

*THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE JOHANNEAN QUESTION.*

VI. PARTITION AND DERIVATION THEORIES.

THE position of things in the Liberal camp at the present moment is this. There is a small group of Irreconcilables whose literary defence of their views is really not such as to claim serious consideration. Thoma is the most voluminous ; Pfeiderer the most distinguished. There are however two Pfeiderers, the theologian and the critic. Pfeiderer the skilful and lucid exponent not so much of the history as of the logical relations of doctrine is one thing, Pfeiderer the historical critic is another. In this latter capacity I am afraid that if all criticism were like his, the character which it bears in some quarters would not be undeserved. For any power of estimating historical evidence or discriminating between the relative value of verified fact and hypothesis we look in vain. Confident assertion does duty for proof where proof is most needed. I may have been unfortunate, but in the parts of *Urchristenthum* which I have read there were more disputable propositions than paragraphs, sometimes even than sentences. Only some eleven pages (pp. 776-786) are given directly to the question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. In this Dr. Pfeiderer sees neither mystery nor difficulty. He will not hear of any half measures. The Gospel clearly comes after a group of Deutero-Pauline writings which belong to the first decades of the second century—the writings attributed to St. Luke and the Epistles to the Hebrews and Ephesians.

We remember by the way that the first of these Epistles is quoted at length in the Epistle of Clement of Rome, which the great majority of critics with clearly preponderant probability place in the year 95 or 96 ; but the mere fact

that it quotes Hebrews makes Pfeiderer remove it into the second century, though he has only a "perhaps" for the date of Hebrews itself.

The Fourth Gospel was written between Barcochba and Justin (135-158 A.D. according to Pfeiderer's dating; a recent writer, Krüger, places the First Apology on which the question turns in 138 A.D., Dr. Hort c. 146). The Gospel was written at Ephesus, by a single author, who from the miracles to which he gives admission cannot have been either the Apostle or a disciple of the Apostle, but was a nameless person who sought to invest his work with Apostolic authority; the ideas are largely derived from Philo, and a great part of the narrative is pure allegory.

Again I would ask the reader to recall and compare with this the external and internal evidence as it has been stated in previous papers.

The great mass of Liberal opinion in its more reasonable exponents is so alive to the weight of the arguments for the genuineness of the Gospel that it is trending more and more in the direction of a compromise; it is more and more seeking for some solution which shall not cut the Gospel adrift, but shall connect it by some tie, stronger or weaker, with the beloved Apostle.

I spoke in my first paper of the double form which this solution was taking. There are some who divide up the Gospel into sections and assign by far the greater number directly to St. John, but the remainder away from him. There are others who contend that no part of the Gospel was actually committed to writing by the Apostle, but that the whole is the work of one of his disciples, drawing upon the tradition which he had heard from his master.

When it is a question of dividing the Gospel, and saying that this part is genuine and that not, we naturally think of the narratives and the discourses, and we are reminded of the way in which the two most eminent literary critics

who have dealt with the Gospel took opposite sides on this point.

“M. Renan,” writes our own Matthew Arnold, “often so ingenious as well as eloquent, says that the narrative and incidents in the Fourth Gospel are probably in the main historical, the discourses invented! Reverse the proposition and it would be more plausible. The narrative, so meagre, and skipping so unaccountably backwards and forwards between Galilee and Jerusalem, might well be thought, not indeed invented, but a matter of infinitely little care and attention to the writer of the Gospel, a mere slight framework in which to set the doctrine and discourses of Jesus. The doctrine and discourses of Jesus, on the other hand, *cannot* in the main be the writer’s, because in the main they are clearly out of his reach.”<sup>1</sup>

It is easy to see what is in the mind of both writers. M. Renan, the skilled Orientalist, who had himself made the pilgrimage to Palestine, and who has always a quick though not always a sure eye for the play of human nature, cannot resist the indications in the Gospel of true local colour and reality. On the other hand, Matthew Arnold, the charm of whose writings consists in his instinctive delight in and unfailing response to the higher expression of the things of the spirit, sees at once that the Johannean discourses have in them something which is above the level even of an Apostle.

