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Authenticity of John's Gospel : deduced



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THE AUTHENTICITY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL,  
AS SHOWN FROM ITS COINCIDING WITH AND ILLUSTRATING  
THE SYNOPTICS.





# THE AUTHENTICITY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL,

DEDUCED FROM

INTERNAL EVIDENCE,

WITH

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS

DERIVED FROM

THE MODE OF TEACHING, THE STYLE, THE DOCTRINE OF  
THE LOGOS, AND OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.

BY

JAMES ORR.

---

*ὁ ἐωράκαμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν.*—I JOHN i., 3.

“Cur ita crediderim, nisi quid te detinet, audi.”—HORACE, EPISTOLA, ii.

“Conjectures and hypotheses are the creatures of men, and will always be found very unlike the creatures of God.”—NEWTON.

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## P R E F A C E .

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THAT there is a growing tendency at present amongst the leaders of advanced religious thought in these countries to discredit the Authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, must, I think, be evident to any one who is at all conversant with this class of literature. This tendency, originating with the publication of the works of Strauss, De Wette, Baur, and other German critics, received a great impulse from the appearance, some three years since, of the learned work of the lamented Rev. John James Tayler, late Principal of Manchester New College, London, entitled, "An Attempt to ascertain the character of the Fourth Gospel; especially in its relation to the three first,"—a work most favourably reviewed by some of our periodicals of great authority. And since that time this tendency has been confirmed by the publication of Dr. Davidson's very learned and valuable "Introduction to the study of the New Testament," in which he decides unfavourably as to the authenticity of this, as well as several other portions of our Christian records. Whilst on the other side, judgment has been allowed to go almost by default, no attempt having been made, so far as this writer is aware, to defend the authenticity of this Gospel, if we except

Mr. Rowland's "Evidence from Tradition and from the Fathers applied in support of the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel."

In opposition, therefore, to so many learned authorities, whose opinion is confessedly deserving of the most serious consideration, it may seem presumptuous in the present writer to enter upon that defence. But *alteram partem audi* is a good principle of British justice. And if it be the glory of Protestantism to refuse to subject the individual judgment to church authority, we should be equally careful to "Prove all things," and to assert what Jeremy Taylor calls "the liberty of prophesying" in those matters that concern the very foundations of our faith.

With this view, the author, in the early part of last year, published a series of letters on the above subject in the pages of "The Inquirer," with the kind permission of the Editor. These were hastily written with no view to ulterior publication, but simply meant to record his dissent from the conclusion arrived at by Mr. Taylor and others, and to assign his reasons for that dissent. So much had been written, of late years, on either side, in the pages of our periodicals, that he had been led for some time previously to devote considerable attention to the subject; and somewhat dissatisfied with the arguments on both sides he had subjected the Gospels themselves to a minute and searching examination, carefully collating the Three looked upon as the more authentic, and comparing their statements of the *facts* and *circumstances* in the life of Jesus with those recorded in the Fourth. The result was that amidst many acknowledged discrepancies—discrepancies, indeed, most difficult to be accounted for—he was much struck with numerous evidently undesigned

coincidences. Statements in the Synoptical accounts that, taken by themselves, had seemed unlikely or even contradictory, had, by the testimony of the Fourth witness, been either reconciled or rendered credible. In some cases, whereas the former were evidently derived from the testimony of others, the testimony of the latter was as evidently that of an eye-witness. These were, to his own mind at least, such marks and tokens of credibility as could not be resisted. In a British court of justice, where the object of both judge and jury is to weigh evidence, and from differing and seemingly discordant testimony to elicit truth, the evidence of a witness that explains such testimony, and all unwittingly corroborates some previous statements,—such evidence is usually credited, being supposed to bear upon itself the stamp and impress of its own trustworthiness. So it seemed to him in this case. How far he is right in thinking so it will be for the reader to decide.

In his reading on the subject he had never seen these coincidences pointed out as they seemed to him to merit. The discrepancies had been relied on, and as he thinks magnified, as destructive of all trustworthiness in the later historian. By his letters he wished also to draw to the former the attention of more learned and able commentators than himself. Having failed seemingly in this, he would now submit this argument from coincidences, with his answers to objections, in a more regular and appropriate form. At the conclusion of the letters, some correspondents, personally unknown to him, in both the sister countries of England and Scotland, were pleased to express their satisfaction with his argument, and their strong desire that he would embody it in some more

permanent and accessible form. This he has now endeavoured to do in a manner more suited to the great importance of the subject, adding such new matter as seemed worthy to be noted, considering such objections of Dr. Davidson, Strauss, and others, as seemed to him of most importance, but carefully avoiding any such Greek citations and critical discussions as would only tend to embarrass the English reader. The question is one, not for the learned exclusively, but which the author would submit to the calm good sense, and discriminating judgment of the British Public.

CLONMEL, *March*, 1870.

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# THE AUTHENTICITY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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DIVERSITY of statement is the most marked characteristic of all human testimony. Anyone familiar with the process of sifting evidence in a court of justice is fully aware of this. No two independent parties, however truthful, will give, in all respects, a precisely similar account of the same circumstances. Such is the diversity of mind, that that which strikes one the most forcibly, fails, it may be, to arrest the attention of the other. Difference of position in point of observation contributes to augment this diversity. Even a difference in point of time, the influence of reflection, the accession of new information, will lead the same witness to vary in his own testimony. One witness possessed of a more retentive memory, a more lively imagination, or a greater command of language, will leave on the minds of his auditors quite a different impression from another witness. And so well recognized is this law of evidence, that a too uniform coincidence begets suspicion, lest it should be the result of a corrupt collusion. Whilst, on the other hand, the diversity of statement as to facts and events may become so great as to be absolutely irreconcilable and contradictory.

Now the question to be solved is this:—Are the facts and events in the life of Jesus, as recorded in the Fourth Gospel, so entirely different from those recorded in the others, as to be thus absolutely irreconcilable? That the whole style and conception of the work is different we admit; so much so as to prove the writer to be quite a distinct and independent witness; or one at least who has largely benefited, in his conception of Christ's character and office, *by time, more mature reflection, and experience.* We also admit that the style itself, properly so called, so widely differs from that of another book of the New Testament—the Apocalypse—usually ascribed to the same writer, by the early Church, as justly to excite grave suspicions that both could not be the composition of the same

author. The difference of the mode of teaching attributed to Jesus by the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel is at once so obvious as to strike the most careless reader. In the former, save in the sermon on the mount, and in a few like instances, Jesus is continually represented as speaking "unto *the people* in parables." In the latter, he seldom speaks in parables, though he does continually in highly figurative, symbolic, and oft impassioned language. And whilst the Synoptists are careful—at least two of them—to trace his lineal descent from Abraham the father of their nation, and from David, their most warlike monarch, in order to prove him to be "the righteous Branch" of whom their Prophets prophesied; whilst these give us a comparatively human view of the character and office of the Christ, as if his mission had been simply "to have redeemed Israel;" the author of the Fourth Gospel gives us a highly spiritual and exalted view of it, though one also sanctioned by prophetic language that Jesus was "the light of the world,"—"the true vine" of God's planting in the land of Palestine—"the bread of God that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world,"—and even "the *Logos*" or "word of God" that once spoke unto the fathers by the Prophets, but was now "made" or revealed in "flesh" and "dwelt amongst us" in the person of this Jesus of Nazareth "full of grace and truth."

The explanation of these differences, and the reply to some objections that have been raised on them, to the authenticity of John's narrative, will be reserved for the second part of this treatise. The first part will be devoted to a consideration of the facts themselves of Jesus' life,—not certainly with a view to present such a harmony of the gospels as has been frequently attempted, but to see whether there be anything in the facts so irreconcilable as to render the evidence flagrantly contradictory; and to note especially those diversities of statement that a little consideration may happily fit into each other, and those brief coincidences, which when evidently undesigned, bear with them, more than any concurrent statements, a conviction of their truth.

And here it may be remarked that in the high court of criticism, Gospel witnesses are to be judged of, as it is now generally admitted, by the same rules of evidence as we judge of other witnesses. Their assumed infallibility can no longer be allowed to cover or excuse manifest inconsistencies. The same, but certainly not a greater degree of rigour, is to be applied to their statements, that we apply to those of ordinary witnesses in a court of justice. A

witness is not to be discredited, and put out of court, because he gives us more enlarged views, and more distinct conceptions of the events in question, than those who have preceded him, which may have been on his part the result of a more extended range of vision, and more mature experience. And if the strongly concurrent testimony of the first three witnesses in this case has excited no more unfavourable suspicion than that they have copied from a previous record; or, as it seems more likely, that they concurred in embodying in their simple narratives those oral traditions of the life which constant repetition had previously stereotyped; is our fourth witness to be discredited, because, writing after the lapse of another generation, in a country far distant from his native Galilee, amongst a people with, to him, new modes of thought, and thus with much more enlarged experience, he has recast for us, with far higher views, the whole story of the Saviour's life?

That there is a tendency on the part of critics to exaggerate the importance of Gospel discrepancies, appears from the fact that they dwell almost entirely on these, to the neglect of the coincidences. Who that has read the able, searching, but deeply hostile criticisms of Strauss on the Gospel Records, can fail to have been struck with their uniform one-sidedness? He exhausts invention in impeaching the credibility of the witnesses. And even in the last learned work of the Rev. J. J. Tayler—a man distinguished for his integrity, Christian moderation, and exceeding fairness to an opponent—in the first section of his work on the Fourth Gospel we have this very strong statement. Speaking of the difference betwixt it and the Synoptics, he writes:—

“This difference goes much deeper than mere diversity of style or individuality of conception—the mere omission, or insertion, or simple re-arrangement of particular facts and particular sayings; for in these more superficial aspects the three first Gospels also differ very considerably from each other. The difference between the Fourth Gospel and the other three affects the whole conception of the person and teaching of Christ, and the fundamental distribution of the events of his public ministry.”

That it seemingly “affects the teaching of Christ” has already been admitted; and the reason of that will be hereafter explained, as before intimated. But that it “affects the whole conception of *the person*,” save to those who see in the Logos a proof of Christ's Deity, that surely is an exaggeration. For in John's Gospel, in the very first chapter which speaks of him as an embodiment of the

Logos, in the 45th verse, he is called by one of his own disciples "Jesus of Nazareth, *the son of Joseph.*" Nor in this Gospel is the miraculous conception once spoken of, though Mary, as "the Mother of Jesus," is repeatedly introduced. And in the 8th chapter, verse 40th, Jesus is represented as describing himself to the Jews as "*a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God.*" And further, as to this difference affecting "*the fundamental distribution of the events of his public ministry,*"—surely all the witnesses introduce Jesus to us on the banks of Jordan in company with the Baptist, though the fourth does not actually record his baptism! All represent the Baptist, in like manner introducing him, in almost identical language, as "one mightier than himself"—one "preferred before him"—"whose shoes latchet he is unworthy to unloose," to the notice of his countrymen. All conduct him unanimously, at the close of his ministry, to the city of Jerusalem, amidst the applauding expectations of excited thousands,—to the hall of Pilate and the cross of Calvary, through the hostility of the Jewish priesthood, as they all testify to his betrayal by one of his own followers in the garden of Gethsemane. And all testify to his interment in the sepulchre of Joseph, and concur in representing him as having arisen from that sepulchre and being afterwards seen by many of his followers. And is it therefore just to say that their other differences affect "*the fundamental distribution of the events of his public ministry*" and life? Whether such is the fact, will appear still more fully from the following coincidences.

# PART I.

## COINCIDENCES IN THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE CHRIST.

THE records of the Baptist's testimony to Jesus as the Christ, as contained in the first three Gospels, are curiously coincident, and are manifestly derived from a common source. That Matthew, or either of his co-evangelists was present on the occasion, is no where intimated by them. Matthew, a tax-gatherer in Capernaum, was in all likelihood, at that time "sitting at the receipt of custom." Luke records the story admittedly at second hand. The Baptist, long before these men had been called to be disciples of Jesus, had been shut up by Herod in the prison of Macherus, on the Eastern side of the Dead Sea. And it is not likely that Jesus himself had narrated to his own disciples this eulogium of the Baptist on himself.

The Evangelist Mark, however—such is the tradition of the early Church—wrote under the supervision, or at least reported the testimony of the Apostle Peter. And though, according to this testimony, Peter was not then called to be his follower, yet if we turn to John's Gospel—i., 40—we will have little difficulty in determining its source. There we find that not only Peter, but Andrew his brother, and a third party, whose name is not given, but who was in all likelihood John the Evangelist himself, were present on the banks of Jordan, and "heard John—the Baptist—speak," when "looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God.'" Yea further, two of these three—as it appears from verse 35th—had been disciples of the Baptist long before they became disciples of Jesus. Philip also, another disciple as we learn from the same chapter, was at this time attending on the Baptist's ministry. And so was Nathaniel of Cana, whom some commentators identify with Bartholomew. So that we have no difficulty, not only in tracing the source from which the first three

Evangelists derived their account of the Baptist's ministry, but we learn the cause which first drew the attention of these men to Jesus himself, and disposed them afterwards to leave their occupations, and become his followers. And had John not written, doubts might more justly have been thrown on the Baptist's testimony, by modern critics, as then these might have asked, From what source did Matthew, Mark, and Luke derive their record of it?

As to the difference betwixt John's account of the Baptist's preaching and that given us by the Synoptists, of which some critics have made much, the latter, it is evident, give us an outline of the Baptist's teaching generally, while the former confines himself to his testimony to the Christ. And as to the terms in which, according to the two histories, the Baptist speaks of him, the language presents simply that variety of form, yet similarity of substance, that usually characterizes the evidence of true witnesses. The Synoptists uniformly make the Baptist speak of Christ as "one mightier than I"—"There cometh one mightier than I after me, *the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose*"—Mark i., 7. And John attributes these words to him—i., 26, 27—"There standeth one among you whom ye know not; he it is who coming after me is *preferred before me; whose shoes latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*" Here indeed there is so much of a coincidence as might lead to the supposition that the author of the Fourth Gospel saw the others, and quoted from them with a difference; but he gives us so much additional matter, and in so different a form, that he must be treated as an independent witness. Thus, he tells us that this was the Baptist's testimony to a deputation of "Priests and Levites from Jerusalem," who had been sent down to ask him, "Who art thou?" "He confessed and denied not, but confessed I am not the Christ." And when pressed further to explain himself—"that we may give an answer to them that sent us"—he replied, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah." Now, the Synoptists tell us nothing of this deputation from Jerusalem, but they all represent the Baptist as applying to his own mission and office this quotation from Isaiah. Nay, more—for Matthew tells us that it was when he "saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism" that he thus saluted them: "O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come"—and uttered the above testimony to the mission of the Christ. And are not these Pharisees and Sadducees of whom

Matthew speaks precisely that deputation from Jerusalem of whom John tells us, though he does not ascribe the same violence of language to the Baptist?

And yet we are told by Mr. Tayler, in the work above referred to, page 4, that "the Fourth Gospel stands out in decided contrast and *contradiction* to the three first." How far there is a "contradiction" *here* it will be for the reader to decide. To me there is a greater one amongst the first three themselves; for Luke tells us that it was "to *the multitude* that came forth to be baptized of him" that the Baptist addressed that cutting speech—"O, generation of vipers," &c.—a thing most unlikely; whereas Matthew confines it, with more propriety, to "the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Further, it is said by Mr. T., page as above, that the Fourth Gospel "omits all mention of the baptism of Jesus by John." True, it does not narrate the fact, but it certainly alludes to it in these words (i., 33, 34)—"But He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me—Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."

And yet again, it is said that the Fourth Gospel "represents John as saying at once, on seeing the Spirit descending on Jesus, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'" Now surely it represents no such thing. These words are addressed to that deputation of the Priests and Levites, to whom the Baptist had previously testified—"There standeth one among you whom ye know not;" for we read (i., 29, 30)—"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God; this is he'"—evidently addressing some of that deputation who had been with him on the previous day—"of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me."

It would seem from the tenor of John's Gospel that this deputation from Jerusalem had come down to Bethabara *subsequent* to the time of Christ's baptism. After this event Jesus withdrew forty days into the wilderness, as we learn from the Synoptics. That wilderness was, no doubt, a portion of the "wilderness of Judea," spoken of in Matt. iii., 1, in which John the Baptist preached. On his return from that retirement, we may suppose that Jesus again visited John on the banks of Jordan, in order to find some one to accompany him on his way back to Nazareth. On

this occasion it was that John pointed him out to the Jewish deputation, and to "two of his own disciples." And the day following, as we read—John i., 43—"Jesus would go forth to Galilee, and findeth Philip," a native of Bethsaida in Galilee—one it would seem previously known unto Jesus,—and desiring his company, saith unto him, "Follow me." Thus, these words of John to the Priests and Levites—"There standeth one among you whom ye know not"—are fully explained when we understand him to refer to the previous visit of Jesus, on which occasion John had baptized him, as related in the Synoptics, and "bare record that this is the Son of God."

Much, however, has been made of the Baptist's statement in verse 31st—"And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." This, it is said, is inconsistent with Matthew's statement, iii., 14—"But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But what does it imply? Simply that up to the period of his baptism John did not know *Jesus as the Christ*. He may have known him previously as a young man of excellent character, who had no occasion to come to him to confess his sins and be purified in the waters of the Jordan. He may have known him, as the language attributed to him by Matthew implies, to be a young man of loftier mind and purer morals than himself. Besides, Luke's history leads us to suppose that there was such previous knowledge, if not relationship, betwixt the families of John and Jesus, which will account for what is said in Matthew. And yet, until his baptism, John may have never thought of Jesus as the Christ. Even the people of Nazareth, where he had been brought up, as we learn from Luke, knew him as a young man of excellent character, and when, "as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read, they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." But when he announced himself as the party spoken of by Isaiah, they no more knew him in that capacity, but "rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill that they might cast him down headlong."

