JOURNAL OF

THE TRANSACTIONS

OF

The Victoria Institute,

OR,

Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

VOL. LVI.

LONDON:
(Published by the Institute, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W.1.)

1924.

THE 662ND ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W., ON MONDAY, MARCH 10TH, 1924, AT 4.30 P.M.

THE REV. ARTHUR H. FINN IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the election of the following:—The Rev. Canon H. E. Nolloth, D.D., as a Member; and David Somerville, Esq., and the Rev. Prof. Julius R. Mantey, Th.D., as Associates.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced the Rev. Harold Smith, M.A., D.D., to read his paper on "The Johannine Authorship of the Fourth Gospel."

THE JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL. By the REV. HAROLD SMITH, M.A., D.D.

I.—External Evidence: (a) For the Book.

WE find at the close of the second century all four Gospels, bearing their present names, universally accepted as authoritative Scripture. This holds good all over the Christian world.

Irenaeus (*c.* 185 A.D.) gives, as is well known, rather fanciful reasons why there must necessarily be *four* Gospels,* neither more nor less. But it is clear that neither he nor his contemporaries first decided upon the number *four*, and then reached it either by addition or by subtraction of doubtful cases. Such a process has clearly sometimes taken place, *e.g.*, in arriving at the exact number of "Seven Penitential Psalms" or "Seven Deadly Sins." But Irenaeus has another passage where he points out that the Gnostics have strangely neglected the number *five*; he shows that this recurs constantly in nature (*e.g.*, five fingers and five senses) and in Scripture (*e.g.*, five books of the law, five wise virgins). Thus, if *five* Gospels† had been at all generally recognised he could quite as easily have shown that number to be determined by the fitness of things; so with *three*.

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* III, xi, 8, p. 190. † II, xxiv, 4, p. 151.

Perhaps somewhat earlier, perhaps somewhat later, we have what is known as the "*Muratorian Canon*" (because first published by the Italian scholar Muratori, eighteenth century). This gives, in a very corrupt Latin text, a list of books recognised at Rome. It recognises four Gospels, declaring them to be harmonious in the main points, although various elements are taught in each. It gives an account of the origin of the Fourth Gospel, by "John, one of the disciples" (*see* later).

Theophilus of Antioch, 180, quotes John i, 1–3, as the utterance of John, one of those inspired.

The Gnostic *Heracleon*, who wrote a commentary on this Gospel, must have known it as John's.

From a time considerably earlier than this we find this Gospel used and valued, though nothing is said of its authorship. In this, however, it shares with the other three Gospels, which are also used without being named.

If later imagination had had anything to do with the naming, we should not have had Gospels ascribed to Matthew, Mark and Luke, all men of secondary importance. Therefore, there is nothing distinctive or suspicious in the absence of ascription of authorship to quotations or echoes of the Fourth Gospel; and, like the rest, its ascription comes from apparently authentic tradition, not imagination or conjecture.

Justin Martyr (150–160) uses this Gospel as one of the "memoirs written by the Apostles and those who followed them." He does not, indeed, quote from it nearly so often as from the rest; but has several clear echoes of it (*e.g.*, on the new birth); and his doctrine, especially that of the Logos, is largely based on it. His use of it is like his use of St. Paul, whom he never formally quotes in his extant works. Any idea that Justin regarded this Gospel as of less value than the rest is overthrown by his disciple *Tatian*, who not only has several quotations from it in his *Apology*, but made, either in Greek or in Syriac, a harmony of the Four (Diatessaron), using our Fourth Gospel equally with the rest, and beginning with its Prologue, "In the beginning was the Word."

We find it highly valued among the *Gnostics*, especially the Valentinians. *Ptolemaeus* quotes and interprets the Prologue. *Heracleon* wrote a commentary upon a large part of it, if not the whole; we have only fragments of it in Origen's commentary, which itself has reached us very incomplete. Heracleon sometimes applies it to establish Valentinian teaching; but often his sayings are of interest and value, apart from coming from our oldest commentary on the Gospels. Thus he has some good notes on Chap. IV: "The water which Jesus gives is of the Spirit and his power; this life is eternal and never decaying, for inalienable is the divine power and gift. . . . Those who partake of what is supplied richly from above, themselves

pour forth the things bestowed upon them unto the eternal life of others." . . . "The Saviour called His Father's will His own food, for it was His nourishment, refreshment and power." But still more significant than this use of the Gospel by Valentinians is the fact that their distinctive terminology seems based upon the language of this Gospel, especially the Prologue. Hence it must have held a recognised position by the time the Valentinians originated, say A.D. 130.

There are quotations or echoes also in other Gnostic writers, including a book ascribed to *Basileides*. But there is the possibility that this comes from a later member of his school.

