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ARTICLE III.

THE JOHANNINE PROBLEMS.

BY THE REVEREND HANS C. JUELL,
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I.

THERE is a striking difference between John and the Synoptic Gospels in regard to the scene of Jesus' ministry. In the Synoptic Gospels it is laid, almost exclusively, in Galilee, while in the Fourth Gospel we consider Jesus mostly in his Judæan ministry. Professor Schmiedel says: "In John the most important thing is this, that Jesus' real and abiding dwelling-place during his ministry is Judæa and especially Jerusalem."¹

The scene of Jesus' ministry opens "in Bethany beyond the Jordan," which "was east of the river, and a day's distance at the most from Cana of Galilee (John ii. 1)."² Jesus and his disciples went into Galilee and remained there until the passover. Then they left for the feast at Jerusalem. How long they stayed in Galilee, or at Jerusalem and "the land of Judæa," we do not know. But they need not have remained in Judæa more than two weeks. Then they left for Galilee.

Jesus remained in Galilee until the time of the unnamed feast (John v. 1). On the sabbath following this feast he healed the man at the pool of Bethesda. This stirred up such an opposition (v. 18) that Jesus left for Galilee in fear

¹The Johannine Writings, p. 12.

²Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1. p. 276a.

of his life (John vii. 1), where he remained over one pass-over (John vi. 4) and six months into the next year, till the feast of tabernacles. This means that he was in Galilee, according to the Fourth Gospel, continuously for sixteen months.¹

We are not told whether Jesus remained in Jerusalem during the two months between the feast of tabernacles and the feast of the dedication. What we have recorded here may not have taken more than a week; so, if the Synoptic accounts should demand Jesus' presence elsewhere during that time, there is nothing to preclude that possibility. Just at the close of the last-named feast "he went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there he abode" (John v. 40). During the four months from the feast of the dedication to the feast of the passover Jesus makes but a brief visit, a few days at most, to Judæa, when he raised Lazarus, until he finally, "six days before the passover," came to Bethany (John xii. 1).

This gives the probability of two weeks during Jesus' first visit, the possibility of one week during the second visit, of two months during the third, of three days during the fourth, and six days at the last, for his stay in Judæa. That is, according to the Fourth Gospel, out of a ministry of something over two years there is a possibility of his having spent three months in Judæa, but it need not have been more than half that length of time. This certainly cannot be claimed to be in conflict with the Synoptic Gospels.

II.

Much has been made of the difference between the Johannine and the Synoptic Jesus.² It is claimed that the Jesus

¹ I assume here that the unnamed feast was Pentecost.

² Cf. *The Johannine Writings*, Schmiedel, pp. 25-35.

of the Fourth Gospel lacks the common limitations of men much more so than the Synoptic Jesus.¹

But a distinction should be made between the historical and the doctrinal Jesus of the Fourth Gospel. Naturally, by the time this Gospel was written, there had grown up around Jesus many doctrines not based on the historical facts given, but rather on the fact that he was the Son of God, and the commonly accepted interpretation of what such a person was and could do. The attributes belonging to God would naturally be attributed to Jesus. The Prologue must be considered as part of the doctrinal conception of Jesus, so also should John ii. 24, 25; vi. 61, 64, 71; and xiii. 1, 3. It is not my aim in the least to attempt to discredit these doctrinal statements by John, but it is fair to remember that we are considering the historical Jesus, and as such we will ascribe to him these various attributes only as they are revealed in his actual life as described in this Gospel.

We should also avoid reading our own doctrinal conceptions into the life of Jesus. In an historical study we should avoid as far as possible coloring the incidents given with our own philosophy, and then considering that the picture drawn, color and all, is the product of historical events. Really, however, the historical Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is more human, and has a broader range of interests, than the Jesus of the Synoptists. But, of course, we can merely touch upon this subject in a brief article like this.