The recent attempts to work out in detail the separation of the two elements, that which is original from that which is not original, in the Gospel of St. John, do not follow the dividing line of discourse and narrative.<sup>2</sup> And yet it is rather remarkable that the most important of these attempts all seem to make a point of removing the chief stumbling-block in the eyes of Matthew Arnold, the skipping of the narrative backwards and forwards from Jeru-

<sup>1</sup> *Literature and Dogma* (London, 1873), p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> The earlier partition theories of Weisse and Schenkel seem to have gone on the principle of keeping the discourses and rejecting the history, or at least referring it to a disciple: *vid.* Bleek-Mangold, *Einleitung*, p. 292 f.

salem to Galilee and from Galilee to Jerusalem. They do it however hardly for this, or for the same reason. Wendt gets rid of the Galilæan episodes in order that he may throw all the discourses to the end of our Lord's life, where he thinks that they are in place and in keeping with the main outlines of the narrative in the other Gospels.<sup>1</sup> There is, I confess, to me something attractive in this, though we may question whether it justifies the use of the knife quite so freely. It is a less violent method to explain the facts by what I have ventured to call the process of *foreshortening*, or anticipation of later utterances on earlier occasions, to which the mind of the aged Evangelist might naturally be liable.

Delff is not thinking of the distinction between earlier and later, but he has arrived at the conclusion that the author was a native of Jerusalem, a member of one of the high-priestly families; and it is therefore natural to him to make the range of vision bounded by the horizon of Jerusalem. He thinks that additions were made to the original document with the view of harmonizing it (1) with the Galilæan tradition, established through the other Gospels; (2) with the current Chiliastic expectations; (3) with the philosophy of Alexandria.<sup>2</sup> 'There is a touch here of the "vigour and rigour" which Matthew Arnold noted as a tendency of German criticism. Even if we believed that the author of the Gospel was a dweller in Jerusalem, it still would not be beyond the bounds of possibility that he should know—and that from personal experience—what passed in Galilee. It is also not so unheard of for the same mind to entertain trains of thought on two different planes at the same time, one it may be inherited, the other a product of its own inward reflexion and development. And lastly, we have seen it to be not so certain that the author introduces the Alexandrian philosophy at all.

<sup>1</sup> *Lehre Jesu*, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> *Das vierte Evang.*, p. 13.

These considerations go far to do away with the necessity of assuming that the Gospel has been interpolated. Still it may be of some interest in itself and may possibly serve a useful purpose in the future to compare the schemes arrived at by two different writers quite independently. As there is a still further coincidence with the older writer, Schweizer, I add his scheme from Archdeacon Watkins' *Bampton Lectures*, p. 249.

TABULAR VIEW OF PARTITION THEORIES AS APPLIED TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

*Sections Supposed to be Interpolated.*

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Alex.<br>Schweizer,<br>1841. | i. 21f., Elias or the Prophet.<br>ii. 1-12, Marriage at Cana.<br>iv. 44-54, Reception in Galilee; Nobleman's Son.<br>vi. 1-26, Miracle of 5,000.<br>xvi. 30, "Now we know that Thou knowest all things."<br>xviii. 9, None lost.<br>xix. 35-37, Witness of Blood and Water.<br>xxi., Supplemental Chapter.   |
| H. H. Wendt,<br>1886.        | i. 6-8, 15, Witness of Baptist.<br>i. 19-34, Witness of Baptist.<br>35, 52, Messiahship exhibited.<br>ii. 1-12, Marriage at Cana, a Sign of Messiahship.<br>21, Comment by Evangelist.<br>iii. 2b, "None can do these signs."<br>5, <i>ἕδαρος καί</i> .<br>22-iv. 3, Baptist's Discourse.<br>iv. 10 part, 11, 15-18 (?), Samaritan Husband.<br>25-26, Messiahship declared.<br>27b-30, 35b, 39-42, Narrative Setting.<br>43-54, Reception in Galilee.<br>v. 1-16, Modified from Original by Reminiscence of Mark ii. 10 ff.<br>28, 29, Bodily Resurrection.<br>33, 34 (?), Deputation to John.<br>vi. 1-26, Miracle of 5,000.<br>39, 40, 44, 54, "I will raise him at the last day." |

