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1937

## 811TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, MAY 3RD, 1937,  
AT 5 P.M.

THE REV. W. J. DOWNES, M.A., B.D., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the election of the Rev. W. E. Dalling, M.A., as an Associate.

In the absence of the author, the paper was read by the Rev. Principal H. S. Curr, M.A., B.D., which was entitled "The Gospel of St. John *in Situ*" (being the Dr. A. T. Schofield Memorial Paper, 1937).

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### THE FOURTH GOSPEL "IN SITU."

By the REV. D. M. M'INTYRE, D.D.

(Being the Dr. A. T. Schofield Memorial Paper.)

THE first course of lectures delivered by Neander, the celebrated Church historian, was on the Fourth Gospel.

Nearly forty years later, when he was on his deathbed, he announced as the next subject for study, "The Gospel of St. John considered in its true historical position." This line of examination opens to us the surest way by which we may convince ourselves of the authenticity and verity of this Gospel.

Let us remind ourselves of the actual situation in which this Gospel is thought to have had its origin.

The earliest tradition asserted that the Fourth Gospel was written by John, the disciple of the Lord, in Ephesus, towards the close of the first Christian century. It is said that during his long life of witness-bearing he was accustomed to narrate many

incidents belonging to the Saviour's ministry and to recount a number of His sayings. As years passed, the leaders of the Church in Asia urged him to commit to the written page those things which he had often communicated to them in speech. He hesitated, but finally consented, they on their part promising to assist him.

This tradition may not be accurate in every particular, but it is, no doubt, substantially correct. It is vouched for by Papias (c. A.D. 130), the Muratori Fragment (c. 170), Irenæus (c. 180), Clement of Alexandria (c. 200); and is confirmed by Eusebius the historian, the most learned theologian of his age and the possessor of a great library (*fl.* 325).

Let us now test the accuracy of this tradition by examining the Gospel in its historical relations.

Naturally we begin with the direct witness of the Gospel itself.

The lofty language of the prologue leads on to a personal testimony: "We beheld His glory" (i, 14). That this is not spoken of the Church at large, but of the writer himself and of his brethren of the apostolic company, is evidenced by the tender recollection of that hour when the unnamed disciple of chapter one first looked upon his Lord (verses 35-40). This narrative presents every evidence of autobiographical verisimilitude.

In the nineteenth chapter we have a strongly-worded attestation to the piercing of the Redeemer's side and the issuing therefrom of blood mingled with water: "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe." Some good scholars, recognising the emphasis laid on the pronoun—*ἐκεῖνος*—refer the last clause to Christ Himself, as if we should read it thus: "My Lord knows that I am speaking truth."\* But it is more likely that the Evangelist is speaking of himself in the third person according to a familiar literary usage.† This is a case where the underlying Aramaic shines through. In his latest volume, Dr. C. C. Torrey writes: "This is perhaps the most important single verse in the Fourth Gospel, for here

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\* *E.g.*, Zahn, Sanday, Abbott, Murray.

† Dr. B. W. Bacon exclaims against such a suggestion: "Whoever heard of a writer employing such ambiguities to make the simple statement, 'I myself saw this'?" Professor Macgregor says curtly that this view is "surely impossible." It is certainly not according to Anglo-Saxon idiom. But St. John was an Eastern, and thought in Aramaic.

the real author of the work speaks momentarily and modestly in his own person." For confirmation of this statement he refers to his earlier work, *The Four Gospels* : " It seems to me quite certain that in the mysterious ἐκεῖνος of this verse we are to see the personal testimony of the author of the Gospel. It is quite idiomatic, and there is no other way of explaining it. When, either through modesty or for some other reason, there is a wish to avoid the use of ' I,' the circumlocution *hābū gabrā* ' that man,' ' that one,' ' a certain person,' is used in Jewish Aramaic not infrequently . . . Dalman, *Gramm.*,<sup>2</sup> p. 108, mentions this as a feature of ' the Galilean popular speech,' and in his *Worte Jesu*, pp. 204 f., he gives a rather long list of illustrative passages . . . Similarly, in Arabic the pronoun *hādha*, ' this ' (with no noun appended), is used occasionally as a modest substitute for the first person singular . . . It is plain that the Aramaic phrase in this passage could only have been rendered by ἐκεῖνος." (Pp. 329 f.)

The Witness is himself the Evangelist, he is also the Beloved Disciple.\*

As he is about to bring his recollections to a close, the writer, almost for the first time, puts himself forward in order that he may indicate the aim which from the beginning he had set before him : " Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name." (xx, 30, 31.)

At the very end of the Gospel we have the certification, written possibly by the elders in Ephesus, that he who wrote the Gospel was the disciple whom Jesus loved : " This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things ; and we know that his witness is true " (xxi, 24). Those who presented this testimony would have first-hand knowledge of the matters narrated ; they were able, therefore, to guarantee the historical accuracy of the whole. And though they may have given some

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\* One has not space to discuss the " partitionist " theories. But it is not unfair to say that the literary considerations on which these rest do not encourage conviction in a matter which is primarily of historical interest, and which exacts a very sincere desire for truth on the part of the sacred writer. For the rest, even Wellhausen admits that the Fourth Gospel can be regarded historically as " essentially a unity."

assistance to St. John in arranging his memoirs (*see* Muratori Fragment), *the full responsibility of authorship was borne by the disciple "who wrote these things."*