How intensely interesting the story of Jesus' early struggles as pictured in this Gospel is! Jesus started his ministry in Jerusalem at the time of the passover, and had some suc-

¹ For a fuller study of this subject, see *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, Mackintosh, pp. 94-121; *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, Sanday, pp. 205-235; *The Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, Moffatt, pp. 525-530.

cess (ii. 23), but left the city in a short time, probably because of opposition stirred up by his zeal for reform (ii. 13-22), for "the land of Judæa" (iii. 22), where he and his disciples took up rural work. Success followed his labors in this community (iv. 1), but this success stirred up contentions (iii. 25) which threatened to undermine the influence of John the Baptist, so Jesus felt that it was necessary for him to leave this his field of activity. He stayed in Galilee for a while, and then again went down into Judæa, and the second time started his ministry in Jerusalem. This time he had to flee for his life, and now he was forced to choose Galilee for his field of labor (vii. 1). We find here the reason given why Jesus' ministry was laid in Galilee. According to the Synoptic Gospels we might think that he preferred Galilee to Judæa as a field of service.

Look at Jesus' first work with a sinful person,—his conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. He first tells her that he has the living water. But this seems to make no impression on her. Then Jesus shifts his conversation and asks for her husband. It is clear that there is no logical connection between his request for her to bring her husband and his claim of having the living water. Jesus found that he had failed in his first attempt, so tried another way of reaching her inner life. But just as he had her where he felt himself ready to lead her into the higher life, which he sought to bring to her, the disciples came and she slipped away, even leaving her waterpot. It was probably disappointment at first which made Jesus unwilling to partake of the food his disciples brought him, but as soon as he saw the people coming from Sychar he felt that his words had had their desired effect, when joy took the place of disappointment. He felt that "the will of him that sent" him

was that he should win such persons as this woman into the better life. And here we do not see the experienced and omniscient man, but we see a man who, by different trials, wins this woman for the spiritual life. This certainly is quite human.

The Synoptic Jesus appears to be devoid of fear. In no instance do we see him deliberately seeking to avoid the threatened danger. He visits Nazareth, and stirs up the antagonism of the people to the extent that "they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong" (Luke iv. 29); but in a short time he is back in Nazareth teaching the people (Mark vi. 1-6).¹

The Johannine Jesus is continually seeking to escape danger. He walked in Galilee sixteen months because the Jews sought to kill him (vii. 1). When Jesus had told the Jews the plain truth at the feast of the dedication, "they sought again to take him; and he went forth out of their hand. And he went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was at first baptizing; and there he abode" (x. 39, 40; cf. also xi. 8). Shortly after the raising of Lazarus the chief priest and the Pharisees "took counsel that they might put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews" (xi. 53, 54). It must be granted that this attempt to escape danger is a human trait in Jesus.

There are two passages in the Gospel which have been made use of to prove the unique divinity of Jesus, and which characterize him as being superior to the common human limitations, — John vii. 1-11 and xi. 1-44.² To appreciate

¹ Cf. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Edersheim, vol. i. pp. 430 ff., 635 ff.

² Cf. *The Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, Moffatt, p. 526.

this we should look back of the statements in the Gospel to the actual scenes and raise the question as to what really happened, leaving as far as possible, doctrinal conceptions behind, and be governed by the statements given.

Jesus' brothers wanted him to go up to Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles and not continue to hide himself. Jesus tells them plainly, "I go not up to this feast" (vii. 8).¹ This statement certainly would be understood by Jesus' brethren to mean that he was not going up to Jerusalem to this feast of tabernacles. And we cannot explain away this meaning, since we know that he went up, by saying that he meant something entirely different. Words are used to convey ideas, and when we use words which we know will be understood in one way we have no right to attempt to clear ourselves later by giving a different meaning to our words.² Jesus told his brethren that he was not going to the feast, and still he went. There are only two possible explanations for this attitude of Jesus. Either he made a deliberate misstatement, or he did not intend to go up to the feast when he spoke to the brethren, and, for some reason, changed his mind later and went up. The latter is the most reasonable interpretation.