That the Baptist afterwards, shut up for months in the prison of Macherus, his bold spirit broken and subdued by his confinement and the tyranny of Herod, should have sent two of his own disciples to ask Jesus—"Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" seems to me not so unaccountable as it has been



represented. Previous to John's imprisonment, according to the Synoptics, Jesus had given few signs of that high office to which John believed him to be called. Not till after that imprisonment had Jesus entered on his Galilean ministry. In the distant Macherus tidings had reached the imprisoned Baptist of one who had left Judea, and the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and who confined his ministry to Galilee. Can we wonder at the stern old Baptist wondering whether this was he of whom he had once testified to the Priests and Levites—"After me cometh one who is mightier than I, who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire, whose fan is in his hand and will thoroughly purge his floor?" Can we not sympathize with the faltering faith of him who, as Jesus testified, once a prophet and "more than a prophet," is now as "a reed shaken with the wind?" However this may be, the seeming inconsistency here alluded to is no longer betwixt the Fourth Gospel, and the account in the Synoptics, but applies solely to the latter, and therefore requires here no further observation.

On the whole, therefore, John's evidence as to the Baptist's testimony is strictly consistent with the other evidence. And it is John alone who tells us (chapter iii.) of that noble testimony of the Prophet of the Wilderness to the rising reputation of the younger preacher, when both were still teaching in the country of Judea. When "certain Jews" came to John and thought to excite his jealousy of Jesus by saying unto him:—"Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to *him*;" the magnanimous reply was, "A man can take unto himself nothing, except it be given him from heaven; ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: *this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*"

## CHAPTER II.

## WHERE DID JESUS COMMENCE HIS MINISTRY?

ALL our historians concur in representing Galilee as the first scene of the Saviour's ministry, though they differ widely both as to *place* and *time*, John stating that his first miracle was performed at Cana, the city of Nathanael, a few days after he left the Jordan in Philip's company, perhaps, also, in company with Andrew and Peter, with Nathanael, and John himself, the disciples who may have accompanied him to the marriage; whereas Luke brings him back to "Nazareth, where he had been brought up," and there represents him as inaugurating his ministry in that very synagogue where "his custom had been to read the Scriptures," though he also intimates that he had made himself known in Capernaum previously; whilst Mark makes his first act to be the calling of Andrew and Peter, James and John, from their fishing on the Lake of Galilee; and Matthew says that, "leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim," that Isaiah's prophecy might be fulfilled. This, however, was after he had heard that John was cast into prison.

Now, though Jesus did not enter on his principal ministry in Galilee till after John's imprisonment, we cannot suppose that having been at his baptism proclaimed the Beloved of God, he would remain wholly quiescent in the interval—that he would give no sign of the divine power that actuated him. Nor have we any reason to suppose that John's imprisonment took place immediately after the baptism of Jesus. Between these two events an interval may have occurred not only of months but years. Where was Jesus during this interval? Of this period Matthew and Mark tell us nothing; but John does tell us that he was making repeated visits to Jerusalem on the occasions of the festivals, and labouring to convince the Priests and Levites there, of the truth that the Baptist had announced to them.

Is John's account, therefore, unlikely in itself, or is it *fundamentally* at variance with the other narratives? Was it Jesus' duty to retire immediately after his baptism, and to confine himself entirely to the remote Galilee? or was it his business to submit his claims to the chief rulers of his nation?—the men who had

sent that deputation to the Jordan to ask the Baptist, "Who art thou?" In his temptation in the wilderness, recorded only by the Synoptists, the Evil One suggests to him, "If thou be the Son of God cast thyself down" from a pinnacle of the temple in attestation of thy claims. His mind was evidently engrossed at this very early period with the thought of how he is to convince of his Messiahship Judea's priests. John tells us that he commenced his ministry by making repeated efforts to the same purpose, until he found, by their hostility, he was endangering his life. Then, but not till then, it was that he withdrew to Galilee, "because the Jews sought to kill him." And is there no coincidence of design in this conduct with that of the tempting thought attributed to him in the wilderness? And though the Synoptics pass over in silence this great gap in the history of the life, could Jesus have been more worthily or appropriately employed than as the Fourth Gospel represents him—discussing with the teachers of his country his claim, now so cordially admitted by us, to be the "Sent of God," "the Light of the World?"

Passing over, however, this less important coincidence betwixt this tempting thought attributed to him in the Synoptics, and the actual conduct ascribed to him by John, have we any evidence to warrant the supposition that Jesus made Jerusalem and Judea the chief scene of his ministry at first, as John's Gospel represents? or did he not once show himself there from the period of his baptism till a few days before he suffered death, as represented by the Synoptics? Mr. Tayler has, with much truth, observed:—"The three first Gospels divide the public ministry of Christ into two distinctly marked and broadly separated periods—that which was passed in Galilee, and that which was passed in Jerusalem. The first of these periods is introduced by the descent of the Spirit on Jesus at his baptism by John; the second by the transfiguration, which has all the appearance of being a renewal and a reinforcement of the original consecration at baptism. This distribution of events into two periods, with the initiations of baptism and the transfiguration severally prefixed to each, marks with the strongest characters the common type of the Synoptical conception of the ministry of Christ."

This observation is true generally, though "this distribution of events into two periods" may be more "distinctly marked and broadly separated" in the conception of Mr. Tayler than in that of these evangelists; but the question is, was there not a third

period in the ministry of Jesus anterior to either of them, as John would lead us to believe—a period betwixt the baptism and the imprisonment of the Baptist—a period passed over by the Synoptists as one of which they had little or no personal knowledge, but which is evidently implied in the very language with which they introduce their first period, “*Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God?*”

In this respect, however, Mr. Tayler represents “the Fourth Gospel as standing out in direct contrast and *contradiction* to the three first,” seeking on this ground to invalidate its authenticity. He writes, page 4:—“Instead of postponing the commencement of Christ’s ministry till John was cast into prison, the fourth Evangelist describes it as subsisting for some time side by side with that of John—the two preachers’ baptizing together in the same neighbourhood. Instead of cautiously advancing his claims, and only towards the close of his ministry distinctly announcing himself as the Christ—Jesus, in the Fourth Gospel, from the very first, reveals his high character and office by an unreserved disclosure of the Divine word incarnate in him, and engaged in open discussion respecting his claims to authority with the Jews of Jerusalem.”

Granting that he did, does this in any degree contradict the accounts of his preaching in Galilee afterwards, as given by the Synoptics? Nay, in his preaching, as we might expect, are there not continual references to, or, at least, an implied connexion with this anterior period passed chiefly in Jerusalem amidst its priests and Pharisees?

Before proceeding, however, to adduce evidence of this, I would take exception to the above language of Mr. Tayler, by which he implies that the Synoptics represent Jesus as “cautiously advancing his claims, and only towards the close of his ministry distinctly announcing himself as the Christ.” The fact is, in his very first appearance in the synagogue of Nazareth, his own city, after his baptism, Luke represents him as laying claim publicly to be the party spoken of by the prophet, in consequence of which he exposed himself to violence; and a higher claim he never put forth according to John’s Gospel, even when he announced himself to the Jews of Jerusalem as “the Light of the World.” And if we turn to Matthew’s Gospel, in his very first sermon on the mount, we find him speaking as “one having authority,” couching his address thus: “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of

old time, &c.; but *I say* unto you"—“many will say unto *me* in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, &c.; and then *will I profess* unto them, *I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.*” Does such language imply anything of “*caution* in advancing his claims” to be considered a teacher come from God? Is it not a distinct announcement of himself in his highest office, as judge of our humanity from the very first?—an announcement which only gives offence to our modern critics, it would seem, when preferred, in John’s Gospel, before the Scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem.

Besides, what mean those references in this sermon, and in other parts of the Synoptical teachings, to men who “break commandments, and teach men so,” who allow men to “swear falsely by the temple, but not by the gold of the temple,” who “blow trumpets before them when bestowing alms, and love to pray standing in synagogues and at corners of streets,” “false prophets,” “Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” so defective in righteousness that unless ours exceed it we “shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven?” Does Jesus speak of any class of the simple villagers of Galilee amongst whom he lived, and to whose neighbours he is now addressing himself, and holding them up for execration? Or does he speak of men whose false teaching and hollow piety he had been a painful witness to in Judea and Jerusalem? Had he never previously entered into controversy with these men, and, according to his own rule of action, “told them their faults to themselves alone?” Is not his whole language the fruit of a bitter experience acquired previously from his controversies with Scribes,—his whole discourse a running commentary on their teaching,—the very spirit of this discourse a burning indignation against men who, he foresaw, would for *his sake* “persecute, and say all manner of evil falsely,” against his disciples? Why for “his sake,” if he had not previously made himself, by his severe censures, obnoxious unto these men? Matthew’s Gospel, then, in its very first chapters, presupposes this previous history given us by John. We cannot thoroughly understand or appreciate the former without we know the previous hostility between Jesus and these Jews which John discloses. So contrary to fact is it, that “the fourth stands out in direct contrast and contradiction to the three first.”

Take another illustration. In the 8th chapter of Matthew, when Jesus cured the leper, he said unto him, “See thou tell no man,

but go thy way; show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, *for a testimony unto them.*" A testimony to whom, if not to the priests of Jerusalem? And why does he send this man away to the far distant Jerusalem to testify of a prophet of whom its priests, so far as this Gospel has informed us, as yet knew nothing? Does not the act itself prove that Jesus was already known to these priests, that his claims had been rejected by them, as John asserts, and that his object in sending the man was not simply that he should offer the gift that Moses commanded, but that the fact of his being cleansed by the power of Jesus might testify to these men that he was the Christ?

Again, if we turn to the 9th of Matthew, we find that on one occasion thus early in his ministry, on his return from Gadara by ship to "his own city," Capernaum, he was accused by "certain Scribes" of blasphemy for saying to one sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." If we compare this account in Matthew with Luke *in loco*, we will find that these "certain Scribes" were "Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by," or awaiting his return, who "were come out of every town of Judea and Jerusalem." What were these men from the distant Judea wanting with Jesus in the remote Capernaum? Had the reputation of the young teacher and moralist attracted them? It is at an early period of the ministry, according to the Synoptics. Had they come to profit by him, or is it that they might "watch him?" Having failed to stone him in the streets of Jerusalem, they come to see if they may not convict him of some capital offence against their law, for according to John Jesus had offended them by curing an impotent man on the Sabbath day. In their presence he now cures one sick of the palsy, and they would pervert his language into blasphemy—a crime capital by their law. To prove to these men that he had "power on earth to forgive sins, he varies that language, and says to the sick of the palsy, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Still hostile to him, however, when he goes, as we are told in the same chapter, to a feast, at the house of Levi, his follower, they accuse him to his own disciples of eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. Jesus goes into a synagogue on the Sabbath day, and cures a man with a withered hand, and these men dog his steps to watch him. His disciples go through a field of corn on that day, and pluck a few ears, rubbing them in their hands, and these men think to entrap their Master into some admission fatal to them, or prejudicial to

himself? And why all this hostility to a young teacher of so inoffensive morals? Blot out John's narrative, and what key have we to unlock the conduct of these actors in the Synoptics? Admit the general correctness of his history, and we understand at once not only the impelling motive of these Pharisees, but the conduct towards them of Jesus himself. Well, had Jesus proved their disposition on his past visits to Jerusalem? On repeated occasions had they sought to stone him. On the Baptist's imprisonment he had left their neighbourhood, fearing no doubt a like or more fatal termination to his own labours. On meeting them in Galilee, Jesus, knowing their thoughts about him, ask them, "Why think ye evil in your hearts?" These men, unable to deny his miracle, accuse him of "casting out devils by the Prince of the Devils." Thus persecuted by them, he chooses out twelve disciples "to be with him." Until another baptism of the Spirit, on the mount of transfiguration, disposes him "stedfastly to set his face to go up to Jerusalem," that he might "lay down his life and take it again," and thus triumph over his enemies by the victory of the cross.

If we follow him to Jerusalem, we find in these histories further unmistakable evidence that this was not his first visit since his baptism to the holy city, nor this his first interview in the citadel of their power with Judea's priests. Luke tells us that when he beheld the city he wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, *but now they are hid from thine eyes.*" And Matthew, in his 23rd chapter, after recording that awful denunciation of these Scribes and Pharisees in the temple itself, thus represents Jesus as apostrophizing their city, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, *how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.*" With what truth could Jesus have said this, had he never previously, in his character of Messiah, visited that city? Was it by confining his ministry to Galilee that he had "*often*" attempted to gather Jerusalem's children together? \* Or what mean those tears

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\* Dr. Davidson, in his Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. ii., page 358, &c., labours hard to get rid of the force of these words, "*how often.*" To me, however, the attempt is a clear case of special pleading, and cannot, I should think, on a calm review of it, be entirely satisfactory to the doctor himself. Even could he trace the apostrophe of Jesus to some apocryphal writing, of Christian origin, now lost, called "The

spoken of by Luke, or to what purpose were they shed, had he not previously attempted to make known to its citizens "the things that belonged unto its peace?" It is well known with what devout affection every Jew looked upon Jerusalem the holy. When destroyed by her enemies the Psalmist had written of her (cii., 14), "Thy servants take pleasure *in her stones*, and favour *the dust* thereof." A citizen of Nazareth, had not Jesus in his youth, with the natural ardour of his countrymen, rejoiced to "stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem?" When baptized to his high and holy office, the first aspiration of his heart must have been to bring "peace within her walls, and prosperity to her palaces," by his own glorious message of glad tidings. "Sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," his first desire must have been to purify the worship of the sanctuary, and to manifest his power, as John tells us he did, by the pool of Bethesda, to the accredited teachers of his nation; and only when rejected by them to warn them that the vineyard would be taken from them. Driven out by her hierarchy, and his life repeatedly threatened, he would naturally mourn over his former disappointed hopes, and could with truth exclaim, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not." By experience, however, as well as by inspiration, he had learned that there were "other sheep not of this fold," whom he was to gather into the Great Father's flock, "while the children of the kingdom were to be cast out?" And on going up to that city he so loved once to look upon, consciously to suffer death at the hand of its rulers, what wonder if, contrasting his youthful aspirations with his more matured and deeper intuitions, he should be moved even unto tears, especially when he foresaw how her "enemies would cast a trench about her, and compass her round, and lay her with the ground, and her children within her—because she knew not the time of her visitation."

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Wisdom of God," which had not appeared till Jerusalem had already been destroyed, still Christ's awful invective against its priests, on the supposition that this was a first interview, remains to be accounted for, as well as those tears shed on first beholding it, if he had made no previous attempts to make known to its citizens the things that belonged to its peace.

The Doctor thinks, however, that he may have made such attempts in the few days, or even during "several weeks" before the Passover at which he died. If so what record have we of them? or why does he intimate in every speech at this time that the kingdom shall be taken from them—that "now they are hid from thine eyes?" To me, verily, the Doctor's "attempt" to explain the "*how often*" is, as he characterizes that of Weizächer's, "futile."



If it be still urged, why has not Matthew and his co-evangelists given us some more definite account of these early but post-baptismal visits of Jesus to Judea and Jerusalem than such obscure references, the answer is at once obvious. Matthew was at this time a tax-gatherer in Capernaum, "sitting at the receipt of custom." Perhaps he took but little interest in the movements of Jesus at the time. He is badly prepared to write that portion of the history, and therefore wisely confined himself to things he had himself observed either before or subsequent to his calling. Peter, who is supposed to have been the source of Mark's testimony, was also at this time pursuing the occupation of fisherman on the lake. Luke has collected the materials of his history evidently from such Galilean sources. But John, who was also a fisherman on the lake, is a young man of pious disposition, as evinced by his being a disciple of the Baptist before he was known to the Christ. Beloved by him afterwards, he had early learned to appreciate the true nobility of his character, and may have been repeatedly his companion on their visits to their nation's festivals. In writing his narrative, therefore, he gives us his experience of him, even "from the beginning." And because it is more full, appreciative, and spiritual, are we to reject it as unworthy of our confidence?

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CALLING OF THE APOSTLES.

How very abrupt and unsatisfactory the calling of Christ's first followers, according to the Synoptists! According to Mark's and Matthew's history, the calling of Peter and Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee, was the first act of Jesus's ministry. Without any intimation of any previous knowledge on either side, before Jesus had done any wonderful works, or his fame had been established as a public teacher, we are told that on his simple invitation these men "straightway left their nets"—their usual occupations—their only means, so far as we know, of supporting themselves and families, "and followed him!" How very unlike, judging from the ordinary conduct of humanity, what we would expect!

Luke, indeed, places the calling of these men somewhat later, and after "the fame of him had gone out into every place of the country round about." He also intimates some previous acquaintance with Simon Peter on the part of Jesus, "into whose

house in Capernaum he had entered, and cured his wife's mother of a great fever." He likewise suggests a powerful motive for these men's conduct, for he tells us that it was when "pressed by the people," when teaching by the lake, Jesus saw two ships near at hand, and "entered into one of them, which was Simon's." And when he had left speaking, he said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." But Simon pleads, "We have toiled all night, and taken nothing;" and yet, on complying with the Master's wish, they enclose "a great multitude of fishes, so that the net brake." The narrative of this evangelist, therefore, supplies a reason for the conduct of these men—and yet one but partly satisfactory for their "forsaking all and following him." It also accounts more fully for the form of the invitation, as recorded by the others: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Now, the fourth Gospel gives us no account of *this* calling of these disciples by the Lake of Galilee; and nothing can be more at variance, and utterly discordant, than the narrative it gives of the first interview of these men with the Great Teacher, when placed side by side with that in the Synoptics; yet, though evidently written with no design to explain the others, it gives us a perfectly satisfactory account of the matter. We find from it that the conduct of these men on the Lake of Galilee was the result of no sudden impulse, but of a previous acquaintance with Jesus on the banks of Jordan, where his forerunner was baptizing, who had pointed him out to one, if not to two, of them, as "The Lamb of God." "One of the two who heard John—the Baptist—speak was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother." The other, it is reasonable to conclude, was John the Evangelist himself. He and James were partners with Andrew and Simon in the other ship. Two of these were originally citizens of Bethsaida, as was also Philip. The sons of Zebedee seem to have been natives of Capernaum. May not some of these men have gone up from these towns, as Jesus himself did from Nazareth, at the time spoken of in John's Gospel, to hear, if not to be baptized of, the Prophet of the Wilderness? Philip, as we have seen, "findeth Nathanael," whom some identify with Bartholomew, an inhabitant of Cana, and introduces him to Jesus. This introduction would seem to have taken place on the very day that Jesus "would go forth to Galilee." And bearing in mind the custom of the East to travel together in parties, we may well suppose that Philip's object was to secure Nathanael's company. And

if we suppose, as the narrative seems to suggest, that Simon, Andrew, and the beloved disciple, returned to Galilee with Jesus, Philip, and Nathanael, here is a little travelling company of six, whose intercourse on that journey moulded five of them into willing apostles, at a subsequent time of the future church, and who formed that little body of "disciples" invited with Jesus and his mother, on their way through Cana, to the marriage feast.