The question as to the identity of the beloved disciple with John the Apostle must be considered. This disciple was present at the last Passover of our Lord (John xiii, 23), therefore he was one of the twelve, presumably one of the favoured three. The dying Saviour committed His Mother to the care of this disciple: Salome was, it appears, sister of the Virgin Mary (John xix, 25, Mark xv, 40, Matt. xxvii, 56). We find him next in company with Simon Peter on the morning of the resurrection (John xx, 2), and later by the shore of the Lake (John xxi, 7). In the last instance we are shut up to the conclusion that the beloved disciple is either one of the sons of Zebedee or one of the two unnamed disciples. He could not have been James, for this chapter brings John before us as already aged (verses 22, 23). It is unlikely that he was one of the others; neither of these will fit into all the circumstances. The phrase which we find in xx, 2—"the other disciple, whom Jesus loved"—brings two other scenes into line with those that we have mentioned: the first meeting of John with the Master, and the entrance of Simon with him into the palace of the high priest (i, 40, xviii, 15). If we cannot offer a mathematical demonstration, we have at least a moral certainty that this disciple was John the son of Zebedee.

We must now glance at the indirect evidence which Gospel affords in confirmation of the tradition.

It is obvious that the author was a Jew whose native speech was Aramaic. From Salmasius (d. 1653) to Professor Burney in our own day the belief that the Fourth Gospel was originally written in Aramaic has frequently reappeared. It is doubtful if this opinion can be substantiated, but it is evident that the writer was more familiar with Aramaic than with Greek, though he had a fair knowledge of the latter tongue. A line of argument which has been elaborated with fullness and force by Drs. Westcott, Lightfoot, Sanday, Salmon, and others is as follows: The writer was a Jew, a Jew of Palestine, whose knowledge of the topography of the Holy Land was intimate and went back to the days of Christ. He speaks of the scenes of our Lord's ministry with a particularity which betrays a personal acquaintance with the incidents which he narrates. The exactness of his portrayal

indicates that he was one of those who companied with Jesus. And, one finally decides, that he was the Apostle John.\*

The merely literary objections which have been urged against these conclusions are not at all formidable.

It has been objected, for instance, that the style of the writer is reproduced in all the speeches contained in this Gospel, especially in those attributed to our Lord. In so far as this is the case it may quite naturally be accounted for. St. John had told the story of Jesus many times before he committed it to writing. He told it first and most often in Aramaic, and it was with the recollection of those numerous recitals fresh upon his spirit that he wrote, translating from Aramaic into Greek. The translation would smooth out differences, and if the statement of the Muratori Fragment, that "it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John should relate all things in his own name, *aided by the revision of all,*" contains a core of truth this would further help to explain the similarity of the several speeches. It might also be shown, by a comparison of the sayings of Jesus recorded in the Synoptic Gospels with the narration of St. John, that the disciple had, by unconscious imitation, entered into the manner of thought and speech which characterised his beloved Lord.

The difficulty of remembering long passages of some verbal statement after the lapse of years has been urged against the historicity, and therefore against the Johannine authorship of this Gospel. But most of the narratives in the Fourth Gospel recount scenes of debate—question and answer, statement and reply—and it is much easier to recollect the course of an argument than to recall a sustained address. Even the sacramental meditations (chapters xiii–xvi) are thrown into what Vinet calls "a divine confusion" by the reaction of the disciples to our Lord's great sayings, and His response to their unspoken questionings. The intercessory prayer perhaps stands alone. But, apart from the promise of Christ that the Comforter would strengthen recollection (xiv, 26), in such an hour of high excitement as this the words of the prayer would fall on the ears of an attuned

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\* It is not necessary to retrace this line of proof: it has fulfilled its end. "Supernatural Religion" is dead, and the arguments of F. C. Baur have passed into the *limbus criticorum*. There are, however, signs in some recent writings of an inclination to return to a date not far removed from that of Baur. Old foes are apt to reappear with new faces. But for the present the concern of faith is not so much with the date of the Fourth Gospel, nor even with its apostolic authority, as with its historical verity.

listener with an unforgettable force, so that they would be written on the heart as in letters of fire. In addition to this, we must remind ourselves of what has already been indicated, as tradition informs us and as the pages of the New Testament evidence, St. John constantly preached the things concerning Jesus which had fallen under his own observation, so that, from the day of Pentecost onwards, those reminiscences had been wearing channels in his mind. Words and phrases would be exactly recalled.

The date of this Gospel, as given in the tradition (c., A.D. 95), is generally received by modern scholars. Differing opinions, as of Vacher Burch that it was given in substance to the Church soon after the ascension of the Lord, of Professor Burney that it was published about the year 78, or of Paul Schmiedel that it may be dated from about A.D. 140, have won a very partial acceptance. Professor Torrey, who demands an early date, says, but without sufficient regard to conflicting circumstances, that "the stage of 'evangelization' which this Gospel represents (e.g., in iv, 35-38) is the earliest, the purely Jewish stage." It would be more correct to say that the Gospel narrative is photographic in its accuracy, but that fact does not determine its date. The weight of evidence confirms the traditional view—that this Gospel first appeared towards the close of the first century.

As we read the Gospel we are increasingly impressed with the conviction that the writer, although he lives in devout recollection with his Lord in Palestine in the third decade of the century, is nevertheless conversant with modes of thought which were current in Asia Minor at the time when presumably the Gospel was written.