We see by this passage that Jesus feared that the Jews would kill him should he go up to Jerusalem. His statement, "My time is not yet fulfilled" (vii. 8), makes this clear. He was not ready to die, and the going up to Jeru-

¹The "yet" which appears in the A. V. probably came in for doctrinal reasons, so that the American Revision has the correct reading.

²The mystical sayings of Jesus that he is the bread of life, that men must eat his flesh and drink his blood, that he is the light of the world, etc., can hardly be considered as parallels with this statement. These mystical sayings demand some spiritual interpretation which a clear statement of facts does not.

salem would mean death to him as he understood it. But the brethren and some of the disciples went up to the feast, and they found that there was a strong sentiment in favor of Jesus ("some said, He is a good man," vii. 12), which fact they reported to Jesus. He, therefore, changed his mind and went up to the feast. This means that the claim that "the omniscience of Jesus in this Gospel is full-orbed from the very beginning (i. 48; iv. 17-18, 35; v. 42; vi. 15, 61, 64; viii. 40, etc.),"¹ is at least open to criticism.

We turn now to the story of the raising of Lazarus. Jesus is now at "the place where John was at first baptizing" (x. 40), where we found him at the beginning of the Gospel. This was, evidently, one day's journey from Cana of Galilee (ii. 1). Take any good map of Palestine made to scale and get the distance from Cana to the place beyond the river Jordan which would be the approximate place from the fact of one day's journey, twenty-five miles; then measure from that place to Bethany in Judæa, and you will find that Bethany beyond the Jordan is fully two days' journey from the home of Lazarus. This means that, according to the account we have in our Gospel, Jesus was at least two days' distance from the home of Mary and Martha.

Lazarus is sick, and the sisters send a messenger to tell Jesus of this sickness (xi. 3). "But when Jesus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby" (xi. 4). Let us take our stand with the disciples to whom Jesus was speaking, and consider what we would have understood him to mean. He left the impression with the disciples that Lazarus would not die of this sickness. He could not have made

¹ The Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, Moffatt, p. 526.

that much plainer. But it is commonly claimed that the rest of the sentence changes the meaning to be that Lazarus would really die, and then Jesus would raise him from the dead, and receive glory from this wonderful miracle. This interpretation ignores all grammatical laws. "Thereby" can only refer back to "sickness." The Son of God should be glorified by the sickness. That would have been the way we would have understood Jesus had we been present with the disciples when the words were spoken. It may be that Lazarus, unlike his sisters (xi. 27), had failed to grasp the deeper significance of Jesus, and had not responded to the call for a higher spiritual life, and Jesus felt that God had sent him this sickness that he might be drawn closer to Himself.

Now notice, two days pass before Jesus says that Lazarus is dead, and he wants to go up to Bethany. The disciples remonstrate with him, but finally go at the courageous suggestion of Thomas, that they go and die with Jesus. When they arrive, Lazarus has been dead four days. That means time for a trip from Bethany to Jesus and back again. True, nothing is said of another messenger to notify Jesus of the death of Lazarus. But neither are we told that Jesus knew all the time that Lazarus was dead, which is the assumption of those who claim that Jesus delayed his trip to Bethany merely to receive glory for himself. The facts in the case give us a better right to claim that when the brother died, the two sisters sent a messenger to tell Jesus of his death, and that he went up to the sorrowing sisters as soon as he knew of their bereavement, than to suppose that, because of his divine insight, he knew this as soon as it happened, and that he delayed going merely to make the miracle more effective.

It is unfair to assume, as some do, that Jesus knew all the facts concerning Lazarus, as they happened, from the first, and that he purposely delayed his help to glorify himself, and then severely to criticize Jesus because of this assumed "inhumanity."¹ We may rather assume that Jesus thought that this sickness was not serious, and that he did not feel justified in risking his and his disciples' life to visit him at that time. Then the messenger comes and tells Jesus of Lazarus' death, possibly unbeknown to the disciples, and also brings Jesus word from the authorities that no harm shall come to him if he goes to visit the sorrowing sisters. It may be of such a report from the authorities Jesus speaks when he says that it is safe to walk in the daylight (xi. 9). He then goes to Bethany. If we are willing to leave out the assumption that Jesus was omniscient, there is nothing unnatural in this account so far.

