

THE HISTORICAL VALUE  
OF THE  
FOURTH GOSPEL

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## PREFACE

THIS book is a reprint, with a few necessary verbal changes, of a series of papers which have appeared in the *Expositor* during the last twelve months. They are here reprinted by permission of the Editor, who was kind enough to suggest to the Publishers that the papers were worth issuing in book form. As this opinion was shared by others, I have acted upon it, and turned each paper into a chapter. I send forth the book in the hope that it may draw the attention of its readers to many points of interest and importance in the Fourth Gospel, and may be of use to other workers in the same field.

E. H. A.

KIRKBY LONSDALE.

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## **INTRODUCTORY**

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

THE writer of these pages sets himself the task of showing on internal grounds that the Fourth Gospel is a historical and not merely, as some present-day critics affirm, a theological document. In speaking, however, of the Gospel as historical we do not mean that the aim of the writer of it was primarily a historical one. His interest may well have been theological, as indeed he expressly states it to have been (xx. 31). But our contention will here be that the writer did not invent his story to teach theological truth. We believe that the things which the Evangelist records as

having happened are real events, that they did take place. In saying this we are setting ourselves in opposition to much of the criticism of our day, which denies to this Gospel serious historical value, regarding it as irreconcilable with the Synoptic tradition of the life of Jesus Christ.

For the opposition to the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel is based chiefly on internal grounds. Its external credentials might be accepted by adverse critics were it not for what they consider to be overwhelming objections against its apostolic authorship on the ground of internal evidence. But, as it is, the external evidence is explained away because it is thought that the story of the life of Jesus in this Gospel cannot be brought into agreement with what is acknowledged to be the earlier story in point of time, that, namely, which we have in the pages of the Synoptists. Critics opposed to the Johannine authorship of the Gospel contend that

both stories of the life of Jesus—that of the Synoptists and that of the Fourth Gospel—cannot be alike historical. A choice, then, has to be made between the two, and preference is shown for the Synoptic story. For it is argued that the Fourth Gospel is obviously a theological document, and its writer's interests are theologically determined, so that its genesis is explicable on theological grounds. While, then, the Fourth Gospel may be an interesting psychological study its contents are not history and are not to be so interpreted.

It is because the opposition to the historical character of the Fourth Gospel is based principally on its contents, and because the external credentials of the apostolic authorship of the book are explained away, not for the reason that they are trivial, but because they cannot outweigh the internal evidence, that we shall in these pages confine our attention to this internal evidence, and discuss the historical

probability of the events which this Gospel records.

Now it is clear that the mind, when it applies itself to considerations of historical probability, cannot possibly start as if it were a *tabula rasa*. For in judging whether or not a document is historically probable, that is to say whether or not the events recorded in it are likely to have happened, we are either comparing the document itself with other documents which may agree with or conflict with it, or we are judging of the agreement of its recorded events with individual or general human experience. Thus it may be argued that the story in the Fourth Gospel is historically improbable because it contains so much of the miraculous. This is an objection which might equally well be urged against the other Gospels, and it is no part of our present purpose to consider it. The case before us is that of a document purporting to be historical

and yet not in agreement with other documents. We have to do with critics who accept the Synoptic account of the life of Jesus as, in the main at any rate, historical but who contend that the story of the same life in the Fourth Gospel is so much at variance with it that it cannot be seriously regarded as history. The interests of the writer are so obviously theological that there can be no doubt that his record of the life of Jesus is to be interpreted not historically but theologically.

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon at the outset of our inquiry that the Fourth Gospel does certainly put forth its own claim to be historical, to be an account of things which really happened. Indeed it purports to be the work of an eyewitness of some, at any rate, of the things which it records. Thus at the beginning of the Gospel (i. 14) we read: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt

among us; and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." And this assertion of personal witness is clearly put forward in the opening words of the first Johannine Epistle, a work which is generally recognised to proceed from the same hand as the Gospel, whether or no that hand be the hand of John the son of Zebedee: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us."

No asseveration of personal witness of the life of Jesus could well be stronger

than this. And it is reaffirmed in the narrative of the Gospel. Thus when the writer records the incident of the piercing of the side of the Crucified, out of which there came blood and water, he adds (xix. 35): "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true that ye also may believe." Whether the statement at the close of the Gospel (xxi. 24) is one made by the author himself or is a later addition, it too is an assertion of personal witness: "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true."

This last-quoted verse shows that it is intended that the author of the Gospel should be identified with the person who is described in its pages as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." This is clear from the connection of the verse with those immediately preceding it. We thus have



to recognise the presence, purported at any rate, of the writer at several of the scenes described by him. He was present at the Last Supper (xiii. 23), to him was intrusted by Jesus the care of His mother (xix. 26, 27), he was a witness of the empty tomb (xx. 1-10), and he saw personally the risen Jesus (xxi. 7).

Now it may, of course, be said that this is but a device on the part of the writer to give authority to his work. We are told that pseudonymous writing was common in old times and that the practice of it must not be judged by modern standards of authorship. This is indeed an important point that has to be borne in mind in estimating the genuineness of ancient writings. But it may be questioned whether it has much to do with the case before us. For what the writer does *not* do in his Gospel is to lay claim to a great name. It is the modesty of his reference to himself that specially strikes

us. He never names himself at all, but he employs always a circumlocution when he has to make mention of himself. Thus we have seen above how he describes himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the identity of this disciple with the author, real or purported, being assured to us by the statement of xxi. 24.

And there can be little doubt that the writer intends the reader of the Gospel to see his presence at other scenes which he records, when he does not name himself. When in the first chapter (35 ff.) he tells of two disciples of John who both followed Jesus at the instigation of the Baptist he gives the name of one of them but not that of the other. "One of the two that heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." It has been generally understood that the other was the author himself.

So again in xviii. 15 he writes that two disciples followed Jesus from the garden,

where the betrayal had taken place, to the palace of the high priest. The one disciple he names—Simon Peter—the other is spoken of simply as “another disciple.” It can hardly be supposed that the author was ignorant of the name of this other disciple, for he tells us so much about him. He “was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest.” And when Peter was standing outside “the other disciple which was known unto the high priest went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.” And it was in connexion with this admission of Peter by the portress into the court of the high priest that the first denial made by Peter of his Master occurred. The whole account of this scene is indeed most graphic and circumstantial, and the character of the description is at once explained if it be the work of an eyewitness, as it will be if the author be that other disciple. In a later chapter we shall return to this matter.

The point which it is sought to emphasise now is that while the author of the Gospel does undoubtedly seem to wish to give his readers the impression that he himself played a part in some, at any rate, of the scenes which he describes, and that he writes as one who knows because he has seen and heard, he yet does this with such modesty and self-suppression that it becomes absurd to treat the Gospel as a pseudonymous writing which claims authority by the use of some great and honoured name.

It must not, however, be denied that it is possible that the writer of the Gospel may have wished to make it appear that he was an eyewitness of the events that he records in order to give authority to his writing. But there is a serious objection to this theory of the make-belief of discipleship, which may be stated here. It is this. The claim to be a personal disciple and eyewitness is not sufficiently prominent to support the theory. It is altogether too casual and by-

the-way. For it must be remembered that the theory presupposes that the writer's interest is mainly theological and that he forges events and puts into the mouth of Jesus words which He did not really speak in order to give support to the doctrine contained in them. But in those parts of the Gospel which are most doctrinal the presence of the writer is not hinted at, with the exception of the chapters which give the discourse in the upper chamber at the Last Supper. He does not anywhere in those sections of the Gospel which give our Lord's public discourses refer to his own presence at the time they were delivered. He does not say: I was there, and I heard these words, and I know, therefore, that they are the doctrine of the Lord. Even in the upper chamber, where the writer represents himself as present, he does not emphasise his presence. The only two occasions in the Gospel where the personal witness of the writer is specially emphasised are those

which have been already mentioned, namely, the piercing of the Lord's side, whereat there came out blood and water, and the manifestation of the risen Jesus. As by the mention of the one the writer gives his personal testimony to the actual death of Jesus, so by his record of the other he bears witness to the Lord's triumph over death.

Personal witness is all-important on such points as these; and if the witness which the writer so emphatically gives were not true, he would be an impostor; and no appreciation of the sublime grandeur of his conception of the Person of Jesus Christ should blind our eyes to the fact. There would be no excuse for what would be a deliberate falsehood. Even if these things did take place and the writer had not personal experience of them and yet said that he had, he would stand guilty of a deception which no good intention could justify. If the words of xix 35 be not true, they are gross deceit. For even though xxi. 24 may be no claim of the

author of the Gospel, but an addition made by some other writer who may have genuinely believed what he said, the same cannot be said of xix. 35. The words, "He knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe," could only come from the writer of the Gospel himself; for he alone could testify that he knew that he was speaking the truth. For while one, other than the author of the Gospel, might testify that the author was saying what was true—a testimony which he could only give if he had independent evidence of the truth of what was related—he would not be likely to say that the author knew that he was speaking the truth; whereas the statement comes quite naturally from the Evangelist himself.

We must not, however, omit to mention, in passing, the opinion that has been entertained that the pronoun *ἐκεῖνος* in this verse has reference, not to the Evangelist, but to the Lord Jesus. This opinion originates with Zahn (*Einleitung*, ii. p. 476), and it has found

favour with Dr. Sanday. It is not necessary to discuss the matter here, for the argument is not seriously affected by it, but I confess that I prefer Westcott's view that the person intended by ἐκεῖνος is the same as the subject of μεμαρτύρηκεν. But even if we suppose that Zahn is right and that what is here written amounts to "Christ knoweth that what the writer is saying is true," it would still remain true that we have here an asseveration of the Evangelist himself and not the testimony of another. For a man is not wont to call Heaven to witness that something that has been said is true unless it be what he himself has said.

The claim, then, of the author of the Fourth Gospel to have been a personal disciple of Jesus, and to have seen and heard something of that which he records, seems unmistakable. It is a claim put forward by the Evangelist himself, and it is supported by the testimony of xxi. 24. But this claim has been and still is disputed. It becomes



necessary, then, to examine it and to decide whether it can be justified. If it be the case, as adverse critics contend, that the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is not the Jesus of the Synoptists, but the poetic creation of a later time, then the Gospel is not historical in the true sense of the word.

But how shall we institute our inquiry, and on what principles shall we carry it forward? Our document does not stand alone, but it has to be considered in relation to the other three Gospels. We are assuming that the Synoptic Gospels are, speaking generally, historical, that they give a true picture of Jesus Christ, who really did do and say the things which He is in them represented to have done and said, that they are a faithful account of His deeds and words and of His manner of living and speaking. Of course it has to be borne in mind that there are differences and divergences even among the Synoptists, but for our purpose these are for the most part unimportant,

though they have their importance in what is known as the Synoptic Problem. With that we have not here to do. Assuming the general historical correctness of the Synoptists, we have to bring the Fourth Gospel into connexion with them.

On comparing the Fourth Gospel with the other three we observe that it covers ground which they also cover, while it also contains much matter peculiar to itself, namely, the Judæan ministry of Jesus. It seems desirable, then, first of all to compare with the Synoptists those parts of the Fourth Gospel which treat of subjects common to it and them. For the time the Judæan ministry peculiar to St. John may be left out of account. We will first inquire whether the character of the Fourth Gospel in those parts of it which touch closely the Synoptic narratives is such that its claim to be the work of a personal disciple and eyewitness can be sustained. For if it be indeed the writing of one who drew from

his personal experience, this ought to show itself in the narrative. The author need not agree with the Synoptists in every detail, but in the main he should, and we ought to find incidental touches which give evidence of personal witness. Agreement with the other Gospels would of course prove nothing in itself, for our author, if he be only a fictitious disciple and eye-witness, will have drawn his information from them. We must look for independence even in those parts of the Gospel which touch the Synoptists most closely. We must test our Evangelist in regard to those points in which his account of things, which the Synoptists record, differs from theirs, either in the way of correction or of addition.

I may say, then, at once that a careful examination of those parts of the Fourth Gospel which can be compared with the other three as treating of a common subject, has led me to the conclusion that the

Evangelist is indeed writing from personal experience, and I desire to state at length my reasons for this conclusion.

The sections of our Gospel which we shall first examine, being those which touch closely the Synoptic narratives, will be the ones which deal with the ministry of the Baptist, with the betrayal, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus, and with the post-resurrection appearances. After dealing with these we will pass to consider a group of five other events common to the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel, namely, the cleansing of the temple, the feeding of the five thousand, the walking on the sea, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and the Last Supper.

After we have examined in some detail these parts of the Fourth Gospel which treat of events which the other Evangelists also treat of, and substantiated the claim of the fourth Evangelist to be a personal disciple and eyewitness, we can proceed to

the consideration of those sections of his Gospel which treat of the Judæan ministry, and we shall start without prejudice against their historical probability.

It will have been noticed that we have been proceeding on the assumption that the Fourth Gospel is the work of one author, and it may be objected that we have not allowed for the possibility that in some parts of the Gospel we may have the work and testimony of a personal disciple while in other portions this may not be the case. Well, for my own part, I believe that this Gospel is one and indivisible, and that it is impossible without violence to dissect it or sever one part from another. The narrative flows on without creating any suspicion that at any point of it a new hand has become engaged on it. I except, of course, the section at the beginning of chapter viii. and possibly also the two concluding verses of the Gospel. The rest is all alike written in

the style peculiarly "Johannine," a style so distinctive that it seems well-nigh impossible that it could proceed from more than one person. It is the style of the Fourth Gospel, and the style too of the so-called First Epistle of St. John. And if we can make good our contention that the Fourth Gospel is the work of a personal disciple as it claims to be, then there is very good reason to believe that its author is John the son of Zebedee.

I do not propose to discuss the theory put forward by Delff and subjected to criticism by Dr. Sanday (*The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*), that the author of certain parts of the Fourth Gospel, though a personal disciple, is yet some other person than John the son of Zebedee. The choice seems to me to lie between the traditional authorship and a mere make-believe of personal testimony. My object in these chapters is primarily to vindicate the historical character of the Fourth

Gospel, so that the person of the writer of it is not of chief concern. But I am persuaded that if the Gospel is recognised, as I believe it will have to be, but is not in Delff's theory, as an indivisible whole, and the writing of a personal disciple, it will be acknowledged to be the work of John the Apostle.

# **THE MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIST**



## CHAPTER II

### THE MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIST

ALL the four Evangelists agree in representing the ministry of the Baptist as a deliberate preparation made by him for the coming of Another after him greater than himself. In all the Gospels the Baptist comes forward in fulfilment of the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight" (or "make ready") "the way of the Lord." And in all he points to Another who is to come after him, the latchet of whose shoes he is not worthy to unloose.\* The scene of the Baptist's preaching is the valley of the

\* Matthew has a slightly different expression.

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Jordan, and in the river Jordan he baptized those who came to him. In the Fourth Gospel a particular place named Bethany (i. 28) is mentioned, "These things were done in Bethany beyond Jordan where John was baptizing." This particularity of statement on the part of this Evangelist is noteworthy and is easily explicable if he were himself, as the narrative seems to suggest, a disciple of John. On this point more will be said presently. But we must throughout our investigation into the question whether our Gospel does or does not show true signs of being the work of a personal disciple and eyewitness, notice particularly those points in which the author gives details, lacking in the other Evangelists, in the scenes and events described both by him and by some or all of them. We draw attention, then, at this point to the particular mention of Bethany beyond Jordan.

But we must pass now to consider the

broad outlines of the story of the preaching and baptism of John in the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel.

The account given in St. Mark is very short. He tells how John came in fulfilment of the words of prophecy, and baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. He then tells of the crowds that went to his baptism, and gives a brief description of the appearance of the Baptist, who was clothed with camel's hair and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and he adds that his food was locusts and wild honey. He mentions the Baptist's proclamation of Him who was to come after him, mightier than he, and for whom he was unworthy to perform the most menial office. This One, when He came, would confer a baptism greater than the Baptist's. For while the Baptist baptized with water, this Greater One to come would baptize with the Holy Ghost. The Evange-

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list then passes on to tell of the baptism of Jesus by John. He records how, as Jesus came up out of the water, He saw the heavens rent asunder and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.

The other two Synoptists utilise Mark, and they have information to give besides, derived from some other source. St. Matthew tells of Pharisees and Sadducees coming to John's baptism, and of the Baptist's insistence in their case on a true repentance. Claims of privilege, such as "We have Abraham to our father," were insufficient. St. Luke gives this same warning of the Baptist, though he speaks of it as addressed to the multitudes. He also gives details of the Baptist's requirements from special classes who came to his baptism asking advice: What shall we do? We may remark, too, that St. Luke represents the Baptist's reference to Him that

should come after him as being made at a time when the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ.

We now turn to the account given of these things in the Fourth Gospel. We will remark first of all that while the Evangelist, like the Synoptists, finds a place in his story of the Baptist for the words of the prophet Isaiah, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord," he does not simply say, as do the Synoptists, that the Baptist came in fulfilment of, or in accordance with, this prophecy, but he represents the Baptist as applying these words to himself. He tells of a mission sent to the Baptist from the religious leaders of the nation in Jerusalem requiring him to declare himself. The Jews, we read, sent unto him from Jerusalem priests and Levites to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and

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denied not; and he confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet?\* And he answered, No. They said, therefore, unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? It was then that the Baptist replied: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.

Now we can gather from a later portion of the Synoptic narrative that the religious authorities at Jerusalem did not acknowledge the Baptist. For when they questioned the authority of Jesus to cleanse the temple, and indeed challenged Him with the question, by what authority He did these things, and He put to them the counter question, whether the baptism of John was from heaven or of men, they found themselves in a dilemma. They

\* For the reference here see Westcott's Commentary.

feared to say that it was of men because the people took John for a prophet. And if they said that it was from heaven, then Jesus would ask them, Why then did ye not believe him? It is clear, then, that they had not believed in the mission of the Baptist. Thus this deputation to the Baptist of which we read in the Fourth Gospel is rendered a probable event by what we find recorded in another connection in the Synoptists.

And when we come to reflect on the matter, we can see that the application of the words of Isaiah to the Baptist which we find in the Synoptists is more likely than not to have been made by himself first of all rather than by others who regarded him as divinely sent. If the Baptist in his humility had made his own this appellation—a voice crying in the wilderness—we can well understand the application of it to him in the Synoptists, whereas it is not easy to understand that those

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who believed in his divine mission and took him for a prophet sent by God would have applied to him a description which might seem derogatory. I find, then, in his account of the mission from Jerusalem to the Baptist, recorded by our Evangelist, a mark that we have here to do with the words of one who knew. And we shall be able, I think, to go further than this and to say that we have here the record of one who heard and saw the things which he narrates. But of this presently.

We referred above to the fact that St. Luke places the Baptist's references to Him that was mightier, and who was to come after him, at the time of expectation on the part of the people when men were questioning in their hearts whether John was the Christ. We may notice now that with this accords the narrative of the Fourth Gospel. The members of the mission sent from Jerusalem having obtained from the Baptist the confession that he



was not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet, proceed to question him, and ask him why then he is engaged in baptizing. And John answered them: "I baptize with water: in the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, even He that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose."

It may perhaps appear strange that the fourth Evangelist, if he had accurate knowledge of the work of the Baptist, should not mention the baptism of Jesus which all the Synoptists record. But silence on the part of a writer as to any particular event does not prove that he did not know of it, and indeed a careful reading of our Gospel seems to show that the Evangelist did know of the baptism of Jesus, and that, though he does not record it explicitly, it is very clearly implied in what he says. We read that on the day after the Baptist's reception of the deputation from Jerusalem, he saw Jesus coming unto him, and

said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is become before me: for He was before me. And I knew Him not; but that He should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing with water." And John bare witness, saying, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

This section of the narrative requires careful consideration. In the first place we note that it implies all that the Synoptists say about the baptism of Jesus at the hands of John the Baptist. "John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit

descending as a dove out of heaven, and it abode upon Him." It may be said that the Evangelist does not associate this descent of the Spirit upon Jesus with His baptism. But surely this is implied very clearly in the words that follow: "He that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit." The words suggest that the descent of the Spirit upon the chosen One was to take place in the course of the administration of the baptism. *He that sent the Baptist to baptize with water* had given him a sign—a sign which (as the association of ideas seems to imply) was to take place at the baptism of Him thus marked out.

Again we note that if our Evangelist says nothing of the voice from heaven which was heard at the baptism of Jesus, this, too, is implicit in his story. That voice, according to the Synoptists, had declared:

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This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And here in the Fourth Gospel we have the testimony of the Baptist: I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. This title "Son of God" may well not have meant to the Baptist all that we read into it, but at any rate it implied Christhood or Messiahship, and the use of it by the Baptist is a faithful witness on his part to the voice from heaven, if indeed that voice had proclaimed "This is my beloved Son."

We may, then, without forcing the narrative of the Fourth Gospel, say that the baptism of Jesus, the descent of the Spirit upon Him in the form of a dove at His baptism, and the voice from heaven, declaring Him to be the Son of God, are all implicit in it. But we must face the objection that in our Gospel the Baptist says that he knew Him not until the sign was fulfilled, whereas in the narrative of

Matthew John is represented as saying to Jesus, who came to be baptized by him: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." This seems to show that the Baptist already knew the superiority of Jesus—knew, in fact, that He was the one to whom the Baptist had pointed, and for whom he had prepared the way.

There are two possible explanations of the difficulty which here confronts us. In the first place it might be said that it is extremely likely that the Baptist was already acquainted with Jesus, seeing that, according to St. Luke, their mothers were related to one another. The Baptist may well have been impressed by the character and personality of Jesus, and may even have had a presentiment, which was now to be converted into a certainty by the fulfilment of the sign that had been given

to him, that this was indeed He for whose coming he was preparing men's hearts. Or, secondly, it might be said that we cannot be expected to accept every statement in Matthew as true in historical detail. The Evangelist may be expressing what seemed to Christians a very proper sentiment on the part of the Baptist. Such an explanation would, I confess, be no shock to me, and would in no way upset my faith in the general reliability of the Gospel narrative. I regard the First Gospel as principally valuable to us for the sayings of Jesus which it records rather than for its statements of historical fact. And certainly I cannot discredit the very plain statement of the Baptist recorded for us in the Fourth Gospel, for I believe on other grounds that we have here the witness of a personal disciple of the Baptist. I cannot accept it as a principle of criticism of the Gospels that the Synoptists are to be preferred in every detail, and that the

Fourth Gospel is to be discredited if anywhere its statements do not accord with those of the other three. The value which we attach to the Fourth Gospel will depend in large measure on whether or not we are persuaded by a careful examination of its contents as a whole that it is the testimony of one who knew, who had seen and who had heard. This is its claim, and it is this claim that we are engaged in examining and carefully weighing. We have so far made but little way in the task we have set ourselves. The conclusion which every one must form for himself will depend upon a careful examination of the whole evidence. Weak points in it, if such there seem to be, must be noted by each inquirer. An honest attempt will be made in these pages to face all the facts of the case and a purely *ex parte* statement of it will be carefully avoided. The reader has already understood that it is our object to defend the traditional authorship of the Gospel, but

we would be preserved in our task from any suppression of the facts.

We now return to the narrative of the Evangelist. We have considered the witness of John to himself as a mere Voice to proclaim One who was to come after, and we have seen him in the presence of this Other whom he declared to be the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. I know that it has been said that this is the language of later Christian devotion and worship, and that it is an anachronism to put such a saying into the mouth of the Baptist. But there is nothing incredible to one who believes John the Baptist to have been a Heaven-sent prophet to prepare the way of the Christ, that he should have had an insight, divinely given, into the sin-bearing office that this Other would have to assume.

