

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

BASILIDIAN CHRONOLOGY AND NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION¹

ROLAND H. BAINTON
YALE UNIVERSITY

CLEMENT of Alexandria gives us the following account of Basilidian gospel chronology.²

¹ Abbreviations: ANF — *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, CIL — *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, DB — *Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible*, DCB — *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, Smith and Wace, HE — *Historia Ecclesiastica*, HRE — *Herzog's Realencyclopaedie*, NH — *Naturalis Historia*, PG — *Patrum Graecorum*, PL — *Patrum Latinorum*, T. u. U. — *Texte und Untersuchungen*, VC — *Vita Constantini*.

² Clement of Alexandria *Stromata*, I Cap. XXI, 145, 1—146, 4, ed. Stählin, p. 90. Ἐγενήθη δὲ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν τῷ ὀγδόῳ καὶ εἰκοστῷ ἔτει, ὅτε πρῶτος ἐπέλευσεν ἀπογραφὰς γενέσθαι ἐπὶ Αὐγούστου. ὅτι δὲ τούτ' ἀληθὲς ἔστω, ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τῷ κατὰ Λουκᾶν γέγραπται οὕτως: "ἔτι δὲ πεντηκονταετῶν ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐγένετο βῆμα κυρίου ἐπὶ Ἰωάννη τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱόν." καὶ πάλιν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ. "ἦν δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἐρχόμενος ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα ὡς ἑτῶν λ'." καὶ ὅτι ἐκινῶντος μόνου ἦεν αὐτὸν κερθεῖν, καὶ τοῦτο γέγραπται οὕτως: "ἐκινῶντος δεκτῶν κυρίου κερθεῖν ἀπέστειλόν με." τοῦτο καὶ ὁ προφήτης εἶπεν καὶ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. πεντηκονταετῶν ἔτη Τιβερίου καὶ πεντηκονταετῶν Αὐγούστου, οὕτως πληροῦται τὰ τριδικαῖα ἔτη ἕως οὗ ἔπαυεν. ἀφ' οὗ δὲ ἔπαυεν ἕως τῆς καταστροφῆς Ἰερουσαλὴμ γίνονται ἔτη μβ' μῆνες γ', καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς καταστροφῆς Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἕως Κομίου τελευτῆς ἔτη ρβ' μῆνες ι' ἡμέραι εγ'. γίνονται οὖν ἀφ' οὗ ὁ κύριος ἐγενήθη ἕως Κομίου τελευτῆς τὰ πέντα ἔτη ργδ' μῆνες εἰς ἡμέρας εγ'. εἰσι δὲ οἱ περιεργότεροι τῇ γενέσει τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν οὗ μόνου τὸ ἔτος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆν ἡμέραν προστιθέτες, ἦν φασὶν ἔτους εἴ Αὐγούστου ἐν ἡμέτρη Παχῶν καὶ εἰσὶ δέκα.

οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ Βασιλείδου καὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος αὐτοῦ τῆν ἡμέραν ἐορτάζουσι προδικαποκρούουτες (ἐν) ἀναγωγῶσι. φασὶ δὲ εἶναι τὸ πεντηκονταετῶν ἔτος Τιβερίου Καίσαρος τῆν πεντηκονταετῶν τοῦ Τυβί μῆνος, τινεὶ δὲ αὐ τῆν ἐδεκάτην τοῦ αὐτοῦ μῆνος. τὸ τε πᾶθος αὐτοῦ ἀκριβολογούμενοι φέρουσιν οἱ μὲν τινεὶ τῷ ἑκαδικῷ ἔτει Τιβερίου Καίσαρος Φαρμαῶδ καί, οἱ δὲ Φαρμοῦδ καί. ἄλλοι δὲ Φαρμοῦδ δ' πεποδῆσαι τὸν σωτήρα λέγουσιν. καὶ μὴν τινεὶ αὐτῶν φασὶ Φαρμοῦδ γενεθῆσαι εἰς ἡ καί.

Line 7: πεντηκονταετῶν ὄν ἔτη—πεντηκονταετῶν Usener πεντηκονταετῶν ὄν ἔτη—
πεντηκονταετῶν L.

Our Lord was born in the twenty eighth year, when first they ordered the census to be taken in the time of Augustus; and since all is true, it is written in the gospel of Luke thus: "In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zacharias," and again in the same (book): "And Jesus was coming to his baptism being about thirty years old." And since it was necessary for him to preach only one year this also is written thus; "He sent me to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." This both the prophet said and the gospel. Fifteen years then of Tiberius and fifteen of Augustus, thus are filled up the thirty years until he suffered. From the time that he suffered to the destruction of Jerusalem there are 42 years and 3 months and from the destruction of Jerusalem to the death of Commodus 122 years, 10 months and 13 days. There are then in all from the birth of Christ to the death of Commodus 194 years, one month and 13 days. There are those who over-curious have determined not only the year, but even the day of our Savior's birth, which they say was the twenty eighth year of Augustus, the 25th of Pachon. The followers of Basilides celebrate the day of his baptism also, spending the night before in reading. They say that it was the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, the 15th of the month Tybi, but some the 11th of the same month. Some reckoning accurately place his passion in the sixteenth year of Tiberius on the 25th of Phamenoth, others on the 25th of Pharmuthi. Still others say that the Savior suffered on the 19th of Pharmuthi. Some of them indeed say that he was born on the 24th or 25th of Pharmuthi.

We get then the following dates. For the **BIRTH** the 28th year of Augustus. This is to be inferred from the fact that the "over-curious" mentioned just before the Basilidians placed the birth on the 25th of Pachon in the

10: $\rho\alpha\beta$ Usener $\rho\alpha\gamma$ L, $\mu\eta\pi\epsilon\varsigma$ ι historisch falsch ($\mu\eta\pi\epsilon\varsigma$ γ' $\eta\mu\epsilon\rho\alpha\varsigma$ $\kappa\gamma'$ Usener). H. Browne (*Journal of Sacred and Classical Philology* Cambridge 1884, p. 328) reads $\rho\alpha\mu'$. Usener (*Weihnachtsfest*, p. 5, note 3) comments " $\rho\alpha\mu'$ schrieb Dindorf nach Browne willkürlich," but a simple addition will show that Browne's reading is necessary to give the required sum.

28th year of Augustus. When Clement comes to the Basilidians he gives their days for the birth, but not the year. The inference is that it is the same. The days for the birth are the 24th and 25th of Pharmuthi. We get for the BAPTISM the 15th year of Tiberius, Tybi 15th and 11th; for the DEATH the 16th year of Tiberius, Phamenoth 25th, Pharmuthi 25th and Pharmuthi 19th.

The ministry will have covered only the "acceptable year,"³ Tiberius 15—16. If Jesus was born in the 28th year of Augustus and commenced his ministry in the fifteenth of Tiberius, he will have been at that time "about thirty."⁴

These dates have nowhere been satisfactorily explained. Hozakowski⁵ deals only with the chronology of Clement in this passage. H. Browne⁶ makes some very valuable contributions by working out the equivalents of some of the dates in the *annus vagus*, but gives up the rest. Turner⁷ eliminates "the three Basilidian dates (for the crucifixion) as probably mere Gnostic fancies." Fotheringham⁸ suggests that they were derived from the *dies aegyptiaci* of Philocalus, which were as follows:⁹ January 2, 6, 16, February 7, 25, March 3, 24, April 3, 21, May 3, 21, June 7, 20, July 6, 18, August 6, 21, September 2, 19, October 3, 20, November 2, 24, December 4, 14. But the Basilidian dates do not exactly correspond. The closest approximation is that between April 20th and 21st. Further, T. Mommsen has conclusively demonstrated that the *dies aegyptiaci* are not Egyptian at all, but derived from the purely Roman *dies Senatus legitimi*.¹⁰ The variation in the lists also indicates that the dates were not derived from a fixed foreign source.¹¹ The term *aegypt-*

³ Lk. 4 19.

⁴ Lk. 3 23.

⁵ *De Chron. Clem. Alex.*, Diss., Münster 1896.

⁶ *Journal of Sacred and Classical Philology*, Cambridge, 1854, vol. i, pp. 327—336.

⁷ *D. B.*, art. *Chronology of the N. T.*, p. 415, left column.

⁸ *Journal of Philology*, vol. xxix, art. *The Date of the Crucifixion*.

⁹ *CIL.*, T. Mommsen, vol. 1, p. 374.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Ginzell, *Math. u. Tech. Chronologie*, III, 231, cf. Grotefend, *Zeitrechn. d. deutsch. Mittelalt. u. d. Neuzeit*, I. Bd., 36, cf. also Mommsen, *op. cit.*

tiaci was used because Egypt was a land of ill omen, or because all things mathematical were supposedly derived thence.¹³ Since Basilides had no contact with Rome we may eliminate this source for his dates. We are left, therefore, without any satisfactory explanation.

We shall not deal with the year of the crucifixion, nor with the length of the ministry, which are obviously derived from Luke, but only with the days for the baptism, death and birth. The view taken is that Tybi 11th was brought over from the church, and not borrowed directly from the Epiphany of Dionysus, as has been commonly supposed. Tybi 15th is connected with the full moon. Of the days for the death, Phamenoth 25th is the equinox. It may be derived from an Egyptian festival, from Quartodeciman practice, or from independent calculation. Pharmuthi 25th was the day of the rising of the Pleiades and of the commencement of the harvest in Egypt. There may have been already on this day an agricultural feast of first-fruits like Passover. Pharmuthi 19th is not a date of the passion at all, but of the commencement of the six day period of ritual preparation. The days assigned to the birth belong properly to the conception. The difference of one day may be due to a double dating, or to diversity of local practice.

If these conclusions be correct, the Basilidian dates are all wrong, and this study will have merely a negative value for the chronology of the New Testament. The discussion of the true source of the dates bears nevertheless on New Testament interpretation. If, as we contend, the Basilidians derived Epiphany directly from the church, the feast will have existed in orthodox circles as early as the writing of the Fourth Gospel, and the account of the miracle at Cana may then well have been written to parallel the wonder of Dionysus on the same day. The dates of the death are perhaps derived from Quartodecimanism, and thus show the wide influence of Johannine chronology. The dating of the conception is an illustration of the tendency to continually push back the point at which Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power."

¹³ Mommsen gives a number of illustrative citations, *op. cit.*

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS RELATIVE TO BASILIDES AND HIS SECT

Before taking up the gospel chronology of Basilides it will be well to know when and where he lived, what gospel or gospels he used, what view he held of those events in the life of Christ which he dated, what chronological system he employed, and wherein he may have differed from his followers.

§ 1. SOURCES.

What are our sources for the answer to these questions? We have direct quotations from Basilides in the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria,¹³ and in the Acts of Archelaus and Mani.¹⁴ Unfortunately in the longer citation of the Acts, Basilides is himself quoting others, and his own view is not clear. The secondary accounts fall into two groups. In the first we have Irenaeus,¹⁵ and the lost compendium of Hippolytus, which may be reconstructed from Epiphanius,¹⁶ Philaster,¹⁷ Pseudo-Tertullian,¹⁸ and Theodoret;¹⁹ the later *Refutation* of Hippolytus comprises the second.²⁰ According to the first group the system of Basilides was dualistic and emanational; according to the second pantheistic and evolutionary. The quotations from Basilides himself must be the touch-stone. In the citation of the Acts of Archelaus, he discusses dualism, but what he thinks of it is not

¹³ *Stromata* I, xxi, 145,1—146,4, ed. Stählin, p. 90; II, viii, 88, 1; III, i, 1; IV, xi, 81—88, § xii; V, vi, 37, 4; V, xi, 74, 3; VI, vi, 53, 2; VII, xvii, 106, 3—4. *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 16.

¹⁴ *Acta Archelai*, ed. Charles Henry Beeson, LXVII = 55.

¹⁵ *Irenaeus*, Text, W. W. Harvey, Lib. I, xviii, Gr. I, xxii, Mass. I, xxiv, 1, cap. XIX—XXI Haer.

¹⁶ *Epiphanius*, Text, Karl Holl, Panarion Haer. 23, 1—2 = 62 A—B 24, 1 and 4—5 = 69 C and 69 A; 24, 3, 1—5 = 70 D—71 A; 24, 7 = 73 A—C, 23, 2, 2 = 83 C.

¹⁷ *Filastrii Diversarum Hereseon Liber XXXII—XXXIII*, ed. Fredericus Marx.

¹⁸ Pseudo-Tertullian, *De Praescriptionibus Haeret.*, 46, ed. E. F. Leopold.

¹⁹ Theodoret, *Haeretic. Fabularum*, Lib. 1, 2. From *Thomasii Institutiones Theologicae Antiquorum Patrum, Pars Quarta*.

²⁰ Hippolytus *Refutation*, V, 8, 4; VII, 22, 2—4, 25, 5—7, 26, 6—9, 27, 5 and 8—13, 28, 1, text Wendland.

clear. There has been a good deal of debate as to whether the quotations in Clement agree best with Irenaeus or the later Hippolytus. Opinion generally favored Hippolytus when the *Refutation* was first discovered. The reasons are summed up by Jacobi.²¹ But Hilgenfeld²² and Lipsius²³ took the opposite position. They were answered by Hort,²⁴ in detail by Drummond,²⁵ and again by Peake,²⁶ to whom the reader is referred.

They point out the many particulars in which Hippolytus agrees with the quotations from the *Exegetica* of Basilides in Clement. It is further shown that in one place Irenaeus contradicts Clement. According to the twenty third book of the *Exegetica*²⁷ pre-natal guilt explains the suffering of Jesus. But the Basilides of Irenaeus did not admit that Jesus suffered at all. Rather he was changed into the form of Simon, who was crucified in his place.²⁸ There is but one point where the discussion need be elaborated. Clement says that according to this school labor and fear overcome deeds as rust iron.²⁹ Hilgenfeld thinks that this fits in only with a dualistic system.³⁰ On the contrary such an explanation of evil is highly characteristic of pantheism.³¹ In order to save the goodness of the all embracing God evil is reduced to a mere blemish, and the responsibility of God is guarded by the very slightest limitation of his power, in that the rust appears of itself.

We may conclude, then, that the quotation in Clement and the *Refutation* of Hippolytus constitute our most reliable source for the system of Basilides himself. The Irenaeus group may, however, be used for the views of the school, as well as for the

²¹ *Zeitschrift f. Kirchengeschichte*, I, 1877, p. 481.

²² *Zeitschrift f. wissensch. Theol.*, XXI, 1878, p. 228, *Ketzergesch.*, p. 196.