We are told that this miracle is so much greater than those of the Synoptic Gospels, because Jesus raised Lazarus on the fourth day after his death.² No doubt this gave some added meaning to the miracle to the people of that day, since it was then felt that the spirit left off hovering about the body the fourth day. But when we know that a person is just as dead one hour after the end has come as four days later, we certainly would not say that the Jesus who raised the widow's son of Nain was unable to raise Lazarus. The one is no more marvelous than the other to the thinking man of to-day.

But when we claim that we believe that Jesus "could give the man power to walk with firmly fastened feet,"³ we are told that we are affirming something we cannot possibly be-

¹ *The Johannine Writings*, Schmiedel, pp. 30-33.

² *Cf. Ibid.*, p. 32.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

lieve. And it certainly seems that this does make a severe demand on our faith. But let us see what we have. Let us go with the company to the grave where Lazarus was laid.

When we come to the tomb, we find that it is a cave, and a stone is laid over it (xi. 38). It would be natural to suppose that the cave entered from the side of a hill, and that the stone slanted considerably from the perpendicular position. The Jewish bier was a board on which the corpse was laid, and coffins were unknown.¹ Suppose this board with Lazarus on it had been placed on two stones in the cave, say six feet from its mouth, with the head inward. When, therefore, Jesus spoke the words which gave life to the man who was dead, and he became conscious of life, he may have merely slipped his feet off the board and risen from his bier. This rising would apparently have brought him forth. Jesus, seeing him bound and unable to walk, told the people to "loose him and let him go."

Look briefly at the basis given for the claim that this Gospel pictures to us an omniscient Jesus. His declaration to Nathaniel cannot be made use of (i. 48). We are a little surprised that Nathaniel wonders at what Jesus has said. There is nothing to preclude the possibility of Jesus having known something of this Israelite before this time. Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman (iv. 17, 18) may also have been based on information rather than on divine revelation. Any preacher with a fairly clear grasp of human character could have spoken the words Jesus speaks in v. 42; and what Jesus says in viii. 40 may be based on information received. The other verses (vi. 15, 61, 64) are expressions of John's theological conception and, therefore, will not be used for our picture of the historical Christ in this Gospel.

¹ *Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 1. p. 332b.

III.

There are certain statements of facts on which the Fourth differs from the Synoptic Gospels.

1. In the Fourth Gospel the cleansing of the temple takes place during the first passover of Jesus' ministry. In the Synoptic Gospels it takes place at the last passover. Though there is a possibility that Jesus cleansed the temple twice, this is not commonly considered to be the case. The question then is raised as to which account should be considered as giving this incident its proper place.

The cleansing of the temple is the only incident recorded in the Gospels where Jesus uses physical power to purify Israel. Throughout his ministry he employs spiritual forces to combat physical powers. He does not even call the twelve legions of angels to help him when in the garden of Gethsemane. But he depends on his drawing power when lifted up to gain for him a world following. He depends upon love and righteousness as the weapons with which to win the kingdom.

The picture we here have of Jesus, if we accept the chronological arrangement of the Fourth Gospel, is that Jesus, fresh from hearing John the Baptist declare that the ax is laid at the root of the tree, goes out to "thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor." He acts like the average young man who starts in his ministry. He chafes under the slowness of the transforming influence of truth and love and employs the apparently quicker way of using the forces at hand to compel obedience to his wishes. But later in his life this minister learns that, even if the results come quicker by enforcing the law rather than preaching the gospel, they are superficial and short-lived.

This reform move of Jesus seems to have had little effect

on the people at this time, probably because Jesus was an obscure man. They questioned his right to do this, and probably made it impossible for him to continue his work in Jerusalem. But little opposition seems to have been raised.

