

THE ODES OF SOLOMON AND THE BIBLICAL  
TARGUMS.

IN the present paper I am proposing to discuss the dependence of the *Odes of Solomon* upon the Biblical Targums, especially upon the Targum on the Psalms and the Targum on Isaiah. Something has been said upon the point in the recent edition of the *Odes* issued by the John Rylands Library, under the editorial care of my colleague Dr. Mingana and myself; but, as we shall see presently, the treatment of the *Odes* from this point of view in the new edition is rather to be described as suggestive than to be regarded as exhaustive and final. At first sight it might seem that an attempt to elucidate the *Odes of Solomon* by means of a Targum was almost like explaining *ignotum per ignotius*; for, after all, what do we know of those Aramaic translations of the Old Testament which go under the name of Targum? Their origin and time of production are still involved in obscurity; there is, probably, no branch of Biblical studies that is to-day more neglected than that of the Targums. The majority of Biblical students know little more of the subject than that it was conventional in the Synagogue for an interpreter to follow the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures by an oral rendering of the Hebrew into the popular Aramaic dialect of the community, giving his translation verse by verse in the reading of the Law, and three verses at a time in the case of the Prophets. Jews and Christians alike appear to have neglected the Targums, yet it is capable of proof that it is in the Targums that the literary link between Judaism and Christianity consists. These, at all events, were a part of their common belief and worship, before the Church had detached itself from the Synagogue. Moreover the oldest Syriac Scriptures appear

to be in dependence (in part, at least) upon the Targums recited in the Synagogue, and the Gospels themselves in their earliest tradition and translation are affected by them. It would be easy to show that the New Testament is under the influence of Targum beyond what has yet been recognised by writers on the subject, and that it is highly probable that our Lord made his defence at his trial and uttered his despair upon the cross in language taken from the Targum. So we repeat that it is strange and regrettable that so little has been done for the elucidation of the Targums. We must not linger over the subject, or we should never reach our main field of enquiry, which concerns itself with the *Odes of Solomon*. If it should turn out that such enquiry should re-act upon Targum studies, we shall not be very much surprised.

Let us then come to the *Odes*, and to the point that has been reached in their criticism and explanation.

The recent publication of the John Rylands Library edition of the *Odes of Solomon* has revived a number of smouldering controversies, and made it clear that the last word is not yet said on the place of origin and the time of production of the *Odes*, and the language in which they are composed. No doubt much has been gained on the side of intelligibility : perplexing and even unique in their complexity as are these beautiful songs of the spirit, they have begun to yield up their obscurity, and, if mystical, to cease from being mysterious.

When we examine what the principal reviewers have had to say on the new edition, we find that almost every one of them has something to add to the resultant elucidation, even when their criticisms seem to be dictated by party-spirit or prepossessions. They will serve an auxiliary purpose, over and above their actual value as comments, in proving that

the editors of the recent volumes had not exhausted their theme, and that there is a good deal still to be discovered and disclosed. For that reason I should like to make one or two fresh statements with regard to what I now consider to be the real crux of the interpretation of the *Odes*.

I do not begin by a fresh discussion of the extent to which the *Odes* may be coloured by baptismal references (including references to baptismal ritual), which is the arena to which Dr. Bernard invites me, and where he thinks as challenger to hold the field, crying, "how much" where I whisper "how little." Dr. Bernard knows as well as anyone that the question of baptismal allusions cannot be dissociated from the question of the date of production of the songs. The two go together; either involves the other. If the *Odes* were written at the end of the first century, there can be no highly evolved baptismal references; if, on the other hand, they were produced, as Bernard believes, at the end of the second century, then it is not impossible, however unlikely, that the baptismal practices of the Church of Antioch of the fourth century might be carried back to the second century; the question of date dominates the controversy, unless, of course, we assume that the date itself is deducible from the possible baptismal allusions. If, however, we can prove the earlier date by another path, then no one knows better than Dr. Bernard that *cadit quaestio*.