The prologue, which is framed around the Greek term *Logos*, declares the pre-existence of the Son and unfolds his relation to the world of men. But, as Dr. Rendel Harris and others have shown, the Evangelist has before his mind the Wisdom of God, as it is portrayed in the Old Testament and in the Sapiential Writings of the later Jews, with perhaps a recollection of the Memra of the Targums. The use of the term, however, is significant. From the fifth century B.C. the philosophers of Greece spoke much of the *Logos*, and the word had passed into currency in Ionia as well as in Alexandria. When uttered it would convey a definite concept to the man of the streets and market-places of Ephesus. But it is important to observe, and this is an evidence

of the historical worth of the Gospel, that the terminology of the Greek schools is not found in the Johannine narrative.

At the same time, that perversion of the teaching of Jesus which characterized even the incipient stages of Gnosticism, is continually before the mind of St. John. Both Caius and Jerome tell us that the author of the Gospel was a contemporary of Cerinthus, who taught in Ionia towards the close of the apostolic period. Tradition affirms that Cerinthus and St. John came into contact, if not into collision, in Ephesus. "To the false speculations," says Ebrard, "which denied now the divinity, now the humanity of Christ, he opposed His utterances about His eternal relation with the Father, and the revelation of the Father through Him. To the mere intellectual striving after knowledge without holiness, he opposes the mystical life of the believer's union with Christ." He adds that no sharper antithesis to Cerinthian speculations could be conceived than is found in the words of chapter xx, 31: "These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name."

One scarcely needs to prove that the First Epistle of St. John is by the author of the Gospel. The opening words seem to assert this, and the literary evidence is conclusive. The Epistle was probably sent out with the Gospel, to show the significance of the history, and to clear its implications: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye may have fellowship with us" (1 John i, 1-3). In this Epistle we have reference also to the pierced side, to the water and the blood, "sin's double cure" (v. 6). The emphatic statement: "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood" is a mortal thrust at the doctrine of Cerinthus, that the æon Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism, and forsook Him when He entered the darkness of the cross. Also the docetism of the Gnostics is rebuked by the profound utterance of 1 John iv, 2, 3: "Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and

every spirit which confesseth not Jesus (*or* annulleth Jesus) is not of God : and this is the spirit of the antichrist."

The connection between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse is very intimate. Whatever opinion one may hold as to the authorship of the Book of Revelation, it is certain that it originated in Ionia in the second half of the first Christian century, and is therefore an important witness to the authenticity of the Gospel according to St. John. Bishop Westcott affirms that "the Apocalypse is doctrinally the uniting link between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel. It offers the characteristic thoughts of the Fourth Gospel in that form of development which belongs to the earliest apostolic age."\* The Apocalypse paints in pictures—sometimes in hues of earthquake and eclipse, sometimes in radiancy of glory dazzling beyond expression—the great truths which are set forth in the Gospel in words as profound as they are simple, words which constantly remind us of the intercourse of the Master with the disciple whom He loved.

The inter-relation of the Fourth Gospel with the Synoptics provides a complicated but convincing evidence of the historical value of the former. The delicate threads of connection between the three-fold Gospel and the memoranda of St. John may be traced on every page. Bishop Westcott enumerates nearly a hundred parallels and coincidences between the Three and the One.†

The testimony of Eusebius is as follows : "John, they say, having all the time preached, but not using his pen, in the end set himself to write. The occasion was this : when the three earlier Gospels were handed to him he, they say, accepted them and testified to their truth, although they were so far defective that the earlier stages of the Ministry were absent from their accounts."‡ St. John was undoubtedly familiar with the Synoptics ; he assumes a general knowledge of them on the part of his readers. He omits that which has been sufficiently narrated ; he fits his supplementary matter into the general chronological scheme which they appear to follow ; at times he seems to regard, from a different point of view, the events which both he and they relate.

The Synoptists draw the greater part of their material from the tradition current in the Church of the first days and from the

\* *The Gospel of Saint John*, p. lxxxiv.

† *Ibid.*, p. lxxxii, f.

‡ *H.E.*, iii, 24.

“teaching of the Apostles” which soon crystallized into form. They accordingly convey the instruction given to new converts and inquirers in the beginning of the Christian age. Until the passion of Jesus darkens upon the page the first three Gospels confine themselves almost exclusively to the Galilean ministry of the Lord; whereas the Fourth Gospel was addressed mainly to mature believers of the second generation, and is concerned chiefly with the deep sayings of Jesus relative to His Person and the work of the Holy Spirit.\* These sayings were for the most part spoken in Jerusalem, the home of Jewish orthodoxy. When the Fourth Gospel came to be written, controversies on difficult points of doctrine had begun to stir in the Church. St. John, therefore, in re-telling the story of Jesus, selects those incidents which lead him most directly to the fulfilment of his expressed purpose: “These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing ye may have life in His name.” Remembering this, we may understand why so large a part of the Gospel should be occupied with the disputing of the Jews regarding the claims of the Messiah to be the Son of God.

While there are striking divergencies between the earlier Gospels and the later one, there are remarkable agreements in language and in description. It would be impossible in the time at one's disposal to dwell at any length on these. All that one can do is to make a few general remarks by way of comparison.

