

ARTICLE X.

A UNITARIAN ON THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

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IN 1903, Professor James Drummond, Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, gave to the world what, from a Unitarian, is rather a surprising book on "The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel."¹ The dedication is as follows:—

"In reverent and loving memory of
JOHN JAMES TAYLER
and
JAMES MARTINEAU

who, while themselves fearlessly seeking for truth, taught others to follow evidence with their own independent judgment, however imperfect, and to call no man master."

Both Martineau and Tayler wrote elaborate arguments to disprove the Johannean authorship of the Fourth Gospel. But this book by their disciple, whose reverence for these two great leaders of modern Unitarianism in England is evidently most sincere, is a record of the tests to which he has submitted the arguments of his spiritual fathers and others who held the same view, and shows us that he found them unconvincing; and that, on the other hand, evidence shows that the Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John. His conclusion, after a full consideration of the objections raised by critics to John's authorship, is as follows: "The external evidence (be

¹An Inquiry into the Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel. By James Drummond, M.A., LL.D., Hon. Litt.D., Principal of Manchester College, Oxford. Williams & Norgate, London.

it said with due respect to the Alogi¹) is all on one side, and, for my part, I cannot well repel its force."

He finds the internal evidence, too, pointing in the same direction, as he discovers that its author is a Palestinian Jew, a disciple of Christ, and an eye and ear witness of much that he relates. The Unitarian writer's case is very much like that of Tyndall in pronouncing against Bastian's assertion, that he had succeeded in demonstrating spontaneous generation. He wished it to be true, but the crucial tests which he applied showed him that Bastian was mistaken; and he honestly told the world so.² His decision in the case has probably had more weight with thinking men than all the arguments of Christian Scientists combined; because it was the decision of a man who was not only among the first scientists of the age, but a decision based on the evidence of facts in the observation of which his predilections, if allowed to influence him, would have inclined him to the opposite conclusion.

Let us direct our attention to some part of the external evidence, the force of which the author "cannot well repel."

It is well known that Eusebius, who seems to have had before him, in the library at Cæsarea, the Christian literature which had survived the many persecutions, almost in its entirety, speaks of the Fourth Gospel as undoubtedly written by

¹The assertion of Epiphanius about the shadowy Alogi as disputing the Johannean authorship, and referring to Cerinthus as the author of the Gospel, is a matter of small consequence, if not indeed of entire misunderstanding. The heresy, Drummond thinks, first assumed definite form in the brain of Epiphanius, in the fourth century, though the Alogi are mentioned by Irenæus, or some Montanist interpolator of his works. (See translator's note, Neander's Church History, Rose's translation, p. 373.) Drummond remarks that, by a certain class of scholars, "The Alogi are fondled with a tenderness suitable to their small proportions."

²Proceedings of the Royal Society, 1876, Vol. xxv. Nos. 172, 176, 177. Certain scientists are still rolling this stone of Sisyphus.

the Apostle John. A brief extract will show that there seems to have been no Johannean problem in his day, but only a charge of disagreement in the accounts of our Saviour's life in the Synoptics and in the Gospel of John. This, Eusebius explains by showing that John supplied the accounts omitted by the Synoptic Gospels, especially those of the Judæan ministry, when "John was not yet cast into prison": "The apostle, therefore, in his Gospel, gives the deeds of Jesus before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three evangelists mention the circumstances after that event. One who attends to these circumstances can no longer entertain the opinion, that the Gospels are at variance with each other, as the Gospel of John comprehends the first events of Christ, but the others, the history that took place at the latter part of the time."¹ Of its inspiration, too, he has the fullest confidence, as he speaks of "the divinity, as a part reserved for him by the divine Spirit, as if for a superior," i.e. superior to the other evangelists. Thus wrote Eusebius about 320 A.D., when Christianity had become the religion of the Roman Empire.

Is there evidence of the existence of such a tradition at an earlier time? This question, as all must know, is to be answered in the affirmative. It had not recently become the belief of the church when these words were written. We can go back to the writings of men who were born within a generation after the death of the Apostle John, and find them quoting the Fourth Gospel as the Gospel of John.