Something similar is the case of the controversy over the original language of the *Odes*, whether Greek (as Dom Connolly, and myself originally), or Hebrew (as Dr. Abbott), or Syriac (as myself *now* and my colleague Dr. Mingana). Around this question much irrelevant discourse has been going on, the irrelevancy being often due to the imperfect knowledge of the languages involved, and the consequent over-manipulation of dictionaries and grammars. Here also the problem suggests another path to the goal. It is curious

that the reviewers to whom we referred (Bernard and Connolly) have failed to see that such a new path to the solution of the involved problems was actually pointed out to them in the new edition. *The path in question is the proved dependence of the Odists upon the Biblical Targums.* To this point of view we now return in order to make our argument somewhat more transparent to those to whom it has been either obscure or negligible. To Dr. Bernard it was certainly negligible ; he brushed it aside in a sentence or so, although it was really the most important thing that had yet been said from the standpoint of the critic. He had this excuse, that the editors of the recent volume did not say as much as might have been said on the subject of Targumism in the *Odes*.

Dr. Bernard's statement was as follows :

“ Harris calls attention to phrases which are like those which a Targumist would have used, and to one or two passages in which he thinks that the direct influence of the Targums may be traced. . . . It is probable, I think, that he provides the true explanation for most of the parallels . . . when he says ‘such expressions (as the Targumist paraphrases) readily become conventional, at least among Aramaic-speaking peoples. They pass into the religious language of the time.’<sup>1</sup> But it is doubtful if we can say more than this.”

To which we would reply that it is difficult to say less than this and is very nearly equivalent to saying nothing at all. And when we turn to Dr. Bernard's other review in the *Church Quarterly* for October, 1920, we find that the reviewer has actually chosen this line of defence for his position ; he never alludes to the Targums at all, though, as we have abundantly shown, they are the key to the whole problem. In the one review he treats the Targums as negligible, having

<sup>1</sup> *Theology*, Nov. 1920, p. 293.

actually ignored them in the other review. It will be seen presently that this was quite inadequate ; it was criticism by the omission of the matter to be criticised.

In the new edition of the *Odes* it is brought out quite clearly that the author was a scholar as well as a saint. Whether he was a Greek scholar is the point on which Dom Connolly has laboured, and concerning which he has disputed much with Dr. Abbott. We have shown, on our part, that he was a Hebrew scholar ; that he knew the variants in the Hebrew text ; how else could he have versified the two forms in which the 100th Psalm comes to us .

“It is *He* that hath made us  
Not *we* ourselves,  
or  
And *His* we are.”

That single case of the poetic use of both variants, in *Ode VII.*,

“He hath given Himself to be seen of *them that are His*,  
That they might recognise *Him that made them*,  
And might not suppose that they came of *themselves*”  
(*Ode VII.* 12),

should have settled the question of the acquaintance of the writer with the Hebrew text.

It came out clearly that there were other cases of Hebraism (such as would be a distinct gain to Dr. Abbott's argument), but it was also evident that there were suggestions of a possible acquaintance with the text of the LXX (which sent the argument back again into the hands of Dom Connolly (“’twill away again from me to you”). The most convincing of such passages was Proverbs viii. 22, where the Hebrew says :

“The Lord possessed me (i.e. Wisdom),”  
and the LXX says,

“The Lord created me,”

in which it has the support of the Targum, and where the

Odist says both (see *Ode* XII. 9, "He who *possessed* me from the beginning," i.e., the Father of Truth; and *Ode* VII. 8, "He who *created* Wisdom is wiser than His works").

By these and similar passages we prove that the Odist was acquainted with the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and perhaps also with the LXX.

In the same way we proved his dependence upon the Syriac Bible, and argued from it that the *Odes* were composed in Syriac. It is not necessary to repeat the argument here, for, as we have said, the whole question will be affected by the discovery that the Odist was also acquainted with the Biblical Targum. That acquaintance is the key to the interpretation of the *Odes*.