- H. H. Wendt, i. 6-8, 15, vi. 59, Synagogue at Capernaum.  
 1886. Witness 62, Ascension a Scandal.  
 of Baptist. 64*b*, 70, 71, The Traitor.
- vii. 1, 2, 8-14, Expanded Narrative.  
 20, 21*a*, "Thou hast a devil."  
 30-32, 35*f*., 37*a*, 39, 44-52, mostly  
 Narrative Insertions.  
 53-viii, 11, *Pericope Adulteræ*.
- viii. 20*a*, Treasury; 30, 31, Mary Be-  
 lieves.
- ix. 1-3, 6-31, Narrative of Blind Man.
- x. 19-21 (perhaps), 22, 23 (perhaps), 39,  
 40-42, Narrative Insertions, etc.
- xi. 1-7*a*, 11-15, 17-20, 24, 28-46 (mainly),  
 Raising of Lazarus (narrative  
 portion).  
 47-xii. 19, Ephraim; Supper at  
 Bethany, etc.
- xii. 28*b*-30, Voice from Heaven.  
 37, 39-43, 47*b*, 40, "Last Day."
- xiii. 11, 18*f*., 21-31*a*, The Traitor (cf.  
 Mark xiv. 17-21).
- xvi. 13, *καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν*.
- xviii.-xx. (except xviii. 35*b*-38*a*, xix. 9-  
 11*a*).
- Hugo Delff, i. 1-6, The ii. 1-11, Marriage at Cana.  
 1890. Logos as 17, 20, 21, Comments of Evangelist  
 Life and 44, Reception in Galilee.  
 Light. 46-54, Nobleman's Son.
- 9-19, The v. 19-30, Judgment and Resurrection.  
 Logos In- vi. 1-30, Miracle of 5,000. [Wanting in  
 carnate. Celsus' Copy, *Das vierte Evang.*,  
 p. 14.]  
 37-40, Judgment and Resurrection.  
 44, Resurrection.  
 54, "  
 59, Synagogue at Capernaum.
- vii. 39, Comment.
- xii. 16, Comment.  
 26-31, Voice from Heaven.  
 33, Comment.
- xiii. 20, "He that receiveth whomsoever  
 I shall send."
- xx. 11-19, Mary at the Sepulchre.
- xxi., Supplemental Chapter.

We have seen that the arguments *for* the hypothesis of interpolation are far from convincing. It remains to ask whether there are not also valid arguments *against* the hypothesis. The weight of opinion is clearly against it. Schürer must be reckoned on the adverse side.<sup>1</sup> On the same side we might for once quote Pfeleiderer, though the second half of his sentence contains an unpardonable exaggeration, abundantly refuted in Wendt's recent volume :

“These Johannean discourses are so much of one piece (aus einem Guss), form and substance are so inseparable, and the discourses again are so entirely one with the narratives which introduce or illustrate them that it is impossible to separate the one from the other : if one does eliminate from these discourses all that does not suit the personages of the history because it belongs to later theological reflexion, what then will be left of them still remaining?”<sup>2</sup>

But the most weightily expressed opinion is that of Holtzmann :

“However, all attempts to draw a clearly distinguishable line of demarcation, whether it be between earlier and later strata, or between genuine and not genuine, historical and unhistorical elements, must always be wrecked against the solid and compact unity which the work presents, both in regard to language and in regard to matter. Apart from the interpolations indicated by the history of the Text (v. 4, vii. 53–viii. 11), and from the last chapter added by way of supplement, the work is, both in form and substance, both in arrangement and in range of ideas, an organic whole without omissions or interpolations, the “seamless coat,” which can be parted or torn, but only by a happy cast allotted to its rightful owner (so especially Hilgenfeld and Strauss).”<sup>3</sup>

This “solid and compact unity” alike in language, in structure, and in thought, is indeed the keynote of the Gospel, and marks the fatal objection to any theory of partition. I have little doubt that the more closely the Gospel is studied the more conclusively will this be proved. I cannot stay to go into much detail at present, but a few

<sup>1</sup> *Vortrag*, pp. 50, 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Urchristenthum*, p. 781.

<sup>3</sup> *Einleitung* (2nd ed.), p. 457.

remarks may be made to show the general direction that the argument would take.

