement and Barnabas—that it is not very early in Christian doctrine. It appears to have made its entrance during the last quarter of the first century into certain circles which had come particularly under the influence of the Jewish Apocalypses. Its wider adoption was part of the process through which Gnostic Christianity was gradually catholicized by the infiltration of elements of definitely Jewish or Palestinian origin. These conclusions refer to the apocalyptic Son of Man; but, as we have seen, the term was used by the Naassenes at a very early date, and might therefore have been familiar to some Gnostic Christians who had points of contact with them. In some of the passages in Mark in which the term occurs the Son of Man is the eschato-

¹ Mk. viii, 31; ix, 31; x, 33.

² *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 20.

logical Son of Man. If, therefore, the conclusions above stated are correct, these passages are not likely to have been in the Primitive Gospel; and this opinion agrees with critical judgment upon the passages themselves. The utterance of Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Mk. xiv, 62), in which the term occurs, is rejected as unauthentic by several leading commentators; and the "Little Apocalypse" in Mk. xiii is also not original. When further we take into account the known fact that belief in a Second Coming was alien to Gnostic doctrine, we may reasonably suspect that the only other passage in this Gospel (viii, 38) in which the term is used in connection with a Second Coming is also not primitive. In two other verses the term appears in a prediction of the "betrayal"; and these verses are inferably late.

In Hebrew and Aramaic the term "son of man" was commonly used periphrastically to signify "man," and good authorities are of the opinion that it sometimes appears in the Gospels in this sense. It may have this meaning in Mk. ii, 10 and 28. Hence an investigation of the significance which as a divine title the term may have had in an earlier and simpler form of Mark can with safety take account only of the three verses referred to above and perhaps one other. An apocalyptic or eschatological implication must of course be excluded.

The prophecies in Mark have been expanded. The essential content of them in its primitive form can be recovered from Mk. viii, 31: "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected and be killed, and after three days rise again." The writer, although he impressed his own personality upon the Gospel, was certainly not the originator of its fundamental doctrine. The prophecy, we may safely conclude, was not invented by him; it must have been the expression of an existing dogma. Now the name which the Naassenes gave to the Logos incarnate in men was "the Son of Man." Hence before a Gospel was composed the belief existed, no doubt in written form, that the Son of Man must suffer and be rejected and be killed. It is not at all unlikely that Naassene doctrine should have been reflected in an early Christian document. Close connection with the

Naassenes need not be assumed. Certain great ideas were floating in the religious atmosphere of the time and were absorbed and applied by religious thinkers in accordance with their own method of exposition and the dogmatic orientation of the circle in which they moved. The resurrection of the Saviour after three days was a current religious idea. Christian doctrine must have been enriched from very varied sources. As Bousset has observed ¹ :—

A religion of so victorious a power of growing and recruiting as Christianity took over with amazing rapidity forms of thought of the most varied kind.

The influence of Orphism upon Christianity has been recognized by several scholars :—

Macchiore and others have drawn attention to the Orphic elements in Christianity. The scholar named has observed : “ The Orphic belief traversed all the stages of the evolution of the Greek folk from magic to philosophy . . . until at last it was reformed and spiritualized through becoming Christianity.” ²

Another verse which may be of Gnostic origin is Mk. x, 45 : “ The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” The word “ ransom ” need not imply an expiatory sacrifice. The Greek word *lutron* which is so translated has the general meaning of a *price paid*, and the more particular one of *the price of redemption*. But the notion that Christ came “ to minister ” does not correspond well with the activity of Jesus as conceived in the Primitive Gospel. It is frequently instructive to go behind the English translation to the original Greek, and when we do that in the present case we find that the verb employed signifies *to wait on, to serve*, implying service rendered by a subordinate to his superior, which is not an appropriate description of beneficent operation through divine power exercised by a being who was manifestly superior to those upon whom the benefits were conferred. Here again we may reasonably suspect that a

¹ *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 39.

² Van den Bergh van Eysinga, *De Wereld van het Nieuwe Testament*, p. 126.

phrase originally employed in connection with a different conception of the Christ was taken into the Gospel. In the Gospel Jesus is never humiliated until the hour of his death approaches, and is never placed in a position of inferiority. He speaks and acts "with authority" and confounds all who engage in controversy with him. Though human in form he walks among men as a god, and out of compassion he condescends to do them good. This is not "service" in the sense of the Greek verb *diakoneo*. But if we go back to the earlier Gnostic Christianity we find the conception expressed. In the Gospel the self-humiliation of Jesus may be latent, but it is not apparent, whereas in the Pauline Epistles, for example, it is stressed. Jesus, we are told, "took the form of a slave." The introduction of the phrase into the Gospel is intelligible, but it is unlikely to be original there because it does not arise out of the Evangelist's presentation of the Christ. But the idea of the "humiliation" of the Christ is older than Paul. It is a cardinal point in the doctrine of the Naassenes, in which the Christ becomes subservient to the carnal nature in order to liberate the soul. And the death of the Christ in the irredeemably carnal man could be said to be the price paid by him for the redemption of many others.

A number of the ablest critics of the New Testament have been of the opinion that *Son of Man* was not a messianic title in the first century; and the idea that the Son of Man must suffer and be killed cannot have been derived from the Apocalypses, nor can the passages cited from Mark have been genuine utterances of Jesus. As the writer of the article "Son of Man" in the *Encyc. Bibl.* has observed: "That Jesus cannot have predicted in detail his death and resurrection after three days, or on the third day, is evident to all critical students." The simplest solution of the problem, upon which a great deal has been written to little purpose, is that the conception of the suffering and death of the Son of Man is of Gnostic origin, and that in the development of Christian dogma it was transformed through fusion of the Gnostic with the apocalyptic Son of Man and assimilation to an existing conviction that immortality for man could be secured only through the death and resurrection of a divine being.

There is evidence that other Gnostics besides the Naassenes promulgated a metaphysical doctrine of the death and resurrection of the Logos and interpreted myths in terms of it. In a source used by Plutarch the myth of Osiris is interpreted as follows :—

Osiris is the Logos, whose forms and ideas the goddess Isis as the female principle in nature receives into herself. Only his spirit is imperishable, immortal; since the knowing, reasoning, and virtuous part is stronger than destruction and change. But his body is frequently torn and annihilated by Typho; in other words, all that enters this material world from the world of ideas has, like a seal in wax, no durability and becomes the prey of the disorderly and destructive power of the evil element. When, however, Typho destroys these copies of the imperishable essence, Isis mourning takes them into herself and preserves them.¹

A closer parallel is offered in a Gnostic interpretation of the myth of Attis, according to which Attis is the primitive divine creative power [= Logos] which enters into matter and works upon it. As Attis is recalled by the mother-goddess to the heavenly world, so does the Logos oppressed by matter revive and reascend. One may say, therefore, that there was a Gnostic doctrine of the death and resurrection of the Logos, not derived directly from Greek or oriental myth. There is not only not the slightest reason for connecting the doctrine in its origin with the death of any man; it is most improbable that it should have originated in that way. It is older than the Naassene Hymn, in which the Christ is individualized.

In the first century there was no authoritative dogma and no one in a position to authorize any. We read of parties of Paul, of Peter, of Apollos. These names represent varieties of Gnostic Christian thought; but there were also the Judaic parties in Palestine and elsewhere, represented by James and in the Apocalypse of John. All these parties must have held opinions different from the others. Various ideas and speculations concerning the Christ or the Logos were current, any of which, through one or another of the Christian sects, could have left traces upon the early Christian literature.

Peter seems to have occupied a position intermediate

¹ Quoted by Bousset, *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 166.

between those of Paul and James. Very little can be inferred concerning the opinions of Peter and Paul from the speeches ascribed to them in the Acts of the Apostles, which were composed by the compiler of the book with the design of assimilating as far as possible the views of the two leaders, though no doubt fragments from more ancient records may have been included. The Clementines profess to give the doctrine of Peter, and there is no reason to suppose that it is a mere fabrication. A connection is thus indicated between the doctrine of Peter and that of the Gnostic Ebionites.¹ The *Gospel of Peter* has Gnostic features. It is probable that the composer who wrote in Peter's name belonged to a Petrine party. According to Epiphanius some of the Ebionites taught that the Christ was a spiritual being created before all things and that he had descended and appeared to the Patriarchs in the body of Adam. The doctrine ascribed to Peter in the Clementine *Recognitions* approximates closely to this. These Ebionites held further that the Christ, having finally invested himself in the body of Adam and appeared upon earth in the form of a man, had been crucified, had risen, and ascended. Since this Christ had not even in his human and visible shape been born, we are not moving in the region of historical fact, and the "crucifixion" may be inferred to have had its origin in symbolism, as with the Naassenes. Adam stands as the type of humanity in which the spiritual Christ is being perpetually ill-treated and "crucified."² In the *Gospel of Peter* Jesus and the Christ are not identified. When Jesus is on the point of giving up the ghost he utters the cry, "My power, my power, thou hast left me," where power = Logos or Christ.³ Jesus himself is not a normal human being since he is incapable of suffering pain. Apparently he was not born, for he is said to have "gone thither from whence he was sent."

¹ "Peter" may be little more than a name representing a sect with which he was—or was supposed to have been—connected.

² In several places in the Psalms "adam" is found in the Hebrew as a general term for "man."

³ Justin, who seems to have been restating Gnostic doctrine in a more Catholic form, terms Jesus "Logos and Power" of God.

5. LITERALIZATION OF THE DOGMA

Christianity, like every great and successful popular movement, must have been a product of the aspirations and ideals of the age in which it was born. No leader, however exceptional his genius, can *create* such a movement, though no doubt he can precipitate it when the conditions are ripe. The operative ideas must be there first. Leaders do not originate these; they shape and direct them. Now we may learn what were the questions and longings which were directing men's thoughts in the first century from the perplexity of Clement in *Recog.*, I, 4 :—

I was pondering how I could restrain myself from the propensity to sin if the reward of righteousness were doubtful, especially as I do not even know for certain what the righteousness itself which pleases God is. Neither, as I reflected, do I know whether the soul is immortal, nor whether it is of such a nature as to be able to hope for anything in the future.

Clement complains that he can get no satisfying answers to these questions from the philosophers, and what he requires is certainty. The average man, neither then nor now, will be satisfied with the assurance that certainty in such matters is unattainable. Certainty he wants and certainty he will have. No wonder that ancient myths became transformed under the pressure of such need into the Mystery-cults of Saviour-gods, and no wonder that these flourished. They offered to their devotees that for which above all things they yearned—the assurance of eternal life. And the assurance was given in the most convincing manner. The Saviour-god by dying had vanquished death; and, as he had risen again from the dead, so would his worshippers, having identified themselves with him by appropriate rites, be assured of their own resurrection, or of the continuing life of the soul when the body had perished. In Egypt those who had died were named Osiris, and frequently an image of the god was interred with them, and over their body the following incantation was pronounced :—

As surely as Osiris lives shall he live; as surely as Osiris cannot die shall he also not die; as surely as Osiris will not be annihilated, he also shall not be annihilated.

In the mystic ceremonies of Attis, the worshipper became symbolically united with the god and was thus made a partaker of his immortality. In the ritual of his death and resurrection an effigy of the god was buried, and when on the third day the sepulchre was opened and found to be empty the resurrection of the god was hailed by his worshippers as a guarantee of their own resurrection. "Be comforted, ye pious," said the priest; "as the god is saved so will ye be saved." The death and resurrection of Dionysus was enacted in his Mystery and the resurrection of the god was understood by those who were present as a symbolic assurance of their own immortality. The prevalence of this intense longing for the assurance of immortality and the competition of cults which satisfied it inevitably resulted in the assimilation of the death and resurrection of the Gnostic Christ to those of the other divine Saviours. But Clement in the *Recognitions* demands more than the assurance of immortality; he desires also to know what is the righteousness which is pleasing to God. In this respect Christianity had an advantage over the Pagan cults. In them, indeed, a pure life was thought to please the god. But Christianity could present to those who wished to live rightly a code of morals which had the authority of a divine revelation.

The natural tendency to literalize metaphor must among early Gnostics have been stimulated by a passage in the *Wisdom of Solomon* previously referred to. The passage (*Wis. ii*) is a description of the ignominious death of the righteous man (the Just) at the hands of the wicked, who say :—

Let us lie in wait for the righteous man because he is of disservice to us, and is contrary to our works. He professeth to have knowledge of God and nameth himself the servant of God. He vaunteth that God is his father. If the righteous man is God's son he will uphold him. With outrage and torture let us put him to the test. Let us condemn him to a shameful death.

Gnostics, applying to this passage the method of interpretation which was habitual with them, could hardly fail to see in it a description of the death of the incarnate Logos; and they would find a direct incitement to probe beneath the

surface in verse 22, which says that the wicked "knew not the mysteries of God." The ideally righteous man was he in whom the spiritual Christ was present in the superlative degree. The righteous man of this passage is termed the servant (*pais*) of God and the son of God, both of them titles of the Christ. The word translated "of disservice" is in the Greek *duschrestos*. Now *Chrestos* was employed by Gnostics as a name alternative to *Christos*. The meaning of the word is *gracious, serviceable, or kind*. One who was *duschrestos* to the wicked would of course be *chrestos* to the good. Even though accepted at first as symbolism, yet under the influences which have been adverted to, the picture presented by it must have tended to accelerate the literalization of the belief that the incarnate Christ had been put to death. We know from the *Epistle of Barnabas* that early Christians did in fact understand this passage to be a description of the death of the Christ.¹

His suffering was manifested beforehand. For the prophet saith concerning Israel: Woe unto their soul, for they have counselled evil counsel against themselves, saying, Let us bind the righteous one, for he is unprofitable [*duschrestos*] for us. . . . For they shall see him in that day wearing the long scarlet robe about his flesh, and shall say, Is not this he whom once we crucified and set at nought and spat upon? Verily this was he who then said that he was the son of God (*Wis.* v, 2-5).

The "prophet" is Isaiah (iii, 9); but only the first sentence is taken from that book; the source of the rest of the passage is obviously *Wisdom*. Christians of the first century would make no distinction between such a statement as that quoted above from *Wisdom* and a genuine historical record.²

There is no unambiguous reference in the *Odes of Solomon* to the death of the Christ, but in Ode XLII there appears to be a reference to the righteous man of *Wisdom*: "My out-

¹ §§ 6, 7. Note that "Israel" is identified with the wicked who slew "the Just". Tertullian also identified Christ with the righteous man of *Wisdom*. *Adv. Marcion*, III, 22.

² "The makers of the tradition . . . regarded the Scriptural 'prophecies' as actual data for the historian." Alan Richardson, *The Gospels in the Making*. The author is by no means a radical critic.

stretching is the outstretched wood which was set up on the way of the Just"—or, according to another translation, "on which the Just was hung by the way." We may conclude that the writer understood the "shameful death" to mean crucifixion; and it seems probable that he considered the righteous man to be a special incarnation of the Christ. Or he could have taken him to be a type of the righteous in general—in other words, of the congregation of the saints, since, as we have seen, that congregation was thought of as the visible body of the Logos.

Then the persecution and martyrdom to which the congregation or its members were exposed could be symbolically described as the persecution and martyrdom of the Christ. In verse 1 of Ode XLII it is written: "I approached my Lord, for the outstretching of my hands is his sign," where "my Lord" as usual in the Odes is God. The figure is taken from Ps. lxxxviii, 9: "Lord, I have stretched out my hands unto thee." And "my Lord" in this verse is a different being from "the Just" who is mentioned later. Hence there is no reason to assume a reference to the cross of Jesus. On the contrary, the cross of Jesus is the end of an evolutionary process of thought of which we are now considering the early stages.

It is well known that the cross was a sacred symbol among various nations long before the Christian era. In the story of the out-stretching of the arms of Moses during the battle with the Amalekites there is evidence that it was such among the ancient Israelites. Inferably even at the date when that story was written the outstretching was the Lord's "sign." The cross had symbolic significance in the cult of Osiris. And, when the disciples of Mithras were baptized, the priest made upon their foreheads the sign of the cross. In the temple of Serapis at Alexandria there was a large image of the god with arms outstretched crosswise.¹ Prometheus, who, like the Logos, was regarded as a benefactor of men, was represented in a crucified posture. The Passover Lamb, as Justin informs us, was dressed in the shape of a cross. Consequently it was hardly possible for

¹ Cox, *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, 1903, p. 354.

early Gnostic Christians to avoid understanding the "shameful death" of "the Just" as crucifixion, which was the only kind of shameful death appropriate to a divine being.

Really, however, the "shameful death" of *Wisdom* is hardly likely to have meant crucifixion in the Roman sense. The passage was doubtless suggested by Plato's picture of the sufferings of the ideally righteous man, in which he is said to have been "impaled." The term probably indicates a method of punishment anciently in use which consisted in the suspension of the criminal by the wrists to a post with his arms above his head. Sometimes there was a short cross-piece at the top of the post, whereby a resemblance to crucifixion was created, and the word used by Plato could be understood by later writers as signifying crucifixion. There is reason to believe that the Odist was acquainted with the writings of Plato. Some knowledge of Platonic doctrine seems to be indicated in Ode XXXIV :—

The likeness of that which is below is that which is above ;
for everything is above ; and below there is nothing, but it
is believed to be by those who have not knowledge.

Obviously people who held opinions of that kind were not bound to historical reality and might be capable of thinking and writing of a symbolic death as if it were more real than a physical one. And, since the argument of Plato was that the ideal Just Man must necessarily have been ill-treated and slain, when the belief was established among Gnostic Christians that the Logos had "appeared," belief in his ignominious and yet glorious death necessarily followed. Moreover, Plato's ideal man must have been actually the Platonic "idea" of man; not a mere abstraction, but the supernal perfect being of whom the human race was supposed to be a very imperfect copy, for the reason that the supernal ideal man is marred through being impressed upon matter. The Gnostic conception of the incarnate Logos was so closely analogous to this that it would be strange indeed if they had not identified him with Plato's Just Man.

It is thus quite comprehensible how the incarnate Christ-Logos, the God in men who is continually being degraded and tortured through the imperfection of the carnal nature,

came to be thought of as crucified, and how the conception gradually came to be more concretely represented, until by easily intelligible stages men arrived at the idea that the perfectly righteous man in whom the Christ had become incarnate in order to bring to men the knowledge of the true God had been crucified by the wicked. Many of the beliefs, especially religious beliefs, cherished by men have had a less solid foundation than this. Since, moreover, the perfectly righteous man, like the "wise man" of the Stoics, was an ideal man who had never been born of a woman, his identification with the "prophet" Joshua, who had "come again from Heaven," was a very natural step—one, however, which the Catholic Christian writers of the second century would certainly suppress. In the oldest Christian literature the time and place of the Crucifixion are completely undefined.

6. THE QUASI-HISTORICAL DETAILS

The conception of the death of the Christ having been reached, the restless and curious imagination of human beings would set to work and elaborate the picture. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah supplied some details; others were taken from Psalms which were supposed to be prophetic. We can learn from Justin and others that Christian writers sought for no historical evidence; the principle upon which they worked was that every supposed prophecy must necessarily have been fulfilled. And thus the drama was built up. We could also take account of the theory of the secret cult of an ancient Palestinian god Joshua and of his sacrificial death in the form of a human victim. We might then infer that the existing narrative of the Passion was arrived at from a fusion of two representations of different character and origin. The theory in question does not, however, come within the scope of the present work. But also in addition to the Logos-Christ there existed in Jewish religious thought the Messiah-Christ, and the identification of the two was a stage in the synthesis of Catholic doctrine. Neither in Pauline and Johannine Christianity nor in the Primitive Gospel was the Son of God Christ the Jewish

Messiah. When the identification had been made it seemed to Christians one of the great tragedies of the world that, although the long-expected Messiah had come, the Jews had refused to receive him. It may, in fact, be at first sight surprising that Christianity, which began as a Jewish movement, afterwards made no appeal to Jews. The abrogation of the Mosaic Law through the Christ was no doubt a serious obstacle; but that is not a complete explanation, since some Jewish Gnostics had rejected the Law; and other Jews might have been induced to do so. The metaphysical Gnostic Christianity in its early form did attract philosophically minded Jews, as we may learn from the Talmud; but, when the Christ had been humanized and historicized and the Jews were asked to worship a man, naturally they refused. They were not able to be convinced by Christian arguments that this man was either Son of God or Christ. They replied, as Trypho in Justin's *Dialogue* replied: "Ye follow an empty rumour and make a Christ for yourselves." "If he was born and lived somewhere he is entirely unknown."

The "righteous man" was condemned to a shameful death. But condemnation to death implies a trial. A trial therefore had to be supplied. And by whom else should Jesus be tried but by the Jews who had rejected him? The *Gospel of Peter* should be accepted as evidence that in the earliest form of the historicized dogma Jews were the responsible agents. Previously the executioners were as indefinite as all the other details. In the earliest strata of the Pauline Epistles, among which we may reckon Rom. ii, 17-29; ix, 1-5; x, 1-4; 1 Cor. x, 1-11, we can find criticism of Jews and tempered censure, but no such hostility as existed later and must have existed then if Jesus had really been killed by Jews, or at their instigation. Up to the year 70 the Christian sects must have been largely composed of Jews, who had as yet no idea that they were founding a new religion. Gnostic Christianity originated among men who still reckoned themselves Jews and hoped to permeate Judaism with a spiritual doctrine before which the ancient formalism must wither. The writer of Rom. ix, 1-5, and

x, 1, 2—a Jew himself, though certainly not Paul—gives expression to this hope without a trace of animosity. What a contrast between the sorrowful regret exhibited in these verses and the vehement anti-Jewish invective of the Fourth Gospel! Something had plainly occurred in the meanwhile to kindle the later hostility, which consequently was not due to the crucifixion of Jesus. The Pharisees, too, during the same period were not inimical to the Jewish Gnostic sects. The statement in Acts xxiii, 9, that the Pharisees were favourable to Paul correctly illustrates the historical situation at that time. It was the fall of Jerusalem which brought about the change of feeling by shattering the political bond of union. The Jewish leaders, believing that religious uniformity could alone preserve the nation, became strictly legalistic and intolerant. It was not the Christians who declared war against the Jews, but contrariwise. The pericope, Jn. ix, is the symbolic statement of an historic fact, which, however, is antedated by the writer. According to John the Pharisees—sc. the contemporary Pharisees—were blind men who thought they could see; the man blind from his birth who is made to see is the type of the Christianized Jew. He is cast out from the Synagogue. Thus the hostility began. A natural result of that hostility was identification of the Jews with the wicked of the *Wisdom of Solomon* who condemned the “righteous man” to a shameful death. Proof that this identification was actually made is found in the passage from the *Epistle of Barnabas* previously quoted.