But some men heard him who did not forget what he said and did. When Jesus was before the Sanhedrin on his trial, two men came forward who testified that Jesus had said, "I am able to destroy this temple of God, and build it in three days" (Matt. xxvi. 61=Mark xiv. 58). It is true that these witnesses were called "false," but that seems to be because they were testifying against Jesus rather than because they were not telling the truth. Had the members of the Sanhedrin employed men to swear falsely to a made-up charge, there had been little trouble in getting them to agree. It is clear that these men testified to something they had heard.

Jesus could not have said this just a few days before the trial, for then there had been a number of witnesses present to report it to the officers; so there had been no difficulty in finding enough witnesses to substantiate this statement. And such a charge, that Jesus had threatened to destroy the temple, would have been considered very serious. Even this charge by the "false" witnesses created such a feeling that the rabble who passed by while Jesus hung on the cross reviled him, saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself" (Matt. xxvii. 40=Mark xv. 29).

It would seem, therefore, that the Synoptic Gospels point to a cleansing of the temple which took place approximately at the time it is recorded to have taken place in the Fourth Gospel. And if it is claimed that John placed it where he did because of the Synoptic account, that does not minimize

the evidence for the early cleansing of the temple, it rather strengthens it.

If we were to take the account of the cleansing of the temple out of the Synoptic Gospels, we would not interfere with their unity. It seems not to have left any impression on the people, whereas such an act would naturally have stirred up the Jewish officers. The only possible reference to it is that in Mark xi. 28, where the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders asked him, "By what authority doest thou these things?" The reference here is to more than one act; and even if one of these could have been the cleansing of the temple, that certainly is not clearly stated.¹

2. There is a question as to the time of the day when Jesus was crucified. According to John's Gospel, Jesus is not even condemned at the sixth hour (xix. 14); while, according to Mark's (xv. 33) account, he had been on the cross some time at the sixth hour. There appears to be some discrepancy here.

But if we consider that John used the Roman notation of time, the same as our notation, and that Mark used the Babylonian notation, reckoning time from the morning, then there is no discrepancy.² That means that, according to John's account, Jesus was condemned shortly after six in the morning, and that, according to Mark's account, he had been on the cross for some time at noon. These statements appear to be quite harmonious.

3. In John's Gospel the last supper is not synonymous

¹On the cleansing of the temple, see *The Historical Value of the Fourth Gospel*, Askwith, pp. 187-196.

²Cf. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Edersheim, vol. 1. p. 428, and *The New Testament in Modern Speech*, Weymouth, on this and other passages in John's Gospel dealing with the time of day.

with the passover, while in the Synoptic Gospels it was the passover feast Jesus had with his disciples. There appears little hope of harmonizing these two accounts.

“The primary tradition (Mark xiv. 1-2= Matt. xxvi. 3-5) expressly dates the arrest of Jesus not during the feast, from which it follows (cp. Matt. xxvii. 62) that Jesus was crucified before the passover.” It will be seen, therefore, that the Synoptic account is not in harmony with itself. The question would, therefore, be raised as to which account in these Gospels is reliable. “But that Jesus died on Nisan 15, the feast day, is unlikely, as work was going on (Mark xv. 21, Luke xxiii. 56) and arms were being carried (Mark xiv. 47, etc.), both of which, as well as a meeting of the Sanhedrin, were strictly prohibited on the feast day.” We would, therefore, naturally accept the Johannine date for the crucifixion. “The correctness of the Johannine tradition is corroborated by the likelihood that Luke (xxii. 15-16) preserves a saying which seems to show that when Jesus ate his last meal with the disciples, he knew that he would not live to celebrate the passover that year with them.”¹

4. We are told that no reason can be given for the omission of the miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the Synoptic Gospels if it really happened.² And if that is true it makes it hard to cling to its historicity. It is a miracle of such importance that we can hardly say that it was merely passed over by the Synoptists. And even if this may not properly be classed with the other three cases just considered, we will investigate the problem here.