²³ *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius*.

²⁴ *DCB.*, article *Basilides*.

²⁵ *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 304 ff.

²⁶ *Enc. of Rel. and Ethics*, article *Basilides*.

²⁷ *Cl. Alex.*, *Str.* IV, 81-88.

²⁸ *Iren. Haer.* 1, 19, 2, *Epi.* 24, 3, 70D ff. *Ps. Tert.* 46 *Phil.* 82.

²⁹ *Str.*, IV, 88, 5.

³⁰ *Ketzergesch.*, p. 226.

³¹ *Cf. Hermes Trismegistus*, 14, 7.

details of the life and activity of the founder. In addition we have scattering notices in Eusebius,³³ who depends on Irenaeus and Agrippa Castor, in Origen³⁴ and in Jerome.³⁴

§ 2. DATE AND PLACE.

All of the evidence on the date of Basilides agrees with the statement in the Armenian *Chronicle* of Eusebius that he appeared in the 17th year of Hadrian (133 A. D.).³⁵

According to Epiphanius, Basilides was a fellow-student of Saturnilos and Menander in Syrian Antioch, and came thence to Egypt.³⁶ A number of places are mentioned in Egypt where he was supposed to have worked, but these are doubtless simply the localities in which Epiphanius found his followers.³⁷ There can be no doubt that he was in Alexandria.³⁸ But was he ever in Syria? Jacobi³⁹ and Hort⁴⁰ think it highly improbable. Epiphanius inferred too much from his sources. He had at his disposal first of all Irenaeus according to whom "Saturninus, who was from Antioch that is near Daphne, and Basilides, taking their rise from these (i. e. Menander and Simon [*ex iis—occasiones accipientes, ἀφορμὰς λαβόντες*]) showed different doctrines, the one in Syria, the other in Alexandria."⁴¹ Jacobi feels that the expression "*occasiones accipientes*" indicates nothing more

³³ *H. E.*, IV, 7—8.

³⁴ Collected by Dr. Hans Windisch, *Das Evangelium des Bas.*, *Zeitschr. f. die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1906, Heft 3.

³⁵ *De Viris Ill.*, XXI; on Amos 3 s.

³⁶ *Die Griech. Christ. Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhund.*, vol. 5, p. 290. Cf. Jerome's commentary *ad locum* and *De Viris Ill.*, XXI, Theodoret, *Fab. Haer.*, 1, 2 depends on Eusebius. The remaining evidence is found in Euseb. *H. E.*, IV, 7, Cl. Alex., *Str.*, VII, 17, 106, 3—4. Justin *Dial. Trypho*, 35, cf. Ap. 1, 26. On the whole subject see Harnack, *Chronologie*, vol. 1, p. 290. Hort, *DCB.*, art. *Basilides*.

³⁷ *Haer.*, 23, 62B; 24, 68D, 69A, cf. Philaster, *Haer.*, 32.

³⁸ *Haer.*, 68C.

³⁹ *Iren.* 1, 28, Euseb; *H. E.*, IV, 7, Theod. *Fab. Haer.*, 1, 2. Clem. Alex. has the most extensive quotations from his works.

⁴⁰ *Zeitschr. f. Kirchengeschichte*, 1, 1877, p. 490 ff. *Das Ursprüngliche Bas. System*.

⁴¹ *DCB.*, art. *Basilides*.

⁴² *Haer.*, 1, 18.

than that Basilides was influenced by the system of Menander, not that he had any personal contact with him in Syria. He cites as a parallel the case of Cerdon, who "taking his rise (*occasionem accipiens*) from the Simonians, when he had come to Rome etc."⁴³ This does not mean that Cerdon had any personal connection with Simon, but simply that their systems were similar. It is to be noticed, however, that Irenaeus does not say Simon, but the Simonians, with whom Cerdon might well have had relations. The implication is that he had been with them in the same geographical locality. So in the other case, although there is not a direct statement that Basilides was in Syria, the language is nevertheless sufficient to warrant the inference made by Epiphanius. The rest of our sources throw little light on the subject.⁴³

The internal evidence is not so conclusive. Professor Bacon suggests that Basilides' use of Semitic names supports the tradition that he came from Antioch.⁴⁴ Caulacau was the name in which Christ ascended and descended.⁴⁵ The origin of the term is revealed by Hippolytus, who says that the Naasenes employed the words caulacau, saulasau and zesar,⁴⁶ which Epiphanius identified with the Hebrew of Isaiah 28 13.⁴⁷ The man who first used the word must have known Hebrew because none of the versions transliterates,⁴⁸ but it is not clear that Basilides was the man. All of our authorities belong to the Irenaeus group, and connect the word with an ascent and descent of Christ which sound perilously like an emanation, in which Basilides did not believe.⁴⁹ Further the word was employed by the Naasenes⁵⁰

⁴³ *Ibid.* 1, 24.

⁴⁴ Ps. Tert. *De Praes. Haer.* 46. Hippolytus, *Ref. Haer.*, VII, 27, 13 and 28, 1. Euseb., *H. E.*, IV, 7, *Acts of Archelaus and Mani*, c. 55. Their statement that Basilides preached in Persia is not to be taken seriously.

⁴⁵ *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate*, p. 52, note 3.

⁴⁶ *Iren. Haer.*, 1, 19, cf. *Theod. Haer. Fab.*, 1, 4.

⁴⁷ *Ref.* V, 8, 4.

⁴⁸ *Haer.*, 26, 78 D ff.

⁴⁹ Field, *Origen. Hexapla, ad locum*.

⁵⁰ *Hipp., Ref.*, VII, 26, 5-7.

⁵¹ *Hipp., Ref.*, V, 8, 4.

and Nicolaitans,⁵¹ though Basilides is probably anterior to both.⁵²

The term Abraxas may be neither Semitic nor Basilidian. All guesses as to its derivation have been fruitless.⁵³ Among the Christian Gnostics it is peculiar to the Basilidians, but occurs in the magical papyri,⁵⁴ and on gems which may be neither Basilidian nor Gnostic.⁵⁵ In any case it is doubtful whether Basilides employed the word at all, if Irenaeus and his group are correct that the numerical value of its letters was applied to a series of emanations.⁵⁶ Hippolytus attributes it to his followers.⁵⁷

There need be no doubt that Basilides called his prophets Barcabbas and Barcoph,⁵⁸ but so did the "Gnostics" of Epiphanius.⁵⁹ Basilides is probably prior to both,⁶⁰ but still he need not have originated the terms.

A weightier consideration is that Basilides used only the gospel of Luke, which according to tradition originated in Antioch.⁶¹

⁵¹ Epiphanius, *Haer.*, 25, 78 D ff. Hippolytus in his earlier work. *Phil. Haer.*, 33.

⁵² On the Nicolaitans see Salmond, *DCB*, art. *Casulacae*. Hilgenfeld points out that they made free use of the Fourth Gospel of which the earlier Gnostic was ignorant. *Ketzergeschichte*, p. 262. Irenaeus connects the Nicolaitans with the sect of Rev. 2a, and the Nicolaus of Acts 6a, but Justin, on whom he depends, leaves no place for such a companion of Simon and Menander. Hippolytus, in his earlier work, derives the Nicolaitans from Nicolaus, to be sure, but introduces the discussion of the sect after Basilides. Preserved in *Ps. Tert.* 46, *Phil.* 33, *Epi.* 25.

⁵³ Hort, *DCB*, art. *Basilides*. He cites Movers, *Phoen.*, 1, p. 229. Barzilai, *Gli Abraxas*.

⁵⁴ Dieterich, *Abraxas*, pp. 17 and 46, *Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, Griffith and Thompson I, 302, II, 154.

⁵⁵ Matter, *Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme*, vol. 1, p. 418. C. W. King, *The Gnostics and Their Remains*, p. 245 f.

⁵⁶ Iren., *Haer.*, 1, 19, 4. *Ps. Tert.*, 46, *Theod.*, *Fab. Haer.*, 1, 4, *Augustine, Haer.*, 4.

⁵⁷ *Ref.*, VII, 26, 6.

⁵⁸ Euseb., *H. E.*, IV, 7, 7. Barcoph is doubtless the Parchor of Isidore. *Cl. Alex., Str.*, VI, 53, 2.

⁵⁹ *Haer.*, 26, 83 C.

⁶⁰ Epiphanius enumerates Basilides earlier. *Haer.* 24 see *DCB*, art. *Basilides*.

⁶¹ See the next section.

We may conclude, chiefly on the basis of the external evidence, that Basilides came from Syria.

§ 3. THE GOSPEL OF BASILIDES.

We must know what gospels the Basilidians employed if we are to determine their view of those events in the life of Christ which they dated. Wherever possible we shall distinguish between the usage of the founder and the sect.

It is quite plain from two passages of Hippolytus that the school used the Fourth Gospel.⁶² But the case is not so clear with regard to the master. The quotations are both introduced by *φησί*, but nothing can be inferred from the singular of the verb, because as Drummond himself admits, Hippolytus uses this form to describe the opinions of the whole sect of the Naasenes.⁶³

In the first case the immediate antecedent is the plural *ἄνδρες οὗτοι*⁶⁴: in the second, two pages of *φησί* follow after *κατ' αὐτούς*.⁶⁵ The inference is that we are dealing with the views of the school. There is further a very positive indication that Basilides himself did not know the Fourth Gospel. Clement of Alexandria⁶⁶ quotes from the twenty third book of the *Exegetica* of Basilides, where the author is discussing the problem of the cross. How could Jesus' suffering be reconciled with his sinlessness?⁶⁷ The problem is solved by the assumption of pre-natal guilt. Such a solution is scarcely thinkable if he accepted John 9 3, "Neither this man sinned nor his parents."⁶⁸

The case is similar for the use of Matthew. Hippolytus again shows that it was employed by the school.⁶⁹ Clement of Alexandria says that when the followers of Basilides are asked about marriage they refer to Matthew 19 11 ff., which is, of course,

⁶² *Ref.*, VII, 22, 4, Jn 1 9, VII, 27, 5, Jn 2 4.

⁶³ *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 297.

⁶⁴ *Ref.*, VII, 22, 3.

⁶⁵ VII, 26, 6.

⁶⁶ *Str.*, IV, 81-88.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 83.

⁶⁸ Cf. Bacon, *Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate*, p. 54.

⁶⁹ *Ref.*, VII, 27, 5, Mt. 2 1-2.

peculiar to that gospel.⁷⁰ The quotation is probably taken from the *Ethica* of Isidore cited in the next section.⁷¹ At any rate the followers and not the founder are responsible for the opinion.

The case is different when it comes to Luke. Origen says that Basilides dared to write a gospel according to himself.⁷² Eusebius learned from the refutation of Agrippa Castor that Basilides wrote twenty four books "on the gospel."⁷³ Clement of Alexandria says that they were called *Exegetica*, and quotes from the twenty third book.⁷⁴ The *Acts of Archelaus and Mani* give a part of the thirteenth.⁷⁵ What was this gospel according to Basilides? Windisch⁷⁶ has demonstrated that it was nothing more nor less than a recension of our Luke.

Take the quotation from the twenty-third book in Clement.⁷⁷ We have already seen that it cannot refer to John 9. Windisch shows that there is only one place in the gospels where the suffering and sinlessness of Jesus are brought into direct contrast, and that is in the rebuke of the penitent to the railing thief, which is peculiar to Luke (23 20). It is worthy of note that the twenty-third book of the commentary would treat of the twenty-third chapter of the gospel. The chronological section given above rests on Luke 3 1 and 4 19. The quotation in the *Acts of Archelaus and Mani* deals with a parable of a poor man and a rich man, which can scarcely be anything other than Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16 19-31). It will be noticed that in this case the thirteenth book corresponds to the sixteenth chapter. Basilides may have removed a good deal of the earlier part of Luke. Windisch goes on to quote a number of passages from Origen referring to those heretics who used Luke. Basilides is sometimes included. We come then to the conclusion that the founder used Luke's gospel alone. As we have already observed, this is an additional reason for believing that he came from Antioch.

⁷⁰ *Str.*, III, 1, 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, III, 2.

⁷² *Origen*, V, p. 86, ed. Lommatzsch, cited by Windisch. See note 76.

⁷³ *H. E.*, IV, 7.

⁷⁴ *Str.*, IV, 61-68.

⁷⁵ *o.* 55.

⁷⁶ *Zeitschrift f. d. N. T. Wiss.*, 1906, Heft 3, *Das Evangelium des Bas.*

⁷⁷ *Str.*, IV, 61-68.

But how much of Luke did he have? Origen's charge that he wrote a gospel according to himself can be understood only if he mutilated Luke as Marcion did. We have found an employment of Luke 3 1; 4 19; 16 19-31; and 23 40, with an indication that there were excisions before the sixteenth chapter. What was removed, and in particular did Basilides, like Marcion,⁷⁸ begin with 3 1 cutting off the birth stories? Hippolytus introduces with his usual *φησί* the quotation of Luke 1 35,⁷⁹ but there is no assurance that this refers to Basilides himself. There are indications, however, in the *Homilies* of Origen that Basilides did not cut off the earlier part of the gospel.⁸⁰ In the sixteenth homily⁸¹ he reminds those heretics who rejected the Old Testament that they had allowed Luke 2 34 to remain in their gospel. Who are these heretics? Again in the twentieth homily⁸² he appeals to Luke 2 49 to show that the boy Jesus was concerned to do the work of the god of the Old Testament. "Let the Valentinians blush as they hear Jesus speaking etc. Let all the heretics blush who accept the gospel of Luke." It is distinctly stated that the Valentinians accepted this passage. We know that the Marcionites did not. Who are the others who did? In a fragment preserved in *Macarius Chrysocephalus* Origen says that the passage on the use of the ten commandments⁸³ was written for the benefit of the Valentinians, Basilidians and Marcionites, who have this in their gospel.⁸⁴ These are evidently for him the three great sects who accepted Luke, for that is what "their gospel" obviously means. May we not conclude, then, that in the above case the Basilidians are the others who had Luke 2 49 in "their gospel," which would of course be "the Gospel according to Basilides"? It will not be unlikely that he was also among those who retained Luke 2 34, and in this case

⁷⁸ Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, IV, 7.

⁷⁹ *Ref.*, VII, 26, 9.

⁸⁰ All of the references to the *Homilies* are taken without verification from the article of Windisch. He does not discuss the question of whether Basilides kept the first three chapters of Luke.

⁸¹ ed. Lomm. V, p. 142.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁸³ Lk. 10 25-28.

⁸⁴ *Lomm.*, V, 240.