This testimony of the Baptist to "the Lamb of God" is repeated on the following day when Jesus again walked by, as John stood



with two of his disciples. And the two disciples, we are told, heard him thus speak, and they followed Jesus. "And Jesus turned and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi, where abidest Thou? He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came, therefore, and saw where He abode; and they abode with Him that day: it was about the tenth hour." We notice this particularity of statement, which is intelligible if the writer had himself a share in these events. And that he had a share in them has been surmised with good reason from the words which follow: "One of the two that heard John speak and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." The other he does not name, and, as we have seen, it is according to his manner to preserve his own anonymity. It has been inferred, then, that the other was John himself, the writer of the Gospel.

A difficulty, however, arises at once, for

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it would seem from the Synoptists that the call by Jesus of John, the son of Zebedee, to discipleship came at a later time, as did also that of Andrew and his brother Simon Peter, both of whom are associated with Jesus at this earlier stage in the Fourth Gospel. For we read that Andrew "findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). And he brought him to Jesus, who looked upon him and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is, by interpretation, Peter)."

Now this whole passage has seemed to the opponents of the Johannine authorship of the Gospel to present serious and insurmountable historical difficulties; for not only, as we have said already, does it antedate the call to Simon Peter and Andrew (and John, too, if he be intended by that other disciple), but it antedates too by a long way the recognition, by

these disciples of Jesus, of His Messiahship. It is not to be denied that these are serious difficulties which must be properly faced, but I doubt whether they are as formidable as is often imagined.

Let us at first put on one side the difficulty presented by the disciples' too early acknowledgment of the Messiahship of Jesus and consider the question of the time of their call to be disciples.

Mark's account is as follows: "And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they left the nets and followed him. And going on a little further, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee

in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him." Matthew borrows his account from Mark, and adds nothing to it. The only small point of difference is that Matthew omits mention of the hired servants. St. Luke, however, gives a much fuller account of the call of these disciples at the sea of Galilee and places it in connection with a miraculous draught of fishes (St. Luke v. 1-11). I think it cannot be denied that the fuller narrative of St. Luke here is to be preferred to the very cursory and, as it stands, hardly intelligible account given by Mark, and copied by Matthew. It seems extremely unlikely that Jesus was unknown to Peter before the call at the sea of Galilee to become a fisher of men. Indeed in St. Luke the order of events is so given that the healing of Simon's wife's mother in the house of Simon precedes the call associated in that Gospel with the miraculous draught of fishes. It is true that in Mark the order of events

is reversed, and the healing of Peter's mother-in-law follows the call by the sea of Galilee. Historical probability is, however, all in favour of some previous acquaintance of Peter with the Master before he would be ready to obey the call to follow Him and to become a fisher of men, and the account given in Mark of these things is altogether too fragmentary to enable us to get a true perspective of the progress of events.

We may say, then, that the Synoptic narratives, collectively considered, do not exclude the possibility of a prior acquaintance of Peter and Andrew and James and John with Jesus before their call by the sea of Galilee: and this acquaintance may not have been lacking in intimacy; and an informal discipleship and partial companionship may well have preceded the final call which followed upon the miraculous draught of fishes. Then the disciples threw in their lot with Jesus to

be trained by Him to become fishers of men.

Apart from the fact that St. Luke in his account places the healing of Simon's mother-in-law before the call at the lake (an order of events, however, reversed in Mark), we may observe that the reply of Peter to Jesus, when the command to let down the nets was given, suggests previous knowledge of, and confidence in, Jesus: "Master, we have toiled all night, and took nothing, but at thy word I will let down the nets."

So, then, we cannot discredit the Fourth Gospel on the ground that it brings these future apostles into a position of discipleship under Jesus in the neighbourhood of the Jordan and before the ministry in Galilee. But there is the further difficulty. It has been objected that the recognition and confession of the Messiahship of Jesus on the part of these disciples in the Fourth Gospel is premature. It is said that according to

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the Synoptists this recognition did not come until a later stage, when Peter made his great confession at Cæsarea Philippi (Mark viii. 27, Matt. xvi. 13, Luke ix. 18). And further, it is pointed out that when the confession was made, Jesus strictly charged His disciples not to make it known that He was the Christ, whereas in the Fourth Gospel the claim to Messiahship is everywhere prominent and public.

Now if it be the case, as the Fourth Gospel represents it to be, that some of the first disciples of Jesus were led to Him by the influence of the Baptist, who directed them to Jesus as the One for whose coming he had been preparing, it is almost inconceivable that, even at that early stage, there should not have been some sort of recognition, or at any rate hope, of His Messiahship. Surely the Baptist knew that he had come to prepare the way for the Messiah, nor did he make any secret of the fact. And the story of

the baptism of Jesus as we have it in the Synoptists finds a place for the assertion of His Messianic office; for the voice from heaven proclaims Him to be the Son of God, which title at least implied Messiahship, whatever further depth of meaning it might contain. There is, of course, the question: For whom was this voice meant? Who heard it? It is not quite clear from the narratives of Mark and Matthew whether it was Jesus or John who saw the Spirit like a dove descend, and it is not said who heard the voice, but only that there was a voice. In Mark the voice addresses Jesus: Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased. In Matthew it speaks of, but not to, Jesus: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. St. Luke makes the voice address Jesus, but he does not say who heard it, nor who saw the Spirit. He merely says that the heaven opened and the Holy Spirit came down in bodily



form like a dove upon him, and a voice came out of heaven: Thou art My beloved Son, &c.

According to the Fourth Gospel it was the Baptist who saw the Spirit descend on Jesus, and there is no reason to suppose that any other bystanders witnessed the sign. It was for the Baptist; and it must have been from him that the story of the baptism of Jesus came. He saw and he bore witness that this was the Son of God (John i. 34). It is a mistake to suppose that this title thus applied to Jesus at this early stage in the Fourth Gospel goes beyond anything which we find at the corresponding stage in the Synoptists. In their pages Jesus is declared thus early to be the Son of God, and there is no suggestion that this was a title to be kept secret. Nor is there anything at all improbable in the statement of the Fourth Evangelist that the Baptist testified that he had seen the sign of the descent of the Spirit like a

dove, and that He bore witness to the Son of God.

Is it unlikely, then, we ask, that some of the disciples of the Baptist, having been thus directed by him to Jesus, should have gone over to Him in the belief that He was the Messiah? If Andrew believed the testimony of the Baptist, would it not be quite natural that he should say to his brother Simon, as in the Fourth Gospel he is represented as saying, We have found the Messiah? As yet he believes Him to be the Messiah only on the testimony of another. His is at present a discovery of hope rather than an assurance of faith, which could only come later on when he had learnt to know his Master. Perhaps those first disciples were too ready at first to call Jesus Messiah without realising what it meant. And we find Jesus almost rebuking Nathanael for a too hasty confession. When Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus, who showed by His words addressed

to Nathanael that He knew what he had been doing and of what he had been thinking and perhaps also reading, Nathanael is so struck by this that he acknowledges that Philip must have been right when he said to him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. He too readily confesses: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art King of Israel." Then comes what sounds like a rebuke from Jesus: "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these." And then he adds—and the plural pronoun seems to show that the words, though addressed to Nathanael, were meant not for him alone but for his fellow-disciples too: "Verily verily, I say unto you, ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." So, then, until they knew Jesus to be the true link between earth and

heaven, the one Mediator between God and man, they were incapable of making a full confession of faith. If their hope was already set on Him, they must pass through much discipline and experience before they could be said to know Him.

We may say, then, that the faith of these early disciples of Jesus, who had passed to Him from the Baptist, was, at this early stage, of a very elementary character, and I do not think that if the first chapter of our Gospel be carefully read, it can be said that the Evangelist represents it as otherwise. There is plenty of room left for development, and that could only come by their personal intercourse with the Master. What gives special value to the great confession of St. Peter at the later stage is that it proceeds from personal knowledge. He is not repeating what another has said to him. Flesh and blood have not revealed it to him, but the Father in heaven. It is an act of personal

faith, proceeding from personal knowledge and experience. This could not be said of these confessions, really little better than expressed hopes, which are recorded in the first chapter of St. John. They are worthy to be recorded, not because of what they were then, but because of what they developed into later.

It may perhaps seem useless to speculate why our Lord should have made use of the figure of the ladder in His conversation with Nathanael, but something may be said on this point in passing. It would appear from the conversation that Nathanael's thoughts had been running on the patriarch Jacob. It is difficult otherwise to understand the bearing of the greeting of Jesus: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," and Nathanael's answer, which seems to show that Jesus had read what was going on in his mind, Whence knowest thou Me? We learn from what follows that Nathanael

had been sitting under a fig-tree when Philip called him, and Nathanael was as much, if not more astonished that Jesus knew this than that He was able to read his thoughts. What was Philip doing under the fig-tree? Possibly he had been engaged in meditation or in reading, and the subject that occupied him may well have been the story of Jacob. Such a supposition—it is but a conjecture after all—gives unity to the whole incident and would explain our Lord's reference to Jacob's ladder, to which it hardly admits of doubt that His words (i. 51) do refer. This underlying unity may seem fanciful. It was suggested to me many years ago by one who has now been long dead. The impression it made upon me as in itself very likely is as strong now as it was then.

I do not propose in the present chapter to discuss the point, referred to above, which is made against the Fourth Gospel, namely, that the Messiahship of Jesus is so much

to the fore and so widely talked about, whereas in the Synoptists Jesus is represented as urging silence on the point. It is an objection which does not properly concern us here, and it will be best to reserve it for consideration at a later stage. But we shall do well before closing this chapter to say something about the story of the ministry of the Baptist as given by our Evangelist, regarding it, as we shall now do, as proceeding from one who had himself been a disciple of the Baptist, from whom he passed to become a disciple of Jesus.

Indeed, the whole point of view taken by the Evangelist seems to me to be that of a disciple who honoured and revered his master, and that not blindly, but with a real appreciation of his powers and of his limitations. He gave up this his first master to follow and to be taught by Another, but he remembers the former one with gratitude and affection. He recognises

that the Baptist was divinely sent, but he was not the light, nor did he claim to be what he was not. He bore witness of the light, and faithfully directed men away from himself to that Other for whom he came to prepare the way. He confessed, and denied not—there is no wavering, no uncertainty, no self-seeking—he confessed, I am not the Christ.

It is this same Evangelist who records the noble words of the Baptist spoken when he was confronted by the growing popularity of Jesus: "A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (iii. 27-30).



What our Evangelist tells us of the Baptist does not, then, concern his outward appearance, nor his meat and drink, nor does he say anything of the crowds that came to him. He tells rather how the Baptist led some of his disciples away from himself to follow Another. His theme is the testimony of the Baptist to the Christ. He is not ashamed to have given up his first master to follow that Other, because for this very purpose had he been a disciple of the Baptist, that by him he might be led on to become a disciple of Jesus. From the Synoptists we learn nothing of how some of the Baptist's disciples became disciples of Jesus. But if the work of the Baptist was what the Synoptists declare it to have been, namely, to prepare the way for the Christ, it is hardly conceivable that this work, faithfully carried out, could have failed of this result—to supply disciples for Him. The first chapter of the Fourth Gospel shows the Baptist making this

supply, and he who wrote it was, I believe, one who passed to discipleship under Jesus through the faithful witness borne to Him by the Baptist. He had learnt what the Baptist had to teach him, which was to follow Jesus. By transferring his allegiance to the new Master he was really continuing, in the only true way, his allegiance to the old.

It is one of the objections urged by Schmiedel against the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel that the picture which it gives of the Baptist and his ministry does not accord with historical probability. In the Fourth Gospel, he says,\* the Baptist knows not only the superior dignity of Jesus as does Matthew (the reference here being of course to the Baptist's protest, "I have need to be baptized of Thee," which Schmiedel regards as a later addition to

\* See his pamphlet in the series *Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher* entitled *Das Vierte Evangelium gegenüber den drei ersten*, p. 64. I have given a somewhat free rendering of his words.

the original story) and that He was destined to be the redeemer of the whole world, but also his previous life with God in heaven (St. John i. 15, 30). The task of the Baptist, then, is exclusively confined to bearing witness to Jesus. Not for a moment has his baptism value for those who have a share in it; he practises it only that he may be able to witness for Jesus. There is no mention anywhere of his preaching of repentance. His later question, whether Jesus were the Messiah, would, therefore, be altogether impossible, for he would then be guilty of a sinful doubt respecting that which had been revealed to him by God. According to the original account of the Synoptists, on the other hand, he knew nothing up to this time which put him into a position to decide this question (for Schmiedel considers the voice at the baptism to have been addressed to, and heard only by, Jesus). In short, he says, instead of a strong,

though in its spiritual outlook limited personality, worthy of honour in His tragic death, the Fourth Gospel exhibits nothing but a secondary figure endowed with supernatural knowledge, but wanting in colour true to life, who merely has to serve to reveal the majesty of Jesus.

I consider that these objections are in large part answered by what has been already said of the Evangelist's point of view in recording the Baptist's ministry. It is perfectly true that the interest, for the Evangelist, of the Baptist is in the witness he bore to the Christ. This witness had, indeed, as we believe, been the first step towards the writer's discipleship with Jesus. But Schmiedel overstates his case when he lays so much stress on the supernatural knowledge of the Baptist, and certainly when he says that the Baptist knew of the previous life of Jesus with God in heaven. The Baptist's witness as recorded by our Evangelist runs (i. 15): "This was He of

whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for He was before me (*ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν*)." And again in verse 30: "This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man (*ἄνθρωπος*) which is become before me, for He was before me." To interpret these sayings, as Schmiedel does, as if they evidenced the Baptist's knowledge of the previous life of Jesus in heaven, is to make the thought of the prologue of the Gospel the thought of the Baptist, instead of the ripe belief of the Evangelist himself. It seems fitting to quote the words of the late Bishop Westcott\*: "'After' and 'before' are both used in a metaphorical sense from the image of progression in a line. He who comes later in time comes 'after,' and he who advances in front shows by that his superior power. The supposed reference to the pre-existence of the Word, as if the Baptist said, 'He that cometh after me in respect of my present mission hath already

\* Commentary on **I**St. John.

been active among men before I was born,' seems to be inconsistent with the argument, which points to a present consequence (*is now come to be*), of an eternal truth (*He was before me*)."

Then next, Schmiedél considers that the Baptist's knowledge of the Messianic dignity of Jesus, as represented in St. John, is inconsistent with the message of inquiry recorded in the Synoptists: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" But it is surely a mistake to imagine that this question proves that the Messiahship of Jesus was something which had not engaged his mind before, something as to which he had had no information hitherto. The very answer of Jesus, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me," points to the fact that the Baptist's faith was being sorely tried as he lay in his prison. And what otherwise, we ask, would be the meaning of the question of Jesus after the disciples of John had departed—

“What went ye out into the wilderness to see, a reed shaken with the wind?” It is surely true to experience that the spiritual enlightenment of one period of life seems insufficient at a later time of deep spiritual depression and that he who experiences this is ready to seek for fresh assurances of his former certainty, which has become dimmed.

Something has already been said on the question, To whom was the voice at the baptism of Jesus audible? Schmiedel considers that it was heard by Jesus only. But the Synoptists, if they do not state that it was so, certainly do not exclude the possibility that the voice was audible to the Baptist. And I can see nothing at all unlikely in the testimony which the Baptist gives, according to the fourth Evangelist, respecting the sign of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus.

If it had been the purpose of our Evangelist to write a history of the Baptist's

ministry, then, knowing what we do of this from the Synoptists, we should say that he had failed. But, as it is, his purpose was to give the Baptist's witness to Jesus as the Christ, which witness had meant all that it had done for the Evangelist himself. In this he has certainly not failed; nor is there, so far as I can see, in the narrative portion of the first chapter of our Evangelist anything which goes beyond the bounds of historical probability. Indeed the more I consider it, the more probable does the whole story become, filling up, as it does, what are undoubtedly gaps in the Synoptic narrative, and affording us an explanation of the story of the baptism of Jesus in the other three Gospels. If our account of the matter be correct, then that story goes back to the testimony of the Baptist himself.



## **THE BETRAYAL**

## CHAPTER III

### THE BETRAYAL

IT has been explained in the first chapter that it is our purpose, first of all, to examine those sections of the Fourth Gospel which cover ground already traversed by the Synoptists, in order to decide whether the narrative is consistent with the Synoptic narrative, and whether the differences and additions are such as to justify the tradition of the Christian Church that the fourth Evangelist was a personal disciple of Jesus. In the preceding chapter we have applied our method to the story of the ministry of the Baptist.

We now pass over the whole story of

the public ministry of Jesus, because the points of view of our Evangelist and of the Synoptists are so widely different in regard to it. In the present chapter we shall consider the account, given us in the Fourth Gospel, of the betrayal of Jesus.

The fourth Evangelist agrees with the Synoptists in representing the death of Jesus to have been brought about through the treachery of Judas. He does not, however, record the actual covenant of betrayal made with the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver. But, like Mark and Matthew, he reports the anointing of Jesus at Bethany, upon which, according to these other Evangelists, the agreement made by Judas with the chief priests followed closely. This anointing evidently took place when Jesus was reclining at the table. This is explicitly stated by Mark and by the fourth Evangelist. We find in the Fourth Gospel more particularity of statement than in the other Gospels, and names are given.

It is true that it does not mention by name Simon the leper, in whose house, according to Mark and Matthew, the event took place, but it mentions Martha as serving, and Lazarus as one of the guests at the supper; and whereas Mark and Matthew speak, without naming her, of a woman who came and anointed Jesus, our Evangelist tells us that this woman was Mary, doubtless intending the sister of Martha. With these two sisters he has already made us familiar in the story of the raising of their brother Lazarus. The expression used by the Evangelist to describe the ointment is much the same as that employed by Mark (John—*μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτίμου*, Mark—*μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτελοῦς*), the epithet *πιστικός*, here applied, being of uncertain meaning. There is a difference between our Evangelist and the other two, in that he speaks of the anointing of the *feet* of Jesus, they of that of His *head*. The former seems more probable when once

the feast had begun. The Evangelist specially emphasises that it was the feet, for the order of his words is: "She anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped with her hair his feet." He adds the little touch, suggestive of his own presence on the occasion, that the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Mark and Matthew tell us that there arose a murmuring among some present that the ointment should be thus wasted, instead of being sold and given to the poor. The fourth Evangelist says that this complaint came from Judas Iscariot. Nor is he likely to be wrong in this, for the other two Evangelists place the going away of Judas, to sell Jesus to the chief priests, in close juxtaposition with this incident. Our Evangelist gives us information, peculiar to him, about Judas Iscariot, namely, that he had the money bag, which fact is repeated in xiii. 29. This is a fact—supposing it to be a fact—which

would hardly be known outside the circle of the disciples.

We see, then, that this section of our Gospel which records the anointing of Jesus in the house at Bethany abounds in particularity of detail. The author writes as one who either knew the details or pretended to know them.

We come now to the story of the actual betrayal in the garden of Gethsemane. The intervening events, namely, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the Last Supper, will come before us in later chapters.

Our Gospel agrees with the Synoptists in making the arrest of Jesus take place outside Jerusalem. The name Gethsemane, which Matthew and Mark give to the spot, is not found in the Fourth Gospel. But the Evangelist calls the place "a garden" (κῆπος), and tells us that Jesus passed to it with His disciples after crossing the brook Kidron. He adds that it was a place whither Jesus often resorted with His

disciples, and this was how Judas knew it. This is a detail that would be known to the select circle, and the mention of it is intelligible if the writer belonged to that circle.

It is a striking fact that no mention is made in the Fourth Gospel of the Agony in the Garden. It is the more striking, as, according to the Synoptists, John was himself one of the three chosen by Jesus to watch while He went further on to pray. We cannot, however, argue that what a writer does not mention he does not know of. Possibly our Evangelist felt that he had nothing to add to what was already written in the other Gospels on the subject, and he may characteristically have chosen not to mention an incident to which his own name attached in the other Gospels.

We come now to the arrival of Judas Iscariot upon the scene. According to the Synoptists, he was accompanied by a multitude (ὄχλος) armed with swords and staves,

and coming from the chief priests and elders. There is no explicit mention of the presence of soldiers. In the Fourth Gospel, however, it is distinctly stated that there were soldiers; Judas having received (1) the band (*τὴν σπεῖραν*) and (2) officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees. There can be no question that "the band" was one of soldiers, and they were led by an officer called in *v. 12* a Chiliarch. A clear distinction is made between the band of soldiers, which would, of course, be supplied by the Roman governor, and the officers who were from the Jewish authorities. Our Evangelist tells us that they came with lanterns and torches and weapons (*ὄπλων*). It may be remarked in passing that the mention of lanterns and torches, of which nothing is said by the Synoptists, suggests that we have here the evidence of an eyewitness. These lights would give a character to the scene which would impress one who was there.



But exception has been taken to the presence of the band of soldiers in the Fourth Gospel. The objection is really a twofold one. First it is said that it is not likely that there were any soldiers at all; and secondly it is contended that, even if there were some, there could not be so many as the term *σπείρα*, here used, implies.

In answer to the first objection it may be said that not only is it *a priori* probable that there would be soldiers, but also their presence seems to be required by the Synoptic account. Westcott says very pertinently : "It is difficult to suppose that the priests would have ventured on such an arrest as that of Christ without communicating with the Roman governor, or that Pilate would have found any difficulty in granting them a detachment of men for the purpose, especially at the feast time. Moreover, Pilate's early appearance at the court, no less than the dream of his wife, implies some knowledge of the coming charge."

Westcott further adds: "Perhaps it is not too fanciful to see a reference to the soldiers in the turn of the phrase 'twelve legions of angels' (Matt. xxvi. 53)."

According to the Synoptists, the multitude, which came to take Jesus, was equipped with swords and staves. It is very unlikely that the Jewish "officers" who formed the temple guard or police would be permitted by the Roman authorities to carry arms. And if this be so, there must have been Roman soldiers in this "multitude." It is likely enough that the Jewish "officers" had power to effect an arrest in the temple itself, but it may be questioned whether any such power would have been allowed them outside. If the armed power of Rome had been called in, we can well understand the protest made by Jesus (Mark xiv. 48, 49): "Are ye come out as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not."

I do not think, then, that exception can reasonably be taken to the presence of the soldiery, in the Fourth Gospel, among those who came to arrest Jesus. But then it is urged that the term *ἡ σπεῖρα* which the Evangelist uses proves the narrative to be quite unreliable. For *σπεῖρα* is the Greek equivalent of the Latin 'cohors,' which denotes the tenth part of a legion. It is true that *σπεῖρα* is used in Polybius (11, 23) to denote a maniple, which was only the thirtieth part of a legion, but the use of the term Chiliarch (*v.* 12), which was the Greek equivalent of 'tribunus,' the commander of a cohort, seems to require us to take *σπεῖρα* in the context as equivalent to 'cohors,' which would be a body of six hundred men.

Now it certainly does not seem at all probable that so large an armed force as this would have been employed for the arrest of an unarmed man; and if the narrative of our Evangelist made it neces-

sary for us to understand it so, there would be a considerable shaking of our faith in his reliability.