We can approach the subject best by expanding what is said in the new edition on the dependence of the first *Ode of Solomon* upon the first Psalm in the Psalter.

Speaking generally, we find that the dependence of the *Odes* upon the Targums is, in the first instance, linguistic: the *Odes* speak a Targumic dialect; we discovered, however, something much more important than an agreement in dialect. It turned out, upon examination, that the *Odes* actually versify for us portions of the Psalter; this came clearly to light on comparing the first *Ode* and the first Psalm. When we put them side by side, the fact of borrowing was undeniable. There was a crown of unwithering and blossoming and fruit-bearing branches in the *Ode*, which was clearly the duplicate of the tree whose branches hang over the first Psalm, whose leaf never withers and which brings forth its fruit in its season. It may be asked how that coincidence in theme proves the Targum on the Psalms to be the link between the Psalter and the *Odes*. Let us see. The question arose in one's mind whether the Odist had anything to answer to the statement that

"Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

At this point I made the conjecture that perhaps the prosperous doer was not the hero of the Psalm, but the tree that represented him pictorially. Students of the first chapter of Genesis in the Hebrew, whose exertations on the text have not wholly slipped away from them (*tempus edax rerum semiticarum*) will recall the expression

“tree of fruit making (*or* doing) fruit,”

and students of the New Testament will at once recognise the “tree that makes (*or* does) good fruit”; so that there was a possibility that the tree in the Psalter could be regarded as prosperous, in which case we had an explanation of the closing words of the *Ode*,

“My fruits are full and perfect:  
They are full of thy salvation.”

A reference to the Targum on the Psalm showed that this was also the view taken by the Targumist, who explains that

“Every germ that germinates ripens and prospers.”

I notice that this coincidence with the interpretation of the Targum is a coincidence with what is regarded by modern critics as a fantastic piece of exegesis. For instance, Baethgen says in his commentary that it is “distorted and unnatural.” Very good! Then in that case the agreement between the Odist and the Targum is the more noteworthy. Clearly our next step is to print the Targum and the *Ode* side by side, and examine for further coincidences of thought and expression.

Here they are in juxtaposition.

*Psalm (Targum).*

Blessed, etc.  
But his delight is in the Law  
(νόμος) of the Lord, and in  
his law doth he meditate day  
and night;  
And he shall be like a tree of  
life (*or* living tree) that is

*Ode I.*

The Lord is upon my head like a  
crown;  
And I shall not be without it.  
The crown of truth was woven  
for me;  
And it caused thy branches to  
germinate in me.

planted by the streams of water, whose fruit ripens in its season, and its leaves do not fall; and every germ that it germinates swells like a berry and prospers.	For it is not like a withered crown which does not ger- minate, But thou livest upon my head, And thou hast germinated upon my head; Thy fruits are full and perfect, Full of thy salvation.
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The coincidences are open and palpable; when, moreover, we turn to the fourth *Ode*, we find the Odist's adaptation of "brings forth fruit in its season" in the form

"never wilt thou fail nor be without fruit";

and when we turn to the 41st *Ode*, we find the exhortation

"In his *Love* let us meditate night and day."

Almost every word and thought in the Psalm is now seen to be reproduced or imitated in the *Odes*, generally from the medium of the Targum. There only remains the opening stanza of *Ode* 1: can we find that? Where does the crown come from that is on the singer's head?

It is curious that, as far as I know, no one has detected the source of the passage with which the *Ode* opens. Suppose we turn to the Targum on Isaiah xxviii. 5, and we shall find as follows:

"In that time the Messiah of the Lord of Hosts shall be for a crown of joy and for a diadem of praise for the remnant of the people; for the word of truth, etc." Here the word for "crown" is the same as in the *Odes*; the word for diadem is a somewhat rare word (*kathar*), which the Peshitta version renders by *gedila*, "a woven wreath"; this at once supplies us with the line, "the crown of truth was woven for me" (the "truth," also, comes from the Targum). Thus there is no doubt that the opening verses of the *Ode* are also Targumic in origin. For the final allusion to the Lord on the head of the singer, of which crown he is not to be deprived, the explanation appears to be, that the Targumists



believed that the ancient Israel who came out of Egypt were, every one, crowned with the Incommunicable Name ; they lost it when they worshipped the golden calf !

