

PORTLAND, OREGON, SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 16, 1910

TWO SCORE NEW SONGS of SOLOMON DISCOVERED



Prof. Rendel Harris, Discoverer of the Additional Odes of Solomon

Famous Biblical Scholar, Dr. J. Rendel Harris, Finds and Translates 42 More Odes of Apocryphal Poet

THE literature of the world has been enriched by more than two score hymns from the same pens that made King Solomon the most famous of all song writers.

For centuries lost to human ken, buried in undeciphered Syriac upon the fragment of a manuscript that formed part of a collection unread and even unseen on the banks of the Tigris, these forty-two new odes of the great King Solomon were retrieved by the distinguished English scholar, J. Rendel Harris.

Long and patient study of those priceless pages followed, always in secret, always with the scholar's jealous trembling lest some one, some profound student with attainments similar to his own, should surprise his knowledge in some chance remark betraying too profound a learning in the lore of which all the rest of the world had thus far enjoyed but an inkling.

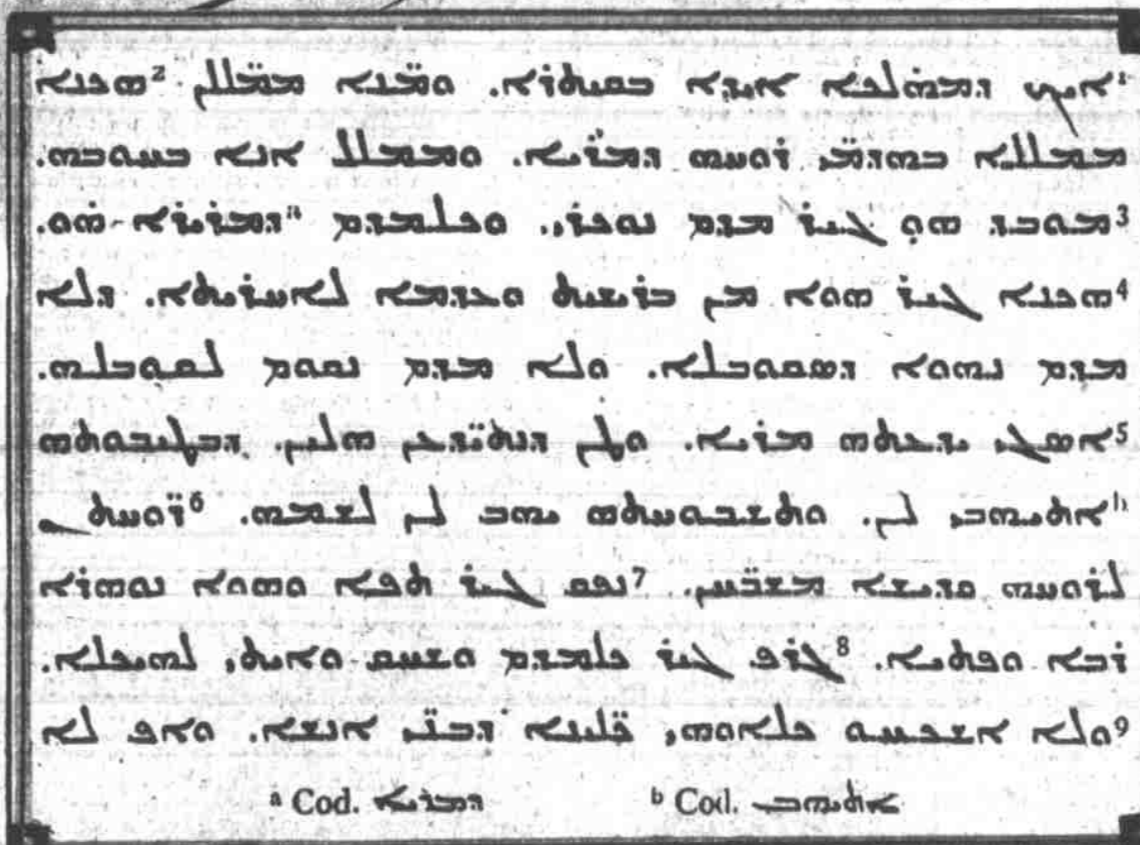
It mattered not that to him, as to other men of learning, the songs of Solomon were but the empty vault of other unknown, gifted singers whose names are forever lost under the grandeur of the mighty name to which they attributed their poems.