The relation of the epistles of *Ignatius* to this Gospel is not clear. He has close affinities of language and ideas, but no definite quotations; and the echoes are not quite clear enough to make it certain that he was familiar with the book, and does not simply echo current teaching.

The only second century rejection of the book comes from some writers, whom Epiphanius, perhaps following Hippolytus, nicknames the "Alogi"—a term signifying that they (1) rejected the Logos, and (2) were therefore *irrational*. They were strong opponents of the Montanists, with their doctrine of the Spirit, for which they appealed to this Gospel; and their Millenarianism, for which they appealed to the Apocalypse. The Alogi sought to cut the ground from under them by denying the authority of both books, ascribing them (or at least the Apocalypse) to the heretic Cerinthus. But they did not assert that either book was recent.

Thus this Gospel can be traced back to 130, when it must have had already a recognised position; possibly to 115. The *terminus a quo* depends on the date of the circulation of the other Gospels. Tradition is clear that this was written after the rest; one form is that John knew and approved of them, but regarded them as incomplete.

(*b*) *For the Author.*

There is plenty of evidence that at the end of the first century there lived and died in "Asia"—more particularly at *Ephesus*—a great Christian teacher and ruler named John, a disciple of the Lord, who is repeatedly spoken of as "the beloved disciple" of this Gospel, and as its source or author. Thus *Polycrates* says that the "great lights fallen asleep in Asia" include "John, who leaned on the Lord's breast, who had been a priest wearing the sacred plate,* a witness (or martyr) and teacher; he sleeps at Ephesus." Irenaeus, speaking of his own intercourse with Polycarp, says "how he would relate his intercourse with John and with the others that had seen the Lord."† Elsewhere, giving the origins of the Gospels, he says: "John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on his breast, also published a

* πέταλον Eus. v, 24. † Eus. v, 20.

Gospel while living in Ephesus of Asia." He also gives, on the authority of Polycarp, the story of John rushing out of the bath-house at Ephesus on meeting Cerinthus there.* Clement of Alexandria may have gained his knowledge of Christianity in Asia from one of his teachers, an Ionian. He gives the story of John and the young robber as " a true story of John the Apostle," who, " when on the death of the tyrant he removed from Patmos to Ephesus, went also to the surrounding districts . . . in one place appointing bishops, in another setting in order whole churches, in another ordaining a ministry."

The Leucian Acts of John—one of the oldest of the apocryphal Acts, perhaps belonging to the second century—also put John at Ephesus.

The Muratorian Canon gives no place, but associates John with Andrew. " The fourth Gospel comes from John, one of the disciples. At the instance of his fellow disciples and bishops he said : ' Fast with me to-day for three days, and let us tell one another whatever may be revealed to each of us.' The same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John should write all in his own name, and that all should certify."

It is perhaps worth noting that the character of John as revealed in the two reasonably authentic stories told of him by Irenaeus and Clement is close to that of the Apostle. Later stories are of not nearly the same value.

But while there was a general agreement that this John was the author of the Gospel, and, no doubt, he was commonly identified with the Apostle, yet Clement is the first to state this definitely. Others simply call him the " disciple of the Lord." This of itself would raise no difficulty. It might be thought sufficient to use the title given in his Gospel, where the term " apostle " is practically absent (only in xiii, 16). And as the son of Zebedee is the only disciple bearing that name in the N.T. (unless John Mark be so reckoned), further distinction would be thought unnecessary. It is not as with two named James or two named Philip.

But there are two points of external evidence against this identity : one long known, the other discovered only of late.

(1) There is some appreciable evidence for the existence of another John, distinct from the Apostle. The two may then easily have been confused, as seems to have been the case with the two Philips, the Apostle and the Deacon. We are told definitely by Polycrates that Philip the *Apostle* settled at Hierapolis, near Laodicea. But the mention of his *daughters* by Papias, Polycrates and Proclus seems to identify him with the Deacon. So, it is said, it may have been with John.

* III, iii, 2, p. 177.

The oldest piece of evidence is Eusebius' extract from the preface of Papias' *Exposition of the Lord's Oracles*. He says he had collected what he could from those who had followed the elders (*i.e.*, the Apostles), inquiring what Andrew said, or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples; "and what Aristion and the elder John, disciples of the Lord, say." Notice that he uses the present tense of these two last; this suggests that they were living and accessible when Papias collected his sayings; Eusebius thinks that from his frequent quotation of them he may have known them personally. But, as Eusebius notices, he has two mentions of "John." Are they one, or two? The title "elder" proves nothing, as it is used of both (as is that of "disciple"). If one and the same man, the Apostle, is meant, we have rather a clumsy piece of composition. Eusebius maintains that two Johns are implied. He desires to find a second John to whom to ascribe the Apocalypse, for which he does not care, and perhaps also the two minor catholic epistles; but moderns would identify him—and not the Apostle—with John of Ephesus, the writer or source of the Fourth Gospel. On the other hand, the juxtaposition of John and Matthew may be suggested by both being evangelists.