Hippolytus may be reporting the founder as well as his followers when he attributes to them the use of Luke 1 35.

§ 4. CHRISTOLOGY.

We come now to the Christology of Basilides and his followers in so far as it affects their view of those events in the life of Jesus to which they assigned dates. There are three; the baptism, the birth and the death. We shall include the conception for reasons which will subsequently appear.

The most outstanding was the baptism. The event must have had great significance for them, because Clement says that the night before the commemoration was spent in readings. If one knew nothing of the adoptionist character of this festival in the Christian church, he could scarcely be in doubt as to its meaning, when he compared the views of Cerinthus, according to whom Jesus was a man like all others, until at the baptism Christ came into him in the form of a dove.⁶⁵ The baptism was his birth as the Son of God. There is evidence to show that the Basilidians took the same view. Clement says, "the dove was seen as a body, which some call the Holy Spirit, but the Basilidians the minister."⁶⁶ Again Clement accuses the Basilidians of making ignorance the source of salvation. "Was this ignorance of good things? If so the *minister* and the preaching and the *baptism* are rendered superfluous to them."⁶⁷ It would seem that the dove is the minister by which Christ enters Jesus at his baptism, so that at this time he is really born as God.

But although this was the opinion of the Basilidians it was not that of their master. If he had been an adoptionist, we should have expected his gospel to begin like Marcion's with Luke 3 1, but we have seen that he included parts of chapter two. Further a descent of Christ would have been something very akin to an emanation, but Basilides said that there were none.⁶⁸ He declared also that "the gospel came to the world and went through every rule and power and lordship and every

⁶⁵ Iren. *Haer.*, 1, 21, 1.

⁶⁶ *Excerpta ex ser. Theodoti*, § 16.

⁶⁷ *Str.*, II, 8, 38, 1.

⁶⁸ Hipp., *Ref.*, VII, 22, 2.

name that is named. It came truly, although nothing came down from above etc., but as naphtha attracts fire from a distance" so that which was below was kindled without an actual descent.⁸⁹ He would not admit a coming down of Christ into Jesus. Rather a light came down, or better shone down and illuminated him.⁹⁰ This is the typical light which appeared at the baptism,⁹¹ but for Basilides it came not then, but rather at the conception, for this is what is meant by "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee" and "the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee."⁹² Basilides has gone a step beyond the Synoptics in his approach to the prologue of the Fourth Gospel. For Mark, Jesus becomes God at his baptism⁹³, when the Spirit enters εἰς αὐτόν. For Matthew and Luke the magi and the angels hail the birth as the point at which God becomes man. Basilides goes back to the conception, if not further, when he says that Jesus was "pre-thought at the time of the generation of the stars."⁹⁴ It remained for the Johannine author to assert that "in the beginning was the word." The Basilidians, however, found the theory of illumination without emanation a little too abstruse and reverted to the earlier adoptionism. We notice that neither the founder nor the sect made anything of the birth. Yet Clement says that they dated it. We shall have occasion to explain that statement later on.

We turn now to the death. Some of the Basilidians were Docetists. According to them Jesus was not crucified, but was changed into the form of Simon, who suffered in his place. It was, therefore, perfectly right to escape martyrdom by denial, because he who confessed the crucified placed his faith in Simon. It is hard to see how those who took such a position could have had any interest in the cross at all. We must conclude that the day of the death was commemorated only by those who agreed with their founder that Jesus really suffered, and indeed as a

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, VII, 25, 5-7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, VII, 26, 7-8.

⁹¹ Huck, *Synopse der Drei Ersten Evangelien*, ad Lk. 3 22.

⁹² Lk. 1 35, Hipp., *Ref.*, VII, 26, 9.

⁹³ Mk. 1 10.

⁹⁴ Hipp., *Ref.*, VII, 27, 5.

punishment for his pre-natal guilt. His death, they held, separated his nature into its constituent elements. The physical part returned to formlessness; the psychical reverted to the Hebdomad, and that which corresponded to the boundary spirit remained with it, so that "Jesus became the first fruits of the sorting out. His passion took place for no other reason than for the separating of that which had been mixed up."⁹⁵

§ 5. CHRONOLOGY.

What chronological system was employed by the Basilidians? Epiphanius says that they called the chief power Abraxas, the sum of whose letters equals 365, corresponding to the number of days in the year and the number of parts in the body. "They are wrong," says Epiphanius. "There are 365 $\frac{1}{4}$."⁹⁶ It would seem that he used the Augustan calendar, whereas they employed the old movable Egyptian year, without intercalation in leap-year. Such might be the case if the word had been constructed because of its numerical value, but the coincidence was probably observed after the word existed, as in the case of *Νεῖλος*⁹⁷ and *Μεῖθρας*,⁹⁸ which give exactly the same sum. Furthermore the equation had already been made in the magical papyri,⁹⁹ from which the Basilidians could have borrowed it without taking over the chronological system on which it may have been based. But in any case allegory does not need to be too precise. Clement of Alexandria finds the "acceptable year" in the 360 *tintinnabuli* of the high priest's garments.¹⁰⁰ One need not conclude with Hozakowski¹⁰¹ that he was referring to the old Egyptian year which had but 360 days if one exclude the 5 *epagomenai*.

But we have more direct evidence that all of the Basilidians employed the Augustan year. Some celebrated the baptism on

⁹⁵ Hipp., *Ref.*, VII, 27, 8—12.

⁹⁶ *Haer.*, I, 24, 7. 73A ff.

⁹⁷ Heliodorus, *Act.*, IX, 22.

⁹⁸ Jerome on *Amos*, 3 v.

⁹⁹ Dieterich, *Abraxas*, p. 182, L 26 *ὅ ἐστι ὁ ἀριθμὸς τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ Ἀβραξᾶ.*

¹⁰⁰ *Str.*, V, 6, 37, 4.

¹⁰¹ *De Chron. Clem. Al.*

Tybi 11th. We shall see that the feast was derived from the Epiphany of Dionysus on January 6th. There is a correspondence in date, however, only if the Alexandrian calendar was used. Tybi 11th would be January 6th on the movable basis only in the years 24 to 21 B. C. On the Augustan basis there would be an exact correspondence except in the intercalary year, when Tybi 11th would be January 7th. We hope to show that another group of Basilidians assigned the conception to the 28th year of Augustus. They would not be likely to accept the era without the calendar, so we may assume that the Augustan system has been employed throughout.

The months of that year are equated below with those of the Julian calendar.¹⁰² Following will be found the Julian equivalents of the Basilidian dates.¹⁰³

Alexandrian Month	Julian Day	Julian Month	Alexandrian Day
1 Thoth	29 August	1 September	4 Thoth
1 Phaophi	28 September	1 October	4 Phaophi
1 Athyr	28 October	1 November	5 Athyr
1 Choiak	27 November	1 December	5 Choiak
1 Tybi	27 December	1 January	6 Tybi
1 Mechir	26 January	1 February	7 Mechir
1 Phamenoth	25 February	1 March	5 Phamenoth
1 Pharmuthi	27 March	1 April	6 Pharmuthi
1 Pachon	26 April	1 May	6 Pachon
1 Payni	26 May	1 June	7 Payni
1 Epiphi	25 June	1 July	7 Epiphi
1 Messori	25 July	1 August	8 Messori
1 Epagomenai	24 August		

Birth in the twenty eighth year of Augustus.

Pachon 25 — May 20, Schram's Tables number 1720832

Pharmuthi 24 — April 19, number 1732124

Pharmuthi 25 — April 20, number 1732125

¹⁰² Ginzel, *Math. u. Techn. Chronologie*, 1, p. 225.

¹⁰³ B. Schram, *Kalendariograph. u. Chronologische Tafeln*.

Baptism in the fifteenth year of Tiberius.

Tybi 15 — January 10, number 1731660

Tybi 11 — January 6, number 1731656

Passion in the sixteenth year of Tiberius.

Phamenoth 25 — March 21, number 1732095

Pharmuthi 25 — April 20, number 1732125

Pharmuthi 19 — April 14, number 1732119

BAPTISM

Some of the Basilidians celebrated the baptism as the birth in an adoptionist sense on Tybi 11th — January 6th, which is obviously the date of Epiphany.¹⁶⁴ The common opinion is that the Basilidians borrowed from a heathen festival of the birth of Dionysus,¹⁶⁵ and that the church in turn borrowed from the Gnostics in the early fourth century when the controversy was not so bitter. The feast must have been introduced later than 311 A. D. in the West,¹⁶⁶ and earlier than 325 A. D. in the East.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ For a full discussion of the feast see: A. Meyer, *Das Weihnachtsfest*, pp. 7—29. Usener, *Das Weihnachtsfest*, in *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, 1—2, pp. 187—213. Lagarde, *Mitteilungen*, 3. 4. *Altes und Neues über das Weihnachtsfest*, p. 241 ff. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, pp. 275 and 293. Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, pp. 257—265. Rohde, *Psyche*, 295 ff. Articles on Epiphany in *Catholic Enc.*, V, p. 504, Cyril Martindale, *Enc. of Bel. and Ethics*, K. Lake, *HRE.*, 3, vol. V, p. 414, Caspari, *Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church*, vol. II, p. 1141 ff.

¹⁶⁵ Epiphanius, *Haer.*, II, 51, 22, ed. Dindorf, p. 482. Usener assumed that Epiphanius was describing a Gnostic rite because of the mention of crosses (*op. c.*, p. 28) but the cross was not peculiar to the Christians, Socrates, *H. E.*, V, 17, Migne, *P. G.*, 67, p. 608, cf. Sozomen 7, 15, *Raf. H. E.*, II, 29. The Dusares, who is born in Petra, is the Arabian equivalent of the Greek Dionysus. A. Meyer, *op. c.*, p. 19, note 27. Cf. Macrobius, *Saturnaliorum*, Lib. I, cap. XVIII, ed. Ludovicus Janus, p. 171, § 8. On Dionysus and Kore see Nilsson, *op. c.*, pp. 279 and 289.

¹⁶⁶ Because it was not observed by the Donatists, who rejected none of the rites of the church. *S. Augustini Episcopi Sermo CCII in Epiphania Domini IV*, Migne, *P. L.*, 38, p. 1033.

¹⁶⁷ The Catholic Gregory of Nazianza makes nothing of the attendance in 323 A. D. of the Arian emperor Valens, at the celebration of the festival by the Catholic Basil of Caesarea. If the feast were not common to the rival camps this would have been a great concession and one of which Gregory could scarcely have failed to take advantage. The festival must,

But such a procedure is very unlikely. The controversy with the Gnostics never ceased to be bitter.¹⁰⁸ Further, the Basilidian practice is too frail a link to connect the temple and the church, whose festivals have much more in common than the baptism and the birth. Among the heathen January 6th was the epiphany or manifestation of the glory of the god Dionysus. On that day he was born as the aeon by Kore, the virgin.¹⁰⁹ The event was celebrated by carrying torches.¹¹⁰ On that day he turned water into wine,¹¹¹ which led to a rite of the storing of waters.¹¹² In the church we have similarly a veritable epiphany or manifestation of the glory of Jesus. To January 6th was assigned most commonly the baptism;¹¹³ sometimes the baptism and the birth,¹¹⁴ sometimes the birth without mention of the baptism because of the adoptionist nature of the feast;¹¹⁵

therefore, antedate the Council of Nicaea (325 A. D.). *S. Gregorii Theologi Oratio XLIII. In Laudem Basilii Magni*, § 52. Migne, P. G., 36, p. 561. See Usener, *op. c.*, p. 192.

¹⁰⁸ Eusebius, *V. C.*, III, 64—65.

¹⁰⁹ Epiphanius, *Haer.*, II, 51, 22, ed. Dindorf, p. 482.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Diodori Siculi*, Lib. III, Cap. LXVI, § 1—2. *Pausanias*, 6, 26, § 1—2, ed. Carolus Godofredus Siebelis. *C. Plinii Secundii N. H.*, II, 106, ed. Gabriel Brotier, cf. XXXI, 13. For further evidence and a discussion of the chronology, see A. Meyer, *op. c.*, pp. 15—16, and the notes.

¹¹² Epiphanius, *Haer.*, II, 51, § 80, Dindorf, *Aristides Rhactor*, Oxford, 1780, II, 578 (p. 341) and 612 (p. 361), cited by K. Lake in the *Enc. of Rel. and Ethics*, cf. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 86.

¹¹³ Jerome on *Ezech.*, 1 a, Migne, P. L., XXV, p. 18.

¹¹⁴ *Joannis Cassiani Collationes*, X, 2, P. L., XLIX, 820. Date 418—427 A. D.

¹¹⁵ So in a papyrus published by G. Bickell in *Mittheilungen aus der Sammlung der Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer*, 1887, Bd. 2, 83—86, cited by Usener, *op. c.*, p. 189, note 1. So also in the *Peregrinatio Silviae*. Geyer, *Itinera Hierosolymitana Corpus Scriptorum Eccl. Lat.*, 39, pp. 37—101. G. Krüger in *H. R. E.*, 3, 16, p. 345 ff. gives 394 A. D. as the latest possible date of the document. The first leaf is missing, but we can tell that Epiphany is the subject because the next feast is its quadragesima. The account of the visit to the cave at Bethlehem is also lost, but the story is resumed with a return to Jerusalem. We may infer that the procession came from Bethlehem, because we are told that a journey was made there every day (p. 77, l. 9) and that the rites preceding Epiphany were similar to those leading up to Easter, which began with a visit to the cave at Bethlehem (p. 93, § 42).

in one case the conception was added.¹¹⁶ Soon the day served to commemorate also the adoration of the shepherds¹¹⁷ and the Magi, and the appearance of the star,¹¹⁸ the miracle at Cana,¹¹⁹ and the feeding of the five thousand.¹²⁰ We find the storing of waters,¹²¹ and a feast of lights.¹²² The church and the temple have in common the turning of water into wine, the storing of waters and the feast of lights, in addition to the Basilidian baptism and birth. Further it is easier to account for the diverse events attached to the Christian Epiphany if the starting point was not merely the commemoration of an adoptionist baptism, but the manifestation of the whole glory of the god. It is much simpler to suppose that the church borrowed directly from the heathen.¹²³ The Basilidian rite was so meagre either because the split antedated the complete development of the orthodox festival, or because only selected elements were retained.

But apart from these probabilities we have direct evidence that Epiphany is earlier than the Gnostic separation. Mgr. Duchesne¹²⁴ points out that according to Sozomen¹²⁵ the Montanists celebrated Easter on April 6th, exactly nine months before January 6th. We shall have occasion to see later on

¹¹⁶ The Armenians commemorate the baptism, birth and conception on the same day. Usener, *op. c.*, p. 206.