From Volkmar to Guignebert critics of the New Testament have seen that the story of the betrayal by Judas must be fictitious. But the story is not an arbitrary invention, although the details of it were supplied by passages in the Old Testament—Ps. xli, 9, and lv, 12; Zech. xi, 12, 13. It was written as the symbolic statement of a fact. Loisy, when he suggested that Judas may be the personification of incredulous and false Judaism, threw a gleam of light into the obscurity which had baffled theologians, without, however, completely illuminating it. The credit for that is due to Prof. W. B. Smith. Jesus, having been rejected by

the Jews, instead of being the Saviour of his own people, became "a light to lighten the Gentiles." The passage of thought from the idea of a metaphorical "handing over" to that of "delivering up" in a more literal sense was very easy for Greek-speaking early Christians; for the Greek verb *paradidōmi* has both meanings, and it also means to *hand over to justice* and to *betray*. Hence out of the thought that the Jews had given up their Messiah to the Gentiles could easily arise the idea that Jesus had been betrayed and that he had been delivered into the hands of a Gentile judge. W. B. Smith pointed out that there is a Hebrew root S-K-R, of which the most pertinent occurrence is in Isa. xix, 4: "I will give over (*sikkarti*) Egypt into the hands of a cruel lord." The Septuagint renders this verb *sikkarti* by the future of the Greek *paradidōmi*. *Iscariot* therefore might signify *he who gives up, hands over, or surrenders*. If the designation is artificial the case is not one for the strict application of the laws of etymology. The name *Judas* having been chosen for its close resemblance to *Judæus*, we can find in the combination "Judas Iscariot" an embodiment of the notion that the "Jew" had "delivered up" Jesus to the Gentiles.

There is another Hebrew root which may have helped by its appropriateness to fix the designation of Judas. The root has the significance of *hiring*, and occurs in the very passage of Zechariah [xi, 12] from which the item of the thirty pieces of silver was taken. Twice in this verse occur the words "my price" (*sechari*). But the notion of surrendering was probably the operative one. If this explanation of the meaning of the term "Iscariot" is correct, the Judas episode must be later even than Pilate in the story of the Passion. Guignebert has concluded that the Jews had nothing to do with the crucifixion of Jesus, basing his conclusion upon the historical impossibility of the narrative in this respect. But, since the trial by Pilate is hardly less incredible, it is inferable that there was some motive for the representation. And the motive is not likely to have been Christian hostility to the Jews, since in an earlier form of the narrative it was the Jews themselves who carried out

the crucifixion.¹ A possible explanation is that the story was designed, like the episode of Judas, to illustrate the surrender of their Messiah by the Jews to the Gentiles. It may be objected that Judas did not as a matter of fact surrender Jesus to the Gentiles. But we have to consider that the episode was devised as the symbolic representation of an idea, and that it had somehow to be fitted into an existing narrative which already gave a more literal representation of the same idea; and the delivering up of Jesus to the Gentiles was in fact the final result of his action. Judas, as the type of the Jews, surrendered the Christ; that was the important fact to be illustrated. It is worth noting, however, that in the Fourth Gospel nothing is said about the bargain made by Judas with the Jewish leaders and that Judas conducts to the garden a captain and a band of soldiers, who must have been Roman soldiers. Two different accounts seem to have been mixed up together in this Gospel.

The substitution of a Gentile judge for Herod must have been motivated, because difficulties were thereby created and the plausibility of the narrative was entirely destroyed. The responsibility for the death of Jesus had to remain fixed upon the Jews, and the Roman governor had to be absolved. And so we are presented with the amazing spectacle of the condemnation of an innocent man as a feeble concession to Jews by a strong ruler who in his general behaviour had shown a callous disregard for Jewish susceptibilities. But the Gospel writers were far more interested in the presentation of their ideas than in the probability, to say nothing of the accuracy, of their statements. Why Pilate was chosen for the part is very much a matter for conjecture. Very likely, however, it was because he was rather a notorious person, who, at the end of his ten years' procuratorship, had been summoned by Tiberius to Rome to answer for the arbitrary violence of which he was accused.

¹ A trace of the earlier belief has been preserved in the Fourth Gospel, xix, 16, where it is said that Pilate delivered Jesus to the Jews to be crucified, and that they (the Jews) took Jesus. The compositeness of the narrative appears in the subsequent statement (verse 23) that the soldiers crucified Jesus.

7. THE SACRED MEAL

Intimately connected with the death of the Saviour-god was the sacred meal. The origin of this, no doubt, was the prehistoric cannibalistic meal at which the flesh of the theanthropic sacrificial victim was eaten. But in the Mystery cults the tendency was to pass from the physical to the metaphysical. It was no longer thought necessary to eat the flesh of the god, since his spirit could be supposed to be present in the duly consecrated food and drink. The primitive conception, with which was bound up the idea of a redemptive sacrifice, still comes to expression in the Catholic Sacrament as we find it represented in Matthew and Mark. But in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* and in 1 Cor. x, 16, 17, we have earlier evidence of a Gnostic Christian Sacrament—or rather Eucharist—from which the original crude significance has been refined away. The Gnostics, after their manner, interpreted the meal symbolically. Some of the heretical Gnostics of the second century seem to have converted their Sacrament into a magical rite, but from the passages above referred to we learn that for Gnostic Christians of the first century the partaking in common of the sacramental meal symbolized union—union of the members one with another and union of the community with the indwelling spiritual Christ. The vine in Jn. xv, 1, is a symbol of this unity. Jesus as “the true vine” says to his disciples: “Abide in me and I in you.” In the Mandæan *Book of John* also the vine is a symbol of the unifying spirit of the community; the members are likened to birds which perch upon it and make their nests there. Similarly with regard to the bread, as we read in the *Didachē*:—

Just as this broken [bread] was scattered over the hills and became one, so let thy church be gathered from the ends of the earth into thy Kingdom.¹

These words must have been written by a Jew who had in mind fellow-Jews dispersed among the nations; not all such Jews, of course, but those who revered a divine Jesus believed to have brought “knowledge and immortality” to

¹ The “Kingdom” here is not the eschatological Kingdom.

men.¹ We may infer a widely spread, even though not numerically important, Gnostic Jesus-cult among Jews of the Dispersion early in the first century. The sacred meal of this Jewish sect has no apparent relation to the death of Jesus. The same may be said of the sacred meal referred to in 1 Cor. x, which also signifies communion. And, bearing in mind the early Gnostic Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, we may not unreasonably conjecture that the fellowship of body and blood in these verses signifies the fellowship of the corporate community, the body of Christ, in which the spiritual Christ is incarnate. Indeed, this interpretation may be implicit in the words of verse 17: "Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body." The persistence of the term "Communion" is an indication of synthesis; for the Catholic Sacrament cannot have grown out of the Gnostic Eucharist. It came in along a different line and, though actually very much more ancient, its entry into Christianity was subsequent, as the documentary evidence attests. The fact that attestation of the Sacrament is later than that of the Eucharist has been recognized. Theologians on their theory can neither explain the fact nor account for the double conception. Schweitzer, for example, wrote:—

From the standpoint of the doctrine of the Apostle to the Gentiles to speak of the body and blood of Christ is an absurdity. It remains obscure how Paul could have brought the account of the Sacrament which he gives in 1 Cor. x into conformity with the historical [?] words of Jesus naming the bread and wine his own body and blood, and how he could have given a common interpretation to the two conceptions.²

The plain answer of course is that he could not, and that he did not. But for Gnostics a symbol might be something more than the expression of an idea: it might have operative power. So, possibly, it was thought that as a result of the

¹ The term "servant (*pais*) of God" does not imply an historical person. The Greek word *can* mean "son." And a mere man could not be supposed to have brought "immortality." The bringer of "Gnosis and immortality" was the Gnostic Logos.

² *Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung*, p. 156. We have here an illustration of the remarkable combination in Schweitzer of critical acumen with theological obtuseness.

communion the spiritual Christ entered in fuller measure into the participants. And it is understandable that with the influx of Pagans from the Mystery-cults there gradually arose a belief in the magical efficacy of the consecrated food, and thus the amalgamation of Sacrament and Eucharist became possible.

CHAPTER VII

PAULINE AND JOHANNINE CHRISTIANITY

I. THE PAULINE PROBLEM

No valuation of Pauline Christianity is possible until we have decided which of the heterogeneous doctrines embodied in the Epistles is actually Pauline. With regard to Paul himself very little that is reliable is known. For our present purpose, however, it will be sufficient, and it will be convenient, to use the name as that of the promulgator of a body of doctrine which probably in fact emanated from more than one person. It is the doctrine of a school or of a group of allied communities. Not very much help in determining the character of the doctrine can be obtained from theological works upon the subject in general. During eighty years at least, if we begin with F. C. Baur, an immense expenditure of learning and acuteness has resulted in no agreed solution of the Pauline problem. One may safely conclude that theologians have been reasoning from a false premise; otherwise so much learned labour would not have been so lamentably wasted. The course of the discussion has been recorded and acutely criticized by Schweitzer,¹ with whose opinion upon its general character it is impossible not to agree:—

Theologians operate ever with the old presuppositions. . . . The result is in every respect unsatisfying. The solution remains as impossible as before, and the simplifications which are thought to have been achieved in the statement of the problem result only in new difficulties.

The extraordinary thing is that Schweitzer himself has not seen what presupposition it is that persistently falsifies the argument, although he has laid his finger upon it over and over again. The principal difficulty in which criticism has been floundering is, as he points out, that it has been

¹ *Gesch. der Paul. Forsch.*

compelled to recognize in the Epistles a double doctrine—one juridical, grounded upon the thought of justification, and the other ethical, governed by the idea of sanctification—and has not been able to show how the two are connected and how they can be unified.¹ But there are also subsidiary contradictions which the critics by subtle and verbose reasoning endeavour to explain away. A method much in vogue is the subjective one of forming a conception of Paulinism and then bringing into prominence those passages which confirm it, while keeping inconvenient passages as far as possible in the background or arbitrarily construing them in a more favourable sense.

The essential duality of the doctrine of the Pauline Epistles was first clearly noted by Lipsius (1853), with whom began the long-continued effort to unify it. Schweitzer's criticism is that Lipsius tones down one of the doctrines in favour of the other and makes a superficial welding of the two by skilfully chosen expressions. He was followed by Lüdemann (1872), who pointed out that in the Epistles there are not only two conceptions of "flesh" but also two "anthropologies" with which are respectively connected two different doctrines of "redemption." Lüdemann's solution was that the "ethical-physical" (Hellenistic) is Paul's "real view, which merely tolerates the proximity of the other and tends to supplant it" in proportion as the writer goes more deeply into the essential nature of things. Pfeiderer (1887) disagreed with Lüdemann, holding that both views had from the outset equal value in the consciousness of the Apostle. He practically renounced the attempt to solve the psychological problem involved in his conclusion, saying that nothing remains but to admit that in Paul's consciousness the two different conceptions lay together unreconciled, and that he passed over from the one to the other without feeling the contradiction! Needless to say, a conclusion which was nothing but a confession of failure has not been acceptable to theological critics in general. The explanation mostly favoured by Pfeiderer's successors is that Paul's religious outlook underwent a gradual change.

¹ Work cited, p. 9.

The explanation does not explain that which most needs explaining—viz., the juxtaposition of both doctrines fully developed in the same Epistle. Pfeleiderer did at all events recognize the fact that the two main doctrines are completely intermingled. Schweitzer's comment is :—

One almost gets the impression that the assumption of successive phases is intended pre-eminently to serve the purpose of slurring over the question of the inner unity of the doctrines. Critics express no astonishment at the effortless manner in which the writer passes over from the one series of ideas to the other. At the conclusion of each of these works one is obliged to ask oneself whether the author really expects the reader to regard what is offered as the presentation of a system which ever existed in the brain of a man of the earliest Christian period.¹

The final observation seems to show that Schweitzer had some inkling of a fact which strongly impressed van Manen—viz., that from the year 30 to the date of Paul there had not been sufficient time for the growth of doctrines so diverse and so highly elaborated. It is, however, not necessary with van Manen to relegate the Epistles in their entirety to the second century, since we know that the origin of Gnostic or Hellenistic Christianity antedates the beginning of the Christian era.

Another problem hitherto unsolved is presented by the Pauline eschatology, which is in flagrant opposition to the Gnostic doctrine of the antithesis of spirit to flesh—an opposition extremely embarrassing to those critics who maintain that the Gnostic doctrine is genuinely Pauline. But those who, like B. Weiss (1886), stress the eschatology and believe it to be the starting-point of Paul's preaching cannot make clear any orderly process of development. Kabisch (1893) accordingly renounced the attempt to explain the contradiction by assuming a process of development in the thought of Paul, and tried to get rid of it by asserting that whenever Paul wrote of death and resurrection he meant physical death and resurrection, which is decidedly not the case; moreover, there are passages in which a

¹ Work cited, pp. 26, 28.

“resurrection” in the generally accepted sense of the term is implicitly denied. Schweitzer observes that according to some of the investigators along these lines the doctrine of Paul consists of a “present” and a “future” theology between which there is no inner connection. The existence of these two theologies in the Epistles is, however, a fact, and no one has succeeded in reconciling them. Brandt (1893), in direct opposition to Kabisch, maintained that Paul regarded his conversion as “a death and resurrection of his inner man.” Such a view of death and resurrection cancels eschatology. It is the Gnostic view of the *Odes of Solomon* from which eschatology is entirely absent.

Holtzmann (1897) carefully reviewed the work of his predecessors and endeavoured by a critical appraisal of the results obtained in the light of his own studies to demonstrate a consistent Pauline Christology. Schweitzer’s judgment is that he, like the others, is driven into mere descriptions in Pauline phraseology and is practically unable to explain anything. Holtzmann finds the key to Paulinism in the story of Paul’s conversion, developing therefrom a psychological theory in vague and rhetorical language. But, as a matter of fact, no doctrine in the Epistles is founded by the writer upon an individual emotional experience. In Rom. iii to v, and vii, 7–25, we have a closely reasoned argument with much show of logic, and the appeal to personal experience is quite general and capable of finding a response in the consciousness of anybody. In other sections we have a doctrine of redemption which is not logically reasoned out but presented as intuitively known through that super-sensual kind of knowing which is Gnosis. The doctrine is not, in essentials, peculiar to Paul. Holtzmann differs from some other critics in denying that Paul was a Gnostic. Schweitzer, on the other hand, asserts that the whole character of his system shows him to have been such; but how can anyone who understands what Gnosticism really is believe that the chapters of Romans referred to above were written by a Gnostic? Holtzmann was probably aware of the irreconcilability of much of the doctrine with the Gnostic view of redemption, and made the denial in the interest of his

method of accommodation—arguing, for example, that the union with Christ in the Pauline theory of baptism is merely symbolic. That is a forced interpretation not justified by the text, as some other commentators have seen—e.g., Titius (1900) and Heitmüller (1903)—the latter of whom ¹ declares that the mystical union which is accomplished in baptism between the believer and Christ is a “physical-hyperphysical” union and has for its consequence that the former actually participates in the death and resurrection of the latter. If we substitute for Heitmüller’s rather evasive expression the word “spiritual,” this is the plain meaning of the passage (Rom. vi, 3–6), which expresses the Gnostic view of “resurrection”—a view which is emphasized in verse 13: “Present yourselves unto God as alive from the dead.” A second, future, resurrection is excluded. Neither 1 Cor. xv nor the eschatological sections of the Epistles can have been written by this Gnostic. Holtzmann’s procedure in this case is typical. The admission of a contradiction is shirked by asserting that Paul in a certain passage must not be understood to mean what is actually said, because that would be inconsistent with what is said elsewhere. Another method of self-deception exemplified by Holtzmann is the ostensible harmonization of a deep-rooted difference by one of those vague phrases which merely serve as a cloak for insufficiency, such as “the coincidence of a national attitude of mind with a Greek form of thought.”

The work of Holtzmann was not accepted by critical theologians as a satisfactory solution of the Pauline problem. Brückner (1903) and Wrede (1904) argued that Paulinism cannot be explained as a development of the teaching of Jesus, and the former traced it to the Jewish eschatology as exemplified in the Apocalypses of Esdras and Baruch. This conclusion was strongly challenged by Olschewski (1909), who objected that the writers previously mentioned had not explained “the peculiar combination of Christology with pneumatology which is so specifically Pauline,” and endeavoured to do so himself by spinning a psychological theory

¹ *Taufe und Abendmahl bei Paulus*, p. 56.

out of the story of Paul's conversion—a favourite device, for by enveloping the difficulties in a cloud of words theologians are able to persuade themselves that so remarkable a spiritual experience can be made accountable for the promulgation of any sort of paradoxical doctrine by the subject of it. But the principles of sound criticism require that the steps by which the passage was made from a certain doctrine to another quite incompatible doctrine should be demonstrated and made chronologically and psychologically conceivable.

By Brückner, however, an important advance was initiated and the problem stated in new and more scientific terms. His own conclusions were inadequate and constituted no solution of the problem, because he applied his method only partially through giving undue prominence to the eschatology of the Epistles. But the way which he opened has been pursued to better purpose by Reitzenstein and Bousset. In the view of these writers the problem is not that of the psychology of a single mind, but is to be solved by application of the principles of the scientific study of religions. Bousset argues that some at least of the most characteristic Pauline doctrine was already that of the communities to which he wrote; and Reitzenstein has traced analogies between Paulinism and the religious ideas of the Mystery-cults and of the Hermetic literature. Both these writers, however, have found it necessary in the application of their method to be selective, and have not accounted for the double aspect of the Pauline soteriology. Reitzenstein, it is true, has attempted to explain the Pauline eschatology in the same manner as the Pauline mysticism; but Schweitzer conclusively contended against him that Jewish eschatology has no analogue in the Pagan mysticism. On this side Brückner had the clearer vision. In fact, anyone who maintains that Paul was a Gnostic or a Mystic is exposed to confutation by every objector who brings forward passages which no Gnostic or Mystic can have written. The eschatology and the mysticism are as immiscible as oil and water. Reitzenstein in continuing the attempt to explain the doctrines of the Epistles without accounting for their hetero-

geneous character exposed himself to the criticism of Schweitzer, who wrote :—

The Apostle is at the standpoint of strict predestination ; for those who are “ called ” salvation necessarily follows ; those who are not called can never, and by no means, attain it. An analogy to this conception fails in the Mystery religions.¹

It ought indeed to be evident that the conception could not possibly exist in the same order of religious ideas as the Pauline doctrine that everyone who is willing can become spiritual and a new creature by mystical union with the Christ—a doctrine which is laid down in perfectly unambiguous terms in Rom. vi, 2b–13. The theory of baptism outlined in this section would have no sense if some men were predestined to destruction. Thus no solution of the Pauline problem is attainable until theologians are ready to admit that the Epistles are composite. Bousset² has already declared that the problem is insoluble, as of course it is on the lines on which the critics have been working for the past eighty years. But sooner or later the truth will dawn upon them ; and then perhaps the value of the work of the Dutch school will be recognized. Van Manen, like all pioneers, did not always follow the right road, and the exposure of his errors can be made to pass as a refutation of his thesis as a whole ; but it will not always be so. Theology has travelled far during the last hundred years, and is capable of travelling farther.

Proof of stratification in the Epistles proceeds not only from the recognition of differences of doctrine, but also from that of differences of style. It is as impossible that the writer of Rom. iii–v ; vii, 7–25 ; ix, 14–24 ; xi, 1–12, should have also written Rom. i, 18–27 ; ii, 17–29 ; vi, 3–13, 16–23, as it would be for *Martin Chuzzlewit* to have been written by George Meredith ; and when it has been noted that a highly characteristic doctrine is in several long passages invariably

¹ *Gesch. der Paul. Forsch.*, p. 168. The predestinarian writer uses the word “ called,” but the word does not in itself involve the doctrine of predestination.

² *Der Apostel Paulus*, 1906, p. 16.

accompanied by a very characteristic and individual literary style found elsewhere only in short interpolations which are as palpable as pebbles in clay, and in some Epistles—e.g., 2 Cor.—are not found at all, the only logical conclusion is that the sections in question have been inserted into a previously existing document. It is possible to show by a careful examination and comparison of style and doctrine that in each of the principal Epistles a Gnostic document is embedded and that these documents form the oldest strata of the respective Epistles. An approximate reproduction of the Gnostic substratum of the four Epistles is subjoined in Appendices B to E to this book.¹

2. JEWISH "MYSTERIES"

It is an easy matter for Schweitzer and others who dislike Reitzenstein's conclusions to criticize them in detail and to show that direct dependence of Paulinism upon the Mystery-cults is unlikely. But community of religious ideas is demonstrable. Reitzenstein's analysis, moreover, is defective through his not having taken account of pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism. There were Jewish as well as Pagan Mysteries; the systems of the Essenes, the Therapeuts, and doubtless of other Jewish sects may be so characterized. It is certain that the Essenes revered the Sun. This reverence may have had its origin in Sun-worship, but for the Essenes no doubt the Sun was a symbol, and the interpretation of the symbol was a part of their Mystery. An affinity between the Essenes and some early Christian communities is proved by Pliny's letter to Trajan in which it is said that the Christians in Bithynia sang hymns to Christ at sunrise. The sacred meal of these sects must also have been of the nature of a Mystery. In various sects a mystical significance was attributed to a certain kind of food. There is, for example, evidence in early Christian literature that fish was eaten as a sacred symbol. Such practices are

¹ Detailed proof of the approximate correctness of the reconstruction is given in my book, *A Critical Analysis of the Four Chief Pauline Epistles*.

characteristic of a Mystery religion. After reading Philo's description of the sacred meal of the Therapeuts it is hardly possible to doubt that it was a Mystery. It was solemnized only once a year, on the fiftieth day, with a most impressive ceremonial and the singing of hymns. Since the food, though in itself of an ordinary kind, is described as "most holy," it must have had symbolic significance of sanctifying efficiency. The meal was followed by a ritual ceremony which must also have been symbolic. The principal feature of it was the formation of two choirs, one male, the other female, who sang alternately, and finally together as one. Philo describes the united choir as a representation of the choir of Israelites which was headed by Moses and Miriam after the passage of the Red Sea. It is not quite clear whether the comparison was made by Philo himself or whether he is recording the intention of the Therapeuts. The latter is probable because it is likely that he had some ground for his statement and because Jewish Mystics symbolically described the transformation from carnal to spiritual as a deliverance from Egypt. Philo himself employed that imagery. And the Peratai derived their name from a Greek verb meaning *to pass through*, because they claimed to have passed by means of their Gnosis from the bondage of carnal impulses into spiritual life as the Israelites had passed from Egypt through the Red Sea. Now mystics, such as from Philo's description the Therapeuts were, believed that spiritual transformation was wrought or assisted by the performance of some symbolic act. Since the annual religious ceremony of the Therapeuts, and especially the choirs, must have had a meaning of that kind, it is highly probable that the interpretation given by Philo was the true one. The ceremony, we may conclude, was essentially a Mystery. And, as the theosophical system of the Therapeuts was inferably near akin to Philo's own, it is quite likely that in the Mystery Moses and Miriam symbolized the Logos and Sophia.

