

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

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

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



Buy me a coffee

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



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

*INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE AUTHENTICITY
AND GENUINENESS OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.*

THIS lecture originally formed one of a series connected with Christian evidences, and delivered in St. George's Hall in 1871. The other lectures were published shortly afterwards; but, not having been informed beforehand that publication was expected, I withheld my own from the volume. It seemed to me that in the course of a single lecture I could only touch the fringes of a great subject, and that injustice would be done by such imperfect treatment as alone time and opportunity allowed. Moreover I was then, and for some terms afterwards, engaged in lecturing on this Gospel at Cambridge, and I entertained the hope that I might be able to deal with the subject less inadequately if I gave myself more time. Happily it passed into other and better hands, and I was relieved from this care.

A rumour got abroad at the time, and has (I am informed) been since repeated, that I did not allow the lecture to be published, because I was *dissatisfied* with it. I was only dissatisfied in the sense which I have already explained. It could not be otherwise than unsatisfactory to bring forward mere fragmentary evidence of an important conclusion, when there was abundant proof in the background. The present publication of the lecture is my answer to this rumour. I give it after eighteen years exactly in the same form in which it was originally written, with the exception of a few verbal alterations. Looking over it again after

this long lapse of time, I have nothing to withdraw. Additional study has only strengthened my conviction that this narrative of St. John could not have been written by any one but an eye-witness.

As I have not dealt with the external evidences except for the sake of supplying a statement of the position of antagonists, the treatment suffers less than it would otherwise have done from not being brought down to date. I have mentioned by way of illustration two respects in which later discoveries had falsified Baur's contentions. The last eighteen years would supply several others. I will single out three: (1) The antagonists of the Ignatian Epistles are again put on their defence. The arguments which were adduced against the genuineness of these epistles will hold no longer. Ignatius has the testimony of his friend and contemporary Polycarp, and Polycarp has the testimony of his own personal disciple Irenæus. The testimony of Irenæus is denied by no one; the testimony of Polycarp is only denied because it certifies to the Ignatian letters. Before we are prepared to snap this chain of evidence rudely, and to break with an uninterrupted tradition, we require far stronger reasons than have been hitherto adduced. (2) Justin Martyr wrote before or about the middle of the second century. His use of the Fourth Gospel was at one time systematically denied by the impugners of its apostolic authorship. Now it is acknowledged almost universally, even by those who do not allow that this evangelical narrative was written by St. John himself. (3) The *Diatessaron* of Tatian was written about A.D. 170, and consisted of a "Harmony of Four Gospels." Baur and others contended that at all events St. John was not one of the four. Indeed how could it be? for it had not been written, or only recently written, at this time. The *Diatessaron* itself has been discovered, and a commentary of Ephraem Syrus upon it in Armenian has likewise

been unearthed within the last few years, both showing that it began with the opening words of St. John.

The fourth of our canonical gospels has been ascribed by the tradition of the Church to St. John the son of Zebedee, the personal disciple of our Lord, and one of the twelve apostles. Till within a century (I might almost say, till within a generation) of the present time, this has been the universal belief—with one single and unimportant exception—of all ages, of all churches, of all sects, of all individuals alike.

This unanimity is the more remarkable in the earlier ages of the Church, because the language of this gospel has a very intimate bearing on numberless theological controversies which started up in the second, third, and fourth centuries of the Christian era; and it was therefore the direct interest of one party or other to deny the apostolic authority, if they had any ground for doing so. This happened not once or twice only, but many times. It would be difficult to point to a single heresy promulgated before the close of the fourth century, which might not find some imaginary points of coincidence or some real points of conflict—some relations whether of antagonism or of sympathy—with this gospel. This was equally true of Montanism in the second century, and of Arianism in the fourth. The Fourth Gospel would necessarily be among the most important authorities—we might fairly say *the* most important authority—in the settlement of the controversy, both from the claims which it made as a product of the beloved apostle himself, and from the striking representations which it gives of our Lord's teaching. The defender or the impugner of this or that theological opinion would have had a direct interest in disproving its genuineness and denying its authority. Can we question that this would have been done again and again, if there

had been any haze of doubt hanging over its origin, if the antagonist could have found even a *prima facie* ground for an attack?