It will be said, however, that the Synoptists represent Jesus as "driven of the Spirit into the wilderness" after his baptism, where he spent "forty days, being tempted;" and how, then, could he have gone up to Galilee at this time, as John's narrative suggests? This objection has been so much insisted on, that though this explanation, so simple in itself, has already been suggested, it may be well more definitely to repeat it. John, as we have seen, does not tell us of the baptism of Jesus, but of his identification as the Christ, on the occasion when "the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?" This seems to have been an occasion subsequent to the baptism, and may have occurred at the end of those forty days spent by Jesus in the wilderness, when he would naturally revisit the multitude at Jordan, to seek out some to accompany him to Galilee. The two narratives, therefore, so seemingly dissimilar, are easily reconcilable, and their very dissimilarity, when reconciled, lends to their statements the greater probability.

Much has been made, however, of the phrase, "Lamb of God," by which the Baptist is here said to have characterized the Christ. This, it is argued, is a phrase not likely to have been used by the prophet of the Wilderness, and imputes to him that sacrificial view of Christianity which was the growth of a later age. But the phrase may have been used by him, as most expressive of the meekness and innocence of Jesus, quite apart from all idea of sacrifice;\* or it may, without at all impeaching the general veracity of our historian, have been unwittingly ascribed by him to the Baptist, writing after the lapse of many years. Account for it as we may, the phrase in itself is quite too inconsiderable to invalidate the importance of this history to the elucidation of the Synoptics.

As to the Apostolic college, John, of all the Evangelists,

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\* In the passage on Isaiah to which the phrase seems to refer—"He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth"—the leading idea is the unresisting innocence of the victim, and in this sense John seems to use it.

enables us to explain satisfactorily how it was that six—three of them honoured with Christ's more especial confidence—became members of it. And though he says nothing of the selection of the others—some of them Christ's own immediate relatives,—like the first followers of the Arabian prophet; and though their calling presents no inconsistencies to be explained, yet their selection, under the circumstances that Christ did so, may be worthy a word of comment. The second James, we know, was related to Jesus, for Paul calls him—Gal. i., 19—"the Lord's brother." That he was not, however, his full brother we also know, as in all the lists of the Apostles he is called "the son of Alpheus." And yet, as in the Synoptics, he is always spoken of with Joses, or "Judas, the brother of James," as son to Mary, it seems lawful to infer that Mary was united by a second marriage to Alpheus after the death of Joseph, who is not once mentioned after the baptism of Christ. Here, then, we have two more of the Apostolic college—James and Judas—Christ's half brothers. And he seems also to have had another near connexion in Levi, or Matthew the Evangelist, whom Mark designates also as "of Alpheus," though it may have been by a former marriage, but whose call to be a follower preceded that of the others, and was made under the following peculiar circumstances.

It was on the occasion, spoken of in the last chapter, after an absence of "some days" from Capernaum—Mark ii., 1—on entering into "the house"—his usual place of residence—that he found those "Pharisees and doctors of the law" awaiting his arrival, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Jordan, and *Jerusalem*.\* If we may credit the Fourth Gospel, with these Judean Pharisees he had already come in contact, and was fully aware of their animus towards him—an animus which appears in their conduct on this occasion, as they think to pervert his language in curing the sick of the palsy into the crime of blasphemy—an offence capital by their law. If we do not credit the Fourth Gospel, the Synoptics assign no valid reason for the presence of these men, at this early period of his ministry, from the distant Judea and Jerusalem. What too, is the conduct of Jesus himself towards them? After vindicating his language, and curing the man, he left the house to them, and passing out of the city, "went forth again by the seaside," and "as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alpheus, sitting at the

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\* Compare Matt. ix., 1; Mark ii., 1; Luke v., 17, &c.

receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me, and he arose and followed him." Levi, from his office, was evidently a man of some weight in Capernaum, and being the son of Alpheus, must have been well known unto Jesus. What was his object in calling him at the time? Having withdrawn so lately from Judea, where he had been in danger of being stoned, the presence of these men from Jerusalem itself, in the distant Capernaum, on his return to it, naturally excited apprehension. Is it not as a measure of precaution that he asks the companionship of the tax-gatherer? That the mind of Jesus laboured under apprehension at the time, of a fate similar to John's, is evident from his repeated injunctions to those he cured, to "say nothing to any man." And when the leper "began to publish and blaze abroad the matter" of his cure, we are told in Mark i., 45, "that Jesus could no more *openly enter* into the city, but was without in desert places." For such apprehension on the part of Christ the Fourth Gospel affords the only rational explanation. And hence the calling of Levi at this early period, a man of note and connected with the family.

Levi, in all likelihood looked down upon hitherto by his connexions on account of his occupation, is manifestly delighted to be thus taken notice of, and confided in by his wondrous relative. "He makes him a great feast in his house, and a great company of publicans and others sat down with him." Jesus accepted the invitation, but when the Scribes and Pharisees saw it, they say unto his disciples, "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" Then follows their accusation of the disciples themselves for plucking and eating the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, and their "watching Jesus" when he went into the synagogue, and cured the man on the Sabbath day with the withered hand, "that they might accuse him." Here is an act so akin to the cure of the impotent man in Jerusalem on the Sabbath, as told us by John, that we at once understand the animus of these Pharisees, and why it is that Jesus "looks round on them with anger, demanding "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" And these men, we are told by Luke, were "filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus," or, as Mark relates, "the Pharisees went forth and straightway took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy him." In consequence of which, "Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea," and desired that "a small ship should wait on him."

It was under these circumstances, according to both Mark and Luke, and after a night spent in prayer, that Jesus finally ordained the Twelve. One of his objects assigned by Mark is "that they should *be with him*," as well as that he might send them forth to preach. No doubt he foresaw that his own ministry would be short, and therefore wished to discipline a few active missionaries of his new religion. He also wished to have with him as travelling companions men in whom he could confide, and hence the deeper guilt of Iscariot the traitor. It was shortly after this, that his friends, thinking him beside himself, and fearing that he would commit himself with Herod's government, no doubt, in inaugurating this bodyguard, "sought to lay hold on him." But what had Jesus hitherto done in the north of Galilee, according to the Synoptical accounts, to excite the deadly animosity of these Pharisees from the distant Jerusalem and Judea? Evidently nothing. Ignore John's Gospel, and those antecedent visits of Jesus to Jerusalem of which it informs us, and we leave their conduct totally unaccounted for. Admit it, and we at once perceive the predisposing *animus* of these men, and the object of their visit. We also perceive the reason why Jesus confined his ministry at this time to Galilee,—his reason for the oft-repeated caution to his hearers that they should not make him known,—his reasons also for the ordination of the Twelve—until his new baptism on the mount of transfiguration finally prepared his mind for "the decease that he was to accomplish at Jerusalem."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

IN taking up the subject of this chapter at this period of the life, it is not because I mean to assign it to the same place in Christ's history that the Fourth Gospel does, but because this has been made the subject of remarks most unfavourable to that Gospel's authenticity. "In no instance," says Mr. Tayler, "is the difference between the Synoptical and the Johannine narrative more strikingly exemplified, than in the position which they respectively assign to the expulsion of the money-changers from the Temple. The Fourth Gospel puts it at the opening of Christ's ministry, on the occasion of the first Passover, with a view, no doubt, to establish his prophetic authority from the first in the face of the Jews, and to

give him at once the vantage ground which he is described as occupying with them in his subsequent controversy through the sequel of the history. The Synoptists, with certainly far more semblance of probability, place the transaction at the end of his public life, after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when he had already acquired a wide-spread prophetic fame," &c.

In the latter remark of Mr. Tayler, every candid critic will concur as to the Synoptical being the more probable place for this event in the history of Jesus. And yet, however great the discrepancy, and however difficult to account for, a careful comparison of their statements reveals such a striking coincidence that it may be fairly concluded there is the "soul of truth in both."

Before proceeding to consider those statements, however, let us ask, is it not possible that there may have been a remonstrance on the part of Jesus with the chief priests and rulers of the Temple as to this desecration of its outer court, on some previous visit, such as John speaks of? Is it likely that he would have proceeded to such extremities on his *first* visit to their city in his capacity of Messiah? And if such a remonstrance on his first visit, may not this have led to this misplacement of the final event by the Fourth Evangelist?

That there were such previous visits to Jerusalem betwixt his baptism and crucifixion, as John tells us of, we have already argued to be likely. Jerusalem was the true and fitting centre of all great religious effort. It was the place where thrice a year, from all regions, members of the Jewish nation congregated. Apart from his own obligation and disposition as a Jew to attend those festivals, true policy would suggest to him what we are told his brethren did—"Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. If thou doest these things, show thyself to the world." And it would not be, till compelled by actual violence and just apprehensions for his own life, that he would cease "to walk in Jewry," and confine his ministry to the remote Galilee, sending the lepers whom he cured, as he does in the Synoptics, to "show themselves to the priests for a testimony unto them."

If then such visits were made by Jesus after his baptism, we can readily understand how the desecration of the court of the Gentiles, by using it for purposes of traffic, would seem repulsive to the mind of Christ. We cannot suppose that in his controversies with the priests he would keep silent as to that abuse. His Father's house was designed as a house of prayer "for all nations, but ye have

made it a den of thieves." The introduction of the cleansing where John puts it\* may be regarded as intimating those previous remonstrances. But it is so described as to apply only to the actual cleansing on his last visit by Christ himself.

On this occasion, as all the Evangelists testify, Jesus was attended by a great multitude of his Galilean followers and others, who, in the very presence of their priests, hail him as "the King of Israel who cometh in the name of the Lord." In this respect at least John's Gospel is coincident with the Synoptics. And to render his entrance more marked, as both authorities record, Jesus sends his disciples for a colt, and for the only time in his life that we read of such a thing, rides into Jerusalem, as one of their old judges, amidst the shouts of that exulting throng, which led the Pharisees to confess—"Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing; behold the world is gone after him." On his entrance there, according to the Synoptical accounts, he "went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves."

These acts—I quite agree with Mr. Tayler in thinking—the Synoptists place with much greater probability at this period of the life, "when he had an enthusiastic multitude at his back to support his claims." But surely they are not the acts of one, entering for the *first* time into that old city of Jerusalem in his character of Messiah—of one a comparative stranger to its citizens, who had hitherto confined himself to the land of Galilee, and who had, up to this period, never come in contact with its resident priests? With respect to this entrance, too, the Fourth Gospel not only confirms the testimony of the others, but assigns the reason, which the others do not, for the *citizens* joining in that ovation with his Galilean followers—namely, the raising of Lazarus—"for this cause the people also met him."

That Jesus should, as has been said, have remonstrated with the priests, at the first Passover after his baptism, on the unseemliness and impropriety of making a house of prayer a public market, seems not unreasonable, and a vague recollection of this may account for John's placing the other events at this period of his history. But

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\* Mr. Tayler intimates that the author of this Gospel put it here designedly, "with the view, no doubt, to establish his prophetic authority from the first in the face of the Jews," &c. But is it at all likely that a *spurious* author would have designedly opposed his unsupported and improbable statement in this matter to the authority of the other Evangelists?



that Jesus proceeded on this occasion—unsupported as he was by the following he afterwards possessed—to the extremity of “making a scourge of small cords, and driving them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen, pouring out the exchanger’s money,” &c.—this seems unlikely. This treatment, violent on his part, without previous remonstrance, these merchants and money-changers would not at that time so tamely have submitted to; and its insertion here may perhaps be attributed to that confusion of mind, and mixing up of events and circumstances, to which, as all may observe, old age is liable—to which, in fact, all are more or less liable who endeavour to recall the past. Such a remonstrance on Christ’s first visit may have become confused and associated in our author’s mind with his more decided action in his last.

But what then? Is John’s narrative to be wholly discredited on account of this discrepancy, and Matthew’s not, when he tells us—seemingly in order more literally to fulfil a prophecy—that Jesus on this occasion rode into Jerusalem on *two* animals instead of one, as the others testify—“sitting upon an ass, *and a colt the foal of an ass?*”

And now with regard to the striking coincidence to which I have alluded. On the driving out of the cattle, when the Jews asked, as was natural, “What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?” or, as the Synoptists report his words, “By what authority doest thou these things, or who gave thee this authority?” Jesus is represented by John as answering, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Of this the Synoptists tell us nothing, but they do tell us that one of the accusations brought by the false witnesses against Jesus before Caiaphas was—“This fellow said, ‘I am able to *destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.*’” Nay, further, when Jesus was suspended on the cross, they represent those that passed by reviling him, saying, “Thou that *destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself.*”

On the authority of all the Evangelists, therefore, we are warranted in believing that some such expression had been used by Jesus; and yet it must have been used more recently than John leads us to suppose, for it seems quite fresh in the minds of his revilers, and may have been the bitter and exulting taunt of those money-changers and others whom he had so recently interrupted in their traffic, and ignominiously driven out. The question, therefore, arises, is such coincidence an undesigned one? Had some spurious

author of the Fourth Gospel taken it from the others, would he have introduced it at a time so improbable in itself, and so flagrantly at variance with the other Gospels? Is the whole story in John's Gospel a clumsy plagiarism, introduced for no purpose seemingly, quite out of its natural connexion? or is it one of those undesigned coincidences betwixt honest credible witnesses, that affix to their testimony the stamp of truth?

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## CHAPTER V.

### CHRIST'S JOURNEY THROUGH SAMARIA TO GALILEE.

THE Fourth Gospel, after the Passover mentioned in the second chapter, represents Jesus' ministry as "subsisting side by side" for some time with the Baptist's, in the country of Judea, and then after the Jews' attempt to excite John's jealousy against the younger preacher, it tells us in the fourth chapter that Jesus "left Judea and departed again into Galilee." But as nothing of this is told us in the Synoptics, of course this portion of the life, however natural and probable, is, by those who reject the authenticity of this Gospel, also discredited.

Did these histories profess to give us a full, minute, and chronological biography of the Christ, some weight might attach to such a discrepancy. But none save Luke professes to "write in order of all things from the first;" and he evidently derived his information from Galilean sources, chiefly from the Gospel of Matthew, and probably of Mark, written previously. These are evidently *disjecta membra* of that wondrous life lived in Palestine—not agreeing with one another in many instances—in some cases personal recollections;—in Luke's case, the accounts handed down by others, written in the form we have them, not at the time of their occurrence, but in all cases many years afterwards, and therefore presenting such discordancies of statement as we might naturally expect. Under such circumstances their silence as to this portion of the life is surely a matter of no moment. In all writings of a like nature, difficulties will present themselves which after the lapse of so long a period it may be impossible to reconcile. Even in contemporary affairs, how hard is it sometimes for the judge to unravel the true facts of the case, and the real sequence of events, from the evidence of discordant witnesses

in a court of justice. But when that evidence, however discordant, is found in some points, quite unexpectedly, to fit, and dovetail into one another, he finds that he has firm ground to go upon, in pointing out such coincidences to the jury as the landmarks of the truth. Such are the proofs of authenticity which I would elicit from these histories, and from this journey through Samaria especially. In this case, however, it is not the contradiction betwixt the witnesses that is sought to be explained, for the Synoptists tell us nothing of such a journey, but it is a want of sequence, or seeming contradiction on the part of the Fourth writer himself, which, by their testimony, I would endeavour to clear up.

The Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel at least agree in this, in assigning, not Nazareth, but Capernaum, after his baptism, as Christ's place of residence. Matthew says that "leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum." Luke says, after his expulsion by the Nazarenes he "came down to Capernaum and taught them on the Sabbath days," though he also refers to a visit to Capernaum previously—"Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum do also here in thy country." And John says, referring probably to that previous visit, that after the marriage in Cana, "he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples, *and they continued there not many days.*" This visit then seems to have been the one alluded to by Luke, as made anterior to that when his citizens rejected him. It is true John speaks of no works done by Jesus in Capernaum at this time, but he does tell us of his changing water into wine on his way there at Cana. Whether it was the fame of that action that preceded him to Nazareth, and is there alluded to by Luke, we know not. It was at a later period that he cured Simon's wife's mother, and the son of the nobleman who was sick in Capernaum. But the coincidence as it stands is sufficiently remarkable. Both histories lead us to infer that Jesus ceased to be an inhabitant of Nazareth soon after his baptism. Both point to Capernaum as a place repeatedly visited by him. And Luke assigns the conduct of the citizens of Nazareth as his reason for leaving it and making the other his future residence.

That Jesus therefore may have made repeated visits to Jerusalem on the occasion of the national festivals whilst living there, may be assumed as possible, though the Synoptists do not mention them. That he may have been accompanied by John the son of Zebedee

on such occasions, betwixt whom and Jesus there seems to have arisen a strong attachment, as well as by some other of the disciples we have already deemed probable. That John, his future historian, who describes this journey with all the circumstantiality of an eye-witness, may have lingered with him in the country of Judea on the expiration of the festivals, to listen to his teaching, is also possible, instead of hastening back to resume his fishing on the lake. And in giving us an account of this portion of the Saviour's history, he distinctly intimates that we are to understand him as speaking of a time anterior to the other accounts, of which he seems to have been cognizant; for he writes—iii., 24—as if to guard himself against the charge of inconsistency, that “John was not yet cast into prison.”

But in giving us this account of the return journey through Samaria he falls into the following inconsistency, which the narrative of Luke enables us to explain, thus connecting these Gospels most remarkably. After the interview of Jesus with the woman of Samaria, John tells us—iv., 40-41—that they spent two days in Samaria at this time, and “departed thence and went *into Galilee, for Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.*” In this statement, seeing that Jesus was going into his own country Galilee, where Nazareth was, John does not seem, however accurate, to be very logical. Nor is he more so in that which follows, for in verse 45 he says—“When he was come into Galilee, *the Galileans received him, having seen all the things he did at Jerusalem at the feast.*” Here then we have not only one, but clearly two *non-sequiturs* in his statement, which, had it contained the visit to Nazareth mentioned by Luke, would have sufficed to make all consistent. Nazareth he had visited, according to Luke, at a very early period of his history. There it was that Jesus had testified “*No prophet is accepted in his own country*”—Luke iv., 24. And was it not some remembrance of this former visit, on the part of John, that causes him thus seemingly to stumble in his narrative? He does not mention it, but makes Jesus pass on to Cana, where on his last visit he had made the water wine, and assigns his former rejection by the Nazarenes as his reason for passing by their city, though his way to Cana from Samaria lay directly through Nazareth.