It is possible to take up the position that the Evangelist does not use the words *σπεῖρα* and *χιλιάρχος* in their technical sense. A serious objection, however, to this is the use of the definite article with *σπεῖρα* the first time the word occurs, for we read: "Judas having received *the* band &c." If *σπεῖρα* be not used technically, the force of the article could not well be anything but 'the band necessary for his purpose'; that is to say, the band needed to effect the arrest. This interpretation seems unsatisfactory, and it is more natural to adopt the technical meaning of *σπεῖρα*. The force of the article would then be 'the cohort garrisoned in Jerusalem,' in the tower of Antonia. We find the same definiteness with apparently this meaning in Acts xxi. 31, where we read: "Tidings came to the chief captain of the band (τῷ χιλιάρχῳ τῆς σπείρης) that all Jerusalem was in confusion."

But while it is hardly to be supposed that the whole garrison would turn out to effect the arrest of Jesus, there is no difficulty in supposing that a detachment was sent. A detachment acting for the whole might be spoken of as if it were the whole, in much the same way as we, in English, speak of "the police." By this term we sometimes mean the whole body of the police, but such a statement as "the police have made an arrest" would be understood to mean that *some* of the police had done so. If we read in a book that a person having got the police went off to effect an arrest, we should not suppose that every policeman in the place went with him. And in the passage before us we need not understand that the whole body of Roman troops stationed in Jerusalem went with Judas.

If, then, we once admit that the Synoptic narrative does not exclude, even though it does not explicitly mention, the presence of Roman soldiers among those who came

with Judas to take Jesus, there does not appear to be anything extravagant in the statement of the fourth Evangelist.

We shall now pass on to our Evangelist's story of the arrest. We mark that he does not say anything of the kiss of Judas, which the Synoptists tell us was the sign by which those who were to make the arrest might know which was the person to be taken. The account of the matter in our Gospel is as follows: "Jesus therefore knowing all things that were coming upon him went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth (Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον). Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, was standing with them. When therefore he said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these

go their way: that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou hast given me I lost not one."

Then follows the incident of the cutting off of the ear of the high priest's servant. Our Evangelist here, according to his usual habit, gives names. He tells us that it was Peter who thus drew the sword, and that the servant's name was Malchus. These are details unknown to the Synoptists, or, at any rate, unrecorded by them. They are details which would be known to the writer, supposing him to have been present at the scene, and also to have been known to the high priest (xviii. 10).

But the historical probability of the scene as described by our Evangelist has been strongly controverted. Schmiedel\* considers that a book in which, as he says, the meaning of the Eucharistic supper is given a year before it took place, in which five

\* *Das vierte Evangelium gegenüber den drei ersten*  
p. 107.

hundred if not a thousand Roman soldiers go backward and fall to the ground before Him, whom they were to arrest, at the words "I am he," and in which a hundred pounds of spices are applied for the embalming of the body of Jesus, should for these reasons alone be saved from any such misunderstanding as that it is a report of actual events.

We are only concerned here with the second of these objections. We may at once put aside "the five hundred, if not a thousand Roman soldiers," for we do not suppose that the Evangelist means that the whole cohort of soldiers was employed. But Schmiedel would probably still object to the account given by the Evangelist, even if the number of soldiers were reduced to one of not more than two figures.

Now I do not see how it can be reasonably denied that the behaviour of Jesus as represented here is just what the perfect unselfishness and general considerateness of



His character would have led us to expect. We see Him ready to give Himself up to the authorities, who demanded His arrest, and to save His disciples from all molestation. There is certainly nothing in the statement made by the Evangelist, that Jesus knew all things that were coming upon Him, that is at all improbable, for the Synoptists report in clearest terms that He had foretold to His disciples His crucifixion and that He had a clear foreknowledge of the treachery of Judas. It is going beyond all reasonable criticism to say that the Evangelist is here making Jesus less human than do the Synoptists. And the scene is certainly graphically depicted, so much so that if the Evangelist be not recording that of which he had had actual experience, we must allow that he was indeed a consummate artist.

We see Jesus first of all coming forward and asking—possibly addressing Himself to the Chiliarch in command of the soldiers—

“Whom seek ye?” This was not a superfluous question. For though Jesus knew the meaning of the kiss of Judas, this was nevertheless no straightforward answer to His question, for Judas had merely greeted Him as a friend, pretending still to belong to the circle of disciples. There had been no proper statement made which would render the question of Jesus inappropriate. The answer, then, is given: “Jesus the Nazarene.” And Jesus said: “I am He.” And then the Evangelist adds: “And Judas also which betrayed him was standing with them.” This is a statement which appears at first sight superfluous. But if the writer be describing an actual scene of which he had been the witness, we can understand the impression that must have been made on his mind when the treachery of Judas was thus proved. The kiss which Judas had given his Master could tell the disciples nothing. It was calculated to make it appear that he was still one of themselves,

but he is now seen standing with those who have come to take Jesus. He is proved to be a traitor.

And now comes the statement of the Evangelist: "When, therefore, he said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground." Now this either took place or it did not. If it did, there must have been some reason for this conduct though we may not be able to discover it; if it did not take place and the Evangelist is only inventing particulars, then this particular invention must have had a reason. And what satisfactory reason, we may ask, can be assigned? The only reason suggested is that it is a design of the Evangelist to extol Jesus and to heighten in some way the dignity of His person and of His commanding presence. This indeed is a fault which is thought by opponents of the historical worth of the Gospel to pervade the whole book. Well, they may be right, but the present instance

is a very unconvincing proof of this tendency.

The character of Judas is one of the strangest puzzles in the New Testament. He does not appear to have wished that Jesus should be condemned to death. It has been thought that his purpose was to force Jesus to declare Himself, and there may well have been some subtle design, as hard for us to read as the character of Judas himself, in this conduct on the part of those who had come to arrest Jesus. Judas, who, as we read, was standing with them, may have taken the lead in this strange behaviour which the others may have followed without quite knowing why. But the point to observe is that whatever its purpose, Jesus, according to the narrative, was impatient of it. He asked them again: "Whom seek ye?" And when they repeated their answer, "Jesus the Nazarene," He replied with an obvious tone of just impatience: "I told you that I am he: if

therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." If the Evangelist meant to represent this act of the soldiers and of the officers of the Jews as one of homage to Jesus, he strangely contradicts himself by making it very unacceptable to Him to whom it was offered. The rejection of it would imply that it was no true homage; and if it is no true homage, it can in no way add to or heighten the dignity of the Christ. It seems far more likely that this conduct savoured of an excessive politeness, wholly inappropriate to the occasion and utterly distasteful to Him to whom it was offered; for plainly He rejected it. I can see no evidence here of any such design on the part of the writer as is attributed to him. We need not surely lose patience with our Evangelist because he records a fact which we find it hard, if not impossible, to explain.

Again, it cannot fairly be argued that the readiness of Jesus to surrender Himself, as

this is exhibited in our Gospel, is out of accord with the mental struggle which the Synoptists depict in what is usually called the Agony in the Garden. For this struggle was over before Judas appeared upon the scene. Jesus knew now that the cup must be drunk ; and the words which the Fourth Gospel puts into His mouth in His reproof of Peter for using the sword—"The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?"—are reminiscent of the struggle through which He had passed.

We may remark that our Evangelist, who is thought by those who regard him as unhistorical to carry miracle to excess, says nothing of Jesus healing the ear of Malchus. If he were wanting in this passage to lay emphasis on the divine power of Jesus, as is contended by those who object to his representation of the conduct of the men in going backward and falling to the ground, he loses his opportunity in omitting to mention a proof of it which lay ready to his

hand in the pages of St. Luke. Apparently the underlying thought of this section of our Gospel is not the miracle-working power of Jesus, but His perfect self-surrender and readiness to bear all that was destined for Him by the will of heaven. He is ready to bear all Himself, and shows Himself eager to spare His disciples all share in the persecution which He Himself was to undergo. And if it be said that the freedom He gives to His disciples renders nugatory the statement of the Synoptists that they all forsook Him and fled, the answer will be that the freedom extended to them laid upon them the responsibility of the choice between withdrawal from Him and following Him with their sympathy. While He was anxious to spare them persecution, they were only too ready to desert Him through fear of consequences to themselves. Not that we are in a position to judge them. Their conduct was very human, while His was divine.

# THE TRIAL OF JESUS



## CHAPTER IV

### THE TRIAL OF JESUS

WE shall now consider the report given by the fourth Evangelist of the Trial of Jesus. According to the Synoptists Jesus was tried before Caiaphas, the high priest, and afterwards before Pilate, and St. Luke mentions a quasi-trial before Herod. The fourth Evangelist tells also of a previous examination of the Prisoner before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. It is difficult to see what motive could be suggested for the insertion of this notice of an examination before Annas unless it really took place. There is certainly nothing antecedently improbable in it, for it is well

known that Annas wielded enormous influence, though he had long ago been deposed from the high-priesthood, now held by his son-in-law.

Exception has been taken to the statement of our Evangelist that Caiaphas was high priest *that year*. It has been said that this proves the writer to have been under the erroneous impression that the high-priesthood was a yearly office. This point is mentioned here by the way, and it must be left to the reader to judge whether such a mistake is at all probable in a writer who, it must be allowed, shows himself throughout well informed about, and thoroughly conversant with, Jewish matters and customs.

Returning to the examination of Jesus before Annas, we notice that it fits in remarkably well with the account given by St. Luke of the arrest and trial. For he tells how Jesus was taken from the place of His arrest to the high priest's house (*oikíav*), and then a considerable interval

elapsed, during which the threefold denial of Peter occurred, before the meeting of the Sanhedrin, which is said to have taken place before it was day. There is then nothing at all impossible in the course of events in the Fourth Gospel. The Evangelist, like St. Luke, puts the denial of Peter before the trial before Caiaphas; and the filling up of the interval of time between the arrest and the formal arraignment before the Sanhedrin by an informal examination by, or at any rate in the presence of, the influential Annas certainly seems highly probable. Whether this examination took place in the house of Annas or in the palace of the high priest Caiaphas is a question which cannot be positively determined. For my own part I take it that it was held in the palace of Caiaphas, but the uncertainty arises from our inability to decide whether our Evangelist intends Annas or Caiaphas when he speaks of the high priest in xviii. 15 and 19. The

title ἀρχιερέυς could be and certainly was applied to Annas after his deposition from the high-priesthood, and indeed the term is used with some elasticity, and we read of ἀρχιερεῖς, rendered by "chief priests" in our English translation. But as in verse 13 the Evangelist says expressly that Caiaphas was high priest and he does not there apply any title to Annas, merely describing him as the father-in-law of Caiaphas, it seems most natural that when he immediately afterwards speaks of ὁ ἀρχιερέυς he should mean him who has been so designated, namely Caiaphas. On the other hand, if ὁ ἀρχιερέυς in verse 19 refers to Caiaphas, then the Evangelist records no examination made by Annas, and the questions put to Jesus respecting His doctrine came from Caiaphas. In this case the statement of verse 24, that Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas, may seem wanting in point. But of course the examination, whether made by Annas himself or by

Caiaphas in the presence of his father-in-law, was quite informal, and when Jesus is sent bound to Caiaphas the high priest (v. 24) it is that He may be formally arraigned before the Sanhedrin.

The matter is, however, not one of great importance. The statement made by our Evangelist that there was an informal examination made before the meeting of the Sanhedrin is extremely probable, and we have seen that St. Luke's narrative leaves room for it, though he does not actually mention it. Moreover the statement of our Evangelist that this examination took place before Annas, if not by him, is also probable, considering the influence which he is known to have had. Indeed it seems to me that we have here one of those touches which show the Evangelist to have been accurately informed. This of course he would be if he is to be identified with the other disciple (v. 15) who was known to the high priest.

The story of the denial of Peter, who accompanied this other disciple to the palace of the high priest, is told in our Gospel in such a circumstantial way that it is difficult to believe that it is other than historically correct. Like St. Luke, differing here from the other Synoptists, our Evangelist makes the denial take place before the meeting of the Sanhedrin. He tells us that the first of the three denials occurred as Peter entered into the palace of the high priest. 'The other disciple,' whom we take to be the fourth Evangelist, and who was known to the high priest, gained admission to the palace, and in view of the fact that he was no stranger he was able to persuade the portress to admit Peter. Nor was the question put by the portress to Peter, "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?" an unnatural one. Probably she knew John to be a disciple; hence the point of the word 'also.' But Peter, afraid, said, "I am not." Our

Evangelist then tells us that Peter passed to the fire and stood and warmed himself with the servants and the officers, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold. One who had himself experienced the cold of that night would naturally remember the fact.

The other two denials are placed by our Evangelist after the examination of Jesus respecting His disciples and His teaching, and the record of them follows immediately on the words: "Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest." Then, as Simon Peter stood and warmed himself, those who were with him questioned him: "Art thou also one of his disciples?" He denied, and said, "I am not." Then one of the servants of the high priest being, the Evangelist tells us, a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see thee in the garden with him?" Peter denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

It has been pointed out\* that the statement made by St. Luke that on the third denial the Lord turned and looked upon Peter would find a simple explanation if the narrative of the Fourth Gospel be accurate, for, according to it, the last two of the three denials occurred as Jesus was being taken before Caiaphas. If then Peter denied Jesus just as He was being led past the place where Peter was, what more natural than that Jesus should have turned to look at him, and that that look should have brought tears of bitter sorrow into Peter's eyes?

It may be noted, too, that St. Luke places an interval of about an hour between the first and second denials of Peter, and with this the narrative of the Fourth Gospel agrees, in that it implies that the examination took place in the meanwhile. Of course it is open to

\* Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* in the article on "Annas."



objectors to say that our Evangelist had St. Luke's Gospel to help him in the construction of his own, and therefore points of agreement prove nothing. But it is difficult to see how the Evangelist could have constructed his narrative about these matters with all its circumstantial detail if he had not been possessed of information more accurate and detailed than he could possibly glean from the other Gospels.

Our Evangelist tells us nothing of the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, though we see that he knew of it from his statement that Jesus was sent bound to Caiaphas. It may seem idle to speculate why he is silent on this point, but it is probable that he had nothing to add to what the Synoptists had written about it, and moreover it contributed little to the ultimate condemnation of Jesus, which had to come from Pilate. The Evangelist has already described in brief and striking terms the attitude of the high priest by

saying: "Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." The trial before the Sanhedrin was no true trial at all. It was merely an attempt so to implicate Jesus that the counsel of Caiaphas might appear justified.

But when our Evangelist comes to tell the story of the arraignment before Pilate he gives very full information, and only the most obstinate prejudice will fail to see in this account a very accurate knowledge of what took place. We gain from St. John a far more exact idea of the stages by which Pilate was led on to consent to the death of Jesus than could ever be derived from the pages of the Synoptists; Pilate is so set before us in this Gospel that we are constrained to acknowledge that here, even if nowhere else in the book, we have the picture of a historical reality. The only reasonable exception, as it seems to me, that can be

taken to this part of the story of our Evangelist is that it says nothing of Pilate sending Jesus to Herod. But it is easily possible to combine the narratives of St. Luke and St. John so as to have a consistent whole.

Our Evangelist begins by stating that Jesus was led from Caiaphas into the Prætorium while it was early, and he explains the peculiar way in which the trial had to be conducted because the Jewish accusers refused to enter into the Prætorium, lest they should be defiled, and so might not eat the passover. Exception may be taken to this statement on the ground that the passover had already taken place. This is a point, however, the consideration of which we must defer until a later chapter. I may say here in anticipation that I take the view that our Evangelist is right, and that the passover was to take place the next evening.

The prisoner then was within, and the accusers without, and Pilate has to conduct the case by passing from the one to the others. He goes out therefore to ask the accusers what their accusation was. Instead of bringing a direct charge they reply evasively: "If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee." Now we know from the Synoptists that the Sanhedrin, after seeking to find some cause of death in Jesus, had at last found it in His confession of Messiahship, which they interpreted as blasphemy. Satisfied that for this He deserved to die, but unable to carry out the sentence themselves, they had come to Pilate, evidently hoping that he would consent. If, as we suppose, he had already allowed them the necessary band of soldiers to arrest Jesus, they may have interpreted this to mean his readiness to acquiesce in their verdict. But instead they find that Pilate requires a definite accusation,

which they were not prepared for. In their opinion Jesus was an evil-doer; should not this suffice? Pilate then replies with some sarcasm that if he is not to decide the case but they, then judgment must proceed from them and not from him: "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." To which the Jews replied: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." By their answer they showed to Pilate that it was a death sentence that they required and not an equitable judgment of the case according to Roman law. The Evangelist finds this incident worthy of record because, as he significantly adds, the inability of the Jews to put any man to death brought about the fulfilment of the word of Jesus which he had spoken, signifying what manner of death He should die. That Jesus had so spoken and foretold His crucifixion, the Synoptists plainly declare; so that our Evangelist cannot be accused of ascribing here undue foreknowledge to Jesus.

The Evangelist does not state that the accusers then preferred a case against the Prisoner, but it seems to be implied in the subsequent conduct of Pilate, who entered again into the Prætorium and, calling Jesus, asked Him: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus proceeds to inquire whether this is a charge brought against Him as to which He must defend Himself or whether it is an inquiry made by Pilate. He asks: "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?" Then comes Pilate's answer full of contempt and scorn for the Jew: "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?"

When then Jesus is informed that there is a charge laid against Him, He is ready to defend Himself, because this is obviously a matter as to which the Roman Governor has a right to an answer. He defends Himself, then, not by denying the charge,

but by showing that it was misleading. "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

Is He then guilty of the charge they have brought against Him? Pilate asks Him: "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered: "Thou sayest that I am king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." And Pilate asks: "What is truth?"

But he sees clearly, whatever his attitude of mind towards Jesus and His claims to be a king, that this is no political case and that no criminal offence has been committed; so he goes out again to the accusers and says: "I find no fault in him."

At this point the account given by St. Luke helps us. The accusers became more

urgent, he says, and accused Jesus of stirring up the people, teaching throughout all Judæa and beginning from Galilee even to Jerusalem. Pilate, learning that the prisoner was a Galilean, sends him to Herod, who was at that time in Jerusalem. But Herod could get no answer to the questions he put to the prisoner, and sent Him back to Pilate arrayed in a splendid robe. Neither did he find any fault in Him touching the things whereof He was accused.

Of all this our Evangelist says nothing. Nor from his point of view was there any need to mention it, for matters stood after the visit to Herod exactly as they did before. Pilate is in the same position now as then. He can find no fault or crime in the Prisoner. But at this point he shows signs of weakness. He wishes to please the Jews, and so he offers to release Jesus as a political prisoner. It may seem strange that when the accusers had so plainly shown that it was the death of Jesus which they desired, Pilate should



have sought to satisfy them by setting Him free. This is a trait in the story which increases our confidence in the truth of it. Pilate does not propose simply to release Jesus, but to release Him as a political offender in honour of the feast and according to custom. But the accusers would have none of it. That would have been to frustrate their whole design. They demanded instead the release of the robber Barabbas.

Then Pilate, still exhibiting cowardly weakness, has Jesus scourged, hoping apparently that by thus disgracing Him in the eyes of the accusers he will satisfy their malice, and be able to spare his own conscience the guilt of the death of an innocent man. The soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus' head and arrayed Him in a purple garment—possibly the same as that in which Herod had clothed Him\*—

\* There is an interesting article in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, April, 1909, by Dr. A. W. Verrall on "Christ before Herod." I do not find myself in

and after they had mocked Him, Pilate went out once more, still protesting that he could find no crime in the man, and exhibiting Jesus wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. To their pity he appeals, and possibly also to their sense of humour, which he hopes may enable them to see the absurdity of the charge they have brought against Jesus. But to Pilate's words, "Behold the man," they reply with shouts: "Crucify him, crucify him." If this is what they want, Pilate says, let them do it themselves. "Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no crime in him."

Then, and not till then, did the accusers bring forward the charge on which they

agreement with the writer when he argues that Herod's conduct, described in the original as *ἐμπαίξας περιβαλὼν ἰσθῆτα λαμπρὰν αὐτὸν*, was not intended as a piece of mockery. It seems to me that *ἐμπαίξας* cannot be separated from *περιβαλὼν* as Dr. Verrall's interpretation of the passage requires. Herod mockingly threw round Jesus a splendid robe and sent Him to Pilate. This seems the natural meaning of the passage.

had already in the Sanhedrin declared Jesus to be worthy of death: "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." And when Pilate heard this he was the more afraid, and he entered into the Prætorium again and asked Jesus, "Whence art thou?" But Jesus gave him no answer. He refused to be questioned by Pilate, except so far as the questions arose out of definite charges of which Roman law required Pilate to take account. And Pilate said unto Him: "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have authority to release thee, and have authority to crucify thee?" To which Jesus replied: "Thou wouldest have no authority against me except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin." Hereupon Pilate sought to release Jesus, but the Jews, detecting the weakness Pilate had already shown, proceed to work upon his fears: "If thou release this man,

thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." And they were successful. Pilate brought Jesus forth, and took his place on the judgment seat at a place which the Evangelist, with his usual particularity of statement, says was called the Pavement, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. His final appeal, "Behold your king!" and "Shall I crucify your king?" met only with the response from the chief priests: "We have no king but Cæsar." And he delivered Jesus to be crucified.

We cannot say what is the point intended by the Evangelist in mentioning that, when Pilate took his place on the judgment seat, it was the preparation of the passover, and it was the sixth hour. Did he intend to indicate that time was pressing and that this business must be got over before the feast? It may be so, but the sixth hour, supposing this to mean six o'clock according to our reckoning, that is six hours from

midnight, could not be considered late. Or could it be that, regarding Jesus as the true paschal lamb, as his words in xix. 36 show him to have done, he saw the fitness of this day and hour for the sentence of death now passed upon Him? Or was there something in the outward appearance of the city at this moment which directed attention to the character of the day, and was the hour impressed on the mind of the Evangelist by his experience of the event? Or did he feel that the day and hour of this decision, so momentous in the history of the world, deserved to be chronicled? These are questions that we cannot answer.

## **THE CRUCIFIXION**

## CHAPTER V

### THE CRUCIFIXION

COMING now to the account which our Evangelist gives of the Crucifixion, we observe that there is nothing in it which conflicts in any way with the picture which the Synoptists portray for us. The Fourth Gospel contains much information not to be found in the Synoptists, and is markedly independent of them. It is in this Gospel only that we are told that the title on the cross was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, and it is from it that we learn of the altercation between the Jews and Pilate as to the form of wording of the title. It must be allowed that this has all the

appearance of historical truth. The account given of the distribution of the garments of Jesus among the soldiers is more fully told than in the other Gospels, this being easily explained, on the theory of the Johannine authorship, by the presence of the Evangelist at the scene; for it is immediately afterwards that he tells of the women at the cross along with the disciple whom Jesus loved. It is, however, open to objectors to say that the story of the partition of the garments among the soldiers is an embellishment of that given in the other Gospels in order to make the event square with the prophecy which the Evangelist quotes:—

“They parted my garments among them,  
And upon my vesture did they cast lots.”

The incident of the women and the beloved disciple at the cross is also open to the criticism of objectors on the ground that our Evangelist brings them near to the cross, whereas Mark and Matthew speak



of certain women looking on, but only from far off. It is, however, not impossible that these faithful women did approach the cross as our Evangelist represents. But it is hardly likely that they would be there the whole time. They may well have retired when the beloved disciple took Mary, the mother of Jesus, to his house as he seems to have done immediately (xix. 27). The other women may have returned to view the scene from afar and have afterwards taken part in the burial as St. Luke reports. It is certainly a point worthy of notice that the women mentioned in Mark and Matthew as watching from far off can be satisfactorily identified with those (other than the Lord's mother) standing by the cross in the Fourth Gospel.