The Pauline baptism was certainly a Mystery, and so probably was the sacred meal referred to in 1 Cor. x. The word "mystery" occurs several times in the Pauline Epistles,

and there was evidently esoteric doctrine reserved for the highest grade of initiates in the Christian, as in the pre-Christian Jewish Gnostic, communities. That must be the explanation of the statement in Mk. iv, 11, which has so severely exercised the minds of theologians. The same religious atmosphere which converted certain Pagan myths into Mysteries also favoured the birth and growth of Mystery-cults among the Jews. Some of the Hermetic literature, as Reitzenstein has proved, was in existence early in the first century, and acquaintance with contemporary religious ideas may have exercised a formative influence upon the thought of Paul. It seems reasonable to suppose that he was to some degree an innovator, but Bousset is surely right in his opinion that Paulinism in its main features—and by Paulinism I mean the Gnostic doctrine of the Epistles—must already have been the theory and practice of the communities for which he wrote. And these communities, we may infer, were strongly Hellenized communities of Jewish mystics, with an admixture of Greeks. The resemblances between Paulinism and the religious ideas of contemporary Pagan Mystery-cults reflect the prevalent thought and aspirations of the time. The differences upon which Schweitzer lays so much stress in his criticism of Reitzenstein are the result of difference of origin, Jewish on the one hand, Greek and oriental on the other.

3. UNION WITH THE SAVIOUR

Schweitzer observes that the term "Saviour-god" signifies a god who came into the world for the sake of men, died, and rose from the dead, and argues that, since the Jesus of Paul is not a god, the supposed analogy between Paulinism and the Mystery-cults is false. Monotheistic Jews could not, of course, think of the Christ as a second god, but the analogy is not destroyed because in the one case the divine being who came to earth and died for men was a god and in the other the Son of God; the essential and really vital conception was the same. Both in the Mystery-cults and in Pauline Christianity eternal life was believed to be ensured

through a mystical union with the divine Saviour. In neither was the death of the Saviour regarded as an expiatory sacrifice. Such a conception is foreign to early mysticism. The central idea of the Pauline doctrine—viz., immortality through union with Christ—is traceable to the *Odes of Solomon*, in which we read that : “ He that is joined to him who is immortal will also himself become immortal. . . . This is the Spirit of the Lord ” ; and the Spirit of the Lord is the Word : “ Life we receive in his Christ ” ; and in Ode XLI : “ His Word is with us all our way, the Saviour who makes alive.” It even appears that in the Pauline doctrine also the Christ is “ the Spirit of the Lord.” For in 1 Cor. i, 5, believers are told that “ in everything ye were enriched in him [Christ Jesus], in all utterance and all knowledge.” But later on we learn that it is from the Spirit of God that the enrichment comes. “ Unto us God revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God ” (1 Cor. ii, 10). Comparison of this verse with one in Ode XVI—“ The Word of the Lord searches out the unseen thing and scrutinizes his thought ”—shows that the “ Spirit ” of the Epistle is the “ Word ” of the Ode. In the next verse the statement is even more categorically made : “ The things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God.” Hence the Christ who enriches in divine knowledge (Gnosis) and reveals the hidden things of God must be also “ the Spirit of God.” Again, in Rom. viii, 9, we read : “ Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ” ; and the indwelling Spirit is the Christ with whom the believer is mystically united. In 2 Cor. iii, 17, the identification is quite unambiguously made : “ Now the Lord is the Spirit.” The verse is not part of the Gnostic Epistle, but the doctrine of the section is on the whole Pauline. And in the Gnostic Epistle itself the identity seems to be implied in verses 5 and 17 : “ God gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Wherefore if any man is in Christ he is a new creature.”¹

¹ In Justin's Christology, which had not been completely Catholicized, the Holy Spirit is declared with emphasis to be no other than the Logos (*Apol.*, I, 33).

The union between the mystic and the indwelling Christ is here expressed as the being "in Christ." The same duplex view of the union is found in the Odes, where not only does the Word dwell "in man," but also "he was reckoned like me that I might put him on." And in both the Odes and the Gnostic Epistles those who receive the Spirit, who is the Son, become sons of God themselves. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God these are sons of God" (Rom. viii, 14); and "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God"; the meaning of which is that through union with the divine Spirit who is the Son of God the pneumatic man acquires the conviction that he is also a son.

Another objection raised by Schweitzer is that in the Pagan cults the mystic union was regarded as a "deification." Naturally that was a view of it which Jewish Gnostics could not take; but in so far as a man was pneumatic he partook of the divine Spirit and so became in a certain sense divine. The comparison reveals analogies of religious ideas. It is beside the mark to deny identity. Of course there were differences of structural growth corresponding with the difference of soil. To prefer the Christian conception is reasonable enough. The Gnostic writer distinguishes between the carnal and the pneumatic man, as did Gnostics in general; but the distinction no more involves the theological doctrine of Predestination than does the philosophic opinion that conduct is determined by character. Character can be changed and the sinner become virtuous. Even the most thoroughgoing Determinism is not the same thing as the theological doctrine of Predestination. Doubtless Gnostics believed that the carnal nature of some men is such that they cannot become spiritual, but they would have repudiated the idea that God had ordained it so. Their God was incapable of willing anything evil.

4. THE PAULINE BAPTISM

Schweitzer observes that Christians were baptized in the name of Jesus, whereas there is no evidence of a baptism in

the name of Osiris, Attis, or Mithras. That again is a superficial distinction. Baptism no doubt was rather markedly a characteristic of Christian sects, derived from the practice of earlier Jewish Mystics. But baptism in the name of Jesus is not the outcome of a fundamental difference of religious ideas. It is explicable from the Christian attitude, inherited from Judaism, towards Paganism. There is no evidence that in the pre-Christian Jewish sects baptism was practised in the name of a divine person; but Christians in connecting the name of Jesus with it were not doing something for which no analogy in Paganism can be found. There is sufficient evidence of the utterance of a divine name, and of the magical effect supposed to be produced by it, in Pagan cults and in Gnostic formulas of conjuration. The pronouncement of the divine name was believed to be a protection against the attacks of evil supernatural powers. Belief in the existence of malevolent dæmons was universal among early Christians and they used the name *Jesus* for the quelling of these dæmons just as the Pagans used divine names for a similar purpose. But Christians asserted that the Pagan deities themselves were dæmons and that they gained entrance into the bodies of those who ate meat which had been offered to an idol. Every Pagan, in fact, was supposed to be possessed by a dæmon who had to be expelled before a proselyte could be admitted into the Church. And since it was thought that the expulsion could be effected by pronouncing the name *Jesus*, or, later, by reciting the trinitarian formula, baptism was practised in this name, or these names. In *Recog.* II, 71 Peter is reported to have said :—

Everyone who has at any time worshipped idols, and those whom the Pagans call gods, or has eaten of their sacrifices, does not lack an unclean spirit. For he has partaken of that dæmon whose image he has formed in his mind, and he therefore needs the purification of baptism in order that the unclean spirit may go out of him.

This quotation may be supplemented by one from Justin (*Dial.* 85) :—

For by the name of him, this Son of God and first-begotten of all creation . . . every dæmon exorcised is conquered and subdued.

Schweitzer's dealing with the text is quite uncritical; he takes no account even of interpolations which other theological commentators have recognized; and he finds much of his argument against Reitzenstein upon sections which Paul certainly never wrote. The sacraments in the Mystery religions are always more than symbols; the symbol is operative, and mystically produces the consecrating effect which it imitates. So do the Pauline sacraments. Schweitzer, however, points to 1 Cor. vi, 11, and argues that the double interpretation of baptism as on the one hand a "washing" and a "sanctification" and on the other as a mystical union with the Christ is an irrationality which has no parallel in the Mystery-cults, the former interpretation being also comparatively superficial. But we are not obliged to charge Paul with irrationality and superficiality; there is an alternative—viz., recognition of the fact that two conceptions so fundamentally different cannot have existed together in the same mind. Schweitzer is quite right in saying that union of the two views would be irrational. The immersion in baptism simulates a burial and the emergence a resurrection; and that is a "mystery," for the symbol works. "Washing" is an incongruous idea, since the old man with all his sins was believed to have died and to have risen a "new creature," pneumatic instead of carnal. The becoming pneumatic was a necessary condition of immortality, for, as in the *Wisdom* and *Odes of Solomon*, there is no resurrection of the body. The true Pauline doctrine of immortality is stated in 2 Cor. v, 1-4; it is that immediately upon the dissolution of the body the spirit of the pneumatic man is clothed in a heavenly psychic "tabernacle." This passage is conclusive on the point; but it is supported by others—e.g., Rom. viii, 13, "if ye live after the flesh ye must die,"—which implies that there is no death for the "sons of God," and no future life for the "flesh." Just as in *Wis.* iii, 2, so Paul could have said of the righteous: "In the eyes of the foolish they seem to have died"; but their apparent

death is liberation from the perishable garment of the spirit, while the life of the spirit is eternal and unbroken. Schweitzer as a result of his defective analysis of the Epistles is able in his criticism of Reitzenstein to choose, as others have done, the passages which suit his argument. And of course he can find evidence of belief in a future resurrection. But Paul's doctrine is the Gnostic doctrine that the pneumatic man has already "risen from the dead."¹

The doctrine of the Mystery-cults was similar. Paul did not derive it from them, though the machinery may have been suggested by the religious ideas prevailing at the time. Schweitzer raises the objection that in the Mystery-cults the pneumatic regeneration was regarded as a "re-birth," whereas in Paulinism it is a resurrection. The difference of view may legitimately be held to prove that there was not direct borrowing by Paul; but obviously the essential idea is the same, albeit expressed in different terms. Another point of difference to which Schweitzer draws attention is that in the theory of the Mystery-cults the spiritual "transfiguration" of the living man is attained after he has received divine essence into himself through Gnosis and the vision of the god, whereas in Paulinism the spiritual union with Christ in baptism comes first and Gnosis with all that is therein implied follows. If Schweitzer's intention was to demonstrate the originality of Paulinism he has not succeeded, for in the *Odes of Solomon* spiritual union with the Word is the primary condition of salvation; and the Pauline doctrine is even much older than the Odes. According to the Orphic belief man must atone for his earthly life through suffering and dying with the god. In the ceremony of initiation a symbolic death and rebirth was enacted; after which apparently there followed a rite in which the initiate became a child of the goddess Persephone through sucking the milk upon which her son Dionysus had been nourished.² Cer-

¹ Cp. also Ephes. ii, 5: "God, . . . even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up with him." The doctrine of 1 Cor. xv seems to be a compromise between orthodox Catholic doctrine and the primitive Pauline.

² Van den Bergh van Eysinga, work cited, p. 125.

tainly Paulinism was not a copy of any contemporary cult observance; but characteristic features of it are found in most of them.

5. IMPORTANCE OF THE HERMETIC LITERATURE

The importance of the Hermetic literature consists in the proof it affords of the prevalence of a certain type of Gnostic theosophy in the first century. This theosophy came to expression in different forms according to the religious or philosophic mentality of those who were influenced by it, thus linking together systems as diverse as Neo-Pythagoreanism and Pauline Christianity. In the prominent position occupied by, and the character ascribed to, *Nous* and *Logos* we can trace an affinity between a Gnostic system like that of the Naassenes, the Hermetic literature, and Paulinism. The term *Christ*, being specifically Jewish, is naturally found only in the Jewish Gnostic sects; but the *Nous-Logos* of the Hermetic literature corresponds with the Gnostic *Logos*, who is also the *Christ* of the Jewish Gnostics. The Naassene *Nous* was a product of the action of contemporary thought upon the *Wisdom of the Wisdom literature* and is distinct from *Logos*.¹ In *Poimandres* the *Logos*, the Son of God, is said to have issued from *Nous*. The Naassene doctrine, in which the distinction between *Nous* and *Anthropos* is very indefinite, approximates to this. In the Naassene Hymn, which is early though not primitive, Hermetic influence is clearly perceptible. For the Hymn begins: "The first *Nous* was the genetic law of the whole. And the second was the poured out chaos of the first-born."² And in *Poimandres* we read: "The god *Nous* begat the second demiurgic *Nous*." Then, it is said, the second *Nous*, having been united with the *Logos*, produced the *hylē*, the primeval matter. Afterwards Nature (*Physis*) brought forth irrational living things from the elements.

¹ It is not meant by this statement that the Naassenes founded their system directly upon the *Wisdom of Solomon*. In the development of Jewish Gnostic theosophy the Hellenic *Nous* became assimilated to "Wisdom" regarded as the "mind" of God.

² The text of the second clause is probably corrupt.

In Paulinism Wisdom and Logos have been fused together to form the Christ; as we read in 1 Cor. i, 24, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." In Ode XXXII the Word is equated with "the holy power of the Most High," and in the *Gospel of Peter* "power" is synonymous with the Christ incarnate in Jesus. Between Paulinism and the Hermetic literature we find kinship of ideas rather than direct dependence. The Nous of the Hermetic books, like the Word of the *Odes of Solomon* and the Christ-Logos of the Naassenes, though written of as a person, is a spiritual supernatural power, whose dwelling is the pious and pure, to whom he brings Gnosis and the mastery over the impulses of the carnal nature, precisely as does the indwelling Christ of Paul. And we are reminded of a passage in the *Wisdom of Solomon* and of some of the Odes when we read of the pneumatic men—those who possess Nous—who stand opposed to the world, misjudged, oppressed, and persecuted. The Gnostic and Pauline terminology—*pneuma*, *psyche*, and *sarx*—is conspicuous; but the sacramental aspect of the religion is less prominent than with Paul. There is, however, reference to a sacrament, and in one place (*Corp. Herm.*, IV, 4) a baptism with Nous is mentioned. Carnal men are supposed to become the prey of a misleading and avenging dæmon, who corresponds with "the Corruptor," "the Destroyer," "the Dragon" of the *Odes of Solomon*, and the "god of this world" of the Pauline Epistles. The "god of this world" is not, however, a dæmon in the ordinary signification of the term, nor is he Satan, for Satan is an evil angel—a dæmon if you like—who has never been held to be a god. The Pauline god of this world is apparently the creator of it, to whom its imperfections are to be ascribed, since we are told (Rom. viii, 20) that "the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but through him who subjected it." The statement involves the Pauline and Gnostic belief in the intrinsic imperfection of matter, for which Satan could not be made responsible, though its creator might be. The Pauline dualism is thus at a stage beyond that of the earliest Jewish Gnostics.

6. THE ARCHONS

Connected with the popular belief in dæmons was the belief, derived from the East, in the existence of seven "Archons"—spiritual beings who correspond with the seven planetary bodies, sun and moon being included. The Gnostics termed them "Archons of this æon." In the first century they had come to be regarded as evil and tyrannical, since they were supposed—as by some the planets still are—to rule the destiny of men (*heimarmenē*) and hence to be the cause of all their misfortunes. They were also supposed to obstruct the soul in its journey to Heaven. So far as Gnostics had a doctrine of predestination it was that of the astrological predestination of *heimarmenē*. From this tyranny, however, men could be liberated by Nous, or the Logos, or the Christ, and the liberation was believed by Christian Gnostics to be effected in some manner, not explicitly defined, through the death of the Christ. A possible explanation is that the Christ died voluntarily as a ransom, whereby he obtained from the Archons the liberation of all those who confessed him and became united with him. The explanation involves the supposition that the Archons expected the Christ, whose power they dreaded, to remain dead. And by killing him they condemned themselves, for they had gone beyond what was permissible for them as rulers of the cosmos. Another possible explanation is that the Christ, when he descended through the celestial spheres, took the form of a man, so that the Archons did not recognize him and thus incurred the guilt of the slaying of the Son of God. This kind of tricking of the evil one is a favourite theme in folk-lore. Bousset accepts the explanation in so far as he writes in reference to 1 Cor. ii, 8, and Col. ii, 15 :—

Through his death on the cross Christ stripped the principalities and powers [the Archons] of their weapons and triumphed over them openly.¹

But evidently a triumph through death requires some further explanation; the triumph would not have been complete without a resurrection; and this seems to involve

¹ *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 142.

the tricking of the Archons. The explanation satisfactorily clears up the obscurity of 1 Cor. ii, 7, 8 :—

We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the æons unto our glory; which none of the Archons of this æon knew; for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.

The Archons are referred to again in Rom. viii, 38, Eph. vi, 12, and elsewhere. In the latter verse the Greek word translated "world-rulers" is *kosmokratoras*, a regular Gnostic term for the Archons. Most probably also the reference in Gal. iv, 8—"they who by nature are no gods"—is to these Archons. The "bondage" from which Christ liberated the Christian was double—the bondage of the Mosaic Law and *heimarmenē*. The word "rudiments" (elements)—Greek *stoicheia*—is another name for them and for the planets with which they were connected. In the *Testament of Solomon* there is mention of "seven spirits fair to look upon . . . those which are called *stoicheia*, the *kosmokratores* of this cosmos." To each of these is given the name of a sin. This identification of the Archons with sins would evidently have been capable of giving rise to the idea that the spiritual Christ who is put to death in the soul of a wicked man had been killed by the Archons. But of course the idea of a conflict between the good and evil forces in the universe and the temporary success of the evil is a very ancient one. It is likely that in Gal. iv, 10, there is reference to Jewish observances; but the days of the week were connected with the planets, and the months with the zodiacal constellations—also spiritual beings. Many Jews, even Pharisees, believed that in each planet resided an angel and a demon who exerted an influence over the lives of men; and the *Preaching of Peter* reproaches the Jews for "serving" [= worshipping] sun and moon, which, of course, were *stoicheia*. Jews in the first century were by no means exempt from superstition—not to mention Christians who had been Pagans—and it was easy to connect Jewish ceremonial observance of seasons with Pagan reverence for

the dæmonic powers which were supposed to govern those seasons.¹ And when we learn from an old Jewish book that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were personified as rulers of planets, constellations, and seasons, we realize that there were religious speculations, and possibly even cults, in Jewry of which we hear nothing in the Talmud.

The variety of Christian doctrine at the end of the first century being inconsistent with the supposition that it developed uniformly along a single line, the dogma of the death of the Christ was no doubt worked out differently in different circles. Paul was not the originator of the idea that the Christ had been killed by the Archons. The verses quoted above from 1 Cor. make it clear that the belief expressed was the established belief of the community for which he wrote.

As the Archons are of astral origin, so also may the "crucifixion" have been; for in an astronomical chart the sun is apparently crucified upon the intersecting lines of the equator and the ecliptic at the moment of his descent into the lower hemisphere, the hemisphere of darkness and death; and is so again at the moment of his resurrection into the hemisphere of light and life; while the period of transit is three days. The sun, of course, was worshipped long before he became one of the seven Archons. At the time when the myth of the death of the Sun-god originated, the sun, being in the constellation Aries at the Spring equinox, was identified with the Ram. That is the Lamb which had been "slain from the foundation of the world." The custom of dressing the paschal lamb in the shape of a cross is referable to the same myth.

Obviously the scene of the killing of a spiritual Christ by malevolent spiritual Archons was not anywhere upon the earth; and there is nothing in the Pauline Gnostic Epistles which need be understood as implying an individual incarnation. Since the Spirit of God, according to Paul, is incarnate in all pneumatic people, the statement (Rom. viii, 3) that God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh may

¹ Jewish prayers to the planetary angels have been preserved in the Paris Codex, 2419.

have the same meaning as the statement in the *Odes of Solomon* that "he was reckoned like me that I might put him on." Docetism, however, cannot be excluded, because the Greek word for "likeness" is *homoiotēs*, which means *similitude* and thus by implication excludes identity. In neither case is it supposed that the Christ actually became flesh. In Phil. ii, 6-8, again, where it is said that Christ, "being in the form of God . . . emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men," and was found "in appearance as a man," the implication of the words excludes the idea that the Christ literally became man. The phrase "taking the form of a slave" is reminiscent of the Sethian Logos. Docetism is more strongly suggested by this passage than the former one; for the Greek word translated in the English versions "fashion" is *schema*, which, according to the Greek lexicon, signifies *form, outward appearance opposed to the reality, a mere show, look, mien, etc.* The two passages may not have been written by the same man. Whichever interpretation of the second passage be adopted, we have no right to attribute to a writer who thus describes the descent of a divine being in the form of a man the belief that he was born of a woman.

The Pauline statement that he who receives the Spirit of God becomes "a new creature" illustrates some phrases in the *Odes* which, as was previously argued, have been misunderstood. When the Odist wrote: "I have been delivered from vanity . . . I received the face and fashion of a new person"; "all those will be astonished that see me, for from another race am I"; and similar phrases, he was not, as some critics have imagined, quoting the Christ; he was affirming in poetical and somewhat hyperbolic language his conviction that as a spiritual child of God he had become "a new creature."