Here then is not only a marked coincidence betwixt John's and Luke's narratives; but here, in order to render John's statement logical and consistent, we must revert to, and explain it by

St. Luke's—evidently one of those undesigned corroborations of a defective witness which any judge would seize on, as an indication of his truth.

Mr. Tayler, however, has adduced the cordial reception given to Jesus by the Samaritans on this journey, and his residence in their city for two days, as a strong argument to disprove John's testimony;\* because Luke tells us—ix., 52—that on his last journey from Galilee to the Holy City, "a village of the Samaritans did not receive him because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem." It is actually implied that gladly would they have received him, had he remained with them. Their national jealousy was excited because he would not—because he would go to worship, as they thought, in the rival temple of Jerusalem; so that, as I take it, there is here a confirmation, and not a contradiction, of John's testimony by this Evangelist. In sending forth the Twelve Christ certainly, according to Matthew, directs them, saying—"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not;" but this by no means proves that he had not himself passed through Samaria, and been cordially received by its inhabitants. He also tells the Twelve, "Verily I say unto you ye shall not have gone over *the cities of Israel* till the son of man be come;" and his reason possibly may have been that the cities of Israel were better prepared to receive the message, though perhaps less disposed to receive the messenger, than those either of the Gentiles or Samaritans.

But Mr. Tayler further argues that John's statement "is still more at variance with Acts viii., 5-14, where we learn that Christ was first preached in Samaria by Philip." Well, no doubt amongst the Apostles, Philip was the first who "preached Christ unto them," but a reference to Acts viii., 1, shows us, that even before Philip's visit, on account of the great persecution that arose against the Church at Jerusalem, the Christians "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and *Samaria, except the Apostles.*" So that Samaria must have heard the word of God before Philip visited it. And to imagine for a moment that the inhabitants of a small strip of country lying between Galilee and Judea, the great scenes of Christ's ministry, had not heard of the

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\* See J. J. Tr's., Fourth Gospel, page 93.

fame of this great teacher up to the time of Philip's visit to them, is to make a supposition most unlikely indeed.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND.

WITH respect to these repeated visits to Jerusalem recorded in the Fourth Gospel, as the writer neither intimates the time of the Baptist's imprisonment, nor tells us of the ordination of the Twelve, it is difficult certainly to determine how many were made previous to that imprisonment, and therefore to the time at which Matthew and Mark take up the history. That the first visit to a Passover spoken of in the second chapter, is thus accounted for, and also the facts of the third, there can be no doubt, for the writer there intimates that "John was not yet cast into prison." The fourth also presents no difficulty, as it but records the events that occurred on his way back through Samaria and Cana, the second time, down to Capernaum, where the nobleman came to him to heal his son. To this period of the life we may also safely assign the visit spoken of in the fifth chapter, where Jesus is recorded to have cured the impotent man by the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, an act which so excited the hostility of the Pharisees. We have no reason to conclude that there was not time for this, and indeed the subsequent visit spoken of in the seventh chapter, before the imprisonment of John. It was on his *second* visit, that the Jews began to "persecute Jesus and seek to slay him," because he had not only healed the man, but vindicated his healing him on the Sabbath day, by what seemed to them the blasphemous argument, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And it is not to the introduction of the seventh chapter that the Evangelist intimates—"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Jewry because the Jews sought to kill him." And yet in this chapter he takes him up "to the feast of tabernacles, though not openly, but as it were in secret."

Between these two chapters, however, we have in the sixth, "the feeding of the five thousand," "and walking on the water," the only events of the Galilean ministry which John records in common with the Synoptists—events which might be supposed to

aid us in our chronology, but which like the cleansing of the temple, have been introduced, according to the judgment of nearly all commentators, and indeed according to the thread of the narrative itself, out of their proper place. In the end of the fifth chapter, our author leaves Jesus in the temple, discussing with the Jews the testimony of Moses. And in the opening of the sixth, he says—"After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee which is the sea of Tiberias," without intimating how he got there. Nor is it more consonant with the opening of the seventh chapter, where our author, after detailing a residence of some time in Galilee, says—"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Jewry for the Jews sought to kill him"—evidently referring to the events detailed in the fifth chapter.

The events, therefore, in the sixth chapter are evidently out of place, and should be assigned to some later period of the ministry, and yet they tally in so many respects with the same events as recorded in the Synoptics, that, make what we will of the events related, the two histories should stand or fall together.

According to John's testimony, Jesus made at least *three* visits to Jerusalem at this period of his ministry—a visit to a Passover, a visit to a feast, name not given us, at which he cured the impotent man, and a third to "the feast of tabernacles," when the Jews sent their officers to take him, and after which they themselves "took up stones to cast at him." And besides these, there is a Passover spoken of as "nigh" in the sixth chapter, which Jesus does not seem to have attended. This would give us a year at least for his pre-Galilean ministry. And we can well believe that after the divine call he had received to become a preacher of truth and righteousness, he would not, without strong reasons for it, confine his ministrations to one portion of his countrymen. Jerusalem was the place, and these national festivals most fit occasions, for meeting large numbers of them, come up to worship from all regions. Of these occasions he would avail himself so long as he could do with safety to himself. And the conduct of Jesus on his third visit, as recorded by John, manifestly indicates this growing apprehension for his own safety. "He went up not openly," as before, "but as it were in secret." And when he found on these repeated visits, that his life was again and again threatened by its rulers, and if we suppose that he heard about the same time of the Baptist's imprisonment, we can well understand his motive for making the distant and more retired Galilee, for a season at least,

the theatre of his labours, which he may have done from the Passover spoken of in John's sixth chapter till that at which he suffered death.

Even in Galilee his increasing popularity would soon make him an object of curiosity, if not suspicion, to Herod's Government, as intimated in the Synoptics (see Luke ix., 9). But "in Jewry he could no longer walk," as his cutting reproofs of Scribes and Pharisees had already aroused the deadly hostility of Judea's priests. And hence his oft-repeated caution to his followers that they "should not make him known." Let us see, then, what is the line of action which these Synoptists attribute to him in Galilee, and whether it is consistent with these previous circumstances of his life.

His first act is, according to Mark and Matthew, to summon Peter and Andrew, James and John—men, as we have seen, previously well known to him—to leave their occupations on the Lake of Galilee, and to accompany him in his journeys. We next read of him in Matthew, delivering that remarkable sermon on the mount, in which he embodies all the essentials of religion and morality; and so emphatically warns his audience against the conduct and teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees. After this he goes about "all Galilee," but chiefly the region of Capernaum, where he is on the bounds of Herod's jurisdiction, "teaching in their synagogues, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease." Even here, however, the hostility of the Pharisees follows him. On his return to Capernaum, after a short absence, he finds these men, and "doctors of the law" from Judea and Jerusalem awaiting him, with no friendly designs evidently. After some altercation with them about the cure of the sick of the palsy, he leaves the house, and summons Levi to accompany him. He enters a synagogue, and in their presence cures the man who had his hand withered, as he had cured the impotent man in Jerusalem on the Sabbath; and as we read in Mark iii., 6: "The Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him how they might destroy him. But Jesus withdrew himself, with his disciples, to the sea, and a great multitude followed him."

Then follows his more energetic action as dangers increase around him of choosing out of all his followers twelve, one, as it were, for each of the tribes of Israel, "that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have



power to heal sickness, and to cast out demons." After this event we find the Baptist still living, but his once powerful mind broken down by his imprisonment, so that Jesus compares it "to a reed shaken with the wind." However, shortly afterwards Herod cut off John's head, and his disciples "took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus."

"When Jesus heard this," as Matthew tells us (xiv., 13), "he departed by ship into a desert place apart; and when the people heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities." Such is a brief outline of the Galilean ministry of Jesus up to this time, according to the Synoptics; and how far it is consistent with, or presupposes those previous visits to Jerusalem spoken of by John, it is for the reader to decide.

It was in a "desert place," "belonging to the city called Bethsaida," as Luke describes it (ix., 10), that all concur in representing Jesus as feeding "the five thousand," being that "great multitude" that had "followed him on foot out of the cities." The Bethsaida here spoken of seems to have been the city afterwards called Julius, which lay to the north or north-east of the Lake of Galilee, where he was out of Herod's jurisdiction; and as Capernaum lay to the north-west, the people, to have followed him, must have passed round the northern extremity of the lake. It is true there is a discrepancy here betwixt Mark and Luke as to the locality, as well as betwixt them both and the Fourth Evangelist. Mark says, that after feeding the people he "constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida," which, unless we take the liberty of translating the Greek proposition, *πρὸς*, "over against," as our translators have done in the margin, would imply that the desert place did not belong unto Bethsaida; whilst the Fourth Gospel speaks of "other ships coming from Tiberias," a city to the south-west of the lake "near to the place where they did eat bread," as if the Bethsaida spoken of in Luke was that betwixt Capernaum and Tiberias.

Reconcile these discrepancies as we may, here is a chapter from Christ's Galilean ministry introduced, certainly without much regard to order or connexion, into a history which confines itself almost exclusively to his ministry in Judea. The questions arise: Whence came it? Is it the vague recollections of an old man, who loves to dwell on, if not to magnify, his Master's character, and on whose memory some minute facts have imprinted themselves, though no longer able to follow the sequence of

events? Or is it a plagiarism of some spurious author of the second century, who inserts it here so inartistically, in order to give the work the greater air of probability? Or are both histories the record of a legend that grew up around the character of Jesus through the admiration of his followers? Whatever the award, both should be regarded as equally true or equally unreliable.

If we compare the histories more minutely, we find betwixt them the following additional discrepancies:—All the Synoptists tell us that *the disciples say to Jesus*, “Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals.” Whereas the Fourth Gospel tells us that *Jesus said to Philip*, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” And whereas Philip answers, “Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them”—in Mark we read, that in reply to Christ’s command, “Give ye them to eat,” the disciples say to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat.”

Again John tells us—seemingly with the peculiar minuteness of an old man’s memory in some things—that it was “Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother”—his own companion on the banks of Jordan in his early youth—who said to Jesus: “There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they amongst so many?” With the particularity, also, of an eye-witness, he tells us “there was much grass in the place,” and that they “gathered the fragments together, and filled twelve baskets,” in which, however, he agrees with the Synoptists. The latter say, however, that it was “to pray” that Jesus departed into a mountain afterwards; whereas John says it was because he “perceived the people would come and take him by force to make him a king.”

The walking on the water by Jesus after the ship is similarly, though not in like words, described by both. But whereas John represents them as going to Capernaum, which lay “over against” the Bethsaida called Julius, Mark says “to Bethsaida” simply, and Matthew and Luke to “the land of Gennesaret.” These are discrepancies, fatal certainly to the popular doctrine of inspiration, but are they unusual or unaccountable at such a distance of time in the evidence of otherwise credible witnesses? The main facts of the history remain the same. The discrepancies are matters of detail. But would not a spurious author, cognizant of the previous histories, have carefully avoided them?”

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE PORTRAITS OF THE TWO SISTERS.

IN this age of science, when the reign of law, both in the physical and moral world, is equally the deduction of reason and experience, I am well aware of the very grave difficulty which such facts as those referred to in the last chapter oppose to the authenticity of the Christian records, however much they may have contributed at one time to their reception. It may be pleaded that our knowledge of law in this imperfect state is too limited for us to say absolutely when law is violated. However mysterious to the ignorant, we know it is the same law of gravitation which causes the stone to descend that causes the smoke to ascend, thus producing the most opposite visible effects. In like manner, in presence of new discoveries in science made almost daily, whereby our knowledge of law has been much extended, even within the present generation, all tending to enhance the superiority of mind over matter, it would seem presumptuous in us to say what is possible and what not.

On the other hand, it is the testimony of experience how speedily extraordinary legends develop themselves and accumulate about characters looked up to as remarkable, not only in future generations, but even within the lives of their contemporaries. On this principle it is now the fashion, after the example of Strauss, to explain away the Christian miracles. For my own part, however, I must confess my total inability to separate the (to us) supernatural element from the historical matter in the Christian scriptures. Could I do so, as it now appears to me, I would only leave unaccounted for that wondrous movement in the religious world, that clearly had its origin in the life and death of this Jesus of Nazareth. In this enlightened century, with all the propogandism of the Press to aid us, we all know how difficult it is, and what effort and time it takes, to make any change in religious belief. But here is the greatest movement ever made in the world's history due to a few months' teaching of a young man in an obscure Roman Province; by a Roman Governor ignominiously put to death. Of all miracles recorded in these books, there is perhaps than this no greater miracle, save it may be the character of that Jesus as there sketched to us by men certainly of otherwise no literary eminence, who could not have originated it,—a miracle as undeniable by the most sceptical who will study it, as by the most orthodox.

However, this is a question which does not at present come before us. The supernatural difficulty presses not more heavily on the Fourth Gospel than it does on the Synoptics. And however different the former may be in style and manner, and many of the events recorded, the *facts*, so far as we have advanced, we have seen to be not inconsistent with the other histories. Nay, these records, in some points, so incidentally dovetail into the other as to prove them to be the testimony of an eye-witness—that the Fourth Gospel, in its leading features, is a writing of the same stamp, though written probably about a generation later, as we shall see, hereafter,—and that there is the soul of truth in both.

In the last chapter I noticed the want of sequence in the events recorded by our author, and attributed it to a vagueness of memory on the part of an old man, whose mind, clear on other points, has failed to retain the natural order of occurrences. Experience testifies that the recollections of the aged, however accurate as to particulars that may have impressed themselves on the mind in youth, become very desultory and confused in their general features when they assume the form of a lengthened narrative. And such are precisely the features of this Gospel. Had it been “an historical treatise on the life of Christ,” as some suppose, it would have been equally destitute of those minute coincidences which bespeak the recollection of an eye-witness, and free from those anomalies that so markedly characterize it. Had it been a recast of old materials in a later age, by one personally unacquainted with the facts, the author would, like Luke, have taken care to “write *in order*” of all things delivered to him. We would not have had a chapter like the sixth thrust into the narrative in the place in which we find it, regardless of all connexion. We would not have had it assigned as a reason for Jesus going into Galilee that he himself had testified, “a prophet hath no honour in his own country.” Nor would we have had an account of a visit to Judea prefaced by the assertion that “Jesus would not walk in Jewry.” These are anomalies to which no respectable author of a spurious gospel or “historical treatise” would have committed himself. But they are quite consistent with a consciousness of integrity, and may be satisfactorily accounted for by that desultoriness of memory which all may experience who try after many years to recall past events, but which is peculiarly observable in the recollections of the aged.

But in Luke's Gospel, however consonant it may be in some of its chapters with the previous histories, we find, as in John's, much

new matter,—especially that portion from chapter ix., 51, to xviii.—difficult to fit into the narrative of the other Evangelists. To him we are solely indebted, not only for some of Christ's most exquisite parables, as that of the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the rich man and Lazarus, &c., but also for the account of the appointment and mission of the seventy disciples. He also tells us of a journey of Jesus "through Samaria and Galilee" to Jerusalem, about which the others are equally silent. And from his extreme dissatisfaction with Capernaum and Bethsaida, recorded in the tenth chapter, the parable of the good Samaritan, and the cure of the ten lepers, of whom one was a Samaritan, we may infer that much of this period of the life was passed in Samaria. At least, these references to Samaritans confirm John's testimony that he was more readily received by this people than his own countrymen the Jews. And here it is that we come on another coincidence still more remarkable betwixt these two Evangelists.

It was in this period of the life as we are told by Luke, x., 38—that Jesus "entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at his feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving." In these few lines, how complete the characters of the two sisters given to us at greater length by John! Apart from the names, like two *cartes* of the same parties by different photographers, we recognize at once the sisters of Lazarus. Mary is the quiet, silent, meditative character, who "sat at his feet and heard his word"—who in John's narrative "sat still in the house"—who "when she saw him fell down at his feet," and who at the supper afterwards lavished upon those feet her costly ointment. Martha "is cumbered about much serving"—at that supper "Martha served,"—she is "troubled about many things," and by the grave of her brother, when Jesus tells the people to take away the stone, at once cautions him that the smell would be offensive. Is this description of character fortuitous? Or has Luke's mention of the two sisters formed the foundation of a myth which some future unknown writer enlarged and embellished into the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, borrowing the latter character from Luke's parable of the rich man, and transforming him into a brother of the sisters? The supposition is ingenious, but would not its admission destroy all faith in these Gospel histories? In that case, John's story is not a legend, but an artful invention fabricated for a

purpose, with all the adjuncts of place, time, and circumstance. This Martha and Mary—whose act is spoken of through all the Churches as a “memorial of her”—are made residents of Bethany—an act or plot devised to bring into the most striking contrast Christ's power over death and the hostility of the Pharisees; and the fame of him whom all men honour as the most perfect personification of life and truth founded on a fiction!

Suppose it, however, founded upon truth, as well as that told us solely by Luke, of the widow's son of Nain, how it may be asked, did John, a Galilean fisherman, acquire that more intimate knowledge of the two sisters which his Gospel exhibits beyond the other Evangelists? It may be replied that his residence in Jerusalem for years after the crucifixion would naturally lead him to cultivate the acquaintance of a family so beloved by the Master. With this family he represents Jesus on the most intimate terms of acquaintanceship. The sisters' message to him is, “Lord, behold him whom thou lovest is sick.” And the fact, that Luke tells us of, that “when he entered into a certain village, a certain woman called Martha received him into her house,” would seem to intimate a previous acquaintanceship which must have been formed at a date previous to the events in the Synoptical Gospels, and may therefore warrant us in crediting those accounts of previous visits to Jerusalem of which John speaks.