Irenæus, for instance, who died about 202 A.D., as bishop² of

¹ H. E. III. 24.

² "It should be remembered that *Irenæus*, in his letter to *Florus*, speaking more accurately than at some other times, calls *Polycarp*, even, 'that blessed presbyter.'" "Ignatius does not speak of an institution of bishops by the apostles; he does not consider bishops as successors of the apostles. He knows nothing yet of

the church in Lyons, tells us: "Then [i. e. after the other Gospels were written] John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, himself also published the Gospel while he was dwelling in Asia."¹ His testimony is seen to be of greater value when we remember that he himself, before going to Lyons, dwelt in Asia, the province of which Ephesus was the capital, and that he was, in his youth, a pupil of Polycarp, who was himself a pupil of the Apostle John. Polycarp was a contemporary of John, certainly, for more than thirty, perhaps more than forty, years, and could not have failed to know the facts in the case; and this is what his pupil, Irenæus, tells us.

In view of such facts, Drummond asks the very pointed question, "Then is it probable that Irenæus could suppose that a book which had never been heard of when he was a youth, had been in current use throughout the whole of the century?"

As to the relations which Irenæus enjoyed with Polycarp, we have his own testimony in his letter to Florinus: "I remember the events of those times much better than those of more recent occurrence. As the studies of our youth, growing with our minds, unite with them so firmly, that I can tell also the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse; and also his entrances, his walks, the complexion of his life, and the form of his body, and his conversations with the people, and his familiar intercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with applying the name bishop beyond the realm of the local congregation" (Adolf Harnack, in reply to Bishop Lightfoot on the Ignatian Epistles). There had been a considerable change, however, by the end of the second century.

¹ Irenæus wrote his "Adv. Hæreses" while Eleutherus was bishop of Rome (182-188 A.D., or 171-185, according to Blair's Chronological Tables).

those who had seen the Lord. How also he used to relate their discourses, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord. Also concerning his miracles, and his doctrine, all these were told by Polycarp, in consistency with the Holy Scriptures."¹ Irenæus also tells us, that "Polycarp was instructed by the apostles, and was brought into contact with many who had seen Christ."²

One must be very credulous in his disposition if he can be persuaded by the higher critics that *they* know more about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel than did Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John himself.

Thus the words of one whose connection with the Apostle John was very close³ assure us that he was the author of the Gospel which bears his name.

But this witness does not stand alone. Others who knew what were the Gospels received by the church as of apostolic authority, and who were contemporaries of Irenæus, give the same testimony.

Theophilus, bishop (or chief pastor) of the church of Antioch (171-183 A.D.), quotes verbatim the opening verses of John's Gospel, and ascribes them to him as their author.⁴

Tertullian,⁵ so many of whose writings have been preserved to our day, treats the four Gospels just as the most conserva-

¹ Quoted by Eusebius, H. E. v. 20. ² Adv. Hær. iii. 3.

³ "The letter to Florinus seems to give evidence of a connection between Irenæus and St. John of remarkable closeness and importance; and it would seem, *prima facie*, to be in the last degree unlikely that Irenæus would have accepted as Johannine a spurious work claiming to have come from the hand of St. John" (Church Quarterly Review (London), April, 1905).

⁴ Ad Autolyicum.

⁵ "The same authority of the apostolic churches will afford evidence to the other Gospels also [i.e. besides Luke's, which he was defending] which we possess equally through their means, and according to their usage [i.e. of ancient, and especially apostolic,

tive scholar does now, and, as our author shows, had no "Johannean problem" to deal with.

The case is the same with *Clement of Alexandria*. His testimony is the more valuable because of his extensive travels and knowledge of the church "in Greece, Magna Græcia, Syria, Egypt, and the East. He knew, then, what were the Gospels read by the whole Christian church of his day."

How is it with *Origen*, Clement's great pupil in the celebrated school of Alexandria, who succeeded his master, and became head of the school soon after the death of Irenæus at Lyons? Turning to his Commentary on John, which lies before me, I read: "The Gospels, then, being four, I deem the first fruits of the Gospels to be that which you¹ have enjoined me to search into according to my powers, the Gospel of John." And Origen, born about eighty-five years after John's death, probably knew every scrap of early Christian literature of importance.