7. PAULINE CHRISTOLOGY IS INDEPENDENT OF AN HISTORICAL JESUS

Several of the theologians who have written upon the Epistles have pointed out that Paulinism is not in any

particular derivable from the teaching of Jesus. We have, in fact, no right to interpret Pauline expressions on the presupposition of a background for which there is evidence only in documents of later date. And if the independence of Paulinism is visible to men who have accepted as genuine the bulk of the Epistles, how much more decidedly can it be affirmed when the Pauline documents have been separated from the catholicizing and other dogmatic discourses into which they have been inserted, or which have been inserted into them! The writer of the Gnostic Epistles knows absolutely nothing concerning the life-story of a human Jesus, nor can the communities for which he wrote have known anything, if Bousset and Reitzenstein are right—and surely they are—in saying that Paulinism was a growth, not a system fashioned within the mind of a single man. And the growth must have continued over a considerable period of time. We have traced it from the *Wisdom of Solomon* through the Odes to the Pauline Epistles, developing gradually under the influence of contemporary thought; but of any influence due to the teaching of Jesus there is not the faintest trace. “The conception of Jesus as Lord of the community,” wrote Bousset,¹ “was not the work of the Apostle, but the fundamental conviction of the Christian community.” That is to say, Jesus for the Pauline communities was “the Lord” just as Adonis or Osiris was “the Lord” for the communities which worshipped them. The title was used absolutely by religious communities only of beings considered to be divine. Jesus, in fact, was the cult-hero of the Pauline communities; cult-god would not be an inappropriate term, for, although Paul could not apply the term “god” to Jesus, yet, as Bousset observes, the general belief of the communities would easily transcend the distinction and, as the example of Clement of Alexandria and other Hellenistic Christian writers shows, it would ere long consciously speak of the great mystery of the godhead of Christ. For in cult and ritual it had already unconsciously done so. But if Jesus had been for certain communities “the Lord,” whether as god or as Son of God, before Paul—

¹ *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 107.

and how long before who shall say?—the period of “deification” assumed by theologians is so much reduced as to render the supposed fact even less credible than it was already. Bousset does not clearly distinguish between the Pauline and other Christian communities, and it is possible that Paul introduced the name *Jesus* into certain communities which had previously worshipped a nameless Christ; but the name must have been a divine one before it could be so applied.

In the fact that Bousset has seen and honestly and courageously uttered so much of the truth as he has done we may perceive the first gleam of the dawn of a more scientific treatment of the early history of Christian dogma. Theological criticism cannot be permanently satisfied to rest at the standpoint to which he has brought it. He sums up his conclusions as follows:—

The picture which Paul actually draws of the Lord Jesus is not taken from the earthly career of Jesus of Nazareth. The Jesus whom Paul knows is the pre-existent supernal Christ, who was rich and became poor for our sake, who was in the form of God and took the form of a servant. It is into this personification of Jesus that are fitted all the characteristics which Paul here and there brings into prominence: his humility, his obedience, his love, his truthfulness, his faithfulness even unto the death on the cross. The subject of all these predicates is not the “historical” Jesus. For an outline of a personal portrait of Jesus, strictly speaking even for a foundation for it, especially as regards his piety and his faith in God, Paul in the proclamation of his Gospel has no more place at all. He preaches, not the faith of Jesus, but faith *in* Jesus. How will anyone any longer talk of a personal portrait of Jesus by Paul in our sense of the term? ¹

8. PRIORITY OF THE *ODES OF SOLOMON*

There is no descent of Jesus into Hell in the Pauline doctrine. The supposition that it formed part of the doctrine of the Odist is, as was pointed out previously, probably due to a misunderstanding of his imagery. A comparison of Paulinism with the doctrine of the Odes should have made

¹ *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 144.

it clear that the latter is the more primitive. In the former we find new elements which were absorbed from contemporary religious ideas. It is easier to explain Paulinism as a development out of the doctrine of the Odes than the converse. Further evidence which seems by itself to be conclusive can be given. In the Odes the Most High is very rarely named God. The writer follows the usage of the Psalms in employing the term "the Lord." And this term, which in the Epistles appears as a designation of Christ, is in the Odes hardly ever so used. The Pauline writer has become familiar with Greek religious terminology, and is much less dependent upon the Old Testament. The application of the title "the Lord" to Jesus in the Pauline communities proves that he had become to all intents and purposes their "cult-god." In the community O "the Christ" still retained its Jewish meaning of "the anointed." It had not yet become a proper name; and the "anointing" was as figurative as the anointing of Adam with oil from the tree of life probably was in the Clementine *Recognitions*. In the Epistles *Christ* in conjunction with *Jesus* has become a proper name. The time interval between the dates of composition of the Odes and the Epistles respectively must in fact have been considerable. The former stand closer to the *Wisdom of Solomon* than they do to the latter. The designation of God as "the Most High" both in the Wisdom books and in the Odes is by itself an indication of this.

9. THE CHARACTER OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The Fourth Gospel, like the Pauline Epistles, has been Catholicized. We find in it, though less varied, similar opposition of doctrine. The basis of the Gospel is a Gnostic document in which extensive interpolated passages are recognizable, the purpose of some, but not all, being to neutralize the primitive Gnosticism. Schmiedel has seen the inconsistency and is puzzled by it. "We would much like to know," he says, "whether this mingling is due entirely to a want of clearness or whether it admits of a more satisfactory explanation." It does. Schmiedel's conjectural

solution is that the writer was in process of passing from Gnosticism to the teaching of the Church—the same old assumption by which critics have attempted to explain the heterogeneity of the Pauline doctrine. The explanation is as impossible in this case as in the other. What we find is not a partially Catholicized Gnosticism, but sometimes the full expression of a Gnostic idea closely followed by Catholic doctrine enforced with an emphasis which proves that it was introduced to counteract the foregoing Gnosticism. The original writer was so thoroughly a Gnostic as to declare that the god of the Jews was evil and not the Father of Jesus.¹ Schmiedel states the case fairly accurately when he says that “the Gnostic ideas appear, in the main, sporadically, and are withdrawn or made harmless by other utterances.”² It is not a fact that the writer wavers between two opinions; he expresses his own opinions clearly and strongly. The supposition that after doing so he would immediately withdraw them or make them harmless by other utterances is quite unjustifiable and most improbable; but it is exactly what a Catholicizing editor might be expected to do.

As a Gnostic the writer was a thoroughgoing symbolist.³ It is not surprising that a critic of Schmiedel's intelligence has realized this fact, but his bias as a Christian theologian has prevented him from applying his knowledge consistently. One example of the writer's symbolism is the living water which Jesus says he would have given to the Samaritan woman. We know what this water was. We have read of it in the *Odes of Solomon*. And just as this water of life was spiritual drink so also the bread of God from heaven (vi, 33) is spiritual food. But we learn from verse 35 that Jesus himself, the spiritual Christ therefore, is this bread of life, which consequently cannot be literally eaten. We have learnt already that in the Gnostic Christian Eucharist the bread was not the body of Jesus, but was a symbol of the

¹ Jn. viii, 19, 38, 44. The correct translation of verse 44 is “Ye are from the father of the devil”—i.e., *Demiurgus*.

² *The Johannine Writings*, p. 165.

³ Several leading critics including Loisy, Kreyenbühl, and Dr. E. A. Abbott have recognized the symbolic character of the Fourth Gospel.

union of the members one with another, and of their spiritual union with the Christ. It was impossible for a Gnostic to imagine that he was eating the flesh of Jesus in his sacrament. And, since for the writer of the Fourth Gospel Jesus was the Logos, for him also the thought that he could partake of his flesh and blood must have been not only meaningless but even repugnant.¹ There is evidence of this in the Gospel itself. The Feeding of the Five Thousand (vi, 5-14), as Schmiedel perceived, is intended to represent the sacred meal, which, however, is not the Catholic Sacrament. That is made clear in the closely following verses in which Jesus with direct reference to the Feeding tells the people that he is the bread of life which came down from Heaven—spiritual food, namely. Further evidence that John did not hold the Catholic view of the Sacrament is found in his account of the Last Supper, where he refrains—we must suppose, intentionally refrains—from making Jesus give his disciples the bread and wine naming them his flesh and blood.

Several eminent critics—e.g., Wellhausen and Loisy—have recognized the fact that the Fourth Gospel is composite. Like the Gospel of Mark, it had a history. Schwarz² noted three stages in the formation of the book: a fundamental document which he describes as “a sort of dramatic poem of great originality,” and two subsequent editions, the purpose of the second being to make the Gospel more acceptable to the Church. Consequently the primitive work was inferably current in some Gnostic community before there is any known reference to it. Loisy³ has observed that:—

At bottom the primary document, the liberties which an editor has taken in the face of the synoptic tradition, and even that very tradition itself, prove that, if Jesus occupied a definite place in the history of mankind, Jesus Christ was first and foremost a theologic and liturgic theme, an object of religious worship, under an extremely fluid historical appearance.

¹ Cp. vi, 63: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.” That is a Gnostic opinion against which Tertullian protests.

² *Nachrichten von der kön. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Phil. Hist.*

³ *Le Quat. Evan.*, p. 59.

The Gnostic Christ was altogether a theologic theme. In the *Odes of Solomon* the Christ is personified; in the Fourth Gospel, as the narrative form required, he is individualized; but he is not the Jesus of the Synoptics. No criterion but a subjective one can be applied for the purpose of deciding which of the two figures, if either, is the historical Jesus.

Theologians cannot extract even from the Synoptics a Jesus-figure upon which they are all agreed.¹ Bousset agrees with Loisy in the opinion that the intention of John² was not to supplement but to correct the Synoptics. We might even say that his Gospel is a protest against their presentation of the Christ—not, however, on the ground of historical truth, but of what he conceived to be religious truth. It is no accident that his Jesus is not a promulgator of ethical doctrine—which was not a function of the Logos—and that he works comparatively few miracles. The Gnostic composer of the Fourth Gospel was consciously not writing the biography of a man. His purpose was to illustrate allegorically the power of the Word; and the few miracles he records, which, doubtless intentionally, he terms “signs” [? symbols], are symbolic representations of the progress of the Christian religion and of the spiritual life which flowed forth from the community inspired by the Word. It is the great merit of Schmiedel to have seen this, even though he has not fully realized the significance of it. “The wine,” he says, “into which Jesus changed the water at Cana, is, of course, the new, glowing, and inspiring religion which Jesus puts in the place of a weak Judaism.”³ But it was no historical Jesus who did this; it was the spiritual doctrine of the incarnate Word, whose development we have traced from the *Wisdom of Solomon*.⁴ The Evangelists

¹ Schweitzer's judgment on the search for the features of the historical Jesus is expressed in the words: “There is nothing more negative than the result of the critical study of the life of Jesus.” And Dr. Burkitt's comment upon Weinel's assertion that “we know him very well,” is “What a claim!”

² I use the name John to designate the Gnostic writer of the Fourth Gospel.

³ No place named Cana is mentioned in any document except the Fourth Gospel. The name may have been suggested by the Greek word *kaina* (*new things*).

⁴ Was it the Jesus who uttered Mt. v, 17, 18? If not, why not?

ascribe to Jesus their own contradictory opinions. The Epistles record no abrogation of the Law by the man Jesus; the writers say: "Christ is the end of the Law"—a very different thing. We may be sure, too, that the writer of the Fourth Gospel meant something important by connecting this "sign" with a marriage. The "marriage" may have signified union between the Judaic and Hellenistic Christian Churches.

The Christ of Matthew is a Jew, but the Christ of John is as devoid of nationality as the Word of the *Odes of Solomon*. When addressing the Jews he is pointedly made to say "your law."

10. THE JOHANNINE LOGOS

It is evident from the Prologue to the Gospel that the Johannine Jesus is the pre-existent Logos, and we must infer that the absence of a birth-story is intentional. The Logos of John cannot have been "born." The Prologue, part of which is included in chap. iii, appears to be older than the Gospel itself. In its original state it contained no reference to John the Baptist.¹ There are several passages in the Gospel which reproduce the doctrine of the *Odes of Solomon*. It cannot with certainty be inferred that the *Odes* were known to the Evangelist, because the doctrine must have been that of some very early Gnostic Christian communities, but the striking resemblances in the Prologue to some passages in the *Odes* rather point to knowledge of them on the part of the writer of it. For convenience of comparison I place corresponding passages in parallel columns.

John (Prologue).

The Word was with God
and the Word was God.

All things were made by
him.

In him was life.

Odes.

The Father of Gnosis is the Word
of Gnosis. Light dawned from the
Word that was before-time in him
[the Father].

The worlds were made by his
Word.

Deathless Life embraced me.
And from that Life is the Spirit
within me.

¹ An approximate reconstruction of the Prologue is given in Appendix F.

John (Prologue).

And the life was the light of men.

The light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness mastered it not.

There was the true light coming into the world.

As many as received him to them gave he the right to become children of God, who were born, not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Of his fulness we all received. We beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, he hath declared him.

xiv, 9

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.

God gave his only begotten Son that whoever believeth on him should not perish.

x, 14

I know mine own and mine own know me.

xiv, 19, 21, 23

Because I live, ye shall live also. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father and I will love him. If a man love me he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.

The Johannine Word is precisely the Word of the Odes; a spiritual being capable of becoming immanent in men. And in those in whom the Word abides the Father also abides.¹

¹ Rendel Harris (*The Origin of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel*) drew attention to resemblances between the phraseology of the Prologue and Proverbs iii and viii which seem to show that the writer of the Prologue knew that the Word was derived from Wisdom.

Odes.

The mouth of the Lord is the true Word and the door of his light.

Let not the luminary be conquered by the darkness.

He is the light and the dawn of thought.

[The Spirit] brought me forth before the face of the Lord. And although a son of man, I was named the illuminated one, the Son of God.

The dwelling-place of the Word is man. The Son of the Most High appeared in the perfection of his Father. He [the Father] hath given himself to be seen [through the Word]. And the interpretation of himself had its course by him.

I announce peace to you his saints that those who have known him may not perish.

His children will be known to him.

I have been united to him. . . . Because I love him that is the Son I shall become a son. For he that is joined to him who is immortal will himself also become immortal.

Abide ye beloved ones in the Beloved.

It will be seen that with both writers the "abiding" is conceived in a very real way as the dwelling of the Spirit of the Lord in the soul of the believer. Though this was also the doctrine of Paul it is evident that the affinity between John and the Odist is closer than that between Paul and the Odist. Paulinism was affected more by external influences. Johannine Christianity exhibits on the whole the earlier form and must have had its roots deep down in the first century.¹ But, whatever the differences, the core of the doctrine—viz., that the assurance of salvation comes from union with the Christ—is common to all three; and so is the denial of a bodily resurrection. The apocalyptic doctrine of a final judgment by the Son of Man has been imposed upon the Fourth Gospel; but the Gnostic writer expressly repudiated it (iii, 17–19), particularly in the words: "He that believeth is not judged; he that believeth not hath been judged already"; because the pneumatic man is immortal; and the carnal man must perish once and for ever. Union with the spiritual Christ is symbolized in the eating of the Bread of Life. "The Feeding of the Five Thousand," wrote Schmiedel, "is a spiritual enjoyment of the person of Jesus."² While commending Schmiedel's insight one must take exception to his use of the word "person" in relation to a Sacrament which symbolically expresses a spiritual fact. Although John for the purpose of his narrative has to represent Jesus as a person he cannot have so regarded him; for he makes him say: "I and the Father are one." Otherwise stated, the Johannine Christ is the Word of the *Odes of Solomon* inseparable from the Father.³ The quoted speech is not a mere metaphor, for elsewhere (xiv, 10) Jesus says: "The Father abiding in me

¹ R. Bultmann wrote in 1925: "We cannot overlook the possibility that the Johannine Christianity represents a type more ancient than the synoptic."

² *The Joh. Writ.*, p. 97.

³ The Greek of Jn. i, 1, expresses a relationship between God and the Logos which cannot be expressed in English without circumlocution. The meaning is that the Logos is in some sense God without being actually God himself. The conception of the *Odes*, according to which the Word is a spiritual extension of the divine essence, quite meets the case. God and the Word form an indivisible unity, without identity.

doeth his works . . . I am in the Father and the Father in me." The Logos of John is, in fact, like the Logos of the Odes—God in relation to man. Being "in the Father" in the present tense implies simultaneous existence in Heaven and upon the earth, a condition which was possible for the spiritual Logos of John. We may compare Seneca's simile :—

As the rays of the sun indeed fall upon the earth, but are only at home in the place from whence they came, so is it with the great and holy Spirit, which is sent down hither in order that we may have closer acquaintance with God. He has dealings with us, but clings to the source from which he sprang.

So we see that the thought which is the main theme of the *Odes of Solomon* and was transmitted to John was known also to Seneca. We should not, for the sake of a materializing theory, deny to a Christian writer the possibility of rising in thought to the spiritual altitude of a Pagan. In iii, 13, Jesus says of himself : " No man hath ascended into Heaven but he that descended out of Heaven, the Son of Man who *is* in Heaven." The last four words are omitted in many MSS., presumably by Catholicizing editors. Schmiedel observes : " They very appropriately reflect John's idea about Jesus, and were therefore certainly written by him." ¹ Schmiedel infers from the affinity between the ideas of John and Philo that the former must have been acquainted with the writings of the latter. Now Philo frequently writes of the Logos in terms which imply personality ; and yet it is certain that he did not regard the Logos as literally a person, any more than the writer of Proverbs, who said that Wisdom had " built her house," believed that Wisdom was a person. Modern critics do not make allowance for the difference between the mentality of religious thinkers of the first century and their own. It is quite possible for John to have written his Gospel without any belief that Jesus was a person who had actually

¹ Work cited, p. 153. But in spite of Schmiedel's opinion it is somewhat doubtful whether passages in which the term " Son of Man " appears belong to the oldest stratum of the Gospel. The Son of Man in this verse, however, is more like the Naassene than the apocalyptic Son of Man.

lived in Palestine. True, we read (i, 14) that "the Word became flesh"; but is it likely that those words were really written by John? Schmiedel, who does not doubt this, nevertheless sees that, if genuine, they cannot be literally meant. He interprets them to mean that the Logos clothed himself with flesh.¹ As we have already seen, there is a sense in which that could be said by a Gnostic. But, if the interpretation is in any sense correct, the visible flesh of Jesus was a mere envelope and no part of the spiritual Christ, hence there could have been no religious significance in the eating of it. According to John the Logos came down from Heaven as spirit and reascended as spirit; and that was a Gnostic heresy. Ignatius wrote: "For I know that after the Resurrection he was in the flesh, and I believe he is so now."² In the Ignatian doctrine Jesus was "spiritually united" with the Father; but all the Catholic writers affirmed that the Ascension was "in the flesh." The Catholic leaders must have understood the character of the Johannine Christology very well, and they would never have granted canonicity to its unadulterated Gnosticism.³ Realizing this, we can understand the vigour with which an editor has stated the Catholic view of the Sacrament (vi, 52-56) immediately following the spiritual doctrine of the Bread of Life. The very emphasis with which the statement is made betrays the motive of it.

There are passages in the Gospel which look like Docetism, but they should perhaps be understood as indications of the symbolic character of the writer's Jesus. For example, in viii, 59, Jesus in the Temple is surrounded by Jews who take up stones to cast at him, but "he hid himself and went out of the Temple." Which is as much as to say that he made himself invisible. In the circumstances it would have been a physical impossibility for Jesus to hide himself and go out

¹ *The Joh. Writ.*, p. 152.

² *Smyrn.*, II, 2. Ἐγὼ γὰρ καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἐν σαρκὶ αὐτὸν οἶδα καὶ πορεύω ὄντα.

³ "The last, the ecclesiastical, edition might be twenty or thirty years later than the first. . . . It is then that Ephesus will have taken the indispensable steps to make its Gospel acceptable to Rome." Loisy, *Le quat. Evan.*, p. 602.

of the Temple. In x, 39, again, the Jews who were "round about him" "sought again to take him and he went forth out of their hand." There is no reason to suppose that the writer in making such statements believed that he was recording facts. He was writing an allegory; and by the intangibility of Jesus he indicates that his Logos is no more a "person" than the Word of the *Odes of Solomon*. If he had been intending to relate facts he would have had some regard to what theologians call "the tradition," assuming of course that he believed there were any known facts, which, in view of the character of his Gospel, one may take leave to doubt.¹

In the *Odes of Solomon* the Word, being a metaphysical abstraction conceived as a spiritual emanation, is able, notwithstanding the personification, to have his dwelling-place in man. It was impossible for John to predicate this unambiguously with respect to his individualized Christ. In certain passages the immanence of the Christ is asserted—for example, in xvii, 21, where it is written: "That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be in us"; and again in verse 23: "I in them, and thou in me." The chapter from which these verses are quoted is Johannine and no doubt very early; it may have formed part of a liturgy; but it was not a constituent part of the primary Gospel. In the Gospel itself the difficulty is got over by substituting the spoken word of Jesus for the divine Word—e.g., in v, 24: "He that heareth my word . . . hath eternal life." To imagine that "word" in this verse means instruction or the injunctions of morality would be to ignore the whole character of the Johannine Christology. Evidently it is conceived as something which has in itself, not merely through what it imparts, a life-giving power. Further than that, as in the *Odes*, he who has received "my word" has risen from the dead; for the verse continues, "hath passed out of death into life." In viii, 28, again, we have an indication that the word spoken by Jesus is synonymous with the divine Word—that is to say, him-

¹ In the process of Catholicization a small amount of synoptic material was introduced into this Gospel, as Loisy and Wellhausen have shown.

self: "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me I speak these things." Jesus, as the Word, is the medium of communication between God and men. And in verse 31 he says: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples, and the truth shall make you free." The "truth" is Gnosis, and the "freedom" is liberation from the bondage of *heimarmenē*. He who believes that the Christ is the Son of God and that he was sent by God has received not only "my word" but also "the Word."

Wellhausen, in spite of his insight into the character of the Fourth Gospel, seems to have gone rather perversely astray when he wrote:—

By union with Christ is meant not a mystical union with the person of Jesus, but a rational one with the truth he announces. There is, moreover, no question of the historical Jesus (*κατὰ σάρκα*) and of familiar acquaintance with him, but, exactly as with Paul, solely with the heavenly.¹

Wellhausen sees that what is signified is "immanence," but he thinks the immanence is not in the individual but in the Church. Surely it must have been in the former before it could be in the latter. No doubt he is right so far that the "works" of Jesus are the works of the Christian community in which the Father operates through the immanent Logos. But if by "rational" Wellhausen intends to imply an intellectual process, his own rationality has misled him. The union conceived was "mystical"; certainly not indeed with the "historical" Jesus, but with the heavenly Christ. How could such a union be other than mystical? The "truth" proclaimed by Jesus is not logically demonstrable truth; it is theosophical truth, Gnosis really, even though the writer did not employ that term. The word has the same meaning in this Gospel as it has in the *Odes of Solomon*. Seeing that Wellhausen understood union with Christ to mean union with the truth—i.e., with his word—he should have realized that union with the Christ and abiding in his word were intended to signify one and the same thing. By his use of the term "acquaintance," Wellhausen has obscured

¹ *Das Evangelium Johannis*, p. 118.

the issue. One can have familiar acquaintance with a material person, but not, in the usual sense of the words, with a divine being. Paul had no thought of "acquaintance" in that sense. Wellhausen is, of course, quite right in saying that in this Gospel there is no question of familiar acquaintance with the historical Jesus.