At any rate, esteem as we will this coincidence betwixt Luke's and the Fourth Gospel, as to the portraits of the sisters, it is certainly for his personal feelings towards this family, as represented by the latter, that the character of Jesus is so prized by many. In no action of his life, perhaps, does Jesus manifest himself so “touched with a feeling of our infirmities,” as when he wept with the sisters at the grave of Lazarus. Mr. Tayler would have us believe that this Gospel unduly magnifies Jesus as the Logos, and yet it is in this Gospel only that we find such a record as this—“Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” And if it discloses in a more spiritual sense his divine and lofty sonship, to it also we are indebted for our most perfect knowledge of his deep human sympathies. The question therefore arises, is such knowledge founded on a record of actual facts or fiction? And though this question may determine nothing as to the authenticity of the Gospel, yet it is surely worthy of our consideration, how much less without this Gospel would we have loved and appreciated the Christ.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

WE have seen that, according to this Gospel, Jesus made at least three visits to Jerusalem to the festivals previous to the Passover at which he suffered death. And we have argued that all may have been made anterior to the time of the imprisonment of the Baptist, and therefore consistently with the Synoptical accounts. In fact, as we have shown from various coincidences, such visits as John speaks of, are absolutely required to the better understanding of the conduct of Jesus and his Apostles as given in the Synoptics,—the latter in leaving their fishing on the lake of Galilee immediately when called on,—the former in his invectives against Pharisees, and confining his teaching so exclusively to that province.

That this was the view of this Gospel taken by the early Church we learn from this testimony of Eusebius. That historian, in writing of the order of the Gospels in Book iii., chapter 24, says—

“Of these his (John’s) Gospel, so well known in the Churches throughout the world, must first of all be acknowledged as genuine. That it is however with good reason placed the fourth in order by the ancients may be made evident in the following manner. . . . Matthew having first proclaimed the Gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going also to other nations, committed it to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence. But after Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who all this time was proclaiming the Gospel without writing, at length proceeded to write it on the following occasion. The three Gospels previously written having been distributed among all, and also handed to him, they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth. But that there was only wanting in the narrative, the account of the things done by Christ, among the first of his deeds, and at the commencement of the Gospel. And this was the truth. For it is evident that the other three Evangelists only wrote the deeds of our Lord *for one year after the imprisonment* of John the Baptist, and intimated this in their history. . . . This Apostle therefore in his Gospel gives the deeds of Jesus *before* the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three Evangelists mention the circumstances after that event.”

In this age of historical criticism, when the fashion has been to “rehabilitate” the *dead*, and give an entirely new aspect to the past, we know how little weight is sometimes given to the evidence of

history. But if this testimony of Eusebius be of any weight, the "one year" that he here speaks of would date from the Passover of which John speaks in his sixth chapter, which has, as I have argued, been placed out of its natural order, to the final Passover at which he suffered death.

It may be possible, however, to assign another reason for John writing this portion of Christ's history than that given by Eusebius. Having removed from Jerusalem after the death of Mary the mother of our Lord to the far distant Ephesus, as bishop of a church that Paul had founded, John's remaining thirty or forty years of life, perhaps more, were spent amongst a people of Grecian origin, of ideas new to him, strangers to Judea, and yet of highly intellectual minds. The natural objection which such a people would make to Christianity would be that its author, according to all the published accounts of him, having undertaken to subvert the Jewish worship, had confined his teaching to the remote Galilee, and never set his face in Jerusalem itself, the very seat and centre of it, but on one occasion, at which time, according to its own advocates, he had been put to death by its chief priests. That a like reproach was brought by the enemies of Christianity we find from the writings of Celsus about the middle of the second century that Jesus "had for his disciples only despised men of the lowest kind, publicans and fishermen." And John himself puts this objection into the mouth of some members of the Sanhedrim (vii., 48): "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed?" May it not have been to obviate such objection that John writes, or causes to be written, these personal recollections, and records repeated visits of Jesus to that city, and discussions with the recognized teachers of Judaism in the temple itself, anterior to the time at which the Synoptists take up the history? On each occasion he represents him as claiming a Divine authority, and in proof of that claim doing works of healing; just as in the Synoptics he is represented as saying to the sick of the palsy, in presence of the Jewish doctors, "Arise, and take up thy bed," that "ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Thus, in John, he cures the impotent man, and to prove himself "the Light of the World," opens the eyes of the man that was born blind, appealing in like manner to these works: "The works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me."\*

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\* In page 5 Mr. Tayler says: "The Fourth Gospel presents us with a selection of



We come now, however, to another entrance into Jerusalem, about which all the witnesses testify; but to explain, or even justify the manner of it, on the part of a teacher from the remote Galilee, it is absolutely necessary that we should suppose anterior visits, and controversies with its priests, at which the claims of Jesus had been advanced, and yet rejected. On coming into Bethpage and Bethany, contrary to all his former habits and usual demeanour, he sent for a colt to the neighbouring village, and, surrounded by a multitude of his Galilean followers, as well as "much people" of the city that went forth to meet him, made a public entry seated on the animal, the multitude on either side spreading their garments in the way, and others taking branches of the palm tree and spreading them in the way, and all shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord." Nay more, he goes into the temple itself, and evinces his authority by "casting out those that sold and bought in the temple."

And why did he thus endanger, as it would seem, the peace of that great city, and outrage the authority of the governor of the temple, with all its hosts of priests and rulers, and Pilate the Roman governor himself looking on from the town of Antonia, if this entry were not the very apotheosis of repeated visits and claims of a like nature, as John tells us, intended by the Christ as a consummation of a long series of hostilities betwixt himself and the Jewish hierarchy? Had we only the accounts in the Synoptics, difficult it would be, indeed, to justify such an invasion of the sacred city, even by one claiming to be the Messiah, without his having previously submitted those claims to the judgment of those best qualified to decide. The Synoptists represent the entrance as made by Jesus on his first approach to Jerusalem, before he had any time for discussion with its priests. Such discussions they do

just seven miracles, intended apparently to furnish a specimen of the various modes and occasions of Christ's miraculous workings, &c." In this, however, he is not quite correct, for in addition to the seven he enumerates, this Gospel speaks of miracles performed by Jesus at the first Passover (ii., 23), though it does not describe any save the cleansing of the Temple; and to the influence of those miracles on the mind of Nicodemus it attributes the visit of that member of the Sanhedrim to Jesus.

It also in the fourth chapter attributes to Jesus the miracle of knowing the previous history of the woman of Samaria, which became to her the sign that Jesus was the Christ; and in the eleventh, of knowing that Lazarus was dead in Bethany, whilst Jesus and his disciples were yet in Bethabara, facts not enumerated by Mr. Tayler.

inform us of subsequently; and also that Jesus declined to give them any satisfaction. In just indignation seemingly, these priests ask him, "By what authority doest thou these things, or who gave thee this authority?" and, in lofty disdain, he answers them by another interrogatory: "The baptism of John, was it of Heaven, or of man?" Nay, he goes on to tell them that "the vineyard shall be taken from them," that "the Lord of the Vineyard shall come and destroy these wicked husbandmen;" and as John represents him saying: "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He;" so here are these words attributed to him: "The stone which *the builders rejected*, the same is become the head of the corner," language implying that the stone had already been rejected by these builders. So that to justify Christ's conduct and language we must pre-suppose those prior visits to Jerusalem recorded by this Evangelist.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS AND PILATE.

THE reticence of the Synoptists as to Christ's first visits to Jerusalem throws an air of mystery, also, around his conduct, as described by them, before Caiaphas and Pilate; and had we not John's narrative to explain it, it would present no little difficulty. Coming up from Galilee for the first time since his baptism, and entering their city in the manner he had done, and, through fear of his following, driving from the temple the permitted traffic so needful for the sacrifices, we have seen that to the natural question of the rulers he replied contemptuously by another question, and positively refused to tell them by what authority he did those things. And when made a prisoner, and taken before the high court of his nation, he in like manner refused to answer anything to the charges alleged against him, till he was solemnly adjured by the high priest to say whether he were "the Christ the Son of God." Now, this taciturnity, and conduct at least seemingly contemptuous, is easily understood on the supposition that this is only the last of a series of interviews with these men in which Jesus had advanced his claims, as John tells us, to be the Christ, "the Light of the World," the true Siloa, "the Bread of God, that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

Had it been his first interview with the hierarchy of Jerusalem, as the Synoptists lead us to suppose, would not such conduct have been unaccountable on his part, and gone far to justify his treatment by these Pharisees?

No doubt, according to the Synoptics, with some of these men, at a much earlier period of his ministry Jesus had come in contact. But the imputed conduct on either side from the very first betrays a previous hostility. And even before meeting with them, so far as these inform us, in his very first sermon on the mount as we have seen, he denounces their conduct to his audience in Galilee as "men of sad countenances," who act so that they "may have glory of men." On their part these men watch Jesus, try to entrap him with their questions, and even in Galilee take counsel to kill him. This antagonism evidently had its origin at a period much anterior to the Galilean ministry. So pertinaciously does it follow him that he soon begins to anticipate his doom. In the far distant Cæsarea Philippi he tells his followers that "the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and the chief priests and the scribes." And hence it is that on coming up to Jerusalem, he keeps no terms with them, but publicly denounces their hypocrisy to the populace in the Temple itself. And when finally betrayed into their power, he "answers nothing," or only after this manner, as Luke records—"If I tell you ye will not believe, and if I also ask you ye will not answer me or let me go."

But towards Pilate the Roman governor, we would have expected less of this reticence. It had been no part of Christ's mission to denounce his extortion and injustice. He had ever been careful to stand well with the civil government. When asked for it, he had paid the capitation-tax or tribute. When the ensnaring question of the Herodians was put to him, he had told them to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." And he had withdrawn himself when in Galilee his followers would have compromised him, by taking him by force and making him their leader.

In the hall of Pilate then, when brought before that governor by the chief priests, and accused of "perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king;"—and when Pilate asks him "Art thou the King of the Jews?" the Synoptists all concur in representing Jesus as replying "Thou sayest"—an answer which, if unexplained, must have implicated him, as being an admission of the treason alleged against him. And yet so far from explaining it, though repeatedly questioned,

Jesus is said by the Synoptists to have "answered nothing, so that Pilate marvelled greatly."

According to this statement, therefore, Jesus confesses the charge alleged against him. He explains nothing. Without any seeming reason, he remains obstinately silent. And yet the Roman governor, despite his own admission—who could not be ignorant of his great popularity—that the city was at that moment crowded with the Galilean followers who had a few days before hailed him as their king—and whose duty it was to deal sharply with one who did not disclaim such treason—is made to declare, "I find no fault in this man." Nay, he seeks to release the prisoner, and finally takes water and washes his hands before them, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it."

If we turn, however, to the Fourth Gospel we get a much more natural and probable account of the matter, and one which evinces it to be from an eye-witness, which we have no reason to think any of the Synoptists were. When the chief priests led Jesus "unto the hall of judgment," we are told that they themselves "went not in lest they should be defiled." Accordingly Pilate went out to them and asked, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" After which he entered into the judgment hall again and called Jesus and said unto him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"—to which question, Jesus, not having been present at the accusation replies, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?"

In these words, then, Jesus neither admits nor denies the charge against him. But by Pilate's answer we are justified in supposing that, by look or manner, he reproached the governor for attributing the charge of sedition to him who had counselled these Pharisees to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Pilate answers deprecatingly "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done?" To which Jesus, so far from preserving a sullen and uncalled for silence, replies, "My kingdom is not of this world"—not a worldly kingdom. Had it been so I had Galilean followers enough who would willingly have fought "that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." In some surprise Pilate asks him "Art thou a king then?"—to which Jesus in explanation says, "Thou sayest that I am a king"—as much as to say call me what you will, as he is not less a king who reigns over the minds of men than he who commands their bodily homage, but "to this

end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice"—every true man is my subject.

Here then it is this free explanation in the judgment hall, of which the Synoptics tell us nothing, that sends out Pilate to the Jews, declaring as they do tell us, "I have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him." Here is Christ's conduct no longer mysterious, or seemingly obstinate. In this narrative, probably of that "other disciple who was known to the high priest," we have a clear, satisfactory, and much more likely account of it. Pilate's conduct is no longer inconsistent. And it is not till the Jews accuse Jesus of making himself "the Son of God," and the timid Pilate returns and asks him, "Whence art thou?"—that he, knowing how fruitless further explanation would be, "gave him no answer."

That John, a fisherman on the lake of Galilee, should be that "disciple known to the high priest" of Jerusalem may seem unlikely; and yet there is some reason to suppose that he was somehow connected with the priestly office. Polycrates, a bishop, of Ephesus, in the second century, calls him "a priest who wore the *petalon*," or priestly mitre, inscribed "Holy to Jehovah." And though commentators have been much puzzled what to make of this in a Christian Apostle, representing the language of Polycrates as metaphorical, and not founded on fact, yet it seems far more likely that one of these golden plates had been in John's possession as an heirloom, which perhaps he was fond of exhibiting, and thus gave rise to his successor's representation. The circumstance at least is worth considering, as tending to identify him with the "disciple known to the high priest."

John's Gospel, however, differs materially from the others in representing Jesus as answering the high priest who asked him "of his disciples and doctrine," freely in this manner,—“I spoke openly to the world, I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.” The explanation of this however is simple. John tells us that they "led him away to Annas first," possibly in order that he being now an old man, perhaps unable to attend the council, might have an opportunity of seeing and questioning the prisoner, possibly, in order to give the council time to assemble at the house of Caiaphas. The questions put by Annas, it may be, are given in John's Gospel, to whom Jesus answers in deference to his age and dignity, whilst

the examination before Caiaphas is omitted. Whereas the Synoptists pass over the former, and take us at once to the house of Caiaphas, save Luke who implies the lapse of some time, saying, "As soon as it was day," they led him to their council; and before this he represents the men that held Jesus as mocking and smiting him, which they did, according to John's Gospel, for his answer to the high priest. However this may be, the question again arises, are such discrepancies more likely, in the work of a spurious author; or of one conscious that he is testifying the truth?

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE LAST SUPPER.

INTO the much-vexed question of the Paschal Supper I will not enter at much length. Save on the theory of his plenary inspiration, the difference of date assigned to it by our author, in no way affects the authenticity of his Gospel, however it may the writer's correctness. Once admit the liability to error as to dates, the verbal accuracy of expressions, and true order of events—a liability not to be wondered at after the lapse of years,—and what does it amount to? The discrepancy as to this matter is not greater than that about the cleansing of the temple,—not greater than many existing in the Synoptics. And after all is it so certain that there is an error on our author's part? The Synoptists describe Jesus as partaking of the Passover, and instituting the Supper on "the first day of unleavened bread." But the first day of unleavened bread was, if we insist on strict literal accuracy, the day after the Passover, the 15th of Nisan, and not the 14th, when "the Passover must be killed"—a popular loose way of speaking,\* which our critics pardon in the Synoptists; but with John they insist on strict literal accuracy when he commences his 13th chapter with the words "Before the Passover."

In his 18th chapter, however, verse 28th, John again writes—"And they (the Jews) went not into the judgment hall lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover." Here it

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\* "Popular and inexact language," Dr. Davidson calls it in Vol. ii., p. 403, of his "Introduction," which he rightly interprets to mean the 14th of Nisan. But why then insist that John, by the use of this word "before," places this Supper on the 13th?

appears, if we insist on literal accuracy, that the time at which Jesus eat the last Supper with his disciples must have been anterior to the usual time of eating the Passover amongst the Jews. If for "eat," however, we had any authority to substitute *keep* in this passage, it would remove much of the difficulty; for we can well understand that during their great national festival these priests would not choose to defile themselves, especially as the next day (the Sabbath) was an "high day" amongst them.

But without making this change in the sacred text, is it not still possible that both Jesus and the Jews eat the Passover on the same *Jewish* day, that is the 14th day of the month Nisan, as Moses had commanded (Ex. xii., 6.) The Jewish day as we know lasted from evening to evening, and the Passover was to be killed and eaten, as the English reader will see, according to the marginal reading in the Bible, "*between the two evenings.*" So that Jesus and his disciples may really have eaten the Passover in the early part of the 14th of Nisan, after sunset on the *first* evening when the Jewish day commenced, and the priests may not have eaten it till the second evening before sunset, and after the crucifixion.

The Hebrew expression here rendered, "Between the two evenings," is usually interpreted, as I am aware, between the "ninth and eleventh hours" of the day, or our three and five o'clock in the afternoon; such being the time, as Josephus intimates in his "Wars," book 6th, chap. 9th, sec. 3rd, for the priests in his time to kill the sacrifices. But Moses himself defines the Jewish Sabbath (Lev. xxiii., 32) to be "from even unto even"—a rest surely not only of two but twenty-four hours—usually interpreted from sunset to sunset. And the command in Deuteronomy—xvi., 6—is to "sacrifice the Passover at even, *at the going down of the sun*"—a command which Aben Ezra and others interpret to mean between *sunset and dark*—and if killed *before* the hour at which the Jewish day commenced, the expression "*in that night*" (Ex. xii., 8), denoting when it was to be eaten, would not be the 14th, but the 15th of Nisan. But it was in *that night* in which the Jews first ate of it that the destroying angel passed over the houses of the Israelites. It was "at midnight" (Ex. xii., 29) that "the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt;" so that midnight must have been the midnight of the 14th—the day the festival was instituted to commemorate. In this view I believe I am virtually supported by Clement, Origin, Erasmus, Neandar, Alford, and Ellicott, although I have not their works to refer to.

And yet Mr. Tayler, in the ninth and tenth sections of his learned work, gives us no less than over forty pages on the paschal controversy, in which he speaks of the subject as "By far the most extraordinary divergency between the three first Gospels and the Fourth;" and asserts that "According to the Fourth Gospel, this Supper *must* have taken place not on the 14th but on the 13th of Nisan, and Christ himself have suffered on the 14th, the same day on the eve of which the Passover was celebrated" (see p. 100); and therefore "the two narratives are utterly incapable of reconciliation."

Now that the crucifixion took place on the 14th of Nisan I readily admit, for even Paul calls Christ (I. Cor. v., 7), "Our Passover sacrificed for us," which he would not have done had it not taken place on the same date as the Jewish Passover. And Christ himself, in instituting the Lord's Supper, evidently assumes the fact when he says, as the Synoptists tell us—"This is *my* body broken for you—this is *my* blood of the *new* covenant," &c.—an assumption without foundation had he not been crucified on the 14th of Nisan. And yet Mr. Tayler says (page 99) that, according to Paul and the Synoptists, whose account of the institution he refers to, "Jesus was crucified on the 15th of Nisan, the first entire day of the feast of unleavened bread." If so, there is really no point in Paul's language, nor yet in Christ's reference to the old covenant as about to be superseded, as given by the Synoptists. But the words, "first *entire* day of the feast," here used by Mr. T., shows us that he was confounding the Jewish reckoning with ours, and explains the cause of this mistake. Every "day of the feast," according to Jewish time, was an "entire" one, though differing from ours in having the night preceding it. And the day on which Jesus suffered was the day of that night in which he instituted the supper, and told them "the shepherd should be smitten, and the sheep of the flock scattered abroad."