The account of the Baptist's ministry is given by the Evangelist in diverse but quite congruent forms. St. John emphasises two points. In the first place he stresses the witness of John to Jesus, to His Person and work. In the second place he affirms, as against some who had been disciples of Jesus but had not become followers of the Lord, that John was merely the herald of the Christ. Both these points are confirmed by the Synoptists.

St. John selects a number of representative incidents of the Saviour's ministry, and passes by great breadths of His mighty working. The Synoptists indicate in similar terms that the

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\* It is undoubtedly true that St. John saw the Saviour to be exceedingly glorious through participation in His grace and power during sixty years of loving discipleship. But we ought not to allow ourselves on that account to suppose that the history has been “idealised.” We might as well insist that the adoring utterances of the First Epistle of Peter cancel the factual truth of the Second Gospel.

reminiscences which they record convey only a partial view of the saving activity of Jesus. \*

From time to time St. John makes it clear that he is cognizant of the course of the Galilean ministry, and the Synoptists indicate their awareness of the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem. The beginning of His self-manifestation in the capital gives us the key to understand the unquestioning obedience of John and Andrew, Simon and James, when at the lakeside He called them to discipleship. Already by the waters of baptism they had entered into the obedience of Christ. And the lament of the Saviour over the city which had so many times heard His voice, only to refuse His invitation, is recorded in the Synoptical Gospels: "How often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not." (Matt. xxiii, 37, Luke xiii, 34).

All the Evangelists regard the cross as central. The life of love leads up to it, the resurrection is its consequence. And it is in the passion story that the interlacing filaments are most frequently discernible. If St. John omits the agony in the garden, he records the soul-distress of Jesus (xii, 27; xiii, 21). If he does not describe the Feast of Remembrance, he tells of the Memorial Supper (xiii, 2 f.), and imparts in anticipation (vi, 48-56) the significance which the Lord conferred upon it in the words of institution. If he calls upon us to behold the essential glory of the Sole-begotten, he tells us also of the Saviour's weariness, His tears, His temptations, His torturing thirst (iv, 6, xi, 35, xiv, 30, xix, 28). On the other hand, both Matthew and Luke report words which enshrine the full doctrine of our Lord's Deity as it is set forth in the Gospel according to St. John (*e.g.*, Matt. xi, 27, Luke x, 22). In each of the four Gospels we are confronted with the same Christ.

Ignatius of Antioch, "the successor of St. Paul," as he ventured to style himself, wrote a number of Epistles to the Churches on his way to a Roman martyrdom (*c.* 110). These Epistles are saturated with Johannine thought and phraseology. Dr. Burney extracts from them 36 reminiscences of the teaching of the Fourth Gospel, and adds to these 11 allusions to the First Epistle of John. He writes: "Ignatius's knowledge of the

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\* Compare, for example: Matthew iv, 23, 24; viii, 16; ix, 35; xi, 5, 20 f.; xiv, 2, 14, 35; xv, 30; xix, 2; xxi, 14; with John ii, 23; iv, 45; vi, 2; vii, 3, 31; x, 32; xi, 47; xii, 37; xx, 30; xxi, 25.

Fourth Gospel . . . seems to be proved to demonstration." \* Similarly, Canon Streeter, speaking of the relation of Ignatius to the Fourth Gospel, declares that "his whole outlook and his theology have been profoundly influenced by the study of this Gospel." One illustration will suffice: "I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham. And I desire the drink of God, the blood of Him who is undying love and eternal life." This recalls John vi, 33, 48, 54.

Papias, who wrote soon after the close of the first century † and is described by Irenæus as "a hearer of John, a companion of Polycarp and a man of the olden time," made use, according to Eusebius, of "testimonies from the First Epistle of John." §

Polycarp, who died in extreme old age (A.D. 155), wrote many Epistles to the Churches. Of these only one remains, a letter to the Philippians, dated by Bishop Lightfoot about the year A.D. 110. This Epistle has several allusions to the First Epistle of John, as, for example: "Every one that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is Antichrist; and whosoever confesseth not the testimony of the cross is of the devil."

As it is practically certain that the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John are by the same writer, and were published together, the witness of Papias and of Polycarp indirectly confirms the former.

The early Gnostics, Basileides, Valentinus, Heracleon, took

\* *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 153-171.

† *The Four Gospels*, p. 455.

‡ Dr. Sanday places it even earlier. He says: "The natural date for the extracts in this chapter seems to me to be *circa* 100." *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 251.

§ From a much-discussed passage in Papias' *Expositions*, Eusebius concludes that at the close of the first century there were two Johns, both of note in the Church, who lived and died in Ephesus. This is quite likely: the name John was as common among the Jews as it is with us. But, so far as we are able to judge, there was only one person in Ephesus of such high authority as is evidenced by the Johannine writings—and that one was the son of Zebedee, disciple and apostle.

It would be a mistake to think that when Polycrates says that St. John wore the "petalon"—the priestly mitre with the golden seal, "Holiness to Jehovah"—he was referring to the Aaronic priesthood in any sense other than figurative. He probably meant that John, "the head of the Church in Asia," was in the Christian Church what the High Priest in Israel had been. There may also have been an allusion to the holy character of the disciple of love—he wore the Lamb's name upon his brow.

notice of the Fourth Gospel because of what they deemed its attitude to "the true gnosis," an attitude outwardly similar to their own, but in many important respects different. Basileides flourished about 130, Valentinus after 140; the writings of Heracleon date from the first half of the second century. Basileides, in the few pages of his writings which remain, refers to the Fourth Gospel; of Valentinus Westcott says: "The whole system of Valentinus is unintelligible to me unless the Gospel of St. John is presupposed." Heracleon wrote a commentary on this Gospel.