The essential identity, in a mystical sense, of the Johannine Christ with the word spoken by him was seen by Bousset,¹ who, quoting Jn. xv, 7—"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you"—and xv, 3—"Ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you"—observes that community with Christ corresponds exactly to community with the Word, and that the word spoken by Jesus has the redemptive power of the Logos himself.²

11. RESURRECTION

The interpolated section, vi, 52-56, contradicts another opinion of the Gnostic writer with the words: "I will raise him up at the last day." Notwithstanding the important differences between the doctrines of Paul and John, as regards the Gnostic fundamentals they are in agreement, and there is no future resurrection in either of them. The spirit is immortal and its life is continuous. The spirit is the man, "The flesh profiteth nothing." When Martha says she knows that her brother will rise again in the resurrection at the last day, Jesus corrects her with the words:—

I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth on me *shall never die.*

For John, as for Paul, death of the body is not death in the Gnostic sense of the word "death"; and the believer has already risen from the dead. Expression is given to this view also in vi, 51: "I am the living bread . . . if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." The bread from Heaven is spiritual bread and must be spiritually "eaten."

¹ *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 205.

² In the prayer of Ghizeh, discovered by Reitzenstein, the "voice" of Jesus stands for Jesus himself. *Poim.*, p. 5.

The bread of the Gnostic Eucharist was, of course, not itself the living bread; it was only a symbol of it. But the Catholic editor has tacked on to the verse his materialistic dogma that "the bread which I shall give him is my flesh."

It is strange that Schmiedel, with all his insight, should have perversely tried to explain the miracle of the Raising of Lazarus from the supposed misunderstanding of a symbolic expression in a discourse—not a discourse of Jesus. The explanation savours of the demoded Rationalism of H. E. G. Paulus.¹ How can Schmiedel have failed to see that in his anxiety to exonerate John from "any idea of deception or forgery" or from "censurable indulgence in phantasies" he was depreciating him, substituting dependence upon a false rumour for spirituality and imagination? It would be doing no service to the reputation of Spenser to rationalize the fine allegories of the *Faerie Queene* in so paltry a manner. This kind of criticism would have to blame Bunyan for "censurable indulgence in phantasies." The story has been explained as a pendant to that of Dives and Lazarus in Luke. The allegory in Luke concludes with the words of Abraham to Dives: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead." Dives and his brethren typify the Jews. In the Fourth Gospel Lazarus does rise from the dead and yet the Jews are not persuaded. The explanation may be correct so far as it goes, but it is certain that the story in John has deeper significance than that.² The writer, in fact, prepares his readers for the understanding of it in the declaration of Jesus to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life." It is a verbal picture illustrating that passage in the *Odes of Solomon* in which the dead in Sheol are brought to life by the power of the Word. The death is spiritual death. Lazarus is a type of the Pagan world, not only dead

¹ To guard against a possible misunderstanding on the part of some who are not familiar with the history of theological exegesis I had better perhaps explain that the Rationalism here referred to has no connection with the Rationalism of the Rationalist Press Association.

² It is not improbable, as Mr. A. B. Sanders has pointed out to me, that the date of the story in Luke is later than that of the Johannine allegory.

but corrupt, yet still capable of receiving life from the source of life, the Christ-Logos, speaking through the congregation of the saints, the corporate Word. Martha, it is evident, typifies the Judaic Christian who believed in a resurrection of the body and a day of judgment and was still cumbered with Judaic observances. Mary then of course typifies the Hellenistic Christian. Martha goes to meet Jesus because the first Christians were Jews; Mary, as the Gentile Christian, is "called" (verse 28).

12. GOD-VISION

Bousset draws attention to an important aspect of the Johannine Christ-mysticism, which, he says, tends to pass over into God-mysticism—viz., the Gnostic conception of the "vision of God" attainable through Gnosis. In this Gospel it is obtained by those who have seen the Christ. "He that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me." The writer of these words cannot have meant that everyone who had seen Jesus had seen God. He was not thinking of physical vision and most decidedly not of an intellectual process by which one could infer the goodness of God from the admirable qualities of some man. And where, in the Prologue, it is said that "the Word dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten from the Father" the writer is speaking for himself and his fellow-believers who had never actually seen the Word. He is exactly duplicating the thought of the Odist, who wrote that God had "given himself to be seen," and that the Word "appeared in the perfection of his Father." We find this conception of god-vision in contemporary Mystery religions. In certain of the Mysteries the vision was realized through the brilliant illumination of a picture or image of the god in a chamber otherwise dark. But, as Bousset observes, later this crude procedure was usually refined away. It is known, however, that something of the kind was practised at the Sacrament of certain Christian Gnostics. The officiating priest in the Pagan Mysteries by suitable means induced in the worshippers an ecstatic condition in which they imagined that the god had appeared to them.

A common procedure seems to have been for the worshipper to gaze at a bright light and utter a prayer in which the words "come, appear to me" were frequently repeated. A typical prayer to Horus is quoted by Reitzenstein. After the invocation the god is supposed to appear and the worshipper cries "Hail, lord, god of gods, benefactor."¹

The meaning attached by the writer of the Fourth Gospel to the God-vision can be better understood from Philo, who wrote of "men capable of vision," whom he terms therapeutic (worshipful) men, and says that "they should be encouraged to look continually upon that which they have learnt of the divine essence, until they see what they long for." Philo certainly was not thinking of physical vision; he was reproducing in purified form a prevalent idea; and so no doubt was John.² In the Mysteries the god-vision was supposed to operate as "deification" and to ensure immortality. In a papyrus prayer we read: "For thou art I and I am thou." There is not much difference between this and the Johannine formula: "I in them and thou in me." The Christian writer could not precisely identify himself with God, but he could believe that God was abiding in him through the indwelling Word. And, equally with the Pagan, he believed that the God-vision was the guarantee of immortality. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God." As in the *Odes of Solomon*, mystical "seeing" is mystical "knowing."

The "knowledge" of the Johannine writings is altogether mystical knowledge which resides in, and is bound up with, the God-vision. "To see" and "to know" are used almost synonymously and are interchangeable with one another. Believers "know" because God and Jesus have

¹ *Poim.*, pp. 27 f. In these prayers, as in the Christian documents, we find very great importance attached to "the name" of the god. Horus had several names, of which one was Jaoui.

² Egyptian Gnostics had risen to this point. In the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Tat, the disciple of Hermes, says: "I see the greatness with its visible form." Hermes tells him that this is not yet god-vision, since "the true" is bodiless. The Logos of the *Odes* and of John is also "the true," and is also bodiless. Or again are we to say that a Christian writer was incapable of the lofty thought of a Pagan?

known them. Hence the "truth" which believers receive from the "fulness" of the Logos appears as correlative with "grace." And this "truth" is a divine, living power.¹

Just like the Truth and Grace of the Odes where "Truth" and "Grace" are titles of the Word. It is impossible not to recognize community of ideas between the Johannine and the Egyptian theosophy. And these ideas were already in existence before the Christian era. In the Egyptian theosophy the Logos, who was assimilated to Hermes while Hermes again was assimilated to the god Thot, was viewed not only as the agent of the creation, but also as the bringer of divine revelation and the means of regeneration, securing immortality. A statement in the Hermetic *Genikoi Logoi*—"no one can be saved before being born again"—corresponds closely with the saying of Jesus in John: "Except a man be born anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (iii, 3). There is also a close resemblance between the question of Nicodemus in the next verse of the Gospel and the reply of Tat to his teacher in the *Corp. Herm.*: "I know not, O Trismegistos, from what kind of womb thou wast reborn and from what kind of seed." "The antiquity of the *Genikoi Logoi*," says Reitzenstein, "must guarantee it against any suspicion of Christian influence."

The Greek word *pleroma* (fulness), which occurs in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and also in Colos. i, 19, was much used by Gnostics. The early vogue of the term appears from its use by Philo in a sense similar to that in which it was used in the Pagan theosophy. In *Corp. Herm.*, XII, 15, it is written: "This whole cosmos, the great god and image of the greater . . . is the fulness of life." And in VI, 4, "For the cosmos is the fulness of evil, but God of good—or the good of God." An opinion which is deprecated in IX, 4, in the words: "For we say that evil must reside in its own place. For its place is the earth, not the cosmos, as some say, blaspheming." Reitzenstein observes:—

I readily confess that I can as little separate the sentence "God is the fulness of good" from the Gospel passage "Of

¹ Bousset, *Kyr. Chr.*, p. 207.

his fulness we all received and grace for grace," as I can the sentence "the God is the fulness of life" from that other one, "In him was life and the life was the light of men."¹

There are also resemblances between the *Shepherd* of Hermas and *Poimandres* which cannot be accidental. In particular it is demonstrable that the Shepherd himself was copied from the divine Poimandres (shepherd of men) who is also Hermes and Nous. It is probable that the writer of the *Odes of Solomon* was familiar, not with *Poimandres* itself, but with literature of a similar character. Reitzenstein has given reasons for thinking that the sources of the Hermetic literature are pre-Christian and that *Poimandres* in its most ancient form must be dated earlier than the beginning of the second Christian century.²

¹ *Poim.*, p. 26 n.

² Some of the expressions used by ancient Christian writers have gradually been invested in modern thought with a different signification corresponding with a change in the religious outlook. This observation applies particularly to several of the quotations made in the foregoing chapter. Readers should be on their guard against reading into such expressions modern ideas which were certainly not in the mind of the writer.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRIMITIVE GOSPEL

I. ITS GENERAL CHARACTER

UNTIL we come to a Gospel—that is to say, at earliest until the close of the first century—we find in the Christian documents no apparent knowledge of the doings or sayings of the man Jesus, but very much concerning the death and resurrection of a divine Christ. And there is nothing to indicate that this death had any connection with an historic event. The Resurrection, moreover, is of greater importance than the death. There is no justification for the opinion that belief in the resurrection of Jesus was the cause of the belief in his divinity. The Resurrection could not have had the dogmatic value which is attached to it in this early literature unless the Christ who rose had already been regarded as a divine being. No evidence of the actuality of the Resurrection is forthcoming—1 Cor. xv, 1–8, being later than a Gospel—it is an article of religious belief; Christ must have risen, for, if not, there is no possibility of a resurrection for anybody. That is the only reason for believing in it which the writer of 1 Cor. xv, 12 ff., can give.¹ The writers of the earliest Pauline Epistles “preach Christ crucified”—obviously a dogma; such an expression would not be used of a known historic event. The dogma is a “stumbling-block” to Jews, but in one passage only is it even implied that the Jews were responsible for the Crucifixion, and Pilate is not mentioned at all. In 1 Thess. ii, 15, it is said that the Jews “killed the Lord Jesus”; but since in the following verse the reader is reminded that “the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost” the passage must have been written later than the year 70.

¹ For a proof that 1 Cor. xv, 1–8, is a late interpolation, see Steck, *Der Galaterbrief*, pp. 182 ff. W. B. Smith, *Ecce Deus*, p. 153.

In the foregoing pages abundant evidence of the Gnostic fondness for allegory has been given. The Gnostic Justin set forth his theosophical opinions in an allegory which revolves about a shepherd Jesus. The number of supernatural beings introduced into this work prevent its being mistaken for a record of real events; but a gifted Gnostic whose imagination was more restrained could, in spite of the supernatural character of his narrative, have produced the impression that his book had some foundation in fact. The Fourth Gospel, which cannot be true if the Synoptics are true, may be given as an example. And if we have to decide whether this Gospel is fiction pure and simple or allegory there is no reason to hesitate. Examples of John's allegorical method have been given. But if Justin's story of Jesus and John's story of Jesus are allegories why should not the Gospel of Mark be an allegory? To illustrate his conception of the Christ in that way is just what a Gnostic who had the requisite literary ability would be likely to do. The supposition that that is what happened is entirely consistent with the fact that before the appearance of a Gospel there is no evidence that anything whatever concerning the life-story of Jesus was known. The symbolic character of Mark's Gospel has been demonstrated by W. B. Smith.¹ The book itself does not claim to be the story of a man. The subject of it is announced as "The good tidings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"; and the Jesus Christ of this Gospel is not "Son of God" as a holy man might be termed a son of God; he is Son of God in some fashion which is very real and unique. Did the original writer believe that any mortal had ever been, or could ever have been, Son of God in that sense, or was his Jesus Christ not rather an individualization of some such metaphysical being as the Son of God of the *Odes of Solomon*, just as the Jesus Christ of John is the individualized Word? The whole character of the Gospel goes to show that the latter supposition is the true one. The writer, in spite of some uncouthness in his diction, was a great literary artist, and by graphical touches he has produced an appearance of actuality which has deceived many generations of readers; but a cool,

¹ *Ecce Deus*, pp. 110 ff.

critical judgment must pronounce with Wellhausen that "one never gets the impression that an attempt had been made by those who had eaten and drunk with Jesus to give others a notion of his personality"; and with Dr. W. B. Bacon that "in spite of a graphic style and an interest in externals much more apparent than in Matthew or Luke, our Evangelist is conspicuously lacking in a really historical conception of Jesus's career." Anybody who can without prepossession compare this Gospel with any biographical sketch must realize that we have in it literature of an entirely different order, and that too not merely by reason of its supernatural character. If there had ever stood behind the Gospel a known person, some of those intimate recollections derived from private intercourse which are found in all biographies must have made their appearance. The graphic touches are of the superficial and artificial character which a skilful writer of fiction knows how to supply. "The scantiness of the tradition," wrote Wellhausen in another place, "is remarkable." And this scanty remnant is not really known to be "tradition"; it is the irreducible residue which up to the present has resisted the acid of modern criticism, and there are critics who accept even less than Wellhausen does. Prof. R. Bultmann, in a monograph upon Jesus written in 1926, said that in his opinion practically nothing more can be learnt of the life and personality of Jesus, because the Christian sources have not concerned themselves therewith. "What has been written," he continues, "during a hundred and fifty years on the life of Jesus, his personality, his inner development, and so forth, is—in so far as it is not critical investigation—fantastic and romancist.") And the net result of the critical investigation is a progressive destruction of the record. But the Gospel, like that of John, is not fiction, it is allegory.¹

It might be argued that since the writer was intending to recount the acts of the Son of God he would deliberately omit any details which indicated the mere humanity of his

¹ We may infer from the Christian humanization of the Logos Simon that there was a Simonian allegory of which he was the subject.

Jesus. The objection involves the unlikely assumption of the writer's belief that a known man had been the unique Son of God. And, if the writer's intention was to depict the Son of God, of what value is his Gospel as evidence of the real existence of a man? The assumption that he deliberately rejected known facts which would have been inconsistent with his presentation of the Christ also involves the conclusion that he was completely divorced from tradition; and upon the rock of that conclusion Schmiedel's thesis of the Nine Pillars is hopelessly wrecked.¹ Those who attach weight to Schmiedel's argument are thus faced with this dilemma. If Mark was cognizant of intimate details which he refused to record he was not tied to a tradition; if he had no knowledge of any such details the existence of any tradition may reasonably be questioned.²

Papias states that whenever he met anyone who had seen an apostle, he made a point of inquiring what the apostle had said. Let anyone think what a wealth of personal recollections in the case of any noteworthy historical character would thus have been transmitted. And yet we may confidently infer from the silence of early writers who were acquainted with the works of Papias that he had learnt in this manner absolutely no biographical details at all. Papias mentions "apostles," but there is no reason to believe that any of these apostles had been personally acquainted with Jesus. Irenæus, when a young man, had conversed with Polycarp, who had known the apostles and had learnt what he could from them. Was Irenæus as incurious concerning details of the life of Jesus as Paul was? That is difficult to believe, if the real existence of Jesus meant to him what it means to modern theologians. In any case the absolute non-existence

¹ For a detailed refutation of Schmiedel's thesis, see *Ecce Deus*, pp. 177-207.

² Some apologists—e.g., A. Richardson, work cited, pp. 45 ff.—who are quite alive to the unbiographical character of Mark's Gospel, explain it by saying that the first Christians were uninterested in the details of the life of Jesus! and that "the Resurrection claim was the whole content of the earliest preaching." In other words, the foundation of Christianity is not the life-work of a remarkable man, but a dogma. The explanation given implies that *from the very first* Christians had no interest in Jesus *as a man*. What then becomes of the argument from "personality"?

of any anecdote or personal reminiscence is in the circumstances most significant. The critical conclusion which would be drawn by a secular historian from such a state of the case is that *there was no tradition* relative to an "historical" Jesus. When no water issues from the open lower end of a pipe connected with a cistern we infer that the cistern is empty. Irenæus does, it is true, record one "tradition," and we may be quite sure he would have recorded others if he could. But the tradition which he records is that Jesus lived to be rather an old man!¹ The destructive analysis of modern criticism has left to the Gospels an extremely small residue of "tradition." Outside the Gospels, even in a number of places where we might reasonably expect to find some, we are met by a perfect blank. It would be absurd to argue that the Evangelists had so completely reaped the field of tradition that nothing was left for anyone else to report.

The affinity between the concluding section of Mark [xvi, 1-8] and the corresponding section of the *Gospel of Peter* is so close that either one of them is dependent upon the other or both are dependent upon a common original. And it is shown elsewhere in this book that in this portion of the narrative the *Gospel of Peter* has preserved on the whole the earlier form. A very early edition of the Gospel upon which the Synoptics are based seems to have concluded with the words, "Then the women fled affrighted," so that it contained no appearance of Jesus after the Resurrection. The section which follows in the *Gospel of Peter* looks like a subsequent addition, as Mk. xvi, 9-20, is known to be. Now, in the apocryphal Gospel the angel says to the women concerning Jesus: "He is risen and gone thither from whence he was sent"—implying that at first the Resurrection and Ascension were not separated by an interval of time. For the above statement there has been substituted in Mark the statement that Jesus had gone into Galilee. There can surely be no doubt as to which is the earlier.² We

¹ Aetatem seniore (Contra haer., II, 22).

² There is evidence in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, § 16, that originally the Resurrection and Ascension were believed to have taken place upon the same day.

may infer that in the Primitive Gospel Jesus came straight down from Heaven, "whence he was sent." And the inference is decidedly confirmed by the opening section of Mark. The best critics agree that the birth-stories in Matthew and Luke are late and unhistorical.¹ The writer of the Primitive Gospel had nothing to say upon the subject, not because all the relevant circumstances had been completely forgotten, which is unlikely; nor for the still more unlikely reason that neither he nor his readers took any interest in the origin of so important and remarkable a person; but because the Son of God could not be supposed to have had an infancy and boyhood upon the earth.

2. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

The originality of the account of the baptism of Jesus may be doubted. There was evidently a controversy among early Christians with regard to the significance and importance of baptism. Jn. xiii, 10, seems to contain a polemic against some who attached a mystical or symbolic significance to total immersion. "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet but is clean every whit." Rejection of the Pauline view of baptism is implied. Total immersion was probably at first the general—though not universal—rule in the Christian communities; and the desire to confront objectors with a divine authorization of the rule may have been the motive for the insertion into the Gospel of an account of the baptism of Jesus. We may infer a motive because we have evidence in the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* that the baptism of Jesus by John was felt to be an incongruity. The writer of Matthew also thought it necessary to give some plausible explanation of it. On the other hand the most eminent critics are aware of the fact that not only speeches of Jesus but also incidents were inserted into the Gospels for a controversial or dogmatic purpose. If this baptism had really happened one might have expected that

¹ Guignebert wrote: "Neither of these two accounts of the Nativity will bear critical examination, and it is obvious that neither is founded upon an authentic original tradition." *Jesus*, p. 93.

Paul, for whom baptism was so very important, would have made some allusion to it; and if his Jesus had been a man there is no reason why he should not have done so.

The writer of the Fourth Gospel never hesitates to suppress or to transform circumstances related by the other Evangelists when his own opinion requires it. It is most unlikely that he would have recounted an episode which was in conflict with his view of baptism. Moreover the Johannine Jesus, as the Logos, an emanation from God—in effect himself the Spirit of God—did not require that the Spirit should descend upon him. No passage in the Fourth Gospel in which the Holy Spirit is distinguished from the Father and the Son appears to be original. Since the Gospel was very freely Catholicized it is more likely that the account of the baptism was introduced later into it than that it is primitive. Schmiedel has pointed out that the baptism of Jesus is not categorically affirmed in this Gospel and that the descent of the Spirit takes place for the enlightenment of John. That is true, though the baptism is implied in verse 29. The writer of this section may have intended to modify the Synoptic account, with which he was presumably acquainted; but for several reasons it is extremely doubtful whether the section is primitive. Verse 31 implies that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. John cannot have written that; but the verse may be a later interpolation into the section.

There is textual evidence that the section is not original. The repetition of the phrase "Behold the Lamb of God" in verses 29 and 36 has an artificial appearance; and if one of these verses was written by John and the other not, it is verse 29 which must be rejected; for the phrase, "which taketh away the sin of the world," is not an expression of Johannine doctrine. Verses 29, 35, and 43 all begin with the words "On the morrow." Now verses 19 to 28 record a conversation which is supposed to have taken place on a certain day; verses 29 to 34 record the coming of Jesus to John, which would thus have occurred the next day; verses 35 to 42 circumstances which are said to have happened on the third day; and verses 43 to 51 an incident which is referred to the

fourth day. Quibbles apart, the following day would be the fifth; and yet chapter ii begins with the words, "And the third day." Inferably two sections have been inserted of which for the reasons stated one is likely to have been verses 29 to 34. Even if we begin to count from the day referred to in verse 29, one section has been inserted.