In the first place, it may be noted that Wendt by getting rid of so much of the narrative portion of the Gospel sacrifices just that which comes to us with the highest credentials as history. It sacrifices all the first chapter after the prologue with the admirable scene between St. John and the deputation, and the other scene hardly less graphic and natural, which shows how disciples gathered round a master. It sacrifices not all, but many features in the striking seventh chapter which takes us down among the crowd and up into the conclave of the Pharisees and lets us hear their comments. It sacrifices a fresh and lifelike sketch, full of Jewish touches, the healing of the blind man in chapter ix. It sacrifices not only much of the earlier part of chapter ix., but the last section which is on a par with chapter vii. as a picture of the surroundings among which Jesus moved. It sacrifices the hearing before Annas, so probable and so characteristic; it sacrifices many characteristic details in the hearing before Pilate, and indeed leaves but little remaining of the story of the Passion. Along with these larger pieces of narrative it cuts out a number of smaller particulars on which we rely, and have seen reason to rely: Bethany beyond Jordan, Ænon and Salim, the pool of Bethesda or Bezetha with its five colonnades, the treasury, the feast of dedication, perhaps Solomon's porch, Kedron, and so on. All these are points which, it seems to me, that a historian with an eye for facts would be least willing to let go.

Delff does not make this mistake, and less exception can be taken to his procedure on a broad view of the case. But he cuts off the prologue which forms such a fitting and majestic vestibule to the rest of the Gospel. He inverts the view of Baur and his school, which made all the rest of the Gospel a dramatizing or embodying in action of the

great leading ideas of the prologue. And yet stripped of its exaggeration, there was too much truth in that view for it to be lightly abandoned. It is impossible to take up Delf's version of the Gospel without a sense of mutilation.

An argument like this may be thought somewhat subjective in its character. But when these supposed interpolations are examined they will be found to be full of cross-references pointing backwards or forwards and indissolubly linking the portions rejected to those received as genuine. The narrative of St. John is so direct and simple that characteristic expressions are less easily detected in it; but even so the passages which are alleged to be interpolations yield too many to be safely set aside. It would be wearisome and I confess I think unnecessary to go over the whole ground, but a few specimens may be given from the first two chapters.

## CROSS-REFERENCES

| FROM PASSAGES SUPPOSED TO BE INTERPOLATED TO   | PASSAGES RETAINED AS GENUINE.   |
|--|---|
| DELFF.   |   |
| i. 4. "In Him was life."   | xi. 25, xiv. 6. "I am the life."<br><i>cf.</i> v. 40, vi. 35, x. 10, etc.<br><i>ζωή</i> occurs 36 times and is very characteristic. |
| i. 4. "The light of men."  | viii. 12, ix. 5. "I am the light of the world." <i>φῶς</i> 22 times in the Gospel.  |
| i. 5. Light in darkness.   | xii. 46. Light and darkness: <i>cf.</i> iii. 19, viii. 12, xii. 35. <i>σκοτία</i> also characteristic.                              |
| i. 5. <i>ἡ σκοτία οὐ κατέλαβεν.</i>  | xii. 35. <i>μὴ σκοτία καταλάβῃ.</i>   |
| i. 10. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." | xvii. 25. "The world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me."                      |

*The structure in triplets which is very marked in this context, also underlies many other passages.*