In a collection of papyri purchased from a dealer in 1934 were some fragments of a life of Christ. These were apparently portions of an early Gospel, designed on much the same lines as the canonical Gospels. This copy was made "most likely before the end of the first century . . . (it) can hardly be later than the early years of the second century." This Gospel, so far as the fragment which has been preserved indicates, has almost no affinity with the Synoptics, but its relation to the Fourth Gospel is "obvious and palpable." The question rises: Does the author of this Gospel quote from St. John? or do the Fourth Gospel and this unknown writing both rest on an earlier stratum of tradition? Perhaps the true answer would be that the Unknown Gospel derives largely from the teaching of St. John, which must have been widely diffused throughout the Church.

An unpublished fragment of a manuscript of the Fourth Gospel, purchased in Egypt in 1920 and examined in 1935 by C. H. Roberts,\* is thought to be "the earliest known fragment of any part of the New Testament and probably the earliest witness to the existence of the Gospel according to St. John." We find it circulating in Middle Egypt in the first half of the second century. The verses preserved in this fragment are John xviii, 31-33, 37-38.

Justin Martyr (*fl.* 146) has a distinct reference to our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus: "For Christ said, Except ye be born again ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. But that it is impossible for those who have been once born to enter into their mother's womb is clear to all."

Tatian, a disciple of Justin, composed a Harmony of the Four Gospels by which we see that those under his hand were practi-

\* Both of these Fragments were published by the Trustees of the British Museum, 1935

cally identical with our own. This Harmony opens with the sentence, "In the beginning was the Word"; and, as we have indicated, it contains the entire Gospel according to St. John.

Irenæus (*fl.* 180) quotes frequently from the Fourth Gospel, and tells us definitely that "John the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on His breast, put forth his Gospel while he abode in Ephesus in Asia."

We need go no farther. In the last quarter of the second century of our era the Gospel according to John was received as authentic by the Church in every province of the Empire. The evidence of its distribution from 170 to 200 is summed up by Dr. Sanday in these terms: "Irenæus and the Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, Heracleon in Italy, Tertullian at Carthage, Polycrates at Ephesus, Theophilus at Antioch, Tatian at Rome and in Syria, Clement at Alexandria. The strategical positions are occupied, one might say, all over the Empire. In the great majority of cases there is not a hint of dissent."\*

Eusebius confirms this pronouncement, and assures us that both the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John were accepted without controversy, not only by his own contemporaries, but also by the ancients.† From that date until quite recent times no serious doubt was cast upon the authenticity of this Gospel which Ernesti has described as "the heart of Christ." Theodor Keim, alluding to the criticism of the Fourth Gospel, declares that "our age has cancelled the judgment of centuries." He implies that it has been reserved for the last century or so to cast doubt on the authenticity of this important work. Perhaps we may judge that Dr. Keim's assertion is too unqualified with regard to the early centuries. On account of the use which Gnostics and Montanists made of the Fourth Gospel, a slight degree of hesitation in granting to it full canonical status was observed, especially in the West. But those who demurred were few, and their objections were quickly overruled.‡

\* *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 238.

† *H.E.*, iii, 24.

‡ The Johannine tradition, as we have seen, is consistent and strong; and there is little to set against it. Two doubtful notices which found themselves on Papias, but come respectively from the seventh and the ninth century, affirm the martyrdom of John the Apostle. This is, so far, confirmed by the Syriac martyrology of date 411, and the statement of Aphrahat under the date 343, that John "trode in the footsteps of Christ." But these are too recent to carry conviction, nor are they consistent with themselves.

But, says Keim, "our age has cancelled the judgment of centuries." This statement is not so convincing now as it may have been some years ago. It is true that for a generation or two many New Testament scholars have been unwilling to endorse the historical verity of the Fourth Gospel. But there is some evidence that the tide has begun to turn.

Let me give only one illustration, the latest so far as I am aware. Dr. J. O. F. Murray, formerly Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge, now Dean of Ely Cathedral, who has spent forty years in the study and exposition of the Gospel according to St. John, has only some months ago brought out a valuable commentary upon it.\* "In this book," it is said, "the author has tried to gather up the fruits of a long life, a great part of which has been spent in trying to share with others the lessons that St. John has to teach one who believes with ever-deepening conviction that the Gospel does indeed come to us direct from him." There are others who share with Dr. Murray this "ever-deepening conviction."

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Rev. W. J. DOWNES, M.A., B.D.) said: The paper we are about to hear has been selected as the Dr. A. T. Schofield Memorial Lecture. Dr. Schofield was in the tradition of Luke, the beloved physician. A well-known medical practitioner, he was also a Christian writer, and active otherwise in Christian work and testimony. Associated, too, with this Institute as one of its Vice-Presidents, and interested always in its proceedings, it is altogether fitting that he should still be remembered in connection with its work. His interests were many sided, but centred most in the Holy Scriptures. The present paper is on a subject that would certainly have appealed to him, and it is also by an author whom he would have regarded as a kindred spirit.

