

Three other modern forgeries about the Life of Christ I will just name—more to show my consciousness of their existence than because they are at all interesting. One is a life said to have been found in a Buddhist monastery in Tibet, and connected with the name of Notovich as discoverer or translator. The second is a ridiculous and disgusting American book called 'The Archko Volume'. The third is the Letter of Benan (an Egyptian physician), shown by Professor Carl Schmidt (*Der Benanbrief*, 1919) to have been forged by Ernst Edler von der Planitz. This, I believe, had a great vogue recently in Central Europe, but I have never heard of it in an English dress.

PASSION GOSPELS

GOSPEL OF PETER

THE early testimonies about this book have been set forth already. The present fragment was discovered in 1884 in a tomb at Akhmim in Egypt. The manuscript in which it is is a little book containing a portion of the Book of Enoch in Greek, this fragment on the Passion, and another, a description of Heaven and Hell, which is either (as I now think) a second fragment of the Gospel, or a piece of the Apocalypse of Peter. It will be given later under that head.

We have seen that the Gospel of Peter is quoted by writers of the latter end of the second century. It has been contended that Justin Martyr also used it soon after the middle of that century, but the evidence is not demonstrative. I believe it is not safe to date the book much earlier than A. D. 150.

It uses all four canonical Gospels, and is the earliest uncanonical account of the Passion that exists. It is not wholly orthodox: for it throws doubt on the reality of the Lord's sufferings, and by consequence upon the reality of his human body. In other words it is, as Serapion of Antioch indicated, of a Docetic character.

Another characteristic of it is its extremely anti-Jewish attitude. Blame is thrown on the Jews wherever possible, and Pilate is white-washed.

In this case I give, in Roman and Arabic figures respectively, a double division into sections and verses. The first is that of Armitage Robinson, the second that of Harnack.

FRAGMENT I

I. 1 But of the Jews no man washed his hands, neither *did* Herod nor any one of his judges: and whereas they would not
2 wash, Pilate rose up. And then Herod the king commanded that the Lord should be taken *into their hands*, saying unto them: All that I commanded you to do unto him, do ye.

II. 3 Now there stood there Joseph the friend of Pilate and of the Lord, and he, knowing that they were about to crucify him, came unto Pilate and begged the body of Jesus for

4 burial. And Pilate sending unto Herod, begged his body.

5 And Herod said: Brother Pilate, even if none had begged for him, we should have buried him, since also the sabbath dawneth; for it is written in the law that the sun should not set upon one that hath been slain (murdered).

III. 6 And he delivered him unto the people before the first day of (*or on the day before the*) unleavened bread, *even* their feast. And they having taken the Lord pushed him as they ran, and said: Let us hale the Son of God, now that 7 we have gotten authority over him. And they put on him a purple robe, and made him sit upon the seat of judgement, 8 saying: Give righteous judgement, thou King of Israel. And one of them brought a crown of thorns and set it upon the 9 Lord's head; and others stood and did spit in his eyes, and others buffeted his cheeks; and others did prick him with a reed, and some of them scourged him, saying: With this honour let us honour (*or at this price let us value*) the son of God.

IV. 10 And they brought two malefactors, and crucified the 11 Lord betwixt them. But he kept silence, as one feeling no pain. And when they set the cross upright, they wrote 12 thereon: This is the King of Israel. And they laid his garments before him, and divided them *among themselves* and 13 cast the lot upon them. But one of those malefactors reproached them, saying: We have thus suffered for the evils which we have done; but this man which hath become the 14 saviour of men, wherein hath he injured you? And they were wroth with him, and commanded that his legs should not be broken, that so he might die in torment.

V. 15 Now it was noonday, and darkness prevailed over all Judaea: and they were troubled and in an agony lest the sun should have set, for that he yet lived: *for* it is written for them that the sun should not set upon him that hath been 16 slain (murdered). And one of them said: Give ye him to drink gall with vinegar: and they mingled it and gave him 17 to drink: and they fulfilled all things and accomplished 18 their sins upon their own heads. And many went about with 19 lamps, supposing that it was night: and *some* fell. And the Lord cried out aloud saying: My power, *my* power, thou hast forsaken me. And when he had *so* said, he was taken up.

20 And in the same hour was the veil of the temple of Jerusalem rent in two.

VI. 21 And then they plucked the nails from the hands of the Lord and laid him upon the earth: and the whole earth was shaken, and there came a great fear *on all*.

22 Then the sun shone forth, and it was found to be the ninth 23 hour. And the Jews rejoiced, and gave his body unto Joseph to bury it, because he had beheld all the good things which

24 he did. And he took the Lord and washed him and wrapped him in linen and brought him unto his own sepulchre, *which is called the Garden of Joseph.*

VII. 25 Then the Jews and the elders and the priests, when they perceived how great evil they had done themselves, began to lament and to say: Woe unto our sins: the judgement and the end of Jerusalem is drawn nigh.

26 But I with my fellows was in grief, and we were wounded in our minds and would have hid ourselves; for we were sought after by them as malefactors, and as thinking to set 27 the temple on fire. And beside all these things we were fasting, and we sat mourning and weeping night and day until the sabbath.

VIII. 28 But the scribes and Pharisees and elders gathered one with another, for they had heard that all the people were murmuring and beating their breasts, saying: If these very great signs have come to pass at his death, behold how 29 righteous he was. *And* the elders were afraid and came unto 30 Pilate, entreating him and saying: Give us soldiers that we (*or* they) may watch his sepulchre for three days, lest his disciples come and steal him away and the people suppose 31 that he is risen from the dead, and do us hurt. And Pilate gave them Petronius the centurion with soldiers to watch the sepulchre; and *the* elders and scribes came with them unto 32 the tomb, and when they had rolled a great stone to keep out (*al. together with*) the centurion and the soldiers, *then* all 33 that were there together set it upon the door of the tomb; and plastered thereon seven seals; and they pitched a tent there and kept watch.