For twenty centuries and more mankind has accepted the wonderfully beautiful, the passionately exalted strophes that glow like fiery gems amid the often dull chronicles



of the Old Testament as the veritable compositions of that inspired Solomon who reared the imposing Temple and found room in his capacious heart for the love of a thousand helpmeets.

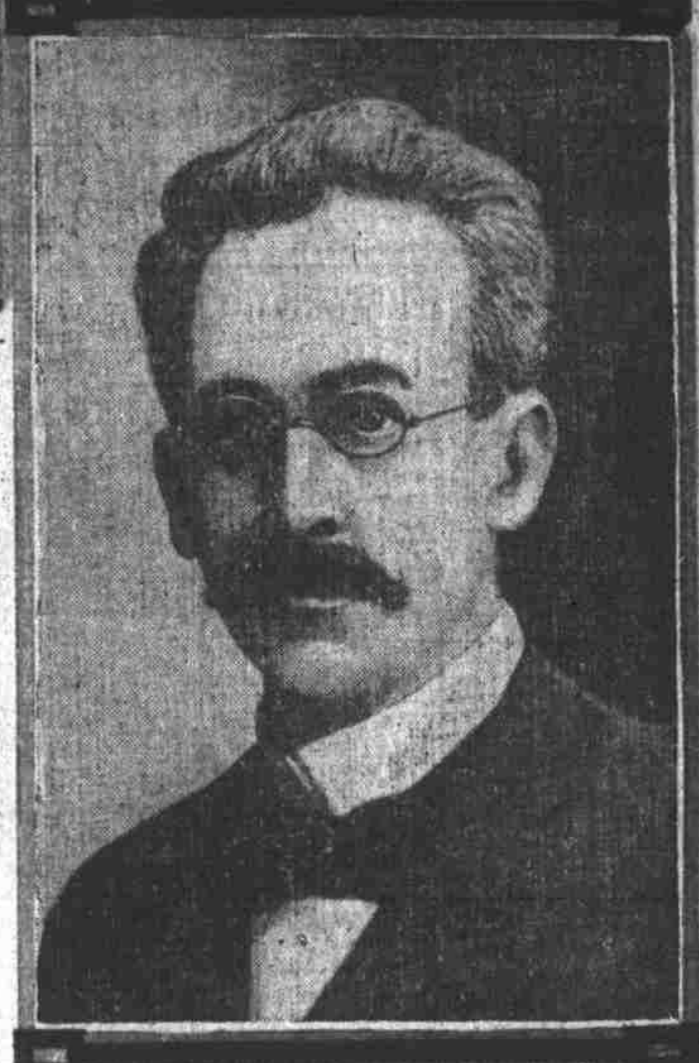
Modern criticism, grown so old that it might be classed as ancient lore, had stripped that puissant king of his giant's robe of poesy and had apportioned it among a whole school of singers more numerous, perhaps, than the cities that gave birth to Homer. Yet criticism must perforce continue to attach Solomon's name to all poems that have once gained glory from the honor of his authorship.



Fac Simile of the Original Manuscript of One of the New Odes.

appraisal of the genius and the nature of a race. Doctor Harris, when he had translated forty-two of the odes from the Syriac, gave his discovery to the world in a book, which had its title influenced by the ineradicable popular acceptance of King Solomon's authorship of all the poems that have been attributed to him. "The Odes and Psalms of Solomon" was the title, although, to the higher criticism, the name of Solomon in this connection represents only the designation of a school or cult of ancient literature that flourished under his reputation. History and archeology, until recently impatient of every bit of tradition that lacked documentary evidence of some sort, have of late learned to treat with more respect the fables and tales that have been handed down from father to son, even though hundreds of genera-

tions have passed since the events could have occurred. It may be, then, that the authorship of Solomon, which criticism now so haughtily rejects as belonging to these inspired poems, shall in the future prove to have something more substantial to indorse it than the universal, popular report and belief which prevailed in the days when Jerusalem was approaching its downfall. As it is, even the higher criticism is prepared to admit that the new odes are as authentically the work of King Solomon as were those that have been admired in the pages of the Old Testament. Hence, to those who still cherish the blessed, literal faith in the Bible they have known and loved throughout their pious lives, the fresh poems can be accepted as treasure troves, beyond price; and to those who pride themselves on taking their Scriptures with the



Prof. Harnack, the Great German Authority on the Odes of Solomon

salt of the higher criticism, the odes shed an effulgent, marvelously transforming light upon the life, the times and the people among whom the Savior labored for the souls' salvation.