I would first of all express my great appreciation of the paper and thank Dr. M'Intyre for his able work. Such questions as the paper has raised in my mind are of a very minor character, such as, *e.g.*, the statement at the top of page 253, that John xxi, 22 and 23 depict John as already aged. I do not see how the suggestion of age is

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\* *Jesus According to John*, 1936.

got from the verses in question ; and on the other hand, the probability that Jesus, James and John were cousins according to the flesh strongly suggests that they were much of the same age.

Mention is made on page 254 of the difficulty of remembering long passages of some verbal statement after the lapse of years. Supplementary to what Dr. M'Intyre says, it should be remembered that with the people concerned the power of memory would normally be very much greater than with people of our own Western day and generation. The faculty of memory had much greater cultivation among them because they depended more upon it. There was no Press ; no cheap books ; and very restricted access to any written word. Memory was largely called on to supply accurately in daily conversation and discussion the sacred words of the Law and the Prophets, and the Traditions of the Elders ; also the details of business transactions. When, therefore, the Holy Spirit, the Remembrancer, came to them in accordance with the promise, He came to enhance a faculty already trained to a high degree of usefulness. Moreover, those earliest disciples were not poverty-stricken, illiterate people. When they were described as " ignorant and unlearned men " the words meant not what we to-day would take them to mean, but simply that they had not had a university education and were not trained expositors of the sacred Scriptures and the Traditions. They normally possessed a fair degree of culture ; they could read and write. It was most likely, therefore, that they would make notes of some sort so that the striking sayings and deeds of Jesus might be constantly freshened in their memories.

The last paragraph and the footnote on page 258 draw attention to the difference of emphasis between the first three and the fourth Gospels. The difference, of course, strikes the reader at once, and the reasons for it given in the paper are perfectly true. I believe that yet another reason is to be found in the fact that the Synoptists did not need to emphasise the Deity of Jesus because they were so close to Him in time when their Gospels were written. His impression upon them, especially in the closing weeks of His earthly life, had been so vivid, so overwhelming, that they all spontaneously and heartily confessed Him as " my Lord and my God." When they wrote the Deity of their beloved Lord was so clear, so obvious, so unquestionable in their minds that they felt no great concern to

emphasise it. But after the lapse of years, when John came to write his supplementary Gospel, the situation had changed. The idea of Incarnation as applied to Jesus had become increasingly difficult because the new generation of converts had not the same overwhelming awareness of the Deity of the Lord. So John writes with that special emphasis. And it is significant that the critics who would destroy the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel are chiefly those for whom the idea of an Incarnation, of the Deity of Christ, is unacceptable.

I again express my deep appreciation of Dr. M'Intyre's paper, and ask you to accord to him, as I am sure you are most keen to do, a very cordial vote of thanks.

Dr. J. BARCROFT ANDERSON said : I realise that my knowledge of the English language is limited : but so far as that knowledge goes I understand Dr. M'Intyre in his paper to represent John's Gospel to have been of human origin. That John used his own judgment as to what he inserted, and as to what he did not insert, that he relied on human memory. That is a view which, I believe, that most of you do not accept. If you believe, as you do, that from Pentecost till the time of the end of Acts, the Apostles, and members of the Ecclesia of God, spoke messages from God in languages they themselves knew not and could not interpret, you can have no difficulty in believing that the Author of John's Gospel was not John, but the Holy Spirit of God. You accept the words of 2 Peter i, 21 :—" This primary thing get to know, that every prophecy of Scripture from personal release (or origin) never came into being. Because, *not* by will of man arose prophecy at any time, but by Holy Spirit being carried-along they spake from God, though men." If you carry anything along, that thing you carry has no say as to where you carry it.

Mr. SIDNEY COLLETT said : Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen : I am sure we all thank Dr. M'Intyre for his paper and Principal Curr for reading it. There are, however, certain statements in the paper that call for comment.

On page 251 he tells of a legend which says " the Leaders of the

Church in Asia urged John to commit to the written page what he had often communicated to them in speech. He hesitated; but finally consented, *they on their part promising to assist him.*"

On page 252 he speaks of the time when John is about to bring his *recollections* to a close.

On page 254 He speaks of "the difficulty of *remembering* long passages, etc."

Now, these and other similar passages raise the whole question of the inspiration of the Bible, and, in these days of modernistic teaching, we ought to be very definite on the subject. I am not prepared to believe that in the Bible we have just what the writers happened to *remember*, even with the "assistance" of others. The Bible makes it perfectly clear that what we have in the Holy Book is not the mere "recollections" of a human mind but what holy men of God spake as they were moved ("driven" is the actual word as in Acts xxvii, 17) by the "Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i, 21). So that we have the all-embracing statement in 2 Tim. iii, 16 that:—  
"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

I would like to ask Dr. M'Intyre: How did Moses write the account of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis, concerning things that happened before man with a "memory" was created? and, again, how did the Evangelists record the thrice-repeated prayer of our Lord in Gethsemane, when the only three disciples who were anywhere near, were sound asleep? (Matt. xxvi, 36-45).

There is, however, one passage (Luke i, 3) which, from our authorised version, seems to imply that Luke wrote his gospel as a result of his own natural understanding of the things of which he wrote. But the words rendered "from the very first" should be "from above." That Greek word "anóthen" is never elsewhere rendered "from the very first," but always "from above," as in John viii, 23, where Christ said: "Ye are from beneath I am from above."