¹¹⁷ Ephraem Syrus († 373 A. D. G. Bickell, *Ephr. Syri Carmina Nisibena*, Lips., 1866, p. 9, note 1). Usener, *op. c.*, 195—196, cites the editions of Lamy and Benedictus, neither of which is accessible to me.

¹¹⁸ Ephraem Syrus and Epiphanius, who is dependent upon him. *Haer.*, II, 51. It is worthy of note that Epiphanius put the baptism back sixty days from Jan. 6th to Nov. 8th, probably to avoid an adoptionist interpretation, see §§ 16, 22, 24 and 27.

¹¹⁹ Ephraem Syrus and Epiphanius, *loc. c.*

¹²⁰ *S. Augustini Sermo OXXXVI*, Migne, *P. L.*, 39, p. 2013, in *Epiphania Domini*, VI, *Misale Gothicum in Vigiliis Epiphaniae*. Neale and Forbes, *Gallican Liturgies*, p. 49 ff.

¹²¹ See note ¹¹³.

¹²² *Peregrinatio Silviae, S. Gregorii Theologi Oratio XXXIX in Sancta Lamma*, Migne, *P. G.*, 36, p. 336.

¹²³ For a curious mixture of Christian and heathen elements see Julius Africanus, *ANF.*, VI, p. 128 ff. Migne, *P. G.*, 10, p. 96 ff.

¹²⁴ *Christian Worship*, p. 264.

¹²⁵ Sozomen, VII, 18.

that it was almost universal to assign the conception and the death to the same day. April 6th will have been the day of the conception then as well as of the passion. Duchesne thinks that this was the fixed date and that January 6th was derived from it. He holds in fact that Epiphany arose in just this way. But after all that we have seen about the epiphany of Dionysus it must be obvious that January 6th, on the contrary, is the fixed date and April 6th almost certainly the derived. There is nothing whatever in pagan or in Christian practice to account for the choice of April 6th, unless it be derived from January 6th, and in that case the Montanists must have regarded January 6th as the day of the birth, whether they celebrated it or not. We are led then to the very interesting conclusion that Epiphany was common to two rival heresies, the Gnostics and the Montanists, neither of which is likely to have borrowed from the other. The day must, therefore, go back to the common stream of tradition before the Gnostic split. Epiphany, as a feast of the church, is thus thrown back to the beginning of the second century.

The conclusion is further strengthened by the usage of the Marcionites. The following passage occurs in Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem*:¹²⁶

Anno XV Tiberii Christus Jesus de caelo manare dignatus est spiritus salutaris Marcionis, salutis qui ita voluit quoto quidem anno Antonini maioris de Ponto suo exhalaverit aulacanicularis, non curavi investigare, de quo tamen constat, Antoninianus haereticus est sub Pio impius, a Tiberio autem usque ad Antoninum anni fere centum quindecim et dimidium anni cum dimidio mensis, tantumdem temporis ponunt inter Christum et Marcionem.

The passage is very difficult to construe. *Aura* is of course to be substituted for *aula*, but what of *salutis*? Bill enumerates the various conjectures,¹²⁷ *Marcionis salutem qui ita voluit*,¹²⁸

¹²⁶ 1, 19, *Migne*, 2, p. 267. I am indebted to Professor Bacon for this reference.

¹²⁷ *Texte u. Unters.*, 36, p. 69.

¹²⁸ Ursinus, Harnack.

*Marcionem saltem.*¹²⁰ His own suggestion is "*salutis qui ita voluit (spiritum e caelo exhalatum esse, ipsum) quoto quidem anno, etc.*" The passage might then be translated:

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, Christ Jesus was deemed worthy to descend from heaven, the saving spirit of Marcion. I do not care to investigate in what year of Antoninus, the Elder, the wind of the dog-star blew him from Pontus, who thus wished the Spirit to be blown from heaven. From this, however, it appears that he was a heretic under Antoninus; under Pius, impious. From Tiberius, moreover, to Antoninus there are about 115 years and a half year and a half month. So much time they place between Christ and Marcion.

It is evident that we are dealing here not with the interval between Tiberius and Antoninus on any basis, but with a Marcionite calculation of the time between Christ and Marcion.¹²⁰ Both termini can be determined almost exactly because we have the year in one case and the month in the other. Christ descended in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, i. e. A. D. 29. Marcion was blown from Pontus by the wind of the dog-star, which rose about the end of July. If then we add 115 years to 29 A. D. we get the year 144 A. D. for Marcion. And if from the end of July, 144 A. D., we subtract 115 years, six months and a half, we are thrown back to the first week of January A. D. 29. Marcion, as an Adoptionist, will have reckoned the descent of Christ from the baptism, so this is the event which fell in the first week of January. What can that be but Epiphany on January 6th? The Marcionites as well as the Montanists recognized the day.

The inferences, however, with regard to the practice of the church are not the same in each case, because the Marcionites were not necessarily so independent of the Basilidians as the Montanists. Bill thinks that there was borrowing on the part of the Marcionites.¹²¹ This is quite possible since Basilides appeared in 133 A. D., Marcion in 144 A. D. On the other hand the reverse is equally possible. Clement of Alexandria says that

¹²⁰ Lipsius.

¹²⁰ Harnack, *Chronologie*, I, pp. 297 ff., 306 f., and *Texte u. Untersuch.*, 45, *Marcion*, Beilage 1, p. 19. Bill, *op. cit.*

¹²¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 72.

Marcion was an elder contemporary of Basilides and Valentinus and implies that he was their teacher.¹²³ If either be true, no deductions can be made as to the usage of the church from the independent practice of rival sects.

But the Marcionite calculation in itself leads us to the almost certain conclusion that the date was recognized equally by the church. A comparison is made between the saving work of Christ and Marcion.¹²⁴ What Christ taught the church has perverted, but Marcion has restored. His followers would bring the orthodox back to the teaching of the Master whom both revered by an appeal to a date which both recognized. "You, like us," they would say, "believe that on the 6th of January A. D. 29 Christ was baptized and the Spirit entered into him. We would teach you the true significance of that event." The Marcionites are reckoning the time of the restoration of the gospel from the date to which the church assigned its inception.

The third item of evidence is the most direct. We find an actual employment of January 6th for the birth of Jesus by an orthodox writer before the composition of the first book of the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria¹²⁴ (202—3 A. D.). This may be inferred from the fact that Clement here employs different chronological systems. In 140 7 he says that between the captivity under Vespasian and the death of Commodus on December 31st, 192 A. D. there are 121 years, six months and 24 days, but in 145 5 the sum given is 121 years, ten months and 13 days.¹²⁵ Again in 145 1 the birth of Christ is assigned to the 28th year of Augustus — 3/2 B. C., but 194 years, one

¹²³ *Strom.* VII, 17, 106 f., ed. Stählin, Band 3 p. 75, see Harnack, *Chronologie*, I, p. 298 ff.

¹²⁴ It matters little for our purposes whether the point of departure be Marcion's sailing from Pontus (Bill) or his breach with the Roman church (Harnack).

¹²⁵ Harnack, *Chronologie*, vol. 2, p. 11.

¹²⁶ Stählin, whose text I have given before in translation (p. 81), follows Usener in giving 122 years, but Usener's correction is designed to make Clement agree with history according to the Julian calendar. We must seek rather to justify Clement's arithmetic. 30 years plus 42 years and 3 months from 194 years, 1 month and 13 days, give 121 years, 10 months and 13 days.

month and 13 days before the death of Commodus, which according to the Julian calendar gives November 18th, 4/3 B. C.¹²⁶

These discrepancies can be explained only if Clement employed sources based on different chronological systems. One will have been the Augustan, which differs from the Julian only in that it employs the Egyptian months. The other will have been the era of Nabonassar, which loses a day every four years so that the months go wandering through the year. It is, therefore, called the *annus vagus*. We shall expect to discover that the longer intervals were calculated according to the vague year and the shorter according to the fixed. This assumption may serve also to explain why Origen placed only 42 years between the passion and the destruction of Jerusalem, which he assigned rightly to Passover,¹²⁷ but wrongly to 71 A. D.,¹²⁸ whereas Clement made the interval 42 years and three months.

If the dates are worked out in this dual fashion there are some very surprising results.¹²⁹ The first discrepancy was between the sums given for the interval from the destruction of Jerusalem to the death of Commodus. The shorter is 121 years, six months and 24 days, which on the Julian basis gives June 6—7th, 71 A. D. for the destruction. If then the 42 years and 3 months to the passion be reckoned back on the movable basis, we arrive at March 18—19th, 29 A. D., a date to which the crucifixion was frequently assigned. The longer sum is 121 years, 10 months and 13 days. On the movable basis this will bring the destruction of Jerusalem to March 23rd, the equinox of 72 A. D. The year is wrong, but the day is significant, because Origen reckoned an even number of years between the destruction and the passion, which was commonly assigned to the equinox.

But the most surprising results are obtained for the birth, when we calculate the 194 years, 1 month and 13 days from

¹²⁶ This date is accepted as that of Clement by Ginzler, III, p. 196, note 1, and by A. Meyer, *Das Weihnachtsfest*, p. 6, note 4.

¹²⁷ Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, 2116.

¹²⁸ *Hom. in Jer. XIV*, cf. *Cels.*, IV 22.

¹²⁹ Most of them have been worked out by H. Browne in the *Journal of Classical and Sacred Philology*, Cambridge, 1—2, 1854—5, *S. Clemens Alex. on New Testament Chronology*, p. 327 ff.

the death of Commodus on the movable basis. I give the calculations in full according to Schram's tables, pp. 186—7:

Dec. 31st, 192 A. D. — 1791520 + 31 = 1791551

1791551 — 522 — 29 Mechir 940 Nab.

940 Mechir 29

194 1 month 13

746 Tybi 16 — 1720682

16

1720698

692

6 January 2 B. C.

In other words if we use the movable calendar, Clement agrees with himself as to the year of Christ's birth, and the day turns out to be the very Epiphany which we are considering.

That date once obtained there is still another coincidence. Clement forgets the "acceptable year" of the public ministry, and places thirty years between the birth and the death. This added to the 42 years and 3 months to the destruction of Jerusalem will give for the whole interval 72 years and 3 months. On the movable basis the city will then have been taken on March 19th, 71 A. D. Origen's interval of 42 years to the passion would give March 19, 29 A. D., only one day from the common date. These coincidences simply confirm our conclusion that Clement used a source which calculated according to the *annus vagus*.

The source will scarcely have been heretical. We may, therefore, conclude that an orthodox writer later than the death of Commodus (192 A. D.) and earlier than the first book of the *Stromata* of Clement (202—3 A. D.) assigned the birth of Jesus to January 6th. We thus discover that Epiphany was recognized not only by the Basilidians, Montanists, and Marcionites, but also somewhere in the church at the very height of the heretical controversies. Mutual borrowing is scarcely credible. One is, therefore, forced to the conclusion that Epiphany as a Christian festival antedates the schisms and hence goes back to the beginning of the second century. An interesting conclusion this! Our feast may well have antedated the Fourth Gospel, too,

which increases the probability of Professor Bacon's suggestion that the account of the turning of water into wine at Cana was deliberately written to parallel the miracle of Dionysus on the same day.¹⁴⁰

TYBI 15TH — JANUARY 10TH

The number symbolism of the Gnostics may have had something to do with the choice of the 15th of Tybi. The Basilidians, to be sure, make nothing of the thirty aeons of the Valentinians,¹⁴¹ based on the thirty years of Christ's life, of which according to Clement fifteen fell under Augustus and fifteen under Tiberius.¹⁴² But the Basilidians did make the fifteenth year of Tiberius the starting point for their absolute chronology.¹⁴³ It is possible but not likely that the number played a symbolic part in their system.

A more satisfactory explanation is offered by a passage in *Pistis Sophia*, which Usener cites in this connection.¹⁴⁴ We discover a virtual epiphany of Jesus on Tybi 15th, regarded as the day of the full moon. The passage reads as follows:¹⁴⁵

It came to pass on the 15th of the month Tybi, which is the same day in which the moon is full, on that day then, while the sun was in his course, there went out after him a great power of light, shining exceedingly and beyond measure, for it went out from the light of lights and proceeded from the last mystery which is the same as the twenty fourth mystery, from the inner to the inner which are in the order of the second rank of the first mystery. This light came down from Jesus and enveloped him entirely. He stood removed from his disciples and shone exceedingly, there being no measure to his light.—These things came to pass on the 15th of the moon, the day when it is full in Tybi. It came to pass when

¹⁴⁰ *After Six Days*, Jan. 1915, *Harvard Theol. Rev.*, p. 94.

¹⁴¹ *Iren.* II, 22.

¹⁴² *Strom.* I, 145—6.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Das Weihnachtsfest*, p. 20.

¹⁴⁵ Translated from pages 4 and 5 of the Latin of M. G. Schwartz.

Jesus ascended into heaven after the third hour, all the powers of heaven were disturbed and agitated among themselves, nor did all the powers in heaven and the whole world cease to be disturbed, and they were in commotion among themselves from the third hour of the 15th of the moon of Tybi until the ninth hour of the following day.

Usener inferred from this passage that there was originally a lunar year in Egypt. That is greatly debated and in any case unimportant for our purpose.¹⁴⁶ More to the point is the connection of religious festivals with the moon, which appears from the following papyrus and inscriptions:

From a temple papyrus: from the 26th of the second harvest month to the 25th of the third—from the 20th of the second flood month to the 18th of the first winter month—from the 18th of the second winter month to the 17th of the third—¹⁴⁷

These are intervals of twenty nine days and indicate that some of the temples reckoned according to the moon.

Thutmose III (18th Dynasty): In the year 23, month Pachon, day 21, day of the new-moon feast. In the 24th year of the same king: "I command to erect the foundation stone on the day of the new-moon feast."¹⁴⁸

In the temple of Rameses III at Medinet-Habu: monthly heaven festivals, gifts every month on the 29th moon-day, on the entry of the thirtieth, on the day of the new moon, on the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th and 15th moondays.¹⁴⁹

The Egyptians then celebrated religious festivals connected with the moon, some of which fell on the fifteenth of the month. The Gnostics assigned an epiphany of Jesus to Tybi 15th.

¹⁴⁶ See Ginzel, *Math. u. Techn. Chron.*, I, § 36.