Doctor Harris himself, speaking of his surprising disclosure in the volume, says:

"It contains an important addition to our knowledge of the literature which immediately anticipates or directly follows the time of Christ. It contains, on the one hand, a hitherto unknown version of the Psalms of Solomon, a collection which has often been studied, from the standpoints both of the higher and lower criticism, and which is, by common consent, referred to the middle of the first century, B. C.; and on the other hand it presents a new collection which I have called, for the sake of distinction, and in harmony with the references in ancient writers, by the name of the Odes of Solomon.

"They are here edited and translated from a Syrian manuscript in my own possession, and it will probably be no rash prediction to say that their value and antiquity will be at once recognized by students and critics, and that they will be assigned, either wholly or in part, to the first century of the Christian era.

"Apart altogether from the question of a half century more or less in the dating of a document, it lies outside controversy that the new odes are marked by a vigor and exaltation of spiritual life, and a mystical insight, to which we can only find parallels in the most illuminated periods of the history of the church.

"They differ, in this respect, by the whole breadth of the firmament, from the extant Psalms of Solomon, with which they are associated in our manuscript. In these there is little originality, and not much hope; the hard experiences through which Jerusalem passed at the hands of the Romans in the invasion of Pompey have left a gloom over the sky even in the moments of temporary relief and in the time of exultation over the fall of the great oppressor."

CAREFULLY WRITTEN

Doctor Harris states that the manuscript may be from three to four centuries old and had been lying on his shelves for a couple of years, along with a heap of leaves from various Syriac manuscripts which came from the neighborhood of the Tigris. In spite of its relative late date, the text is a good one; carefully, if somewhat coarsely, written. The original text is reproduced, page for page, and a number of other scholars have been engaged, of late, in making translations from the Syriac as reproduced in Doctor Harris' work. He himself, before giving his translations of all the forty-two new odes, furnishes an exhaustive criticism of the whole manuscript, and compares it with the whole range of existing knowledge that applies to the general subject of the Psalms of Solomon. His most important commentary, however, is that which he makes upon the odes themselves.

"In the odes," he says, "we have few quotations or adaptations from previous writings, whether Jewish or Christian; there is little that can be traced to the Old Testament, almost nothing that is to be credited to the Gospels or other branches of the Christian literature.

"Their radiance is no reflection from the illumination of other days; their inspiration is first-hand and immediate; it answers very well to the summary which Aristides made of the life of the early Christian church when he describes them as indeed a new people with whom something divine is mingled."

"They are thus," adds their discoverer, "altogether distinct from the extant Psalms of Solomon, which are bound up with them in our manuscript."

Professor James A. Montgomery, an American scholar, who has made one of the most thorough reviews of Doctor Harris' remarkable find, has been probably the first to attempt the designation of the odes by separate names. His classification is very helpful in any account of them which cannot hope to reproduce them all, and can present the text of but a single one, Ode 6, as an example of the rest.

Among those titles which Professor Montgomery has suggested are: (CONTINUED ON INSIDE PAGE)

THE circumstance that King Solomon did not write any of the poems attributed to him in no way lessens the beauty of the verses for the ordinary reader, or detracts from their importance as contributions to the literature of the world and as indices to the character of the Jewish people. Indeed, the very fact that all the songs and odes and psalms of Solomon are now assumed to have been the production of a variety of poets, who sought for their verses deathless fame by ascribing the authorship to the divinely favored genius of centuries that were distanced even when the Christian era began, is considered now of the utmost importance to one of the most vexed and vital of historical questions—the real character of the Jewish religion. Previously it was almost a tenet of faith with historians and critics that the books of the Old Testament were inflexible and infallible in their portrayal of the Jewish religion as one

of the sternest, most merciless justice, to the point of cruelty. But these new odes have given renewed strength to the arguments of later critics that adduce proof upon proof to show that Christianity itself derived much of its pitifulness, its exemplary gentleness, from a very religion it rejected. The great German scholar, Dr. Adolf Harnack, has discerned in the odes feeling and sentiment strangely akin to the thrilling power of expression and the profound depth of emotion which characterized the Fourth Gospel of St. John. And so, although apparently sealed with the great seal of Solomon, this important discovery, that comes to us from the far, mysterious banks of the Tigris through the pages of an English scholar, swiftly takes on a value that elevates it far above the level of mere apostrophes in piety. In fact, it bids fair to lead the way, after ages of injustice, to the true