Dr. Davidson, also, who devotes seventeen or eighteen pages of his very excellent work to this controversy, in Vol. ii., page 403, writes:—"The Synoptists intended to express the fact that Jesus partook of the legal Passover meal on the evening of the 14th of Nisan. Hence he was crucified on the 15th, the day before the Jewish Sabbath." Here the doctor acknowledges by the word "intended" the Synoptists did not express the fact they "meant" to do. But he also assigns the date of the crucifixion to "the 15th, the day before the Jewish Sabbath."



Now, both histories coincide in this respect at least, that they represent Jesus to have suffered the day before the Sabbath. John tells us that the Jews, "because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day, besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." And the Synoptists uniformly represent the women as coming to the sepulchre on "the first day of the week," "having rested the Sabbath day, according to commandment." Let us, however, clearly understand whether the inference is just, that he was crucified on the 15th, according to the Synoptics, as both Mr. Tayler and Dr. Davidson represent.

"The Hebrew Passover commenced on the even of the 14th Nisan, without any reference to the day of the week," writes Mr. Tayler, page 124; and, "in the way of reckoning then customary among the Jews, connecting the evening of one day with the morning of the next as *one continuous day*" (page 125), it is plain that "the eve of the 14th of Nisan" was the evening of the day on which our Lord was crucified. And this is borne out by the Levitical law.

According to Deuteronomy xvi., 6, as we have seen, the paschal lamb was to be killed "at even, at the going down of the sun." It was to be eaten "*in that night*, roast with fire and unleavened bread" (Ex. xii., 8), and to be eaten "*in haste*," in remembrance of the haste with which they came forth from the land of Egypt. "That night" was the night of the 14th of Nisan, and as this preceded the day in the Jewish reckoning, the night of the 14th of Nisan on which Jesus eat the Passover with his disciples was the night of the same day on which he suffered, so that according to the Synoptists he suffered on the 14th, and not the 15th, as Mr. Tayler and Dr. Davidson assert. If he suffered on the 15th, then more than twenty-fours must have elapsed between the last supper and crucifixion contrary to both histories. And the only real difficulty is that pointed out above, where John writes "*eat*," seemingly instead of *keep*, the Passover.

On what grounds, however, does Mr. Tayler assert, that "according to the Fourth Gospel this supper *must* have taken place on the 13th of Nisan?" On this, that "In the opening verse of the 13th chapter we were told that the supper was 'before the Feast of the Passover,' and, to exclude all possibility of mistake, we are further told (xiii., 29), that at the conclusion of the supper some words spoken by Jesus to Judas were understood to

be an instruction to him to buy what was necessary for the celebration of the feast."

Let us see whether this be entirely correct. What is really asserted by the Evangelist is: "Now, before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Surely much too "popular and inexact language," to quote the words of Dr. Davidson in reference to "the first day of unleavened bread," to bind the Evangelist to any particular date as to the supper. If, however, we should assign any particular force to the word "before" in this sentence, we might suppose that John meant to assign Christ's reason for keeping the Passover in the first hours of the 14th of Nisan, *before* the usual time of day, that the Jews were wont to keep it, that he might sup with his disciples, for Luke tells us that he said to them, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."

And with respect to what Jesus said to Judas, verse 29: "Understood to be an instruction to him to buy what was necessary for the celebration of the feast"—this could not, of course, refer to the supper that was then ended, and may not to the Passover, which, being eaten in haste and with bitter herbs, was not what is understood by the word "*feast*," which term applied more properly to the seven days of unleavened bread, during which they were to abstain from work, and to put all leaven out of their houses. Against this it may have been that the disciples may have understood Jesus to instruct Judas; so little does their interpretation "exclude all possibility of mistake."

But, further, Mr. Tayler refers to "two passages in the sequel of the narrative—first (xviii. 28), where we are told that the Jews when they led Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate, would not enter the heathen judgment-hall, lest they should disqualify themselves by defilement for eating the Passover"—a passage, we have already considered, showing that they may still have eaten it in the last hours of the 14th Nisan, subsequent to the crucifixion; "and, secondly (xix., 14), where it is expressly stated that 'it was the preparation of the Passover.'" Now, had Mr. Tayler compared this verse with the 31st and 42nd in the same chapter, he would have seen that the day John speaks of he also calls the preparation for the Sabbath, "for that Sabbath was an high day" among the Jews, being the one that occurred during the festival of the Passover.

The "preparation of the Passover" really took place four days previously, on the 10th day of the month Nisan (see Ex. xii., 3); or, if we are to interpret it the day before the Passover, this would make Jesus to have suffered, not on the 14th, but the 13th, contrary to Mr. Tayler's own statement. His statement is, that it was on the 14th of Nisan, according to this Gospel, that Christ suffered, and not the day before the Passover. So that this phrase of John's, if it be not another instance of that "popular and inexact language," must either mean the preparation *for the Sabbath* of the Passover, or we are to understand by it that at that very time the priests were killing the paschal lamb for their evening meal, and offering up the morning sacrifice "about the sixth hour," at the very time, as John would indicate, that these men shouted, "Away with him, away with him; crucify him; we have no king but Cæsar." At any rate, both histories speak of the day on which Christ suffered as "*the preparation*"—that is, the day before the Sabbath—with which the above phrase is not inconsistent.

If, therefore, we have succeeded in showing that this "divergency between the three first Gospels and the Fourth" is not so "extraordinary" as has been represented, we would further request the reader's attention to the following coincidences. Mr T. writes— "In this (John's) narrative not a word is said of the commemorative institution of breaking bread and distributing wine; but in place of it a symbolical act is introduced—the washing of the disciples' feet by Christ, to which the Synoptists do not once refer, and for which indeed they leave no room." See pp. 99, 100.

True it is that John tells us that on "supper being ended" Jesus rose from table, laid aside his garments, took water and a towel and "began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." And equally true it is that the Synoptists do not once refer to this "symbolical act" of Jesus—an act no less symbolical and impressive than one they do tell us of on a like occasion, when Jesus "*took a child and set it in the midst of them.*" But John, with a strange remissness, does not tell us what prompted Jesus to the act. And were it not for Luke, we would have been left, in utter ignorance, to guess its cause. On turning to his Gospel, however (xxii., 24), we read, "There was also a *strife among them* which of them should be accounted the greatest." Here then, as on the like occasion, the act of Jesus, as well as the admonition with which he enforces the meaning of it, is satisfactorily accounted for,—another instance of that undesigned

coincidence of testimony on the part of witnesses so widely separated by time and place as should effectually establish their trustworthiness.

In commenting upon Luke, however, Dr. Davidson, in Vol. ii., page 37, says—"The passage about the disputation of the disciples has no proper connexion with its context. A similar fact had been already related by the Evangelist (ix., 46), and we can scarcely resist the impression that, if this be historical, its proper place is earlier."

But if there had been two disputations of the disciples previously on the subject, why may there not have been a third at the last supper? On the first occasion, as Luke tells us—and in this he is corroborated by Mark (ix., 36)—Jesus rebuked them by taking a child and "setting him in the midst of them." The second was when the mother of Zebedee's children preferred her request to Jesus on behalf of her two sons. What more likely at the last Supper, when the manner and language of Jesus intimated that something important was about to happen, that this spirit of rivalry should again manifest itself, when he spoke of "the Kingdom of God" being about to come? And hence the third emphatic reproof administered to them, as reported by this Evangelist.

It is true that, according to Luke, Jesus gives them on this occasion this admonition—"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; but so shall it not be among you." However, according to Matthew and Mark, it was on the previous occasion he addressed this to them, when they were indignant with the two brethren. About to leave them, when this strife breaks out anew, justly indignant that his past reproofs had been of so little use, Jesus now admonishes them by the emphatic action of washing their feet, and thus enforces the meaning of the act—"For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." And the act so coincides with Luke's record and Christ's conduct on a previous occasion, as very strongly to corroborate John's statement.

But further, as to what occurred at that Supper with respect to Judas, we have this discrepancy amongst the Synoptists. When Jesus announced to them, "Verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me;" and when they all in sorrow began to say unto him one by one, "Is it I?" Matthew indicates some delay or hesitation on the part of Judas in responding, and makes Jesus reply to him openly—"Thou hast said." This, however, is omitted by Mark, and nothing more is given than this general reply of

Jesus to the question of the disciples—"One of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish;" or, as Matthew has it, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." Luke only says, "They began to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing."

Now, however natural the hesitancy of Iscariot in putting the question, this open branding of him as a traitor in presence of his fellows is not such an act as we would naturally ascribe to Jesus. If Mark learned the circumstance from Peter, his silence about it seems expressive. And what is the testimony of John? He tells us, in the very words ascribed to him by Matthew, that Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me." But instead of the disciples asking Jesus one by one "Is it I?" he writes—"Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord who is it? Jesus answered, he it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop he gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, 'That thou doest do quickly.' Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him"—the above conversation having taken place *sotto voce*.

Here then is an account of the matter at least much more consonant to the character of Jesus. But if John's Gospel be not authentic, what are we to say to it? If this cleverly depicted scene at the Supper table be ideal, Christ's character must be ideal also. It is only through such traits and incidents that that character is portrayed to us. Mr Tayler and Dr. Davidson are very indignant that their opponents should ascribe to the author, on their theory, any improper purpose. True, the purpose may be very proper, but the character is no longer real, if these traits are the fictions of the novelist. And in the above case I, for my part, can only see one of two alternatives, either that the above is the testimony of an eye-witness, or a very exquisitely devised work of fiction. Matthew's statement seems more the artless work of legend or tradition; but this, if not true, seems written artfully, well calculated to deceive by its very circumstantiality.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE BETRAYAL AND CRUCIFIXION.

THESE events I will group together, as it is necessary to notice them only very briefly; for however discordant the histories have been as to the early period of the life, when they bring Jesus to Jerusalem on his last visit, they became to the end remarkably coincident. There are still discrepancies, however, worthy to be noticed, and these, not only betwixt the Fourth Gospel and the others, but in the accounts of the Synoptists themselves, where John's testimony becomes of the utmost value to us.

We have another example of this in their respective accounts of the betrayal of Jesus. The Synoptists tell us,—or at least Matthew and Mark do, for Luke does not—that the betrayal originated in “Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,” on the occasion of a woman—whom they do not mention—anointing the head of Jesus with an “alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious,” which occasioned some indignation on the part of some of the disciples, who said, “To what purpose is this waste?” They do not indicate the woman's motive; nor yet that the traitor was indignant above others, but immediately tell us, “Then Judas Iscariot one of the twelve went unto the chief priests to betray him unto them.”

But when we turn to John's Gospel, what a flood of light is thrown on the whole subject. John does not tell us indeed of Judas, going on this occasion from the house to the chief priests, but he does tell us what it was that brought Jesus and his disciples to that house in Bethany, that the woman's name was Mary, the sister of him whom he had raised from the dead; that it was not the “head” but the “feet” of Jesus she anointed—a circumstance more natural and likely; that this Judas Iscariot was a “son of Simon's,” in whose house they were, according to the Synoptics, and that it was he who gave utterance to the indignation under the plea of charity, being of an avaricious disposition, though the treasurer of the party.

Again, the discrepancy of the narratives as to Christ's conduct in the garden of Gethsemane has been strongly commented on by those unfavourable to the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. John does not tell us certainly of Jesus taking the three disciples,

and retiring apart to pray on that occasion—all this had been already told by the Synoptists—but when he reproves Peter for cutting off the servant's ear, saying, "Put up thy sword into the sheath, *the cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it*"—here language is attributed to him by John, so identical with that used in prayer as recorded by the Synoptists, and the determination expressed is so consonant with the concluding sentiment of that prayer—"If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done"—that there can be little difficulty as to the general accuracy of two so diverging yet concurring witnesses.

Further, all the Synoptists tell us of one of the disciples drawing a sword, and smiting off the ear of a servant of the high priest, but none of them tells us either the name of the servant, or of the disciple who did the deed. This may be accounted for on the supposition that the former was not known to them, and that during Peter's life, his brethren did not choose to particularize him, and so expose him to the malice of the priests. When John wrote, however, his enemies had done their worst upon him, and so he gives us, not only the name of him who drew the sword—an act so consonant to the character of Peter—but also of the servant smitten on the occasion, for John seems to have been known to the high priest's household, as we find him "speaking to her that kept the door, and bringing in Peter."

And here we must pause to ask the impugners of this Gospel's authenticity, why this particularity about the names of parties so unimportant as that of this servant, to this great history, and about events of so little moment as one of the disciples being known to the servant of the high priest? Is this the cunning device of some spurious author to impose on us by affecting a knowledge of names and circumstances, as ideal as the creations of some novelist, and fitting them into the previous histories of our Lord? This history is either founded on the testimony of an eye-witness, or it is the work of some very clever cunning artist. To do its opponents justice, few of them would allege the latter; but their confessed difficulty is, having denied its authenticity to give some rational, probable account of its origin at Ephesus, at a time and place so remote from the circumstances it describes. Some indeed—such as F. C. Baur—think it must be of Alexandrian origin, but this opinion is strongly contested by other critics. Some regard it, not so much as a history, as a "theological treatise" on the life of Christ which it evidently is not; and if so,

for what purpose is this introduction of unimportant names and circumstances? Some think it written by some Gentile Christian of the second century for the purpose of magnifying Jesus as the Logos. If so, he must either have invented, or derived his information from an eye-witness as to those circumstances in the life of Christ. The simplest solution surely is that which accepts it as the authentic testimony of a man who loved to ponder in his old age, on scenes that had so deeply interested him, and in which, as the disciple whom the Master loved, he had himself borne no unimportant part.

Take, further, the respective accounts of the crucifixion of the Christ. They all concur in the main circumstances. John tells us, indeed, that Jesus "went forth, *bearing his cross*, to the place called Golgotha," as it was customary for the condemned to bear the instrument of their punishment. However, we must qualify John's statement by that in the Synoptics, and suppose that the soldiers, soon finding Jesus unequal to the burthen, "laid hold of Simon the Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, and him they compelled to bear the cross." Of this Simon, John says nothing; and yet, with the others, he mentions "the parting of the garments," the "two malefactors," and each gives us a separate version of the inscription on the cross.

Here, then, is one criterion by which to test the accuracy of each. Which of these versions is the most likely? The inscription, indeed, was sufficiently public and notorious to be easily accessible to all. "The place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city." It was written in "Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin," according to both Luke and John. Yet we have no reason to think that any of the Evangelists had seen it but John himself. In fear for their own safety, his other male followers had forsaken him. And hence all the Evangelists give it differently, while they concur as to its general import. Matthew gives it thus: "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Mark says it was: "THE KING OF THE JEWS." Luke thus records it: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." But John tells us, as if alluding to this difference: "*And the writing was*, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

That Pilate wrote it to spite the Jews for compelling him to do an act so repugnant to his own sense of justice we have good reason to believe. Each form of the inscription manifests this. From Luke we learn they had already told him the man was a



Galilean. In bringing their charge against him of perverting the nation, they must have given him some name, though it is not mentioned, and may even have spoken of him contemptuously as from Nazareth. To gall them more, Pilate would not omit from the inscription the offensive title. And if a sad spectator of his Master's sufferings, we can well suppose that John had read again and again that inscription on the cross above him, perhaps in its threefold character, for we have no right to assume that he was an illiterate man. And his version, as being the most stinging to Jewish pride, may justly be considered the most accurate, even if we had not the writer's own most emphatic assertion of the fact. For our author gives his testimony pointedly and confidently as a thing known to many beside himself, adding, "This title, then, read many of the Jews, for the place was nigh to the city."

Further, John gives the remonstrance of the chief priests with Pilate against this inscription, and their suggestion of a change in the wording of it, which Pilate refuses to make, all which was matter personally unknown to the Synoptists, and which could not have been given us, save by one who had been present, and deeply interested in the case; and which could hardly have been invented with such regard to character and circumstance, save for a purpose, which I will not ascribe to this Evangelist.

Finally, when Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus, as Mark tells us, "Pilate marvelled if he were already dead; and, calling the centurion, asked him whether he had been any while dead." And with this agrees this testimony of John, that when the soldiers came to Jesus they "found him dead already," and that one of them pierced his side, and "forthwith came out blood and water." And then follows that remarkable testimony so much commented on by critics, "*And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe.*" Here we have, on the part of a sacred writer, as solemn an affirmation as man can make as to a certain fact being actually witnessed. He does not assert, indeed, that he himself witnessed the soldiers piercing the side of Jesus; but he does affirm most emphatically the trustworthiness of the evidence. Here is no question of coincidence. The question is, are we to believe this sacred writer when he pledges his veracity as to the truthfulness of the party whose evidence he records. The affirmation is made with no reference to the question of authenticity now before us. It refers solely to a question that had arisen

in the early church amongst Greek converts whether Jesus Christ had actually "come in the flesh," or whether that body crucified on Calvary were not really a phantom. These men said that it was. This writer affirms this testimony in contradiction of them. We are now told that the book was written in order to magnify Jesus as the Divine Logos. Here its author writes to contradict a party who, for the purpose of doing so, denied his humanity. This writing emanates from Ephesus, where John lived, and who wrote letters to the same effect. The question, therefore, for the English reader is, simply, Had this writer John's authority, or, at least, the authority of an eye-witness, for this solemn affirmation? Or does he make it on the authority of some legend or tradition, of whose truth he personally knew nothing?

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE RESURRECTION.

WE come now to consider the posthumous history of the Christ; and here the great difficulty is, no longer to reconcile the statements of the Fourth with those of the Synoptical Gospels, but to reconcile the latter with one another. Our business will be to try to extract some consistent harmonious account from all.

In the July number of *The Theological Review*, for 1866, the Rev. C. Kegan Paul, in his review of Renan's work "Les Apôtres," observes:—"We will, therefore, only say this much, that all harmonies of the accounts of the resurrection signally fail. But in so failing the discrepancies which remain only serve to give a more life-like picture than could be gained in any other way of the confusion, the cross-reports, the incoherence of statement on the part of those who were engaged in the transactions of that memorable day."