The question is not how it happened that the first three

¹ The Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, Moffatt, pp. 544 f.

² Cf. *Johannine Writings*, Schmiedel, p. 94. *The Fourth Gospel*, Scott, p. 37.

Evangelists omitted what one mentioned. It is now an accepted fact that Peter is the authority for Mark's Gospel, and that Matthew and Luke have depended almost exclusively on the Second Gospel for their historical statements.¹ This makes it a question why Peter should have omitted this miracle which John has mentioned.

With all of Peter's admirable virtues it must be admitted that he was not especially courageous. Because he feared the consequences, he denied his Lord at the time of the trial. And later on, when he was the leader of the church, he failed to do what he knew to be right, "fearing them that were of the circumcision" (Gal. ii. 12). May it not have been because Jesus knew of this his weakness that he told Peter that he would deny him?

It was dangerous for Jesus and his disciples to go up to Judæa at the time of the sickness and death of Lazarus. The Jews had but now sought to kill him. There are good reasons for supposing that it was Peter who said, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" (xi. 8). It would not be in harmony with the nature of Peter to respond heartily to the fine courageous words of Thomas, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (xi. 16). He who could deny his Lord at the time of the trial, and who had failed to live up to his religious convictions when a leader of the Christian church, may very well have found some excuse for not going to Bethany at this time. Having failed to see the miracle, and being ashamed of his cowardice in not accompanying Jesus and the disciples on this tour, he would say little about this miracle. This

¹The Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, Moffatt, pp. 179 ff., 185 ff.

offers at least a plausible explanation for the omission of this miracle from the Synoptic accounts.

IV.

The opposition to the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel rests almost exclusively on the external evidences at the present time, and, that in particular, on the evidences for the early martyrdom of John.¹ It becomes necessary, therefore, to consider the external evidences.

It will be sufficient to mention only two of the external evidences for the Johannine authorship. (1) The early tradition is that John lived in Ephesus until the end of the first century and wrote the Gospel in that city. "John's Ephesian residence has been disputed by many scholars, but the tradition seems too strong to be shaken. The chief witness for it is Irenaeus, a pupil of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who reports that Polycarp was a personal disciple of John, and that the latter lived in Ephesus until the reign of Trajan, who became emperor in the year 98."² (2) The Fourth Gospel "according to all surviving authorities . . . bore a title which

¹ I am here dependent upon the scholarly work of Professor James Moffatt which is fair to both sides of the controversy. The discrepancies between the Synoptic and Fourth Gospels which were brought out so strongly by earlier writers have gradually disappeared. "Recent criticism of the Synoptic Gospels has brought them nearer to the Fourth Gospel" (*The Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, p. 540). The later date of the Gospel, which was held by some, and which excluded the possibility of the Johannine authorship, has given way before the better evidence for a date in conformity with the traditional view (cf. pp. 580 f.). In short, Professor Moffatt rests his opposition to the Johannine authorship almost exclusively on the evidences for the early martyrdom of John.

² *The Apostolic Age*, McGiffert, p. 606.

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connects it with John; and John to the early Christians, seems to have meant the Apostle.”¹

“The evidence for the early martyrdom of John the son of Zebedee is, in fact, threefold: (a) a prophecy of Jesus preserved in Mark x. 39=Matt. xx. 23, (b) the witness of Papias, and (c) the calendars of the church.”²

It is unnecessary to cite the quotation from Mark.