And this brings me to speak of that one exception to the universal tradition to which I have already alluded. Once, and once only, did the disputants in a theological controversy yield to the temptation, strong though it must have been. A small, unimportant, nameless sect—if indeed they were compact enough to form a sect—in the latter half of the second century, denied that the Gospel and the Apocalypse were written by St. John. These are the two canonical writings which especially attribute the title of the Word of God, the Logos, to our Lord: the one, in the opening verses, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”; the other, in the vision of Him who rides on the white horse, whose garments are stained with blood, and whose name is given as the “Word of God.” To dispose of the doctrine they discredited the writings. Epiphanius calls them *Alogi*, “the opponents of the Word,” or (as it might be translated, for it is capable of a double meaning) “the irrational ones.” The name is avowedly his own invention. Indeed they would scarcely have acknowledged a title which had this double sense, and could have been so easily turned against themselves. They appear only to disappear. Beyond one or two casual allusions, they are not mentioned; they have no place in history.

This is just one of those exceptions which strengthens the rule. What these *Alogi* did numberless other sectaries and heretics would doubtless have done, if there had been any sufficient ground for the course. But even these *Alogi* lend no countenance to the views of modern objectors. Modern critics play off the Apocalypse against the Gospel, allowing the genuineness of the former, and using it to impugn the genuineness of the latter. Moreover there is

the greatest difference between the two. The modern antagonist places the composition of the Fourth Gospel in the middle or the latter half of the second century; these ancient heretics ascribed it to the early heresiarch Cerinthus, who lived at the close of the first century, and was a contemporary of St. John. Living themselves in the latter half of the second century, they knew (as their opponents would have reminded them, if they had found it convenient to forget the fact) that the Gospel was not a work of yesterday, that it had already a long history, and that it went back at all events to the latest years of the apostolic age; and in their theory they were obliged to recognise this fact. I need hardly say that the doctrine of the Person of Christ put forward in the Gospel and the Apocalypse is diametrically opposed to the teaching of Cerinthus, as every modern critic would allow. I only allude to this fact, to show that these very persons, who form the single exception to the unanimous tradition of all the churches and all the sects alike, are our witnesses for the antiquity of the Gospel (though not for its authenticity), and therefore are witnesses *against* the modern impugnors of its genuineness.

With this exception, the early testimony to the authenticity and genuineness of the Gospel is singularly varied. It is a remarkable and an important fact, that the most decisive and earliest testimony comes, not from Fathers of the orthodox Church, but from heretical writers. I cannot enter upon this question at length, for I did not undertake this afternoon to speak of the *external* evidence; and I ask you to bear in mind, that any inadequate and cursory treatment necessarily does a great injustice to a subject like this; for the ultimate effect of testimony must depend on its fulness and variety. I only call attention to the fact that within the last few years most valuable additions have been made to this external testimony, and these from

6 INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE AUTHENTICITY

the opposite extremes of the heretical scale. At the one extreme we have *Ebionism*, which was the offspring of Judaizing tendencies; at the other, *Gnosticism*, which took its rise in Gentile license of speculation and practice. Ebionism is represented by a remarkable extant work belonging to the second century, possibly to the first half of the second century, the *Clementine Homilies*. The greater part of this work has long been known, but until within the last few years the printed text was taken from a MS mutilated at the end; so that of the twenty Homilies the last half of the nineteenth and the whole of the twentieth are wanting. These earlier Homilies contained more than one reference to gospel history which could not well be referred to any of the three first evangelists, and seemed certainly to have been taken from the fourth. Still the reference was not absolutely certain, and the impugners of St. John's Gospel availed themselves of this doubt to deny the reference to this gospel. At length, in the year 1853, Dressel published for the first time, from a Vatican MS, the missing conclusion of these Homilies; and this was found to contain a reference to the incidents attending the healing of the man born blind, related only by St. John, and related in a way distinctly characteristic of St. John—a reference so distinct, that no one from that time has attempted to deny or to dispute it.