The following remark of Drummond, though occurring in a different connection, seems *à propos* here: "That the Christian church should have the same set of Gospels in the middle of the second century and at the end of the second century is what we would expect antecedently to testimony; and, therefore, when testimony is forthcoming which points to this state of things, we see no occasion to apply the bludgeon to get rid of our witness."

We shall now see that this testimony *is* forthcoming, and that a powerful effort has been made to apply the bludgeon to get rid of the witness.

churches]. I mean the Gospels of John and Matthew—*namely* that which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was. For even Luke's form of the Gospel men usually ascribe to Paul" (Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, iv. 5).

¹Ambrosius.

Even the *heretics* of the second century bear witness in no uncertain tones. Indeed, the evidence of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel is as clear in the writings of the enemies of orthodox Christianity as in those of its true adherents. They claimed, like all heretics, to be the best Christians, and to have a profounder knowledge of Christianity than others. Assuming for themselves a superior knowledge of its principles, they took the name of Gnostics. Adopting a philosophy, or *gnosis*, they used it as a means of explaining the deep mysteries of theology, especially the origin of evil and its results. Their systems, though differing among themselves, presented one feature in common, which was the antithesis of that of the agnosticism of our time. They acknowledged the authority of the Scriptures, and quoted them to maintain their positions, while our agnostics reject the Scriptures altogether.

Drummond brings out the evidence of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel in the writings of Gnostics with great force and clearness. He cites first the case of *Ptolemæus*, one of the first disciples of Valentinus. *Ptolemæus* uses expressions in the first chapter of John's Gospel as follows: "The apostle affirms that the fabrication of the cosmos was his own [i. e. the Saviour's], saying, that all things were made through him, and without him was nothing made."¹ *Ptolemæus* calls this apostle, "John the disciple of the Lord."

The Commentary on the Gospel of John by the Valentinian Gnostic, *Heracleon*, is one of the clearest proofs of the universal acceptance of this Gospel at, and therefore before, his time. Of course he would not have quoted the Gospel to sustain his

¹Of the esteem in which *Ptolemæus* held the Gospels, the following words, in a letter to a friend, leave us in no doubt: "From the words of our Saviour *through which alone* it is possible to be guided, without stumbling, to the apprehension of things." The passages quoted by him are all from the Gospels.

positions, unless it had been previously acknowledged as among the authoritative Christian Scriptures. But, instead of merely quoting it, he writes a commentary on it, trying to show that it supports his Gnostic theories. Many considerable extracts from this commentary are preserved to us in Origen's Commentary on John, and in one of these, Heracleon ascribes the authorship of the Gospel to John by implication. He had been speaking of John the Baptist, and Origen comments as follows: "Heracleon misapprehends, saying, that 'no one hath seen God at any time, and the following words have been spoken, not by the Baptist, but by the disciple,' as much as to say, 'not by John the Baptist, but by John the disciple.'"

Drummond remarks on this: "It follows that this distinguished Gnostic accepted the current ecclesiastical view of the authorship of the Gospel. But this is not all. The fact that he wrote a copious commentary on the work shows that it stood high in his estimation; and the nature of that commentary proves that he regarded it as Holy Scripture in the highest sense."

These were of the Eastern Valentinian school.

Theodotus, a Western Valentinian, is then cited as using expressions of the Fourth Gospel, and speaking of it as the writing of the "Apostle." On this Gnostic use of the Gospel, Drummond remarks: "Now the unhesitating acceptance and reverential use of the Fourth Gospel as Johannean, or at least apostolic, by two widely separated schools among the successors of Valentinus, affords a strong presumption that Tertullian was right in saying that the master himself used the whole instrument."