- i. 10. "He was in the world."      iii. 19. "The light is come into the world; *cf.* ix. 5, 39, xi. 27, xvi. 28, etc. *κόσμος* 77 times in the Gospel, 3 times each in *St. Mark* and *St. Luke*.
- i. 10. "The world knew Him not."      xiv. 7. "The world cannot receive . . . neither knoweth Him: *cf.* xiv. 19, xv. 18, xvii. 14.
- i. 11. *εἰς τὰ ἴδια*.      xvi. 32, xix. 27. *εἰς τὰ ἴδια*; viii. 44, *ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων*.
- i. 11. *οἱ ἴδιοι*.      xiii. 1. *τοὺς ἰδίους*; *cf.* xv. 19.
- i. 12. *τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι*.      1 John iii. 1. *ἵνα τέκνα Θεοῦ κληθῶμεν*; *cf.* John xi. 52. [Dr. Delff would probably refer the *Ep.* not to the author but to the redactor of Gospel: still the coincidence is interesting.]
- i. 13. "Born not of blood," etc.      iii. 5. "Except a man be born . . . of the Spirit," etc.
- i. 14. "Was made flesh."      viii. 40. "A man (*ἄνθρωπον*) that hath told you the truth.
- i. 14. "We beheld His glory."      xi. 40. "Thou shouldst see the glory of God"; *cf.* ii. 11 [*rejected*], xii. 41, xvii. 5, 22, 44.
- i. 14. *μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός*.      iii. 16. *τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ*; *cf.* iii. 18.
- i. 17. "The law was given by Moses."      vii. 19. "Did not Moses give you the law?"
- i. 17. "Truth by Jesus Christ."      xiv. 6. "I am the truth"; truth a characteristic word, 25 times in all.
- i. 18. "No man hath seen God."      v. 37. "We have not . . . seen His shape."
- i. 18. "Only-begotten."      *See on i. 14.*
- i. 18. "He hath declared Him."      xiv. 9. "He hath seen the Father"; *cf.* xii. 45.
- i. 18. *ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο*.      Characteristic form of phrase; *cf.* i. 33, *ὁ πέμψας* . . . *ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν*, v. 11, ix. 37, x. 1, xii. 48, xiv. 21, 26, xv. 26.
- ii. 4. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"      xix. 26. "Woman, behold thy son!"

- ii. 4. "Mine hour is not yet come." *Characteristic phrase; cf. vii. 30, viii. 20, xii. 23, xiii. 1, xvi. 21; also vii. 6, 8.*
- ii. 9. "But the servants which drew the water knew." *This mode of parenthetical qualification or restriction is characteristic; cf. iv. 2: "Though Jesus Himself baptized not," [vi. 23: "Howbeit there came other boats," etc., is rejected.]*
- ii. 11. "This beginning of signs." *vii. 22. "Not because it is of Moses."  
xii. 6. "This he said, not that he cared for the poor," etc.  
"Signs" in this sense is well-known as a characteristic word, occurring 17 times in the Gospel.*
- ii. 11. "Manifested forth His glory." *i. 14. "We saw His glory" [rejected by Delff, not by Wendt].  
vii. 4. "When [rather Because] he saw His glory."  
xvii. 5, 22, 24.*
- ii. 11. Glory coupled with manifestation. *xvii. 4-6. The Son glorified, the Father's Name manifested.*
- ii. 11. Glory in juxtaposition with belief. *xvii. 21-25 similar juxtaposition.*
- WENDT.
- i. 19. ἡ μαρτυρία. *Characteristic idea and word; 29 times in Johannean writings (incl. Apoc.), only 7 times besides in N. T.*
- i. 20. "Confessed and denied not." *For emphatic combination of positive and negative, cf. i. 3, iii. 16, vi. 50, 51.*
- i. 28. "These things," etc. *[Wendt excises all historical notes, or we might compare for mode of introduction, viii. 20, and for place, x. 40.]*
- i. 31. φανερωθῆ. *Characteristic word; 9 times in St. John, only 3 times in Synoptics (including disputed verses of St. Mark).*
- i. 33, 34. "Bare record." *See above on i. 19.*

- i. 33. ἐκεῖνος. *See above on i. 18.*
- i. 38, 50. "Rabbi." *Standing title (8 times) in St. John, not in St. Luke.*
- i. 39. "Tenth hour." [*Notes of time are characteristic of the Johannean narrative, but are struck out by Wendt.*]
- i. 44. "Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." xii. 21, 22 [*left by Wendt*]. "The same came to Philip which was of Bethsaida . . . Philip . . . taketh Andrew."
- i. 46. "Any good thing out of Nazareth." vii. 41. "Shall the Christ come out of Galilee?" [*left by Wendt, though not vii. 52.*]
- i. 50. "Greater things than these." v. 20. "Greater works than these"; cf. xiv. 12.
- ii. 1-12. *See above.*

In view of this evidence, which it is clear might be extended indefinitely, I do not think that many of us will hesitate to reject decidedly all the partition theories before us, and indeed to go a step beyond this, and assert with Holtzmann the essential and indissoluble unity of the Gospel.

But now the further question arises: Is not Holtzmann also right in refusing to share the contents of the Gospel between disciple and Master? The vertical dividing up of the Gospel is found to be untenable; is the horizontal dividing of it any more tenable?