(2) Comparatively lately it has been noticed that there is some evidence that John the Apostle suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Jews, presumably, but not certainly, in Palestine. This is stated, in the best MS. of Georgius Hamartolus, a writer of the ninth century, and in what probably is an epitome of Philip of Side, of the fifth century, to have been stated by Papias in his second book—(the two writers may not be independent). But it is very strange that if Papias really said this, Irenaeus and Eusebius should have ignored it; it would seem that either he did not really say it, or they did not credit him. These two writers are not remarkable for accuracy; Georgius combines the martyrdom of John with his return from Patmos and residence in Asia. On the work of Philip of Side, a presbyter of Constantinople in the earlier part of the fifth century, and thought at one time very likely to become Bishop, we have a contemporary criticism by Socrates the historian. His *Christian History* was a most voluminous work, dragging in all kinds of irrelevant matters in order to display the author's learning; it was written in an elaborate but obscure style, and constantly shifted from one period to another, so confusing the sequence. Some of the fragments we possess do not show much accuracy.

There are, however, various other writings (*e.g.*, the Syriac Martyrology) which speak of the martyrdom of John the Apostle. These would have more weight if they did not come from the period when every leader of the earlier generation was supposed to have been a martyr, at least if he was to be honoured properly. Mark x, 39, may be used on both sides; it is held by some that it shows that

John had already suffered martyrdom when Mark wrote his Gospel; but it may equally well have led men to assume, without any definite tradition, or without seeing its incompatibility with the residence of John at Ephesus, that he must have been martyred. The story, told first by Tertullian, of his being given a cup of poison and then plunged in boiling oil, but escaping unharmed, seems based on this verse, as giving a literal fulfilment of the "cup" and the "baptism."

There is thus *some* evidence (1) for there having been two Johns; (2) for John the Apostle having been martyred, presumably early. Hence there is a tendency to ascribe the Gospel to the other John. Some forms of this view, however, make little real difference; the Gospel comes, all the same, from an intimate disciple of the Lord.

II.—Internal Evidence.

It is usual to work this out in stages: *e.g.*, the author is (1) a Jew; (2) a Jew of Palestine; (3) of the first century; (4) an eye-witness; (5) an apostle; (6) St. John. But it is difficult to keep some of these stages separate; *e.g.*, most of the arguments for his being a Jew point to his being a Hebrew, not a Hellenist.

That he was a Hebrew is now generally recognised—allowing for the fact that some distinguish the *source* or *witness* from the *evangelist*. According to Dr. Latimer Jackson, "The general trend of scholarship is to affirm that [the evangelist] originally belonged to Jewish Christianity. The Gospel, penned for Gentile readers to whom Jewish terms had to be translated and explained, throughout reveals a distinctly Semitic mode of thought by its phraseology, its frequent Hebraisms, its comparatively limited vocabulary. . . . His diction has closest affinity not with the literature of Hellenistic Judaism, but with that of Palestinian learning."

Dr. Burney regards the Gospel as having been originally written in Aramaic.

Mr. Abrahams ("Rabbinic Aids to Exegesis," in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*) says: "Most remarkable has been the cumulative strength of the arguments adduced by Jewish writers favourable to the authenticity of the discourses in the Fourth Gospel, especially in relation to the circumstances under which they are reported to have been spoken."

We notice that (1) some of the quotations from the O.T. are independent of the LXX (*e.g.*, Zech. xii, 10; in John xix, 37); (2) a number of Hebrew or Aramaic words are given, with their correct meaning; (3) there is familiarity with Jewish ideas, *e.g.*, Pharisaic contempt for the common people (vii, 49); warning against multiplying words with a woman (iv, 27); low opinion of the dispersion among the Greeks (vii, 35). In particular, more light is thrown upon the current doctrine of the Messiah than in all the rest of the N.T.

The one serious charge of ignorance is the mention of Caiaphas as

" High Priest that year," which suggests it was thought to be an annual office. But it may well mean simply that he was High Priest " that fateful year, the year of all years."

An argument against the writer's Jewish origin is his constant description of the Lord's opponents as " the Jews "—not " the scribes " or the like. But this merely associates the Lord's opponents with the Jewish opponents of Christianity when the book was written; and is balanced by the saying " Salvation is of the Jews."