¹⁴⁷ Cited by Ginzel, *op. cit.* I, 168 from Borchardt, *Der zweite Papyrusfund von Kahun (Zeitschr. f. aegypt. Spr., XXXVII, 1899, 93)*.

¹⁴⁸ Cited by Ginzel, p. 167, from Brugsch, *Thesaur. Inscr. Aegypt.*, I, 45—53, II, 267—277, 280, 311, 476, *Aegyptologie* 350, 335.

¹⁴⁹ See the previous note.

DATES OF THE PASSION

All the Basilidian dates for the passion are incorrect. The crucifixion must have fallen on a Friday either the 14th or the 15th of Nisan within the limits of 28 to 33 A. D.¹⁵⁰ Fotheringham has worked out the following table for the Julian equivalents of the 14th of Nisan for the longer period of 26 to 35 A. D.¹⁵¹

A. D.	Date of Nisan 14th
26	Sa., Mar. 23
26	Su., Apr. 21
27	F., Apr. 11
28	Tu., Mar. 30
29	Sa., Mar. 19
29	M., Apr. 18
30	F., Apr. 7
31	Tu., Mar. 27
32	M., Apr. 14
33	F., Apr. 3
34	W., Mar. 24
35	Tu., Apr. 12

From this chart it becomes apparent that Luke's year and day are impossible.¹⁵² The year 29 A. D. is out of the question on any basis. The 15th can have been a Friday only in 27 A. D. if according to Maimonides' rule the moon was visible on March 27th, and in 34 A. D. in case the moon was hidden by

¹⁵⁰ Turner, *D. B.*, p. 410.

¹⁵¹ *The Journal of Theological Studies*, Oct., 1910 (Vol. XII, No. 45). Fotheringham proceeds on the assumption that the official Jewish year was still empirically determined in the time of Christ. The opposite view is defended by Turner, article *Chronology*, *D. B.*, and Ramsay, *Expositor*, Nov. 1899. The case for the empirical chronology is summed up and developed by Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, First Div. II, app. 8, *Jewish and Macedonian months*; Bacon, *Expositor*, July, 1900; and Fotheringham, *Society of Historical Theology*, 1901—1902, *Journal of Theology*, vol. XXIX and in the article cited above. This view seems to me sufficiently established to require no further discussion.

¹⁵² Cf. Bacon, *Lucan versus Johannine Chronology*, *Expositor*, March, 1907, § 5.

clouds on March 10th. The first is very unlikely. The second is possible, but the year is too late.

It is equally plain that all of the Basilidian dates are similarly impossible. Their explanation will throw light not so much upon the chronology of the life of Jesus, as upon the development of Christian festivals.

After what we have found out about Epiphany, it will not be unprofitable in seeking an explanation to look for a heathen background. Perhaps we shall find that the death and resurrection of Jesus have been substituted for those of the vegetation and solar deities. But we must bear in mind that the primary associations of the passion are with the Jewish Passover. It will not do to forget either its time or character. As to the first, it fell notoriously somewhere near the spring equinox, which, by the way, was also the day of the resurrection of many of the chthonic gods. As to character, it was a composite feast made up of a nomadic sacrifice of firstlings and an agricultural offering of first-fruits.¹⁵³ An account of the combined festival is found in Leviticus 23 5 ff:

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, is Jehovah's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto Jehovah: seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread.—And Jehovah spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the *first-fruits* of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And in the day when you wave the sheaf, ye shall offer a *he-lamb* without blemish a year old for a burnt-offering unto Jehovah.

The agricultural symbolism was not lost on Christian authors. For Paul and for Clement of Rome, Christ was "our first-fruits."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ See Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, III § 1. 1 p. 87 ff. Cf. W. R. Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, new ed., pp. 56 and 384.

¹⁵⁴ 1 Cor. 15 20, *Clement of Rome*, § 24.

Clement of Alexandria says that he rose on the third day, which is the first of the weeks of harvest, in which it is commanded that the priest should wave the sheaf.¹⁵⁵

It need scarcely be said that Jewish and heathen influences are not mutually exclusive. We have just noted that Passover fell near the equinox, the date of the resurrection of many of the chthonic gods. We may find similarly that offerings of firstlings or first-fruits were made in other countries at about the same time as in Palestine.

PHAMENOTH 25TH -- MARCH 21ST

Our first date, March 21st, is connected rather with the time than with the character of Passover. According to Fotheringham it is the true equinox for the period of Basilides.¹⁵⁶ This may occasion surprise to those who remember that J. Caesar chose March 25th. The fact is that there was no uniformity in antiquity with regard to the exact day, due partly to the precession of the equinoxes, partly to difficulties of observation. Among the Greeks, Eudoxos chose March 28th, Euktemon March 26th, Kalippus March 24th, Hipparchus March 23rd and 24th.¹⁵⁷ For Anatolius of Laodicea the date was March 19th.¹⁵⁸ The Apostolic Constitutions put it on March 22nd.¹⁵⁹ Theophilus of Alexandria chose March 21st.¹⁶⁰ Epiphanius seems to reckon the night of the 21st as equal to the day of the 22nd: "And having risen according to the Egyptians on the 26th of Phamenoth, which was the equal day of the past night and the equal night after the 25th, and the 22nd of March."¹⁶¹ We discover

¹⁵⁵ In the *Chronicon Paschale*, quoted in *Canonicity*, A. H. Charteris, p. 195.

¹⁵⁶ *The Day of the Crucifixion, Journal of Philology*, XXIX.

¹⁵⁷ Ginzel, *Math. und Techn. Chron.*, II, 423. On the Julian equinox, see p. 265.

¹⁵⁸ Euseb., *H. E.*, VII, 32, 14.

¹⁵⁹ *A. N. F.*, VII, p. 447.

¹⁶⁰ D. Petavii, *De Doctrina Temporum*, Tom. II, p. 501, *Prologus Theophili*. See also *Cyril of Alex.*, Migne, *P. L.*, 54, p. 608: *Et fuit sol cursum totius anni in xii kal. Aprilis*.

¹⁶¹ *Adversus Hæreses*, II, 51, 27, Dindorf p. 493.

then that there was no absolute uniformity. In Alexandria March 21st was the accepted day. We are dealing then with the equinox.

Why did the Basilidians choose this day? Were they influenced by the Egyptian mysteries? That is unlikely. We find several dates given for the death and resurrection of Osiris, but none of them is in the spring. Plutarch assigns the mourning and rejoicing for the dying and rising god to Athyr 17th — November 13th.¹⁶² The Dendera inscription places a similar festival on the 30th of Choiak — December 26th.¹⁶³ Frazer thinks that these feasts are identical, and accounts for the difference in date by the assumption that, with the introduction of the Augustan year, all festivals were moved back a month to put them in their original position relative to the seasons. But apart from the fact that there is no evidence for this change, the Philocalian calendar assigns the resurrection of Osiris by implication to November 1st. Mommsen suggests that this is because the festival was taken over when Athyr 17th of the movable year corresponded to November 1st, i. e. in the reign of Caligula 37, 38 or 39 A. D.¹⁶⁴ In that case the festivals of Athyr and Choiak cannot be identified. But their relation is beside the point for our purposes because neither comes in the spring. There is, therefore, nothing to account for the Basilidian date.

We do, however, find one or two events in the catalogue of the Egyptian mysteries assigned to the equinox. Plutarch says that it was the time of the child-bearing of Isis.¹⁶⁵ This does not serve as a very appropriate background for the death and resurrection. Lydus presents something more promising in his description of the rites of the 19th of March,¹⁶⁶ which we found to be the equinox for Anatolius. On that day, he says, the Nile

¹⁶² *De Iside et Osiride*, 39. Cf. Herodotus II. 129—132. Lactantius, *Divin. Institut.* I, 21. A more extensive description and fuller references will be found in Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 240 ff.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* pp. 259—60.

¹⁶⁴ *CIL*, 1, 2, p. 405.

¹⁶⁵ *De Is. et Os.*, 65.

¹⁶⁶ *De Mensibus*, 4, 40.

was very low, when a demon in human form appeared all bespattered with mud and predicted to the Egyptians the increase of the river. He then plunged into its water. No one believed him, but his words proved true. In honor of the event the Pelusian feast was instituted. This festival of the rising of the life-giving Nile might well have served as a prototype for the commemoration of the rising of the life-giving Savior. Again the Sallier calendar gives Phamenoth 25th as one of the days when Osiris conquered Set.¹⁶⁷ If the day was still observed in the Christian era, it would be an appropriate time to celebrate Christ's victory over Hades.

But there are other possibilities. One is that the Basilidians were influenced by their Christian contemporaries. The Quartodecimans of Cappadocia celebrated the crucifixion on March 25th, the Julian equinox.¹⁶⁸ They were not Quartodeciman, of course, in the sense that they observed the 14th of Nisan. The essential for this party was not adherence to Jewish practice¹⁶⁹, but observance of the exact date of the passion regardless of the day.¹⁷⁰ It was but natural that those who used a solar calendar should determine that date according to the sun. Another characteristic of their practice was that the conquest over hell was regarded as the true resurrection rather than the appearance to the disciples.¹⁷¹ The period of fasting was, therefore, shortened,¹⁷² and the celebration of the death and resurrection tended to coincide.

There are several witnesses to a similar custom in Gaul. The

¹⁶⁷ Ed. Meyer, *Set-Typhon*.

¹⁶⁸ Epiphanius, *Haer.* II, 50, 1. Dindorf, p. 447.

¹⁶⁹ As Schürer supposed, *Zts. f. d. hist. Theol.*, 1870, p. 251, art. *Passa-streit*. He is corrected by Bacon, *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate*, p. 413.

¹⁷⁰ Euseb., *H. E.* V, 24 and 28.

¹⁷¹ Apollinaris of Hierapolis. *Chronicon Paschale*, cited in *Canonicity*, A. H. Charteris, p. 194. Cf. Bacon, *The Resurrection in Primitive Tradition and Observance*, *Am. Journal of Theol.* p. 393.

¹⁷² Drummond, *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 471, discusses the letter of Basilides to his brother Dionysius of Alex. Routh, *Relig. Sac.* III, p. 223. See Preuschen, art. *Easter Controversy*, in *New Schaff-Hersog Enc.*, vol. IV, 1910.

first is a document published by Lagarde.¹⁷³ There are two texts. The shorter was published by Bronkhurst in 1537, the longer by Baluze in 1683. I give below the commencement of each in translation.

Baluzé:

When all the apostles had gone from this life, fasts were differently observed throughout the world, for all the Gauls kept the Pascha on one day, March 25th, saying: "Why should we keep the Pascha with the Jews according to the moon? But as the birth of the Lord on whatever day it falls is kept on December 25th, so we ought to keep the Pascha on March 25th, when Christ is said to have risen." The Orientals indeed, as the history of Eusebius relates, keep the Pascha on the fourteenth day of the moon on whatever day of March it might fall. But some in Italy fasted full forty days, some thirty; others said that seven days in which the world was made would do; others because the Lord fasted forty days kept forty hours. Since there was such variety of observance, the clergy were astonished that where there was a unity of faith there should be such diversity of practice in fasting. So Papa Victor, bishop of Rome, ordered that authority should be given to Theophilus of Caesarea, bishop of the province of Palestine, because Jerusalem was not then the metropolis, that the paschal rule might come from that region in which Christ lived.

The account goes on to tell how Theophilus called a council which decided, on the basis of analogies drawn from the creation story, that Easter must fall on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. The limits were to be March 22nd and April 21st.

Bronkhurst:

After the resurrection or ascension of the Lord and Savior the apostles made no regulation about the observance of the Pascha because they were dispersed throughout the world taken up with preaching, but they kept the Pascha on the

¹⁷³ *Mitteilungen*, 8. 4. p. 274ff.

fourteenth of the moon in March no matter what the day. After the apostles had passed from this life there was a diversity of practice in fasting throughout the various provinces, for the Gauls always kept the Pascha on March 25th, no matter what the day of the week when Christ was said to have risen. In Italy, indeed, some fasted twenty days, others seven. The orientals following the apostolic practice, as we saw above, kept the fourteenth of the moon in March. Since, then, there was this difference of practice throughout the various provinces, the clergy were astonished that, where there was unity of faith, there should be diversity in the matter of fasts. So Papa Victor, bishop of Rome, gave authority to Theophilus of Caesarea, president of Palestine, that as the Pascha was rightly celebrated by all the Catholic churches the rule might be drawn up where the Lord and Savior of the world walked in the flesh.¹⁷⁴

The account continues much as the other.

It will be noticed at once that the longer text mentions the history of Eusebius of Caesarea, and must, therefore, be as late as the middle of the fourth century. This reference is not in the shorter text, but it is probably as late, because Papa is used as a special title for Victor in distinction to Theophilus, who is merely episcopus. The question then arises as to whether the author of this document gives a true account of what happened at Caesarea. According to the longer text the Gauls argued that the Pascha ought to be celebrated on March 25th as the birth was observed on December 25th. Certainly Christmas

¹⁷⁴ There is a very puzzling case of literary relations here on which I am not at all clear. According to Lagarde the shorter text of Bronkhurst came out in 1537, the longer of Baluze in 1683. The *Historia Ecclesiae* of the Magdeburg Centuriators, which came out in 1624, has used the longer text. Here is the passage. *Centuriar.*, II Cap. VI, p. 89E. Cum Galli diem unum anniversarium, qui fuit 8 Calend. April. observarent, in quo Pascha celebrarent; dicentes (ut Theophilus indicat): Quid nobis necesse est ad lunae computum cum Judaeis Pascha facere? Quia, sicut Domini natalem, quocunque die 8 calend. Januarii venerit; ita et 8 calend. April. quando resurrectio accidit, Christi debemus Pascha celebrare?

had not been introduced into Gaul nor anywhere else by the time of Victor. If this were the correct reading one would be dubious about the rest of it and inclined to reject the notice that March 25th was the day of the passion. But fortunately there is nothing about December 25th in the shorter text. *Brevior lectio praeferenda*. This objection disappears.

