

Happy are we, if we give to Christ the pre-eminence, and if our hearts set "Him first, Him last, Him midst and without end."

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

### THE FAYÛM MANUSCRIPTS.

THE march of events is rapid in every direction. Politics, trade, science have experienced this tendency, and such too is the case in that quieter region of scholarship which deals with the discovery of ancient manuscripts. We have scarcely recovered from the excitement attending the great discoveries of Tatian's *Diatessaron* and the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, when we hear rumours of fresh discoveries which may, in course of investigation, eclipse even these. The scene of the latest accessions to our knowledge is the Fayûm province, a district which, lying fifty or sixty miles to the south of Cairo, has been from the earliest ages celebrated for its fertility. Egyptian history, as reconstructed by Brugsch, tells us that more than two thousand years before Christ one of the Pharaohs established there the lake Moeris which, after eluding the search of many generations, has now been satisfactorily identified.<sup>1</sup> The construction of this lake was intended to prevent the waste of Nile water, by storing it up for future use. In any case it rendered the Fayûm province the garden of Egypt, and developed there a life of which the buried records have now come to light. We must however tell a preliminary story.

It is just one hundred years since a very intelligent Frenchman travelled through Egypt and Syria, leaving as the result a narrative which is of great importance as

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings of Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. iv. p. 124, for identification of the site.

showing us these countries and their internal condition while yet Mahometanism retained somewhat of its pristine vigour. Volney's Travels contain many interesting facts, but are specially important for our present purpose as indicating the rise of that stream of manuscript discovery which has never since ceased in Egypt. From Volney's narrative we learn that in 1778 the Arabs found in a subterranean place near the site of the ancient Memphis, fifty volumes written in a language which they understood not. They were enclosed in a case of sycamore wood and were highly perfumed. The Arabs offered them for sale to a French merchant, but he refused to purchase them all. He fortunately however bought one, while the Arabs consumed the rest, cutting them up and using them instead of tobacco, for which they served as an admirable substitute on account of their pleasant odour. The manuscript which survived proved to be the most ancient Greek document then known. It is still a common notion among even good scholars that the great Biblical codices, the Alexandrian, the Vatican, and the Sinaitic, are the oldest Greek manuscripts, whether sacred or secular. This Egyptian document thus casually rescued from an untimely fate proved this to be a great mistake, and showed that we can scarcely dare to place limits upon our hopes and expectations in this direction. Cardinal Stephen Borgia, a munificent patron of literature, purchased it from the French merchant, and then entrusted it for publication to Nicolas Schow, a learned Dane, who printed it with an elaborate commentary, at Rome, in the year 1788.<sup>1</sup> Schow deciphered the document and found that it contained a second or third century list of the workmen employed upon the canals connecting the lake Moeris in the Fayûm with the Nile. As, however, this

<sup>1</sup> *Charta Papyracea Græce Scripta Musei Borgiani Velitris qua series incolarum Ptolemaidis Arsinoiticæ in aggeribus et fossis operantium exhibetur*, ed. a Nicolas Schow. Rom. 1788.

papyrus contained nothing illustrative either of Scripture or of Church history, the interest in it soon died away. During the Napoleonic invasion and occupation of Egypt, much interest was taken in Egyptology by French scholars, of which the great works of Champollion and Letronne are still the monuments. Yet though many other discoveries rewarded their exertions, they found no Greek manuscripts. It is not, indeed, every invading army which is so fortunate as our own expedition to Abyssinia, which brought back with it valuable copies of early Jewish and Christian writings, such as the Book of Enoch, the Ascension of Isaiah, and the Book of Jubilees or the little Genesis of Jerome. Discoveries of all kinds, indeed, seem to come in rushes or cycles. Such a cycle of discovery was the age of Archbishop Ussher, when the Alexandrian MS. of the Bible, the works of Ignatius, of Clement, of Barnabas, of John Malalas, came almost at once to light. And then again, long periods elapse which are complete blanks as far as discoveries are concerned. Between 1815 and 1830, however, large numbers of Greek papyri were found, and scattered among the various museums and libraries of Europe—Vienna, Turin, Paris, London, Berlin. Since that time a few important Greek papyri have been here and there recovered, but no great collection of documents till within the last seven or eight years. In the year 1877 a large quantity of papyri were offered to the German Consul at Alexandria, who purchased them and sent them to Berlin, where they attracted considerable attention and raised high hopes of more important finds, as among them was found a fragment dating from the 4th century, at latest, of the *Melanippe*, a lost tragedy of Euripides.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the text of this fragment in the *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache*, 1880, Ed. Lepsius, where other fragments from Homer, Sappho, Aratus, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa are printed out of the Fayûm MSS. then known. The text of Gregory is given in full in the first part of *Philologus* for 1885, pp. 1-29. It treats of the life of Moses.