Now Mark is a considerably amplified version of the Primitive Gospel, so that there are a priori grounds for suspecting that any incident which is not consistent with its fundamental doctrine is not original. If the account of the baptism was inserted into one Gnostic Gospel it is at least conceivable that it was inserted into the other. It is even probable; because in the Primitive Gospel Jesus was the pre-existent Son of God and as such in no need of being baptized or of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him. A writer who emphasized the contrast between John's baptism with water and the baptism by Jesus with the Holy Spirit is not likely to have thought that Jesus required a water baptism. Here again the supposition is confirmed by indications of manipulation of the text in Mark at this point. In i, 14, we read: "Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God." This would be a very suitable commencement of the narrative so far as Jesus is concerned. We need not ask whence he came. The verse implies that Jesus was not habitually residing in Galilee at that time, whereas verse 9 does imply it; and in the meanwhile only the forty days' absence in the wilderness is recorded. Jesus is said to have gone there "straightway" after the baptism.¹ Pertinent questions in this connection are: Was John "delivered up" during the forty days? Verse 14 seems to imply not. But, if not, what was Jesus doing and where was he staying in the meantime? The Baptist foretells the coming of Jesus and then quite naturally in verse 14 he disappears from the stage and Jesus arrives.

¹ Raschke, *Die Werkstatt des Markusevangelisten*, p. 75, gave reasons for concluding that the account of the Temptation is not original in Mark. It is an abridgement of the account in Matthew and apparently dependent upon it. In the opinion of most modern critics the story was taken from the source Q, and therefore inferably not in the Primitive Gospel.

The announcement of John that Jesus is to *come after* him corresponds better with this order of events than with a simultaneous appearance which must have continued for an appreciable length of time if the delivering up of John occurred later than the forty days in the wilderness. It would be strange if Jesus emerged merely to be baptized and then retired into obscurity until John was delivered up. Such a delay would not, in fact, be consistent with the first verse of the Gospel which leads us to expect the public appearance of Jesus very soon. The implication is that the activity of John had already occurred. It is mentioned incidentally, and the Gospel proper begins with the appearance of Jesus in verse 14. The fact that in Mark there is no kind of apology for allowing Jesus to be baptized rather points to the insertion of the section at a time when people's minds had become familiarized with the idea.

Notwithstanding the deceptive art of the writer the Gospel of Mark is as little like a record of real events as is the Gospel of John. Consider the immediately following section which describes the calling of the first disciples. The Son of God would be imagined to make disciples in such a manner, but not a man. The introduction of a few details to give an appearance of actuality is an artistic device which would be employed by any competent writer of a narrative. And, since really there is no "actuality" in the incident, there is no reason to suppose that the writer did not represent Peter and Andrew as "fishers" in order to symbolize the fact that they were to become "fishers of men."

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE DESCENT OF THE SON OF GOD

To pass from the locally and temporally undefined idea that the Christ had "appeared upon earth" and been "conversant with men" to a detailed representation of his appearance was a natural step for symbolizing Gnostics to take. It then became necessary to decide upon a place and purpose for his appearance. The first Christians having been Jews, Palestine was indicated as the obviously appropriate place. Galilee was chosen for the fulfilment

of a prophecy of Isaiah [ix, 1, 2].¹ To discover the purpose we must consult the early Christian writers, and the view of the Primitive Gospel should be discoverable in Mark. Since the time of the appearance of Jesus is not stated by the second Evangelist we may infer that that still remained indeterminate. We have not to penetrate far into the Gospel in our search for the purpose; the writer gives a clear intimation of it in the very first section in which the subject is treated. This he does not only by making the act of healing there described the first exercise of the divine power of the Son of God, but also in the words ascribed to the unclean spirit—"Thou hast come to destroy us." And the great importance attached to this exercise of divine power becomes increasingly apparent as we proceed. "And he went throughout all Galilee preaching and casting out devils" (i, 39); "And cast out many devils" (i, 34); "And the unclean spirits, whensoever they beheld him, fell down before him" (iii, 11). In chapter v we read of the expulsion of a "legion" of unclean spirits. When the twelve are sent out "they cast out many devils," and that is evidently regarded as their most important work. How is it that commentators find so little difficulty in this representation? Granting that belief in demoniacal possession was universal in those days, and that a healer would be supposed occasionally to exorcise, what a strange picture of the state of the Galilean population is here presented! Swarms of devil-ridden people everywhere! And how astonishing that the principal work of the Son of God and his disciples should be the expelling of dæmons from a number of lunatics and epileptics! All this is most unnatural. What does it mean? Can the writer really have thought that the Son of God had come down from Heaven for the purpose of destroying dæmons of this particular kind?

Let us now inquire of the Christian writers of the second century what in *their* opinion was the chief purpose of Jesus in coming into the world. In the Greek version of the

¹ Cp. Mt. iv. 15. The writer of the Primitive Gospel may have had an additional reason for laying the scene in Galilee. See *Ecce Deus*, pp. 98 f.

Apology of Aristides it is written that the Son of God became incarnate that he might recall men from the polytheistic error. Tertullian¹ says that the mission of Christ was not like that of Numa to frighten boors with a multitude of gods, but to open the eyes of highly cultured men to a knowledge of the truth—obviously to convert them to monotheism. The *Apologies* of Aristides and of Minucius Felix consist almost entirely of an argument for monotheism versus polytheism. If any one thinks I have exaggerated the importance attached by Mark to the expulsion of dæmons let him listen to Justin (Second *Apol.* 6) :—

Jesus has the name and significance both of man and Saviour. For a man was he made according to the counsel of the God and Father, brought forth for the sake of believing men and for the dissolution of the dæmons.

So, according to Justin, Jesus became man in order to liberate believing men from the dæmons. The liberation of course followed from the belief. And Justin, in his first *Apology*, 5, and elsewhere, says categorically that the Pagan gods are the dæmons whom Jesus had come to destroy. It is obvious from these statements of Justin and those of the other writers quoted that “dissolution of the dæmons” means precisely the same thing as the overthrow of polytheism. A passage quoted previously from the *Recognitions* proves that every Pagan was believed to be possessed by an evil spirit, and the identity of Pagan gods with dæmons is unambiguously declared in 1 Cor. x, 20, “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils.” No wonder that Galilee—“Galilee of the Gentiles,” hence probably a symbol of the Gentile world—was swarming with demoniacs. But the dæmons whom Jesus had come to destroy were not those which caused physical incapacity or mental alienation; they were the far more to be dreaded corruptors of the soul. The inner meaning of the cry of the unclean spirit—“Thou hast come to destroy us”—is clear. Mark did not believe that the Son of God was a psychiatrist, but he himself was a symbolist. The name of the place where the first healing

¹ *Apologeticum*, XXI.

occurred accords with the symbolic character of the episode. The statements of ancient writers as to the situation of Capernaum are contradictory, and Biblical archæologists are unable to agree with regard to it. The name is not found in any existing document older than the Gospels;¹ but Josephus² says that there was a fountain called Capernaum not far from the Lake of Gennesareth. This statement, read in connection with two verses of Zechariah [xiii, 1, 2], is illuminating :—

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land.

The writer appropriately gave to the place where the work of cutting off the names of the idols and putting an end to uncleanness was supposed to have begun the name of a fountain. The place itself was in the land, not of Galilee, but of phantasy.

The first case of healing of this kind is located in a synagogue; but that is exceptional. Jews were as liable to mental derangement as Gentiles, but they were not spiritually sick in the same way. And yet they were not all completely "clean." As we have seen, Christians reproached Jews with their worship of angels and of "stoicheia." Aristides wrote concerning the Jews :—

Nevertheless they too have gone astray from accurate knowledge, and they suppose in their minds that they are serving God; but in the method of their actions their service is to angels and not to God, in that they observe Sabbaths and new moons, and the Passover, and the great fast, and the fast, and circumcision, and cleanness of meats.

Hence we need not be surprised to find one unclean spirit in a synagogue. A man with a withered hand is healed in a

¹ For the conjectures of archæologists, see *Encyc. Bibl.*, Art. Capernaum.

² *Wars of the Jews*, III, x, 8.

synagogue. With regard to that incident Jerome wrote in his commentary on Matthew :—

Up to the advent of the Saviour the hand was dry in the synagogue of the Jews, and works of God were not done in it; after he came to earth the right hand was returned to the Jews that believed on the apostles and was restored to service.

If in the Primitive Gospel casting out dæmons was symbolism, it would be illogical not to conclude that the multitude of miraculous cures, in the literal truth of which no critical theologian believes to-day, are also symbolism. They were introduced for the sake of diversity but their meaning is substantially the same. Jesus himself says (ii, 17) : “ They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.” And plainly he is not speaking of physical sickness. The attitude of the writer to the Old Testament was similar to that of the Odist. He never quotes a text for the purpose of proving that his Jesus was the Messiah—his Jesus was in fact not the Messiah—and quotations of any kind from that source are in Mark so extremely rare that it is doubtful whether in the Primitive Gospel there were any.¹ But the writer could apply, without quoting, a verse from the Prophets as a basis for his imagery. And it seems likely that the curative activity of Jesus was suggested by Isa. xxxv, 5, 6 :—

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.

In the Prophets idolatry is so frequently described as “ uncleanness ” that the writer was not likely to overlook leprosy as a fitting symbol for it.

Since Jesus did not, on any hypothesis, personally destroy the “ dæmons ”; and did not, even if historical, convert any Pagans to belief in his own divinity, we must conclude that in

¹ In the Gnostic Pauline Epistles there are no quotations from the Old Testament. The presence or absence of such quotations serves as a means of discrimination between strata of different origin.

the allegorical representation of the overthrow of polytheism by the Son of God the operation of the divine Son is supposed by the writer to be effected through the community which is his visible body. The writer, indeed, in contemplating the extinction of polytheism must have been thinking more of the future than the present, to say nothing of the past.

4. THE SON OF GOD A SAVIOUR

The Primitive Gospel must have been considerably shorter even than the existing Mark. It is perhaps not possible to reconstruct it; but it is possible to decide that certain sections were contained in it and that certain others were not. It is known, for example, that "the Little Apocalypse" (Mk. xiii, 14-27) is a rather late insertion into the Gospel. Even if that were not demonstrable on critical grounds we could confidently decide that no eschatological passages can have originally formed part of a Gnostic work. The critics are agreed that the discourses of Jesus found in Matthew were taken from a collection—or collections—of "Sayings" (*Logia*), which, therefore, were not in the Primitive Gospel. Now if, as many theologians maintain, Jesus was primarily an ethical teacher and in his teaching lies his supreme value to the world, how extraordinary it is that the writer of the Primitive Gospel, who presumably was in a better position to estimate the significance of his life and was likely to be more under the influence of his "personality" than those who wrote later, had no more to tell about the ethical teaching of Jesus than the writers of the earliest Epistles. And why have the Apologists—except Justin, who quotes from a Gospel—nothing to say about his teaching? True, we are told in Mark that he taught the people "many things." But teaching many things does not *prima facie* signify the inculcation of morality, and in fact the example of the teaching which immediately follows is not a sermon but the parable of "the Sower," of which more anon. Jesus is also said to have "preached"; but the subject of his preaching was not morality, it was the "Kingdom of God"; and the subject was expounded in parables which not even the disciples could

understand. Next after the miracles it is these parables which we can most confidently ascribe to the primitive document. And it is impossible to detach from them the statement with which the series concludes (Mk. iv, 33, 34) :—

And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it; and without a parable spake he not unto them.

All the ingenious wriggling of theological critics has been unable to pervert the plain meaning of this statement, which is that in the Primitive Gospel no straightforward unambiguous talking by Jesus to the people was recorded. Esoteric doctrine is indicated, and that is quite consistent with the symbolic character of the Gospel. In the Christian communities no doubt morality was inculcated and "Sayings of the Lord" were compiled by the teachers or "prophets" for that purpose. But the Gnostic Son of God did not come to teach morality; he came to *save*.

Dr. Bacon has observed that the explanation of the parable of "the Sower" does not give the meaning originally intended by the parable, but "an allegorizing application intended to rebuke various classes of hearers." Dr. Bacon's opinion is certainly correct. The "word" which is "sown" in the parable (Mk. iv, 3-8) is not verbal instruction; it is the Logos, and the sower is God. The parable describes in a different metaphor the stifling or the killing of the Logos of which we read in the doctrine of the Naassenes. The conception of the Logos as the seed of God was current in the first century, applied, however, in different ways.¹ In *Poimandres* the "Will of God" receives the Logos, from which then as from a seed the cosmos is produced. In *Corp. Herm. XIV* we find a doctrine which approximates more closely to that of the parable. Here again the sower is the "Will of God," but the seed is "the true good" from which proceeds the rebirth of the pneumatic people. It cannot, we are told, be taught; it is indefinable and must be grasped through itself—i.e.,

¹ Justin, *Apol.*, I, 32, terms the Logos the seed of God.

intuitively. This is the Gnostic doctrine of Logos and Gnosis. Salvation comes, not from instruction or from doing any "good thing," but from intuitive knowledge of the indwelling Logos, the Son of God, whence follows knowledge of the one true God.

The "historical" Jesus cannot have taught that the indispensable condition of salvation was mystical union with, or even "belief in," himself. For belief in Jesus meant belief in his divinity and his power to save. But in the pericope, Mk. x, 17-22, Jesus, after reciting the commandments, gives the young man who had questioned him clearly to understand that keeping the commandments is not sufficient for salvation. In order to secure eternal life it is necessary to "follow me." And the necessity is more peremptorily insisted on in verses 23-31. "Following Jesus" cannot mean following his example, for that would be mere morality, which had just been declared to be insufficient. Nor can the "following" have been literally meant. If Jesus really believed that the only means by which a man could secure eternal life was to strip himself of all he possessed and follow him about in his peregrinations through Galilee there is justification for the opinion of those who have thought that he was crazy. The demand that anyone who wished to follow him must begin by begging himself is unreasonable. The demand is not an exceptional one addressed to a particular "rich man"; for the poor disciples (x, 30) are promised "eternal life" because they had "left all" and followed Jesus. Again, in viii, 34, it is said that Jesus, having called unto him the multitude, said unto them, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." In none of these cases can the words quoted ever have been spoken by any "teacher." They are the words of a Christian writer, for whom "following Jesus" meant becoming a Christian. Literally understood, there is no "actuality" in the episode of the Rich Young Man. It is a piece of symbolism which was explained by W. B. Smith.¹ The meaning of the demand is that the Jew should give up the privileges which

¹ *Ecce Deus*, pp. 98 ff.

were his pride and share with the Gentile—the poor—i.e., become a Christian.¹

In Matthew Jesus has been humanized and has become a teacher in the more general sense of the term. The Logos Hermes, another Son of God, was a “teacher.” He too taught “many things,” some of them very enigmatically, as we learn from the *Corpus Hermeticum*. But he, like the Gnostic Christ, was a Saviour, and he taught, not morality, but mystical lore, such as we may suppose to have been taught to “the perfect” in the esoteric doctrine of the Gnostic Christian communities.

5. ESOTERISM

Esoterism was a common feature of early religions. In ancient times when the thinking of select men had risen above the superstitious mentality of the multitude some sort of compromise with traditional belief became necessary. No doubt the more enlightened thinkers desired as far as possible to preserve traditional forms, partly perhaps from the natural conservatism of the human mind; but also because they had to take into account the possible danger with which the publication of heterodox opinions in religion might be attended. Traditional forms could be invested with a new significance; but even in free-thinking Greece philosophic interpretation of myths was at one time unsafe, and among more superstitious people it remained so. Consequently new views in religion had to be expressed in esoteric doctrine reserved for the few who had been carefully prepared for its reception. As early as 1500 B.C. there was in Babylon an esoteric priestly doctrine of monotheism. In Egypt also at a very early date there grew up an esoteric doctrine which, while nominally preserving the popular polytheism, had grafted upon it a system which was pantheistic rather than monotheistic. The names of the Egyptian deities were retained but were held to be names of one divine being, who, however, being identified with the cosmos, might manifest

¹ Cp. the story of the rich man (the Jew) and Lazarus (the Gentile). The “great possessions” of the Jew are recorded in Rom. ix, 4, 5.

himself in different forms to which particular names were appropriate. Both the Babylonian and the Egyptian esoteric doctrines were more or less metaphysical and as such beyond the reach of the average man. The same may be said of the early Gnostic Christianity. The number of men and women capable of loving an abstraction was probably not a larger proportion of the whole then than it is now. Multitudes of people could and did love Attis and Tammuz, and women could weep for them at the season when they were supposed to have died. If Christianity had been unable to offer to the ancient world a humanized Jesus Christ as a man of like emotions to their own, and particularly as one who for the sake of mankind had been poor, despised, and maltreated, Hermes, Osiris, Adonis, and their like would probably not all have been dethroned.

We may suppose that in the early Gnostic Christian communities there were people of limited imagination who would interpret such a work as the *Odes of Solomon* literally, as theologians are apt to do to-day, and believe that the Word had actually "appeared." The explanation of the symbolism might then become esoteric doctrine. And we may predicate the same of the Primitive Gospel. Theologians are mostly of the opinion that the Gospel was composed before the end of the first century. The opinion is very likely correct; but the first indubitable evidence of the existence of any Gospel is in the commentary of the Gnostic Basilides (ca. 135 C.E.). After that date knowledge of it seems to have spread rapidly, followed by a multiplication of Gospels. In the meanwhile it must have been known only to a few. "Clement of Rome" was acquainted with "Sayings" of Jesus, but there is no evidence in his *Epistle to the Corinthians* that he had ever seen a Gospel. From information given by Irenæus with regard to the opinions of the Gnostic Cerinthus, who was teaching early in the second century, we can infer that he was acquainted with a Gospel. It is somewhat doubtful whether all the opinions ascribed by Irenæus to Cerinthus were really held by him. But if he was acquainted with a Gospel the fact is evidence of the correctness of the opinion that it originated among Gnostics and for a con-

siderable time was known only to them. Its true character would, of course, be known to the Gnostics who used it. Men of their kind were very well used to symbolic interpretation, though it is possible that the explanation was reserved for an inner group of initiates. Some Pauline expressions are explicable only on the supposition that there was esoteric doctrine in the communities for which the Epistles were written. For example, "We speak wisdom among the perfect." This word "perfect" (*teleioi*) was the regular technical term in that age for the higher grade of initiates, for whom was reserved teaching of a secret character, not to be divulged to those who were unfit to receive it, which would have been a casting of pearls before swine. Consider further these words from the same Epistle: "Which things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." We ought not to modernize expressions of that kind; their meaning can be better appreciated from a knowledge of the phraseology of Philo, who wrote, after explaining a verse of Genesis ¹:—

That is the obvious interpretation of it, for the many; there is, however, a secret one for the few who examine with reference to the spirit and not according to the material form.

The writer of 1 Cor. ii, 13, was a Gnostic and for him, as for Philo, "spiritual" in connection with exegesis could have one meaning only—that is, "symbolic" as opposed to "literal." Consider now that verse in Mark [iv, 11]:—

And he said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but unto them that are without all things are done in parables

—which has so perplexed theologians. How could Jesus have deliberately taught in such a way as to conceal his meaning from his hearers? Surely this is a plain intimation that in the Gnostic circle in which the Primitive Gospel originated there was esoteric doctrine which only an inner

¹ *de Abrahamo*, 147.

group of disciples were allowed to understand. To Philo's evidence of contemporary reservation of esoteric doctrine for the initiated may be added the following from 2 *Esdras* xiv, 26: "Write. And when thou hast done, some things shalt thou publish openly, and some things shalt thou deliver in secret to the wise."

When the Gospel became more widely known and other Gospels were written in which the humanization of Jesus proceeded rapidly, the primitive allegory was inevitably literalized into the life-story of a divine being who had actually become a man and even been born in a supernatural manner from a human mother. For a time the literal view did not supplant the symbolic, at least among Gnostics, but it steadily encroached upon it, until at the beginning of the third century the two views were subsisting side by side, as we may learn from the commentaries of Origen. There can be no doubt at all that with Origen "speaking wisdom" was symbolic interpretation, not only of the Old Testament, but even of the New. For he begins his commentary upon John with the words: "It is necessary to Christianize pneumatically and materially"—i.e., symbolically and literally, as he himself explains. "What," he asks, "is exegesis of the obvious if not its transformation into spiritual?" And in his own exegesis he illustrates his symbolic method abundantly. For example, he explains the phrase, "The Word was in the beginning" to mean that "the Logos was in Sophia, because Sophia [Wisdom] was the beginning";¹ and he interprets the statement of John the Baptist—"In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not"—as a declaration of the fact that the universal Logos, established everywhere by the Father, stands as a guiding principle in the midst of the body, in the heart, of men. This is primitive Gnostic Christian doctrine to which Origen was accommodating the later Gospel story. Origen in his writings hints more than once at secret lore reserved for a few, especially in his work against Celsus, III, 59, where he says, "Then and not till then we invite them to our mysteries, for we speak wisdom

¹ We may suppose the thought of Origen to have been that the Wisdom of God must have preceded the utterance of it.

among the perfect." Jerome, as we have seen, also interpreted the miracles of the New Testament, and not only the miracles, symbolically. A Christian writer of his mentality could use the method without questioning the literal truth of the statements so interpreted; but a logical modern must necessarily decide that, if a writing is symbolism, allegory, or fable, it cannot at the same time be literally true.¹ There can, however, be no doubt about the scepticism of Origen, for he said plainly that the Evangelists have written some things contrary to historical fact, since their aim was to teach spiritual as well as literal truth. If he could make such a statement as that publicly we may imagine the liberty which he probably allowed himself in his esoteric doctrine.