Should we fail in this attempt, therefore, we can hardly do worse than others; and had we none but the Synoptical accounts, the attempt to reconcile them would seem hopeless. Their confusion is the more remarkable as the Apôtles' first care, after the departure of our Lord, as we learn from the book of "Acts," was to choose one from the disciples in the place of Judas, to "be a witness with us of the resurrection." That the event itself had made a deep impression, as was natural, is evident from the recorded

speeches of Peter, from the altered tone of these men's conduct, and from the summary given of their whole teaching at this time—"preaching through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." And yet, in the published accounts given of the event afterwards, the statements are not less confused, unsatisfactory, and contradictory than those already considered betwixt the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics.

So far, indeed, as the interment is concerned, all of them are agreed. All tell us of Joseph of Arimathea—"a rich man," according to Matthew, "an honourable counsellor," Mark calls him, "a good man and a just," says Luke,—going to Pilate and begging the body of Jesus; that he took it down and "wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb hewn in the rock, and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre," and that that day was "the preparation." In this pious work he was watched by Mary of Magdala, and another Mary, who "followed after and beheld how the body was laid."

With this account that of John's is substantially similar, save that he tells us that Joseph was joined in this pious duty by Nicodemus, another member of the Jewish council, "which at first came to Jesus by night." He also tells us that Nicodemus brought with him "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds," and wound the body "in the linen clothes with the spices." Whereas the Synoptists say that the women "bought sweet spices and ointments that they might come and anoint him." It is possible that both may have contributed spices to embalm the body; but the discrepancy, as it stands, is one that shows how little careful the writer was to shape his record in accordance with those that preceded it. Nay, even in his subsequent account, he makes no mention of these spices being found afterwards in the sepulchre.

It is, however, as to what actually occurred at that sepulchre "very early in the morning on the first day of the week" that we find our Evangelists all at variance. That these women went there for the purpose specified above cannot be doubted; but the confusion of the accounts, as Mr. Kegan Paul observes, "only gives us a more life-like picture of their own confusion, and the cross-reports" in consequence. Matthew tells us that "there had been a great earthquake," that an angel had "descended from heaven and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it;" that his presence had utterly terrified the Roman soldiers watching by the tomb; but that he spake encouragingly to the women, saying—"Fear not ye,

for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified," &c.—that the women "departed quickly, and ran to bring his disciples word," and that as they went Jesus met them, and said, "All hail." "And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid, go tell *my brethren* that they go into *Galilee*, and there shall they see me."

Of this earthquake and the guard of Roman soldiers neither Mark nor Luke tells us anything. Neither do they intimate how the stone was rolled away; but both tell us that on their approach the women, to their surprise, found the sepulchre open; for, as the former says, they had been discussing the question—"Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? for it was very great." Further, Mark's account of what they saw is, not *an angel outside*, but "entering into the sepulchre they saw a *young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment*." The young man speaks to them, and in almost the very words attributed to the angel, says, "Be not affrighted, ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified; he is risen, &c.; but go your way, tell his disciples *and Peter* that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him as he said unto you." Mark gives us no hint, and indulges in no supposition as to who this "young man" might be; but afterwards tells us that Jesus appeared *first* to Mary Magdalene, who went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.\* This is worthy to be noted, as it agrees with John's record in this reference to Mary Magdalene, and seems to ignore that of Matthew, as if his account had been founded partly on the reports of the soldiers.

When we turn to Luke, however, we find another and quite

\* This latter passage certainly, with what follows of Mark's Gospel, is rejected by modern critics as unauthenticated by the most ancient MSS. Still it serves to indicate the tradition of the early church. And there is no doubt of Mark's testimony as to the "young man" in the sepulchre being seen by the women; and if Mark had for this statement the authority of Peter, the same authority may have given rise to what follows. Dr. Davidson, in Vol. ii., p. 115, of his "Introduction," after giving the evidence on either side respecting these verses (Mark xvi., 9 to the end), observes:—"It is difficult to decide between the conflicting evidence. The fact that Irenaeus and probably Justin Martyr, had this portion before them in their copies of the Gospel, is sufficient to outweigh the evidence of all the MSS. which omit it, because they reach up to a much earlier time." And again (p. 116)—"Great respect is due to the opinion of textual critics like Griesbach and Tischendorf, who are against the authenticity of the verses. But it cannot be denied that the weight of *external* evidence is on the other side."

different account. According to him also, the women "entered into the sepulchre, but found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass as they were much perplexed there about, behold *two men* stood by them in *shining garments*." These men address them much after the fashion of the "young man," and "angel" in the preceding Gospels, asking, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen." But instead of directing them as the "young man" had done, and both the angel and Jesus himself had done in Mathew's Gospel to "go and tell his disciples that he goeth before you into Galilee," the admonition is,—“Remember how he spake unto you *when he was yet in Galilee*, saying the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of man, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”

Now the question is, to deduce some probable consistent supposition from these "cross-reports." Of course, the record of all these historians is founded on report, not on personal observation, and hence the discordance. They all state, however, that Mary Magdalene was one of these women—the woman that John says came and told him and Peter, and whom they afterwards left weeping by the sepulchre. With her Matthew and Mark associate another Mary, and Luke adds "Joanna and other women." Mark, however, confirms John in this that Jesus "appeared *first* to Mary Magdalene, and that *she* went and told them that had been with him." And Luke also confirms him in one respect, and that a material one—"that *Peter* arose and ran to the sepulchre, and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

How are we, however, even with these coincidences to aid us, to thread our way through the remaining difficulties? In this manner, as it seems to me with the help of John's testimony to aid us, which seems indeed to be only in part what he himself had witnessed, and partly, what had been reported to him by Mary Magdalene. Let us then suppose that when the women first saw the sepulchre open, Mary left her companions, and without waiting to investigate as the other women did, ran back to tell Peter and the other disciples, putting this construction on the occurrence that John says she did, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." In her absence on this errand, the other women go into the sepulchre as Mark testifies, and find a "young man sitting clothed in a long white garment," being "the linen clothes" of which Jesus had not yet divested himself, in

which he had been buried, and in which he had appeared, to the terror of the Roman soldiers, sitting on the stone at the door of the sepulchre. On the women's departure, he must have divested himself of these, leaving them in the sepulchre where they were found by Peter, and in their place seems to have obtained some garments possibly of the gardener, which may afterwards have led to Mary's mistake on seeing him, and thus taken his departure. When Peter and John come subsequently, they find the sepulchre empty of all but the linen clothes, "laid by themselves," as Luke testifies; "and the napkin," as John says, "that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." After their departure, on Mary's return, she, as she stands weeping, "stoops down and looks into the sepulchre," the place still comparatively dark, and sees what she in her imagination magnifies into "two angels," but really the grave clothes as John had seen them, "in white sitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain." Her account gets abroad, and meets us in Luke's version of the matter "as two men in shining garments." That Mary in her affright saw no "angels" is evident from her own story. She hears a voice addressing her, "woman, why weepest thou?"—which she supposes in her confusion to proceed from the sepulchre, but immediately on answering "she *turned herself back* and *saw Jesus standing*, but knew not that it was Jesus." That the first question proceeded from *him* however, would appear, both from Mary's action in turning herself back, and the fact that Jesus repeats it with this addition "Whom seekest thou?"—a usual thing to do when the first question is not answered satisfactorily. She seeing him possibly in altered raiment, at least altered in appearance from the Master once known to her, rushes into another mistake, suggested possibly by the locality, and "supposes him to be the gardener." And it is not till Jesus addresses her by name, and in his usual tone of voice, that she answers instinctively in her native dialect "*Rabboni*," and no doubt as Matthew tells us of the women, "held him by the feet and worshipped," or at least threw herself down in the Eastern mode of salutation, which elicited the message—"Go tell my brethren," or as John has it, "Touch [or hold] me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to *my brethren* and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

On the simplicity and *truth-like* nature of John's story, I need not comment,—nor how admirably it is told if indeed a work of

fiction. No doubt there are many and grave difficulties that still surround the whole subject, as every thinking Christian feels, and easy it is to start objections. Our present object is, not to answer them, but simply to harmonize the narratives; and the above attempt is submitted, in all confidence, to the unbiassed consideration of the reader.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### SUBSEQUENT APPEARANCES.

HOWEVER incoherent the testimony of the Synoptics as to the resurrection, and however impossible to be harmonized without John's testimony to aid us, it is no less meagre and conflicting as to the posthumous appearances. Omitting those doubtful verses in Mark's Gospel, we have only the testimony of two of them on this point, one of them not an Apostle, and confessedly writing from the reports of others. And those testimonies are so conflicting, that whilst Matthew tells us of an appearance in Galilee, according to Luke it would seem as if no such appearance could have taken place, for he represents Jesus, on that night after he had risen and appeared to the eleven, as commanding them to "tarry in Jerusalem until indued with power from on high," and then says that "he led them out as far as to Bethany, lifted up his hands and blessed them, was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

We know how these discrepancies have been naturally seized on by the unbeliever, and perhaps magnified, to take from the Christian all ground for faith in these documents, and in the resurrection itself. We do not refer to them, certainly, for such a purpose. The question before us is the trustworthiness of a certain record. Such discrepancies are freely quoted to invalidate the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. It may then be permitted to show that if valid against it, the same argument would be equally valid against the whole Christian records. For no greater discrepancy can be established against it, than here confronts us in the accounts of the Synoptists.

One circumstance, at least, these discrepancies prove, that there was no collusion on the part of the Evangelists. That the

rumoured resurrection from the dead of such a teacher as this Jesus of Nazareth should have given rise to a variety of statements and contradictory reports, is only what all experience would lead us to expect. These statements the Gospels reflect to us. That such "a rising from the dead" was wholly unanticipated by his Apostles or the Evangelists, all the histories testify. That it produced a wonderful effect upon their minds, changing their whole expectations and manner of life, and through them producing a corresponding change in the history of the world itself,—such are the phenomena that the unbeliever has to account for. Was it a mistake on their part that led to the introduction and propagation of Christianity? We are not concerned to show how Jesus was raised up, or in what body—whether a real or "spiritual"—or "*pneumatic*" one, as Dr. Davidson calls it—he appeared to his disciples. Sufficient it is for us to know that their senses were impressed, so as to beget a deep consciousness of his actual living presence. If asked *how* this was done, we reply that there are many things in this world outside the range of our philosophy. So long as science cannot tell us, beyond a certain organization of nerves and bones and ligaments, how it is that mind acts on matter, even in this life, or how it is that the vital principle, in the animal and vegetable kingdoms out of dead inert matter, builds up for itself a living feeling structure, so that the little acorn becomes transformed into the giant oak, or the unconscious embryo into the self-acting, thinking, perfect man, so long it is useless to dogmatize as to what can, or cannot take place under the Divine Providence. How lately it is since that property of light was discovered, that has enabled men of science to apply it to the purpose of photography, and that property of electricity to the purpose of telegraphy, and when such—at one time miracles—so long lay concealed in the world of matter from the most patient scientific research, is it for any of us to dogmatize as to what may or may not take place in the world of spiritual existence?

How that mortal body, therefore, deposited by Joseph of Arimathea in the sepulchre, had become transformed into that "spiritual body" which is no longer subject—to the astonishment of the disciples—to the laws of matter, it is not our business to explain. If asked how it is that the dead inert matter we call bread becomes transformed in a few hours after its consumption into a portion of our own *living, feeling* organization, despite even Professor Huxley's doctrine of protoplasms, we might feel at a loss



to say. We only know the *fact* that the living animal can assimilate *some* substances, and that if it attempt to assimilate others, the result is death. So it is that the Scriptures only assure us of the *fact* that the minds and senses of the disciples had been convincingly impressed with a conscious sense of Christ's living presence after death, contrary to all expectation on their part of such event;—and that one—John says two—of his own immediate followers, surprised and incredulous at the reports of the women, had examined his sepulchre, and found it empty of all but the grave clothes; and that the words of the women saying that he was alive, “seemed to them as idle tales.” Even when he appeared to themselves as they sat at meat, it seems they were incredulous at first, though “terrified and affrighted as if they had seen a spirit.” And Matthew who corroborates John's testimony about an appearance in Galilee says, “When they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted.” This then is not the evidence of men wishing to impose on others their own imaginary terrors. And as to John's testimony—the point that now concerns us—this so agrees in the main, and yet in some respects so differs from the Synoptists', that it becomes a matter of exceeding interest.

John tells us, as we have seen, that Christ's first appearance after his resurrection was to Mary Magdalene; and in this, apart from the doubtful passages in Mark, he is corroborated by Matthew to this extent that he says Mary was one of the women whom Jesus met on their way to tell his disciples. How they knew him to be Jesus, beyond his saying to them “All hail,” Matthew does not tell us, but according to John, Jesus reveals himself to Mary in a manner so truth-like, so exquisite and touching, that his narrative must either be accepted as genuine, or condemned as a very clever attempt to impose on our credulity.

The next, which is the first appearance Luke relates, is to “two of them on that same day on their way to Emmaus.” But like Mary's, “their eyes were holden; that they should not know him.” John does not tell us of this appearance, though Paul refers to it in 1st Corinthians, xv., 5. But, in order to invalidate John's testimony, Dr. Davidson argues that “the representation given by Luke” of the risen Jesus, “is inconsistent with his (John's) Gospel,”—that in the latter “he did not appear in a gross material form, but in a state not subject, though visible, to the usual conditions of matter.” This is true to some extent, and yet what is Luke's testimony? That two of his intimate disciples failed to recognize the person of

their Master in a long walk and conversation with him, supposing him to be "a stranger in Jerusalem;" nor were their eyes opened till he made himself known to them, by taking bread blessing and breaking it as he had done at the last supper, when, to their astonishment, he "vanished out of their sight" or ceased to be seen of them.

The third appearance is to the twelve, on "the same day at evening being the first day of the week when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews." "Jesus came," John says, "and stood in the midst and saith, Peace be unto you, and showed them his hands and his side." That he was seen "of the twelve" Paul says; and Luke gives us a very graphic account of this appearance who tells us that whilst the two disciples, just returned from Emmaus were relating their experience, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said, *Peace be unto you*;" and when they were terrified and in doubt, Jesus, to assure them, "showed to them his hands and his *feet*." Luke certainly attributes to him language but little consistent with a spiritual existence—"handle me and see for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have"—language analogous to that which John ascribes to him when he says to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, &c." Luke also makes him ask "Have ye any meat?" and when they gave him a piece of a broiled fish and an honeycomb, says, "he took and did eat before them"—a tradition which may have arisen from the action ascribed to him by John in Galilee when he told them to "Bring of the fish ye have now caught," on which occasion he is said to "have given them bread and fish likewise; but not himself to have eaten anything. Attach, therefore, what authority we may to these statements, they all evidently had their origin in the Apostolic testimony referred to by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, and which meets us in the doubtful passages in Mark where we are told that "he appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat." The Fourth Gospel written at Ephesus and the third probably at Rome, after a period, the latter of some 40, the former of 70 or more years, concur sufficiently in their general import to warrant a foundation, at least, of Apostolical authority. The authority for Luke's is supposed to have been *Paul* who concurs in this, that both mention "Cephas" or "Simon" as one of the two to whom Christ made himself known. The other Cleopas, or Klopas, is spoken of by John as the son or husband of one of the Mary's that stood by the cross.

So far then, it would seem, that the Fourth Gospel is quite close

enough in accord with the Synoptist Luke, as not to justify on this ground, Dr. Davidson's verdict of "unhistorical." And though Luke represents Jesus as "eating and drinking with the Apostles after his resurrection," and attributes in his book of Acts (x., 41), a similar statement to the Apostle Peter, yet some allowance must be made for a writer who speaks confessedly from report, especially in describing the actions of a spiritual existence. For that Luke also supposes some great transformation to have taken place is evident from his description of him being "parted from them," and contrary to the law of gravitation, "carried up into heaven."

We come now to another appearance that rests solely on John's testimony—a second one to those eleven, "eight days after," when they "were within, and Thomas with them," the doors being shut. The reason given for it is the incredulity of the absent Thomas on the first occasion, who refused to believe, like a modern philosopher, on any lesser evidence than his own senses. This evidence is given him in presence of his brethren, with this pointed admonition, "Blessed are they who, not seeing, are yet believing,"\* words sufficiently justified, without ascribing any transcendental gloss to them, as Dr. Davidson has done, by the simple fact, that it was quite impossible that all his followers, to the end of time, could continue to receive such satisfaction.

Now the question arises, Is this appearance an invention on the part of this author? We have nothing, certainly, to corroborate this statement in the concurrent tradition. Neither have we anything to corroborate that of Paul as to a separate appearance unto James and to "five hundred brethren at once." If these occurred, why not this also? The admonition above ascribed to Jesus is not so transcendental in spirit as that ascribed to him in the doubtful verses of Mark's Gospel: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This we might suppose written by some transcendental author of the second century to magnify the importance of belief in Christ. But why suppose the other to be the invention of some spurious author, who thus gives us "the lie circumstantial of person, time, and place?"

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\* See Greek text—*μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες.*

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE APPEARANCE IN GALILEE.

THE appearance in Galilee, the subject of the 21st chapter of this Gospel has no connexion with the main body of the work. The Gospel is complete without it. It opens with the announcement that "the word" or will of Deity "was made" or revealed in "flesh," in the person of him to whom the Baptist testified; and it concludes with the assertion, that "these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." In the whole body of the work there is no promise, as in the other Gospels, that he would be seen of his disciples *in Galilee* after his resurrection, and no command that they should "go before him into Galilee." This chapter is evidently an appendix, an after-thought, written, of course, for some purpose, but evidently not to supply any omission in the work itself. Such is and must be the judgment of all critics; but with Grotius, many say that it is the work of another hand than the Evangelist's, added, in all likelihood, after John's death, possibly by some member of the church at Ephesus. Dr. Davidson says, "Probably a Jewish Christian, before the end of the second century, wrote the supplement."

We cannot concur in this conclusion. His twelve reasons against its genuineness appear to us unsatisfactory. No MS., he admits, is so ancient as to want it. The style is not materially different; the difference of language not greater than that noticed by him in the opening chapters of Luke's Gospel, and that owing to a like cause—a reference on the author's part to previously existing writings.