The great Cambridge University specialist, Prof. V. H. Stanton, in his exhaustive treatment of the authorship of the four Gospels in his "The Gospels as Historical Documents,"

published in the same year (1903) with Drummond's work, remarks on this subject, "The attention bestowed on the Gospel according to St. John by these Valentinians of the second generation is not unimportant. It shows strikingly that its position must have been a firmly established one *before they began to teach.*" I have emphasized these last words to draw attention to the fact, that common sense demands it in the case of the Valentinians of the second generation, and equally in those of the first. And though we have not the writings of Valentinus himself, we have the unambiguous testimony of Tertullian, that he used the whole Gospel, and this implies that this Gospel was already established in the confidence of the church as of apostolic authority before Valentinus began to teach. If there had been any doubt of its authority in the great matters discussed, the heresiarch, undoubtedly, instead of weaving his system into it by perverse interpretation, would simply have set it aside, and proclaimed his theory in spite of its teachings. It had evidently become firmly established as a sacred and authoritative writing accepted by the Christian church before he began to teach.

Another celebrated Gnostic, somewhat earlier than Valentinus, is represented by Hippolytus, as quoting the Fourth Gospel.¹ *Basilides* is quoted as using the words of John i. 9 (*τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν*, etc.), and also John ii. 5 (*οὐπω ἤκει ἡ ὄρα μου*), and as saying that these are "in the Gospels" (*ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγέλοις*). *Basilides* flourished from 117 to 138, and was probably well advanced in age when he became well known at the first date, as his son *Isidorus* was old enough to be associated with him as a propagandist of his Gnosticism, and also because he, at least, *claimed* to have been instructed by *Glaucias*, the "interpreter" of Peter, and even to have received secret com-

¹ See *Refutation of All Heresies*, vii. 27.

munications from Matthias, the successor to the vacated apostolate of Judas. Even if we are to suppose these claims to have been doubtful, or even false, they must have been not incredible to the men of his time, or else he would not have dared to make them; and this indicates that he lived at a time when such communications with men of the apostolic age were possible. These utterances of Basilides are therefore dated as early as 125 A.D.

The fact of this early quotation of the Gospel of John so perfectly destroys the foundations of the Tübingen theory of the late origin of this Gospel, that it aroused all the energies and ingenuities of the adherents of that school to explain away the evidence. They claimed that Hippolytus quoted, not the words of Basilides, but those of his followers, and that thus the evidence of the use of the Gospel of John may be brought down to a later date. Drummond meets this claim with very stubborn facts, and demolishes it. One is, that, throughout, Hippolytus uses the word *φησί*, "he says," showing that one particular author is quoted. Another is, that Hippolytus accuses Basilides of falsely representing the teaching of Matthias. Still another is, that, in both the introduction and the conclusion, Hippolytus says, that it is Basilides whom he is combatting. He closes with such words as these: *Ταῦτα μὲν ἐστὶν ἃ καὶ Βασιλείδης μυθεύει*, "These are the fables which Basilides tells."

"It seems to me that the only reasonable conclusion from this evidence is that the extracts which Hippolytus brings before us were taken from a work by Basilides himself." This does indeed seem a reasonable conclusion, for Hippolytus begins his fifth book by saying, *Βασιλείδης δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς λέγει*, "Basilides *himself* says."

The personal authorship of Basilides is about as thoroughly settled as human speech can settle it.¹

Hippolytus quotes the author as saying, that the passages which he quotes are "in the Gospels"; so that, *then*, John's was recognized as of equal authority with the earlier Gospels.

That Hippolytus *could* have quoted the words of Basilides is clear from the fact, that they were extant at the time when he wrote. Clement of Alexandria, his contemporary, quotes from the "Exegetica" of Basilides, and, as Drummond tells us, brings many arguments to show the falsity of the interpretation which he puts on the passages which he quotes.

Since this one fact, that the Gnostic, Basilides, about 125 A.D., used the Gospel of John as one of the Gospels, is established, the efforts of the destructive critics to discredit it are seen to be utterly futile. He would never have quoted it thus if it had not been thoroughly established in the confidence of the Christian church, even at this early date. The bludgeon has failed to silence the witness.