The remainder of the account agrees in the main with Eusebius and the conclusion of the letter of Theophilus which he quotes. To be sure our text says that the Gauls observed March 25th whatever the day of the week. Eusebius represents Irenaeus as writing to Victor in the name of Gaul to say that the resurrection must be observed only on the Lord's day. Irenaeus disapproves very strongly, however, of Victor's action in excommunicating the churches of Asia for Quartodecimanism. This mediating role is more easily explicable if Irenaeus were subject to some pressure in his own community. Further our text says that Victor called a council in Caesarea. Eusebius does not say so, but there is nothing improbable in the account. He who attempted to drive out whole churches had both the will and the power. Our text has nothing about Narcissus of Jerusalem, Cassius of Tyre, Clarus of Ptolemais, but they may have been subordinate figures. The statement of the letter of Theophilus that Palestine followed Alexandria is not inconsistent with the solution given in our manuscript. Easter was to fall on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. The termini were March 22nd and April 21st. This is in complete accord with what we know of the earliest Alexandrian tables. Dionysius of Alexandria (died 264 A. D.) said that Easter must come after the vernal equinox.¹⁷⁵ Anatolius, first of Alexandria, then of Laodicea (270), chose the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. The termini were probably March 20th and April 4th.¹⁷⁶ Theophilus of Alexandria (wrote 385) had the same rule. His earliest limit was March 21st.¹⁷⁷ The ultimate Alexandrian termini were March

¹⁷⁵ Eus. *H. E.* VII, 20.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, VII, 82.

¹⁷⁷ Prologus in Petavius, *De Doctrina Temporum*, II, 501; see Ginzel *op. cit.* III, 232. ff.

21st and April 25th.¹⁷⁸ There is thus nothing in our text which is inconsistent with the rest of our information. We may well believe that it rests upon some reliable source. Perhaps we have here preserved a part of the letter of Theophilus of which Eusebius unfortunately gives only the conclusion.

For our purpose the point of interest is that according to this manuscript the Gauls were Quartodecimans in the same sense as the Cappadocians. 1) They observed the day of the month no matter what the day of the week, (*quacunq̄ue die*). 2) The passion and the resurrection were commemorated on the same day (*quando Christi resurrectio tradebatur, semper Pascha celebrabant*).

But this is not our only evidence. Duchesne cites the following passage from S. Martinus Dumiensis:¹⁷⁹

Until recently many of the Gallican bishops have observed the custom of celebrating the day of the Pascha on March 25th, when, according to the tradition, the resurrection took place.

Note that the Pascha and resurrection are assigned to the same day. Duchesne thought that this must be an error.

We are indebted to Krusch for further examples.¹⁸⁰ The following passage is taken from the spurious *Tractatus S. Adthanasii episcopi Alex. de ratione pasche*, § 1. The locality is mentioned only in the Cölnner manuscript:

I know that many are accustomed to inquire with scrupulous accuracy why we keep the Pascha like the Jews at different times according to the moon. It would seem better to them, that, if we commemorate the Lord's passion, we should observe one day, namely the 25th of March, which many of the Gallican bishops are said to have observed until recently.

He gives another passage from the spurious *Prologus S. Cyrilli Alex. Episc. de ratione paschae*, c. 1, which is a witness to the practice, although nothing is said of the place.¹⁸¹ Ginzel quotes a statement of Bede that such was the practice in Gaul.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Ginzel, *op. cit.* III, 222.

¹⁷⁹ *Christian Worship*, 263, S. Martinus Dumiensis, Migne, P. L., 72, 50. Cf. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, 199.

¹⁸⁰ *Der 84 jährige Ostercyclus*, p. 90, notes 4 and 6.

¹⁸¹ I have not been able to check this citation.

¹⁸² *Op. cit.* III, 219. Bede, *de temp. rat.* c. 47, Migne, P. L. 90, 495.

This likelihood is further increased by the fact that the resurrection of Attis was officially celebrated at Rome on the 25th of March.¹⁶³ What more natural than that the day should be taken over by the Christians?

We may conclude, then, in spite of the pseudonymity of some of the sources, that the Quartodecimans of Cappadocia and Gaul celebrated the passion and the resurrection on March 25th, the vernal equinox, regardless of the day of the week.¹⁶⁴

The Basilidians may perhaps have been affected by their influence. We have had reason already to think that Basilides came from Syria. He may there have learned the Cappadocian practice. If so he will doubtless have observed not only the death, but also the resurrection on March 21st. I would suggest that it was to avoid such an implication that Epiphanius put the passion back to March 20th,¹⁶⁵ and the resurrection forward to the 22nd.

But there is still another possibility. The Basilidians may have done exactly the same thing as the Cappadocians and the Gauls and that quite independently. It was notorious that Passover came at about the time of the equinox, and it was extremely common to compare the life of Christ to the course of the sun or of the seasons. Clement of Rome said that the resurrection came at that point in the year when the day triumphs over night and the flowers blossom in newness of life.¹⁶⁶ Theophilus of Antioch compares the death and resurrection to the dying and rising of seasons and days, of seeds and fruits, and to the waning and waxing of the moon.¹⁶⁷ For Pseudo-Cyprian Jesus is the "sun of righteousness with healing in his wings."¹⁶⁸ It became very common, of course, to make such

¹⁶³ Mommsen, *ILL*, I, 2, p. 388 and 390. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 199, ed. 1906. Bacon, *The Resurrection in Primitive Tradition*, 266.

¹⁶⁴ The reader understands, of course, that although the Quartodecimans were the only ones who celebrated the passion at the equinox, they were not the only ones who thought it to have taken place historically at that time. Turner gives a list of those who took this view, *DB*, p. 415. Cf. Dobschütz, *T. u. U. XI*, I, p. 136 ff.

¹⁶⁵ *Adv. Haereses*, LI, 27 and 1.

¹⁶⁶ 24.

¹⁶⁷ *ANF*, II, p. 93.

¹⁶⁸ Hartal, p. 266.

comparisons when Christmas had been placed on the birthday of the *sol invictus*.¹⁸⁹ The Basilidians may have chosen March 21st, the spring equinox, as the date of the passion, quite independently of their heathen or Christian contemporaries.

PHARMUTHI 25TH — APRIL 20TH

The first Basilidian day for the passion, March 21st, was connected with the date of Passover. The second was probably suggested by its character as a feast of first-fruits.

There are two items of information which make it likely that the Egyptians had a festival of this sort on Pharmuthi 25th. The first is that in the reign of Sheshonk I (966—933 B. C.)¹⁹⁰ there was a feast to Sutekh on this day.¹⁹¹ One can infer nothing as to the nature of the feast from the fact that Pharmuthi 25th was December 7th in 947 B. C.,¹⁹² the middle of the reign of Sheshonk, because the calendar was rotary and the equation would hold only for that year.

More may be inferred from the character of Sutekh. The name is a variant of Set, known in Greek as Typhon. The god belongs to the earliest cycle, as the brother sometimes of Osiris, sometimes of Horus. Experts differ as to whether Sutekh was originally good or bad.¹⁹³ It is abundantly clear that he was adopted by the Hyksos.¹⁹⁴ Probably on this account he came to be regarded as the god of the land beyond Egypt, including the sea.¹⁹⁵ The Ramesids looked upon him as the god of the Semites and identified him with Baal.¹⁹⁶ Like some of the Canaanitish

¹⁸⁹ For passages see A. Meyer, *Das Weihnachtsfest*, notes 54—55.

¹⁹⁰ Brugsch, *Gesch. Aeg.*, p. 769.

¹⁹¹ Breasted, *Ancient Records Egypt*, IV, § 727.

¹⁹² Schram, *Kal. u. Chron. Tafeln*, p. 183.

¹⁹³ He is regarded as originally good by Ebers, *Aegypten u. d. Bücher Moses*, I, p. 237 ff. Diestal, *Set-Typhon, Asahel u. Satan, Zts. f. d. hist. Theologie*, 80, 1860, p. 159 ff. Contra, Ed. Meyer, *Set-Typhon*.

¹⁹⁴ Sallier *pap.*, No. 1 in *Records of the Past*, vol. VIII, *Soc. of Bib. Archaeology*; also in Goodwin, *Cambridge Essays*, 1858, p. 243. Brugsch, *Gesch. Aeg.*, p. 228. Ebers, *op. c. 1*, p. 204 ff.

¹⁹⁵ Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 82 and 88.

¹⁹⁶ Breasted, *op. cit.* III, 386, cf. 326, 389, 374 and IV, 104.

Baals he received offerings from the field and the flock.¹⁹⁷ One is tempted to suggest that when the calendar permitted the festival of Pharmuthi 25th was agricultural in character like the Hebrew Mazzoth.

But Sheshonk reigned a thousand years before the period with which we are dealing. In the mean time either the character of Sutekh changed or the attitude toward him. When Egypt was victorious he was honored as the god of the outer land, who brought it into subjection, but when the enemy won, he was blamed, and his name erased from the monuments. He became the representative of all that is destructive.¹⁹⁸ Yet his worship survived. He appears as an object of prayer in the magical papyri, which contain the Basilidian word *abraxas*.¹⁹⁹ Plutarch regarded him as the father of the Jews.²⁰⁰ But whether the feast on Pharmuthi 25th survived we do not know.

If it did, the similarity of Set in this period to Apollo suggests that the festival may have been one of first fruits. We shall have reason to see in a moment that such offerings were brought to the Greek god. A comparison is not without point because of the close connection between Greece and Egypt. Plutarch tells us that many festivals were celebrated in the two countries on the same day and cites as an example the Thesmophoria.²⁰¹ Herodotus says that this feast was introduced into the Peloponnesus through Egypt.²⁰² What was true of one country was likely to be true of the other.

Horus, to be sure, rather than his brother Set, was usually identified with Apollo.²⁰³ But there were nevertheless many points of correspondence between the latter. Both were in part

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* III, 391, on Baal; see Paton, *Enc. Rel. and Ethics*.

¹⁹⁸ Plutarch, *De Is. et Os.*, 33, 39, 40.

¹⁹⁹ *Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, ed F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, col. XXIII, p. 145, Abraxas, col. XXIII, 24, verso col. XIII, 8. *Zwei griechische Zauberpapyri des Berliner Museums*, von Herrn Parthey, p. 109 ff. *Abh. d. Kön. Ak. d. Wiss. zu Berlin*, 1865, Pap. 1, 252, Abraxas, 1, 302, II, 154.

²⁰⁰ *De Is. et Osid.* 81 and 83.

²⁰¹ Plutarch, *De Is. et Os.*, 69.

²⁰² *Her.*, 2, 171.

²⁰³ Ebers, *Aeg. u. d. Bücher Moses*, I, p. 248.

at least beneficent solar deities.²⁰⁴ To both the ass was sacred.²⁰⁵ Typhon was lord of the sea, and Apollo carried the trident.²⁰⁶ To Typhon men were burned in the dog days,²⁰⁷ and to Apollo on the first day of the Athenian feast of Thargelion.²⁰⁸ In view of these coincidences the rites of Apollo may illustrate those of Set-Typhon.

But we are dealing too much with conjecture. The second item of information is more precise. Theon of Alexandria says in his commentary on the *Phaenomenia* of Aratus:²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ The devotee in the *London Leiden Papyrus* (col. xxiii) addresses Typhon as the sun, and resents the shedding of his blood. Plutarch rejected the current opinion that Typhon was a sun-god (*De Is. et Os.* 51—52) but betrayed a solar connection when he said that the ass, sacred to Typhon, was not to be fed while sacrificing to the sun (*Ibid.* 30).

²⁰⁵ In the case of Typhon, Plutarch, *De Is. et Os.* 30—31, *London and Leiden Papyrus*, col. xxiii. In the case of Apollo, Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, x, 31. Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses*, 20, cf. Movers, *Die Phönizier*, I, 366.

²⁰⁶ Dio Chrys. *Oratio*, xxxiii. *Tarsica Prior*, § 1, cf. xi, 76, xxxvii, 32.

²⁰⁷ Plutarch, *De Is. et Os.*, 73, cf. Ebers, *op. cit.* I, 246.

²⁰⁸ We learn from Suidas, II, 2, p. 1423 that on the first day of the Thargelion in Athens the Pharmakos was taken through the city that he might cleanse it by his death. Who the Pharmakos was we learn from a passage in Hipponax, who tells us that at Kolophon, whenever a famine or pestilence occurred, one of the worst criminals was chosen as a Pharmakos of the afflicted city for a sacrifice of cleansing. He was beaten seven times with green fig branches on the genital organ and then burned. *Fragment of Hipponax*, Bergk, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*, vol. II, p. 752 ff. fr. 4—9; see Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, p. 106, cf. A. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, 468 ff. Schmidt, *Griechische Chronologie*, 296 ff. A. Mommsen, *Heortologie*, 414 ff.

²⁰⁹ Theon of Alexandria on the *Phaenomenia* of Aratos. Ed. Buhle, p. 69, line 264 ff. This paragraph appears only in the Morelius edition of 1559. It is not found in the *Cod. Mosquensis*. 'ΟΝτας αὐτὰς φησὶ καὶ τὸ ἐξ ἀμείρων συγασθῆναι ἀστέρον ἀράσασθαι δὲ ἡμῶν καὶ ἐτίθεσθαι, καὶ τὸ καὶ τὴν ἀνατολὴν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ὄψιν πρὸς ἀναγκαίων εἶναι τοῖς ἀστέροις ἐπιπελλομένῳ γὰρ τοῦ ἀμείρου ἀρχεῖσθαι χρεὶ δαμῆτων δὲ τοῦ ἀρότου· ἦμα οὖν τὸν ἕρδρον, ἦγουν τὴν ἀνατολὴν φησὶ· ἐπὶ τὸν ἕρδρον γὰρ ἀνατέλλουσι σὺν ἡλίῳ, ὅτι ἐν τῷ Ταύρω. ἀπὸ ε' καὶ εἰσάδοι τοῦ φαρμουδι μῆρος, ὅς ἐστι παρὰ Ῥωμαίους Ἀπρῆλλιος, ὅτι καὶ τοῦ θερίου ὁ καιρὸς παρ' Ἀθηναίων, ἐστέριαι δὲ ἀπὸ ἐστέρας ἀνατέλλουσι, ἦλθεν ἔστι ἐν Σαρπητί, Ἄδῳρ μῆρι. ὅς ἐστι παρὰ Ῥωμαίους Νοβέμβριος. ὅτι ἐστὶ καιρὸς τοῦ ἀστέρου. τότε γὰρ ἐστέριαι εἰσι, ὅτι πρὸς ἐστέρας ἀνατέλλουσι.

When the (Pleiades) rise it is necessary to begin the harvest; when they set the sowing. They are said to rise very early in the morning. Before dawn they come up with the sun, when he is in Taurus, from the 25th of the month of Pharmuthi (= April 20th) which is April among the Romans, when also it is time to harvest among the Egyptians.

We are dealing with the fixed Alexandrian calendar because Pharmuthi is distinctly identified with April. There need be no doubt that we have to do with April 20th. This was the time in Egypt when the Pleiades rose and the harvest began. In itself such a day would be appropriate as a substitute for Passover, but particularly so if it was already the date of an agricultural festival. In this case we may appeal with greater confidence to Greek and Roman parallels. In Greece feasts of first-fruits were connected with the rising of the Pleiades; in Rome agricultural festivals centered about April 20th.