So much for the testimony of Ebionism—of the *Judaic* sects of early Christianity. But equally definite, and even more full, is the testimony which recent discovery has brought to light on the side of *Gnosticism*. Many of my hearers will remember the interest which was excited a few years ago by the publication of a lost treatise on heresies, which Bunsen and others ascribed (and, as is now generally allowed, correctly ascribed) to Hippolytus, in the earlier part of the third century. This treatise contains large and frequent extracts from previous Gnostic writers of diverse

schools—Ophites, Basilideans, Valentinians; among them, from a work which Hippolytus quotes as the production of Basilides himself, who flourished about A.D. 130-140. And in these extracts are abundant quotations from the Gospel of St. John.

I have put these two recent accessions to the external testimony in favour of the Fourth Gospel side by side, because, emanating from the most diverse quarters, they have a peculiar value, as showing the extensive circulation and wide reception of this gospel at a very early date; and because also, having been brought to light soon after its genuineness was for the first time seriously impugned, they seem providentially destined to furnish an answer to the objections of recent criticism.

If we ask ourselves why we attribute this or that ancient writing to the author whose name it bears — why, for instance, we accept this tragedy as a play of Sophocles, or that speech as an oration of Demosthenes,—our answer will be, that it bears the name of the author, and (so far as we know) has always been ascribed to him. In very many cases we know nothing, or next to nothing, about the history of the writing in question. In a few instances we are fortunate enough to find a reference to it, or a quotation from it, in some author who lived a century or two later. The cases are exceptionally rare when there is an indisputable allusion in a contemporary, or nearly contemporary, writer. For the most part, we accept the fact of the authorship, because it comes to us on the authority of a MS or MSS written several centuries after the presumed author lived, supported in some cases by quotations in a late lexicographer, or grammarian, or collection of extracts.

The external testimony in favour of St. John's Gospel reaches back much nearer to the writer's own time and is far more extensive than can be produced in the case of

most classical writings of the same antiquity. From the character of the work also, this testimony gains additional value; for where the contents of a book intimately affect the cherished beliefs and the practical conduct of all who receive it, the universality of its reception, amidst jarring creeds and conflicting tendencies, is far more significant than if its contents are indifferent, making no appeal to the religious convictions, and claiming no influence over the life. We may be disposed to complain that the external testimony is not so absolutely and finally conclusive in itself that no door is open for hesitation, that all must, despite themselves, accept it, and that any investigation into the internal evidence is superfluous and vain. But this we have no right to demand. If it is as great, and more than as great, as would satisfy us in any other case, this should suffice us. In all the most important matters which affect our interests in this world and our hopes hereafter, God has left some place for diversity of opinion, because He would not remove all opportunity of self-discipline.

If then the genuineness of this gospel is supported by greater evidence than in ordinary cases we consider conclusive, we approach the investigation of its internal character with a very strong presumption in its favour. The *onus probandi* rests with those who would impugn its genuineness, and nothing short of the fullest and most decisive marks of spuriousness can fairly be considered sufficient to counterbalance this evidence.

As I proceed, I hope to make it clear that, allowing their full weight to all the difficulties (and it would be foolish to deny the existence of difficulties) in this gospel, still the internal marks of authenticity and genuineness are so minute, so varied, so circumstantial, and so unsuspecting, as to create an overwhelming body of evidence in its favour.

But before entering upon this investigation, it may be

worth while to inquire whether the hypotheses suggested by those who deny the genuineness of this gospel are themselves free from all difficulties. For if it be a fact (as I believe it is) that any alternative which has been proposed introduces greater perplexities than those which it is intended to remove, we are bound (irrespective of any positive arguments in its favour) to fall back upon the account which is exposed to fewest objections, and which at the same time is supported by a continuous and universal tradition.

We may take our start from Baur's theory, for he was the first to develop and systematize the attack on the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. According to Baur it was written about the year 170. The external testimony however is alone fatal to this very late epoch; for, after all wresting of evidence and post-dating of documents, it is impossible to deny that at this time the gospel was, not only in existence, but also received far and wide as a genuine document; that it was not only quoted occasionally, but had even been commented upon as the actual work of St. John. Consequently the tendency of later impugnors has been to push the date farther back, and to recede from the extreme position of this, its most determined and ablest antagonist. Hilgenfeld, who may be regarded as the successor of Baur, and the present representative of the Tübingen school (though it has no longer its headquarters at Tübingen), would place its composition about the year 150; and Tayler, who a few years ago (1867) reproduced the argument of Baur and others in England, is disposed to assign it to about the same date. With a strange inconsistency he suggests, towards the close of his book, that its true author may have been John the presbyter, though John the presbyter is stated by Papias (who had conversed with this John, and from whom all the information we possess respecting him is derived) to have been a personal

disciple of our Lord, and therefore could hardly have been older than John the apostle, and certainly could not have been living towards the middle of the second century.

This tendency to recede nearer and nearer to the evangelist's own age shows that the pressure of facts has begun to tell on the theories of antagonistic criticism, and we may look forward to the time when it will be held discreditable to the reputation of any critic for sobriety and judgment to assign to this gospel any later date than the end of the first century, or the very beginning of the second.

But meanwhile, let us take the earliest of these dates (A.D. 140) as less encumbered with difficulties, and therefore more favourable to the opponents of its genuineness, and ask whether a gospel written at such a time would probably have presented the phenomena which we actually find in the fourth canonical gospel. We may interrogate alike its omissions and its contents. On this hypothesis, how are we to account for what it has left unsaid, and for what it has said?

Certainly it must be regarded as a remarkable phenomenon, that on many ecclesiastical questions which then agitated the minds of Christians it is wholly silent, while to others it gives no distinct and authoritative answer. Our Lord's teaching has indeed its bearing on the controversies of the second century, as on those of the fourth, or of the twelfth, or of the sixteenth, or of the nineteenth: but, as in these latter instances, its lessons are inferential rather than direct, they are elicited by painful investigation, they are contained implicitly in our Lord's life and person, they do not lie on the surface, nor do they offer definite solutions of definite difficulties.

Take, for instance, the dispute concerning the episcopate. Contrast the absolute silence of this gospel respecting this institution with the declarations in the Epistles of Ignatius. A modern defender of the episcopate will appeal to the

commission given to the apostles (John xx. 22, 23). I need not stop here to inquire to what extent it favours his views. But obviously it is quite insufficient by itself. It would serve almost equally well for an apostolically ordained ministry of any kind, for a presbyteral as for an episcopal succession. Is it possible that a writer, composing a gospel at the very time when the authority of this office had been called in question, if a supporter of the power of the episcopate, would have resisted the temptation of inserting something which would convey a sanction, if an opponent, something which would convey a disparagement, of this office, in our Lord's own name?

Or, again: take the Gnostic theories of emanations. Any one who has studied the history of the second century will know how large a place they occupy in the theological disputes of the day; what grotesque and varied forms they assume in the speculations of different heretical teachers; what diverse arguments, some valid, some fanciful, are urged against them by orthodox writers. Would a forger have hesitated for a moment to slay this many-headed hydra by one well-aimed blow? What can we suppose to have been the object of such a forger, except to advance certain theological views? And why should he have let slip the very opportunity, which (we must suppose) he was making for himself, of condemning the worst forms of heresy from our Lord's own lips? It is true that you and I think we see (and doubtless think rightly), that the doctrine of God the Word taught in St. John's Gospel is the real answer to the theological questionings which gave rise to all these theories about æons or emanations, and involves implicitly and indirectly the refutation of all such theories. But it is only by more or less abstruse reasoning that we arrive at this conclusion. The early Gnostics did not see it so; they used St. John's Gospel, and retained their theories notwithstanding. A forger would have taken care

to provide a direct refutation which it was impossible to misunderstand.

Or, again : about the middle of the second century the great controversy respecting the time of celebrating Easter was beginning to lift up its head. For the latter half of this century the feud raged, bursting out ever afresh and disturbing the peace of the Church again and again, until it was finally set at rest in the fourth century at the Council of Nicæa. Was the festival of the Lord's resurrection to be celebrated always on the same day of the week, the Sunday? or was it to be guided by the time of the Jewish Passover, and thus to take place on the same day of the month, irrespective of the day of the week? Each community, each individual, took a side in this controversy.

Unimportant in itself, it seriously endangered the existence of the Church. The daring adventurer who did not hesitate to forge a whole gospel would certainly not be deterred by any scruple from setting the matter at rest by a few strokes of the pen. His narrative furnished more than one favourable opportunity for interposing half a dozen decisive words in our Lord's name: and yet he abstained.

Thus we might take in succession the distinctive ecclesiastical controversies of the second century, and show how the writer of the Fourth Gospel holds aloof from them all: certainly a strange and almost incredible fact, if this writer lived about the middle, or even in the latter half, of the century; and, as a romancer, was not restrained by those obligations of fact which fetter the truthful historian who is himself a contemporary of the events recorded!

But if the omissions of the writer are strange and unaccountable on the assumption of the later date of the Gospel, the actual contents present still greater difficulties on the same hypothesis. In the interval between the age when the events are recorded to have taken place and the age

in which the writer is supposed to have lived, a vast change had come over the civilized world. In no period had the dislocation of Jewish history been so complete. Two successive hurricanes had swept over the land and nation. The devastation of Titus had been succeeded by the devastation of Hadrian. What the locust of the first siege had left the cankerworm of the second had devoured. National polity, religious worship, social institutions, all were gone. The city had been razed, the land laid desolate, the law and the ordinances proscribed, the people swept into captivity or scattered over the face of the earth. "Old things had passed away ; all things had become new."

Now let us place ourselves in the position of one who wrote about the middle of the second century, after the later Roman invasion had swept off the scanty gleanings of the past which had been spared from the earlier. Let us ask how a romancer so situated is to make himself acquainted with the incidents, the localities, the buildings, the institutions, the modes of thought and feeling, which belonged to this past age and (as we may almost say) this bygone people. Let it be granted that here and there he might stumble upon a historical fact, that in one or two particulars he might reproduce a national characteristic. More than this would be beyond his reach. For, it will be borne in mind, he would be placed at a great disadvantage, compared with a modern writer ; he would have to reconstruct history without those various appliances, maps and plates, chronological tables, books of travel, by which the author of a historical novel is so largely assisted in the present day.

And even if he had been furnished with all these aids, would he have known how to use them? The uncritical character of the apostolic age is a favourite commonplace with those who impugn the genuineness of the canonical Scriptures, or the trustworthiness of the evangelical narra-

tives. I do not deny that the age (compared with our own) was uncritical, though very exaggerated language is often used on the subject. But obviously this argument has a double edge. And the keener of these two edges lies across the very throat of recent negative criticism. For it requires a much higher flight of critical genius to invent an extremely delicate fiction than to detect it when invented. The age which could not expose a coarse forgery was incapable of constructing a subtle historical romance. This one thing I hope to make clear in the short time that is allowed me this afternoon. The Fourth Gospel, if a forgery, shows the most consummate skill on the part of the forger; it is (as we should say in modern phrase) thoroughly in keeping. It is replete with historical and geographical details; it is interpenetrated with the Judaic spirit of the time; its delineations of character are remarkably subtle; it is perfectly natural in the progress of the events; the allusions to incidents or localities or modes of thought are introduced in an artless and unconscious way, being closely interwoven with the texture of the narrative; while throughout, the author has exercised a silence and a self-restraint about his assumed personality which is without a parallel in ancient forgeries, and which deprives his work of the only motive that, on the supposition of its spuriousness, would account for his undertaking it at all.

In all these respects it forms a direct contrast to the known forgeries of the apostolic or succeeding ages. I will only ask my hearers who are acquainted with early apocryphal literature to compare St. John's Gospel with two very different and yet equally characteristic products of the first and second centuries of the Christian era—with the *Protevangelium*, or Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, on the one hand, and with the *Clementine Homilies*, on the other: the former, a vulgar daub dashed in by a coarse hand in bright and startling colours; the other, a subtle philosophical

romance, elaborately drawn by an able and skilful artist. But both the one and the other are obviously artificial in all their traits, and utterly alien to the tone of genuine history.

Such productions as these show what we might expect to find in a gospel written at the middle or after the middle of the second century.

If then my description of the Fourth Gospel is not overcharged (and I will endeavour to substantiate it immediately), the supposition that this gospel was written at this late epoch by a resident at Alexandria or at Ephesus will appear in the highest degree incredible; and, whatever difficulties the traditional belief may involve, they are small indeed compared with the improbabilities created by the only alternative hypothesis.

I have already proved that the absence of certain topics in this gospel seems fatal to its late authorship. I shall now proceed to investigate those phenomena of its actual contents which force us to the conclusion that it was written by a Jew contemporary with and cognisant of the facts which he relates, and more especially those indications which fix the authorship on the Apostle St. John. It is necessary however to premise by way of caution, that exhaustive treatment is impossible in a single lecture, and that I can only hope to indicate a line of investigation which any one may follow out for himself.

First of all then, the writer was a Jew. This might be inferred with a very high degree of probability from his Greek style alone. It is not ungrammatical Greek, but it is distinctly Greek of one long accustomed to think and speak through the medium of another language. The Greek language is singularly rich in its capabilities of syntactic construction, and it is also well furnished with various connecting particles. The two languages with which a Jew of Palestine would be most familiar—the Hebrew,

which was the language of the sacred Scriptures, and the Aramaic, which was the medium of communication in daily life—being closely allied to each other, stand in direct contrast to the Greek in this respect. There is comparative poverty of inflexions, and there is an extreme paucity of connecting and relative particles. Hence in Hebrew and Aramaic there is little or no syntax, properly so called.

Tested by his style then, the writer was a Jew. Of all the New Testament writings the Fourth Gospel is the most distinctly Hebraic in this respect. The Hebrew simplicity of diction will at once strike the reader. There is an entire absence of periods, for which the Greek language affords such facility. The sentences are co-ordinated, not subordinated. The clauses are strung together, like beads on a string. The very monotony of arrangement, though singularly impressive, is wholly unlike the Greek style of the age.

More especially does the influence of the Hebrew appear in the connecting particles. In this language the single connecting particle ו is used equally, whether co-ordination or opposition is implied; in other words, it represents "but" as well as "and." The Authorized Version does not adequately represent this fact, for our translators have exercised considerable license in varying the renderings: "then," "moreover," "and," "but," etc. Now it is a noticeable fact, that in St. John's Gospel the capabilities of the Greek language in this respect are most commonly neglected; the writer falls back on the simple "and" of Hebrew diction, using it even where we should expect to find an adversative particle. Thus v. 39, 40, "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think that ye have eternal life: *and* they are they which testify of Me: *and* ye will not come to Me"; vii. 19, "Did not Moses give you the law, *and* none of you keepeth the law?" where our English version has inserted an adversative particle to assist the sense,

“and yet”; vii. 30, “Then they sought to take Him: and no man laid hands on Him,” where the English version substitutes “but no man”; vii. 33, “Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and I go to Him that sent Me,” where again our translators attempt to improve the sense by reading “and then.” And instances might be multiplied.

The Hebrew character of the diction moreover shows itself in other ways: by the parallelism of the sentences, by the repetition of the same words in different clauses, by the order of the words, by the syntactical constructions, and by individual expressions. Indeed so completely is this character maintained throughout, that there is hardly a sentence which might not be translated literally into Hebrew or Aramaic, without any violence to the language or to the sense.

I might point also to the interpretation of Aramaic words, as Cephas, Gabbatha, Golgotha, Messias, Rabboni, Siloam, Thomas, as indicating knowledge of this language. On such isolated phenomena however no great stress can fairly be laid, because such interpretations do not necessarily require an extensive acquaintance with the language; and when the whole cast and colouring of the diction can be put in evidence, an individual word here and there is valueless in comparison.

There are however two examples of proper names in this Gospel on which it may be worth while to remark; because the original is obscured in our English Bibles by a false reading in the Greek text used by our translators, and because they afford incidentally somewhat strong testimony to the writer's knowledge both of the language and of contemporary facts.

The first of these is *Isca*riot. In the other three gospels this name is attributed to the traitor apostle Judas alone. In St. John's Gospel also, as represented in the received

text and in our English version, this is the case. But if the more correct readings be substituted, on the authority of the ancient copies, we find it sometimes applied to Judas himself (xii. 4, xiii. 2, xiv. 22), and sometimes to Judas' father Simon (*e.g.* vi. 71, "He spake of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot"; xiii. 26, "He giveth it to Judas the son of Simon Iscariot"). Now this shows that the evangelist knew this not to be a proper name strictly so called, but to describe the native place of the person, "the man of Kerioth," and hence to be applicable to the father and the son alike.

The other instance which I shall give, at first sight presents a difficulty; but when further investigated it only adds fresh testimony to the exact knowledge of the Fourth Evangelist. In St. Matthew, Simon Peter is called Bar-Jona (Matt. xvi. 17); *i.e.* son of Jona (or Jonan or Jonas). Accordingly in the received text of St. John also he appears in not less than four passages (i. 42, xxi. 15-17) as Simon son of Jona (or Jonan or Jonas). But there can be no reasonable doubt that the correct reading in all these four passages is "Simon son of Joannes"—the Hebrew and Aramaic Johanan, the English John—and that later transcribers have altered it to make it accord with the form adopted by St. Matthew. Here there is an apparent discrepancy, which however disappears on examination; for we find that Jona or Jonan or Jonas is more than once used in the LXX version of the Old Testament as a contracted form of the name Johanan, Johannes, or John. Thus the statements of the two evangelists are reconciled; and we owe it to the special knowledge derived from the Fourth Gospel that the full and correct form is preserved. For, when we have once got this key to the fact, we can no longer question that John was the real name of Peter's father, since it throws great light on our Lord's words in St. Matthew. The ordinary name Jonah, which was borne by the prophet, and which is generally supposed to

be the name of Simon's father, signifies "a dove"; but the name Johanan or John is "the grace of God." Hence the Baptist is called not Zechariah, as his relatives thought natural, but John, in accordance with the heavenly message (Luke i. 13), because he was specially given to his parents by God's grace. So too the call of St. Peter (John i. 42) becomes full of meaning: "Thou art Simon the son of the grace of God; thou shalt be called Cephas"; and the final commission given to the same apostle is doubly significant, when we interpret the thrice repeated appeal as "Simon son of God's grace, lovest thou Me?" for without this interpretation the studied repetition of his patronymic seems somewhat meaningless. Bearing this fact in mind, we turn to the passage of St. Matthew (xvi. 17): "Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona (son of the grace of God): for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." His name and his surname alike are symbols and foreshadowings of God's special favour to him in his call and commission. This is only one of many instances in which the authenticity of the statements of the Fourth Gospel is confirmed by the fact that they incidentally explain what is otherwise unexplained in the narrative of the synoptic evangelists.

Another evidence that the writer was acquainted with the Hebrew language is furnished by the quotations from the Old Testament. This evangelist, like St. Paul, sometimes cites from the current Greek version of the Seventy, and sometimes translates directly from the Hebrew. When a writer, as is the case in the Epistle to the Hebrews, quotes largely and quotes uniformly from the LXX version, this is at least an indication that he was not acquainted with the original; and hence we infer that the epistle just mentioned was not written by St. Paul, a Hebrew of the

Hebrews, but by some disciple, a Hellenistic Jew, thoroughly interpenetrated with the apostle's mind and teaching, but ignorant of the language of his forefathers. If on any occasion the quotations of a writer accord with the original Hebrew against the LXX version, we have a right to infer that he was acquainted with the sacred language, was, in fact, a Hebrew or Aramaic-speaking Jew. Several decisive examples might be produced, but one must suffice. In xix. 37 is a quotation from Zechariah xii. 10, which in the original is, "They shall look upon Me whom they pierced." Accordingly it is given in St. John, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced (*ὄψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξέκέντησαν*). But the LXX rendering is, "They shall gaze upon Me, because they insulted" (*ἐπιβλέφονται πρὸς με, ἀνθ' ὧν κατωρχήσαντο*), where the LXX translators had a different reading, יִקְרֶךְ for יִקְרֶךְ, and where their Greek rendering has not a single word in common with St. John's text.

In xii. 40 again, the evangelist quotes Isaiah vi. 10, "Because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes," etc. Now this quotation is far from being verbally exact; for in the Hebrew the sentence is imperative, "Make fat the heart of this people, and make heavy their ears, and close their eyes, that they should not see with their eyes," etc. Yet, on the other hand, it does not contain any of the characteristic renderings of the LXX; and this is one distinct proof that, however loosely quoted, it was derived, not from the LXX, but from the original. For the LXX translators, taking offence, as it would seem, at ascribing the hardening of the heart to God's own agency, have thrown the sentence into a passive form: "The heart of this people was made fat, and with their ears they heard heavily, and their eyes they closed," etc., so as to remove the difficulty. If therefore the evangelist had derived the passage from the LXX, it is inconceivable that he would

have reintroduced the active form, thus wantonly reviving a difficulty, unless he had the original before him.

I will only add one other example. In xiii. 18 occurs a quotation from Psalm xli. 9 (xl. 10). Here the expression which in the original signifies literally "made great" or "made high" his heel is correctly translated "lifted up his heel" (*ἐπῆρεν τὴν πτέρναν αὐτοῦ*), as in the A.V. of the Psalms. The LXX version however gives *ἐμεγάλυνεν πτερνισμόν*, "he multiplied (or increased) tripping up with the heel," or "treachery," which has given rise to the paraphrastic rendering in our Prayer-Book version, "laid great wait for me." Here again it is obvious that the evangelist's quotation could not have been derived from the LXX, but must have been rendered either directly from the Hebrew, or (what for my purpose is equally decisive) indirectly through some Chaldee targum.

If therefore we had no other evidence than the language, we might with confidence affirm that this gospel was not written either by a Gentile or by a Hellenistic Christian, but by a Hebrew accustomed to speak the language of his fathers. This fact alone negatives more than one hypothesis which has been broached of late years respecting its authorship, for it is wholly inconsistent with the strictly Gentile origin which most recent theories assign to it. But, though irreconcilable with Gentile authorship, it is not wholly inconsistent with the later date; for we cannot pronounce it quite impossible that there should be living in Asia Minor or in Egypt, in the middle or after the middle of the second century, a Judaic Christian familiar with the Hebrew or Aramaic language, however rare such instances may have been.

(To be continued.)