Less definite, but not to be despised, is the testimony of the

¹ Dr. Ezra Abbot, probably the greatest biblical critic America has produced, makes the following remark, the justness of which few will dispute: "Hundreds, if not thousands, of people were living [at the time Basilides wrote] who had known the Apostle John. The question whether the beloved disciple had committed to writing his recollections of his Master's life and teaching was one of the greatest interest. The fact of the reception of the Fourth Gospel as his work at so early a date by parties so violently opposed to each other proves that the evidence of its genuineness was decisive" (Critical Essays, p. 91).

Of one of the passages of John's Gospel quoted by Basilides, "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," it has been remarked, even by Matthew Arnold, that these are not words of Christ, and therefore cannot have come from any of traditional "logia" (*God and the Bible*).

As he quotes, or distinctly refers to, other passages of John's Gospel, there can be no doubt that this was quoted from it, and no other source.

Ophites, or Naaseni, as presented by Hippolytus. It is less definite, because he does not name the author or authors whom he quotes; but he represents them as the progenitors of the Basilidians and Valentinians, and as the earliest Gnostics, having their origin from Simon, the Sorcerer. The natural inference is, that the extended extract—some two pages—which he quotes, is a very early writing of the second century. In this single extract, we find quoted several passages from the Gospel of John. Such passages as John x. 34; iii. 6; i. 3, 4; ii. 1-11; vi. 53; v. 37; x. 9; vi. 44 are quoted from this Ophite document.

Drummond's conclusion, after viewing the whole field of Gnostic quotation, is: "That not only the Catholic church [as he calls the Christian church], scattered throughout so many lands, but such diverse schools of heretics in the East and West, who were so glad to pierce every weak place in the Catholic armor, should agree to accept as apostolic a work which was first published in the very heart of their controversies, is not easily believed." On such a supposition, "by a tacit conspiracy between inveterate foes a most damaging circumstance was buried in eternal oblivion; and the opposing armies in Europe, Asia, and Africa agreed to respect as ancient what they knew to be modern. The general probabilities of the case, then, support the conclusion that we have reached by an examination of details, that the Gospel is older than the Gnostic controversies, and was securely established in the respect of Christians before the serious divisions in the church began."

It will be hard for any honest man to look these facts squarely in the face, and deny the reasonableness of this conclusion.

Another quotation from Drummond here will, I trust, be pardoned: "That the Christians should have a set of docu-

ments which they regarded as apostolic, and on which they based their religion, and should incorporate with these, as undoubtedly apostolic, another work which no one had heard of for fifty years after the last apostle was in his grave, and should enter into a conspiracy of silence as to its late appearance, and this, not in one country, but in France, Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Africa, seems to me to be a fact which would need a very remarkable attestation to compel us to accept it."

As we have seen, and will see further, the "attestation" is all the other way.

This use of the Gospel of John by the Gnostics from 125 A.D., and probably earlier, on through the second century, and the evidence at its close from Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement, that the four Gospels, and no others, were the authoritative records of our Saviour's life, are abundant and cumulative proof of the existence of the Fourth Gospel from the beginning of the second century, and of its Johannean authorship. Few books of the same age present such an array of testimonies of their date and authorship as we have already considered; and not all have been brought into view. In the case of any ordinary book so well attested, no question of authorship or date would be raised. But there are still clearer evidences of the early existence of the book, and of its acceptance by the church.

Recent discoveries have brought into very clear light the testimony of two men,—both learned Greek philosophers, both probably of Grecian parentage, though one of them was born at Sychar in Samaria, and the other in Assyria. *Justin Martyr* and *Tatian* met in Rome, and Justin, who had long been there, brought Tatian, the traveler and earnest seeker after truth, to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, about 150

A.D. The writings of these two men, which are still preserved, one of them having been discovered in an Arabic translation, are of the greatest interest, and stand among the irrefragable proofs of the early and universal acceptance by the church of the four Gospels, and of these to the exclusion of apocryphal, so-called, Gospels.