Mark and Matthew give the names of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome. In the Fourth Gospel we have, besides Mary the mother of Jesus, His mother's sister, not

named, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. There is a way of interpreting the Evangelist's words so that Mary the wife of Clopas would be identical with the sister of the mother of Jesus. This does not commend itself to me, for the interpretation would require two sisters to bear the same name. I adopt Westcott's understanding of the passage and take it that the Evangelist mentions four women: (1) the mother of Jesus, (2) His mother's sister, (3) Mary the wife of Clopas, (4) Mary Magdalene.

Now Mary the wife of Clopas is satisfactorily indentified with Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, for James was the son of Alphæus (Mark iii. 18), and it seems likely that Clopas and Alphæus are Greek equivalents of a common Aramaic.

Thus the four women mentioned by our Evangelist will be the mother of Jesus and the same three women named by Mark and Matthew, provided that Salome be

identical with the sister of the mother of Jesus. And such I take her to have been. Our Evangelist, whom we identify with St. John, does not name his own mother Salome, but describes her as the sister of Jesus' mother. Such an indirect description agrees with his usual manner, which, as we have seen, forbids him to name himself.

Westcott has pointed out that the identification of Salome with the sister of Jesus' mother helps us to understand better why Jesus should have intrusted His mother to the care of St. John, this being explained by the relationship between them.

A careful examination, then, of this particular section of our Gospel reveals an agreement with the Synoptists too subtle to explain except on the hypothesis that we have here the record of an actual occurrence. If this be not history, but only an ideal presentation of the devotion of the writer who impersonates the beloved disciple, then it must be admitted that the

picture he gives is one of consummate art. From a comparison of this passage with the Synoptists we are confirmed in our belief that our Evangelist is indeed John the son of Zebedee. But if not, he has wished to make it appear that he was. Would he, we may ask, if he had had such a purpose have carried it out disguisedly? The dignified self-suppression of the narrative is explicable on the theory of the Johannine authorship. It is not easy to explain it on a theory of impersonation.

If it be the case that the beloved disciple retired at once from the cross after the mother of Jesus had been intrusted to his care, we can understand why he passes over much that must have occurred before the point at which he resumes his story, as the end was now approaching. He may well have returned to the scene again and have heard the word of Jesus which he next records. A new section begins with

the words "after this" (*μετὰ τοῦτο*). This manner of linking together the parts of his story with the words *μετὰ τοῦτο* or *μετὰ ταῦτα* is characteristic of the Evangelist (ii. 12, v. 1, vi. 1, vii. 1, xxi. 1). It may be, as has been thought, that there is a shade of distinction between *μετὰ τοῦτο* and *μετὰ ταῦτα*, the former implying a closer connection than the latter with what has gone before. We do not, however, take it that *μετὰ τοῦτο* expresses an immediate sequence in point of time.

"After this," says the Evangelist, "Jesus knowing that all things were now finished that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst." Now here again it may be objected that it is in his desire to see prophecy fulfilled that our Evangelist puts into the mouth of Jesus words which He did not really speak. And it may be said that one who writes history can record what has happened but he cannot read the mind of his heroes beyond what they

express in words. But here the Evangelist says that Jesus knew that all things were now finished. Is not this going beyond what the actual occurrence and the spoken words warrant?

It must of course be allowed, and it has already been admitted, that our Evangelist is doing more than writing history. In going beyond the mere recording of events he may or may not have rightly interpreted the mind and person of Christ. We must make a clear distinction between his statements of fact and his comments upon them, or the conclusions he draws from them. If he records that Jesus said something, he is making a historical statement; if he says that Jesus thought or knew something, he is drawing a conclusion. In investigating the historical value of the Gospel before us we are concerned primarily with its statements of fact. A book may be true historically, but the conclusions drawn by the author from

the facts may be false, or, at any rate, open to question.

In describing the scene in the garden the Evangelist records that Jesus went forward to meet those who had come to arrest Him, and he says that Jesus did this, knowing all things that were coming upon Him. We can accept this last statement respecting the knowledge of Jesus, because His words reported both by the Synoptists and in the Fourth Gospel respecting His coming sufferings and death are a sufficient justification of it. We may not be able in all cases to verify the Evangelist's statements of what Jesus thought and knew, because we do not know all that He said, but it must be remembered that if the Evangelist was indeed a personal disciple, then he had peculiar opportunities for knowing and entering into the mind of his Master, and it would be simply impossible for him to communicate fully to any other person all the detailed reasons

which had led him to certain conclusions. He could do it in some measure but never fully.

Consider, for example, his words in ii. 23-25. He says that when Jesus was in Jerusalem, during the feast, "many believed on his name beholding the signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." Now plainly the Evangelist could not detail all the reasons that had led him to this conclusion respecting the knowledge Jesus had of men. He incidentally gives instances of it in his Gospel—*e.g.*, Nathanael, the woman of Samaria, Judas Iscariot—but we naturally suppose that his own conclusions were drawn from a larger experience than he could possibly record.

With these considerations in mind we will return to the section of our Gospel



which is now properly before us (xix 28-30). Let us look first at the statement of historical fact, supposing it to be fact. It is this: "Jesus said, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar, so they put a sponge full of vinegar upon hyssop and brought it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

Now there is certainly nothing antecedently improbable in what is here stated. The torments of thirst were a usual experience of those who were crucified, and we learn from the Synoptists that 'vinegar' was at hand in this particular case. There is nothing impossible then in the statement of our Evangelist that Jesus, tormented by thirst, wished that something should be given Him to drink. Nor can we argue that this incident did not take place because the other Evangelists do not record it, though the question naturally

arises whether our Evangelist is not merely giving another version of the story given by the Synoptists, that when Jesus uttered His great and bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" one of the bystanders ran and dipped a sponge in vinegar and offered it to Him to drink. But the rest said: "Let be. Let us see whether Elias (whom they thought that Jesus had been summoning) will come to help Him." But I cannot see any adequate reason for such a supposition as this. Why should we suppose that the vinegar, specially set there for sufferers, was only offered once to Jesus? That our Evangelist says nothing of the Eli incident may be explained by the fact that it was already recorded in the other Gospels, and his account of the crucifixion seems of set purpose to supply details which they do not give. Or it may be explained if we suppose that he records here just the things of which he had personal experience, and

we have seen reason to think that he may have been absent from the scene for some time.

Then there is the further statement of our Evangelist that Jesus spoke the word: "It is finished (*τετέλεσται*)." And this is perfectly possible, for all the Synoptists record that He cried with a loud voice, though they do not give the word spoken. And St. Luke records that after He had thus cried, He said: "Father, into thy hands I commend (*παραιθεμαι*) my spirit"; while our Evangelist tells us that after He had said, "It is finished," He bowed His head and gave up (*παρέδωκεν*) His spirit. It is true he records no words with which this surrender of the spirit was made. It does not follow that he did not know that any words were spoken, seeing that he must have known them from St. Luke's Gospel, nor, on the other hand, need we suppose that St. Luke put into the mouth of Jesus these words which He never really spoke.

I can see nothing, then, historically improbable, either on *a priori* grounds or by reason of the Synoptic narratives, in these two words of Jesus which our Evangelist records, namely, "I thirst" and "It is finished."

We have then only to consider the Evangelist's setting, so to speak, of this picture. We must take account of his exact statement: "Jesus knowing that all things were now finished (*τετέλεσται*), that the Scripture might be accomplished (*τελειωθῆ*) saith, I thirst."

It must be observed that the verb used in the sentence 'that all things were now finished' is the very same word as that afterwards spoken by Jesus when He said, 'It is finished.' If then Jesus did really utter this word, as the Evangelist says He did, we need not dispute the statement made by him that Jesus knew that all things were finished. The question, however, naturally arises: Why did the

Evangelist make this statement respecting the knowledge of Jesus when he is going almost immediately afterwards to record the word spoken? It is perhaps not possible for us to answer this question, but we must give it our consideration.

First, we must mention the uncertainty of connexion of the words 'that the scripture might be accomplished' in the context. Do they belong to the words preceding them or to those that follow? Are we to understand that Jesus knew that all things were finished for the accomplishment of the Scriptures when He said, 'I thirst,' or are we to interpret our clause so that it would give the meaning that Jesus said, I thirst, in order that the scripture might be accomplished?

In favour of the second of these two interpretations we have the fact that it accords with the manner of our Evangelist, who finds in the several details of the passion the fulfilment of prophecy (xix. 24,

36, 37). But on the other hand there must be set against this the apparent contradiction involved if this interpretation be adopted. For it may be said that Jesus could not be said to know that all things were already finished if, as yet, there remained one prophecy unfulfilled. Westcott, however, does not think this difficulty serious. For he remarks that the thirst was already felt. The Old Testament language is: "When I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink." The prophecy then would be fulfilled, so far as Jesus was concerned, by the feeling of thirst. It could only be accomplished entirely when expression was given to this feeling so that the need felt could be met by the offer of drink. Westcott, however, says: "The fulfilment of the scripture was not the object which the Lord had in view in uttering the word, but there was a necessary correspondence between His acts and the divine foreshadowing of them." If we accept this

statement of the case, then the words, 'that the scripture might be accomplished' become parenthetical, and Jesus did not utter the words 'I thirst' for the finishing of His work, but all things were already finished and He knew them so to be. In this case the statement of the Evangelist that Jesus knew that all things were now finished is equally absolute if the words 'that the scripture might be accomplished' belong to them or carry the reader on to what follows; and for the statement the Evangelist has, to justify him, the fact that Jesus Himself afterwards uttered the word *τετέλεσται*.

But then we ask: What is the point of our Evangelist saying that Jesus knew that all things were now finished, if he is going to record just afterwards that Jesus said, "It is finished"? I should answer his question, without, I hope, any seeming irreverence, by saying that in the mind of the Evangelist the knowledge that Jesus

had was the justification for His giving utterance to His own personal physical need. Though the bodily sufferings of the crucifixion were so severe, yet Jesus did not allow His mind to turn to them until all things were finished. When He knew that He had done all that was required of Him, and not until then, He asked for some bodily relief in saying, 'I thirst.' And even in His request, the Evangelist seems to say, Jesus was but fulfilling what had been foretold.

I take it then that when Jesus said, 'I thirst,' He meant just exactly what He said. I can accept no mystical interpretation of the words. He felt the awful torments of thirst and asked for alleviation; He did not refuse the vinegar when it was offered, though when hung upon the cross He had refused the myrrh intended to stupefy the senses. All that He had passed through had brought with it a feeling of exhaustion which He appeals to the pity of some by-



stander to remove. In the hour of death, true to the principle of His life, He worked no miracle for His own relief.

We now pass to the account our Evangelist gives of what took place at Golgotha after the death of Jesus. He alone of all the Evangelists records the request of the Jews made to Pilate that the legs of those crucified might be broken. This request they made because it was the preparation, and they would not that the bodies should remain on the cross on the Sabbath Day—that Sabbath Day being a high day. The request being granted, the soldiers came and brake the legs of the one and of the other crucified with Jesus, “but when they came to Jesus Himself and saw that He was dead already they brake not His legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side and straightway there came out blood and water.” Then follows the Evangelist’s solemn attestation: “And

he that hath seen it hath borne witness, and his witness is true (*ἀληθινή*): and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe." And then he adds: "These things came to pass that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."

It is open to objectors to the historicity of our Gospel to say that the writer here again invents his facts to square with prophecy. But surely there is nothing at all improbable in this account; and though we have here statements of fact not given by the Synoptists, there is nothing which conflicts with their less full accounts. The only possible point of conflict that I can see would be in regard to the statement made by Mark that, when Joseph of Arimathæa went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, Pilate marvelled if He were already dead; and calling unto him the centurion

he asked him whether He had been any while dead. And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

Now the request of Joseph must have preceded that made by the Jews that the legs of those crucified might be broken, for Pilate would not have expressed astonishment at the death of Jesus if He had already given permission for His legs to be broken. But it cannot be said that there is anything improbable in the request of the Jews being made after that of Joseph of Arimathæa, for of course there were two other bodies besides that of Jesus. The Jews may or may not have known when they made their request that Jesus was already dead. There is no suggestion that they wished to offer further insult to the body. They wanted to get all the bodies out of the way before the high-sabbath began, as it did at sunset on the Friday. The soldiers who were to carry out Pilate's

order broke the legs of the two robbers, but when they came to Jesus and found that He was already dead they brake not His legs. It was perhaps more by way of precaution than to offer insult to His body that one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus. It may perhaps seem strange that none of the Synoptists should mention this incident. None of them does, for the statement of the piercing of the side in Matthew is a later addition. But it must be remembered that the piercing of the side is no part of the death, which had already taken place.

Again, the asseveration of our Evangelist respecting the outflow of blood and water from the pierced side is too solemn to be passed lightly by. Whatever mystical meaning there may be in this occurrence we are not here concerned with. But the reality of the death of Jesus is most certainly affirmed, and the Evangelist in plainest terms claims to have been a witness of this incident.

Now I am far from saying that impersonation in literature is never justifiable, but I do say emphatically that a writer who impersonates another and deliberately says he is not so doing is guilty of an offence for which no epithet would be too opprobrious. In this case the writer says that his witness is true or genuine (*ἀληθινή*). In other words, if he is impersonating a witness, he is guilty of denying the fact of impersonation. It would be indeed strange that the writer of a book such as our Gospel, the sublimity of whose spiritual teaching even opponents of its historicity admit, should descend to such a departure from the truth! This is he who sets forth the Word made flesh as full of grace and truth! This is he who represents Jesus as declaring before Pilate that He came to bear witness to the truth!

Our Evangelist concludes his account of the crucifixion by recording, as do the other Evangelists, the burial of Jesus. This was

undertaken by Joseph of Arimathæa. Mark and Luke describe him as one who was looking for the kingdom of God. Matthew says that he was a disciple of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel describes him as a disciple, but secretly for fear of the Jews. This is a detail which St. John, supposing our Evangelist to be he, would be likely to know. He also tells us that there came too Nicodemus, he who on the first occasion came to Jesus by night, and that he brought a mixture (or, according to another reading, a roll) of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. This great weight of spices has been objected to and declared to be unhistorical. But it must be remembered that Nicodemus was probably, like Joseph, a rich man, and it would seem that both men intended to pay great honour to the dead body of Jesus, whom they revered. A more serious objection than the weight of the spices is the difference between our Gospel and St. Luke. The

latter represents the *women* as preparing spices and ointments and going with these to the tomb on the first day of the week. Putting the two accounts side by side, I am inclined to think that it was Nicodemus, who, as our Evangelist says, supplied the spices, and that the purpose of the visit of the women on the first day of the week was to apply the spices to embalm the body, there not having been time for this on the Friday evening. Then all had been done, as both St. Luke and St. John imply, in a hurry.

There is in the Fourth Gospel a detail which we do not find in the Synoptists respecting the place of the burial. The tomb where they laid Jesus was, our Evangelist tells us, near at hand, and he implies that it was chosen for this reason. Time was pressing; the day was declining. It was the preparation, the passover was at hand. The tomb then was chosen because it was near, and it is possible that it was

intended to be only a temporary resting-place.

So then in the account of the burial of Jesus we find in our Evangelist details, peculiar to himself, which suggest accurate information, and encourage us in the belief that we have here the record of a personal disciple, who had real personal knowledge of the things which he records.



## **THE RESURRECTION (I)**

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RESURRECTION (I)

THE Gospels give us no account of the resurrection. What they tell of is the empty tomb and appearances of the risen Jesus to His disciples singly or in groups. The nearest approach we have to anything which can be called an account of the resurrection itself is that in Matthew, who says, "Behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men."

We have here an attempted explanation of the way in which the stone came to be rolled away from the mouth of the tomb and, perhaps we may add, of the reason why the guard was unable to hinder the exit of Jesus from the tomb. It is not part of our present purpose to investigate the historical probability of this statement made in Matthew. It may or may not be substantially true. It is an obvious criticism to make that a large circular stone rolling in a horizontal groove is not exactly a thing on which the angel could have sat. And indeed I confess that I am sceptical about this statement as a matter of history, because it is difficult to see what the evidence for it can be. I believe, however, that it is a well-attested fact that the stone was rolled away, and this apparently by no human hands, and that the body of Jesus, which had been laid in the tomb two days before, was gone.

It will be necessary in the present

chapter and the next following, in order to vindicate the historicity of the Fourth Gospel, to consider the whole evidence for the resurrection. For it seems to be thought by many people at the present day that this evidence is of so conflicting a nature that it can no longer be accepted as trustworthy by men of honest mind. We shall then have to examine it with some care and minuteness in order to decide its true nature and value. We shall have to compare the story given in the Fourth Gospel with the accounts of all the Synoptists, and to take account too of the evidence afforded us by the statements of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians xv.

First of all, it will be well to consider the narrative of the Fourth Gospel by itself. For I take it that the writer, if not a personal disciple, at any rate writes as if he were, and as if he were present at the events which he describes. It seems desirable, then, to show that the accounts

given in the last two chapters of this Gospel form a consistent whole, explicable on the theory of the Johannine authorship of the book. Afterwards we shall have to examine the relation of the Johannine story with the other accounts of the appearances of the Risen Lord.

Now if St. John be the author of the Fourth Gospel, it is clear that we have in its last two chapters evidence, in the strictest sense of the word, for the resurrection. Even though his Gospel be the latest of all in point of time its value as affording evidence of the resurrection may far exceed that of the Synoptists. We have certainly no right to start with the hypothesis that the Synoptists are here to be preferred to the Fourth Gospel. We ought first to examine St. John on the supposition that it is evidence, as it claims to be. If its claim is supported by consistency and probability, then we shall be able to give our Evangelist a fair hearing

when we compare his story with that of the Synoptists.

We shall therefore proceed now to the examination of the contents of the twentieth chapter, and I think we shall find reasons for believing that we have here the evidence of an eyewitness and not a tradition, and most certainly not a concocted story.

In this chapter, then, we have the account of three appearances of the Risen Jesus, the first to Mary Magdalene and the other two to the assembled disciples, the first time when Thomas was absent, and the second time when he was there. Of two of these appearances the Evangelist, supposing him to be St. John, was himself a witness; of the other he could not of course be a witness, but he gives, I believe, substantially the account that Mary Magdalene herself gave of her own experience. The object of the writer seems to be to give in a straightforward way the steps by which he himself came personally to

know of and to believe the fact of the resurrection.

He begins by telling of the visit of Mary Magdalene to the tomb which she found empty. She at once reported the fact to Simon Peter and to 'the disciple whom Jesus loved': "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we know not where they have laid Him."

Now we may remark in passing that the Fourth Gospel does not say that Mary Magdalene had gone alone to the tomb. It is necessary to insist on this point, for it has been urged as an objection to this Gospel that it is not in agreement with the Synoptists as to the number of the women. If it is not stated explicitly by our Evangelist that there were other women with Mary Magdalene, it is at any rate plainly implied that she had not gone alone to the tomb, for she uses the plural number in making her announcement: "*We* know not where they have laid Him." If it

be asked why the Evangelist does not explicitly state that other women had gone to the tomb with Mary Magdalene, I should say that it was not essential to his purpose. He is recording primarily his personal experiences in the matter. He tells then, first of all, how he came to know that the tomb was empty. This he learnt from Mary Magdalene, not from the other women, whom, therefore, it would have been irrelevant to mention.

The Evangelist next goes on to tell of his visit to the tomb in company with Simon Peter and what they saw there. The story is very graphically told, and we can follow each detail of it. The younger disciple outruns the elder and comes first to the tomb, and stooping and looking in he sees the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. Simon Peter, therefore, also cometh following him, and entered into the tomb; and it is as if the Evangelist were recording how



Peter, speaking from within, had described the appearance of the tomb. He beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that was upon His head not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then, he adds, entered in the other disciple which came first to the tomb, and he saw and believed.

Believed what? Some, with St. Augustine, have thought that the Evangelist meant only that he believed what Mary Magdalene had said, that the body had been taken away and laid elsewhere. But this is an interpretation of the passage which seems to me most unlikely. Much more probable is it that the arrangement of the grave-cloths in the tomb was such that the Evangelist saw that the body could not have been taken away as Mary had supposed. He believed that the appearance of the empty tomb indicated resurrection, of which the Lord had spoken before His death. The disciples had not

understood His words, nor did they as yet, the Evangelist says, know the scripture that he must rise again from the dead.

The two disciples then returned to their home. Then follows the account of the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene. If the view we take of the matter be right, then the Evangelist had the story from Mary's own lips, for she came and told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and she told how He had said these things to her. We have, I believe, in these verses (11-17) substantially Mary's own story as she told it to the disciples and as the Evangelist remembered it. She told them how she had seen two angels in the tomb who had said to her, Woman, why weepest thou? how she had answered: Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him. Then she had turned and saw one standing whom she thought to be the gardener—this, if true, could only

have come from Mary herself—and to him she had said: Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Then came the sound of her name, by which she recognised the Master. Then the refusal to let her cling to Him—those strange words which seem to me to have the mark of genuineness—“Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father, but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.” It is easier to believe that this happened as is here stated than that the story was invented.

The Evangelist now goes on to relate how Jesus appeared to the disciples when they were met together that same evening with closed doors for fear of the Jews. There is no attempt at explanation. He merely says what happened, what he himself had witnessed. Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be

unto you. And when He had said this He showed them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord, who now spoke to them, giving them their commission: As the Father hath sent me, so send I you. He then breathed upon them and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Next comes the story of Thomas, who had been absent when Jesus appeared the first time. And then follows the statement that these appearances did not stand alone: "Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name." So ends the twentieth chapter, which, according to our view, gives us the stages

by which the Evangelist knew the fact of the resurrection.

We note that all these appearances recorded in St. John xx. took place in Jerusalem. And they are rejected by some critics on this very ground. For it is said that the earliest tradition places the post-resurrection appearances in Galilee, and that a choice must therefore be made between the two. But then the Fourth Gospel does not stop at the twentieth chapter, and the concluding chapter tells of an appearance in Galilee at the sea of Tiberias. Some have thought that this last chapter is not really a part of the Gospel, but is an addition by a later hand. The majority of critics, however, even those opposed to the historicity of the Gospel, do not support this view. And the internal evidence is all in favour of an identity of authorship.

Is the discrepancy, then, between the earlier and later Gospels in the matter

of the post-resurrection appearances all that it has been made out to be? May there not after all have been appearances both in Jerusalem and in Galilee?

Now we observe at once in reading the Synoptists that it is certainly not the case that they know only of appearances in Galilee. St. Luke says nothing of appearances in Galilee, but he has a good deal to say of such in or near Jerusalem. But then St. Luke is said to belong to a later stage of the tradition which transfers the appearances in Galilee to Jerusalem, a process which, it is said, is continued or repeated in the Fourth Gospel. But we have already seen that the Fourth Gospel, while it records appearances in Jerusalem, knows certainly of one appearance in Galilee. It has indeed been said that the last chapter of the Gospel was added by the writer for the purpose of bringing his work into accord with the early tradition which

placed the appearances of the risen Jesus in Galilee. But such a theory proceeds from a presupposition that there were no appearances in Jerusalem, a presupposition which, as I shall now go on to show, is not justified by the so-called earliest tradition.

For where is that tradition to be found? The answer would be: In the Gospel according to Mark. But then it must be borne in mind that the original ending of Mark is missing; and there is nothing in the abrupt ending that we possess to justify us in concluding that there could have been no appearance in Jerusalem. That the conclusion of the Gospel in its original form did go on to tell of an appearance in Galilee I am not prepared to deny. The words of the young man arrayed in white and sitting in the tomb are (ver. 6): "Be not amazed; ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here;

behold the place where they laid him! But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him as he said unto you." Now these words have a place in Matthew also, and there it is told that the eleven disciples did go into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and there they saw Jesus, for it is written: "When they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted." It seems then most probable that Mark also went on to tell of this appearance in Galilee—the account of this being a part of the missing conclusion of that Gospel.