He has also full knowledge of the country of Palestine, speaking familiarly of places not mentioned by the Synoptists, *e.g.*, Cana of Galilee ; Aenon (a true Semitic name) ; the city called Ephraim ; Jacob's Well, which is deep, and the neighbouring mountain. Sychar is pretty certainly not a mistake for, nor a parody on, Sychem (Shechem), but a distinct place nearer the well, now Askar.*

He is also familiar with Jerusalem, knowing, *e.g.*, the pools of Siloam and Bethesda, the Treasury, Solomon's Porch, the distance of Bethany from Jerusalem. This seems to imply familiarity with the city before its destruction by Titus. The controversies and questions also are not such as would be in dispute at Ephesus at a later date, but such matters as Sabbath observance, purification, and Messianic expectations. Palestine in the early part of the first century is reflected, not Ephesus in the second. (This is fully worked out by Dr. Scott Holland, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 51 *f.*)

That the evangelist was an eye-witness and disciple appears from the many unimportant details he gives, obviously because he happened to recollect them. See Holland, p. 55, who notes " the amazing trouble taken to explain how there were boats enough to carry the people back over the Lake of Tiberias (vi, 22–24). So also his repeated notes of the time of day. This record of details of no special importance is a feature also of St. Mark's Gospel—in fact the two have more than one striking coincidence of the kind, as the 5,000 sitting on the *grass*, or the ointment of *spike-nard*. It might be said that in these cases the Fourth Evangelist follows the Second ; but he has much of the same kind quite independently. In the case of the Second Gospel this feature is almost universally held to come from an eye-witness, thus supporting the tradition that in this Gospel we have St. Peter's recollections. It is thought to overthrow the old view that Mark is an abbreviation of Matthew, and to prove that in many narratives the relation is just the reverse. The same argument surely holds good when this feature recurs in the Fourth Gospel. It is far more natural than either of the rival views (*a*) that we have here simply a realistic piece of fiction or romance ; (*b*) that all these details involve some hidden allegorical meaning. Here we

* G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, II, xviii.

may deal with the view that the Gospel as a whole is meant to be allegory rather than history. This is alleged to be supported by Clement's statement of the origin of this Gospel: "John, perceiving that the bodily (external) facts had been set forth in the other Gospels, at the instance of his friends and the inspiration of the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel."* Sanday interprets this as "one which sought to bring out the divine side of its subject." This seems much better than Dean Inge's view (*Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 260, D.C.G., i, 885), that by *spiritual* is meant not doctrinal, ethical and philosophical, but allegorical, as opposed to barely historical. If this were meant, we should expect Clement and Origen to draw a marked distinction between the Gospels, taking the others literally, this allegorically. Origen says that in the Scripture, particularly in John, there is a mixture of what is unhistorical, with a view to spiritual training. But neither he nor Clement supports the view that the three normally give literal history, the Fourth being commonly allegorical. There is no marked difference between Origen's treatment of the First and of the Fourth Gospel in his respective commentaries on them. These writers, by their idea of allegorical and spiritual teaching, are able to combine high views of inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture with full admission of historical inaccuracies. The sacred writers made no *mistakes*, but sometimes consciously meant to convey spiritual truth rather than literal history. But this does not in practice hold good to any extent of this Gospel more than the rest.

Thus much the most natural explanation of these details is that they come from an eye-witness, who recalls points which happen to have stuck in his memory, whether of intrinsic importance or not.

In two or three places there is more direct evidence: i, 14, "*We beheld* his glory" is most naturally taken of the Lord's personal disciples than of Christians generally. We at once compare 1 John i, 1–2, which expresses this thought more clearly. (The arguments for different authorship of the Epistle are far from strong; the many resemblances, both of thought and language, far outweigh the few differences.) But the great passage is xix, 35: "He that hath seen hath borne witness and his witness is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe"—a solemn asservation of the truth of the statement that blood and water came out of the Lord's side. The first part might by itself be taken as the evangelist's testimony to the credibility of his source; but the last part is against this—there is no point in referring to the conviction of some one else. Thus, either the writer is speaking of himself in the third person throughout; or "*He* knoweth" refers to the Divine knowledge. Thus, the Evangelist was present at the Crucifixion.

* Eus. vi, 14.

The evangelist is distinctly identified with the beloved disciple in xxi, 24. But the authenticity of the appendix (chap. xxi) is disputed; and this verse is an addition to it by persons unknown to us. But it is quite clear that the "disciple whom Jesus loved" must be either the evangelist or his main source.