In that passage, accordingly, Luke tells us plainly that he got all his information from above, meaning by Divine inspiration!

Now, I do not suggest that Dr. M'Intyre intended to question the inspiration of the Bible, but I do submit that his words should have been more guarded. In the phraseology which he uses, he places too much stress upon the *human* element, and not enough on the absolute controlling influence and the full inspiration of the

Holy Spirit, whereby alone the infallibility of the Bible could be secured.

Mr. WILLIAM C. EDWARDS said: This is a most interesting paper, but I feel that we must lay far more emphasis upon the help and inspiration of the Holy Spirit; Our Lord promised this in John xiv, 26, "He—the Holy Spirit—would," said our Lord, "bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever I have said unto you." I assume that we all believe that Matthew xxviii, 16–20 is identical with 1 Cor. xv, 6. There we are told that at one time five hundred saw the Risen Lord. To these must be added an innumerable company of men and women who heard Our Lord's discourses, and saw His Miracles, while some were amongst those who were healed. With what joy, mingled with pride, would they often tell their experiences and repeat His words. The stories of these witnesses were again repeated by their hearers. After a time such narratives became quite stereotyped, or, shall we coin a word, and call them gramophoned? We know that many wrote out their experiences and memories of Our Lord's discourses so that there is quite a crop of so-called "logia." When reading Matthew's Gospel, I feel all the time that we have here a Levite, not a Galilean, but one who has become an Official (Publican) there, probably having property in the district. He seems especially to give us much of Our Lord's Galilean Ministry (*e.g.*, chapters v, vi and vii). The Evangelist Mark is generally conceded as giving us the story from the Apostle Peter's own lips. He shows how Christ "went about doing good" (Acts x, and 38–43). There can be no reasonable doubt that the third Evangelist was the Beloved Physician Luke, for it has the peculiar charm and style which seems to mark the writings of medical men of all ages. When we come to the Fourth Gospel, I feel that here we can see that the Holy Spirit who had controlled the writings of the three preceding Gospels now brings records, events and discourses which were not included in the narratives of the other Evangelists.

Some years ago, I discovered that it was possible to prove that Our Lord's Ministry had the cyclic number of 1,290 days. Now supposing that each day were recorded, *e.g.*, the discourses in Matthew v, vi and vii, there might have been thousands of chapters in each Gospel. Supposing that even only a small amount of Our

Lord's discourses and healings were given day by day, the book would indeed be enormous in its size. Happily, the Holy Spirit has condensed this vast Ministry down to the 89 chapters contained in the four Gospels. Should anyone ask me, "How did John get chapter iii, which gives the private interview by night with Nicodemus?" I should at once answer that this was probably retold many times by Nicodemus himself. The woman of Sychar could very well have given her own story (chapter iv) in the great revival in Samaria, when the two Apostles, Peter and John, went to that city (Acts viii, 14). But how shall we account for the sublime chapter xvii, where language is used which we must feel is far beyond all the powers of human composition? It is unfortunate that very few people seem to remember that most important post-Resurrection Ministry of Our Blessed Lord which is referred to in Acts i, 3, where we find that during the forty days in which Christ often showed Himself to his disciples, He spoke to them of "things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." It was the Emmaüs journey (Luke xxiv, 44-48) all over again, not for the benefit of two disciples alone but for the eleven. To such also may belong those special revelations which Christ gave to the Apostle Paul (Gal. i, 12).

I regret very much that the Lecturer has referred so briefly to the Diatessaron of Tatian, which gives a complete answer to those who date the fourth Gospel long after the death of the Beloved Disciple. I hope that some day the original Greek writings of Tatian may be discovered. Meanwhile, there is a cheap and handy translation from the Arabic version which will show how foolish are the attacks of those who seek to discredit the authorship of the fourth Gospel by the aged Apostle John. To my thinking, such men are not inspired by the Holy Spirit but by the Spirit of the Anti-Christ.

Mr. GEORGE BREWER said: We owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. M'Intyre for his valuable paper, in which he has proved by evidence external and internal the authenticity of the fourth Gospel.

As to the external evidence, the testimony of Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple and friend of the Apostle John, while it does not stand alone, should be quite sufficient. He says, speaking of John in connection with the gospel bearing his name, "After the death of Domitian, having returned to Ephesus,

he was induced to write concerning the Divinity of Christ, co-eternal with the Father." Domitian died A.D. 96, and it was by the persecuting edicts of this emperor that John had been exiled to the Isle of Patmos.

The internal evidence, so copiously detailed by Dr. M'Intyre, is overwhelming, and should be sufficient to convince anyone who has no ulterior motive for rejecting this gospel.

The Apostle John, who is generally admitted to have been the disciple most intimate with our Lord, had for many years been ministering to the Churches of Asia Minor (the fruits of the labours of the Apostle Paul), and, by his long Christian experience, was enabled under the power of the Holy Spirit to reveal much of our Lord's life and testimony which was absent from the earlier gospels. As, in the course of more than half a century, many heresies had sprung up concerning the person and work of our Lord, the Apostle was urged to commit the substance of his ministry to writing, so that the Churches of the present and succeeding generations might possess an inspired record.

The fourth Gospel, while in perfect harmony with the three earlier gospels, takes a much wider view of our Lord's ministry.