And honesty requires that we should not omit to mention the fact that St. Luke gives a different version of the words of the angel to the women. In St. Luke there is mention of two angels—or rather two men in dazzling apparel—who say to the women: "Why seek ye the living



among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." Here we have mention of Galilee, but it is in a different connexion. In Mark and Matthew the disciples were told to go to Galilee, where Jesus would come to them, but here in St. Luke it is to words that Jesus had spoken *when in Galilee* that reference is made. St. Luke, it has been said, changed the reference to Galilee to conform with his view that the appearances took place in Jerusalem and not in Galilee. And this change of meaning in the words of the angel has been thought to render unreliable St. Luke's story of the appearances at Jerusalem. If he could thus twist the reference to Galilee, may he not have twisted the history too? I am not able to take this view, for I believe that the simplest way

of explaining all the documents is to suppose that there were appearances also in Jerusalem. I allow, however, that St. Luke's version of the words of the angel differs substantially from that in Mark and Matthew.

Returning now to these two Gospels, we see that Matthew does record an appearance in Galilee, and there is every reason to suppose that Mark did so too. But it must be carefully noticed that Matthew expressly records an appearance in Jerusalem too, before that in Galilee, for he tells how, as the women were hastening from the tomb to bring the disciples word, behold, Jesus met them saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him. Then said Jesus unto them, Fear not: go, tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Whether or not a similar account had a place in the missing verses of Mark we

cannot of course say. But here it is plainly said in Matthew that Jesus appeared to the women on their way from the tomb to the city.

It is difficult, however, to reconcile this account of the appearance to the women with the narrative of St. Luke, who puts into the mouth of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus these words (xxiv. 22): "Moreover, certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb and found it even as the women had said; but him they saw not."

Now this account would certainly seem to imply that the women had not seen Jesus. It is true that the subject of the sentence, 'him they saw not,' refers to those who had gone to the tomb in con-

sequence of the words of the women, and not the women themselves. But the whole context suggests that neither had the women seen Him; it was only a vision of angels that they had had.

Are we then to exclude the statement in Matthew that Jesus appeared to the women as unhistorical? But, if so, on what principle? We cannot reject it on the ground of St. Luke's narrative, if at the same time we are not prepared to give credence to him in the rest of his account of these things, and if we are going to accuse him of romancing on the subject of the post-resurrection appearances in transferring them to Jerusalem.

For my own part, I am prepared not exactly to exclude the statement of Matthew about the appearance to the women, but to interpret it as a not very exact statement of what actually happened. And this seems to me to be an important distinction which we must make in all these

narratives. That is to say, we must distinguish between what is substantially true, and what is accurately expressed. I consider the statement in Matthew that Jesus appeared to the women to be substantially true because we know from St. John's Gospel that Jesus did appear to one of them, namely, to Mary Magdalene. But I find myself quite unable to put the post-resurrection narrative of Matthew on a level with that of the Fourth Gospel for accuracy of statement, because I believe the Fourth Gospel to be first-hand evidence.

Now the statement in Matthew that Jesus appeared to the women may be compared with another made by the same Evangelist, who says that the two robbers crucified with Jesus joined in the reproaches and revilings directed against Jesus upon the cross, whereas, according to St. Luke, one of the two reprov'd his companion for so doing. It is substantially true that the robbers did revile Jesus, for they did so in

the person of one of them ; but I can see no reason, apart from prejudices of verbal inspiration, not justified by the facts, to suppose, as has been done, that both robbers had at first joined in the taunts, and that the one of them afterwards changed his tone. Had he done so, he could not have rebuked his companion as in St. Luke he does.

While, then, it is substantially true that the robbers reviled Jesus, the fact is not accurately expressed in Matthew. And so it is, I think, with the statement respecting the appearance to the women. This, as it stands, will not agree with St. Luke's narrative, and, if there is one story of the post-resurrection appearances in the Synoptists which carries upon its face the impress of historical truth, it is that of the appearance of Jesus to the two disciples going to Emmaus. It seems to me that we have here not merely substantial truth, but also an accuracy of statement of great

historical value. It may be said that this is a purely subjective judgment and needs justification. If any question the judgment, I should ask for an explanation of the extraordinary particularity of statement in the story. So marked is this that I cannot but believe that the Evangelist had the story from one of the actors in the scene, if not from his lips, then from his pen.

## **THE RESURRECTION (II)**



## CHAPTER VII

### THE RESURRECTION (II)

THE story of which we were speaking at the end of the preceding chapter, of the appearance to the two going to Emmaus, hangs together with the account of that to the disciples in Jerusalem on the evening of the same day. The two disciples had returned from Emmaus at once to Jerusalem, and had found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, who greeted them with the words: "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon." And they two rehearsed the things that happened in the way and how He was known of them in

the breaking of the bread. And then, while they were talking of these things, Jesus stood in their midst. There is no mention of a *coming*—the story agrees with the corresponding account in the Fourth Gospel, which tells us that the doors were shut—Jesus stood in the midst.

Now if appearances of the Risen Jesus did take place in and near Jerusalem, the accounts of these things in the Third and Fourth Gospels are explained. If they did not, they are a mystery needing more explanation than has as yet been given. But now the question arises, why is it that in Mark and Matthew stress is laid on Galilee, and I think that perhaps it may help us here to refer to St. Paul's enumeration of appearances in 1 Corinthians xv. There we read as follows:—

“I delivered unto you, first of all, that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath

been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then (*ἑἴτα*) to the twelve; then (*ἔπειτα*) he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep; then (*ἔπειτα*) he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also."

We have here the earliest written record of the appearances of the risen Lord. St. Paul's statement shows that he regarded the fact of the resurrection as based upon the evidence of those who had seen Jesus after He had risen. He claims himself to have been one of those who had seen Him, so that his witness of an appearance made to himself personally is evidence in the strict sense of the word. His statement of appearances made to others is not evidence in this same sense. It is evidence, however, that St. Paul believed these appearances to

have occurred, and as we know that he had been in personal contact with James and Peter and others of the apostles—to say nothing of intercourse he may have had with some of the five hundred brethren to whom Jesus, according to him, appeared at one and the same time—we may say at least that there is a strong presumption that St. Paul had received information on this matter direct from some of those to whom, as he here states, Jesus had appeared.

We have now to ask whether the appearances thus enumerated by St. Paul are in agreement substantially with those given in the Gospel, and to inquire whether the Apostle's words throw any light on the emphasis laid, in the first two Gospels, on an appearance in Galilee.

We observe that St. Paul says nothing about the time and place of these appearances. We know from elsewhere that the appearance to himself took place in the

neighbourhood of Damascus, but that detail finds no place here, nor does he locate or date the other appearances which he here enumerates; but his use of the words *εἶτα* and *ἔπειτα* implies that the sequence is a chronological one.

He tells first of an appearance to Cephas or Peter. This agrees with a casual statement made by St. Luke, from whom also we learn of this appearance; for when the two disciples returned to Jerusalem from Emmaus they were greeted with the words: "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon."

"Then to the twelve." This appearance is to be identified with that recorded by St. Luke and St. John as taking place on the evening of the first Easter Day—an appearance which, as we learn from St. John, was repeated the following week, when Thomas, who had been absent before, was now present with his fellow-disciples.

It may, of course, be objected that

St. Paul says nothing of the appearance to Mary Magdalene, nor yet of that to the two on the way to Emmaus. This does not prove that such appearances did not take place, nor does it show that St. Paul did not know of them. He may be thinking more particularly of those who were to be in a special way witnesses of the resurrection.

Then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once. Of this appearance we should not have known but for this statement of St. Paul, and it may seem surprising that it should not be mentioned in the Gospels. Ought not this to have been the crowning proof of the resurrection, seeing that the appearance was made not to one, nor to a few, but to so many at once? And we cannot help asking where this appearance took place. Some may say that it is useless to attempt to decide such a question, as we are not told. But may it not well be that this appearance to more

than five hundred brethren at once took place in Galilee? Is not Galilee, in fact, the most likely scene of the event? Jesus had many Galilean followers, and it may well be that they had been specially invited to gather themselves together to behold Him. Indeed, I believe that we have here the key to the emphasis laid upon Galilee in the post-resurrection accounts in Mark and Matthew. The message to *the disciples generally*, as distinguished from the apostles particularly, was to meet in Galilee where they should see the risen Jesus. The place of meeting would be an appointed one, most probably on a mountain (St. Matt. xxviii. 16).

The First Gospel speaks of the *eleven disciples* going into Galilee, "unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him but some doubted." May we not have here again substantial truth but not perfect accuracy of statement? It seems impossible

to explain the doubts of the apostles if they had already seen Jesus in Jerusalem, but if those who doubted were some of the large number of brethren to whom Jesus simultaneously appeared, is not the doubting easily explained?

May not then the mountain in Galilee have been the appointed meeting-place of the large body of the Galilean followers of Jesus, who there revealed Himself to them according to a promise already given, a promise which had called them together? This seems to me very likely. I cannot but regard the last chapter of Matthew as very fragmentary; and if we are to reduce the history of these things to a consistent whole, we must fit in the information we have from other sources. That there was a special message sent to the disciples to go to Galilee, where Jesus would meet them, seems clear from Mark and Matthew. The statement of St. Paul that Jesus appeared to above five hundred brethren at once



enables us to interpret that message as addressed to the disciples at large. By obedience to it they were brought into the circle of favoured ones to whom this appearance was vouchsafed.

Nor need we assume that there was only one appearance in Galilee, though probably there was only one to the disciples in general. The last chapter of St. John tells of an appearance to certain of the apostles at the Sea of Galilee, and the story of it is too circumstantially told to be lightly dismissed as unhistorical.

We now return to St. Paul's statement. After the appearance to the more than five hundred brethren he tells of an appearance to James. Of this we learn nothing from the Gospels. But then we must remember that the appearance to Peter is only casually introduced in St. Luke. Then he speaks of an appearance to all the apostles. This may very well have been the last appearance before the Ascension, for we see

from the Acts that Jesus made it clear to His disciples that they were not to expect to continue to see Him with their bodily eyes. He seems to have parted from them finally by an Ascension—not a simple vanishing—so that they learnt by this acted parable to lift their hearts heavenward, and not to expect a repetition of the appearances which had been granted to them during the forty days.

We may then sum up by saying that there seems to be substantial agreement between the summary given by St. Paul of appearances of the risen Jesus and the accounts contained in the Gospels, if we take account of their record of appearances both in Jerusalem and in Galilee. It is a mistake to suppose that the earliest tradition knew nothing of appearances in Jerusalem but only in Galilee. And it may well be that the special emphasis laid on an appearance in Galilee in Matthew (and presumably in Mark too) is to be explained

by the fact that Galilee was the scene of the appearance to the large body of the disciples. Something must have called together those more than five hundred to whom, according to St. Paul, Jesus had appeared at one time. That something might well have been a message from the lips of Jesus that He would appear upon one of the mountains of Galilee.

And the bearing of all this upon our immediate subject; the historical value of the Fourth Gospel, is this. There is nothing whatever therein contained about the post-resurrection appearances which in any way conflicts with the other Gospels taken in conjunction with St. Paul and interpreted comprehensively. St. John never intended to tell the whole story of all the appearances of the risen Jesus. This he says expressly. I can see no reason to doubt that what he does record is a faithful reproduction of the facts as they would be indelibly impressed on the mind of one who

had had his share of experience in these events of such stupendous interest and importance.

And it must be borne in mind that if exception be taken to the contents of the twentieth chapter of St. John on the ground that the appearances there recorded take place in Jerusalem, then the same exception must be taken to St. Luke xxiv. as un-historical. And this would be a serious conclusion to reach in regard to one whose claims as a historian stand so high.

It has been urged as an objection to our Gospel that the writer represents the bestowal of the Holy Spirit as being made on the first Easter Day, when he records that the risen Jesus breathed on His disciples and said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." But as our Evangelist does not record any events subsequent to the ascension, we cannot conclude from this statement that he meant to imply that there was no further outpouring of the

Spirit at Pentecost. I fail to see why it should be supposed that the action of Jesus which St. John here notes should exclude the later Pentecostal effusion.

Finally, objection has been taken to the account of the miraculous draught of fishes in the last chapter of the Gospel, it being said that this is simply based on St. Luke's account of a similar occurrence early in the ministry of Jesus. But why may there not have been a repetition of this occurrence? We gather from St. Luke's narrative that the miraculous draught which he records was intended to be a speaking parable to the fishermen of Galilee. For he reports the words of Jesus to Simon Peter: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Surely there is nothing impossible or even improbable that, now that the time had come for the fulfilment of this promise, the Lord should have repeated the sign, when these disciples had returned to their occupation of fishing in the interval between

their return to Galilee after the Passover and their next going up to Jerusalem to observe Pentecost. It has long ago been pointed out that there is a very significant difference between the two cases. On the first occasion we are told that the nets were breaking; on the second it is expressly said that though the fish were so many the net was not rent. On the first occasion the disciples were being called to be prepared for a work which would at a later time be imposed upon them, but for which they were as yet unready and unfit; but on the occasion of the second miraculous draught the time of preparation was over; they were even now to become fishers of men.

While, then, I confess that I am distrustful of the duplication of an event told in a different way by two writers, because I believe that such duplication proceeds too often from an impatience with difference of detail when substantial agree-

ment is all that may be expected, I am of opinion that in this case the events, recorded by St. Luke and St. John, are not the same, though they have features in common. The whole story told in the last chapter of St. John is altogether too circumstantial and detailed to be interpreted otherwise than as a genuine occurrence. It is all easily explained if the things happened as they are said to have happened, and if St. John is the author of the Gospel. I cannot see that it can be satisfactorily explained otherwise.

**THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE, THE  
FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND,  
AND THE WALKING ON THE SEA**



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE, THE FEED- ING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND, AND THE WALKING ON THE SEA

THERE are five events, other than those we have already considered, which are recorded both by the Synoptists and St. John. These we must now proceed to examine. They are the cleansing of the temple, the feeding of the five thousand, the walking on the sea, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and the Last Supper. We shall consider the first three of these in the present chapter.

Each of the three Synoptists records how Jesus, after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, went to the temple and cast out

them that bought and sold there, protesting against its sacred precincts being turned into a den of robbers. These three accounts are in reality one; the first and third Evangelists have doubtless here borrowed from Mark. St. Luke's account is the shortest; that in Mark, which is copied almost verbatim in Matthew, is the longest. In both Mark and Matthew it is said that Jesus entered into the temple and cast out them that sold and bought there, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and Mark adds that He would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple.

St. John, however, says nothing about this cleansing of the temple after the triumphal entry, but he records a similar occurrence as taking place at an early stage in the ministry when Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the passover. We will quote his account: "And the passover of

the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money and overthrew their tables; and to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house shall eat me up."

Further in both cases the Evangelists represent that Jesus was challenged by the authorities for His action. In the Synoptic account the question is put to Him: "By what authority doest thou these things? or who gave thee this authority?" To these questions Jesus gave no direct reply, but put to His questioners a counter question, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" and promised an answer to

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their question in return for their answer to His. They found themselves in a dilemma, and could not answer, and so received no answer to the question they had put.

In St. John also Jesus is challenged by the Jews and the question asked Him is: "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" And Jesus answered: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Evangelist then goes on to record the answer of the Jews: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?" He then adds: "But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

Now before we pass on to compare and contrast these accounts, and to decide whether both the Synoptic and Johannine accounts are to be considered historical or,

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if not, to which of the two the preference is to be given, let us notice a significant feature in the account of the Fourth Gospel, namely the reference to the disciples. "His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house shall eat me up." And again: "When he was risen from the dead his disciples remembered that he spake this." These statements are at once explicable and justified if the Evangelist was himself a disciple. None but disciples themselves could appropriately say that they remembered, unless indeed he had the information from them, or unless there were something in their conduct which showed it (see for example Matt. xxvi. 75, Luke xxiv. 8). If then our Evangelist be not himself a disciple, he here makes himself appear so to be, and that in a most subtle way.

It must be allowed, I think, that there is nothing at all in the account of the cleansing of the temple in the Fourth Gospel which is *a priori* historically improbable. The

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only exception that can be taken to it is that it too closely resembles the Synoptic account to be considered as the record of a separate historical event. But it is important to notice that a very casual statement in Mark respecting the false witness brought against Jesus at His trial before the high priest shows that some such words as those attributed to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel on this occasion must have been uttered by Him. St. John puts into the mouth of Jesus the words, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." In Mark it is said that at the trial there stood up certain and bare false witness against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands. This witness was false because it distorted the words which Jesus had spoken. He had not said "I will destroy this temple," but "Destroy ye this temple, and in three days I will

raise it up." Exception has been taken to the explanation given by the Fourth Evangelist that Jesus spoke these words of the temple of His body. But we may in passing remark that the statement of the false witnesses in Mark respecting a temple made without hands shows that Jesus used the word temple in a metaphorical sense, and why therefore may He not have intended His body? And I think that it must be admitted that if Jesus did ever speak these words—as even Mark gives us reason to think that He did—the occasion of their utterance in the Fourth Gospel is peculiarly appropriate. And we may remark in conclusion on this point that the account in Mark of the false witness at the trial points to the words not having been recently spoken. It is an argument in favour of them having been uttered at an early stage of the ministry, as in our Gospel they are said to have been.

Again, the account of the cleansing of

the temple in the Fourth Gospel is minute and circumstantial. The oxen and the sheep are not mentioned in the Synoptists, but only here. The scourge of cords is peculiar to this Gospel, and the manner of dealing with the various articles of commerce is very exact. The oxen and sheep are driven out; the changers' money is poured out, and their tables overthrown; and the doves are got rid of by a command to those that sold them to take them away. Contrast with this exactness of statement the account in Mark: "He began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves." Apart from prejudices against the Fourth Gospel on other grounds, would not its account of the cleansing of the temple deserve to be preferred to the Synoptic account, supposing that a choice had to be made between the two?



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But here is just the question which we must face, namely, whether a choice has to be made, or the incident was repeated in actual fact. And we may ask, Why should there not have been a second occurrence? If it were the case, as the Fourth Gospel states, that Jesus protested against the profanation of the temple at the beginning of His ministry, why, if He found the same profanation going on at a later stage, may He not have repeated His protest? It is true that the Fourth Gospel says nothing about such a repetition. But then neither does it say anything about a good many other incidents that took place at Jerusalem after the triumphal entry. What it says rather supplements the Synoptists than repeats what they had already written.

Further, the difference between the challenge put to Jesus on the two occasions and His answer to it militates against the theory that we have to do with only

one event and not two. Supposing that the Synoptists and the Fourth Evangelist recorded the cleansing of the temple as taking place *at the same time* but with a difference of detail in regard to it, then I allow that it would be a remark of a very weak case to explain the differences of detail by duplicating the event. But this is not the case with which we have to deal here. There is a difference of detail, and the occasion is also different. Therefore the two events may well be distinct. Both may have taken place.

The position has been taken up by some scholars that the event only occurred once and that the Fourth Gospel has given it its right place in point of time, the Synoptists only finding it necessary to place it where they do because they have given no record of any previous visit of Jesus to Jerusalem during His ministry. This position I find myself unable to adopt. I should be disposed to adopt it if I were persuaded

that a choice had to be made between the two, but I am of opinion that the repetition of the occurrence is the simplest and the most natural explanation of the contents of the documents. I certainly find myself unable to believe that the story as given by the Fourth Evangelist is an embellishment of that of the Synoptists. If it were, we should have to pronounce it an extraordinarily clever one, because of the superior picturesqueness of its details. This is more easily explained by the supposition that the writer was an eye-witness of the things which he relates.

We now come to the story of the feeding of the five thousand. They are probably not far wrong who consider that the interest of the Fourth Evangelist in regard to this lies not so much in the miracle itself as in the discourse which he places after it. The miracle forms the text of a sermon.

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At this point, then, I hope I may be pardoned if I state the opinion that if the discourse in Capernaum on the Bread of Life had been found in our Gospel following upon the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, and *if that miracle had had no place in the Synoptists*, there would have been critics who would have said that the miracle never took place at all, just as they tell us that the raising of Lazarus is a pure invention of the Evangelist, a story to illustrate the text, I am the Resurrection and the Life. But as the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is recorded by the Synoptists, they are unable to take up this position, but they tell us that the discourse is an invention. Well, we are not now concerned with the discourse, though we shall have something to say about it later on. It finds no place in the Synoptists, and at present we are concerned with such things as are related both by them and the

Fourth Evangelist. It is the miracle with which we have to do. We must ask whether the account given of it in our Gospel is such as to justify the belief that he who records it was a disciple and an eyewitness of what he relates; for this he was, on the theory of the Johannine authorship of the Gospel.

Substantially, the account of the miracle is the same as that given by the Synoptists. Nobody could doubt for a moment that the Evangelist is recording the same event as that which they relate. But a very cursory reading of our Evangelist's account, and comparison of it with the Synoptic account, show us that it is marked by greater particularity, so that either the Evangelist is writing from personal experience, or he had knowledge of details beyond those known to the Synoptists, or he embellished the Synoptic narrative with details for some purpose or other. We must first examine the account and see what these details are.

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According to our Evangelist the feeding of the multitude was first suggested by Jesus Himself. The Synoptic account represents the disciples as coming to Jesus and asking Him to send the multitudes away that they might buy something to eat. But Jesus replied, Give ye them to eat. And they answered, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread and give them to eat? And He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew they say, Five and two fishes. Then He made the people sit down, and distribution was made of the loaves and the fishes, so that the whole multitude was satisfied. At the conclusion of the meal twelve basketfuls of the fragments were taken up. This is in substance the Synoptic account.

In the Fourth Gospel it was Jesus who first broached the subject of food for the multitude. "Seeing that a great company cometh unto Him, He saith to Philip,

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Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" Why was the question addressed to Philip in particular? Was it that he was an inhabitant of the nearest town? We cannot tell. But we cannot but be struck by the fuller detail of our Evangelist beyond that of the Synoptists, who mention no disciples by name. The narrative goes on to say that Jesus only asked this question to prove Philip, for He Himself knew what He would do. Exception has been taken to this statement as exhibiting the tendency of the Evangelist to emphasise the foreknowledge of Jesus. But the question is whether the subsequent conduct and action of Jesus justify the statement. And most people would allow that they do. The statement of the Evangelist is of course not a statement of fact cognised by the senses. It is a justifiable conclusion based on the facts of the case.

Then comes Philip's answer: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient

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for them that every one may take a little." This has to be compared with the question of the disciples, in the Synoptic narrative, whether they should go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread. There is no real discrepancy between the two accounts. For if Jesus had, as our Evangelist represents, asked the question, Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat? the subsequent statement of Philip that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not suffice might well be converted into a kind of surprised question such as we find in the Synoptists: Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread and give them to eat?

It is not improbable, as the Synoptists state, that Jesus at this point asked the disciples how many loaves they had, nor is it improbable that the answer came, as according to our Evangelist it must have done, from Andrew: There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two fishes;



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but, he asks, what are they among so many? Here again we have a particularity of statement in the mention of Andrew by name, which it is difficult to account for unless things really happened as here stated. One who was present would know and might well remember these details. If, however, the details are merely invented to make it appear that the writer was an eye-witness of the event, does it not seem strange that he nowhere asserts his own presence on the occasion? It can be inferred but it is never obtruded.