But, if so, he can hardly be other than an apostle. He is prominent at the Last Supper, where we should infer from the Synoptists that only the Twelve were present. He stands in the closest intimacy with the Lord, *i.e.*, in the position of an apostle. He is present by the Cross; to him our Lord commends his Mother. He is together with apostles at the sea of Tiberias; he is closely associated with Peter throughout the closing chapters. In other places where an unnamed disciple is mentioned the identity is not so certain. Thus it is generally held that he was one of the two disciples of the Baptist who followed the Lord, Andrew being the other; but there is not such complete agreement whether he was "the disciple known unto the High Priest," who got Peter admitted. Much is now made of this verse.

But we are next led to conclude that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" was the Apostle John. He is clearly one of the leading disciples, but distinguished from Peter and Andrew. This suggests either James or John, and James died early. He is found in close connection with Peter (cc. xiii (xviii), xx, xxi), just as Peter and John are found together in the early chapters of Acts. It is also noteworthy that the evangelist never names *John*, whereas he has much to say of other apostles; our only clear view of several of them comes from this Gospel. How is it that only James and John left no impression on the evangelist? A minor point is that while the other evangelists constantly speak of John *the Baptist*, here we read of him simply as "John," as though there were no need to distinguish.

The great argument against this identification is that the character of the son of Zebedee, a "son of thunder," impetuous and keen to avenge his Master's honour, does not suit the evangelist. "To have received and remembered what he afterwards recorded he must have been other than the son of Zebedee was. He must have been already as companion what he proved as witness, appreciative of and sympathetic with that inner life of Jesus which he has unveiled for us."* This is a strong point; but (1) John is not clearly set out in the Synoptists apart from James; he seems his brother's shadow. (2) This view usually exaggerates what is unattractive in the two brothers. (3) The character of John of Ephesus, as shown in the reasonably authentic stories of him, has affinities both with the Apostle of the Synoptists and the "disciple whom Jesus loved."

But we now come to a view which has "caught on" very much of

* Garvie, *The Beloved Disciple*, 229.

late. Are we, after all, bound to suppose the beloved disciple to have been one of the Twelve ? This view starts from one special feature of this Gospel which has often aroused suspicion—the interest in Jerusalem as distinct from Galilee. This suggests that the author was one of our Lord's disciples at Jerusalem (vii, 3). Again, if this is the disciple who brought Peter into the High Priest's house, he was "known to the High Priest"; this suggests he was of good position and family, perhaps priestly. So, again, he is acquainted with the private meetings of the chief priests and others. Here comes in what Polycrates says of "John who leaned on the Lord's breast": "He had been a priest and worn the sacred plate."

These points fit well together, though each may be otherwise met (*e.g.*, Nicodemus may be the source of some information). But it is not easy to account for his presence at the Last Supper. One view is that he was a kind of supernumerary apostle, perhaps too young to be one of the Twelve, who, nevertheless, shared their intercourse with the Lord. But Dr. Garvie* holds that the Last Supper was held in his house; if the apostles remained there it is explained how he was with Peter when Mary Magdalene came from the tomb. He regards him as the unnamed disciple† of chap. i, and as having accompanied the Lord in His early ministry (chaps. ii–iv), but afterwards remaining at Jerusalem.

This view in its higher forms does not make much practical difference from the traditional one. It still makes the Gospel proceed from an eye-witness, an early and fairly intimate disciple, though not one of the Twelve. But another argument for apostolic authorship is the great difference between this Gospel and the others. Could a Gospel of so different a type have won acceptance, unless its author were known as of the highest authority ? And if this disciple of Jerusalem held such a position in the early Church how is it that we hear nothing more of him in the N.T. ? Various identifications have been made with some known person, *e.g.*, Lazarus or the Young Ruler, but all seem fanciful.

One more view must be noticed. A distinction is drawn between the witness or source, whose interest is largely in the history, and the evangelist; between the man whose recollections are recorded, and the man who wrote them. This view maintains that while much of the Fourth Gospel comes from the beloved disciple, yet he was not the actual writer. Just as in the Second Gospel, the source (Peter) is distinct from the writer (Mark), so here; only apparently this Gospel took its name from its source rather than its writer. This is very possible. But, while Mark is usually credited with little more than selection and arrangement, it is possible in the case of this Gospel to make the source supply only the events and the unknown

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* p. 148. † pp. 221 *f.*

writer the theology, which thereby loses much of its value so far as this depends upon external attestation. Some assume also a redactor, who is as clumsy as these redactors usually are. But there seems no need to suppose more than one editor, at most.

Many important points in the criticism of the Gospel have been passed over. The authorship is a great subject of itself.

Discussion.