We saw in our original survey that this was the direction in which many of the best critics were tending. We may exclude writers like Ewald who does not seem to want any more extensive editing by the Ephesian Church than most of us would be ready to grant. We also need not go back to writers like Schenkel and Tobler.<sup>1</sup> But Schürer himself is in favour of this hypothesis. Reuss and Renan are both in favour of it. And above all it is strongly supported by

<sup>1</sup> Bleek-Mangold, *Einkl.*, p. 293f.; Watkins, *Bampton Lect.*, p. 248ff.

Weizsäcker in a very able piece of constructive criticism.<sup>1</sup> Can we yield to the authority of these certainly important names?

The object is, as has been said, a compromise. The writers in question are so much impressed by the signs of historic accuracy in the Gospel, that they are compelled to regard it as embodying a good tradition; and they find no valid reason against, but rather every reason for, referring that tradition to St. John. Both Schürer and Weizsäcker quietly put aside the doubts which have been raised as to the Apostle's residence in Asia Minor. "For this," says Weizsäcker, "we have in fact proof which cannot up to the present time be regarded as shaken."<sup>2</sup> For the supposition of a confusion between the Apostle and any other John, Schürer thinks that there is no good ground.<sup>3</sup> Assuming the truth of this Ephesian tradition, it is then natural to draw the picture which Weizsäcker draws of the school which gathered there round the Apostle, and produced under the influence of his teaching first the Apocalypse and afterwards the Gospel. Between these two works, whatever their difference, there is one great connecting link, the doctrine of the Logos. In the Apocalypse this is put forward as a new and mysterious revelation. The rider on the white horse, Faithful and True, who judges and makes war in righteousness, has a name written that no man knew but He himself. . . . "and His name is called the Word of God."<sup>4</sup> The solemnity with which this revelation is made marks its importance. At the same time in the Apocalypse its meaning is undeveloped; its further development is reserved for the Gospel. Taking this central point with the others which surround it, though

<sup>1</sup> *Apost. Zeitalt.*, pp. 531-558.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 498.

<sup>3</sup> *Vortrag*, p. 71: for a list of authorities for and against the traditional view see Holtzmann, *Einl.*, p. 475f. (ed. 2).

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xix. 11-13.

the differences may be so great as to involve a difference of authorship, yet the affinity is also great enough to locate them in the same home and in the same school. The Gospel belongs to a later stage in its history. That is all.

By keeping upon these lines, the writers I have mentioned desert the ecclesiastical tradition as little as possible. They only carry down the Gospel a little lower in the stream of time; they make it a work of the second and not of the first generation; and they obtain room in it for a greater freedom of handling.

I think we may say that if the Fourth Gospel is not by St. John, then distinctly next, in order of probability, is this theory of Weizsäcker's, very much in the form in which Weizsäcker has stated it. It seems to me however that even this theory is incompatible with the facts. It fails to satisfy the conditions which our previous inquiry has laid down. The arguments on which we have hitherto relied, and which have indeed a very great mass of detail behind them, prove, if they prove anything, that the author of the Gospel himself was a Jew, a Jew of Palestine, a contemporary, an eye-witness, an Apostle. Their force is not met by the supposition that some Gentile or even Jewish Christian of Ephesus made use a generation later of knowledge derived at second-hand from one who possessed these qualifications. For the striking thing about the Gospel is that its characteristics are not those of a second-hand work. The kind of details which it contains is not such as would survive in a tradition. What tradition could do we see in the Synoptic Gospels, especially in St. Mark. There we have tradition seen to great advantage—jottings from the occasional teaching of a leading actor in the events—St. Peter, *ὃς πρὸς τὰς χρείας ἐποιεῖτο τὰς διδασκαλίας*. Accordingly we find a good and faithful report of a number of incidents in the life of our Lord, dialogues, sayings, brief discourses, parables. But the setting in which all this is