There are two other points in the account given by our Evangelist which indicate first-hand evidence. The one is the statement made by him that there was much grass in the place, and the other is the command of Jesus to gather up the broken pieces remaining over that nothing might be lost. The Synoptic account does indeed tell of the gathering up of the fragments, but it says nothing of this act proceeding

from a command of the Master. The probability seems to me to be in favour of such an order having been given.

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is followed in our Gospel, as in the first two, by an account of the walking upon the water. This forms a natural transition to the great discourse on the Bread of Life delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum. We may suppose, then, that it was on this account that St. John gave it a place in his narrative.

There are certain points of difference in regard to this incident between the Synoptists and St. John which must now be touched on. We observe first of all that St. John alone has something to say of the effect upon the people of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. He tells us that they said: "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world." He then goes on to say that Jesus perceived

that they were about to come and take Him by force and to make Him a king, and that for this reason He withdrew again into the mountain Himself alone. Then, apparently in the absence of the Master, when the evening came, the disciples went down to the sea and entered into a boat, and were going over the sea to Capernaum. The Evangelist adds that it had become dark and Jesus had not yet come to them.

But according to the Synoptic account it was Jesus Himself who had constrained (*ἠνάγκασεν*) the disciples to enter into the boat and to go before Him to the other side—to Bethsaida according to Mark—while He sent the multitude away. Then, after He had taken leave of the multitude, He went into the mountain to pray. St. John, however, represents some, at any rate, of the multitude as being the next morning still in the same spot where the miracle had taken place (vi. 22).

Now as regards the effect produced upon

the multitude by the miracle of the feeding, there seems to be nothing improbable in this as it is described by our Evangelist. It was indeed a stupendous miracle that they had witnessed, and the conclusion to which they came seems perfectly natural under the circumstances. Moreover it would be difficult to see what motive the Evangelist could have had in making this statement unless what he says did really take place. It is true that the intention to seize Jesus to make Him king is only said to have been perceived by Jesus, and no outward signs of the intention are mentioned. But we need not assume that the Evangelist had nothing to go upon in making this statement. Moreover the haste shown and the compulsion exercised by Jesus, according to the Synoptists, in sending away the disciples, things which are unexplained in the Synoptic narrative, may perhaps be accounted for if the story of this event in the Fourth Gospel is

historical. For it might well be that Jesus desired to remove His disciples at once from the dangerous enthusiasm of the crowd, against which they might have been powerless to stand. There is certainly, then, no disagreement with the Synoptists on the part of our Evangelist when he describes the effect produced by the miracle upon the crowd. He is merely recording what they are silent about.

There does, however, appear to be a disagreement in regard to the other two points, namely, the sending away of the multitude and the departure of the disciples. But as to the first of these two it must be observed that our Evangelist really is silent on the matter, and it must not be supposed that what he says of the crowd the next morning in verse 22 implies that all the five thousand were still there. He speaks of ὁ ὄχλος ὁ ἑστηκὼς πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης. The presence of the article before the participle seems to make it impossible to understand that by ὁ ὄχλος

is meant the whole multitude of the day before. And indeed the following verses show that there were only so many as could cross the lake in the boats which came over to the place from Tiberias, and which were driven in possibly by the storm during the night. Some dispersal of the crowd the day before was well-nigh imperative in order to frustrate their purpose, and it is not difficult to fit in the statement of the Synoptists, that Jesus sent the multitude away, with the narrative of the Fourth Gospel, though this does not mention the fact explicitly.

The more difficult point is the departure of the disciples; but perhaps we may get help from the mention of Bethsaida in Mark. Matthew omits the words *πρὸς Βηθσαιδάν*, possibly because the writer found it difficult to interpret them, Bethsaida being situated at the north end of the lake and not close to its banks. Indeed some have thought that the words in Mark

imply that there was a second place called Bethsaida on the western shore of the lake, but this is mere hypothesis and has nothing to support it. Mark says that Jesus immediately compelled His disciples to enter into the boat and to go before to the other side (*προάγειν εἰς τὸ πέραν*)—to Bethsaida (*πρὸς Βηθσαιδάν*), so our English translation runs. What is meant by these words? Did Jesus send His disciples across to the western shore of the lake? The words *πρὸς Βηθσαιδάν* seem to exclude this, though the expression *εἰς τὸ πέραν* at first suggests it. May it not then be that Jesus told His disciples to go across to a point on the shore of the lake in the direction of Bethsaida, or over against Bethsaida, it being understood that He would follow them on foot? This interpretation would give a perfectly natural meaning to the words *πρὸς Βηθσαιδάν*. And if the interpretation be correct, then the narrative of St. John will fit in quite well with it. For the

disciples would wait at this spot for Jesus; and only when it had grown dark, and Jesus had not yet come, did they start to cross to the western shore of the lake, to Capernaum as St. John says.

Further, I am of opinion that not only is this interpretation of the words *πρὸς Βηθσαιδάν* a possible one, but it is necessary. If Bethsaida had been the goal, the fact would have been expressed by the use of the preposition *εἰς*, not by *πρὸς*. To a place is always in the New Testament rendered by *εἰς*. The only apparent exception to this that I can find is St. Luke xxiv. 50, where we have *ἕως πρὸς Βηθανίαν*, which is translated in the Authorised Version "as far as to Bethany." But this is probably incorrect; and we note that the Revisers have rendered it "until they were over against Bethany."

It does not seem to me, then, that there is anything in the account of this incident in the Fourth Gospel which is out of agreement with the Synoptic account.



Indeed the purpose of the multitude to declare Jesus king, which our Evangelist alone mentions, seems to throw light on what Mark and Matthew tell us. For it helps us to understand the desire of Jesus to separate His disciples from the dangerous enthusiasm of the crowd and His conduct in dispersing the multitude, before He rejoined the disciples. According to the Johannine account the disciples did not start to cross to the western shore of the lake until it had become dark and Jesus had not yet rejoined them. Their goal was Capernaum (*ἤρχοντο πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης εἰς Καφαρναούμ*). The Evangelist gives a graphic though very brief description of the difficulty encountered in the crossing when he says that the sea was rising by reason of a great wind that blew. He tells us that they had rowed some twenty or thirty furlongs when they beheld Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the boat and they were afraid.

When they were assured that it was Jesus they were ready to receive Him into the boat; and straightway, he concludes, the boat was at the land whither they were going. He does not state that they landed at Capernaum itself, though his language implies that they were somewhere near it, but this they might be if it was the land of Gennesaret, as Mark calls it. And there would be plenty of time for the incidents recorded in Mark vi. 54, 55 to happen before those of the multitude who came over from the eastern shore arrived in Capernaum later in the day (St. John vi. 24).

It is true that the Evangelist says nothing of Peter's attempt to walk on the sea to Jesus, an incident recorded only in Matthew. Of course if this incident really took place and the Evangelist did not know of it, he could not have been an eyewitness. But we cannot draw any conclusion from his silence on the point.

Exception has been taken to the statement made in our Evangelist's account that the boat was *immediately* at the land whither they were going, whereas it would appear that the disciples were well out in the middle of the lake when Jesus came to them. Mark, followed by Matthew, says that the wind ceased, and implies a continuation of the voyage. But if the last part of the voyage was smooth and quickly over, we need not be hypercritical in judging of the manner in which our Evangelist expresses the fact. The verb he uses is *γίνομαι*, the same word which he employs two verses before when he speaks of Jesus drawing near to the boat (*ἔγγυς τοῦ πλοίου γινόμενον*). It is true that it is the aorist *ἐγένετο* which occurs in the verse we are considering, yet still the verb itself denotes a process and not merely a state. They were not at once at the land, but they quickly got to it.

Returning once again to the narrative of

Mark, we may point out how improbable it is that "the other side" to which Jesus at once compelled His disciples to go was the western shore of the lake. For the Evangelist distinctly says that the disciples were to go *before*, while Jesus sent the multitude away. The clear implication is that He would follow them, and on foot, for there is no suggestion that there was any other boat there than the one. The place to which they were directed to go was then not very far distant, as indeed it would not be if Bethsaida here means Bethsaida Julias to the north of the lake, not far from which town the miracle of the feeding had taken place.

Further, it seems clear that the incident of the walking on the water could not have taken place in this neighbourhood, for Mark speaks of it as happening in the fourth watch of the night. The disciples must then have been on the lake for a considerable time and have advanced some way. It is highly improbable that they were still near to the place from which they had started.

**THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, AND THE  
LAST SUPPER**

## CHAPTER IX

### THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, AND THE LAST SUPPER

WE will now pass on to consider the account given in the Fourth Gospel of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It is often said that this Gospel exhibits an obvious exaggeration in the matter of miracle. It may be well, then, to point out that here at any rate there is a very marked absence of anything of the kind. There is nothing said of the prevision of Jesus in the matter of the finding of the ass's colt. Our Evangelist merely says that Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon. The writer does not say whether

or not the Synoptic account of the finding of the ass is correct. Further, there is something very natural about the whole incident as it is told in his Gospel. The impression we get from the Synoptists is that Jesus was accompanied by a great crowd of people as He travelled towards Jerusalem, these having been with Him all the way. We learn from St. John that the multitude that had come to the feast in Jerusalem, hearing that Jesus was coming to the city, went out to meet Him and greeted Him with "Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." In regard to the use of this greeting Ederheim writes:\* "It must be remembered that, according to Jewish tradition, Psalm cxviii. 25-28 was also chanted antiphonally by the people of Jerusalem, as they went to welcome the festive pilgrims on their arrival, the latter always responding in

\* *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, ii. p. 368.

the second clause of each verse, till the last verse of the Psalm was reached, which was sung by both parties in unison, Psalm ciii. 17 being added by way of conclusion."

It would seem, then, that our Evangelist gives us an accurate picture of the occurrence. The multitude came out to meet Jesus to give Him a special welcome because, according to the Evangelist, they had heard of the miracle which he had wrought. He says: "The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness. For this cause also the multitude went and met him, for that they heard that he had done this sign."

Now this point is certainly not brought out in the Synoptic account. There is mention of the multitudes that went before and that followed, but we should not gather from this, without the help of the



Fourth Gospel, that those before were they who had come out from Jerusalem to welcome Jesus and were now escorting Him in triumph into the city.

And though St. John says that this entry of the King into the city accorded with the words of the prophet, "Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt," he tells us that the disciples did not at the time understand the significance of the event. "These things understood not his disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him." We compare this statement with those others in ii. 17, 22, where we have already seen the writer able to speak in the name of the disciples. This statement, like those others, is at once intelligible if the Evangelist be the Apostle St. John.

I do not think that more need be said of

the triumphal entry. It remains now to consider our Evangelist's account of the Last Supper, this being the last of the events that he has in common with the Synoptists.

There is first of all the question of the connection of this Supper with the feast of the Passover. Our Evangelist says nothing about it being a Passover celebration. Indeed it is clear from his narrative of subsequent events that he certainly did *not* regard it as the Passover. For in xviii. 28 he says that the accusers of Jesus would not enter the pretorium that they might not be defiled, *but might eat the passover*. Again he remarks incidentally in xix. 14, that when Pilate sat on the judgment seat at a place called in Hebrew Gabbatha, it was the Preparation of the Passover. In xix. 31 and 42 he again speaks of the day of the crucifixion being the Preparation. Now while the use of the term 'Preparation' in these last two verses might be

interpreted by making it apply to Friday, *quâ* Friday, which was the Preparation for the Sabbath, it seems impossible to accept this interpretation in view of the other two verses to which reference has been made. I acknowledge that in taking up this position I have against me the emphatically expressed opinion of Edersheim, but I fail to see that he has proved his case. He thinks that there is no difference between the Synoptists and St. John as to the day of the month on which the Lord ate the Last Supper with His disciples. He considers that the language of the Fourth Evangelist does not preclude the possibility that that Supper was the Passover feast which was celebrated on the evening of Nisan 14. Thus he interprets the eating of the Passover xviii. 28, as having reference to the *Chagigah* on Nisan 15; but even if this be possible there is still the expression "the Preparation of the Passover" in xix. 14 to

explain. Edersheim interprets this to mean the Friday in Passover week. It would not then be the Preparation of the Passover itself, but the Preparation of the Sabbath of the week of the Passover. This, if a possible interpretation, seems hardly a natural one. And there is the incidental remark made by the Evangelist in xiii. 29, which tells against it. When Jesus had said to Judas at the Supper, "That thou doest do quickly," the writer adds that no one at the table knew for what intent He spake this to him. Some thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus said unto him, "Buy what things we have need of for the feast." This seems to show that in the view of the writer the Supper at which they were sitting was not the Passover feast, for which preparations were yet to be made.

On the whole, then, I share the opinion of most scholars that the Fourth Gospel makes the crucifixion take place on

the 14th Nisan, and that the feast of the Passover would be on the evening of that day. In this case we have a distinct difference between our Evangelist and the Synoptists, who appear to make the Last Supper a celebration of the Passover. Thus in Mark we read: "On the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover, his disciples say unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and make ready that thou mayest eat the passover? And he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him, and where-soever he shall enter in, say to the good-man of the house, The Master saith, Where is my guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? . . . And the disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the pass-over. And when it was evening he cometh

with the twelve." This account, somewhat abbreviated, is reproduced in Matthew; and St. Luke repeats it almost verbatim. The latter, however, has information about the Last Supper from some source other than Mark (St. Luke xxii. 14-38), and he represents Jesus as saying to His disciples, when He sat down with them: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not eat it until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." There are two very interesting notes on the meaning of this saying which are published in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for July 1908, by Professor Burkitt and the Rev. A. E. Brooke. Professor Burkitt certainly holds no brief for the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, but he takes the view, which Mr. Brooke shares, that these words in the mouth of Jesus imply that the meal of which Jesus and His disciples were then par-

taking was *not* the passover feast. Professor Burkitt takes our Lord to mean: "Near as this Passover is, and much as I have longed to celebrate it with you, it is not so to be, for I shall not eat it; within the next twenty-four hours the enemy will have done his worst, and the next Passover that I shall eat with you will be the Messianic Feast."

I may be allowed to say that this view, now put forward by Professor Burkitt and Mr. Brooke, is one that had occurred to me independently some time ago. The natural meaning of the words, taken by themselves, seemed to me to be just as Professor Burkitt has paraphrased them. The difficulty, however, was to reconcile this interpretation with St. Luke's unambiguous statement a few verses before that it was the Passover feast in which Jesus and His disciples were engaged.

But the explanation of the discrepancy is probably that which Professor Burkitt

himself gives. St. Luke has at least two sources from which he derives his information. One is, of course, the Gospel according to Mark, which he freely quotes. The other sources used by him may have supported a view inconsistent with that taken over from the Gospel of Mark. In other words, St. Luke's other sources may have regarded the Last Supper as *not* being the Passover.

Certainly the statement made in Mark xiv. 12 that they sacrificed the Passover on the first day of unleavened bread is an inaccurate one; for the first day of unleavened bread was the day after the Passover, viz., the 15th Nisan. If, then, the Gospel of Mark is inaccurate here, it may be also inaccurate in making the Last Supper a paschal celebration, this inaccuracy being taken over in Matthew and by St. Luke. So though the Fourth Evangelist differs from what is commonly called the Synoptic view of the date of the Last



Supper, it may well be that he is right after all.

For, again, Mark, followed by Matthew, represents the chief priests, &c., as saying when they were plotting to take Jesus and to put Him to death: "Not during the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people." But if the Last Supper were a Passover celebration, then it becomes clear that the Jewish authorities did the very thing which they decided not to do. It seems more likely than not, then, that the Fourth Evangelist is correct in not calling the Last Supper a Passover celebration. And it must be acknowledged that only one who was well informed could have thus corrected the error made in the other Gospels, for he does correct it, not by saying that the Last Supper was not a Passover, but by stating plainly that the Crucifixion took place on the day of the Preparation, the day, that is, on the evening of which the Passover took place.

We now pass from our Evangelist's dating of the Supper to what he has to say of what took place at it. His account is, as every one knows, much fuller than that given by the other Evangelists and yet he omits all mention of the institution of the Eucharist. This, for some unaccountable reason, seems to give great offence to those who deny the apostolic authorship of the Gospel and discredit its historical character. They speak as if the Evangelist had somehow put the institution of the Lord's Supper out of its place, because in his Gospel Jesus is represented as teaching truth preparatory to it in the synagogue at Capernaum after the feeding of the five thousand (St. John vi.). But why should this discourse not have taken place as St. John records? Something of the kind seems almost a necessity. For what meaning otherwise could the disciples have attached to the words of Jesus when, as according to the Synoptists, He instituted

the Eucharist at the Last Supper? When He said, "This is my body," "This is my blood," must there not have been some previous teaching which would prepare the minds of the disciples to hear such startling words? I have never been able to see why He who spake thus to the disciples at the Last Supper, and who is believed to have thus spoken because the Synoptists record the fact, should not have spoken a year before, as the Fourth Evangelist represents, in the synagogue at Capernaum. We have already seen that Schmiedel regards this discourse as unhistorical because it gives the meaning of the Eucharistic Supper a year before it took place, and the insertion of it appears to him therefore to detract from the historical value of the Gospel as a whole. But it is not a very exact statement of the case to say that the Capernaum discourse gives the meaning of the Eucharistic Supper before it took place. For the discourse makes no reference to the

Eucharistic Supper. It certainly abounds in teaching preparatory to the institution of the Eucharist; but that is a different thing.

Though the Fourth Evangelist, in his full account of the Last Supper, says nothing of the institution of the Eucharist, it does not follow that he did not know it was instituted then. Such a supposition would be absurd. Instead of finding fault with him for not repeating what was already known, we ought rather to be grateful to him for telling us so much that was not generally known and which he, if he were an eyewitness, was in an exceptional position to record. And I cannot see that there is anything which he writes on the subject which is in the least degree improbable *a priori*. He tells of two incidents which the other Evangelists give us, namely, the foretelling of the betrayal by one of Jesus' disciples sitting with Him, and also that of the denial of Peter. It is true that Mark and Matthew put the latter after Jesus

had left the upper room, but it is worthy of note that St. Luke, relying no doubt on some other trustworthy source, represents it, as our Evangelist does, as taking place at the Supper. And I fail to see how any one can read the story in the Fourth Gospel of the Lord's disclosure of the betrayal of Judas without being impressed by its historical likelihood. It is told, as only one who was present on the occasion could have told it, with a most remarkable minuteness of detail. When Jesus made the announcement that one of them would betray Him, our Evangelist gives us the picture of the disciples looking one on another in bewilderment, doubting of whom He spake. Then he tells us that there was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. This would be John himself. To him Simon Peter beckoned that he might find out who it was. And he leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast, saith unto Him, Lord, Who is it? And Jesus answered :

He it is for whom I shall dip the sop and give it him. So He dipped the sop and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Nothing but prejudice against the Gospel as a whole could deny to this account real historical value. Who could have invented all these details on the ground of what the other Evangelists tell of the same event? The verisimilitude of our Evangelist is here past all question.

Nor is there anything at all improbable in the story of the washing of the disciples' feet on this occasion, followed by the exhortation to humility and service. For from St. Luke we learn that there had arisen a contention amongst the disciples which of them was to be accounted the greatest.

And the subsequent teaching given by Jesus is set forth in such a way that there seems no improbability that it was actually given. The difficulties which the disciples found in what He said to them are brought out. One after another questions him; and

each time the disciple who addresses Him is mentioned by name. First it is Thomas: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Then Philip: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." And later it is Judas (not Iscariot): "Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" There is, it is true, one case where the disciples are said to have spoken collectively (xvi. 29), but this naming of individuals in three cases is not to be passed lightly over. It is at once explicable on the theory of the Johannine authorship.

It need not be claimed that the Evangelist is recording the *ipsissima verba*, or the Greek equivalent of the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. But there seems no reason to doubt that we have in these chapters a faithful representation of the teaching of the Master on momentous subjects, given at a time when the minds of the disciples were receptive by reason of the solemnity

of the occasion. Our author tells us of a promise made by Jesus that the Holy Spirit would bring to the remembrance of the disciples the things that He had spoken to them. Why should we doubt that this disciple had found the promise fulfilled in his own case, and that the words of Jesus which he has recorded were indeed spoken by Him? If we have not preserved for us the letter, yet we may believe that we have what is more important, the spirit.



**THE PROBABILITY OF A MINISTRY  
IN JERUSALEM**

## CHAPTER X

### THE PROBABILITY OF A MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM

WE have now considered in some detail those sections of the Fourth Gospel which cover ground common to it and the Synoptists. We claim to have shown that there is nothing in these parts of the Gospel seriously at variance with the Synoptic account of the same events. The only difference of any importance concerns the date of the Crucifixion, but in regard to this we have seen reasons for thinking that the Fourth Evangelist is right, and the Marcan account incorrect. While we do not deny that our Evangelist was in all

probability acquainted with the other three Gospels, which every one acknowledges to be earlier than the Fourth Gospel in point of time, there is a marked independence in his treatment of his subject. Moreover the independence which the writer shows is suggestive of first-hand information concerning the things he has to tell of. The narrative cannot, in my opinion, be explained as an embellishment, with a purpose, of the Synoptic narrative. If these portions of the Fourth Gospel which we have had under our consideration in the preceding chapters had stood alone and the Judæan ministry had found no place in the Gospel, I hardly think that any one would have doubted their independent historical value.

But we have yet to consider those parts of the Gospel in which the ministry of Jesus is presented from a wholly different point of view from that which the Synoptists take. And here of course we cannot judge of the historical value of our document on

the same principles as those which have served us hitherto, for thus far we have been able to make a comparison between a part of a document, whose historicity we are seeking to establish, with other documents whose historicity is, speaking generally, admitted, inasmuch as the same events, or, in some cases, closely connected events, are found detailed in both the one and the other. I think it ought to be allowed that if our Evangelist has shown up well in the comparison we have made of his work with the Synoptic writings, so far as a comparison could be made, there is a presumption in favour of the historicity of the other parts of his Gospel. Some of my readers may not allow that I have proved my case up to the present point of the inquiry. Such will not of course allow that we have any right to approach the remaining sections of the Gospel with any prejudice in their favour. I contend, however, that the parts of the Gospel already

considered are certainly not in themselves of such a nature as to create prejudice *against* the remainder.

Speaking broadly, this remainder consists of an account of a ministry of Jesus at different times in or near Jerusalem. It is true that our Evangelist tells of events in Galilee as to which the Synoptists are silent, and these will demand our consideration in due course. In the present chapter, however, I do not propose to go into them, nor indeed is it my intention yet to consider *in detail* our Evangelist's account even of the activity of Jesus in Jerusalem. It seems desirable first of all to inquire whether a Jerusalem ministry has historical probability in its favour, without troubling ourselves yet with the question whether, if it has, that recorded in the Fourth Gospel is likely to be historical.

I propose then to argue for the two following propositions:

A. It is antecedently probable that Jesus

visited Jerusalem during His ministry and before the Passover visit when He was crucified.

B. Certain points in the Synoptic narratives are rendered more intelligible if Jesus had thus previously visited Jerusalem and taught there.

(A.)