The witness from Papias comes from two sources. The first from the “MS. (codex Coislinianus, 305) of Georgios Hamartolos (ninth century), who, *à propos* of the synoptic logion (Mark x. 38 f.), declares in his Chronicle that John the Apostle after writing his Gospel did suffer martyrdom, buttressing the statement upon Papias and Origen.” The statement reads as follows: “John ‘was killed by the Jews, thus plainly fulfilling along with his brother the prophecy of Christ regarding them and their own confession and common agreement concerning him.’”³ The second comes from the de Boor fragment. It reads as follows: “Papias in his second book says that John the divine and James his brother were killed by the Jews.” “The evidence of some ancient calendars favours indirectly the existence of such a tradition. In the fourth century Syriac, ‘John and James, the apostles in Jerusalem,’ are commemorated together as martyrs there on December 27.”⁴

In considering these evidences Professor Moffatt fails to carry the conviction which is characteristic of the rest of his work. His evidences are as carefully selected, and his authorities cited, but his generally fine judicious spirit seems lack-

¹ The Hibbert Journal, Drummond, Oct. 1910, p. 195.

² The Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, Moffatt, p. 602.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 603 f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 605 f.

ing when he pronounces in favor of the evidences for the early martyrdom, and against the late residence of John in Ephesus.

It is manifestly unsafe to give historical value to a prophecy. The disciples understood Jesus to prophesy that the end of the world would come before the last of his followers had passed away. And they confidently expected the end to come. We are inclined to believe that Jesus meant something else from what the disciples understood him to mean, since the end did not come. And it must be admitted that even if the prophecy in Mark x. 39 would naturally mean a red martyrdom, it does not exclude some other interpretation.

It is quite difficult to explain how Eusebius, Irenæus, and others of the early writers, overlooked the statement by Papias in regard to the early martyrdom of John if it really appeared in his books. And, again, if someone else wrote the Fourth Gospel, "why was his work ascribed with such a strange unanimity to the Apostle John, when, at least at the time of its publication, every one knew that he had been for years in the grave?"¹ It is possible for an historian to overlook a statement like this in a book he is studying, but it is hard to see how a fact like this, which certainly must have been known by the Christians generally, could have been ignored, and the tradition of the Johannine authorship have continued to spread.

But even if we accept the claim that such a statement was found in the books of Papias, can we really depend on its historicity? "Eusebius speaks slightly of his mental calibre,"² and does not rely much on his statements for building up history. Irenæus quotes Papias as having written in his

¹The Hibbert Journal, Drummond, Oct. 1910, p. 199.

²The Canon and Text of the New Testament, Gregory, p. 97.

books that the Lord Jesus had said, "The days will come in which vines shall grow, each one having ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand branches, and on each branch again ten thousand twigs, and on each single twig ten thousand clusters, and in each single cluster ten thousand grapes, and each single grape when pressed shall give twenty-five measures of wine."¹ Doubtless there is better evidence for this statement appearing in the books of Papias than the account of the early martyrdom of John, and yet it does not follow, as most students would agree, that Jesus must have said it. It is quite evident, from the citations given, that this reference to the early martyrdom is given to establish the fact that Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled. The interest is polemic rather than historic.

The evidences from the calendars are weak. We know that John and James were not killed on the same day. And it is altogether unlikely that John suffered martyrdom on the same day of the year later on. It seems natural to suppose that the calendars were inspired by the prophecy of Jesus rather than by the fact itself.

It is hardly fair to rank the statement by Irenæus in his letter to Florinus below the citation from Papias in reliability. Grant that Irenæus made mistakes,² it is hardly fair to ascribe this his statement in regard to John as being due to polemic reasons that he might "safeguard the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel." There does not appear to be any call for such a defense at that time. And if he started such a tradition it is surprising that this Gospel should survive and the Gospel according to Peter should perish. Had

¹ *The Canon and Text of the New Testament*, Gregory, p. 100.

² Cf. *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, Moffatt, p. 609.

the fathers been as devoid of the critical spirit as some imply, it is surprising that a great deal of the apocryphal material did not find a place in the canon. A fair study of the canon, in comparison with the apocryphal books, will compel us to have not a little respect for the fair critical spirit of those early fathers. The external evidences may not be strong enough to give conclusive proof for the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. But if we are willing to weigh judiciously the evidences we could hardly claim that they argue strongly against the traditional view.