Brugsch, the great Egyptologist, made excavations in 1880 at Medinet, the capital of the Fayûm province, but without much success. Treasures like the Greek papyri often elude the most diligent searchers, and delight to bury themselves from such amid the thickest darkness. Brugsch discovered something indeed, but not much; his most important "find" being a leaf of parchment containing the first chapter of Second Thessalonians. Dr. Stern, too, under a commission from the Berlin Academy, undertook a fresh search and got some remains of the Hippolytus of Euripides and of Aristotle. A year or two afterwards, however, the greatest treasure of all was discovered. The Austrian Archduke Renier was travelling in Egypt, and purchased a vast quantity of papyri in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Persian, Arabic, Coptic, as well as in the old Egyptian characters, Hieroglyphic, Hieratic and Demotic. It will suffice to show the vast quantity of these MSS. when we mention that the Coptic pieces alone are a thousand in number, including letters, legal documents, Biblical fragments in the Middle Egyptian and Sahidic dialects,<sup>1</sup> and a series of contracts which illustrate the modifications which Roman law experienced at the hands of Egyptian administrators. But then the Coptic papyri are only a small part of the collection which the Archduke brought home and deposited in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. The whole mass of documents has been submitted to the scrutiny of three scholars who have already given many proofs of their skill and knowledge in such work—Messrs. Wessely, Krall and Karabacek. They are all still engaged in the tedious and delicate operations involved in first unrolling and then deciphering the papyri, and have had but little time for that detailed and critical examination which alone will reveal their historical value. From time

<sup>1</sup> The Sahidic Version of the Bible so far as it exists has lately been published by O. V. Lemm, *Bruchstücke der Sahidischen Bibelübersetzung*, Leipzig, 1885.

to time, however, they have furnished reports, from which we learn enough to excite our highest expectations. Thus to Professor Wessely has been assigned the Greek and Latin documents. He is a very young man indeed, being only twenty-five years of age, yet he has already done much good work in the special department of literature to which he has devoted himself. He has published a learned treatise,<sup>1</sup> in which he offers chronological and historical disquisitions on Greek papyri from Fayûm previously known, and has followed it up by some able critical articles in the *Wiener Studien* on the same subject. He has indeed enjoyed exceptional advantages in this direction, as Viennese scholars have for some time specially devoted themselves to studies in this direction. A brief *resumé* of his work will show its importance.

Wessely has found then among the Fayûm papyri remnants of a polemic against Isocrates, dating from the fourth century B.C.; Homeric and Thucydidean fragments of the second century A.D., in very beautiful characters. The fragments of Thucydides are specially valuable as they offer a very different text of the eighth book of the celebrated history from that commonly known. The oldest extant MS. of Thucydides dates indeed only from the tenth or eleventh century, and the eighth book as therein given is very imperfect, so that Wessely's discovery throws a new and unexpected light on this important author. Unexpected indeed it is, as Dr. Arnold, in the preface to the second edition of his Thucydides, remarks, "With respect to the text of Thucydides little, I believe, will ever be done towards correcting it by the search after new manuscripts; the corruptions after all are not many, and it is doubtful whether those in the eighth book are not attributable to the imperfect state in

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena ad Papyrorum Græcorum Novam Collectionem Edendam.* Vienna, 1883.

which the text was left by Thucydides himself." *Æsthetic* and philosophical treatises dating from the second and third centuries of our era have also appeared, admitting us into the very heart and life of the great Alexandrian school when it was forming the minds and influencing the thoughts of a Clement and an Origen. For the Christian student and apologist, Wessely's discoveries have even a still greater interest. Fayûm was a district devoted to theology from the earliest times. In the third century Dionysius of Alexandria, according to the report of Eusebius (*H. E.*, vii. 24), had much trouble there with a bishop who anticipated many of the speculations of the late Dr. Cumming and his school of expositors. In such a district theological works must have abounded. Some of the latest reports therefore announce the discovery of a papyrus roll containing a Gospel of St. Matthew in Greek dating from the third century—a Greek text, which must in that case take precedence in point of time of all others; a *Metanoia* of the fourth century; large fragments of the Old and New Testament on papyrus and parchment; considerable portions of St. Cyril's works; a collection of edicts and other state documents, the earliest dated under Domitian about the year 90 A.D., and then going on almost without a break through all the Pagan and Christian Emperors down to the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens in the seventh century. Among these are documents of Marcus Aurelius, Alexander Severus, Gordian, and Philip the Arabian. The new side lights for Church history to be gained from these papyri may be estimated from one fact alone. The first Emperor of barbarian birth who ascended the imperial throne was Maximinus I. He was very hostile to the Christians, as having enjoyed the favour of his predecessor, Alexander Severus, whom Maximinus dethroned. During his reign Origen had to flee from Alexandria and seek shelter in Asia Minor, whence he addressed a work