We turn now to these feasts. The Athenian Thargelion has been already mentioned. On the first day the Pharmakos was sacrificed. On the second came a procession carrying first-fruits of every character, figs, corn, newly baked bread and so on. They were called *θαργήλια*; the feast and the month in which it fell *θαργήλιών*.²¹⁰ The first fruits were offered on the 7th day of the month.²¹¹ This would not be constant on the Julian calendar because of the shifting of the Attic new year, not to speak of the frequent changes in the method of intercalation. The limits of the octaëteris of Solon were April 22nd and June 22nd. The first would be possible only in a common year, the second in an intercalary. With the improved octaëteris according to Böckh's scheme it can have fallen as early as April 24th in the year Olym. 91, 3, the second of the cycle. Schmidt's reconstruction gives the same result in Olym. 119, 3.²¹² The Metonic cycle gives May 2nd as the earliest limit in the

²¹⁰ The leading references are cited in Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen*, p. 480. Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte*, 2, p. 228. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, p. 110.

²¹¹ The evidence for the date is given by A. Mommsen, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

²¹² Ginzel, *Math. u. Techn. Chron.*, II, p. 434.

second year.²¹³ The Calippic cycle gives April 13th in 127, 1.²¹⁴ Hence the feast would fall as early as the middle of April or as late as the middle of June. The axis of oscillation would be the rising of the Pleiades, which fell in Boeotia on May 19th in the year 800 B. C., and in Athens in the time of Perikles on May 15/16.²¹⁵ This is a month later than in Egypt, but in Greece too the rising of the Pleiades was the signal for the beginning of harvest,²¹⁶ which came just a month later.²¹⁷

At Delos, too, we find a feast of first-fruits to Apollo at the time of the rising of the Pleiades. Our knowledge with regard to it, however, has to be pieced together from several sources. Herodotus gives us an account of the Hyperboreans, a people to the north of Asia minor, who sent a yearly procession which gathered gifts of first-fruits from city to city to present to Delos.²¹⁸ Pausanias gives a similar account with the addition that the gifts were in honor of Apollo and that Athens transmitted the collected offerings to their destination.²¹⁹ Diodorus Siculus tells of the Hyperboreans without mentioning the procession. He states merely that they were worshippers of Apollo and that they were closely related to the Athenians and Delians. There is, however, the significant notice that the epiphany of Apollo began with the spring equinox and ended with the rising of the Pleiades. One would expect that the beginning and the end would be marked by feasts. The procession of first-fruits would naturally have formed the conclusion since the rising of the Pleiades was a sign for the commencement of harvest.²²⁰ If all of these notices be combined we have a yearly procession at the

²¹³ According to Ideler and Schmidt. Tables given in Ginzel, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

²¹⁴ Ideler's table given by Ginzel, *op. cit.*, p. 416. Unger gets the same result in 112. 4. Mommsen's dates are later, cf. Schmidt, *Gr. Chron.*, p. 298.

²¹⁵ Schmidt, *ibid.*, p. 297.

²¹⁶ Hesiod, *Op.* 883. *Scholion on Aratus*, line 137.

²¹⁷ Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.* 8, 2, 7.

²¹⁸ *Her.* 4, 82 and 83.

²¹⁹ *Paus. Att.* 1, 81, 2, cf. *Callimachus, Eis Delon*, 4, 268.

²²⁰ *Diodorus Siculus*, 2, 47.

rising of the Pleiades carrying first-fruits from the Hyperboreans through Asia Minor and Athens to Delos in honor of Apollo.

But the matter is complicated by other information which we have of processions from Athens to Delos in honor of this god. Plato, in the beginning of the *Phaedo*, tells of one. The ship of Theseus was used for the purpose. From the crowning of the prow by the priest to the return of the party no execution could take place in the city. This may not be the same festival which we have seen above. There is no mention of first-fruits. The points of similarity are that the processions were both yearly; both went from Athens to Delos; both were in honor of Apollo. The primary difficulty is occasioned by the date. A scholion on Sophocles gives the indefinite notice that the sailing of the ship was dependent upon certain signs.²²¹ Plutarch adds the precise statement that Theseus offered the sacred bow to Apollo on the 6th of Munychion and that the yearly procession took place on that day.²²² Can this be reconciled with the rising of the Pleiades?

According to A. Mommsen's reckoning it can. He figures that Munychion 6th would have been May 19th in Olym. 88, 3 and May 20th in Olym. 90, 3, both initial years of the octaëteris.²²³ As we have seen this would be the rising of the Pleiades, and hence would agree with the date of the procession of the Hyperboreans. The choice of a stellar date rather than a day of the Attic calendar would further harmonize with the statement of the scholion of Sophocles that the sailing was dependent upon certain signs and hence not fixed by a day of the month.²²⁴

The matter might have rested here if evidence had not been

²²¹ *Schol. Soph.*, O. C. 1047, discussed by A. Mommsen, *Heortologie*, p. 402.

²²² Plutarch, *Theseus*, 18 and 23.

²²³ For other reconstructions of the octaëteris and a discussion of the whole subject see Ginzel, II, § 214. The tables are on p. 434.

²²⁴ Schmidt perceived that a feast of first-fruits could not have fallen permanently on Munychion 6, because this would have been too early in the Metonic and Calippic cycles. He assumed further that the ship did not return until the Thargelion. In that case it cannot have started as early as Munychion 6 because no execution could take place while it was gone, but Phocion was put to death on Munychion 19 in Oly. 115, 2.

discovered which seemed to require a date for the Delia earlier in the year. Mommsen cites an inscription which mentions the Delia and the Apollonia.²²⁵ The Delia comes first. Nilsson assumed that these were equivalent expressions. Apollonia was the name of the feast in Delos, Delia in Athens.²²⁶ He assigned them to the month of Hieros because of inscriptions which mention a feast of Apollo at that time.²²⁷ With this would accord the notice of Dionysius Periegetes of a feast to Apollo in the early spring when the nightingales were breeding.²²⁸ Against this it may be said that there were several feasts of Apollo during the year. The calendar of Homolle gives one in Gamelion and one in Posideon.²²⁹ There is nothing to show that the feast in Hieros is not still another and quite different from the Delia and Apollonia. August Mommsen took this position and dated the Apollonia by the statement of Diodorus Siculus that the epiphany of the god commenced among the Hyperboreans at the spring equinox. This would also explain the notice of Dionysius Periegetes of a feast in the early spring. But since the Delia was mentioned before the Apollonia he placed it on the preceding day.²³⁰ Naturally in that case it could not have been a feast of first-fruits and the procession in the ship of Theseus must be separated from the pilgrimage of the Hyperboreans. The date, Munychion 6, for the former also remains unexplained.²³¹

The one fact that has been overlooked is the statement of Diodorus Siculus that the celebrations of the Hyperboreans lasted until the rising of the Pleiades. I would suggest that the festival in Hieros is to be distinguished from the Delia and

I can find no evidence that the ship came back for the Thargelion, but Schmidt is right that a feast of first-fruits must have fallen late enough for the grain to be ripe. The date of the rising of the Pleiades would meet his objections. *Griech. Chron.* p. 292.

²²⁵ *Bull. Corres. Hell.* vol. 3 (1879) p. 879.

²²⁶ Nilsson, *Gr. Feste*, p. 146.

²²⁷ *ibid.* p. 145, note 1.

²²⁸ *Dion. Perieg.* 526 ff.

²²⁹ *Bull. Corres. Hell.* vol. 14 (1890) p. 492.

²³⁰ *Jahresbericht der Alterth. Wiss.* 48—49, 1886—1887, p. 338.

²³¹ A. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen*, p. 451, note 4.

Apollonia. They, too, are to be separated, but the Apollonia is to come first. The order of the inscription is one of importance rather than of chronology. The date of the Apollonia will have been the spring equinox. The Delia and the procession of the Hyperboreans are to be identified and the date will have been the rising of the Pleiades. This avoids the needless complication of their separation and explains the date, Munychion 6, for the initial years of the octaëteris.

But even if these conclusions be incorrect every one will admit that the Hyperboreans made a presentation of first-fruits which, whatever its relation to the Delia, must have come late enough for the grain to be ripe. The notice of Diodorus Siculus that the Hyperboreans finished their celebrations with the rising of the Pleiades makes it almost equally certain that this was the date of the great procession. Hence at Delos as at Athens we have a feast of first-fruits to Apollo, when the Pleiades rose and the harvest began.

The Roman parallels are also instructive. At the Porca Praecideana a pig was immolated and first-fruits offered to Ceres. The festival was movable in character, occurring whenever the grain was ripe. The practice bears upon our subject only in so far as it is another illustration of the universal dissemination of feasts of first-fruits.²³³

More may be inferred from the fact that April 20th fell in the midst of a series of agricultural festivals. On April 15th came the Fordacalia when a pregnant cow was immolated to Ceres.²³⁴ The Cerealia followed on the 19th.²³⁴ On the 21st the shepherds observed the Parilia in honor of their god, Pales, to whom they offered milk and millet cakes.²³⁵ These, indeed, are not first-fruits but they are offerings from the flock and the field like those of the Hebrew Mazzoth.

We may conclude, then, that on Pharmuthi 25th — April 20th,

²³³ *Aul. Gel.*, 4, 6. *Cato, de Agri Cult.*, 134.

²³⁴ Varro, *de Lingua Latina*, 8, 15. Ovid, *Fasti*, IV, 829 ff. Lydus, *de Mensibus*, IV, 49.

²³⁵ See Wissowa, *Handb. d. Klass. Altertumswissenschaft*, V, 4. *Religion u. Kultus der Römer*, p. 244 ff. Compare Wissowa on the whole subject.

²³⁶ Ovid, *Fasti*, IV, 743 and 776.

when the Pleiades rose and the harvest began, the Egyptians celebrated a feast of first-fruits, which the Basilidians chose as an appropriate substitute for Passover, when he who had been slain as our Passover²³⁶ rose as the "first-fruits of the sorting out of that which had been mixed up."²³⁷

PHARMUTHI 19TH — APRIL 14TH

It will be observed at once that April 14th is exactly six days earlier than April 20th. I would suggest that we are dealing not with another date for the crucifixion, but rather with the commencement of the six day period of ritual preparation for Easter. The practice has its roots in the Old Testament. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth."²³⁸ For six days the cloud covered Sinai.²³⁹ Every Friday was a *ἡμερομηνία*, the end of the six day period of preparation for the Sabbath.²⁴⁰ The practice passed into the church. In the papyrus published by Bickell we find a preparation on Tybi 5th for Epiphany on Tybi 11th.²⁴¹ This custom may well have affected the gospel narrative. There are six days leading up to an epiphany of Jesus at Cana (Jn. 2 1), and six from the confession of Peter to the epiphany of the Transfiguration (Mk. 9 2). Similar notices appear in the passion history. Mark places the crucifixion six days after the triumphal entry, John six days from the anointing in Bethany (12 1). These intervals are probably due to the ritual observances of the church, because we find several witnesses to a six day fast in preparation for Easter. Such was the practice of Dionysius of Alexandria,²⁴² the Apostolic Constitutions,²⁴³ and Athanasius in his first festal letter, where he bases the practice

²³⁶ I Cor. 5 7.

²³⁷ Hippolytus, *Ref.*, VII, 27, 8—12; cf. I Cor. 15 20.

²³⁸ Ex. 20 11.

²³⁹ Ex. 24 18.

²⁴⁰ Compare Bacon, *After Six Days*, *Harvard Theological Review*, Jan. 1915, p. 94.

²⁴¹ Cited in Usener, *Das Weihnachtsfest*, p. 189.

²⁴² Routh, *Rel. Sac.*, vol. II, p. 391.

²⁴³ Migne, *P. G.*, I, 860. *Ap. Const.*, V, 15.

upon the six days of creation.²⁴⁴ I would suggest, then, that April 14th is not a date of the crucifixion, but rather of the commencement of the preparatory fast.

BIRTH

Clement mentions several calculations of the birth. According to one group it fell on Pachon 25 = May 20. The Basilidians placed it on Pharmuthi 24 or 25 = April 19 or 20. Clement blames them all as over-curious in the determination of the exact date.

Several improbabilities strike us at once in this account. 1) We have nowhere found among the Basilidians the slightest interest in the birth. Some were concerned with the conception, others with the baptism in an adoptionist sense. 2) As the text stands Clement is criticising his opponents for doing exactly what he has done himself. When he said that Jesus was born 194 years, 1 month and 13 days before the death of Commodus, he may not have been aware that according to the era of Nabonassar this would be January 6th, the very day to which his opponents assigned the baptism regarded as the birth. But whether he had noticed this or not it can scarcely have escaped him that no matter what the chronological system, he was determining the day of the birth with the utmost precision.

The solution of the difficulty is found in the following passage of Epiphanius:²⁴⁵

For we have found it objected where it is written in these words that the Word of God was begotten from God about the fortieth year of Augustus, which was a slip of the writer, or else the number of the β being erased the $\mu\nu$ alone remaining, he made only forty years; for in the forty second year of Augustus he was begotten. It seems that it was twelve days before the calends of July or June, I cannot say which, in the consulship of Sulpicios Camerinos and Bettios Pompianos. But this I have looked into that there are some who

²⁴⁴ *S. Athanasii Epistola Festalis*, 1. A. Mai, *Patrum Nova Bibliotheca*, VI, pt. 1, p. 28—29.

²⁴⁵ *Epiphanius Adversus Haereses*, II, 51, § 29, ed. Dindorf, p. 494.

declare that the day of the conception, when Gabriel made the annunciation to the Virgin—they declare that it is the conjecture of some who say in the tradition that he was conceived in seven months: for we find from the pledge to Tybi 11 and eight days before the ides of January, when the theophany really took place and he was born, seven months time according to the moon's course minus four days, so if you find then where it is written in the tradition be not offended at the sight. Truly the established birth of Christ is Tybi 11th. But some say that he was conceived in ten months minus fourteen days and eight hours i. e. nine months fifteen days and four hours, hinting at that which was spoken by Solomon, "In the tenth month the springs are in blood," so it is in every way clear that on Tybi 11th according to the Egyptians the before mentioned birth of the Lord in the flesh came to pass. And on this same eleventh after thirty years was the first sign in Cana of Galilee, when he made the water wine.