It will not be necessary to dwell long on the first of these two propositions. It is true that the impression created by the Synoptic narratives may well be that only one Passover Feast occurred during the public ministry of Jesus, namely that one at which He was crucified. According to the Fourth Gospel there were at any rate three Passovers, at two of which Jesus was present in Jerusalem. For the third, the middle of the three, He seems not to have gone up to the capital, for the reason that the authorities there were bent on His death (St. John vii. 1), the time for which

had not, however, yet come. It is easily to be understood that Jesus might have absented Himself from the capital even during "a Feast of obligation" for reasons of personal safety if His hour had not yet come, but it seems highly improbable that He should have kept away from Jerusalem altogether. Even if there were no Passover Feast during His Galilæan ministry, there must have occurred some Feast, attendance at which was obligatory. Even if it be possible to date the various stages of the Galilæan Ministry, as told by the Synoptists, so that no Passover Feast fell within it, there must have been one Feast of Pentecost, for the incident of the plucking of the ears of corn on the Sabbath day (Mark ii. 23) gives a clear indication that it can only have happened somewhere about the time of harvest. And then, before the next Passover Feast occurred, there would be the Feast of Tabernacles on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. Now attendance

at these three Feasts—the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles—was obligatory, and it is difficult to believe that Jesus would have absented Himself from two successive Feasts of obligation falling within His Galilean ministry unless indeed there were special reasons why He did not wish to come into conflict with the authorities in Jerusalem. It may be said, of course, that He absented Himself because He knew of the hostility towards Him of the religious leaders there, this having become clear to Him from the attitude of the Scribes and Pharisees who had come down from Jerusalem to Galilee to question and oppose Him. But it is surely far more easy to explain their advent in Galilee if, as the Fourth Evangelist tells us, Jesus had already visited Jerusalem and they had there fallen out with Him.

I claim, then, that it is antecedently probable that Jesus visited Jerusalem during His ministry and before the Passover visit



when He was crucified. By using the word 'antecedently' here I do not mean that the probability is independent of the Synoptic story of the ministry of Jesus, but what I contend for is that it does not depend on the particular statements of the Fourth Gospel. At least two Feasts of obligation must have occurred during the Galilæan ministry, and the absence of Jesus from both of these, if He had not previously tested the attitude of Jerusalem towards Him, is highly improbable. Such a test could only properly be made by a personal visit.

(B.)

Further, we can argue that certain points in the Synoptic narratives are rendered more intelligible if Jesus had visited Jerusalem during His ministry and before the fatal Passover Feast.

For consider first St. Mark xiv. 57 ff. Jesus is on His trial before the high priest, who

with the Sanhedrin, desires to find some cause why He should be put to death. They invited witness against Him. And many bore false witness against Him, but agreed not together. Then, we read, there stood up certain, and bare false witness against Him, saying, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands." The same incident is recorded in St. Matthew xxvi. 60. Now it is true that in Matthew the witnesses are not represented as saying, "We heard him say" but "This man said." It is clear, however, that the evidence would be worthless unless they could give personal testimony to having heard Jesus thus speak. These witnesses—two in number according to Matthew—are testifying to having heard Jesus say certain blasphemous words against the temple. We are not told who the witnesses were nor whence they came, but it is most natural to suppose that they

were men of Jerusalem, and that they are referring to words which Jesus had spoken in Jerusalem. This supposition is confirmed by the words used in Mark: "I will destroy *this* temple." Now when did Jesus use these words, or words like them which could be twisted so as to be turned against Himself? There is no evidence of any words like them having been spoken by Him in those few days at Jerusalem before the fatal Passover Feast, for what He said about the coming destruction of the Temple to His disciples (Mark xiii. 2) had been said privately; and further, there is nothing at all in His words which in any way corresponds with the statement testified against Him: "In three days I will build another, made without hands."

Further, the fact that the witnesses did not agree in the evidence they gave suggests that the words to which they were referring had been spoken some time before, and their recollection of them was there-

fore confused, and their testimony conflicting.

The conclusion, then, is obvious. Jesus had spoken in Jerusalem words which these witnesses now tried to use against Him. That He had used words capable of being misunderstood or misinterpreted after this manner is stated by the Fourth Evangelist (ii. 19). We have then an argument in favour of the historicity of the Fourth Gospel in regard to this particular statement. It is, however, open to an objector to say that the Evangelist put the words into the mouth of Jesus in consequence of what he found written in Mark and Matthew respecting the false witness against Jesus. But even if this were so, which I do not for a moment allow to be probable, it would be an argument in favour of the proposition which we are at present seeking to establish. As has been said, we are not yet specially concerned with the proof that the particular narrative

of the Fourth Gospel relating to the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem is historical. We are arguing that certain points in the Synoptic narratives are rendered more intelligible if Jesus had during His public ministry visited Jerusalem and taught there. If the Fourth Evangelist invented this saying of Jesus in ii. 19 because of what he found in the first two Synoptists, it would be a proof that to him some explanation of the accusation brought against Jesus by these false witnesses was necessary. And that explanation, on this hypothesis, is that Jesus had uttered words capable of this misconstruction *on a previous visit to Jerusalem.*

We will next consider the reference to Joseph of Arimathæa in connexion with the burial of Jesus. The site of Arimathæa, so far as I know, has not yet been identified. St. Luke, however, calls it "a city of the Jews," which implies

that it was in Judæa. Moreover the fact that in Mark (and St. Luke repeats the statement) Joseph is called a "councillor" would seem to suggest that he lived in or near Jerusalem. In Matthew he is called a disciple of Jesus. Parenthetically we may remark that the Fourth Evangelist so indicates him likewise, and adds that he was only a disciple *secretly*, for fear of the Jews. It may be objected that the statement in Matthew that Joseph was a disciple cannot be pressed, as Mark does not so speak of him, but describes him as one "who was looking for the kingdom of God." I can see, however, no reason, except prejudice, for rejecting the description in Matthew. And we ask: How came this man to be a disciple of Jesus? The answer is simple enough if Jesus had during His ministry visited, and taught in, Jerusalem. Moreover—but this again only parenthetically—the use of the word 'boldly' in Mark's description of Joseph's

approach to Pilate seems to me a confirmation of the statement in the Fourth Gospel that Joseph had been only a *secret* disciple. The appropriateness of the word 'boldly' is at once apparent if, until now, Joseph's discipleship had been a secret thing. It is hardly conceivable that the Fourth Evangelist concluded that Joseph was a secret disciple by arguing from the boldness of his approach to Pilate as Mark represents it. He may well have had independent knowledge of the fact.

Next let us reflect on our Lord's lament over Jerusalem as St. Luke records it (xix. 41 ff.). Is it conceivable that Jesus would have thus lamented over the city if He had as yet made no direct appeal to its inhabitants? What meaning otherwise have such words as: "O that thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace!"? It is an utterance devoid of all significance unless a refusal had already been made. But it is perfectly

explicable on the hypothesis that there had already been a Jerusalem ministry, and a rejection, as according to the Fourth Gospel there had been.

Similar to this lament of Jesus over the holy city is that other which St. Luke gives, and which finds a place in Matthew too (Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!")

Schmiedel has proved to his own satisfaction \* that these words are not words of Jesus at all, but that they are an utterance of 'Wisdom' quoted from some literature not now extant. He points out that in Matthew they follow immediately upon the words: "Therefore behold, I send unto

\* *The Johannine Writings*, pp. 57 ff. The reference in the original German is p. 45, *Das vierte Evangelium*.



you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zechariah, son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation." Now words like these, but with the third person instead of the second, occur also in St. Luke (xi. 49 ff.) and they are prefaced by the words "Therefore also said the wisdom of God," which mark them out as a quotation. The quotation, according to Schmiedel, does not stop at Matthew xxiii. 36, but continues in the following words already cited: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, etc.," though it is to be noticed that in St. Luke this lament is placed in another connection

altogether (Luke xiii. 34). It is unfortunate for Schmiedel's argument that the connexion in St. Luke is so entirely different. Still he is right in drawing attention to the fact that the correct reading gives: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her," and not, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee." So that in these words something is said *about* Jerusalem rather than *to* her, and Jerusalem is only addressed in the words which follow: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, etc."

It does not, however, appear to me that Schmiedel has satisfactorily proved that these last words are not original words of Jesus. There may well be mingled with His words a quotation, as Schmiedel supposes; but it seems clear that both the First Evangelist and St. Luke regard the lamentation as one proceeding from the

heart of Jesus Himself. Whatever former utterance He may be making use of, He is giving expression to the bitter sorrow of His own soul that Jerusalem had refused to heed His message and that her children would not be gathered to Himself. But even if we were to give away, as Schmiedel would have us do, this apostrophe addressed to Jerusalem, I venture to say that the lamentation over the city in St. Luke xix. 41 f. remains unintelligible unless Jesus had already suffered rejection from her. It is only explained if He had already visited Jerusalem and taught there.

Indeed the final rejection and murder of Jesus at the fatal Passover stands unexplained in the Synoptic narrative. We may well ask whether it is historically probable that Jesus should have confined His ministry to Galilee and the north, only presenting Himself to Jerusalem at last to be immediately taken and crucified. Surely

the whole attitude of the religious authorities in Jerusalem towards Jesus, as this is set before us by the Synoptists, demands some explanation beyond what they give! Whether the *details* of the Fourth Gospel respecting the Jerusalem ministry be correct or not, some such ministry there must have been if the Synoptic narrative itself is to be believed.

And, again, there are traces in St. Luke's Gospel of visits to Jerusalem before the final one. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican would find its appropriate setting in the holy city. That of the Good Samaritan suggests that it was delivered somewhere in the neighbourhood of the scene mentioned in the parable itself. In close proximity to this parable there stands in St. Luke's Gospel the visit of Jesus to the house of Martha and Mary in some unnamed village. The Fourth Gospel, if historical, determines this village as Bethany, near to Jerusalem. It is ex-

tremely difficult to construct from St. Luke's Gospel an outline of the journeyings of Jesus. But we may gather from it that a wider sphere of activity was embraced than that which the Marcan story mentions or suggests. The Synoptic narrative, if by this term we understand not merely the Marcan account but all that is contained in the other two Synoptists as well, and especially the matter peculiarly Lucan, is not unfavourable to the theory that the ministry of Jesus extended even to Jerusalem itself; on the contrary, it seems to demand this extension. But whether or no the Fourth Gospel is to be accounted historical in its description of the mission of Jesus to the Jews in Jerusalem is a question which must be separately considered. This will form the subject of our next chapter.

**THE MINISTRY OF JESUS ACCORDING  
TO THE FOURTH EVANGELIST**

## CHAPTER XI

### THE MINISTRY OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE FOURTH EVANGELIST

THE story of the ministry of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel differs from that in the Synoptists chiefly in these two respects: (1) Whereas from the Synoptic narratives it might appear that Jesus gathered no disciples about Him until after the imprisonment of the Baptist, the Fourth Evangelist states clearly that Jesus made disciples and entered upon an active ministry when John was not yet cast into prison. (2) Whereas the Synoptists make Galilee and the north the scene of the ministry of Jesus until near the time of

His visit to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast at which He was crucified, the Fourth Evangelist represents Jesus as visiting Jerusalem repeatedly, there being five Feasts, including the fatal Passover, which, according to him, gave Jesus occasion to go to the holy city.

Now, as regards the first of these two differences, it must be carefully noticed that the Synoptic narratives, though they do not mention a period of ministry prior to the imprisonment of the Baptist, yet do not exclude the possibility of such. For it is important to observe that the Fourth Evangelist does not locate this earlier ministry of Jesus in Galilee. It is true that he takes Jesus to Galilee after He has gathered to Himself certain of the Baptist's disciples (i. 35-51), and that he records the miracle wrought at the marriage feast in Cana, and also a sojourn of not many days in Capernaum. But we must be careful to notice that there is no *public* activity in



Galilee at this time. The occasion of the marriage feast was a private one, and only His mother, and brethren and disciples are mentioned in connexion with the stay in Capernaum.

From Capernaum our Evangelist takes Jesus to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover (ii. 13 ff.), and after this Jesus and His disciples came into "the land of Judæa." Here He tarried with them and they—presumably with His authority (comp. iii. 22 with iv. 2)—baptized. At this time, the Evangelist says expressly, John was still baptizing, for he was not yet cast into prison. This statement reads like a deliberate correction of a possible misunderstanding that might arise from the Synoptic narrative, respecting the time when the public teaching of Jesus began.

Now it is a matter of some importance that we should notice how both Mark and Matthew imply that, before the public Galilean ministry of Jesus began, He was

elsewhere than in Galilee, though they do not say where. Mark has: "After that John was delivered up, Jesus came (ἦλθεν) into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, etc." (St. Mark i. 14), and Matthew speaks of a *withdrawal* into Galilee: "When he heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew (ἀνεχώρησεν) into Galilee." The wording in Matthew might suggest that it was in consequence of the imprisonment of the Baptist that Jesus withdrew to Galilee. St. Mark, however, mentions the imprisonment only as a point of time, and does not say that it was the reason why Jesus came into Galilee. So then even though the author of 'Matthew' may have intended his words "When he heard that John was delivered up, etc." to give the explanation why Jesus retired to Galilee, we need not regard the statement as authoritative, for he may only have drawn an incorrect conclusion from St. Mark, who is his authority here.

But the Fourth Evangelist gives as the

reason why Jesus departed into Galilee that He "knew that the Pharisees had heard that He was making and baptizing more disciples than John" (iv. 1). These words leave it undetermined whether the writer means that the move was made while John was still baptizing. "Baptizing more disciples than John" might mean baptizing more disciples than John *had* done, and not *was* doing. The reason of the withdrawal of Jesus to Galilee may then be given correctly in the Fourth Gospel, and the time of it, which is left undetermined here, may well be, as St. Mark says, after John was delivered up. Only a too keen scent for discrepancies between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptists will detect one here.

But then we are confronted with the objection that St. Mark, followed by the author of 'Matthew,' places the call of Andrew and Simon Peter, to be disciples of Jesus, after the Galilean ministry had

begun, whereas the writer of the Fourth Gospel brings them into discipleship some time before, representing them, as we have seen, as having been previously followers of the Baptist. This seems at first sight a serious objection, particularly as St. Mark was the 'interpreter' of Peter and is reputed to be the reporter of that Apostle's teaching. But I think that it is possible to make too much of the influence of St. Peter upon St. Mark's Gospel. It must not be so exaggerated as to make the Apostle almost the author of that Gospel. And we have already pointed out in the second chapter how insufficient the account given by St. Mark of the call of Peter and Andrew by the sea of Galilee is to explain their readiness to obey. We must surely prefer here the fuller narrative of St. Luke who had some other source of information on this point than St. Mark's Gospel. It may justly be argued that the story of the miraculous draught of fishes as given

by St. Luke (v. 1-11) is the natural prelude to the promise of Jesus: "From henceforth thou shalt catch men." The very fragmentary account, then, given by St. Mark, who depicts Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee and calling Andrew and Peter to follow Him, and He would make them fishers of men, needs to be supplemented as in St. Luke's Gospel it is. But there is no reason for regarding this supplement as in any way artificial and the invention of the writer. It has all the appearance of historical truth. Nor, as I have already pointed out, does St. Luke's account suggest that when this incident took place Simon Peter was still a stranger to Jesus. On the contrary, it is more probable than not that Peter already knew Jesus and so had learnt to place confidence in Him, as he shows himself ready to do when he says: "Master, we toiled all the night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net.'

It does not then seem to me reasonable

to consider the Fourth Gospel incredible in so far as it brings Simon Peter and Andrew into a position of discipleship with Jesus at a time earlier than the public Galilean ministry. It is a remarkable fact that if we exclude the account given in the Fourth Gospel of the passing of disciples from the Baptist to Jesus then we have no record anywhere of any such thing. It is surely unlikely that he who made it his work to prepare the way for the Christ should not have passed on some of his disciples to follow Jesus.

And before we go on further, it may be pointed out that we have evidence from another source that the ministry of Jesus does not (even in the view of one of the Synoptic Evangelists) date from the imprisonment of the Baptist, but rather goes back to the time when John was still baptizing. I refer to the reported words of St. Peter in Acts i. 21 f., where we read: "Of the men therefore which have companied with us

all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, *beginning from the baptism of John*, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection." The words here italicised seem to me an indirect but not an uninteresting confirmation of what is reported in the Fourth Gospel respecting the time at which Jesus began to gather disciples about Himself.

But, an objector will say, granting that Jesus may have made disciples prior to His public Galilean ministry, there is a serious difficulty in the way of the acceptance of the account of this in the Fourth Gospel. For the recognition and confession of Jesus by His disciples, as the Messiah at this early stage is, in view of the Synoptic narratives, an anachronism. This recognition, it is said, only came later. Moreover, in the Synoptists Jesus is represented as unready to declare Himself

to be the Messiah, whereas in the Fourth Gospel the Messianic claim is in the foreground everywhere.

I have already pointed out in the second chapter that the recognition of the first disciples of Jesus as the Christ is more a hope than an assured faith, and that the discipline of their training under Jesus was necessary in order that it might pass from the one to the other. Even in the Fourth Gospel itself the faith of the disciples is shown to be of gradual growth (ii. 11, vi. 68 f.). At first it was the belief of hope, and this, as they gained experience, developed into the faith that comes of knowledge.

In reference to the general objection that in the Fourth Gospel Jesus puts Himself forward from the first as the Messiah it may be said that this is an objection which is easily overrated. As we shall see when we come to consider the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem, He did not



declare Himself as the Christ to the Jews sufficiently clearly for them. And so late as the last visit but one we find them challenging Him to assert Himself: "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ tell us plainly."

It seems to me as clear as anything well can be, if once we accept the Synoptic story of the Baptism of Jesus, that He was fully conscious of His Messiahship before He began His ministry. And when He came forward to gather disciples to Himself, He must have meant to present Himself to them as the Messiah, to make them 'believe in Him.' That the conception which the people had of the Messiah was a wrong one, and one that Jesus could not entertain, is apparent enough. And as wrong notions manifested themselves, caution was needed—even the Fourth Gospel shows this to have been the case (ii. 24, vi. 15)—and injunctions to silence such as we find in the Synoptists may

have become necessary. As Professor Stanton\* well observes, Jesus "set before Himself a twofold object—to implant in the hearts of men faith in Himself as the Christ, and at the same time to change their conception of the Christ, to prevent His countrymen receiving Him merely as the Christ of their expectation."

It must be borne in mind that the time when Jesus came forward was one of expectation. People were looking for the Messiah, and the preaching of the Baptist must have quickened the hope of the coming of the Christ. Some of the Baptist's disciples then were ready to follow one to whom their master had pointed them. With this little band of disciples Jesus went to Galilee, but not, as we have seen, to come forward there publicly as a Teacher. At the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee He turns the water into

\* *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, part ii. p. 196.

wine. It is interesting, I think, to note one particular in our Evangelist's account of this event. I refer to the hesitation, which Jesus shows, to exercise His power. When His mother tells Him that the supply of wine has failed, He answers her, almost reprovably: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Shall He, or shall He not, relieve their want? He cannot unless the right moment has come for the manifestation of His power. Now the Fourth Evangelist tells us nothing of the story of the Temptation of Jesus, as we have it in the Synoptists, but we observe here a striking agreement between him and them. The author of *Ecce Homo* was right, I think, in making the Temptation of Jesus a matter having to do with the way in which He should exercise His miraculous powers. He had refused in the wilderness to turn stones into bread for the satisfaction of His bodily wants. And it seems

to me that He hesitates, for the moment, as to whether He shall use His power at the marriage-feast. He must first be assured that His hour has come, and that the occasion is a right one for so doing. There is at first sight an apparent contradiction between the gentle rebuke addressed to His mother and His subsequent readiness to take the course He did. But deliberation was needed. He would not be dictated to, save from above. There was only hesitation until the Divine will was clear. Then an immediate response was made.

The miracle then was wrought, and the Evangelist records that in consequence of it, His disciples (of whom we believe he was himself one, and so qualified to speak on the point) believed on Him. They who had joined themselves to Jesus, because of the testimony of the Baptist to Him, were now finding that their allegiance was deserved.

After this event at Cana, whether immediately or not we cannot say, for the connecting link *μετὰ τοῦτο* does not determine this, Jesus went with His mother and brethren and disciples to Capernaum, for what purpose we are not told, but there is no hint of any public teaching on this occasion. Thence He went up to Jerusalem for the Passover (ii. 13), His disciples accompanying Him (ii. 22). It was on this occasion that, for the first time, He protested against the profanation of the temple. The account of this we have already considered in an earlier chapter, and we have seen that there is good reason to regard it as historical. The action of Jesus aroused the resentment of 'the Jews' and we see here the beginning of their hostility towards Him, which thus dates from a very early stage of His public life. For this is His first appearance in Jerusalem since this began. But all were not hostile. "When He was at Jerusalem

at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did." The Evangelist does not tell us what signs these were. The cleansing of the temple may well have been one of them. But though many were ready 'to believe on His name'—which means probably that they were ready to welcome Him as Messiah—"Jesus did not trust Himself unto them." We may read into this statement of the Evangelist the fact that there were false conceptions of Messiahship in the minds of the people in Jerusalem, and these Jesus detected from the first.

It was during the time in Jerusalem that the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus by night occurred (iii. 1-21). There is nothing incredible or at all improbable in this visit, nor do I see any reason to doubt that the *purport* of the conversation, which, indeed, the Evangelist may himself have heard, is correctly reported. I say deliberately 'purport,' for, as has often been pointed out,

the style of the writer himself marks even the words of Jesus which He records. Indeed it is not always easy to decide where Jesus ceases to speak, and the reflections of the Evangelist on His words begin. Thus verses 16-21 of this chapter may well be the writer's own comment, rather than words of Jesus.

“After these things”—these events at Jerusalem—Jesus sojourned with His disciples in the land of Judæa (iii. 22) and baptized, while John was still baptizing. And “there arose a questioning on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purifying” (iii. 25). They come to John and tell him of the activity and growing popularity of Jesus. This gives the Evangelist the opportunity to record the further testimony of his former master the Baptist: “Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth

him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, I must decrease." There seems no sufficient reason for the invention of this incident and we may well believe that it really did occur. The concluding words of this chapter (iii. 31-36) are no argument against it, for they need not be understood as part of the Baptist's answer. Rather do they read like a reflection of the writer.

We now come to the withdrawal of Jesus from Judæa into Galilee. We have already considered the reason which our Evangelist gives for this. The journey to Galilee was made through Samaria, and the chief incident in it is the conversation with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well. The story of this is told circumstantially and with remarkable detail, and I should find it difficult to believe that it can be invention and not fact. It was in accordance with our Lord's method to use passing circum-



stances to teach important truths, and in this case He engages the woman in conversation arising out of her employment at the time. The story is, however, open to the objection that Jesus plainly declares Himself to this woman to be the Christ. It must, however, be noticed that He does not so declare Himself until the woman has spoken of the expectation of Messiah among her own people.

We have now reached the time when the public ministry of Jesus in Galilee begins. "The Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast." So writes our Evangelist. He does not narrate the details of the work of Jesus in Galilee at this time except the single miracle of the healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum. We cannot decide why he is so reticent about the work in Galilee, nor why he singles out this particular miracle as worthy of narration. It seems to have

been impressed upon his mind that on each of the two occasions when Jesus had come into Galilee He had wrought a sign at or from Cana (iv. 54). But after all why should the Evangelist have told again the story of the Galilean ministry? It had already been written at some length and there was no need to repeat what the Synoptists had already written. It is true that he does later on repeat the story of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, and that of the walking upon the sea, but these he introduces, I believe, only because they led up to the discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum. This seems to be the Evangelist's centre of interest in that section of his Gospel.