Hence in the Targum of Jonathan on Exodus xxii. 25 we are told that the children of Israel had been deprived by the hands of Aaron of the holy crown which was on their heads, for the great and glorious Name was graven and interpreted (*mephorash*) upon it.

This helps us not only to understand the first verse of *Ode* 1, but also to explain *Ode* 8 (21),

“ They shall not be detached from my Name, for it is with them.”

The new Israel claims to be more faithful than the Ancient Israel, and to have recovered their lost privileges.

That will be sufficient to show that the first *Ode* is in dependence upon the Biblical Targum.

Now let us see whether the key which we have in our hands will open any more locks in the perplexities of the *Odes*.

In *Ode* XVII. (6) Christ is made to say,

“ He who knew and *brought me up*  
Is the Most High in all His perfection.”

There seems to be no doubt that the Odist is speaking in the person of Christ at this point, and, from thence, right on to the end of the *Ode*, with the exception of the closing doxology to the Messiah. What does the Odist mean by God *rearing* the Messiah ?

The answer is that this is the language of the Targum. In Isaiah lxi. 1 the Targum opens with

“ The Spirit of prophecy from before Jahveh is upon me, because *the Lord hath brought me up* ” ; the expression is the same as in the *Ode*. The language of the *Ode* is the language of the Targum.

Now that we know the text upon which the Odist is working, the whole of the *Ode* will become luminous. For

Isaiah lxi. goes on to say that the Messiah is to proclaim "deliverance to the captives and the opening to them that are bound." So the Odist tells us that the Messiah, in whose name he speaks, has opened the doors that are closed and has liberated the bondmen.

"I opened the doors that were closed.

Nothing appeared closed to me

Because I was the opening of everything.

I went towards all the bondmen to loose them."

There can be no doubt as to the fact of the versification of Isaiah by the Odist.

We notice further that in the Hebrew the word "opening" is unexpanded. Our Bibles explain it as the "opening of the prison"; the Greek suggests that it is the "opening of the eyes." The Odist resolves the ambiguity by saying, "I was the opening of *everything*."

Some further points of interest are at once suggested. This passage of Isaiah is said by Luke to have been read by our Lord at the opening of His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth. It will be remembered that the recitation is introduced by the remark that

"He came to Nazareth *where he had been reared*."

The language is remarkable in view of the Targum, for it must be allowed that what our Lord read in the synagogue to a Galilean congregation must have been accompanied by the Aramaic Targum, without which it would have been unintelligible to a Northern gathering. So the question is raised whether Luke may not actually have been working on an Aramaic text, and that he had before him not the Hebrew text, nor the Septuagint, but the Targum. Moreover, the supposition that the Targum had been read with its reference to the prophetic spirit from Jahveh would explain why our Lord speaks of Himself, in reply to the questioning that followed, as a prophet: "I say to you, No prophet, etc."

May it not be possible that when we replace the synagogue lesson by its Targum, or at all events place them side by side, that we may not only explain our Lord's assumption of the prophetic office, and His comparison of Himself with the ancient prophets (Elijah and Elisha), but that we may see the meaning of the enquiry "Is not this Joseph's son?" as dependent upon the statement, "Jahveh reared me"? It will be remembered that in John vi. 42 we have something similar, where Jesus says that He came down from Heaven like the manna, and the people ask if He is not Joseph's son, and how can He say that He descended from Heaven. In the same way we might, in Luke, complete the popular question, "Is not this Joseph's son?" by the further remark, "How then doth He say, God reared me?"