The Chairman :—We shall all, I believe, be agreed that we are indebted to Dr. Smith for a calm, judicial and lucid setting forth of the evidence for and against the Johannine authorship. I have been especially struck with the candour with which full weight is given to all possible objections against it. If anything, I am inclined to think that he has been a little too cautious in dealing with them. For instance, on p. 132 he has contented himself with saying "the authenticity of the appendix (c. xxi) is disputed; and this verse [24] is an addition to it by persons unknown to us." Personally I cannot conceive that any unprejudiced reader could doubt that the account of the sayings and doings by the lake, so full, so minutely detailed, so tenderly truth-like, must come from an eye-witness, and that eye-witness the one who modestly veils his identity under the title "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Had this been written by anyone else, what possible reason could there have been for withholding the name of one so favoured? As for v. 24, the chief argument for supposing that it was added "by persons unknown to us" lies in the plural "we know." But then, what of the following verse with the singular "I suppose"? Did some one of the "persons unknown" take upon himself to add that to the joint testimony of others? But, further, is it in the least likely that any of St. John's hearers or readers would have ventured so to endorse the testimony of a witness of such authority? Or, if the author was not St. John, were there any so unscrupulous as to give a forged testimonial to a fabricator? For myself, I think, it far more likely that the writer would intentionally associate himself with his fellow-Christians rather than use the egotistic "I know."

So, too, with regard to the two mentions of a disciple not named, the argument holds good again that no one who was not the person meant would have any interest in suppressing the name. As for the disciple who was known to the High Priest, there is a link which

perhaps has been little noticed. It is not unlikely that the unnamed "his mother's sister" of St. John xix, 25, was "the mother of Zebedee's children," mentioned by St. Matthew (xxvii, 56). Now we know that Elizabeth, the Virgin's cousin, was married to a priest, and, therefore, the Virgin's sister may also have married similarly, in which case St. John would himself have been of Aaronic descent. This would not only account for his being known to the High Priest, but also for his reluctance at first to enter the tomb (St. John xx, 5), since to a priest it was defilement to come in contact with the dead.

The evidence that the author of the Fourth Gospel must have been a Jew (not much touched on in the paper) might be considerably strengthened. Lately I have been reading Dr. Edersheim's *Life and Times of the Messiah*, and noticed how often he, saturated as he is with Judaic and Rabbinic lore, finds occasion to point out how thoroughly Jewish and even Rabbinic the tone of the Gospel is. In particular, there is a very remarkable note (Vol. II, p. 193) on a certain Rabbi Eliezer, "accused of favouring Christianity." The learned author finds in the questions put to the Rabbi "a distinct reference to the words of Christ in St. John x, 11," and concludes by asking, "Does it not *furnish a reference*—and that on the lips of Jews—*to the Fourth Gospel, and that from the close of the first century* ?"

I do not know how it may appear to others, but to myself it seems that most of the arguments put forward by opponents of the Johannine authorship are not so much to show that the Gospel was not or could not have been the work of the Apostle as to show that it may have been written by someone else. It looks very much as though they had not been compelled by the evidence to reject the traditional belief, but rather that they have raked together every scrap of evidence that might tend to support a preconceived idea that the Gospel was not written by the Apostle. We know that the Alogi rejected the book because they disliked and refused the doctrine of the Logos. Is not that really the case with many nowadays who seek to discredit the evidence of the Gospel ? They are uneasily conscious that if the book were actually written by St. John it would upset the theories they have formed about the Person and Teaching of our Lord. Therefore they do all they can to discredit the value of the Gospel.

Lt.-Col. MACKINLAY said :—Our lecturer has referred to the

Diatessaron, stating that Tatian used the Fourth Gospel equally with the other three in composing it, and this is true. But Tatian appears to have taken the order of events from St. Matthew's Gospel, and to have placed the incidents recorded in the other Gospels in a very haphazard manner. Discrepancies can be found in it in the position of events recorded separately by Mark, Luke, and John ; for instance, the last-named places the meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well (iv, 5–42) *before* the feeding of the five thousand (vi, 4–13), but Tatian inverts the order of the narrative of these two occurrences.

Tatian's work would have been still more satisfactory for our purpose if he had not only given extracts from all the Gospels, but if he had also placed these in the *same* order in which they appear in the different Gospels, but this he has not done ; and from his time till quite recently a satisfactory harmony has not been produced.

But at last it is claimed that it has been attained, when it is recognized that there are three parallel narratives in the Gospel of St. Luke—thus testifying that there is no chronological contradiction between St. John and the other three evangelists, as was formerly very generally supposed.

It is satisfactory that this method of historical investigation now supports the authority and inspiration of St. John's Gospel—that Gospel which is so dear to us by its great spirituality and by its strong testimony to the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ (St. John xx, 31).

Mr. WALTER MAUNDER said :—There is one argument in favour of the view that the author of the Fourth Gospel was none other than the Apostle John, which appears to me to have great weight, although it has not been mentioned in this paper.