placed is loose and vague ; notes of time and place are very indistinct ; some expression of surprise and emotion on the part of the speaker is almost the only transient and subordinate detail that is noted. The Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, is full of these accessories. The scenes there described are such as the author has clearly and vividly presented before him. Two alternatives only are possible. Either these scenes derive their vividness and particularity from the fact that the author is reporting what he had himself heard and seen, or in which he had stood in connexion so close that it is as if he had heard and seen them, or they are the product of pure imagination. A middle link, like tradition, does not help us. The author might as well be six generations removed as one. For instance, we can understand how tradition might hand down the five barley loaves and two small fishes, the two hundred denarii worth of bread, the five thousand people and the twelve baskets of fragments of the miracle of healing, because all these have a direct bearing on the magnitude of the miracle. We can understand even the six water-pots of stone at the marriage feast, because the water-pots at least were essential, and that might cause their number to be remembered and transmitted. These are all details of the same type as those in the Synoptics. But why should it be noted that it was the tenth hour when the disciples left John to follow Jesus, or the sixth hour when He sat down by the well ? Why should we be told that John baptized in Ænon because of its plentiful springs ? Why that such and such a speech was made in Solomon's porch at the feast of dedication in the winter ? Why that Jesus retired to the place where John at first baptized ? or that He went to Ephraim while the Jews were going up to purify themselves before the Passover ? Why that the Sanhedrists would not enter Pilate's house for fear of defilement ? or that the purpose with which

Judas was supposed to have made his exit was to buy necessaries for the feast ?

It would be instructive to work out continuously some of the ideas which these passages suggest—all of a character which in the second century, when the primitive entanglement of Christianity and Judaism had been forgotten, and when Judaism itself had changed its complexion through the fall of Jerusalem, would have lost their interest. Take for instance an idea like that of Levitical purity. What had Christians of the second century to do with that? Can we believe that allusions to it would have been preserved in passing from mouth to mouth? Yet first we have the waterpots at Cana; then the dispute between the disciples of John and a Jew (in the correct text) on some question of purification—naturally arising, as we might suppose, out of the practice of baptism; then we have that singular touch, the mustering of the pilgrims in the country before the Passover, that they might go up to Jerusalem in good time and get their purification over (*ἵνα ἀρτυρωσιν ἑαυτούς*);<sup>1</sup> and lastly, the scrupulous avoidance of defilement by the Sanhedrists.

Or take another set of points, which would also have passed out of remembrance—the baptism of John, not in its relation to any possible survival, like that of Apollos and the disciples at Ephesus, but in its relation to the Jewish conception of Messiah—the necessity of an Elias-ministry and of the moral reformation which it was to work before the Messiah could come. Hence such verses as “Why baptizest thou them if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?” Or “but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” Would a second-century tradition, even that of a disciple, have preserved touches like these?

Many similar points might be taken—the Jewish sects

<sup>1</sup> St. John xi. 55.

and parties, priests, Levites, Sanhedrists, Pharisees, the two high priests Annas and Caiaphas, all in their mutual relations delicately and accurately delineated; the Jewish feasts in regard to which the Evangelist mentions so many characteristic particulars—all, be it remembered, belonging to a state of things which had entirely passed away.

We have already seen how consistently the Gospel maintains the standpoint of the first disciples; how it repeats the kind of thoughts which would actually pass through their minds; how it describes the debates and discussions and controversies which went on around them. We can see that those debates and controversies were exactly such as must have gone on, and yet what we can see must have been by no means so obvious to a Christian in the second century. All that we know of early literature, Christian or pagan, leaves it, I cannot but think, in a high degree improbable that so consistent a picture could have been painted out of pure invention. There would inevitably have been far more serious flaws to be found than any which criticism has discovered.

This is my first reason for not being content to refer the phenomena of the Gospel simply to tradition. They include a number of points which tradition would not have preserved. My second reason is that tradition would almost necessarily be a series of fragments, as the Synoptic Gospels are. In St. John it is true that we have a selection of narratives, but it is a selection taken from a continuous history. They are strung, so to speak, upon a single thread. We feel that there is a duly articulated history, precisely mapped out both in time and place, lying behind them. In the one case the narrator looks back over the scene as a whole, and selects what incidents he pleases out of it; in the other case the narrator has no such survey, no such command of his materials, but must needs put together the incidents as they come to him, as

best he can. This means that in the one case there is, and in the other case there is not direct personal contact with the facts.