We may, then, be doing more than to elucidate and make transparent the language of a single *Ode*; we may be illuminating, by means of the *Ode*, the New Testament itself. We are not yet at the end of the closed doors which our key will open.

There is another passage in Isaiah where the Targum has made a similar substitution, and represented the Most High as *rearing the Messiah*, and this passage also was known to the Odists and was utilised by him.

In Isaiah xlii. 6 we have language very similar to that in Isaiah xli. The Servant (the Messiah) is addressed in the following terms:

"I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness . . . to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeons, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Here the Targum begins:

"I, Jahveh, have *brought thee up* in truth."

Here we have the same expressions as before for *the rearing* of the Messiah.

But now look a little closer at the *Ode* in question:

"He who knew and *reared me*  
 Is the Most High in all His perfection,  
 And He glorified me by His kindness,  
 And heightened my thought to the height of *the Truth*."

Here we see the use which the Odist makes of the language of the prophet as to being "brought up in the Truth." He is evidently familiar with the Targum in this passage also.

We will ask one question more: did he know that "brought me up" had been substituted for "anointed me" in Isaiah lxi.? Does he betray any knowledge of the other reading?

In *Ode XXXVI. 6* we have Christ speaking as follows: "He *anointed me* from His own perfection," a similar expression to the one which we have been studying; and we are entitled to infer that the Odist was closely acquainted with the Hebrew of Isaiah as well as with the Targum. That will suffice for the present to show that Targumism must be conceded, if the *Odes* are to be understood.

If we now turn to *Ode XXXV.* we shall strike some notable matter. We have in v. 4 the statement of the Odist that the Lord was "more to him than *shelter*, and more to him than foundations," and we showed that by a word play upon "dew" (Syr. *ṭalla*) and upon "shelter" (Syr. *ṭillola*), the Odist went on to the similar word for "child" or "boy" (Syr. *ṭalya*), so that in the next verse he could say:

"And I was carried like a child (Syr. *ṭalya*) by its mother;  
 And he gave me milk, the dew (Syr. *ṭalla*) of the Lord;  
 And I was reared (Syr. *ethrabbith*) by his bounty."

We notice again the Targumic language for the Messiah.

Now let us see if we can find the original from which the Odist takes his picture of the God-carried and the God-suckled child.

If we turn to Numbers xi. 12, we find as follows: Moses,

upon whom the burden of the people is pressing with increasing weight, protests to the Lord thus :

“ Have I conceived all this people, have I brought them forth ? that thou shouldest say unto me, carry them in thy bosom, *as a nursing-father carrieth the sucking-child* unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers ? ”

We see why the Odist passes from “ I was carried ” to “ He gave me milk,” for it is a sucking-child that is being carried (the later targum [of Jerusalem] turns the foster-father into a *παιδαγωγός*). Let us now examine the word which we translate “ nursing-father ” ; the Targum says, *tarbyana*, a form which is derived from the root for *growth* (*rabby*) ; the Peshitta follows this closely with *mrabyana*, from the same stem ; now we see why the Odist goes on with

“ And I became great (*or* was reared) by His bounty,” the word used being *ethrabbith* from the same root as appears in the tradition of the Targum and the Peshitta. No such connexion can be traced in the Hebrew of the passage. The structure of the *Ode* is only visible in the Syriac, and we may be sure that the Odist is using either the Syriac Bible or its related Targum.

This is a peculiarly interesting case on another account : it will have been noticed that the Odist is very shy of the Pentateuch ; he never uses the word “ Law ” in the whole of his song-book, where it would come in naturally as in Psalm i.,

“ In his law shall he meditate day and night,” he boldly writes *Love* for *Law* (*Ode* XII. 6, “ Let us meditate in His love, night and day ”), and thereby expresses the whole difference between Judaism and Christianity. In the passage referred to in Numbers he has no difficulty ; here Law and Love are speaking the same language ; so he quotes, and makes delightful word-play out of what he reads.