It is, happily, unnecessary to follow Drummond's extended argument to prove that Justin had all our four Gospels. No open-minded reader can doubt this if he will simply read his two "Apologies" and his "Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew." Justin's use of our Saviour's words to Nicodemus on the subject of the new birth,¹ if they stood alone, would be sufficient proof that Justin had the Gospel of John, and of his estimate of it as one of the sacred "Memoirs of the Apostles"; but they do not stand alone. These writings are full of thoughts and expressions for which no source can be found but the Fourth Gospel itself. So abundant are these proofs of his use of the Gospel of John, that some seem to have been entirely overlooked by all who have written about them.² For instance, when one reads the sixtieth chapter of the First Apology,³ and finds Justin representing the serpent raised by Moses on a *cross*, it seems very natural to ask, how this lifting of the serpent became connected in Justin's mind, or that of his contemporaries or predecessors, with the cross? The only rational answer is that they had read John iii. 14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of man be lifted up." But, as I have said, no discussion is necessary here, especially since the discovery of the two Arabic copies of the "Diatessaron," or "Harmony of the Four Gospels," of Tatian—which Watkins, in his Bampton

¹Apology, 61.

²I find V. H. Stanton, Oxford, an exception, and our author, also, cites this passage.

³Same view in Dialogue, 91, 94, 131.

Lecture, has called "the key to Justin." If Tatian, the pupil of Justin, had the four Gospels, we need not argue to prove that Justin, his teacher, had them. It is certain that Tatian had them, for they all appear in his Harmony of the Four Gospels—ninety-six per cent of the Gospel of John being used in making up this "Diatessaron"—all of it, except the four per cent of which the other three Gospels furnished duplicates. That he had the Fourth Gospel during the lifetime of Justin, too, is evident, for he quotes it in his "Oration to the Greeks," written about 153 A.D.

It is altogether probable, too, that the Diatessaron of Tatian was prepared, at least in part, while he was associated with Justin, as such scholars as Harnack and McGiffert think—and it is, at least, not improbable that it was prepared under the guidance of Justin. Certain combinations of the Gospel in Justin's quotations have suggested the probability of this.

It is almost inconceivable that Tatian, the pupil of Justin, should have had the Four Gospels in their entirety, and that he should have so carefully and laboriously wrought them into a continuous narrative for the use of the church, if they had not been long and fully accredited by the church as "the Gospels," "the Memoirs of the Apostles," as Justin denominates them.

The testimony of both Theodoret and Rabbula shows us that the "Diatessaron" continued to be extensively used in the Syrian churches even as late as the fifth century.

To gain full conviction of the genuineness of all the four Gospels, the open-minded and unsophisticated inquirer has no need to go to any modern discussions of Christian apologetics. The Apologies of Justin and his Dialogue, together with the Diatessaron of Tatian, present the facts so plainly that he who runs may read, if he only have honest eyes to see the facts. Drummond has a most able discussion of these evidences; but

no arguments are so absolutely convincing, to judge from my own experience, as the simple reading of the works for ourselves.¹

The variety of evidences for the Johannean authorship of the Fourth Gospel is certainly amply sufficient to establish it beyond reasonable doubt; but unreasonable cavils have been broached, and, as if to meet them, what may seem even superfluous evidences have been providentially furnished. A still later discovery than that of the Diatessaron is now in our hands. Drummond does not make the use of this which one would expect. The *Lewis Syriac Palimpsest*, discovered at Mount Sinai, is mentioned, indeed, but its value as a witness for the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel is not insisted on, perhaps, because it seemed to him unnecessary, or perhaps, because the full discussion which has practically settled the question of the evidence in the palimpsest of the existence of a text older than that of the Diatessaron had not been published when he wrote.

A very searching examination of the discussions of Zahn, Burkitt, Hjelt, and Guillian in the *Church Quarterly Review* (London), for April, 1903, presents the conclusion, which has all the appearance of finality, that the ages of the four Syriac texts of the four Gospels stand in the following order: (1) Lewis Palimpsest; (2) Diatessaron; (3) Curetonian; (4) Peshitta.

¹ There is little danger of overrating the evidence for the Fourth Gospel. Indeed, no summary of the varied testimonies can give the impression which one gets by seeing with his own eyes the literature of the second century in which occur quotations from and references to this Gospel, while in some instances, while there may be no accurate quotation and no direct reference to a particular passage, the writing is seen to be saturated with Johannine thought and enriched with Johannine words and expressions. No description of Niagara gives quite the impression gained from seeing it.