Thirdly, when we look at the Gospel we see that it is not the product of a dry intellectual light. It palpitates throughout with warm emotion. The keynote of it is love: first the love of the Master for the disciple calling forth the love of the disciple for the Master, and then that love implanted as a principle of the Christian life, and become the dominant motive which binds one Christian to another. Where was all this emotion generated? It is by far the most natural to attribute it to the relation in which the author of the Gospel stood to his subject. A personal feeling like this is not easily transmitted. That St. John, the beloved disciple, should be animated by it is just what we should expect. That an unnamed disciple in the second century who had not "seen Christ in the flesh" should be as impressible, is less likely. I speak here only of competing probabilities.

Weighing these probabilities side by side, they are to my mind irresistibly in favour of the direct apostolic authorship. Let us think, by way of recapitulation, what the problem demands. It demands one who is firmly planted at the point of view of the immediate disciples of Jesus; one who looked at things as they looked at them; who was familiar with the expectation which they entertained and which those around them entertained before they came to recognise Jesus as the Messiah; one apparently taken from the very *entourage* of the Baptist; one who treads with a sure step among all the intricate conditions of the time; one who is at home in all the scenes and places and customs and ways of thought of Palestine when Christ lived; one who has caught truly the main lines of Christ's teaching; who understands the relation in which He stood to the Old Testament, based upon it and yet exercising

command over it, mingling the old and new in that wonderful way and with that wonderful balance which the first generation of Christians possessed, and which their successors seemed so soon to lose. We must think of the author as one who stood directly under the influence, the close personal influence, of Jesus, who took in deep draughts from that "living water," and who, if he in after life sought to impart to others something of the impression which he had himself received, did so not so much through any process of intellectual speculation as through strong and deeply stirred emotion wrought into the inner self by years of vitally realized religious experience.

We cannot wonder if a mind like this, not discursive but concentrated, not given to wandering over a wide field of impressions, but content with a few of singular power and intensity, and letting these sink into it as far as ever they would go, should yet, as the Church moved on, let itself move with it, applying its own great ruling principles to the progressive phases of the Church's history, and to a certain extent interpreting those principles by the teaching of fact and by their practical realization. We cannot wonder if in this way, when the time came to give out as well as to drink in, there should be some infusion of all this later reflexion and experience with the original material of objective fact. We are dealing with a strong, creative personality which could not help acting upon the deposit committed to it, not a mere neutral medium through which it might pass without alteration. A smaller nature might have reproduced its first impressions more exactly; a more flexible and many-sided nature would have had a weaker or less tenacious grip upon them; but a mind like this acts powerfully in proportion as it acts slowly, and transmutes what it retains the more surely, because the lines on which it works are not many but few.

At the same time all the phenomena that are characteristic of the Fourth Gospel may be got well within the compass of the time assigned to the life of the Apostle John. May be, and indeed *must* be. As to the possibility there can be no question. It is a simple rule of proportion. If the Epistles to Corinthians and Romans could be reached by the years 57, 58; if Philippians by the year 61; if Hebrews by about 68 or 69;<sup>1</sup> then certainly the Fourth Gospel could be reached some fifteen or twenty years later. And on the other hand we have seen that it cannot be cut loose from the apostolic age and from immediate contact with the life of Christ. Those are the limits within which the Gospel ranges. The *terminus a quo* is not the schooling of a second generation, but the living experience of the first; the *terminus ad quem* is not the region of Gnosticism or Montanism, but the seed-plot out of which those developments grew as more or less abnormal growths. It is the first generation in its fullest extent, the richest generation which the world has ever seen.

There have been great ages, "spacious times," up and down the world's career—the age of Pericles, the age of Augustus, the years which date from the Hegira of Mahomet or from the Fall of Constantinople, the outburst of genius and national life under our own Queen Elizabeth. But in internal significance, if not in external splendour, there is no age to compare with that which began in the fifteenth year of Tiberius with a set of obscure events in an obscure corner of Judæa, and which came to its close with the death of the last apostle, St. John.

W. SANDAY.

<sup>1</sup> I do not pledge myself absolutely to this date, though I think it on the whole probable: in any case the Epistle was written during the lifetime of Timothy (Heb. xiii. 23), and well before the date at which it is quoted by Clement of Rome. This one fact seems to me to be a landmark of great importance in the history of Christian doctrine.