6. THE MOTHER AND THE BRETHREN

In the second century, when the Catholic Church in its conflict with Docetism had compelling reasons for stressing the real humanity of Jesus, it supplied him with brothers, but in the Primitive Gospel, as was befitting for the Son of God, he was parentless. Joseph is never named in Mark as the father of Jesus, and the solitary verse in which Mary is named as his mother is demonstrably an interpolation. In xv, 40, 41, we read, "Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome, who, when he was in Galilee, followed and ministered unto him." Obviously this Mary was not the mother of Jesus. In the next chapter (xvi, 1) it is said that "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices." There can be no doubt, both from the sequence of events and from the coupling with Salome, that this is the same Mary, who, if she had been the mother of Jesus, would certainly have been so described. In another passage where Mary the mother of Joses is mentioned it is evident from the context that she was not the mother of Jesus. So in all three passages it is implied that Mary the

¹ It is not absolutely certain that Jerome accepted everything in the Gospel without question. A German critic, Rudolf Handmann, has said of him that, for the preservation of his reputation for orthodoxy, he was always ready to sacrifice to the Church his own free opinion.

mother of James and Joses was not the mother of Jesus. Now, in vi, 3, the question is asked: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses?" Were there then two Marys, both of whom had sons named James and Joses? Possible, no doubt, though rather improbable. Consider further the names of the brothers mentioned in the same verse, James and Judas and Simon. Here is another remarkable coincidence. Josephus (*Antiq.*, XX, v, 2) says that James and Simon, the sons of Judas the Galilean, were crucified. The double coincidence must create in the mind of any unprejudiced person a very strong impression of artificiality. And the impression is decidedly deepened by a consideration of the verse as a whole. What motive prompted this recital of names? Jesus, it is implied, was well known to the people addressed. To have referred to him as the son of Mary would have been sufficient and more than sufficient. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that the verse was inserted for the confutation of Gnostics who denied the real humanity of Jesus and his human birth, and that the questions were aimed at them? ¹ Furthermore, Origen in his work against Celsus says that Jesus is not called a carpenter in any Gospel current in the churches, whence we must conclude that the passage was not in his copy of Mark.

In estimating the probability of the authenticity of this verse, we ought to take into account the character of the Gospel as a whole, especially the absence of a birth-story and the manner in which it begins. Any reason whatever for suspecting the originality of the verse reinforces, and is reinforced by, the reasonable presumption that the sudden appearance of the Son of God in Galilee was intended by the writer to indicate his descent from Heaven. The existence of that belief among Gnostic Christians is proved by Phil. ii, 6-8.

A careful consideration of the pericope leads to the conclusion that it is as devoid of "actuality" as the one previously examined. It is said that "a prophet is not

¹ The naming of Mary with the ignoring of Joseph seems to carry a dogmatic implication which points to a Christian writer, not to the inhabitants of a Galilean town.

without honour, save in his own country." But as a matter of fact the question is not merely one of the honouring of a prophet; it is principally one of belief in the power of Jesus to do "mighty works"; and according to verse 2 that belief existed. Is it credible that the sick people of "his own country," and their friends and relations, having heard of the marvellous cures effected by Jesus elsewhere and believing, as we are told they did, in his power to do mighty works, would have refused to profit by it? A physician who has acquired a great reputation will not lack patients among his own town-folk. The writer of this Gospel was not stupid. He was very intelligent. What again is the explanation of the apparent contradiction between the statements that Jesus could do no mighty work and that he did heal some sick folk? If he healed any we may be sure that the rest would have flocked to him. It is supposed by some that the second of the two statements is a later addition. But perhaps if we understood the writer's meaning the apparent contradiction would disappear. In any case the question is unimportant. The main point of the passage is the inability of Jesus to do mighty works in "his own country." But if he had done them elsewhere he could have done them there. We must look beyond the modern "historical" view of Jesus to the intention of the writer, whose Jesus was first and foremost a wonder-worker, and, more than that, one whose power, if he chose to exercise it, could not, assuming the miracles of healing to be physical, have been limited by want of faith in others.

Reasons have been given for concluding that Mark was a symbolist. The conclusion is confirmed by the statement in this pericope that Jesus "could not" in certain circumstances do mighty works. We are now considering, not the Jesus of modern liberal theology, but the Jesus of Mark, the Son of God, who by his mere word was able to calm a storm. If the mighty works had been physical, *that* Jesus, who was not the faith-healer imagined by some theologians, could have healed anyone whom he wished to heal. And it is not said that he "would not," but that he "could not." It follows that if we take this healing to be the literal healing

of physical diseases we must be completely failing to grasp the meaning and the purpose of the story. Critics endeavour to explain this episode by vague talk about "an unfruitful patch at Nazareth." But when we inquire what they mean by this, it becomes evident that they are simply setting aside the narrative of the Evangelist and substituting one which shall be consistent with their own presupposition as to the character of Jesus and his work—a mere begging of the question. What we have to do is to find some reasonable explanation which will be in accordance with the character of the Gospel.

"His own country" has usually been taken to mean Nazareth. But it is very doubtful whether in the first century there was a Galilean village named Nazareth. Cheyne¹ argued that Nazareth was another name for Galilee. The name occurs once only in Mark [i, 9], and as it is absent from the corresponding verse of Matthew [iii, 13], good critics have concluded that it is an interpolation.² Moreover, the Greek word *patris* properly means, as it is translated in the English New Testament, *country*. *Native city* would be *patris polis*. A satisfying explanation of the passage in question should account for this term. It has already been shown that in the Primitive Gospel the healing of diseases and the casting out of dæmons symbolized the conversion of Jews and Pagans to Christianity. The Son of God Jesus being an outcome of the theosophical speculation of Jews, the Jews could be symbolically styled his kinsfolk, and Palestine, or Judæa, "his own country." The scene of the episode is not named Nazareth in Mark. Jews who were afflicted by physical ailments could have had no objection to submitting themselves to a Jew who had proved his ability to heal; but in the view of the Christian writer the ailments of the Jews were spiritual ailments which could be cured only by "faith"—that is to say, by believing in the redemptive power of the Christian Son of God. Faith, in that sense, was of course a prerequisite to their being healed. But the

¹ *Encyc. Bibl.*, Art. Nazareth.

² It was pointed out previously that the first appearance of Jesus in the Primitive Gospel is preserved in Mk. i, 14.

“historical” Jesus could not have demanded that kind of faith. His divinity is implied. Presupposing, as we must, the writer’s own conception of Jesus, it is only thus that we can find a reasonable explanation of the inability of Jesus to do any “mighty work” among “his own people.” “Mighty work” would in any case be an extravagant phrase for the literal healing of the sick in an age when the laws of physiology were little known and people were very ready to believe in the possibility of far greater wonders. Conversion of Pagans to Christianity was spiritually of sufficient importance to be called a mighty work; but of course it was done by the spiritual Son of God acting through the Christian community, not by Jesus in person.¹

When Mk. vi, 3, has been excluded from the Gospel, there remains one passage only in which the mother and brothers of Jesus are mentioned (iii, 31–35), and that in a very peculiar way. The mother and brethren are said to be “standing without,” and Jesus practically disowns them. It is impossible to see in this episode the meek and lowly Jesus of popular imagination. Indeed it is only when interpreted as symbolism that the incident ceases to be offensive. In a man the conduct is not admirable. If, as is usually supposed, the mother and the brethren are the relations (*οἱ παρ’ αὐτοῦ*) mentioned in verse 21, the implication is that Jesus publicly renounced his own mother because she did not believe in him. Marcion adduced the passage (32–35) as evidence that the Jesus of Mark was motherless;² and certainly, especially in conjunction with other evidence of the same import, it can be so understood. Some early Christian writers had in certain respects a better appreciation of the character of the Gospel narrative than modern commentators have. Jerome concluded that the mother of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is a symbol of the Jewish Christian Church, which, as he thought, was the mother church of the Christian

¹ Loisy (*Le Quatr. Ev.*, p. 239) wrote: “Does not the ill success of Christ in his own country symbolize the ill success of the Christian preaching among the Jews?” Thus is one of Schmiedel’s “pillars” undermined by a great Christian critic.

² Raschke (work cited, pp. 173 ff.) argued that verse 31, which Marcion seems not to have had, is an interpolation.

communities, and that the brothers of Jesus symbolize the heads of that Church. The interpretation fits the passage of Mark very well, except that perhaps we should rather take the mother of this passage to represent the Jewish religion. Tertullian understood the passage in this sense; for he wrote ¹:—

In another connection there lies hidden in the aloofness of the mother a symbol of the synagogue, and in the brethren a symbol of the Jews. In their person stood Israel without; the new disciples within symbolize the Church.

In the *Odes of Solomon* the congregation of saints is named the Kingdom of God; and in Mark the Kingdom of the parables is evidently the Christian community, growing from a small and obscure beginning into a large and wide-spreading organization, coming "not with observation" and already when the parables were composed "among you."² Obviously Jesus himself could not have so described the Kingdom. We may infer, as Tertullian did, that the multitude sitting about Jesus in Mk. iii, 32, are the members of the community, the components of the Kingdom. It is, then, perfectly natural that the Gnostic writer of the Primitive Gospel, or the Hellenistic writer of Mark, should have represented the mother and the brethren as being outside and have declared through the mouth of Jesus that his Christ claimed no particular spiritual relationship with the Jews or with the leaders of the Judaic Christian Church.

There appears to be an intimate connection between verses 20, 21, and 32 which is broken by the irrelevant episode contained in the intervening passage, which accordingly may with probability be inferred not to have formed part of the Primitive Gospel. It is believed by some critics to have been in the source Q. If so, it is not original in Mark. The

¹ *De Carne Chr.*, 7.

² The translation "within you" favoured by some liberal theologians is impossible, since the words were addressed to the Pharisees. The translation is not consistent with the description of the Kingdom in the parables, and the form "among you" is confirmed by the Sinaitic Syriac in which it appears without any ambiguity. The notion that the Kingdom of God could be "within you" is altogether modern and could not have occurred to anyone in the first century.

reconstruction of Q is, however, very hypothetical. A passage common to Matthew, Mark, and Luke could have been transferred from the former into both of the latter. Mt. xxiii is assigned by the Rev. J. M. C. Crum ¹ to the source Q; but some commentators better acquainted with the Pharisaism of the first two centuries than he appears to be have decided that the denunciation of the Pharisees was written in the second century. The chapter is found in Luke, with some omissions, dislocated, and modified. We may conclude that Matthew was his source. Now three verses (Mt. xxiii, 5-7), and three only, are found in Mark [xii, 38, 39]; and since they stand in Mark in the corresponding place to that which is occupied by the whole chapter of Matthew, it is hardly possible to doubt that they were taken from that Gospel. They were certainly borrowed, because in the three verses in Matthew there is no indication of the persons against whom the accusations were made; so that the copyist had to introduce the word "scribes," presumably from Mt. xxiii, 2. He has also altered, or omitted, expressions in the three verses which would be intelligible only to Jewish readers.

It is therefore quite possible that Mk. iii, 22-30, was introduced from Matthew. W. B. Smith pointed out that the term "the Holy Spirit" (*τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*) is rare in Mark, occurring only in this passage (iii, 29) and xii, 36, and xiii, 11. The latter two verses are in the account of the week spent by Jesus in Jerusalem, which, in the opinion of some good critics, was not contained in the Primitive Gospel. Chapter xiii is admittedly late. There is no reason to believe that the episode recorded in iii, 22-30, is historical. The Jews themselves practised exorcism. No Jew could have had any ground for saying that another Jew who did the same thing was casting out devils by the prince of the devils, unless in his formula of exorcism he used the name of a *dæmon*. In Matthew Jesus makes the pertinent retort: "By whom, then, do your sons cast them out?" The reproach of the Scribes seems to reflect the consciousness of a time when hostility between Christians and Jews had arisen and when

¹ *The Original Jerusalem Gospel*, pp. 96 ff.

Jews could be represented as ascribing to the agency of Beelzebul the progress of a religion which they believed to have been founded upon falsehood. If, however, the section was written in the second century it may reproduce an assertion actually made by uncritical and credulous Jews who believed that exorcism had been successfully practised by a wonder-working Jesus. Christians were credulous enough to believe that Simon Magus had been a wonder-worker and were accordingly convinced that he was a sorcerer.

It is not necessary to repeat here the arguments by which has been demonstrated the improbability of the application of the title " Brother of the Lord " to James in a literal sense. It is sufficient to observe that if in any genuinely early Epistle James had been called the brother of *Jesus*, there would have been evidence of the relationship. But seeing that the title " the Lord " would in the first century have been given only to a divine being who could not be supposed to have had brothers in the flesh, it is far more likely that the " Brothers of the Lord " were a small group of men of exceptional piety in one of the Christian—presumably Judaic—communities.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

1. PERIOD OF CO-ORDINATION

UP to the time of the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, the Christian communities and the worshippers of a sacrificed Jesus were sects of the Jews. There was as yet no Christian "Church." The church at Jerusalem of which we read in Acts was a Judaic community, and James, the head of it, was so far from being regarded by Jews in general as the leader of an unfriendly sect that, as Hegesippus informs us, he frequented the Temple, praying constantly for his own people, and was allowed in consequence of his reputation for extraordinary piety to enter once a year into the Holy of Holies. Even if the information given by Hegesippus is not in every respect accurate it is clear from what he says that James had not separated himself from the national religion. We must, of course, suppose that the community of which he was the head held some opinions which distinguished it from Jews in general; but it is evident from the statements of Josephus that the death of James was the work of a clique headed by a Sadducee named Ananus, the High Priest, of whom Josephus expresses a very unfavourable opinion.¹ The other persons who were stoned with James were presumably members of his community, but Josephus apparently had no reason to suppose that they were not

¹ *Antiq.* XX, ix, 1. In this passage occur the words "*the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, James was his name.*" Very good reasons, of which the force has been admitted by some eminent Christian theologians, have been given for regarding the words in italics as an interpolation. It is, however, not absolutely impossible that the phrase "the brother of Jesus" is genuine and the following phrase a Christian gloss. It is likely that Josephus would have given some intimation as to who this James was. He cannot have done that by naming a Jesus whom he mentions nowhere else. But in the same section he names a Jesus who was made High Priest in the place of Ananus (Annas).

“Jews,” and he says that “the most equitable” of the citizens were displeased, and that in consequence of their protests Ananus was deprived by King Agrippa of his high priesthood.

We may learn also from 1 Cor. x, 1, that some at any rate of the Hellenistic Jewish Christians had not ceased to think of themselves as Jews. The writer says “our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea.” No hostility to the Jews is apparent in this section, and there is no attack upon the nation as a whole. The writer adduces the faults committed by “some of them” as examples for the admonition of the Hellenistic Jews whom he is addressing. Severer censure of the Jewish people can be found in the Prophets, in the *Psalms of Solomon*, and in 2 *Esdras*. Who, reading this section, would ever imagine that the Jews had filled the cup of their iniquity by killing the Christ? There are cases where silence is equivalent to a negative, and this is one of them. At the date when the section was written the Christian Jews were still hoping to convert their own people. The fall of Jerusalem, which appeared to be a punishment from God, and the tightening of the bands of Jewish orthodoxy, seriously damaged this hope without at first destroying it. Its fulfilment was thrown forward to a more distant future. But there was still for a time no bitterness and no denunciation of Jews on the Christian side. This can be clearly seen in Rom. ix-xi, written by the editor who wrote the section referred to above, shortly after the fall of Jerusalem.¹ Even now he writes as a Jew who has not entirely separated himself from his own people. And not once in the three chapters does he reproach the Jews with having crucified Jesus. He is not angry; he is grieved that his “kinsmen according to the flesh” have refused God’s offer of salvation in Christ. “For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth.” The Jews had declined to believe; and that is the worst this writer can say of them. But the predominant Pharisaic party would no longer tolerate nonconformity, and so, how-

¹ The whole Epistle, including of course chapters ix-xi, was much interpolated in the second century by the writer of chapters iii-v.

ever reluctantly, the Jewish Christians were compelled to cut themselves off from their own people.

The community whose leader was James was Ebionite. The Nazarenes were either very closely connected with it or a subdivision of it.¹ There is no good reason for supposing that before the fall of Jerusalem the Gnostic Christian sects of Greece and Asia Minor had any intercourse with it. After that event, when Jewry became strictly Pharisaic and exclusive, and nonconformity of every kind was repressed, the sects which had sufficient in common to make an alliance possible were driven towards one another by the general persecution. And very soon a few far-sighted men among the nonconformist Jews conceived the magnificent project of welding these nonconformists into a new religious body capable of occupying the position vacated by the Jews and of carrying on an effective warfare against polytheism. We saw in the *Odes of Solomon* the germ of the belief that the community of Saints was the new "chosen people"; and now they had to take up more earnestly than before God's commission to enlighten the Gentiles. The purpose was one strong enough to bring about union between monotheistic congregations whose doctrine and practice might otherwise have been sufficiently different to keep them apart. The Gnostic Christian communities in general were not too widely separated from one another in the matter of doctrine for a loose federation to be difficult of attainment; but not all of them were of the anti-Judaic character which distinguished the community O and the Pauline Christians; hence it is quite intelligible that the early Christian literature from about the year 80 into the second century gives evidence of disputes concerning the observance of the Mosaic Law which threw dogmatic differences into the background.

It is evident that for some considerable time there were Jews in the Christian churches who continued to observe the Sabbath and Jewish regulations with regard to unclean food; but it is not likely that strong insistence upon the necessity for circumcision was maintained by Jewish

¹ R. Handmann, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Bd. V, Heft 3, pp. 104 ff.

Gnostics. We may infer the attitude of the Gnostic Ebionites from the information given in the *Clementine Recognitions* that Peter had no objection to eating with uncircumcized people providing that they had been baptized. The comparative latitude of Peter is also inferable from the *Epistle to the Galatians*. The subsequent backsliding with which he is there reproached may be doubted. If, as is stated, he had been in the habit of living "as do the Gentiles," the other leaders must have known of it, so that there could have been no reason for his being intimidated on this occasion. And if it were true that his conduct then had been an exception to his customary rule, it could not be true that he "compelled the Gentiles to live as do the Jews." The writer cannot have been recording a conference in which he himself had taken part. His account lacks "actuality." The representation appears to be an artifice to throw into relief the independence of Paul and thereby to impress the people addressed with a sense of their own weakness in allowing themselves to be led astray by the Judaizers.¹

It is not likely that the Gnostic Ebionites had rejected Paul as an apostate from the Law; that statement must have been made with respect to the Judaic Ebionites. It was thought at one time that Paul is attacked in the *Clementines* in the figure of Simon Magus. That seems doubtful, though he is certainly attacked in one section of the *Homilies*, which is probably an interpolation. There is, one may conclude, some historical truth in the passages of Acts x, 9-29 and xv, 6-11, in which Peter is represented as an advocate of toleration and even as having been sent to the Gentiles; and there is good ground for the opinion that he was not so close an associate of James as in other places he is made out to be.

In the time of Philo the Essenes and Therapeuts were important sects, but these sects appear to have completely disappeared in the second century. We may infer that they were absorbed into the expanding Christian confederation;

¹ The controversy had not begun in the lifetime of Paul. In the oldest sections of *Romans* and *Corinthians* there is no indication of Christian differences concerning the observance of the Law.

also that their doctrine must have been of a Gnostic type and sufficiently nearly related to that of other Gnostic Christians. The absorption of the Essenes would account for the presence of so much Essene doctrine in the Gospels as to have led some writers to the conclusion that Jesus was an Essene. It is very doubtful indeed whether community of property was a custom of the early Christian churches as a whole, but the statement in Acts iv, 32, may apply to some of them; and, if so, Essenes appear to be indicated.¹ Other Gnostic Christian communities were not completely absorbed, but many of their members must in course of time have been recruited. The appropriation of Peter by the Catholic Church implies the adherence of a large number of Gnostic Ebionites; and there can be no doubt that the Mandæans, who were at one time sufficiently numerous to be serious rivals to the infant community, gradually passed over to it in considerable numbers. John the Baptist was a Mandæan Christ. Rivalry between the sects is deducible, not only from attacks upon Jesus in the Mandæan writings, but also from the account of a discussion in the *Recognitions* between the disciples of Jesus and one of John's disciples, in the course of which the latter affirms that John, and not Jesus, was the Christ. This account is by no means accordant with the Christian representation of John as the forerunner and announcer of Jesus; but the Christian representation may very well conceal the fact that Mandæism did help to prepare the way for Christianity; and the annexation of John may have been a clever stroke of policy. In the Fourth Gospel two of the disciples of Jesus—one of them being Andrew—are said to have been disciples of John, which we may take to mean Mandæans, and in the Acts of the Apostles conversion of disciples of John to Christianity is recorded.

The men who were aiming at the substitution of a new organization on a wider basis and one more acceptable to Pagans for the old religious organization of the Jews must quickly have seen that, while freedom from the Mosaic

¹ Guignebert (work cited, p. 190) wrote: "It is not improbable that the Essene movement finally merged with and was absorbed into Christianity."

Law was a condition indispensable for success, the Old Testament, the identification of Jesus with the Jewish Messiah, and the prestige of Jerusalem would be very valuable assets. But the intense Judaism of the Ebionite church must have made its inclusion in the confederation difficult. There were evidently negotiations and a compromise. The accounts given in Galatians and Acts of the Council of Jerusalem are mutually contradictory and unreliable. The agreement said in Galatians to have been reached would not have been practicable. If we believe the Acts of the Apostles, Paul went straight away and violated it. The actual agreement probably was that circumcision should not be insisted upon as a condition for admission into the Hellenist Christian communities. On the other hand, it is certain that the leaders even of those communities had not power to forbid it. For in Gal. v—a chapter which is not part of the original Epistle—the writer has to make an impassioned appeal to his readers not to allow themselves to be misled by Judaizers who were endeavouring to persuade them of its necessity. A considerable section of the Ebionites, refusing to ally themselves with churches in which Judaic observances were not insisted upon, retained their independence and, like the more uncompromising of the Gnostics, became heretics by standing still.

2. CATHOLICIZATION

The men who were endeavouring to weld the heterogeneous communities into a great Church must have been well endowed with tact and practical wisdom. The saying falsely ascribed to Paul—"I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some"—is in somewhat exaggerated terms the motto of the Catholic leaders. To gather in Jews, Hellenists, and Pagans the entrance had at first to be rather wide; and no rigid standard of orthodoxy can have been set up. The means employed to obtain union were, firstly, appeals to the members to compose their differences and to give heed to the instruction of their presbyters, and, secondly, insidious propaganda through

the circulation of falsified documents, coupled with assurances that Paul, Peter, and Apollos had all taught the same largest common measure of Catholic doctrine upon which the leaders in their wisdom had agreed.¹ The authority of Paul was so valuable in the struggle against Judaic encroachment and for securing the adhesion of the Pauline communities that he was given high rank as an Apostle; but his opinions were misrepresented and his Epistles were Catholicized. During the second century the Catholicizing parties in the churches became strong enough to expel those Gnostics who had declined to abandon the primitive Pauline, Johannine, or other Gnostic Christology. The Catholicizers of course maintained that theirs was the pure original doctrine and they were always able by fabricated or adulterated documents to establish the validity of their claim. So those who had refused to retreat from an earlier position became "antichrists," and as it is written in 1 Jn. ii, 19, 22 :—

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would have continued with us.

Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist.

But the denial was no new heresy when those words were written; it was made in the first century. There were also still in the churches in the second century people who followed Paul and John in their denial of the resurrection of the body, as we learn from 1 Cor. xv, 12–54. And since the writer is compelled to reason with such people, we may infer that the leaders either had not the power to expel them as heretics or did not consider it expedient to do so. But during the second century unification steadily proceeded, the authority of the bishops was strengthened, and a centre of church government established in Rome. That, however, did not mean that uniformity was secured. Within certain well-defined limits the Roman Catholic Church has always

¹ 1 Cor. iii, 4–6, 21; xv, 11. The third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles judged by the standard of a modern historian are most dishonest works. But it was not the intention of their composer to write honest history. They should be judged by the motive which prompted them. It is our own fault if we are deceived.

allowed to individual members a good deal of freedom of opinion, and a modified form of Gnostic Christology persisted. Clement of Alexandria and Origen were exponents of it; and the estimation in which by some, even in the Middle Ages, the Hermetic writings were held is a proof that it was then still alive. Cosimo Medici had the Greek text brought from Bulgaria for his library. And somewhat later the poet Ludovici Lazareli, on being reproved by the King of Naples for admiring this literature, replied: "I am a Christian, O King, and am not ashamed of being at the same time an Hermetic. For if you consider his precepts you will obtain assurance that they are not far removed from Christian doctrine."¹ Gnostic theosophy could not have tinged Christianity so deeply as it did if it had originated outside and been regarded from the beginning as an alien growth.

The assertion of some writers that the disputers of the historicity of Jesus ignore the personal factor is not true. The reply might be made that theologians in order to aggrandize Jesus belittle the prominent men of the period, except perhaps Paul. As for the disciples, they, it is supposed, were men incapable of understanding their teacher, until his death, in some inexplicable manner, penetrated their minds with a brilliant illumination. Modern disbelief in the reality of the Resurrection and proof that the post-mortem appearances of Jesus are rather late inventions have made unintelligible the traditional account of the origin of Christianity. In passing it may be observed that the sudden transformation of the stolid and impercipient disciples into the enlightened and capable leaders of the primitive Church has never been made psychologically comprehensible. Since even some eminent theologians have seen the unsubstantiatedness of the assertion that the figure of Jesus is "uninventible," it is not necessary to consider it seriously. But certainly the men who imagined and drew the Gospel portraits—there are more than one—were very far indeed from being ignorant and unintelligent men; it is to the remarkable quality of their work that belief in the historicity of Jesus is due.

¹ Reitzenstein, *Poim.*, p. 320.

3. WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ?

A slogan at one time much in favour with liberal Christians was "Back to Jesus," as though an uncorrupted Christianity would be thereby recovered. But the existence of the Jesus to whom they wished to return is by other theologians flatly denied. If we ask of theological critics "What was Jesus like?" their discordant replies leave the impression that if he existed he is completely unknown. Schweitzer, after reviewing the history of the search for him, thus sums up the result :—

The Jesus of Nazareth, who came forth as Messiah, announced the morality of the Kingdom of God, founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to consecrate his work, has never existed. He is a figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in an historical garment.¹

If it were possible to get back to the earliest years of the first century, what would be recovered would be a Gnostic Christianity which adored a heavenly Christ, but had no knowledge of a human Jesus. Christians might perhaps do worse than return to a modernized form of it.

If you value highly the Christian ethic, what does it matter whether it was enunciated by a single prophet named Jesus, or whether it was carefully polished by several Christian prophets who sifted it out from the most admired moral doctrine of their day? The essential rule of Christian conduct will, I suppose, in the opinion of Christians, be the injunction: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is, however, to be found in the Old Testament (Lev. xix, 34; Deut. x, 19); and, more broadly expressed, in the *Wisdom of Solomon* (xii, 19): "Thou didst teach thy people that the righteous must be a lover of men." This universal principle of love covers the parable of the Good Samaritan.² Again, is there anything in the New Testament more "Christian" than the verse of Proverbs (xxv, 21): "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he thirsty give him water to drink"? The fact is that the

¹ *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, p. 631.

² Cp. Deut. x, 19: "Love ye therefore the stranger [foreigner]."

best features of the Christian ethic are just those which it has in common with the best Jewish and Stoic morality. The precepts which are peculiarly distinctive of the teaching of Jesus are so impracticable that Christians themselves make no pretence of practising them.

If you value the Gospel Jesus as the finest example of the human character, he can still supply an incentive to endeavour even though the portrait presented be actually an ideal and a symbol. I, for my part, have met with a few characters in fiction which have been more effective in making me feel dissatisfied with myself. For here again fact and theory do not coincide. It is not the Jesus figure of the Gospels, particularly not of the second, which is loved and taken for a model. He is too detached from all human relationships and too far exalted above every human weakness, for that. He is not especially lovable; he is at times—judged as a man—harsh or arrogant; his disciples stand in awe of him; and in the Synoptics the only person he is ever said to have loved is a man whom he had never previously seen. Surely that should strike a thoughtful reader as strange. The man is a type of the Jewish nation, and Jesus is said to have “loved” him because in Hos. ii, 1, it is written: “When Israel was young I loved him.” The good that Jesus does is done by supernatural power, so that no opportunity for the exercise of the admirable human quality of self-sacrifice, or even of the sympathy which is exhibited in simple human acts, is afforded. The compassion of Jesus is the compassion of God; his indignation is tainted by the partisanship of the men who made him the spokesman of their own feelings. His invective against the Pharisees is unjust. Conduct and speech which are not amiable cause no offence because they are not judged by human standards. The Jesus who is loved is an ideal which Christians make for themselves, chiefly by concentrating their attention upon a very few episodes and allowing imagination to play freely upon them. The ideal has its foundation presumably in the impression produced by the Fourth Gospel, though even there Jesus is both too much a god and too much a partisan to serve as a practical example for men.

If you believe in a divine Christ, so did the Gnostics who denied his individual and corporeal reality. The Gnostic dualism does not commend itself to modern philosophical thinkers; but the Catholic materialization of the Christ is surely not of vital importance to Christianity, unless from the point of view of popular success. W. B. Smith, Drews, and van den Bergh van Eysinga have in fact protested against it in the interest of a spiritual religion. Are we to suppose that nearly all Christians are so far Materialists at heart as to feel that if they were to lose the material Jesus nothing would be left? Christians, however, who might be able to rise above the popular standpoint would be faced with the ancient problem of which esoterism was the solution. Everyone who has unfeignedly longed to know and to follow "the best" must have learnt that "the popular" is never "the best." In a recently published anthology entitled *The Wisdom of Life* the following utterance of P. H. D. d'Holbach is quoted:—

Nature tells man to seek light, to search for the truth; religion enjoins upon him to examine nothing, to remain in ignorance. Nature says to man: "Cherish glory, labour to win esteem, be active, courageous, industrious"; religion says to him: "Be humble, abject, pusillanimous, live in retreat, busy thyself in prayer, meditation, devout rites."

The opinion expressed is somewhat too sweeping. There are many forms of religion; and in these days the word is sometimes used so loosely as to deprive it of its distinctive significance. But even in religion properly so called there are gradations of quality which set the highest very far indeed above the lowest. The early Gnosticism had some obvious defects; but it was not by intrinsic merit that Catholic Christianity prevailed. Its victory may have been a survival of the fit in relation to the environment; but it was not a survival of the best.

APPENDIX A

THE GOSPEL OF PETER

THE date generally accepted for the composition of the *Gospel of Peter* is 140 C.E.; but in fixing this date account was not taken of the probability that the Gospel of which we possess a fragment had been added to; and judging by analogy the probability is great. Critics of the New Testament are aware of the fact that behind both Matthew and Mark there lies a simpler, shorter Gospel. It happens that of another early apocryphal Gospel—the *Protevangelium* of James—several copies have survived, and the wide differences which exist between the extant MSS. show that even the most ancient does not present it in its original form. It is thought possible that this Gospel was composed in the first century, but the existing versions are a good deal later than that. We know that there were in the second century versions of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* which differed from one another; and these no doubt had come into existence through amplification of a shorter original. A Gospel once written steadily grew with successive editions, and behind them all lies a primitive Gospel which is irrecoverable. It is therefore highly probable that the surviving version of the *Gospel of Peter* is an amplified and interpolated version of a simpler original which, as we may in fact conclude from internal evidence, was composed at a date considerably earlier. It is by no means improbable that this Gospel has preserved features of the primitive one which the canonical Gospels have lost. They superseded it because they were more congenial to Catholic Christians of the second century. The fact that it has Gnostic features is not at all inconsistent with a very early date. Quite the contrary. Harnack wrote: "It is beyond doubt that theologic literature had its origin among the Gnostics."¹

¹ *Dogmengeschichte*, Vol. I, p. 230, n 1.

The earliest information we possess concerning a collection of letters ascribed to Paul comes through the Gnostic Marcion; and the earliest known commentaries on the Gospels are by Gnostics. There is plenty of justification for the supposition that the Primitive Gospel was Gnostic and that our synoptic Gospels are much amplified and Catholicized versions of it. Mark, however, as commentators have perceived, has retained to some degree the Gnostic atmosphere.

The final decision with regard to the *Gospel of Peter* must depend upon a critical examination of it. Such an examination reveals the fact that a portion of the fragment (§§ 7-10) differs in character from the rest. One of the sections (9) contains supernatural details of the kind which are found in the later apocryphal Gospels. The narrative is more circumstantial than the synoptic; the name of the centurion who commanded the guard at the sepulchre is given; we are told that seven seals were spread upon the door of the sepulchre and given other information not found in Mark. These sections must be judged to be younger than the corresponding portion of the synoptic narrative.

With regard to the remainder of the fragment the case is on the whole quite different. We have a simpler and apparently an earlier story. Between Mk. xv, 21 and 41, there are approximately 400 words; the corresponding passage in the *Gospel of Peter* has about 250 words and is as deficient in detail as the sections above referred to are redundant. This portion of the narrative, although it appears to have been slightly expanded from a still simpler original, produces an impression of great antiquity. There is no mention of Simon of Cyrene, no naming of Golgotha, no description of the jeers of passers by, and no mention of the centurion or of the "women beholding from afar." Passing then through the §§ 7-10, we find again in §11 the characteristic style of the earlier document. There is indeed evidence that this section also has been somewhat expanded; but the expansion is in the nature of an elaboration of older material without the addition of details from Mark or any other known source. The corresponding portion of Mark is

xvi, 1-8, which begins by naming the women who accompanied Mary Magdalene to the sepulchre. In the *Gospel of Peter* the names are not given; we have simply "Mary Magdalene . . . took with her her female friends." Verse 7 is entirely wanting and verse 8, which contains 28 words, is represented by the very concise statement, "Then the women fled affrighted."

It is worth noting that, whereas in §§ 7-10 Scribes and Pharisees, elders and priests, are mentioned, in the other sections we read only of "the Jews." It is, moreover, extremely significant that only in §§ 7-10 does Pilate play any important part; nor is there mention elsewhere of his soldiers. Outside of these sections Pilate is named in two contexts only—viz., in § 2, which, as was shown in Chapter VI, is in all probability an interpolation—and in the incredible statement that he sat with Herod at the trial. Throughout §§ 3-6 Jews are the actors; it is they who set up the cross; it is they who place on the cross the superscription, "This is the King of Israel," it is they who take the body down and deliver it to Joseph. Everything is done by the authority of Herod; but in § 8 we learn that the "elders" have to go to Pilate with the request that he would supply soldiers to guard the tomb. The two portions of the narrative do not cohere. There is nothing in Mark or Luke about the request of the elders; but the account in the *Gospel of Peter* is an amplification of that in Matthew, and is obviously of later date. It seems impossible that the writer who in §§ 7-10 has furnished an abundance of detail not to be found in the synoptic Gospels should elsewhere have ignored so many of the details which are included in the corresponding portions of Mark and have been satisfied to present us with so meagre an account. By any sound rule of literary criticism we ought to decide that §§ 7-10 have been inserted into a much older narrative—a narrative whose author was unacquainted with any of our four Gospels.

In connection with the request of the elders for a guard there is an interesting point which seems to prove that the section is a comparatively late insertion. In Mk. xv, 39, we read of a centurion who stood near the cross and, "when

he saw that he so gave up the ghost," said: "Truly this man was the Son of God." The interpolator, finding no mention of this centurion in the original *Gospel of Peter*, and being determined not to omit his exclamation, has put it into the mouth of the centurion who commanded the guards at the tomb.

The begging of the body of Jesus by Joseph seems to have been included in the original Gospel. His request, however, must have been made not to Pilate but to the Jews who had taken Jesus down from the cross. The latter circumstance is related in § 6, which is clearly the proper place for the request. In the existing text § 2, which follows the command of Herod that the Lord should be taken, begins thus: "Now there stood there Joseph the friend of Pilate and the Lord." The words "the friend of Pilate" seem to have been introduced for the purpose of explaining why the petition was addressed to Pilate instead of to Herod, the actual judge and person in authority. If, as appears probable, the section is an interpolation, the words, "Now there stood there Joseph," may have been transferred from their proper place in § 6, where they fit perfectly. The Jews are distressed because the darkness has made them think that the sun has set and the body has not been buried as by their law it should have been. Then in § 6, inserting the phrase referred to, we should read: "Then the sun shone out, and it was found to be the ninth hour. Now there stood there Joseph the friend of the Lord, and he begged the body of the Lord for burial. And the Jews rejoiced and they gave his body to Joseph to bury it." It was pointed out previously that the citation of the law which appropriately occurs in this connection has been duplicated in the interpolated § 2 in Herod's reply to the petition of Pilate. We may note that in this Gospel Joseph is not named "of Arimathea," and in other respects the section is less detailed than the account in Mark, as may be seen by comparing xv, 42-47, with the comparatively bald statement in the *Gospel of Peter*, "So he took the Lord and washed him and wrapped him in linen and brought him into his own tomb, called Joseph's Garden."

Several scholars, including Sir James Frazer, Salomon Reinach, and W. Bousset, have seen that, if Jesus had been condemned on the charge of having claimed to be the king of the Jews, the Roman governor who sentenced him could not conceivably have ordered the inscription "This is the King of the Jews" to be placed upon the cross. This item is quite incompatible with the rest of the narrative. In the *Gospel of Peter*, however, where the scene of the mocking is enacted by the people and may be understood as the representation of an ancient sacrificial rite, the item falls naturally into its place. We are told in this Gospel that the people set Jesus on a seat of judgment, saying, "Judge righteously, O King of Israel." Then the inscription, "This is the King of Israel" over the head of the crucified victim is just a continuation of the mockery. This item seems to be a crucial test which supplies the final proof that the account in the *Gospel of Peter* is substantially primitive.

It is an interesting fact that Justin found in his *Memoirs* the statement that "they tormented him and set him on a judgment seat and said: Judge us." The substitution of "Judge us" for "Judge righteously, O King of Israel" renders it uncertain whether Justin derived his statement from the *Gospel of Peter*. As there is reason to believe that he was acquainted with that Gospel, he may have had an earlier form of it, since even the oldest sections of the text that we possess have been somewhat expanded. Or Justin may have abridged the statement he found. If, however, he did not take it from the *Gospel of Peter*, evidently it was also contained in some other early apocryphal Gospel. Pilate had been introduced into the narrative before the time of Justin's writing, and the item in question cannot have been inserted after the introduction of Pilate; it must belong to a very early form of the narrative indeed. According to Mark the mocking by the soldiers of Pilate took place in an open court where there would be no seat of any kind. It is true that the Greek word used does not necessarily mean a seat; but the context seems to require this meaning, and it is more likely that the canonical Gospels omitted the item because of its incongruity with the supposed situation than

that it was introduced into some Gospel at a later date. It is not found in the later *Gospel of Nicodemus*.

The application of the title "the Lord" to Jesus in a Gnostic Gospel is not inconsistent with an early date. The title occurs in sections of the Pauline Epistles which were undoubtedly written in the first century.

Note

Since writing the above I have had, through the kindness of Dr. van den Bergh van Eysinga, the advantage of reading some articles contributed by van Manen to the *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1893. In the *Gospel of Peter*, immediately after Jesus had uttered his only cry, it is said that "he was taken up." Since the body of Jesus still hung upon the cross, this must mean that his spirit, his power, the Spirit of God that had been within him, was taken up. Van Manen's comment is: "In this conception there is no room for a resurrection from the dead after the deceased had tarried for a while in the realm of shades; whence it would follow that 'he was taken up' originally belonged to a form of the Gospel in which nothing was yet related concerning the resurrection and ascension of Jesus." The conception, as readers will perceive, is Gnostic. Van Manen was convinced of the great antiquity of portions of the fragment; among other evidence he mentions the term "King of Israel," which, as he says, is an older form than the canonical "King of the Jews."

APPENDIX B

THE Gnostic NUCLEUS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

PAUL, a servant of Christ Jesus, separated unto the gospel of God, to all who are beloved of God.

I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, both to Jew and to Greek. For wrath from heaven is revealed against all impiety and unrighteousness of men who keep down the truth. Because, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonoured among themselves; for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature; and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.

But we, who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with the similitude of his death, we shall be also with the similitude of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof; neither present

your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness ; but present yourselves unto God as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Know ye not that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness ? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered ; and being set free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed ? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.

So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh ; for if ye live after the flesh ye must die ; but if by the spirit ye mortify the body ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear ; but ye received the spirit of sonship whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God ; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is in the future to be revealed to us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but through him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until

now. And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the sonship, the deliverance from our body. For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, with patience we wait for it. And we know that to those who love God all things work together for good. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX C

THE Gnostic NUCLEUS OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS ¹

PAUL, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus.

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in all ye were enriched in him, in every word and all knowledge. For the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness, but unto us who are being saved it is the power of God. For since, in the wisdom of God, the world knew not God through wisdom, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save those who believe. Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For behold your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong, and the base things of the world and the things that are despised did God choose, the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the

¹ Of all the writings published in Paul's name this is the most likely to be a Letter really written by him.

mystery of God, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect; yet a wisdom not of this æon, nor of the archons of this æon, which are coming to nought; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God fore-ordained before the æons unto our glory, which none of the archons of this æon knew; for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But unto us God revealed it through the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God. But we received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God; which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Now the psychic man receiveth not the things of the Spirit [Pneuma] of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is pneumatic judgeth all things and he himself is judged by no man.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations and the same Lord. And there are diversities of inward workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for that which may be profitable. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of gnosis, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another inward workings of powers; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; but one and the same Spirit worketh all these, dividing to each one severally even as he will. For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all

made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body as it pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary; and those parts of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness, whereas our comely parts have no need. But God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honour to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And if one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in a tongue, speaketh not to men, but unto God; for no man understandeth, but in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification and comfort and consolation. Even things without life giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who will prepare himself for war? So also ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye will be speaking into the air. If therefore the whole church be assembled together and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one

unbelieving or unlearned, he is reprov'd by all, he is judg'd by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed.

My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

APPENDIX D

THE Gnostic NUCLEUS OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

PAUL, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth. Now he that establisheth us with you into Christ, and anointed us is God; who also sealed us and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts and read by all men, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone but in tables that are hearts of flesh. And this great confidence that we have through the Christ is in God, who made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive. Therefore seeing we have this ministry even as we obtained mercy we faint not; but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor presenting a counterfeit of the Logos of God; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's consciousness in the sight of God. But if our gospel is yet veiled, it is veiled to them that are perishing, among whom the god of this æon hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them. Seeing that it is God who shined in our hearts to give the illumination of the gnosis of his glory.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves. We are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed. But though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things

which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven; at least if, being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not that we wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now he that created us for this very thing is God who gave us the earnest of the Spirit. Wherefore if any man is in Christ he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold they are become new. But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the service of reconciliation; in that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

We therefore, as though God were entreating by us, are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, giving no occasion of stumbling in anything that our service be not blamed; but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; in pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true; as unknown and yet well-known; as dying and behold we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

APPENDIX E

THE ORIGINAL EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

(Probable Date ca. 80 C.E.)

PAUL, an apostle, unto the churches of Galatia.

I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not according to man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it; but when it was the good pleasure of him who set me apart even from my mother's womb to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Brother of the Lord. Now touching the things which I write to you, behold, before God I lie not. Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ. Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas. [And I went up by revelation;] and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it

makes no matter to me; God accepts no man's person)—they, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me; but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, and when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of friendship, that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision; only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do.

But when Cephas came to Antioch I withstood him to the face because he was condemned. For before certain men came from James he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest in the manner of the Gentiles and not in that of the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to follow the customs of the Jews? We, being Jews by nature, yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, believed on Christ Jesus. But if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.

But before faith came we were kept in ward under the law, shut up for the revealing of the faith which was to come. So that the law became our tutor to bring us to Christ. For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. But I say that so long as the heir is a child he is different in nothing from a bondservant, though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the appointed time of the father. So we also, when we were children, were held in

bondage under the elements of the cosmos. But when the fulness of time came God sent forth his Son that we might receive the sonship. Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them which by nature are no gods; but now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again? Ye observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid of you lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain.

I beseech you, brethren, be as I am, for I am as ye are. Ye did me no wrong; but ye know that with an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel to you the first time. And that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not nor rejected; but ye received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where then is that blessedness of yours? For I bear you witness that, if possible, ye would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. So then am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth, my little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you? But I could wish to be present with you now and to change my voice, for I am perplexed about you.

With freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage.

APPENDIX F

PROLOGUE TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made at all. That which became in him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness mastered it not. The true light, which lighteth every man, was coming into the world, and the world was made through him and the world knew him not. He came unto his own things, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him to them gave he the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And he tabernacled among us,¹ and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only-begotten [*monogenes* ²] from the Father, full of grace and truth. And of his fulness we all received. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him. He that believeth on him is not judged; he that believeth not hath been judged already. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light; for their works were

¹ Cp. *Ecclus.* xxi, 8: "He that created me [Wisdom] made my tabernacle to rest."

² Cp. *Wis.* vii, 13: "For there is in her a holy spirit alone in kind [or sole-born, *monogenes*]."

evil. For everyone that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the truth, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.

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