We are all familiar with the view that the Fourth Evangelist wrote to supplement the Synoptists, and, though this would be an insufficient explanation to give of his purpose in penning his Gospel, we may well believe that there is an element of truth

in it. The interest of the Evangelist turns on the belief and the unbelief which the presence and person of Christ called forth. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews, though given in the Synoptic narratives, is inadequately explained. The steps by which the crucifixion ultimately came about are not shown. The Fourth Evangelist is careful to trace the hostility of the Jews from its first beginnings to its culmination in the crucifixion. His Gospel is a historic commentary on his own words: "He came unto his own (*εἰς τὰ ἴδια*) and his own (*οἱ ἴδιοι*) received him not." Not that his Gospel gives only a dark picture of unbelief. There were those who believed, and of them he writes: "As many as received him to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name."

As we have already said, there were five festal occasions when Jesus visited Jerusalem. The first of these has already come before us. It was a Passover, the first since

He had begun to make disciples. The chief incident of it was the cleansing of the temple. The next occasion was after the public Galilean ministry had begun. The feast is an unnamed one (v. 1). It has been conjectured to be (1) Pentecost, (2) Purim, (3) the Feast of Trumpets. Certainty is impossible in the matter. Our Evangelist tells how Jesus on this occasion offended the Jews by healing an impotent man on the Sabbath day. They 'persecuted' Jesus —by reproaches we may suppose. The answer Jesus gave them was: "My Father worketh even until now and I work." They were offended at this saying and now sought to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath but also made Himself equal with God.

Now it has been objected that the manner in which Jesus speaks to the Jews in Jerusalem does not accord with the style of His teaching, as the Synoptists represent it. Indeed, I have heard it said that Jesus'

manner of address in the Fourth Gospel is irritating and not worthy of Him. The saying put into the mouth of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, "My Father worketh until now, and I work" is contrasted with His words on a similar occasion: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." And we are told that it is highly improbable that Jesus would have spoken to the Jews in Jerusalem about His Father, as in the Fourth Gospel He does. It is said that the argumentative tone of the Gospel reflects the thoughts of a later time, and cannot be reconciled with the Synoptic teaching. It seems not simple enough, but is altogether too theological.

This complaint is made against the long discourse of Jesus which follows immediately upon the incident we have been considering. But I do not think that we have any right to judge *à priori* how Jesus would speak in Jerusalem. Even the Synoptists, when they take Him to Jerusalem for the last Passover,

put into His mouth very stern and uncompromising words. And I see no reason why from the first Jesus should not have adopted towards the religious teachers in Jerusalem the attitude which the Fourth Evangelist sets Him forth as exhibiting. It is not fair to compare the manner of teaching given by Jesus to the simple folk in Galilee with His manner of speaking in Jerusalem where the conditions were so entirely different. A breach with the authorities there was inevitable from the first. Jesus comes to offer Himself to them for their acceptance and He does not conceal His claims, which run counter to all the prejudices and selfish ambitions of Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees.

It is not necessary to suppose that the Fourth Evangelist gives us the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. But we may not unreasonably think that he sets forth the purport of the Master's appeal and claims. It is to be noticed that he does not represent Jesus as coming to Jerusalem and giving out

with no uncertain voice: I am the Christ: It would seem that Jesus never so styled Himself in Jerusalem until He was challenged at His trial before the high priest, and then He only did so in answer to the high priest's question. To have proclaimed Himself as the Christ in the face of the mistaken ideas as to the nature of the Messianic office would have been mischievous. But Jesus did come forward acting with authority, as in the case of the cleansing of the temple, and claimed to speak authoritatively in the name of God, whom He calls publicly His Father. He asserts too that His miracles are signs of His divine mission. From the first He claims the allegiance of Jerusalem for Himself, though He knows what the claim is to cost Him.

The discourse then given in v. 19-47, and completed in vii. 15-24, this latter passage having seemingly become displaced from its proper context,\* marks a crisis in the life of

\* See *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1909: *On two dislocations in St. John's Gospel.*

Jesus. He sees that the attitude of the rulers in Jerusalem towards Him is irreconcilable. Henceforth, Galilee is His hope, and the scene of His labours. Apparently He did not attend the next Passover Feast, but He waited until the Feast of Tabernacles was well advanced and then came forward and preached boldly in the temple courts, inviting attention to Himself. He does not now address Himself to the rulers but to the people generally: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." There is much speculation among the people as to whether He is the Christ, and many were ready to believe on Him. The Pharisees are alarmed by the readiness shown to accept Him as the Christ and they send the temple officers to take Him. These, however, are unable to obey the order, so impressed are they by the manner of Jesus' teaching—"Never man spake like this man." Jesus continues to teach, directing men boldly to Himself as the light of



the world (viii. 12). The Pharisees resent the testimony He bears to Himself, and an altercation ensues, which ends in an attempt to stone Him, because He had spoken blasphemy in claiming to be one with God (viii. 58). But He escaped. Then follows the story of the healing of the man born blind, which is told with remarkable vividness and detail, that it is difficult to believe it can be an invention of the writer. The questioning by the Pharisees of the man himself and his parents, and their attempts to intimidate by threats of excommunication are clearly and logically brought out. The man receives his sentence of excommunication and Jesus offers Himself to him as the object of his personal faith (ix. 35-38). Jesus still speaks boldly to the people and asserts Himself as the true leader and shepherd of Israel in opposition to the hirelings who but seek their own (x. 1-18). Many think Him mad and (possessed, but

some reason more soberly: "These are not the sayings of one possessed with a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

All this happened at the Feast of Tabernacles. The Evangelist does not tell us what happened meanwhile, but he passes at once to the Feast of Dedication, some two months later. "It was winter," he says, "and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch." The Jews seek to draw from Him a direct claim to be the Messiah: "If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." But Jesus refers them to the works He has done, and reproves their unbelief. Again He repeats His oneness with the Father, and they again try to stone Him (x. 22-39).

This is the last time that Jesus comes to Jerusalem until He offers Himself as Jerusalem's King of peace (xii. 12-16). He retires now beyond the Jordan to the place where John had at the first baptized. Here

many came to Him; and they said: "John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true." And many believed on Him there.

Next follows the story of the raising of Lazarus, the objections to which we will consider later. This miracle, persuading, as it did, so many to believe on Jesus, finally decided the Pharisees to put Him to death. Their opportunity came when Jesus presented Himself publicly before the Feast of the Passover.

Now, whatever objections may be made to the account in the Fourth Gospel of the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem on the ground that they do not fit into the Synoptic frame of events, and that the teaching in Jerusalem does not accord with that in Galilee, we have a right to demand that critics should concede that at any rate our Evangelist gives a picture consistent in itself, and that the progress of events is not unnatural. In other words, the

events do 'march.' There is no halting. We can see opposition developing; and the final issue flows naturally out of the beginning. The unbelief and hostility of the Jews and their final rejection and crucifixion of Jesus stand out clearly and consistently. But something more will have to be said in our next and concluding chapter in answer to objections which are made to the Fourth Gospel on the ground of its inconsistency with the other three.

**SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE HISTORICITY OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL  
CONSIDERED**

## CHAPTER XII

### SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE HISTORICITY OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL CONSIDERED

THERE can be no question about the independence of the Fourth Evangelist. His account of the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem is certainly not derived from the Synoptists, and even in regard to his subject matter on ground common to the Synoptic narratives and himself, a careful study shows that he did not merely repeat what the Synoptists say. He tells the story his own way and tacitly corrects them. The most striking correction of all concerns the date of the crucifixion. Whereas the Synoptists make the Last Supper a Passover, and put

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the crucifixion on the 15th of Nisan, St. John says that the Supper was *before* the Feast of the Passover and he puts the crucifixion on the 14th of Nisan. Schmiedel allows that if the Fourth Evangelist is right in this, then his Gospel is to be regarded as correct all through, so crucial does this point seem to him to be. Schmiedel, however, thinks the Evangelist is wrong, and he refuses to regard this Gospel as history in any true sense of the word.

Professor Burkitt is also strongly opposed to the historicity of the Fourth Gospel, but it is a remarkable fact that he considers the writer of it correct in his dating of the crucifixion. Schmiedel's concession then that the Gospel is to be credited if the author is right on this point is one that cannot be assumed to be granted by opponents generally.

It would take up too much space if we were to attempt to answer in detail all the various objections which have been urged

against the Fourth Gospel as history. We may, however, single out some of the most important ones.

Professor Burkitt writes\*: "The discrepancy between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic narrative, *i.e.*, St. Mark's Gospel, comes to a head in the story of the Raising of Lazarus. It is not a question of the improbability or impossibility of the miracle, but of the time and place and the effect upon outsiders." There is no room, he tells us, for the miracle in the historical framework preserved by St. Mark. "Is it possible that any one who reads the continuous and detailed story of Mark from the Transfiguration to the Entry into Jerusalem can interpolate into it the tale of Lazarus and the notable sensation that we are assured that it produced? Must not the answer be, that Mark is silent about the Raising of Lazarus because he did not know of it? And if he did not know of it, can we believe

\* *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 221 ff.



that, as a matter of fact, it ever occurred? In all its dramatic setting it is, I am persuaded, impossible to regard the story of the Raising of Lazarus as a narrative of historical events."

In answer to this criticism it may be said, first, that 'discrepancy' is not an appropriate word to use. If of two writers of the history of a period one narrates and the other omits a particular event, it cannot properly be said that there is a discrepancy between them. Secondly, it may be questioned whether the story given by St. Mark of the time from the Transfiguration to the Entry into Jerusalem can fairly be described as 'continuous and detailed.' It certainly is not so if the Fourth Gospel be historical; and it is simply a prejudging of the whole matter so to describe it. Thirdly, I can see no reason for supposing that if the miracle of the Raising of Lazarus really took place, St. Mark must have known it.

In comparing the Fourth Gospel with the

Synoptists one must ever remember that account must in all fairness be taken of all three of them, and not only of St. Mark. While it is generally recognised now that the author of 'Matthew,' and St. Luke used St. Mark, or what is practically the same as our St. Mark, it is clear that they had other sources of information, one of these being that which is commonly denoted by Q. The use of St. Mark and Q alone will not fully account for St. Luke's Gospel, though of course it is very difficult to decide how much of it falls outside these two sources.

Now, if we had St. Mark's Gospel only and knew nothing of the others we might suppose that when Jesus left Galilee (St. Mark x. 1) it was to go almost direct to Jerusalem for the Passover. Of course, if the Fourth Gospel be historical, this was not the case. And I venture to say, that if St. Luke's Gospel have any historical value independently of its connection with St. Mark, there is room for the course of events as

St. John gives them. It is, I readily allow, extremely difficult to extract from St. Luke's Gospel a chronological sequence of events, but it seems to be clear that, according to this writer, after Jesus had "stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," when "the days were being fulfilled that he should be received up," a good deal happened which from St. Mark's narrative we should never have imagined. I contend that it is not only the Fourth Gospel which requires us to regard the story from the Transfiguration to the Entry into Jerusalem in Mark as 'continuous and detailed.' St. Luke's story is inexplicable if we so regard it.

If we are to do justice to all the documents, we must not begin by assuming the completeness of St. Mark. My contention is that his Gospel is incomplete and needs to be supplemented from other sources. St. Mark does not say that when Jesus removed from Galilee and came into "the borders of Judæa [and] beyond Jordan," He did so merely

*en route* for the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. St. John's Gospel leaves plenty of room for a stay in these parts between verses 21 and 22 of chapter x., and again in x. 40 it is expressly said that after the Feast of the Dedication Jesus "went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptising; and there he abode." It was from this place that, according to our Evangelist, Jesus was sent for, when Lazarus of Bethany was sick.

If the story of Lazarus in the Fourth Gospel be not historical, then the Evangelist has made very skilful use of an incidental notice in St. Luke, where Martha and Mary are named and their dispositions contrasted (x. 38-42). It is worthy of note that, although St. Luke does not name the village where these sisters lived, the visit of Jesus to their home falls in that section of the Gospel which follows upon the time when He had stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. The place which it occupies

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in the Gospel, immediately after Jesus had spoken the parable of the Good Samaritan, itself suggestive of the neighbourhood appropriate to it, shews that the village may well have been Bethany, which is the home of Martha and Mary according to the Fourth Evangelist.

Schmiedel exhibits some impatience with the Evangelist because he distinguishes the Mary of whom he is speaking as the one "which anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair." As the record of this anointing only comes later in the Gospel, Schmiedel considers it inappropriate to give this description before the incident of the anointing has been told. But this surely is hypercritical. The story of the anointing at Bethany was already known to those for whom our Evangelist wrote, and there seems to me to be nothing strange that when he mentions a woman bearing so common a name as Mary he should distinguish her as he does here.

Professor Burkitt recognises the wonderful dramatic setting of the story of the Raising of Lazarus. If the story be fiction, as we are asked to believe, this wonderful narrative must be set down to an extraordinary artistic power possessed by the writer. To this we must ascribe the contrast between the behaviour of the two sisters, which is so entirely in keeping with their dispositions as depicted in St. Luke. To this too must be due the graphic description of the despondency of Thomas: "Let us also go that we may die with him." We mark how entirely this agrees with the character of this Apostle as it is incidentally but consistently portrayed elsewhere in the same Gospel (St. John xiv. 5; xx. 24, 25). The fact that the portrayal is incidental, and by-the-way, has to be taken account of. It is easily explained if it is true to life, and a description of life; but not otherwise.

Dr. West-Watson, the Bishop of Barrow-

in-Furness, has recently suggested\* that though the miracle of the Raising of Lazarus is not recorded by any of the Synoptists, the fact of the miracle may offer an explanation of the question put to our Lord by the Sadducees on the subject of Resurrection, and also of the eagerness of the authorities, according to Matthew, to make the tomb of Jesus secure by the sealing of the stone.

A rock of offence, second in formidableness only to the story of the Raising of Lazarus, is the anachronism of which the Evangelist is supposed to be guilty in placing the Eucharistic teaching given by Jesus a year too soon. In the third and ninth chapters we referred to Schmiedel's objection that the meaning of the Eucharistic Supper is given a year before its time. This fact, taken in conjunction with the statement of the Evangelist that five hundred, if not a

\* *Journal of Theological Studies*, January, 1910.  
Note on The Peræan Ministry.

thousand, Roman soldiers go backward and fall to the ground before Him, whom they were to arrest, at the words "I am he," and with the weight of the spices applied to embalm the body of Jesus, is sufficient, according to Schmiedel, to prove that the Gospel has no historical value.

We have seen, however, that Schmiedel would forego even these objections if the Fourth Evangelist be right, as we have good reason to think that he is, as to the date of the crucifixion. Perhaps then this objection to the Eucharistic teaching is not quite so formidable as some would have us think.

Professor Burkitt goes even beyond Schmiedel in his opposition. Schmiedel objects to the meaning of the Eucharistic supper being given a year before its institution, but Professor Burkitt says: "It is evident that 'John' has transferred the Eucharistic teaching to the earlier Galilean miracle." Now I contend that this last is unfair criticism. It is true in a sense, as



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Schmiedel says, that the meaning of the Eucharistic supper is given a year before it was instituted. I say that *in a sense* this is true. It would be more accurate to say that a year before the institution of the Eucharistic supper, teaching was given which, when the Supper was instituted, served to give it meaning. But no reference is made to the Supper in St. John vi., so that the Evangelist is not guilty of an anachronism.

But Professor Burkitt goes further, and in so doing transgresses the facts of the case, when he speaks of the Evangelist having transferred the Eucharistic teaching from the Last Supper to the earlier Galilean miracle. For where in the Synoptic story of the institution of the Lord's Supper do we find Eucharistic teaching? The Eucharist is then instituted, and the commandment is given to observe it, but there is no record of any teaching about it, except so far as the words, "This is my body" and "This

is my blood" can be described as teaching. I have contended in the ninth chapter that these words which our Lord then used imply some previous teaching, such as we find in St. John vi., for their explanation.

Professor Burkitt says that the Fourth Evangelist by omitting the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, "creates a false impression of the scene." He writes: \* "The origin of the Christian rite of the common sacramental meal must have been known to every moderately instructed Christian, certainly to every one who would undertake to write an account of our Lord's life on earth, and we cannot suppose the Fourth Evangelist to have been ignorant of it. When, therefore, we find him writing an elaborate account of this last meal, including the announcement of the impending betrayal, in which, nevertheless, there is no mention of the epoch-making words of Institution, we can only regard his silence

\* *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 224.

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as deliberate. He must have deliberately left out this exceedingly important incident; and thereby, so far as the mere narrative of facts is concerned, he creates a false impression of the scene."

It is difficult to see how the Evangelist creates a false impression, seeing that, as Professor Burkitt allows, the origin of the common sacramental meal was known to every moderately instructed Christian. The Evangelist does not say that the Eucharist was not instituted at the Last Supper. He is simply silent on the point, deliberately silent, as Professor Burkitt says; for why should he re-write what was already so well known? He tells us a great deal about the Last Supper which otherwise we should not know, and I can see no reason to doubt that what he records is fact and not fiction. I think there is some truth in the idea that the Fourth Evangelist made it his aim to supplement the other Gospels. Surely we should be thankful for the addi-

tional information, rather than feel annoyance because of the absence of repetition of what we already know. It is an abuse of words to say that the Evangelist, by omitting the account of the institution of the Eucharist and yet giving our Lord's sacramental teaching, preparatory to it, a year before, is guilty of a deliberate sacrifice of historical truth.

Again, Professor Burkitt accuses our Evangelist of giving a false impression respecting the Baptism of Jesus. "The descent of the Holy Spirit upon our Lord at His baptism by John is the commencement of the Ministry according to St. Mark. By this act, according to some early theologians, such as Aphraates, He received from the Baptist the sacerdotal gift. But the Fourth Evangelist will have none of it. The scene at the Jordan is indeed recorded by him, and John testifies to the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus; but the central incident, the actual baptism of Jesus by John, is

altogether left out. If the intention of the Evangelist had been to tell us what happened, if his intention had been to make us believe in Jesus because of what happened, such an omission would be nothing short of disingenuous."

This criticism seems to me strange indeed. The first statement is not correct, for St. Mark represents the ministry of Jesus as beginning after John was delivered up, so that it cannot accurately be said that, according to him, the baptism of Jesus is the commencement of the ministry. It is the Fourth Evangelist who makes the ministry begin at an earlier time. And it is quite misleading to say, as Professor Burkitt does, that the baptism of Jesus is altogether left out in the Fourth Gospel. It is not described in detail, it is true. But, as I have already pointed out in the second chapter, it is implicit in the narrative. For it seems quite clear from the Baptist's words in i. 33 that the Spirit descended upon Jesus at the time

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of His baptism: "*He that sent me to baptize with water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.*" "The central incident" is not the baptism, but the descent of the Spirit. This the Fourth Evangelist does not omit. His intention is to tell us what happened, whatever may be said to the contrary. He himself, as we have seen, came first to Jesus in consequence of the testimony of the Baptist to the descent of the Spirit which he had himself witnessed.

Objection is also taken to the miracles in the Fourth Gospel. Not but what there are miracles in the other Gospels, but the Fourth Evangelist is thought to carry the miraculous to excess. He certainly does not record a great number of miracles, but those that he does relate are considered to go beyond corresponding ones in the other Gospels. Thus Lazarus is raised from the dead after he has lain in the grave four days, whereas

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Jairus' daughter was raised shortly after death, and the widow's son at Nain before burial. The man at the pool of Bethesda had been thirty-eight years in his state of infirmity, and the blind man to whom Jesus gave sight had been blind from his birth. As regards these last two instances, we cannot say whether or not they go beyond miracles of healing given in the Synoptists. They tell of blind men to whom sight was restored, and blindness is blindness whether it dates from birth or not.

Schmiedel contends that the miracles in the Fourth Gospel are symbolic and nothing more. Symbolic they well may be, and indeed plainly are, but the question is whether they are fact or fiction. If they are fact, the exactness of statement which we find in this Gospel may be explained by the writer's personal knowledge and information. If they are fiction and symbolic, a meaning must be found for the details. We may ask, What is the symbolism of the

four days during which Lazarus had lain in the tomb? Schmiedel interprets the thirty-eight years of the malady of the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda in this way: For this length of time the Israelites had been obliged, as a punishment for their disobedience to God, to wander in the wilderness, without being permitted to set foot in the promised land. The sick man then represents the Jewish people, and in the five porticoes of the house in which he had so long hoped for a cure we may easily recognise the five books of Moses!

One would like to have an interpretation of the five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs that the disciples had rowed (St. John vi. 19) when they saw Jesus walking on the sea. Unfortunately here the number is not exact. But this gives some latitude for interpretation! It is much to be wished that Schmiedel would add this detail to the symbolic interpretation he gives of the miracle of the walking on the water. Of



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this he says\* that it is certainly meant to serve to support the belief that at every celebration of the Lord's Supper, Jesus is really near to His people. The use of the word 'certainly' (*Sicherlich*) is certainly not justified. And such loose writing does not serve to commend Schmiedel's position in regard to the Fourth Gospel.

It must be allowed that some of the miracles that our Evangelist records are symbolic. They are speaking parables. This is plain from the words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," in the story of the Raising of Lazarus, and from the Lord's declaration, "I am the bread of life," following upon the feeding of the five thousand. But this only raises the miracles to a higher level. It makes them signs in a high and spiritual sense. But they are no signs at all if they be mere fiction.

Another objection raised is the difference

\* *Das vierte Evangelium*, p. 79.

between the manner of Jesus' teaching in the Fourth Gospel and that in the Synoptists. The latter abound in parables which are wholly absent in St. John. But it is absurd to suppose—and indeed the Synoptic writings themselves settle the point—that Jesus had only one method of teaching, viz., that by parables. That He employed this method widely is clear enough from the Synoptists, but there was no need for the Fourth Evangelist to repeat the parables which were already well known. Why should we doubt that Jesus made use of discourse as well as of parable?

But it is complained that the manner of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is unsympathetic and repellent. His way of addressing the Jews could not fail to turn them against Him. It must, however, be remembered that in this Gospel we are shown Jesus in the presence of those who opposed Him more than is the case in the other Gospels. And there are stern denunciations

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of Scribes and Pharisees even in the Synoptists. It is not possible to infer from the manner in which Jesus spoke to the simple folk in Galilee how He would address the religious authorities in Jerusalem. In the Synoptic narrative He is not represented as speaking smooth words to them. Perhaps there are some who think that Jesus ought to have made a compromise with the Jewish authorities instead of being so unbending. But the Fourth Gospel shows how impossible such a thing was. The claim of Jesus to come from God, whom He called His Father, was resented by the Jewish leaders from the first. Jesus had nothing to gain for Himself personally by pressing the claim. The opposition is determined from the beginning and He plainly foresaw the issue of it. A stern protest against mercenary and legalistic religious views had to be made, and strife was inevitable. The opposition of the Jews in the Fourth Gospel arises from the action

of Jesus in cleansing the temple when He said, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise," and from His supposed violation of the Sabbath, in justification of which He says: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." This saying is thought to be provocative and possibly also to be ill-advised. But the question really is whether the claim of Jesus was true or not. One may be forgiven for suspecting that some of the opposition to the Fourth Gospel arises from a belief that it was not.

The question of the historicity of this Gospel is a crucial one. It is perfectly true that the Person of Christ as the Fourth Evangelist sets it forth does not go beyond what St. Paul in his Epistles represents it. But it would be a serious loss to us if we were deprived of the assurance we gain from the Fourth Gospel, if it be historical, that one who had lived in such close intimacy with Jesus in the days of His

flesh came to believe in Him as the author of this Gospel does. His prologue sounds the keynote of what his faith in regard to Jesus Christ was. The answer to the question of the historical value of what is recorded in the Gospel as fact is the answer also to the question whether that faith was justified.