The Fourth Gospel is pre-eminently the Gospel of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This subject is followed out from the first chapter, which begins with the essential Divinity of the Word and ends with the acknowledgment by Thomas of the resurrection of Jesus and his avowal of Him as " my Lord and my God." The writer of the Gospel declares that he had written it " that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing, ye might have life through His Name." And the Fourth Gospel differs from the other three in this, that it is not a narrative of events. It is a single course of teachings by the Lord Jesus

Christ Himself, given in His very own words, of the doctrine of the Resurrection; that is to say, of Himself as the only source of Eternal Life for men.

But Acts i, 22, tells us that the calling of the twelve Apostles was to be for witnesses (literally "martyrs")* of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is no doubt who "the twelve Apostles" were: they are named, all of them, in other Gospels, and after the suicide of Judas Iscariot they are named "the eleven." There were none others present with Jesus than the eleven when Judas had gone out after the Supper and in the Garden. Therefore it must have been one of these eleven, whose names we know, who leaned on Jesus' breast and recorded His words.

But there were three who were pre-eminently witnesses—Peter, James, and John; these three, and no others, were with the Lord when He was transfigured on the Mount, and during His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. And it must be remembered that on the Mount "He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen till the Son of Man was risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one another what the rising from the dead should mean." Of these three, James was killed by order of Herod, and when Peter had been killed by the order of Nero, only one of the three witnesses remained—the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee. When of the twelve called to be the witnesses to the Resurrection only one, the Apostle John, was left, is it conceivable that he would not have written down the sayings of the Lord which he had heard? And is it conceivable that if another man—not one of the original witnesses—had brought out this Gospel, that those in places of authority in the Church would have accepted it? When the other witnesses had been put to death or had fallen asleep, to whom could the Church look to complete "the testimony of Jesus" but to the last of the twelve, the last of the three, who still remained alive?

Mrs. WALTER MAUNDER said:—I must confess to no small irritation at the use of the argument from the "two tombs in Ephesus,

* The use of the word "martyr" as signifying one who was put to death for his testimony to the Resurrection of Christ is a late and secondary use. In the Acts it is constantly used as meaning simply "witness."

and that both are called John's even to this day" (Eus. Book III, chapter 39). Eusebius brings forward this in connection with the authorship of the Book of the Revelation; he is accurate in his quotations from his authorities, but he is not notable for sound judgment. It is perhaps excusable in him to make this suggestion therefore, but it is not excusable in modern critics, even in the case of the Apocalypse. For in that book, though the City of Ephesus is mentioned by name, it is only mentioned in the same connections, and with no greater or less particularity than Smyrna or Laodicea, or any other of the "Seven Churches which are in Asia." But because, *and only because*, it had been handed down that the Apostle John, after having been exiled to Patmos and released from thence, "governed the Churches in Asia," and "coming from the Isle of Patmos to Ephesus" made it his headquarters (Eus. Book III, chapter 23), it is *assumed* that Ephesus was the place of writing of the Apocalypse.

But "moderns," as Dr. Harold Smith tells us, are not content with the suggestion of Eusebius that it was the second John of Ephesus who wrote the Apocalypse; they would ascribe the Fourth Gospel to him also. Here the argument is even weaker and with less excuse. For in the Fourth Gospel there is no mention of Ephesus from beginning to end; no word is said to connect that city with the place of its origin. The "moderns" argue wilfully from their own confusion of thought, thus: The Fourth Gospel is said to have been written by the Apostle John: the Apostle John is said to have resided at Ephesus: there was another John, not an Apostle, living at Ephesus: therefore this second John, not an Apostle, wrote the Fourth Gospel.

As regards the authorship, and therefore date, of the Fourth Gospel, it is well to bear in mind those for whom it was written as well as he who wrote it. I think there is strong evidence that the people for whom it was written were Christians who spoke and thought in Greek, and who were, in the main, neither converted Jews nor the children of Jews. The Aramaic expressions and names used in the gospel are interpreted, and it would have been unnecessary to tell the children of Jews, who had been in the habit of going up to the great feasts, that the Passover was "a Feast of the Jews" or that the Feast of the Dedication was held in the winter. But just as certainly the writer was familiar with the feasts and services

in the Temple and with the reading of the Law. Indeed, the Law, especially the Book of Deuteronomy, was in the minds of the speakers and the hearers in all the teachings and discussions from Chapter III of the Fourth Gospel to Chapter X.

Mr. THEODORE ROBERTS mentioned a difficulty not dealt with by the lecturer, namely, the dissimilarity of the diction of the Gospel from that of the Apocalypse, and suggested that the Apocalypse was written at the end of the reign of Nero or in that of Vespasian, shortly after the evangelist John settled at Ephesus, and before he had become accustomed to think in Greek and compose freely in it; whereas his Epistles and Gospel were written some twenty or thirty years later when he had by constant use become better acquainted with the Greek language.