Two things are plain from this passage;

1) Epiphanius is discussing the conception. This cannot be inferred from his employment of the words *γέννησις* and *ἐγενήθη*, which he uses very loosely for both conception and birth,²⁴⁰ but fortunately we have here the more technical term *σύλληψις*.

2) He is referring to one of the dates mentioned by Clement, May 20th. He gives two dates, May 21st, and June 20th, but the expression indicates that he really meant the same date in each month, eight days before the calends of June and July. The difference arises because the count went backwards from the end of the month and the number of days in these months is not equal. Which day he meant, the twentieth or the twenty first, is indicated by his reckoning of seven months minus four days according to the moon from January sixth. If twenty nine days be allowed for a moon month this will give June 20th. We may assume that the other date was May 20th. We thus discover that this was a date not of the birth, but of the conception.

²⁴⁰ Cf. 459, line 23, τῆς ἐν Βηθλὲμ γενήσεως, the birth in Bethlehem, 460, line 12, ὅτι ἐγενήθη ἐν πν. ἁγ., that he was conceived in the Holy Spirit.

This clears up our passage in Clement. There is an error in the text. Instead of *γένεσις* we should read *γέννησις*, conception rather than birth. Clement is not blaming his opponents for setting the day of the birth. That he had done himself, but rather for reckoning the day of the conception which was necessarily indeterminate. What applies thus to May 20th, will of course apply equally to the Basilidian dates, April 19th and 20th. We are dealing not with the birth, but with the conception.²⁴⁷

But the question at once arises as to whether it is so clear that this explanation can be extended to the Basilidian dates. Could those who differed but four days,²⁴⁸ on the date of the birth disagree a whole month on that of the conception? They could, indeed, because of the wide variety of opinion as to the exact length of the period of gestation. Censorinus tells us that Theonius, the Pythagorean, Aristotle, the Peripatetic, Diocles, Euenor, Straton, Empedocles, Epigenes and many others believed that birth could take place in the seventh month. Euryphon Cnidius vigorously denied it, preferring the eighth. The followers of Epicharmus disagreed with him. The Chaldeans said that it might happen in the ninth or the tenth month, and Aristotle even named the eleventh. Hippon Metapontinus was the wisest of them all in that he allowed any time from the seventh to the ninth.²⁴⁹ With regard to the birth of Christ, Epiphanius reckoned nine months, fifteen days and four hours.²⁵⁰ Augustine calculated nine months and six hours, Chrysostom and Cosmas speak roughly of nine months.²⁵¹ There is thus no reason whatever why those who assigned the birth to January 6th, may not have placed the conception on May 20th or April 20th.

The next question is to discover why these dates were chosen.

²⁴⁷ Lagarde made this suggestion with regard to May 20th. He did not support it by the passage in Epiphanius, nor did he extend his argument to the explanation of the Basilidian dates. *Mitt.* 3, 4, p. 265.

²⁴⁸ Tybi 11th and 15th would be dates of the birth not only for Adoptionists, but also for all who used the Lucan chronology and placed exactly 30 years between the baptism and the birth.

²⁴⁹ Censorini, *De Die Natali*, VII, 7.

²⁵⁰ See the passage given above.

²⁵¹ See below.

We observe at once that April 20th is the date to which Basilides assigned the crucifixion. There is ample evidence to show that this coincidence was the determining factor. There were a great many in the church who set the conception and the crucifixion or resurrection on the same day. Ephraem Syrus says:²⁵²

In Nisan the Lord of Thunder weakened his heat through sympathy, and entered into the womb of Mary that he might dwell there; in Nisan again he has shown himself strong, and after loosing the womb of hell is risen.

Augustine gives us some equally illuminating information:²⁵³

Not without reason did the Lord, speaking of the building of his body, in whose figure the temple was destroyed by the Jews, say that he would raise himself up in three days; the number six itself is known being placed before the year, for they said (Jo 2 20), "Forty and six years was this temple in building," and forty six by six give two hundred and seventy six, which makes nine months and six days, so, since ten months are reckoned to child-bearing women, (not that all come to birth on the sixth day after the nine months, but because in so many days the perfection of the Lord's body was learned, as the authority of the church guards the tradition received from the elders) so he is believed to have been conceived eight days before the calends of April — March 25, *on which day also he died*. And as he was buried in a new tomb, where no other mortal had been placed (Jo 19 41) neither before nor after, so it behooved that he should be conceived in the womb of a virgin, where no mortal had ever been generated. The tradition is that he was born eight days before the calends of January — December 25. Reckoning from the one day to the other then, there are two hundred and seventy six, which is six times forty six.

²⁵² Ephraim Syrii Hymnus, XXI, *De Resurrectione Christi*, v. 10, Lamy 2, 774. I have translated the German of Usener, *Das Weihnachtsfest*, p. 200, which see for other references.

²⁵³ Aug., *De Trinitate*, IV, 5, 9. Migne, P. L., 42, p. 894. Cf. Cyril of Alex. to Leo, Migne, P. L., 54, p. 805, *quia eodem die conceptus in utero est, et mortuus in cruce*.

It is to be observed that March 25th, the spring equinox, which we have so often found as the day of the crucifixion, is for Augustine also the day of the conception.

Chrysostom arrives at the same result by figuring forward from what he takes to be the date of the conception of John in Luke, and backwards from December 25th as the birth.²⁶⁴ The calculations are found in his sermon on Christmas. He commences by saying that it is only ten years since the celebration of the birth of Christ on December 25th had been introduced into his church at Antioch. There had been a good deal of dispute about it in his congregation, some asserting that it was new, some that it was old, being celebrated from Thrace to Gadara. He attempts to establish its validity by three arguments. 1) If it were not correct it could not have spread so rapidly. 2) Any one who consults the Roman records will find the day of the census mentioned by Luke. 3) The exact day may be worked out from the notices in Luke. When Mary conceived Elizabeth was in her sixth month (Lk. 1 39). There were thus three months between the births of John and Jesus. Zacharias could go into the Holy of Holies only once a year on the tenth of the seventh month (reckoning from Nisan, Lev. 16 29).

So it was then that the promise was made to Zacharias. The time of the promise was that of the feast of tabernacles and of the fasting, for this is that which was written, "Humble your souls" (Lev. 16 29). The feast was kept among the Jews about the last of the month of Gorpiaios, as ye witness (There were many Jews in Antioch) — — — The six months of the conception of Elizabeth are Hyperberetaios = October, Dios = November, Apellaios = December, Audynaïos = January, Peritios = February and Dystros = March. After this sixth month came the commencement of the conception of Mary. Whence reckoning nine months we reach the present day (December 25th). April is the first month of the con-

²⁶⁴ *S. Joannis Chrysostomi in Diem Natalem D. N. Jesu Christi*, Migne P. G., 49, pp. 357—358, § 6.

ception of the Lord, which is Xanthikos,²⁵⁶ after which Artemisios — May, Daisios — June, Panemos — July, Lōos — August, Gorpaios — September, Hyperberetaios — October, Dios — November, Apellaios — December, and this is the present month in which we keep the day.²⁵⁶

Chrysostom does not give the exact day of the conception, but he says that it fell in the month of March, nine months before the twenty-fifth of December. This would land him at the twenty fifth of March, the day so often chosen for the crucifixion. We thus have the same coincidence of the conception, and the crucifixion or resurrection, which we found in Augustine.

Cosmas Indicopleustes gives us an even more precise section "on the conception of the Lord".²⁵⁷

Zacharias going into the temple according to the tradition of the law on the tenth of the seventh month and being told that he would beget John by Elisabeth, in her sixth month it was announced to the Virgin that this was the commencement of the first month; for since Zacharias was told on the tenth of the seventh month and Elisabeth conceived in that same month, it is clear that six months of the year were gone and six to come, minus ten days and another two or three or seven until Zacharias went to his house, so that there were 168 or 167 or 163 days. It is possible then to know the beginning of the conception of the Lord, that is the beginning of the first month—it was indeed the sixth to Elisabeth according to the tradition of the gospels, for God always has and does guard this order—since also all keep the birth of our

²⁵⁵ Montfaucon usually eliminates the Julian equivalents of the Macedonian months as later additions. Usener, p. 226, note 18, thinks that this should be done here also.

²⁵⁶ The Antiochian months here used are the exact equivalent of the Julian. This is proved by the *Florentine and Leyden Hemerologia*, published together in 1809 by St. Croix, *Histoire de l'Acad. royale des Inscript. et Belles-lettres avec les Mémoires de littérature*, Paris, Tome 47, pp. 86—84, cited in Ginzel, *op. c.*, III, 31.

²⁵⁷ *Cosmae Indicopleustae Topographiae Chr.*, V, 194, Migne, P. G., 88, 196.

Lord, the ninth month having been completed from the beginning of the first month, on Choiak 28 — December 25.

Cosmas is more precise and hence less consistent than Chrysostom. He reckons a maximum of 168 days to the conception from September 1, the seventh month. (The Jewish and Antiochian year began with March.) This would land him at March 18th. He reckons back nine months from December 25th, which would bring him to March 25th. Which reckoning he preferred matters little for our purpose. March 18th was the date of the entrance of the sun into Aries. March 25th was the equinox. Both were dates to which the crucifixion was commonly assigned.²⁸⁸ We see once more that the conception was placed on the day of the crucifixion and resurrection.²⁸⁹

When Easter was universally accepted as a movable feast the synchronism was lost because March 25th was retained for the conception.²⁹⁰ As such it was widely regarded as New-Year's day and remained such in England until 1751, when the Gregorian calendar was introduced.²⁹¹ The annunciation falls to this day on March 25th in the Roman church. The modern Egyptians celebrate it on Phamenoth 29th, which is April 26th on the Gregorian basis, but March 25th on the Julian.²⁹² The Greek church too places on March 25th the *εὐαγγελισμόν τῆς θεοτόκου*.²⁹³ All of this is witness to the earlier practice of placing the conception and the crucifixion on the same day.

We thus find not only an explanation of why the Basilidians placed the crucifixion and the conception on April 20th, but further an added support for our contention that such was really the case. I know of only one clear case in which the birth is placed in the spring at all, and that is in the treatise on the Computation of Passover in Hartel's edition of Cyprian.²⁹⁴ The author assigns the birth to Wednesday March 27th, the day on

²⁸⁸ On March 18th see *Epiphanius*, II, 51, 1, Dindorf, p. 447.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Cyril of Alex. to Leo, Migne, *P. L.*, 64, p. 605.

²⁹⁰ Cf. *Chron. Pasch.*, Dindorf 1, 22.

²⁹¹ Ginzel, *op. c.*, III, p. 275.

²⁹² Lagarde, *Mith.*, 3—4, p. 292. He quotes *Nilles*, 2, 643.

²⁹³ Ginzel, *op. c.*, III, p. 308.

²⁹⁴ Page 266.

which God created the sun. The date on the statue of Hippolytus, April 2nd, is in dispute because his commentary on Daniel has December 25th.²⁸⁵ We may regard it then as the almost universal custom to observe a synchronism between the conception and the crucifixion. For that reason it is even more likely that we are dealing here not with the birth at all, but rather with the conception.

The explanation of the choice of May 20th does not fall strictly within our province since we are dealing primarily with the chronology of Basilides, but it may not be out of the way to devote a line to it in passing. Lagarde says that the Egyptian church to-day celebrates the entrance of the child Jesus into Egypt on that day (Pachon 25th — May 20th). He cites no ancient employments of the day, but assumes that it must go back to antiquity, and that it probably came originally from a heathen feast.²⁸⁶ That is rather a slender thread. The reader will remember that May 20th was the date of the rising of the Pleiades in Greece and the point of oscillation for the Thargelion and the Delia. I would suggest that some sect chose it for that reason as the date of the conception and crucifixion.

Before taking up April 19th it will be of interest to consider the bearing of these facts upon the interpretation of Luke. Chrysostom and Cosmas are not right that Zacharias could go into the Holy of Holies because he was not the High Priest, but simply one of the lower order of the course of Abijah (1 Chron. 24 11). Neither does Luke say that he went into the Holy of Holies. This feast is not, therefore, necessarily that of Tabernacles. But nevertheless Chrysostom and Cosmas are right that Luke has a chronological interest here. He says that Zacharias waited until his course was over before he went home. The course lasted a week. At the maximum the conception of Elisabeth could have been eight days later than the promise. The conception of Mary came after another six months, hence as Cosmas says possibly 168 days from the promise to Zacharias.

²⁸⁵ See Lagarde, *Mittheilungen*, 3. 4, pp. 296 and 317. See also Kellner, *Heortology*.

²⁸⁶ Lagarde, *Mittheilungen*, 3. 4, p. 265.

Now although there is nothing to prove that Luke regarded this as the feast of Tabernacles, there is also nothing to prove that he did not. If he did the conception would have fallen on March 18th, and, in view of what we have seen above, probably the death too. Now the only year in which March 18th fell in the neighborhood of Passover and on a Friday, was the year 29 A. D., when it came on Friday, Nisan 13th, just one day before the Passover.²⁶⁷ This may perhaps account for Luke's choice of the year 29 A. D. for the crucifixion.

PHARMUTHI 24TH — APRIL 19TH.

April 19th, like April 20th, will have been a date of the conception and of the death. It differs by only one day from the date which we have just considered.

There are two possibilities. 1) The first is that there was a single celebration with a double date. The Egyptian day began with the morning twilight. Hence an event which continued from the evening until the morning received a double date.²⁶⁸ Christian festivals were evening fasts terminated by morning feasts,²⁶⁹ and were, therefore, susceptible to this manner of dating. We actually find several instances in which Epiphany was assigned to the 5th and 6th of January.²⁷⁰ The same may well have been true of Easter.

2) The other possibility is that there was a difference of local observance. This was common enough in the case of festivals attached to the appearance of a heavenly body, which would actually vary in different localities and would be hard to observe with accuracy in any case.²⁷¹ It may well be that the rising of the Pleiades was celebrated in one place on April 20th and in another on the 19th.²⁷²

²⁶⁷ See Fotheringham's tables on page 107.

²⁶⁸ Ginzel, *Math. u. Techn. Chron.*, 1, § 34.

²⁶⁹ Epiphany among the Basilidians, Clement Al., *Str.*, 1, 21, 146, Easter, *Euseb.*, 5, 24, 12.

²⁷⁰ *Epiphanius*, Dindorf 2, 51, § 24, pp. 488—489; § 27, p. 498.

²⁷¹ Ginzel, *ibid.*, 1, § 40.

²⁷² See A. Meyer, *op. c.*, note 22, for a variation of a day in the date of Epiphany.