on Martyrdom to some of the clergy of Alexandria. Now the precise date of this Emperor's accession has hitherto been a disputed point; one of these papyri has, however, cleared up the difficulty, and shown us that he began to reign in the end of March, A.D. 235. The Latin papyri, which have also been entrusted to Wessely, are not at all so numerous as the Greek, yet even among them we have two of the oldest dated Latin documents in existence, the receipts given by an actuary, Sergius, in the year 398 A.D., as well as a formal permit to some soldiers of the Fifth Legion, to assist at the celebration of the Easter Festival at Arsinoë. We can scarcely hope to estimate properly the critical and historical value of those discoveries till they have been printed. The trouble involved in dealing with them is enormous, as the papyri have first to be unrolled with great care, then deciphered, which is often a work of the greatest difficulty owing to the imperfect condition of the Manuscripts, and then pressed and placed under sheets of glass for permanent preservation. The Greek and Latin documents form, however, a comparatively small portion of the mass of material recovered by the Archduke Renier. The Oriental documents in Persian, Ethiopic, Hebrew and Arabic, have been confided to Professor Karabacek. Among these the Ethiopic papyri number two hundred, the Hebrew in square characters twenty-four, and the Arabic papyri literally some thousands. We ask special attention to this fact. Previous to this latest discovery, Arabic papyri were only two or three in number. So late as 1879, Gardthausen, in his great work on Greek Palæography, p. 33, tells us that he knew of only two or at most three, one of them being a passport granted to an Egyptian peasant, dating from 750 A.D. Gardthausen, indeed, thought the Arabs did not use papyri for writing; but in history *à priori* considerations carry little weight. One solitary fact upsets a cart-load of theories. Now just

the reverse of Gardthausen's idea is found to have been the case, and Arabic papyri are perhaps the most numerous of all, extending back to the earliest days of Arab rule in the valley of the Nile. Among them are two of the oldest Mahometan documents now known, one of them dating from the year 30 of the Hegira, corresponding to 652 A.D. Much new light on the origines of Mahometanism and the relations between Islam and Christianity in the first days of Mahometan triumph may be expected from these sources. Professor Krall has taken in hand the purely Egyptian pieces, embracing those in the Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, Demotic and Coptic characters. Among them has been found a letter in Hieratic which is quite three thousand years old. The Coptic papyri are indeed some of the most important for the Christian student. From the Copts we have gained some of our most valuable discoveries concerning the history, life and customs of the early Church. One hundred years ago the Coptic documents preserved in Cardinal Borgia's library yielded to a learned monk of that time an original account of the great Diocletian persecution as conducted in Egypt, tallying in the most accurate manner with the scenes depicted by Eusebius as witnessed by himself. This valuable narrative, now almost forgotten, lies buried in a work by Aug.-Ant. Georgius, enjoying the very uninviting title, "De Miraculis S. Coluthi et Reliquiis Actorum S. Panesniu Martyrum Thebaica fragmenta duo." From the Coptic manuscripts Revillout has within the past few years depicted the wondrous life and history of Senuti, a Christian Mahdi of the fifth century, has traced the repeated invasions of the Blemmyes, the deadly enemies of Roman power and of Christian progress down to the period of the Saracens, and has recovered, and published in the *Revue Egyptologique*, an original narrative of the proceedings and actions of the Fourth General Council, as depicted by the Patriarch Dioscorus from the unorthodox or Mono-



physite point of view ; an aspect of ancient Church life we seldom see, as the triumphant party generally took right good care to destroy all the books and arguments of their vanquished opponents. Church history, indeed, must be largely re-written, or at least will be more vividly depicted and drawn with fuller and more life-like details, in virtue of those new discoveries.

Now let us give one or two examples of the illustrations of Scripture and of Church history which may be derived from these Fayûm MSS. It will be remembered that the Archduke's find is not the only one made in that province. From time to time during the last ten years large quantities of documents have come to light in that same region, and been brought to Europe, chiefly to Vienna and Berlin. Thus before the latest Viennese documents were purchased, Wessely published in the *Wiener Studien* for 1882 three Fayûm manuscripts already possessed by Vienna, which throw considerable light on Scripture and the early Church. The first is a letter or order addressed to a certain Zeno concerning the taxation of the country and the produce of the imperial estates. It is specially important because it dates from about the year 8 or 10 of our era, and shows conclusively that the Romans preserved intact the organization, social and fiscal, of the Ptolemies, as the Ptolemies in turn preserved the system of the Pharaohs—so that if we can form an accurate conception of the Roman system in Egypt we shall have a picture of the life and times of Moses and of Joseph. Wessely also published in the same review some fragments of St. Luke's Gospel. Large quantities of Greek papyri had been previously deciphered, but they were almost entirely secular in their subjects. The only Biblical ones were the London Papyrus Psalter, published by the Palæographical Society in their magnificent plates and by Tischendorf in his *Monumenta Inedita*, and some fragments of St. Paul's Epistles. Wessely now pub-

lished a papyrus with two passages—St. Luke vii. 36–44 and x. 38–42—containing the stories of the Pharisee and the Magdalene, and of Mary and Martha, with the Divine commendation of Mary. This he showed to be the earliest known Evangelistarium or Gospel for liturgical use by the people, dating as it does from about the year 500, the oldest hitherto known only coming from about the year 700. The text found therein is in closest affinity with the great Sinaitic and Vatican Manuscripts, and proves that the Vulgate of the Græco-Egyptian Church of that period was in substantial agreement with them. He then devotes a long notice to a sixth century manuscript of a Septuagint text. It is written on parchment not on papyrus, and offers a very good text of the well-known 27th Psalm, “The Lord is my light and my salvation.” Revillout again, no later than last year, showed in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, what interesting illustrations and vivid details of early Christian life and struggles we may gain from this source. In the first number of the year he printed a Coptic manuscript, setting forth the curses of a pagan mother upon her apostate son, who had joined the Christian ranks. Here we have an original document coming from early Christian times, for doubtless no one would ever have copied anathemas which must have been devoid of meaning or interest for any person but the mother who thus solemnly and sadly cast her son off from her hopes in this world or the next. The document is most interesting and important, not only as illustrating that family separation and loss of all earthly ties which Christ so often warned His people to expect, but also because of the light it throws upon Christian and Egyptian worship. The religion of the ancient Egyptians about the second and third centuries is a somewhat obscure subject. It largely influenced Western paganism, yet we have not that intimate knowledge of it which we possess

concerning the religion of Greece and Rome.<sup>1</sup> In these anathemas we see their doctrine of Apotheosis. The woman's husband is dead, and she appeals to his manes as against the apostate, but she appeals to him as one elevated to a divine state—her husband has now become a new Osiris. The commemorations of the dead, the sacred feasts, the burial places round which the whole family life centred, their doctrines and ideas about future punishments which have been largely adopted by the Christian Copts, are all there depicted. As to Christianity, we have the new name adopted by the convert at baptism, and that a name closely connected with the Church of St. Mark. His name was originally Petuosor, signifying gift of Osiris. He changed it to the apostolic name of Peter, which, as we learn from Dionysius of Alexandria, was in the third century a most popular one in Egypt (Euseb., *H. E.*, vii. 25). From the same writer indeed we learn that this very custom of changing names derived from idols into distinctively Christian ones was common in Egypt during the ages of persecution (Euseb., *Mart. Palest.*, c. xi.). This

<sup>1</sup> An interesting work on Egyptian religion has lately been published at Paris. Its title is, *Histoire du culte des divinités d'Alexandrie, Serapis, Isis, Harpocrate et Anubis, hors d'Égypte, depuis les origines jusqu'à la naissance de l'école néoplatonicienne* : par G. Lafaye. He shows the influence this cult exercised upon Rome during the earlier Christian ages, and also some ideas and doctrines by which it prepared the way for Christianity. He describes its daily morning and evening service. It taught the doctrine of the death and resurrection of Osiris, which seems to have been an imitation of the Christian doctrine of the Passion and Resurrection, just as Tertullian maintains the Mithraic baptism and communion to have been diabolical travesties of the Christian rites. The death and resurrection of Osiris embraced three days from Nov. 12-14. This work also shows the weakness of the Egyptian religion, and explains its failure to satisfy the wants of humanity as Christianity has done. As a matter of fact it expended all its strength in magic and astrology, the remains of which are now coming to light as I show below. The Egyptian magicians often stirred up terrific persecution against Christianity, as in the well-known case of Macrianus mentioned by Eusebius, *H. E.*, vii. 10. In the last number of the *Zeitsch. für Ägyptische Sprache*, p. 136, there is an interesting paper on the Egyptian religion of Cent. iii. derived from the Greek Fayûm MSS. It points out that the Pharaohs were even then still worshipped as gods in the Nile valley.

convert imitated Peter's rash zeal too. He had joined the clergy, and to show his devotion had mocked the pagan rites and uttered threats of violence against the temples. It is in every respect a very instructive memorial of the terrible sacrifices, the family bitterness, the social divisions which must have often followed upon a profession of faith in Christ.