Matthew reveals our Lord as the promised Messiah to Israel, tracing His earthly lineage to King David; Mark, as the Servant of Jehovah, commences with His public ministry; Luke, as the Son of Man records His human ancestry to Adam; while John, who commences his Gospel with the words "In the beginning was The Word," emphasises His essential Deity and Eternal Sonship, by Whom and for Whom all things were created.

John dwells on the spiritual aspect of the Kingdom of God, entrance to which can only be through the new birth; the universality of the gospel of God's grace; the oneness of the members of the Body of Christ, under the figure of One Flock and One Shepherd gathered from both within and without the Jewish fold, and the promise of their going to be with Him where He is; also the promise of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to guide, comfort and teach them during their earthly pilgrimage.

Mr. W. E. LESLIE wrote: The chief interest of the fourth Gospel is undoubtedly devotional and theological. But it has many

interesting literary features. The stylistic resemblances to the Johannine Epistles are marked. They stand out more vividly if stated in relative form. Thus the Greek word rendered "truth," is found 1.5 times per thousand words in the Synoptics, 15.4 in John, 40 in his Epistles, as against 4.6 times per 1,000 in the rest of the New Testament. For this calculation the number of Greek words in the Synoptics is taken as approximately 44,622, in John 15,491, in his Epistles 2,465, and in the rest of the New Testament 127,342.

John's writings are marked by a literary parallelism that may be a development of "Hebrew Parallelism." A simple example is found in 1 John ii, 19 :

They went out from us  
but they were not of us  
for if they had been of us  
they would have continued with us.

More complicated is the arrangement of the clauses in Revelation iv, 8-11. In the well-known visions of the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls, we have the same thing extended to whole sections. In the *Bible League Quarterly* for October, 1931, it was contended that the alleged dislocation in chapter xx, so much insisted upon by Charles and Oman, is in reality part of a literary design running through the entire book.

Turning to the Gospel we find simple parallelism of phrase almost everywhere. The apparent give and take of conversation in chapter vi will be found, upon close examination, to fall into a series of progressively ordered "panels." Chapters xiv, 25 to xviii, 1 are marked by the recurring phrase "these things have I spoken" ("These things spake Jesus" in xvii, 1 and "When Jesus had spoken these words" in xviii, 1).

But, as in the Apokalypse, we meet also with a larger design. The inverse arrangement of the "signs" (whether reckoned as seven or eight) has long been known. What is the connection of these signs with the surrounding matter? The first sign is preceded by the incident of Nathanael, the last by that of Thomas. A number of parallels may be noted between them. Can similar relations be discovered in other parts of the book? Taking the arrangement of

the signs as a guide, the middle point of the book is in the beginning of chapter vi. The signs before that point have a more Hebraic outlook, while those following are more universal. In the case of Nathanael, we have the Messiah, the King of Israel; in that of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." In the first case we have the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. In the second there is the blessedness of those who have not seen and yet have believed.

In the Apokalypse we have a Prologue leading to an Introduction, the boundary being difficult to define. The same remark applies to the conclusion and the Epilogue. In the Gospel we meet with the same difficulty both at the beginning and the end.

These things indicate that there is a literary structure underlying the Gospel similar to that which has been suggested for the Apokalypse. If it could be worked out, it would be decisive for the question of authorship, and would doubtless release a flood of new light from this wonderful Gospel.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

I much regret my enforced absence from the Meeting held on May 3rd. I thank Mr. Downes and Mr. Brewer for their consideration; Mr. Curr also for his kindness in reading the paper for me.

Mr. Downes suggests that I represent St. John as already aged when Our Lord spoke of His return by the shore of the Lake. What I meant was that he was already aged when the chapter was written. I thought I had made that clear.

One or two of those who took part in the discussion seem to me to err, if they will allow me to say so, by minimising or ignoring the human aspects of the Holy Scriptures. One may draw a parallel from the controversies regarding Our Lord's Person which agitated the Early Church. The formal conclusion arrived at was that our Lord was at once Man of our manhood, and very God of very God. When, at a later time the Humanity of the Saviour was reduced in order that His Divinity might be advanced, confusion came into this all-important doctrine.

A similar confusion may arise from a defective view of inspiration. But we shall never make the Deity of Our Lord more sure by

depressing the Manhood, nor the Divinity of the Scriptures more evident by our elimination of the human factors.

Dr. J. Bancroft Anderson says plainly, "The Author of John's Gospel was not John, but the Holy Spirit of God." The Scriptural formula does not bear this out. What we do read by the grace of the Spirit is, "Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (R.V.). The revelation came from God, but it was ministered by men—human hands and lips, human hearts and minds were engaged in the great work of communicating the divine revelation to men.

Mr. Sidney Collett says quite rightly that "What we have in the Holy Book is not the mere 'recollections' of a human mind." But he may have noticed that I speak expressly of "the promise of Christ, that the Comforter would strengthen recollection." And this brings us back to Our Lord's own saying, "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

Mr. Edwards complains that I do not say enough about the action of the Holy Spirit in the creation of St. John's Gospel. For more than fifty years I have consistently affirmed and reaffirmed the plenary inspiration of Scripture, and hope to continue to do so till the end. But Mr. Edwards surely does not consider that my business in writing this paper was to move altogether along the lines of history. It is true that the historical and spiritual lines of argument are concurrent, but they should not be confused.

I might draw attention to other points but I have been asked by the Secretary to be as brief as possible in my reply.