In the Lewis palimpsest, we have the four Gospels entire, with the exception of a few lost leaves of the manuscript, and some undecipherable words and phrases. That the text represented by this manuscript is older than that of the Diatessaron is indicated by the omission of some passages which the oldest Greek manuscripts omit; but the clearest indications of the superior age of the Lewis palimpsest consist in the peculiar readings of the latter, found in the Diatessaron, which indicate that it was composed from the old Syriac text, of which the palimpsest is considered the oldest extant representative. Now, if, back of the Diatessaron, there is a Syriac text of the four Gospels complete, gathered together, and arranged as we have them in our Bibles to-day, already translated into Syriac for the use of the Syrian Christians before the Harmony of Tatian was prepared, the indication is, that the Greek originals must have been in use at a considerably earlier period still.

It may be said that this is an argument of high probability only. This is acknowledged; but it must be remembered that all arguments for the date and authorship of an ancient book are of the same character. From the nature of the case, the certainty of mathematical demonstration is impossible, and there can be no testimony of living witnesses. But while one particular witness of the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel may only give a high degree of probability, the cumulative force of all combined gives practical certainty. Many rays of light come from many directions, and all focus in the conclusion that the Apostle John wrote the Fourth Gospel.

From the Diatessaron and the Lewis palimpsest we see, too, that the text was not in the process of evolution, but was as complete as in our text of the Gospels as determined by modern textual criticism from thousands of Greek manuscripts.

It seems proper, in concluding this survey of what must be

recognized as only a part of the evidence for the Johannean authorship of the Fourth Gospel, to call attention to one fact which seems to have been very generally disregarded—the inestimable *importance* of the book. It is a GOSPEL, containing accounts of our Saviour's life, teachings, and atoning death. It was not an ordinary book, whose origin and genuineness might be a matter of comparatively small importance, but one whose matter was of such vital importance to every individual that it could never have been accepted as equal in authority with the three earlier Gospels by the whole Christian church if there had been the slightest doubt of the authorship of the Apostle John, to whom it has been attributed from the first. But we find Irenæus, who was born probably twelve or fifteen years after the apostle's death (Zahn), Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen, a younger contemporary, speaking of it as having just the same position as the other three Gospels as the basis of the church's faith. Justin's Apologies and Dialogue could not have been written without it, and we find the heretics of the second century, some of them younger contemporaries of John himself, treating it as one of the four Gospels, in just the same way, while we see evidence of its existence in *its present completeness* from the early part of the second century, in the Diatessaron and the Lewis Sinaitic Palimpsest. We may smile at Irenæus' argument for the necessity of having four Gospels; yet his picture of the whole structure of Christian truth resting on the four pillars, the four Gospels, must impress every one with the *importance* of each Gospel, and the impossibility of a false one being accepted by the whole church.

If the Apostle John had not died, but, in accordance with the mistake of some, had, like the fictitious Wandering Jew, come down through all the centuries to our own, it is hard to

imagine with what emotions we should have listened to his reminiscences of that one on whose breast he leaned at the last supper. Could we actually hear from his own lips of this wonderful Person, with whom he had such intimate associations, of whom he could say, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," could even say, "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you,"—we could hardly fail to feel a strange thrill. As we realized the truth of the momentous announcement, "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," we could hardly fail to feel that the Gospel is something more than we had ever before imagined.

And now, since, beyond all reasonable doubt, we have the written words of John, should they not affect us in the same way?

The discussion of Drummond's presentation of the internal evidence of the Johannean authorship of the Fourth Gospel, fresh and, in every way, admirable, as it is, cannot be included in this review. The reader's patience has been already too much trespassed on. Neither can his account of the "character" of the Gospel be referred to, except in again drawing attention to the fact that the proof of the "authorship" is all the more impressive as coming from one who holds the Unitarian view of the "character" of the Gospel—one, too, who, while he continues to hold the theological views of his revered predecessors, Martineau and Taylor, is, by the evidence in the case, constrained to differ from them as to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel.