

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE JOHANNEAN QUESTION.

II. THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

WHAT exactly is it that, in the case of the Fourth Gospel, external evidence can be expected to do? It can hardly "prove" that the Fourth Gospel was written by St. John, in a strict sense of the word "prove." Let us take another example. Some fifteen years ago the authorship of the *Vita Antonii*, commonly attributed to St. Athanasius, was challenged by a German scholar, Weingarten,¹ whose results were accepted by Professor Gwatkin² and apparently by Dr. Hatch,³ though questioned with his usual vigour and knowledge by Keim,⁴ and since examined rather more at length in a monograph by Eichhorn.⁵ Here the state of the case as regards external evidence is this. Athanasius died in A.D. 373. The *Vita Antonii* is mentioned as one of his works by Gregory Nazianzen, in a panegyric upon him, delivered soon after 380. Ephraem Syrus died in the same year as Athanasius, and he too mentions the work as by him. Jerome names Athanasius as the author, *De Vir. Ill.* 87, 88, 125, written about A.D. 393. Before this however, in 375-6, he was already aware that the work had been translated into Latin. The translator was Evagrius, presbyter and afterwards bishop of Antioch, and his version

¹ First in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengesch.* (1876), pp. 10-21.

² *Studies in Arianism*, pp. 100-103.

³ *Bampton Lectures*, p. 154.

⁴ *Aus dem Urchristenthum* (1878), p. 207 f.

⁵ *Athanasii de Vita Ascetica Testimonia Collecta.* (Halle, 1886.)

appears to have been made before the death of Innocentius, a friend of Jerome to whom it was addressed, in 374. As this version is headed *Athanasius episcopus ad peregrinos fratres*,¹ Evagrius himself seems to have regarded Athanasius as the author of the original. It is also expressly ascribed to him in the prologue to the *Life* of St. Ambrose (died 397) by Paulinus, his secretary; by Rufinus of Aquileia, who died 410; in the *Life* of Pachomius, said to be of the fourth century; in the *Historia Lausiaca* of Palladius, written in 420; and by Socrates the historian, writing about 439; besides a number of other references which do not name the author. A mass of evidence like this I think we may call decisive, and such as to overbear even some internal difficulties. When we consider the various quarters from which the evidence comes, with so many different centres, at Constantinople, Antioch, Edessa, Palestine, Egypt, North Italy, it proves that the *Life* must have passed for the work of St. Athanasius during his lifetime, when not only might its authorship have been easily questioned, but when the motive for foisting it upon him would hardly have been operative.

We cannot of course expect anything like this for the Gospel of St. John. Direct and express ascription to the Apostle begins with Theophilus of Antioch (c. 181 A.D.), we may say, roughly speaking, about a hundred years after the Gospel was composed. From that time it is of course rapidly taken up in a number of the most diverse quarters; it has perhaps already had an elaborate commentary written upon it by the Gnostic Heracleon; it has been used by the heathen philosopher Celsus (c. 178); and it has been included in the *Diatessaron* of Tatian. We have abundant proof that from the beginning of the last quarter of the second century the Fourth Gospel is firmly rooted in every branch of the Christian Church, with that one exception of

¹ So Migne's text, evidently from the MSS. (*P.G.* xxvi. 837).

which I shall speak shortly. This consent, strong as it is, no doubt carries us some way back; and it receives corroboration from the traces, of which we shall also have more to say presently, that the Gospel was known and used in the interval. Still, upon the face of it, there is this difference from the *Vita Antonii*, that in the one case direct ascription begins in the lifetime of the author, in the other it is delayed for something like a century. It is obvious to say that an interval like this must prevent the evidence from being decisive. Though again, on the other hand, there are several things to be considered. (1) If we take the ordinary standard of evidence to ancient, and especially to Greek, writings, the Gospel of St. John holds a high place among them. How many, even of the best known classics, rest upon MSS. not older than the tenth or eleventh centuries, and upon the testimony of writers removed by two, three, four, or more centuries from the original! But for the Gospel of St. John we have first-rate MSS. from the fourth century onwards; one version at least certainly (the Latin), and others probably (the Syriac in a high, the Egyptian perhaps in a lower degree) much earlier; and testimonies, abundant, copious, and express all through the second century after composition. (2) Though in the first century the evidence is comparatively scanty, and not quite direct or express, yet much of it shows (notably the *Diatessaron* and Heracleon's *Commentary*) that the Gospel was regarded as authoritative, and that it was interpreted on the same principles as the Old Testament. (3) If the evidence is scanty, this is in large measure due simply to the scantiness of Christian literature. The generations which filled this obscure period (80-180 A.D.) were not much given to writing; and their most elaborate works—the *Exegetica* of Basilides, the *Expositions* of Papias, the *Histories* of Hegesippus—have not survived. (4) The evidence, such as it is, is in some respects specially good in

quality. Though the date at which Irenæus wrote his book, *Against Heresies*, is nearly a hundred years after that at which St. John may be supposed to have written the Gospel, there is only a single link between him and the Apostle: he was the pupil of Polycarp, and Polycarp of St. John. Irenæus also frequently appeals to certain venerable persons, "the presbyters," as he calls them, who belonged to the same circle. And besides Irenæus, even under the unfavourable circumstances from the scantiness of the literature to which I have referred, the witnesses to the Fourth Gospel include nearly all the prominent names in the Church of Asia Minor, where it is said to have been written.

In such a condition of things, surely those who would cut all connexion between the Gospel and the Apostle leave behind them a great mass of difficulties. I am less sure that the conditions might not be sufficiently satisfied if the author were a disciple of the Apostle. There would then be no greater difficulty in accounting for the transference of his name to it than there is in accounting for the like transference in the case of St. Matthew. I could also myself believe it possible (I do not say probable) that the Gospel was the work of "the presbyter John" rather than the Apostle. The evidence points, as I think, distinctly to a certain time and a certain place; it is less clear in pronouncing a particular name or in fixing the identity of a particular person.

With these preliminary remarks on the general character of the evidence, I will now go over the more debatable ground with Dr. Schürer. It will be seen at once that I cannot agree with his estimate of the external evidence, careful and apparently judicial as it is: "The utmost one can admit in an unprejudiced way is that the external evidence is evenly balanced *pro* and *con*, and leads to no decision. Perhaps however it would be truer to say, it is

more unfavourable than favourable to the authenticity." ¹ I should have no hesitation at all in reversing this verdict.

Still there are certain points where I can go some way with Dr. Schürer, and I will begin with these.

In the first place, I am prepared to admit that English critics, myself among them, have not allowed quite enough for the so called Alogi.² I do not think that very much need be allowed for the existence of this party: still, so far as it goes, it does mark a break in the circle of consent, which otherwise, by the time of Irenæus, girdles the whole of what is known of Christendom.

Our information respecting these deniers of the Fourth Gospel, to whom, as is well known, Epiphanius gave the mocking name of "Alogi," comes from two sources, Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* iii. 11, 9, and Epiphanius, *Hær.* li. It is probable that the same persons are referred to by both writers. There is also a slight mention of them by Philastrius (*Hær.* 60). We know further, from the inscription on his statue, that Hippolytus wrote a work in defence of the Fourth Gospel and Apocalypse. It appears to be distinctly probable that the long discussion in Epiphanius really goes back to Hippolytus,³ though much of it seems to be an enlargement by Epiphanius himself in the shape of an elaborate *excursus* on the chronology of the Gospels. Hilgenfeld goes so far as to fix the date of the Hippolytean original from which Epiphanius is quoting from some interesting but tantalizing chronological data given by Epiphanius at the year 218; but the reckoning seems precarious, and is disallowed by Zahn. Lightfoot, with better reason, ascribes to Hippolytus the invention of the

¹ *Contemporary Review*, p. 416.

² The most adequate account of the Alogi in English is perhaps Bishop Lightfoot's, in *THE EXPOSITOR* for 1890, p. 4 f.

³ So Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergesch.*, p. 600; Zahn, *Gesch. d. Kan.* i. 223 ff.; Har-nack, *N. T. um d. Jahr* 200, p. 59; Salmon in *Dict. of Chr. Biog.*, iii. 99; Lightfoot, *Clement* ii. 394, ed. 2.

name "Alogi," noting a similar play upon *νοητός, ἀνόητος* and *δοκός, δοκεῖν, δοκηταί*.¹ Though it is generally agreed that Irenæus and Epiphanius (*i.e.* Hippolytus) are describing the same persons, their opposition to the Fourth Gospel is made to rest on different grounds. From Irenæus we should gather that their interest was anti-Montanistic: in order to cut away the ground from those who professed to belong to a special dispensation of the Paraclete, they denied the Gospel which contained the promise of the Paraclete. In Epiphanius the opposition appears to be directed to the doctrine of the Logos;² and there is also some internal criticism of the Fourth Gospel by comparison with the Synoptics. Several writers, Heinichen, Lipsius, Hilgenfeld, and Harnack,³ identify these opponents of the Logos with the Theodotian Monarchians. And it seems to me hard to escape the plain statement of Epiphanius⁴ that the Theodotians are "a branch (*ἀπόσπασμα*) of the Alogos heresy," though there is, it is true, this real difficulty, that the same writer makes them use a verse of St. John (viii. 40: *ἄνθρωπον ὃς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὑμῖν λελάληκα*). Perhaps something of this kind may be near the truth. There was a rationalistic party—or tendency, perhaps we should say, rather than party—in the north-west of Asia Minor which directed its opposition at once against Montanism and against the Johannean writings. This latter however had not quite hardened into a definite dogma; it was not a universal tenet with those who were otherwise allied in opinion; so that the Fourth Gospel could be used at times when it served their purpose. In this way we may also account for the seeming tolerance extended to them, though the Church did not purge itself of heresy so promptly in

¹ References *ut sup.*

² Zahn denies this (p. 247), but I side on this point rather with Harnack (*N. T. um 200*, p. 63 ff.).

³ See Hilgenfeld *ut sup.*; Zahn, p. 249 n.; Harnack, p. 65.

⁴ *Hær.* liv. 1.

these early days as it did later. Both Irenæus and Epiphanius accuse them of the sin against the Holy Ghost. As to their local distribution, Theodotus himself was a native of Byzantium; we find the party in some force at Thyatira;¹ and Theodotus probably took with him some of its influence to Rome. In time, it probably flourished in the last quarter of the second century.² I incline to think, here with Hilgenfeld and Zahn against Harnack, that there is a covert reference to this party in the Muratorian Fragment.³ The stress which is laid in this on the writing of the Gospels, in spite of their different *principia*, corresponds with the elaborate comparison of the openings of the four Gospels in Epiphanius, and the proof that they do not contradict each other. Taking all the *data* together, it is clear that a certain stir was made in the literature of the time, although it would seem, and the language of Epiphanius would lead us to infer, that the sect was not a numerous or powerful one.⁴

When it is asked what degree of importance is to be attached to the existence of these opinions in their bearing upon the Fourth Gospel, the answer would seem to be that they are more important in their bearing upon the history of the formation of the canon of the Gospels than in their bearing upon the particular question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. The Alogi, like other opponents of the Apocalypse, avenged themselves upon the obnoxious books by attributing them to Cerinthus. It is clear therefore that they had no external tradition to go upon. What tradition they had is so far in favour of the early date of the Gospel, that it assigns it, if not to St. John, yet to a con-

¹ Epiph., *Hær.* li. 33.

² Zahn places the appearance of the Alogi about the year 170 A.D. (*Gesch. d. K.* i. 257); Harnack about 160 A.D. (*Dogmengesch.* i. 307, ed. 2).

³ Zahn, *G. d. K.* i. 222; Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergesch.*, p. 599; Harnack, *N. T.* um 200, p. 69.

⁴ ὀλιγον τῆ δυνάμει.—*Hær.* li. 35.

temporary and companion figure of St. John. But the real grounds of objection were evidently not historical, but dogmatic and critical. As against the clear recognition of the Gospel at the date when these objections were raised in Asia Minor as well as elsewhere—by Melito, by Claudius Apollinaris, by Polycrates, in the affiliated Churches of Vienne and Lyons, by Irenæus, the inheritor of the traditions of Polycarp—they cannot count for much. They prevent us from speaking of complete unanimity, but hardly more.

Another point, which I should myself abstain from pressing, is the evidence of the *Clementine Homilies*. The discovery of Dressel's MS. placed the use of the Fourth Gospel in the *Homilies* beyond a doubt; but there still remains the question as to the date to which the evidence belongs, and we cannot confidently assert that this is one at which its weight in the scale would be considerable. After the time of Irenæus a single witness, however clear, is of no great importance; but it is more probable that the *Homilies* in their present form are after Irenæus than before.

Much the same thing applies to the Muratorian Fragment. I was for some time in the habit of dating this about the year 170 A.D.; but I now think that this is too early. I do not think that we can safely put the original before about 200. Zahn descends a little lower, to about 210 A.D.¹ It will be remembered that Bishop Lightfoot conjectured that it might be an early work of Hippolytus, written about 190 A.D.² The year 200 A.D., as an approximate date, is one to which I think that not much exception can be taken.

Here the qualifications which I should be inclined to put

¹ *Gesch. d. K.* ii. 136.

² *Clement.* ii. 405 ff., 495.

upon my own former statement of the evidence end.¹ For the rest I cannot but think that the case has been considerably strengthened by the discoveries and investigations of recent years.

It is in particular a fact of no small importance to be able to lay our hands on the actual *Diatessaron* of Tatian, at least or something definite and tangible which is near enough to the *Diatessaron* for our purpose. The *Address to the Greeks* made it clear that Tatian used the Fourth Gospel, and reasonable people had little doubt that extracts from the same Gospel were included in the *Diatessaron*. Now we have the extracts before our eyes.

The importance of this is, in a large measure, indirect, because it strengthens the chain in regard to Justin. If Justin's pupil marked off the four canonical Gospels in such a way as to compose a harmony of them and of them only, it becomes increasingly probable that Justin himself meant the same four Gospels by the "Memoirs of the Apostles" to which he refers as his authorities. Justin is writing, not as a bishop for his flock, but as a philosopher and man of letters for a wider public; he therefore aims at a more classical-sounding title than that to which the little communities of Christians were becoming accustomed. That by the "Memoirs" he means our four Gospels is not of course dependent upon any reflected evidence of Tatian's, but it is confirmed by that evidence. With the three Synoptic Gospels we are not concerned. Neither is it necessary any longer to prove that Justin was acquainted with the Fourth Gospel. The position now usually taken up by those who question the genuineness of the Gospel is that he was acquainted with it, but used it so sparingly as to show that he did not regard it as possessing apostolic

¹ I am glad to see however that in 1876 I spoke with due caution as to the *Clementine Homilies*, and left open the space 170-190 A.D. for the Muratorian canon (*Gosp. in Second Cent.*, pp. 161, 265).

authority. This is the view adopted by Dr. Schürer. It is also the view which was somewhat elaborately maintained in this country by Dr. Edwin A. Abbott.¹

In reference to this position, I may perhaps be allowed to repeat some remarks which I made in my *Inaugural Lecture* delivered February 21st, 1883.

“‘Use proves knowledge, but comparatively sparing use proves doubt and hesitation.’ It is evident, upon the face of it, that the inference here is most precarious. How many other causes will account for the sparing use of any particular document besides the attribution to it of defective authority! Possibly the reason may have been some quite trivial mechanical one, such as that Justin had only intermittent access to a MS. of the document in question; for Justin was a somewhat migratory person, and to carry about a whole Bible, Old Testament as well as New, was not such an easy matter in those days. Besides, though the Fourth Gospel is now known to have been certainly circulated in the first half of the second century, it would seem to have come into circulation somewhat slowly. To begin with, it was probably written some twenty years later than St. Matthew and St. Mark, and at least ten years after St. Luke. The Synoptic tradition thus had time to pre-occupy the public mind, while its apparent simplicity made it more readily assimilated. The relative frequency with which the Synoptic Gospels are quoted is only what we should have expected beforehand. And the disproportion between the references to St. John, as compared with St. Mark and St. Luke, is not greater, if it is so great, as that between these Gospels and St. Matthew. At almost every turn it seems to me that some other hypothesis will equally well explain the facts alleged by Dr. Abbott. But there is one simple argument what I cannot but think sufficient to invalidate his whole position. By precisely the same mode of reasoning it might be proved that Justin recognised none, or only one, of St. Paul’s Epistles, at a time when his opponent, the heretic Marcion, certainly recognised ten of them.”²

The question of the use of the Fourth Gospel by Justin remains much as it was when this was written. Nothing better on the subject has yet appeared, or is likely to appear, than the three articles contributed by Dr. James

¹ In two articles in the *Modern Review* for July and October, 1881.

² *The Study of the New Testament*, etc., p. 10 f.

Drummond to the *Theological Review* in October, 1875, and April and July, 1877, and the exact and searching examination in Dr. Ezra Abbot's *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, 1880. With these before us, we must not, I think, be too ready to concede that Justin's use of the Gospel is quite so sparing as it is sometimes made out to be. I am not going again over ground which has been so admirably worked already. I would only point out two things: First, that Dr. Drummond and Dr. Ezra Abbot between them have clearly made out that the doctrine of the Logos, which bears so large a place in Justin, however much in its expansion and development it may have been affected by Philo and the Stoics, yet has its roots in the Johannean doctrine, and derives from that its specifically Christian features. Justin certainly is fully possessed with the idea of the incarnation. He uses for it not once or twice, but repeatedly, the phrases *σαρκοποιηθείς, ἄνθρωπος γενόμενος*, which can have come from no other source but the Fourth Gospel.¹ He also distinctly held the doctrine of the pre-existence of the Logos, and appeals for it to his authorities, which in this case cannot be the Synoptics. He further directly applies to the Logos the title *μονογενής*, again appealing to the "Memoirs," which cannot be anything else than St. John i. 14, 18. Here too I must distinctly hold that Dr. Drummond and Dr. Ezra Abbot have clearly made out their case, though it has met with opposition. And quite independently of our English and American scholars, Dr. Resch speaks of the reference to St. John as "ganz sicher." With such fundamental ideas drawn directly from the Gospel, I do not think that we can rightly call Justin's use of it hesitating or uncertain.

But, secondly, in addition to these primary conceptions, Dr. Abbot has enumerated some fifteen or sixteen instances

¹ See the references in Abbot, *Critical Essays*, p. 144 (= *Authorship*, etc., p. 42). Compare also *σωματοποιήσασθαι*, *Dial.*, c. 70.

of coincidence between Justin and the Fourth Gospel,¹ nearly all of which seem to me to have some real foundation, and several of them to be beyond question. Among these I include of course the passage relating to the "new birth."

Of one passage, or rather group of passages, in particular, Dr. Abbot speaks doubtfully. The group in question is one which seems to point to St. John i. 13, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." There is here a remarkable various reading—known to several of the Latin Fathers, Irenæus (twice), Tertullian (three times), and Ambrose and Augustine (once each), and found also in Cod. Veronensis (*b*) of the Old Latin—according to which "who *was* born" (ὁς ἐγεννήθη) is substituted for "who *were* born" (οἱ ἐγεννήσαν), and the reference is made to be not to the "children of God," but to the incarnate Word. If Justin alludes to the passage, it is in this form. Dr. Resch, who takes up the question, assumes confidently that he does allude to it;² and I confess that I am inclined to agree with him. The allusions are of course very free, but it seems to me decidedly probable that this verse of St. John lies at the bottom of them. To appreciate the force of the probability we need to have the Greek of the passages before us. We need also to remember that there is a further reading, ἐξ αἵματος (for ἐξ αἱμάτων), found also in two MSS. (*b* and *q*) of the Old Latin, in Tertullian (twice), Hilary (once), Augustine (in two treatises), Eusebius, Epiphanius, and according to Baethgen, also in the Curetonian Syriac. This too seems to be implied by Justin.

ST. JOHN I. 13

(as apparently read by Justin).

[ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ] ὁς (T.R. οἱ) οὐκ ἐξ αἵματος (T.R. αἱμάτων) οὐδὲ ἐκ

¹ *Critical Essays*, pp. 31-43, 47-52.

² *Agrapha*, p. 22 f.

θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐγενήθη
(T.R. ἐγενήθησαν).

<p><i>Apol.</i> 1. 32.</p> <p>οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρω- πίου σπέρματος ἀλλ' ἐκ Θεοῦ δυνάμεως.</p>	<p><i>Dial.</i> c. 54.</p> <p>αἷμα μὲν ἔχει ὁ Χριστός, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπου σπέρματος ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ δυνάμεως.</p>	<p><i>Dial.</i> c. 63.</p> <p>ὡς τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐξ ἀν- θρωπίου σπέρ- ματος γεγεννη- μένου, ἀλλ' ἐκ θελήματος Θεοῦ.</p>	<p><i>Dial.</i> c. 76.</p> <p>τὸ γὰρ ὡς υἶόν ἀνθρώπου εἶπεν, φαινόμενον μὲν καὶ γερόμενον ἄνθρωπον μη- νύει, οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπίου δὲ σπέρματος ὑπαρ- χοντα δηλοῖ . . . ὅτι αἷμα μὲν ἔχειν αὐτὸν προ- εμήνυεν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώ- πων.</p>
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Of course I can understand the use of the passage being questioned; but, bearing in mind the two postulates, (1) that Justin certainly was acquainted with the Fourth Gospel, (2) that the readings involved were certainly present to both Irenæus and Tertullian (for the principal reading at least is confirmed by the context in all the instances), we shall, I think, look at the coincidences with different eyes; and to me at least the probability of direct connexion seems considerable.

This is not the only case in which Dr. Resch refers the peculiar form of Justin's quotations to a various reading in his MS. In the disputed, but, as I consider, quite certain, quotation of St. John iii. [3], 5, there are two variants which stand out above the rest: ἂν μὴ ἀναγεννήθητε (for εἰ ἂν μὴ τις γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν), and εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν (for εἰς τ. β. τοῦ Θεοῦ). Of these the latter is found in the first hand of **N**, in two forms of the Old Latin (*e* and *m*),

in the *Clementine Homilies*, Tertullian, and a number of patristic authorities; the former is found in the *Clementine Homilies*, the *Clementine Epitome*, Irenæus as quoted in a *catena*, Eusebius, Athanasius, and a number of other Fathers.¹ The first reading, τῶν οὐρανῶν for τοῦ Θεοῦ, is, no doubt wrongly, admitted by Tischendorf into his text. The question is not whether either reading is right, but whether it is not merely a case of free quotation on the part of Justin but an actual variant in his MS. The wide diffusion of the two readings gives some countenance to the latter view. Both readings are paraphrases, and paraphrases that lie sufficiently near at hand; but when the same paraphrase is found in a number of different writers, its currency is more easily accounted for if it had found its way into MSS.

Yet one more variant of which Dr. Resch finds a trace in Justin is ἐκ γενετῆς πηρόν for τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς, in St. John ix. 1. This reading occurs twice in Justin (*Apol.* i. 22, *Dial.* c. 69), and it is shared by him with the *Clementine Homilies* (xix. 21) and the *Apostolic Constitutions* (v. 7, 17). Again there is something of a case—not quite so strong as the last, but yet appreciable—for assuming a variant in the MS.

With this group of phenomena from Justin I will stop. It might probably be increased considerably if we had access to the original text of Tatian. But I have not found a Johannean variant which, remembering the number of *media* through which that text has passed, seems to me sufficiently established to be used in an argument. There is another interesting but isolated example from the *Commentary* of Heracleon (c. 170–180 A.D.²), in regard to which we

¹ Fully given by Abbot, *Crit. Ess.*, p. 38. We note besides that *renascor* appears largely in Latin texts (see Westcott and Hort *ad loc.*).

² According to Heinrici, 150–160 A.D. (*Valentinianische Gnosis*, p. 14). Lipsius (*Dict. Chr. Biog.* iv. 1079) seems inclined to place him later, but questions the statement of Origen that Heracleon was personally acquainted

are expressly told by Origen that Heracleon's text gave the Samaritan woman *six* husbands instead of *five*.¹ It has not, I believe, been noticed that there are traces of this reading also in Tertullian; there is no mention of it in the critical editions, but it is clearly implied in *Pudic.* 11: *Ut cum Samaritanæ sexto jam matrimonio non mœchæ, sed prostituta, etiam quod nemini facile, quis esset ostendit.* Tertullian probably got this reading from Italy, where it must have had a certain range of circulation.

Justin therefore is not the only writer anterior to Irenæus who has a text already corrupt; and these corruptions have no little significance, even when deduction is made for the possibility that the coincidences may be accidental. Really this possibility, all things considered, is not large. When the readings in question are examined, we see that they have all very much the same character. We should set them down at once as what are technically called Western readings. But what does that mean? These Western readings did not arise in Ephesus; they did not arise in the province of Asia. A number of indications point to the region in which they did arise: it was Syria, if we may not be more precise, and say at Antioch or in the neighbourhood. Here for some time there must have been an active centre of copyists and students, who went on working upon the same lines. The different attestation of different Western readings shows that they were not introduced all at once, but came by successive accretions. The readings in Justin are very fairly consistent; but even they cannot well have come in with a single MS. For a text to have got such a stamp as it has in Justin time is required. We cannot say definitely what time. But

with Valentinus, without sufficient reason. See also Salmon, *Introd.*, p. 54 f., ed. 5.

¹ *Apud* Stieren, *Irenæus*, p. 195: 'Ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν ἀνέγνωμεν πέντε ἀνδρας ἑσχαes' παρά δὲ τῷ Ἡρακλέωνι εὐρομεν ἕξ ἀνδρας ἑσχαes.

I, for one, should feel that the phenomena are more easily and naturally explicable if the Gospel was written about the time to which the tradition of the Church ascribes it than at any of the later dates which criticism has suggested.

Mounting upwards from Justin, we come to the early Gnostics and the apostolic Fathers. And here I cannot help wishing that this chapter could have been written a little later. On both subjects important works are on the way, to which I wish that I could refer in print. I allude to a paper on Basilides recently read at Oxford by Dr. James Drummond, and another on the "Witness of Hermas to the Four Gospels," by Dr. C. Taylor, announced as in preparation among the Cambridge *Texts and Studies*.

In the common chronology Valentinus is usually set down as flourishing about the year 140 (the approximate date at which he came to settle in Rome), and Basilides as flourishing about the year 125. But Dr. Hort gives reasons for thinking that they were more nearly contemporary, and the system of Basilides is in part posterior to that of Valentinus. It would therefore be better to put the *floruit* of Basilides a little later.

Did either of them use the Fourth Gospel? If they did, the fact has an important bearing upon its history. Dr. Schürer is content to dismiss the question by saying: "Whether the fragments of the Gnostics which are given in the *Philosophumena* came from Basilides and Valentinus themselves is very uncertain. Probably the writings referred to are later productions of the school of Basilides and Valentinus."¹ Clearly the matter cannot rest there.

In regard to Valentinus, we are met at the outset by the statement of Tertullian that he apparently used all the Gospels accepted by the Church.² We may not, however, lay too much stress upon this, as Tertullian's knowledge

¹ *Contemporary Review*, p. 413.

² "Integro instrumento uti videtur."—*De Præscr.*, c. 38.

of Valentinus himself seems to have been mainly, if not entirely, at second hand. Of more importance is the assertion of Irenæus that the Valentinians made great use of the Gospel.¹ This is abundantly borne out for the Valentinians, if not for Valentinus. After Valentinus himself, his disciples branched off into two main schools, a Western and an Eastern. The two leading masters of the Western or Italian school were Ptolemæus and Heracleon. But Irenæus gives us a full specimen of the way in which Ptolemæus treated the Scriptures (*Adv. Hær.* i. 8, 5); and that specimen is based on the prologue to St. John. Hippolytus also quotes some unnamed representative of this branch who appealed to St. John x. 8.² Heracleon, as we have seen, wrote a commentary on the Gospel. From the Eastern branch we have the *Excerpta Theodoti*, preserved with the works of Clement of Alexandria.³ Not all of these *Excerpts* really belong to the Eastern school, but the part which does belong to it contains numerous quotations from the Gospel (§§ 6, 7, 17, 19, 26, 41).

This then is the way in which the evidence stands. Both branches of the school are studded with direct and express quotations from the Fourth Gospel. And this surely lends a strong presumption that the founder of the school used and recognised it, a presumption which is confirmed by the fact that Valentinus himself gave names to his æons (*Ἀλήθεια, Λόγος, Ζωή*), which the Fourth Gospel appears to have suggested.⁴

I would rather state the argument thus, than with Dr.

¹ "Hi autem qui a Valentino sunt, eo quod est secundum Joannem plenissime utentes."—*Adv. Hær.* iii. 11. 7.

² *Hær.* vi. 35.

³ According to Zahn (*Forschungen* iii. 117 ff.), these were taken from the eighth book of the *Stromateis*; according to Lipsius (*Dict. Clv. Biog.* iv. 1082), they belonged rather to the work *περι ἀρχῶν* or to the first book of the *Hypotyposes*.

⁴ Iren., *Adv. Hær.* iii. 11. 1 (supposed to be derived from the *Syntagma* of Justin). Compare the following from Jacobi, art. "Gnosis" in Herzog's *Real-*

Salmon lay stress upon the common use of the Gospel by Valentinians and Catholics. When we find Catholics, Nestorians, and Jacobites alike using the Peshitto version, we may take that as valid proof that the Peshitto was common to the whole Syriac Church before its disruption. But the machinery for the expulsion of heretics did not work so surely in the second century as in the fourth. Valentinus was not ejected until he came to Rome, and his disciples may well have kept up a sort of loose connexion. I could conceive the work of an Apostle being taken up among them after Valentinianism came to be stamped as a heresy. I am not aware of any evidence that Basilides was expelled from the Church at all. He may have been, but we must not assume it.

The following of Basilides was not so powerful or so widespread as that of Valentinus; and here there are not so many possible claimants for Basilidian doctrine. It is however well known that there are two conflicting systems which go by the name of Basilides: one represented by Agrippa Castor, Irenæus, Pseudo-Tertullian, Philaster, and Epiphanius, on the one hand (the last three probably reducible to the lost *Syntagma* of Hippolytus, and that again with Irenæus probably based on the similar work now lost of Justin), and Clement of Alexandria with the *Refutation* of Hippolytus, on the other. It is natural to suppose that the first group must have the preference on account of its earlier date. But against this is to be set the fact that Clement certainly had before him the *Exegetica* of Basilides himself; and the tenour of his quotations agrees with the account in the later work of Hippolytus. The system there described is also without doubt, both morally and intellectually, by far the higher and worthier of an original mind

Encyklopädie v. 228 (ed. 2): "Die valentinischen Grundbegriffe entsprechen dem Evangelium Johannes so sehr, dass es ohne Zweifel schon bei Valentin die grosse Bedeutung gehabt die es in dessen Schule behauptet."

of the two. I incline therefore to think that we have in it the real work of Basilides, gathered from his writings, while Agrippa Castor or Justin (= Irenæus + the lost *Synagma* of Hippolytus) drew their accounts rather from hearsay and intercourse with disciples.¹ I have done my best to form this opinion impartially, though the account which is thus vindicated for Basilides contains two unequivocal quotations from St. John.

Here then, I cannot but think, is serious matter for the consideration of the opponents of the Gospel. We are getting perilously near St. John's time, and the gap in the evidence is unexpectedly filling up: behind Irenæus comes, not only the group of more or less fragmentary writers, Theophilus, Melito,² Athenagoras, Claudius Apollinaris, not only Tatian with his *Diatessaron*, following upon his master Justin, but two well established schools, in different continents, of the disciples of Valentinus. And then behind Justin we need hardly appeal to the indirect evidence borne by Papias and Polycarp to the Gospel through the first Epistle, for by their side we have the two heresiarchs, rescued from oblivion, Valentinus and Basilides. Is not this a powerful phalanx to fill the vacant spaces of the second century?

And now, as if to crown all, there comes a rumour of a discovery made by Dr. C. Taylor that the famous passage about the fourfold Gospel in Irenæus is already prefigured in Hermas. From a less trusty hand we might well hesitate to receive such a windfall; but we shall certainly look with no common interest for the coming instalment of the *Cambridge Texts and Studies*. The exact date of Hermas is a difficult and debated question; between the two solu-

¹ This is substantially the view of Dr. Hort, Dr. Ezra Abbot, Dr. Drummond, and Jacobi; the other view is still held by Hilgenfeld, and was at one time (I do not know whether it is now) held by Lipsius.

² Ezra Abbot, *Crit. Ess.*, p. 59.

tions (c. 100 A.D. and c. 140 A.D.) there is a difference of a full generation. The mere fact that the fourfold Gospel was recognised would, I think, weigh rather strongly in the scale in favour of the later date of the two. But even so, supposing that this recognition were made good, it would be equivalent to carrying back the *Diatessaron* itself a generation earlier than we have placed it. And thus the results to which our inquiries would seem to point in regard to Justin, Valentinus, and Basilides would receive a brilliant and unexpected confirmation. Of course, we must not count upon this until we have it in our hands; and yet I confess that those inquiries themselves make the rumoured discovery very far from incredible. It would be only as it were the keystone, binding together and making solid the scattered conclusions to which detailed criticism of other writers would seem to be leading.

In any case, we have a state of things which, if, as I have said, it does not "prove" the Gospel straight away to be the work of St. John, proves what is for practical purposes very much the same thing. Not until 180 A.D. do we have the actual name of the Apostle affixed to the Gospel; but long before that we have it circulating in the Christian world as an authoritative document—a document interpreted and used like a sacred book, a document appealed to for the establishment both of fact and of doctrine. If the inquiries which are now in progress should have the result which it seems very possible they may have, three consequences will follow: (1) The view which places the composition of the Gospel in the second century will be clearly untenable; (2) it will be established that the Gospel had its origin in some leading Christian circle at the time and place which tradition assigns to it; (3) it will be increasingly probable that its author was St. John.

W. SANDAY.