The influence of Psalm xxi. upon the *Odes* has been already pointed out in the new edition, where the margin of the ninth *Ode* shows parallels as follows :

Psalm xx. (xxi.) 4.	“An everlasting crown is Truth. Blessed are they who set it on their heads.
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Psalm xx. (xxi.) 4, LXX	“A stone of great price it is.”
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Here it was shown that the language was based upon the verses,

“Thou preventest Him with the blessings of goodness.  
Thou settest a crown of pure gold (LXX ‘of precious stone’)  
on His head.”

In the expository notes it was pointed out that the reference to the Psalms went further, for the language of the *Ode* was :

“In the will of the Lord is your life,  
And His intention is Life everlasting” ;

which is directly based upon :

“He asked life of thee,  
And thou gavest it him—even life for ever and ever” (Ps. xx.  
[xxi.] 5).

It was further pointed out that the Odist regards the Psalm as Messianic, with Christ for King ; it can thus be described as “the holy thought which God has thought concerning His Messiah.”

When this sentence was written it had not been noticed that *the Targum on the Psalm takes this very view* ; for the Targum opens as follows :

“O Lord, in thy strength the *King Messiah* shall rejoice  
and in thy salvation how greatly shall he exult.”

The same explanation is in verse 9 of the Targum which says that

“The *King Messiah* trusts in the Lord and by the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.”

And it is from the Targum that the Odist obtained his description of the “holy thought which the Lord hath

thought concerning *His Messiah*." When, therefore, we speak of the ninth *Ode* as a pendant to Psalm xxi. the chains on which it depends are the Targum and the Septuagint.

The same Psalm has also been used in the fifth *Ode* in verses 8, 10, 12, apparently without any Messianic reflection.

The discovery that the Odist is often engaged in expanding and commenting upon particular psalms and prophecies furnishes us with the clue to the elucidation of many obscurities in the text, and frequently makes the whole of the *Ode* into a unity, when at first sight it appeared to be a group of ill-connected fragments. One of the best instances is the passage from Isaiah lxi. which we have already been discussing. The mentality of the writer is clearly being revealed; his scholarship also becomes evident. We are certain that he used the Targum and the related Peshitta version, and he may also on occasions have used the LXX. So we now know enough of the methods of composition to apply it to particular *Odes*.

Suppose, for example, that we are studying the third *Ode*. We ask the question whether it has any Old Testament antecedents, and the answer comes back that the key to the *Ode* on this side (without denying the possibility of a connexion with St. John, who tells us that we love because we are first loved) lies in a verse of the eighth chapter of Proverbs, with which chapter we know the writer elsewhere to be familiar.

The verse is as follows :

"I love them that love me ;  
Those that seek me shall find me."  
(Prov. viii. 17.)

This explains at once the language about the "lover who has found the beloved," and makes parallels with the Odist's expansions :

“He loves me,”

“I love the Beloved,”

and when we examine further for linguistic parallels, the result is interesting. The writer is working on the Peshitta version, which says :

“I love my lovers (*or my lover*),”

and using the same root (*rh̄m*) as in the *Ode* in both cases where “love” is mentioned. It is *not* the Greek text which has two words (*ἀγαπᾶ* and *φιλεῖ*) both expressing the same Hebrew root (let the commentators on John xxi. note this), which is a different root from either the Peshitta or its Targum.

Then the third *Ode* must be added to the Wisdom *Odes*, and Christ appears in it as the Divine Wisdom, as elsewhere.

This at once restores the sequence with the last two verses of the *Odes*, which are also Wisdom verses : we can see this by comparing these verses with the speech of Wisdom, the prophetic Virgin in *Ode XXXIII.* 6–8, which is also evidently based on Proverbs viii., e.g., *Ode XXXIII.* :

“O ye sons of men, return ye.

I will make you wise in the ways of truth.”

*Ode III.* :

“This is the Spirit of the Lord which *doth not lie*,

which teacheth the *sons of men* to know *His ways*. *Be wise.*”

Proverbs viii. :

“My voice is *to the sons of men*.