The Chairman had anticipated the idea he was about to bring forward, that the evangelist was of priestly family and was known to the high priest and was constantly in Jerusalem. He would thus be acquainted with the Jerusalem ministry, whereas Peter, who is supposed to have supplied Mark with the materials for his gospel, and Matthew had confined themselves to the Galilean ministry.

Mr. HOSTE remarked that the controversy as to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel reminded him of a discussion many years ago, when the fashion came in of which the Jesuit, Father Hardouin, was the most radical exponent, of questioning the traditional authorship, even of classical works, and the question of the authorship of the *Iliad* came under review. After much learned discussion the conclusion was reached, it is reported, that the traditional authorship must be set on one side. Homer did not write the *Iliad*, but another man of the same name, who lived at the same time and place. An analogous conclusion seems to have been reached here. It could not have been John the Apostle who wrote it, but a particular friend of his of the same name, a sort of supernumerary apostle, a class of person the Gospels forgot to mention.

It has been asserted that our Gospel was first circulated by the Gnostics, but this is not borne out by the facts, and had it been so it would have been a sufficient reason against its acceptance by the Church Fathers (*e.g.* Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Eusebius, Irenaeus), who were strongly opposed to Gnosticism. Indeed, the testimony of the last named, who was well acquainted both with the

western and eastern churches, to the canonicity and authorship of the Fourth Gospel, has additional weight from its non-controversial character; he speaks of it as a well-known fact beyond dispute.

Author's Reply.

I must apologise for having passed over many points altogether, and having treated others so cursorily. I thought it best to confine myself to the question of authorship without dealing with, *e.g.*, differences from the Synoptists, or the exactness of the discourses. And even on the main subject I had to decide between trying to cover the ground generally, or dealing with certain points at length while neglecting others. Hence, it is quite true that very much more might have been said to show that the Evangelist was a Palestinian Jew, and an eye-witness of what he records.

As to some points mentioned by the Chairman:—Personally, I do not think that the arguments for ascribing the last chapter to a different author are very convincing. But that it is an appendix seems shown by the careful way in which chap. xx ends, giving, as one speaker has said, the object for which the Gospel was written, whereas xxi ends abruptly. But v. 24 certainly looks to me like an attestation by others; otherwise we shall have "He knoweth" as in xix, 35. The tradition in the *Muratorian Canon* either interprets the verse thus or supports this interpretation. But I could not deal with the authority of chap. xxi except at the expense of other points. The suggestion that John the son of Zebedee may have been a priest is interesting, but it is only a possibility.

The difference in diction between the Gospel and the Apocalypse might also have been dealt with. A few years back the Neronian date of the Apocalypse was strongly in favour; not so now. If this be given up, the difference may be explained by the Apocalypse having been written down just as the author spoke, *i.e.*, very Hebraistic; while the Gospel was written at leisure and perhaps carefully revised.

Of older books maintaining the Johannine authorship, Lightfoot's *Biblical Essays* is extremely good. The most recent book on this side is that of Dr. Scott Holland. There is also a very good book on the Four Gospels by Dr. Maurice Jones, fully up to date.

THE 663RD ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W., ON MONDAY, MARCH 24TH, 1924, AT 4.30 P.M.

JAMES W. THIRTLE, ESQ., LL.D., M.R.A.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The CHAIRMAN announced that the Rev. A. W. Oxford, M.D., who was to have presided, had been prevented by illness from attending, and that he had stepped into the breach.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the election of Mr. Clifford Newton as an Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced Mr. W. E. Leslie to read his paper on "Telepathy."

TELEPATHY.

By WILSON EDWARDS LESLIE, Esq.

TELEPATHY is a subject which arouses widespread interest, but there is a general lack of information as to the data which have been accumulated by systematic record and research. Unfortunately this is true also of certain aspects of the subject in which a lack of perspective can easily lead to far-reaching misconceptions.

It was thought, therefore, that a brief and ordered outline of the data might usefully be attempted. As the Victoria Institute is interested in the special sciences rather in their relation to Christian Philosophy than as ends in themselves, the wider implicates of the subject have been kept in view.

The word "Telepathy" is used in this paper to denote the related emergence of an idea or sensation in two or more minds when the circumstances preclude the operation of chance or any hitherto recognized medium of communication. It is not intended to imply any explanation of the phenomena, which, indeed, might be due to more than one cause.

Let us now consider what evidence there is that telepathy is a fact in Nature. We may begin with certain experiments which, in the view of the workers concerned, have yielded negative results.