IX. 34 And early in the morning as the sabbath dawned, there came a multitude from Jerusalem and the region round about to see the sepulchre that had been sealed.

35 Now in the night whereon the Lord's day dawned, as the soldiers were keeping guard two by two in every watch, 36 there came a great sound in the heaven, and they saw the heavens opened and two men descend thence, shining with (*lit. having*) a great light, and drawing near unto the sepulchre.

37 And that stone which had been set on the door rolled away of itself and went back to the side, and the sepulchre was

X. 38 opened and both of the young men entered in. When therefore those soldiers saw *that*, they waked up the centurion and the elders (for they also were there keeping 39 watch); and while they were *yet* telling them the things which they had seen, they saw again three men come out of the sepulchre, and two of them sustaining the other (*lit. the* 40 *one*), and a cross following after them. And of the two *they saw* that their heads reached unto heaven, but of him that 41 was led by them that it overpassed the heavens. And they

42 heard a voice out of the heavens saying: Hast thou (*or* Thou hast) preached unto them that sleep? And an answer was heard from the cross, *saying*: Yea.

XI. 43 Those men therefore took counsel one with another to go and report these things unto Pilate. And while they yet thought thereabout, again the heavens were opened and a man descended and entered into the tomb. And they that were with the centurion (*or* the centurion and they that were with him) when they saw that, hastened to go by night unto Pilate and left the sepulchre whereon they were keeping watch, and told all that they had seen, and were in great agony, saying: Of a truth he was the son of God.

46 Pilate answered and said: I am clear from the blood of the son of God, but thus it seemed good unto you. Then all they came and besought him and exhorted him to charge the centurion and the soldiers to tell nothing of that they had seen: For, said they, it is expedient for us to incur the greatest sin before God, rather than to (*and not to*) fall into the hands of the people of the Jews and to be stoned. Pilate therefore charged the centurion and the soldiers that they should say nothing.

XII. 50 Now early on the Lord's day Mary Magdalene, a disciple (*fem.*) of the Lord—*which*, being afraid because of the Jews, for they were inflamed with anger, had not performed at the sepulchre of the Lord those things which women are accustomed to do unto them that die and are beloved of them—took with her the *women her* friends and came unto the tomb where he was laid. And they feared lest the Jews should see them, and said: Even if we were not able to weep and lament him on that day whereon he was crucified, yet let us now do so at his tomb. But who will roll away for us the stone also that is set upon the door of the tomb, that we may enter in and sit beside him and perform that which is due? for the stone was great, and we fear lest any man see us. And if we cannot do so, yet let us cast down at the door these things which we bring for a memorial of him, *and* we will weep and lament until we come unto our house.

XIII. 55 And they went and found the sepulchre open: and they drew near and looked in there, and saw there a young man sitting in the midst of the sepulchre, of a fair countenance and clad in very bright raiment, which said unto them: 56 Wherefore are ye come? whom seek ye? not him that was crucified? He is risen and is departed; but if ye believe it not, look in and see the place where he lay, that he is not *here*: for he is risen and is departed thither whence he was sent. 57 Then the women were affrighted and fled.

XIV. 58 Now it was the last day of unleavened bread, and

many were coming forth *of the city* and returning unto their
 59 own homes because the feast was at an end. But we, the
 twelve disciples of the Lord, were weeping and were in
 sorrow, and each one being grieved for that which had befallen
 60 departed unto his own house. But I, Simon Peter, and Andrew
 my brother, took our nets and went unto the sea: and there
 was with us Levi the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord
 (For Fragment II see Apocalypse of Peter.)

THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS, OR ACTS OF PILATE

We have as yet no true critical edition of this book: one is in preparation, by E. von Dobschütz, to be included in the Berlin corpus of Greek Ante-Nicene Christian writers. A short statement of the authorities available at this moment is therefore necessary.

Tischendorf in his *Evangelia Apocrypha* divides the whole writing into two parts: (1) the story of the Passion; (2) the Descent into Hell; and prints the following forms of each: six in all:

1. Part I, Recension A in Greek from eight manuscripts, and a Latin translation of the Coptic version in the notes.
2. Part I, Recension B in Greek from three late manuscripts.
3. Part II (Descent into Hell) in Greek from three manuscripts.
4. Part I in Latin, using twelve manuscripts, and some old editions.
5. Part II in Latin (A) from four manuscripts.
6. Part II in Latin (B) from three manuscripts.

Tischendorf's must be described as an eclectic text not representing, probably, any one single line of transmission: but it presents the book in a readable, and doubtless, on the whole, correct form.

There are, besides the Latin, three ancient versions of Part I of considerable importance, viz.:

Coptic, preserved in an early papyrus at Turin, and in some fragments at Paris. Last edited by Revillout in *Patrologia orientalis*, ix. 2.

Syriac, edited by Rahmani in *Studia Syriaca*, II.

Armenian, edited by F. C. Conybeare in *Studia Biblica*, IV (Oxford, 1896): he gives a Greek rendering of one manuscript and a Latin one of another.

All of these conform to Tischendorf's Recension A of Part I: and this must be regarded as the most original form of the *Acta* which we have. Recension B is a late and diffuse working-over of the same matter: it will not be translated here in full.

The first part of the book, containing the story of the Passion and Resurrection, is not earlier than the fourth century. Its object in the main is to furnish irrefragable testimony to the resurrection. Attempts have been made to show that it is of early date—that it is, for instance, the writing which Justin Martyr meant when in his Apology he referred his heathen readers to the 'Acts' of Christ's trial preserved among the archives of Rome. The truth of that matter is