The Magical or Gnostic papyri again are very numerous. It was one of the favourite arguments of the Tübingen School against the Pastoral Epistles, that they involved the existence of Gnosticism in a highly developed shape. They held that Gnosticism was a corruption of Christianity, and therefore must have been long posterior to it. Now these documents show that Oriental philosophy could just as easily combine with Judaism as with Christianity, and must therefore have been in existence long before Christianity was heard of. The inner life and spirit of the Gnostic systems have been little investigated by Western thinkers, who have been alienated by the hard names and the perplexing unsympathetic representations given by ecclesiastical historians. But yet systems which entranced a Tatian and a Valentinus, and engaged the powers of a Clement, an Irenæus and an Origen, cannot have been jargon and nonsense. We must view the Gnostic systems from the Oriental side, and then we shall see why the Church strove against them with all its might as aimed at its very life and heart. Magical and Gnostic papyri already exist at London, Leyden, and Paris in considerable numbers, and have been used by Revillout to illustrate the life of Secundus, a Gnostic teacher of the second century. It may, however, be hoped that the Fayûm Manuscripts will throw some new light on a topic which is renewing its interest for us when esoteric Buddhism and its adherents are producing, all unawares doubtless, as the latest products of modern thought, the wildest conceits of Asiatic

and Egyptian Gnosticism. Space would, however, fail to tell of the varied information these papyri give us. They deal with every conceivable subject. In the *Revue Egyptologique* of 1883, for instance, appeared a papyrus from Vienna, which would be of interest to many a special correspondent of to-day, setting forth an artist's life in Egypt with all his crosses and troubles in the first or second century; while the papyri which deal with the Nile and its inundations and constructions are simply endless. The question may naturally be asked, How have these papyri, and parchments, been preserved? The reply is very simple. Even in our damp climate there exist many documents twelve and thirteen hundred years old. The traveller can see in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, and in the Museum of the Irish Academy, sacred manuscripts which are quite as old as many of the Egyptian, dating from the age of St. Columba, if not from that of St. Patrick. In the case of Egypt, however, quantities of the papyri are more than twice as old. They have been preserved in tombs, or may be portions of official libraries buried at some crisis, in the sand; sometimes in vases of earthenware, sometimes, as those Greek papyri which the Arabs destroyed, in cases of sycamore wood; offering, indeed, an interesting corroboration from Egyptian practice of the Jewish custom mentioned in Jeremiah xxxii. 14, where the prophet charges Baruch: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days."

The student wishing to pursue this subject will find abundant material in the German and French periodicals mentioned in this article. The *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, founded by Brugsch, edited till his death by Lepsius, and now continued by Stern, has articles in almost every number about the Egyptian papyri.

The very last, published in February of this year, gives two Coptic documents containing perhaps the oldest existing Christian wills. They were found at Thebes and date from Cent. vii. They illustrate the Church organization of that day. *Philologus*, vol. xliii., the *Revue Archéologique* for 1884, vol. ii. p. 101, and the *Denkschriften* of the Vienna Academy, vol. xxxiii. may also be profitably consulted.

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"NATURAL LAW IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD."

A DEFENCE.

SECOND PAPER.

III. THE most important law which Mr. Drummond brings forward in illustration of his general principle is what he calls the Law of Biogenesis—that life can only come from life: *omne vivum ex vivo*. In Science this doctrine is according to Huxley "victorious along the whole line" in opposition to the theory of Spontaneous Generation; or, to use Mr. Drummond's impressive language, "the passage from the mineral world to the plant or animal world is hermetically sealed on the mineral side; only by the bending down into this dead world of some living form can the dead atoms be gifted with the properties of vitality; without this preliminary contact with Life they remain fixed in the inorganic sphere for ever." In precisely the same way, he holds, the natural man is dead to spiritual things, and can only be made alive by the condescending touch of Him who said, "I am the life."

"The passage from the Natural World to the Spiritual World is hermetically sealed on the natural side. No organic change, no modification of environment, no mental energy, no moral effort, no evolution of character, no progress of civilisation can endow any single human