Blessed are they that *keep My ways* ;

Hear instruction and *be wise.*”

From these parallels it is clear that the close of the third *Ode* is also a pendant to the eighth of Proverbs, and in that sense the *Ode* acquires a literary unity.

I have made it clear, then, that the language of the Odist and his thought are alike dependent upon the Targum and the related Peshitta version. It is not a sufficient explana-



tion to say that the coincidences between the language of the Odist and the Aramaic and Syriac texts is an accident of translation. The coincidences are in the thought as well as in the language. A translator would not know what the Odist was working upon, for his Scripture allusions are carefully disguised. It has taken very close analysis to recover them; but the argument for their existence in Syro-Aramaic form appears to be incontrovertible.

We will take another illustration, for it is only by repeated instances that some of our critics can be reached.

The close of the fifth *Ode* is a noble passage, comparable in some respects with the last verses of the eighth chapter of Romans. When we examine it closely it is seen to be a cento of passages from the Psalms, with variations such as the Odist habitually uses. For example, we might write parallels from the Psalter against the following verses :

"For my hope is upon the Lord,  
And I will not fear ;  
And because the Lord is my salvation  
I will not fear."

(*Ode* V. 10, 11.)

Here the language suggests to us Psalm xxvii. 1,

"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

The next verse is parallel to certain phrases in Psalm xxi., e.g.:

"And He is a crown upon my head, and I shall not be moved,"  
may be compared with

"Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head." (Ps. xxi. 4.)

"The King trusteth in the Lord, and by the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved." (Ps. xxi. 8.)

But this thought, "he shall not be moved," takes the Odist naturally into Psalm xlvi., out of which he evolves his closing stanzas. We will examine the language of these verses more closely; here are the parallels:

"I shall not be moved.  
 Even if everything should be  
     moved  
 I stand firm.  
 If things visible should perish  
 I shall not die :  
 Because the Lord is with me  
 And I am with Him."

(Ode V.)

"God is our refuge and strength  
 Though the earth be removed  
 And the mountains be carried  
     into the heart of the sea.  
 God is in the midst of her  
 She shall not be moved.  
 The heathen raged, the king-  
     doms were moved. . . .  
 The Lord of Hosts is with us.  
 The God of Jacob is our refuge."

(Ps. xlvii.)

Here it is easy to see the string in the Psalmist's lyre that sets up the vibration in the instrument of the Odist. Let us then see where the language of the latter reflects that of the former. We shall find upon comparison that the Hebrew is working with quite different roots from the Odist, but that the Peshitta Syriac gives a constant refrain, which the Odist has imitated. The earth moves, the mountain moves, the kingdoms move, etc.: We see why the Odist says, "If everything should be moved, etc."

So we conclude that the Odist has been working on a Syriac text, and not on Hebrew or Greek; this time the coincidence is with the Peshitta, rather than with the Targum, but it is known that the two are closely related.

We have shown in our edition how constantly the Odist uses Targumic language, so as to avoid saying things about God which involve an anthropomorphic conception, or which imply a localisation of the Divine Presence. We know how important these changes were which the meturgeman made in his reading, for they sometimes have affected the Hebrew text also, i.e. the vowels of the text, but not the consonants. For instance, in Isaiah i. 12 the Lord asks His people as follows :

"When ye come to see *My face*  
 Who required this of you?"

This is corrected in the Hebrew pointing by turning the

verb into a passive (syncopated Niphal), so that we read it,

“When ye come to be seen before my face,”

for certainly no one can see the face of God.

And if the Hebrew text has avoided the doubtful language, much more will the Targum do so, for it says :

“When ye come *to be seen before Me.*”

Now this awkward circumlocution turns up in the ninth *Ode*, and the recognition of its existence makes a very obscure passage lucid ; in our translation it runs thus :

“The seers shall go before Him,  
And they shall be seen before Him.”

Evidently the Odist did not want to say, “they shall come to see my face,” so he makes the would-be seers into those that are seen. We get something of the same kind in Psalm xlii., where even the English Bible uses a paraphrase and asks,

“When shall I come and appear before God ? ”

Is the Odist actually using the first chapter of Isaiah ? Let us see.

The text of the prophet goes on to denounce the sacrifice of the people as unholy and invalid : the Lord asks,

“When ye come to see my face . . . who hath  
required this ?  
Bring no more vain oblations.”

It was a passage that was in constant use in the early anti-Judaic movement. The Odist evidently approves the negation of sacrifice, but his teaching is not merely negative ; he tells us that

“The seers shall appear before Him,  
And they shall *offer (neqarrbon)* their songs,”

meaning the “sacrifice of praise.” The Odist is seen to be something more than a Targumist manipulating a text. He is asking the question, “If oblations are vain, what shall

we offer ? ” and his solution is that “ Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.” (Psalm L. 22, and cf. verses 13, 14, “ Will I eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats ? *Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving.*”) So he brings his songs.

We have now to add these instances of Targumism to those which have been already accumulated in the new edition ; they appear to be of the nature of incontestable evidence. How is this Targumism to be explained ? Clearly it is insufficient to say with Dr. Bernard that it is the natural religious language of the time and district where the *Odes* were produced ; for the coincidences observed deal with particular passages of Scripture, and must have come either from an oral or a written Targum, i.e., from a man or a book. It is the fashion to say that there were no written Targums before the fourth or fifth century. If that pre-supposition could be maintained we should have to admit that the Odist himself was a meturgeman, with his mind and memory stored with Targum ; he would, in that case, have walked out of the synagogue and into the church bringing his Targum with him ; and, in that case also he must have been a convert of the first period. It is not, however, necessary to endorse too positively such a statement as that of the late transfer of the Targums to writing. The grounds for such a supposition are probably insufficient. It may be a mere attempt to exalt the Hebrew text, which people did not understand, at the expense of the Aramaic, which they did understand. If our *Odes* suggest anything it is the use of a written Targum. We feel sure that when Luke composed his account of the scene at Nazareth, with its Targumistic touches in the narration, he had before him the written text that underlay the Lord’s discourse. Surely that means that the written Targum of Isaiah was earlier than the Gospel of Luke. This written Targum is what the Odist has been using. It does not preclude the possibility

that he was a meturgeman as well as an Odist ; he must, at least, have been a Targum student ; nor can we expect to find such except in the first age of the Church. For the Targumists are a synagogue guild. There is no contact between the church and the synagogue, at the end of the second century, which would suggest a trained Jewish convert as the Christian choirmaster. Dr. Bernard's date for his assumed baptismal rituals was pushed back by him to the furthest possible limits of ecclesiastical imagination. Even so it is probably a hundred years too late ; and the theory based on the date, or accompanying it, must be abandoned. The discovery of the Targum that underlies the *Odes* has torpedoed it.

We have reserved the possibility that the Odist was himself a Synagogue Interpreter or Meturgeman. Here is a remarkable confirmation of this belief. In *Ode XXVI.*, after a noble song in the manner of Psalm cvii., the writer breaks out as follows :

“ Oh ! that one could *interpret* the wonders of the Lord !  
For though the *Meturgeman* should be dissolved  
His *Targum* would remain.”

This passage, with its threefold play on the word *interpret*, becomes very luminous when we observe that in the nature of the case it is the Odist who is himself the meturgeman of the desired song, and his Targum of which he speaks is the song which he is longing to compose. “ Oh ! that one could interpret ” means “ Oh ! that I could.”

The prophecy in which he indulged has come true ; he himself has disappeared, and not even his name remains ; but his work has been recovered and will be the joy of Christian hearts for many days to come.

He expressed himself somewhat like Keats when he said,

“ I think that I shall be among the English poets after my death.”

RENDEL HARRIS.