Hitherto this Gospel contains no direct reference to previous ones, if we except where it speaks of the inscription on the cross, and says that "John was not yet cast into prison," though it does contain many remarkable coincidences. It is a direct, independent testimony to the life of Jesus, claiming to be based on direct evidence, expressed in the writer's own language, without any of those parallel passages so notable in the Synoptics. It widely differs from them in many things, and on that account is all the more valuable, as the writer makes no attempt to harmonize incongruities, or supply omissions in the earlier biographies, though his work frequently does both. But here we come to an

appendix of a stamp different from the body of the work, containing a manifest reference to the previous Gospels, and evidently meant to supply an omission in their testimony. No doubt such an appendix requires to be scrutinized with great jealousy, if not to be rejected, unless we can assign a sufficient reason for its reception.

In the previous Gospels, at least in those of Matthew and Mark, Jesus, *at the last supper*, is made to say to his disciples, "But after I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee." Again, at the sepulchre, the "angel" in Matthew, and the "young man" in Mark, says to the women, "Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." And again, in Matthew, when Jesus himself met the women, he is represented as saying to them, "Go, tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

Here is a most remarkable reiteration of a promise and command in two Gospels, both supposed to be founded on Apostolic testimony; and yet notwithstanding one of them tells us nothing of any appearance in Galilee, its testimony, it is supposed, having been abruptly terminated by Peter's death. Matthew does, but in that unsatisfactory way before referred to, where it is said, that when the eleven saw him "in the mountain where Jesus had appointed them;" "they worshipped him, but *some doubted*." Luke's testimony, as we have seen, is quite different, but being founded admittedly on report, is not entitled to the same weight.

John had said nothing about this in the body of his work. He had only told us of Jesus saying to them in general terms, "I go away and come again unto you;" "a little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me;" "but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Had the Apostolic record, therefore, been left in this state, it would, no doubt, have been very unsatisfactory. And here we have a chapter affixed to this Gospel designed manifestly to supply the deficiency.

But what, then? Are we to charge some Jewish Christian of the second century, himself a believer in the faith, with deliberately inventing this appearance, and adding this chapter to the Apostolic manuscript? We have seen that Eusebius reports the tradition in his day, that "the three Gospels previously written were handed to him (John), and that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth; but that there was only wanting in the narrative the

account of the things done by Christ, among the first of his deeds, and at the commencement of his Gospel." May we not suppose, therefore, that on a review of his work, and on comparing it with the others, it might seem to himself and friends there was still something wanting to the narrative—that here was a promise of Jesus, according to Mark, unfulfilled, a direction given to them not complied with, or, at least, very imperfectly, as recorded in Matthew's Gospel? And might it not seem right to John and his amanuensis to resume the pen—for that he had an amanuensis will be shown when his style is treated of—and to add this testimony, not to complete his own narrative, but to supply an important want in the narratives of others? We must either suppose this, or suppose it to be some deliberate invention; or, at least, that some vague tradition was embellished, and palmed off on the church as the testimony of one who was present on the occasion, for the writer adds: "This is the disciple that testifieth of these things, and wrote these things and *we know* that his testimony is true."

Whilst the chapter itself, however, is, in its main fact, so much at variance with the testimony of Luke on matters subsequent to the resurrection, it yet contains another of those coincidences with that Evangelist and the others so remarkable throughout. The disciples, finding themselves in Galilee as directed, and not knowing as yet well what to think of it—he that "was to have redeemed Israel" thus gone from them—at the instigation, as it would seem, of Peter, have resumed their fishing on the lake. Peter and Andrew, and the two sons of Zebedee, had been so employed when Jesus first called them to be his followers. On that occasion, as on this, they had "toiled all night, and taken nothing." On that occasion Jesus was with them in the ship. Now he stands awaiting them on the shore, but "they knew not that it was Jesus." In this case how did the Master make himself known to them? By giving them a like command, which is attended with a like result. On the first occasion, indeed, "the net brake," but now, as if emblematic of their future success as "fishers of men," "they are not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." John had not told us anything before about the draft of fishes. Not once does he mention the occupation of these men on the Lake of Galilee. Is this story, then, a plagiarism for a purpose by some Jewish Christian, written afterwards and affixed, we know not by what influence, to the recognized Apostolic treatise? Is it a myth of some unknown author of an historical treatise, alert in hitting

off such coincidences? Or is it John's corroboration and explanation of the promise ascribed to Jesus by Mark and Matthew? And is this another mode of revealing himself to those disciples, as Luke said he did to Simon and Cleopas, by "the breaking of bread?"

It appears, too, according to this narrative, that Jesus was displeased with Peter, whom he had occasion frequently to admonish formerly, for leading away the disciples to their old mode of life. He says to him very pointedly, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" pointing, no doubt, to the fishes they had caught. Peter replies: "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." And yet the question is repeated three times to his annoyance and confusion; and each time, to Peter's emphatic protestations, the response is, "*Feed my sheep.*"

Dr. Davidson argues upon this that the object of the author was to bring Peter into prominence. He says: "It is probable that the work was at first undervalued by Jewish Christians, because of the inferior position which Peter occupies in it." And what is the effect of the above admonition if not to depreciate him who had denied his Master below him of whom it is said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee; *follow thou me?*" But, verily, if this scene really occurred by the Lake of Galilee, we need seek no other cause for the future "boldness" of Simon Peter, nor ask ourselves how it was that the man who, with oaths, denied Jesus in the hall of Caiaphas, became fifty days afterwards the great Apostle of the Gospel, at the Feast of Pentecost, and to their faces, defied the whole power of the Jewish priesthood.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### RETROSPECTIVE.

WE have now reviewed the *facts* of the life of Jesus, as narrated in these histories, and have not failed to note how widely they differ, especially as to the first part of it. This difference we have made no attempt to lessen unduly, but shown how necessary it is, even had we not been told of them, to presuppose those anterior visits to Jerusalem, and controversies with its doctors of which John speaks, to understand fully his Galilean teaching. And throughout the histories, we have traced a chain of incidents, at every link of which they touch each other, from the testimony of the Baptist, the

opening of Christ's ministry at Nazareth, the calling of the Apostles,—in the feeding of the multitude, the portraits of the two sisters, the entry into Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, his conduct before Pilate, until they finally coalesce in the crucifixion, resurrection, and subsequent reappearances. These are incidents surely not less worthy to be noted than their manifest divergencies. They are just such incidents as any judge, commenting on conflicting testimony in a court of justice, would feel bound to notice. And the argument he would found on them would surely be, not that the fourth witness was unreliable—not that he had absolutely contradicted the other witnesses, but that he had told us many facts and incidents, in many cases casting much light on the testimony of the others, explaining much that had seemed obscure and unaccountable, reconciling statements seemingly utterly at variance, and corroborating much with all the clearness of an eye-witness.

And yet Mr. Tayler in commenting on these differences says—

“It must be obvious, I think, to every one who has carefully gone through the foregoing comparisons, that the old theory which so long found acceptance in the Church, of John's having written his Gospel to fill up and complete the earlier three, does not meet the actual conditions of the case. John's is not so much another, as in one sense a different Gospel. It is impossible to harmonize the two forms of the narrative. One excludes the other. If the three first Gospels represent Christ's public ministry truly, the Fourth cannot be accepted as simple reliable history.”\*

That John did not write purposely to “fill up and complete the earlier three,” and that “it is in one sense a different Gospel,” I readily admit, which makes it all the more valuable to us. But that “the one excludes the other,” or that “it is impossible to harmonize” them, I leave the reader to decide.

The only fact of importance, I believe, in John's narrative that has not been noticed, is the raising of Lazarus—a fact which it is certainly very difficult to place. Much however has been said of it because the other writers do not mention it, and to the minds of many it forms the chief objection to this Gospel's authenticity. Those who deny the supernatural can, as they think, after the manner of Strauss and Renan, resolve the accounts of the other

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\* See “Fourth Gospel,” pp. 6-7.



miracles into legend, but here is one of a remarkable nature in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem said to have been attested by an eye-witness. It is not however the only one for which we are supposed to have Apostolic testimony, and to which the Synoptists as well as John attribute much of Christ's influence. The cure of the sick of the palsy and of the man who had his hand withered was done, as all the Synoptists tell us, in the presence of Christ's enemies as well as his own disciples. And if we eliminate all the supernatural from their narratives, we will leave, it is to be feared, but a very shadowy and mythical Christ. When the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask him, "Art thou he that should come?" we are told that "in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and to many blind he restored their sight," and told John's messengers to go back and tell him what they had heard and seen. That the Synoptists do not mention the raising of Lazarus is no more strange than that John does not mention the raising of the daughter of Jairus, though one of the three selected by Christ to witness it. And to Luke alone are we indebted for the beautiful story of the widow's son of Nain, restored by Jesus to his mother, a fact which he says occurred "the day after" he cured the centurion's servant in Capernaum, when "many of his disciples and much people were with him"—shortly after the calling of Levi and the twelve, whose attention must have been forcibly arrested by this his first act of resummoning the dead to life. And if these two acts were done previously in Galilee, is it so strange that another of the same kind should have been done in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, though unnoticed by these authors?"

There is no doubt that much is made of this latter act by the author of the Fourth Gospel. It is the third and last of those great works, by which Jesus, as this writer represents, manifested his power to the High Priests of Judaism, and by which he accounts for their deadly hostility to him. By this act he seems to have united against him the hostility both of Sadducees and Pharisees in the Sanhedrim. By the first act, "the cure of the impotent man," we may suppose the Pharisees alone would be offended, "because he had done it on the Sabbath day." His second, the opening of the eyes of the man born blind, was done after they had "taken up stones to cast at him," in order to prove that he was "the light of the world"—a proposition which he had asserted—John viii., 12—and which these Pharisees had denied

The third, is this great work at Bethany, performed some time after he had been driven with violence from their city, by which he announces himself as "the resurrection and the life," which led the Pharisees to *say among themselves*, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing, behold the world is gone after him,"—on which occasion they and the chief priests summon a council and determine—"If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

The Synoptists manifestly leave us very much in the dark as to the cause of that hostility. That a great hierarchy, like that of Judea, not more venerable for its antiquity than sacred in the eyes of every Jew, and sustained by all the power of Rome, should have pursued, with so unrelenting animosity, an humble teacher of peace and righteousness in the distant Galilee, seems somewhat beneath their dignity, especially if he had given them no previous offence. His disposition to speak severely of the rulers of his country, among the subjects of a different jurisdiction, from whatever cause it proceeded, might have been overlooked. And even when he "stedfastly set his face to go up to Jerusalem," forewarning his disciples, as the Synoptists tell us, that "the chief priests would kill him," had they no other reason than these disclose to us, we might have supposed that a lesser punishment would have satisfied them than dooming him to death. John's object is clearly to unveil the antagonism subsisting betwixt Jesus and these men from the very first, reporting perhaps more correctly the substance and spirit than the very language of their disputations; and he dwells at length on this work at Bethany, in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, not only to account for its citizens joining with his Galilean followers in welcoming Jesus, but also for the unanimity of the Jewish Council in determining on his death.

The Synoptists, also, make Jesus come from Galilee to Jerusalem by the way of Jordan, or, at least, as passing through Jericho, surrounded by a multitude all the way, in a seemingly triumphant procession, without pausing almost till he enters the city, and cleanses the temple of its traffickers—a proceeding we have deemed unlikely on the part of Jesus, if this were his *first* visit, and in which they are much at variance with John's history. Luke, however, as we have seen, speaks of a journey through Samaria previously, of Christ's interview with Martha and Mary, and his sending out the seventy—a period of time seemingly omitted by Mark and Matthew. And John represents Jesus as going away

into Bethabara, beyond Jordan, after the Jews had "sought again to take him," "into the place where John baptized, and there he abode." From this it was that he came at the summons of the sisters to the grave of Lazarus. And after this he "went into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples." "The wilderness" here spoken of seems to be that to the south-east of Jerusalem, towards the Dead Sea. "The city called Ephraim" was near to Jericho, from which the Synoptists bring him up. Is not this, therefore, the period alluded to by Luke? Bethabara was on the further side of Jericho from Jerusalem. May it not have been whilst residing there that he sent out the seventy? In their absence may he not have visited Bethany? Dr. Davidson admits that this portion of Luke's history is attended with much difficulty (Vol. ii., p. 48); that "the Galilean ministry of Jesus is presented in a different aspect by Luke from that of Matthew;" that "instead of Jesus spending the greater part of his ministry in Galilee, the Evangelist shortens his abode there to throw the main portion of that ministry into the journey which he took before suffering, dying, and rising again." And again, in page 360, in speaking of this time, he says: "A time that may have continued several weeks before the Passover at which he died."

No doubt the matter is attended with much difficulty, not less than to reconcile the different accounts given us of Paul's journeys. Still it hardly justifies the assertion of Mr. Tayler, that "it is impossible to harmonize the two forms of the narrative—that the one excludes the other." Much less can it invalidate the force of those coincidences now pointed out; and these indications that that scene before Pilate, the inscription on the cross, and what was done there by the soldiers, is here described to us on the authority of an eye-witness, as positively declared.

## PART II.

### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE MODE OF TEACHING.

WE have now to consider the objections that have been made to the authenticity of this Gospel, founded still on *internal* evidence, but on other circumstances than the divergency of the history from that of the Synoptics. And the first of these we shall consider is, the different mode of teaching which John ascribes to Christ—a peculiarity that cannot fail to strike even the common reader.

But before entering on this subject, we must premise that we do not claim for the reports of Christ's discourses in either history a strict *verbal* accuracy, and less so for those reported by this Evangelist. We believe that the doctrine of verbal inspiration, so much insisted on by the so-called orthodox churches, has done a great injury to the cause of sound criticism, and to the authority of those documents themselves, as it has generated in their opponents a too exacting judgment, requiring a uniformity too strict and accurate, and magnifying into importance matters of really trivial moment. For no other history than the sacred has so preposterous a claim been advanced, and, consequently, none has been scrutinized with so rigorous a judgment. The verbal correctness of the Synoptics can be amply disproved by a simple collation of parallel passages. And it would be to assume a startling miracle in mnemonics—a miracle for which we have certainly no evidence—that Christ's language in the Fourth Gospel, after a lapse of some sixty years or more, was given literally and verbally accurate. All that we have a right to claim in either case is a *substantial* accuracy as to facts and sentiments, the form and outline of some parables included. Collate any narrative in the Synoptics—the cure of the centurion's servant, the account of the

blind man healed at Jericho, the riding into Jerusalem—and the most orthodox may satisfy themselves that we have no more than this general agreement. And if it be deemed impossible that John could have reproduced from memory with verbal accuracy—for we cannot suppose him to have taken notes—those long discourses delivered to the twelve at the last supper, it is equally so that Luke could have derived from tradition that exquisite word-painting which characterizes the parables of the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the rich man, and Lazarus, &c., and which, in the tradition of the Roman Church, seems to have gained for him the reputation of an artist.

Now, in John's Gospel, if we except the parable of "the Good Shepherd, that giveth his life for the sheep," a manifest allusion to Zachariah xiii., 7, "who knoweth his sheep, and is known of them," referring to Ezekiel xxxiv., and the simile of the vine tree and its branches—an allusion seemingly to what he had said to the Pharisees about "the vineyard and wicked husbandmen," as given in the Synoptics, a parable taken from Isaiah's prophecy; save these, we find few of those parables without which, in Galilee, as we are told, he did not speak unto the people. That he did not always confine himself to parables, however, even there, we have abundant evidence in the sermon on the mount. But in John we have a much higher, more symbolic, and impassioned style of imagery. Nicodemus must be "born again." His disciples must "eat of the bread that cometh down from heaven." They must "abide in him" to be nourished, as the branches of the vine are by its sap—must "enter by him into the sheepfold," and under his guidance "go in and out, and find pasture;" whilst he himself is "the Light of the World" to guide them, "the Bread from heaven" given of God to nourish them, "the Living Water" to assuage their thirst. No doubt much of this highly figurative language was used by Jesus, which is not given us by the Synoptists, for they do report language equally bold and figurative when they make him say, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven;" and again, "Nevertheless, hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

This impassioned language—the utterance of high and lofty feeling—his Synoptical historians seem to have been unable to comprehend; they understood it literally, and therefore much of it would not be reported by them. Even some of his parables, of

no difficulty to us, these men required him to explain. They were looking for a temporal prince, not spiritual bread bestowed on them from heaven. So that even if this language were used by Jesus, which John attributes to him in Capernaum, and on which Mr. Tayler, Dr. Davidson, Strauss, and others, have laid so much stress as indicating the thought of a later age, it would not, in all likelihood, have been reported by them. John tells us, and we can well believe him, that it gave them so much offence at the time, that "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." And according, also, to the Synoptics, we find him, in a later period of his ministry, exclaiming against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, for having, through some cause, rejected him—possibly for such language, from which they would infer that he was beside himself.

These things are pointed out here to show that some of this difference, so observable in the two reports of Christ's teaching, may be justly ascribed to his reporters. The Synoptists wrote at a time when the prevailing expectations of the early Christians as to a speedy visible return of Jesus to the earth to establish the Messianic kingdom, had not been made to give place, by the hard logic of events, to more spiritual conceptions. And that expectation breaks out in the language that these attribute to the Christ: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke xxi., 28). But John lived to an age that saw these expectations dissipated. With him Christ's "kingdom is no more of this world," and Christ's teaching acquires the deep spiritual meaning of his own experience.

Besides, different minds are of different temperaments, and the writings of each, even of historians, are in some degree a reflex of his peculiar temperament, education, and state of information at the time. One is a man of fact, and the other of sentiment; one is a poet, another a philosopher. What strikes the mind of one is not that which appeals most forcibly to the other, which is dwelt on, and remembered. The man of learning and observation will give a very different account of the same transaction from that given by the unlettered peasant. And had John written when the Synoptists did, no doubt he would have given us a very different version of the Saviour's history. In the facts of the early ministry, and in a higher tone of sentiment, it might and would have differed from theirs, but not in its intimations of a Messianic

kingdom upon earth. Then the ardent expectation of the speedy and *literal* fulfilment of Christ's prediction before Caiaphas would have broken out, as it has done in the Book of Revelation: "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

The minds of those to whom we must trace the first origin of the Synoptical accounts were evidently rude and realistic, on whom deep sentiment and lofty imagery would have been lost; to whom it was necessary to convey moral sentiment in parable to fix it in the memory. These have, therefore, recorded for us the parables and acts of Jesus. But they have not caught the higher inspiration of him who said, when all humanity seemed leagued to crush him, "And yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me." And when he speaks of the "Son of Man coming in his glory, and all his holy angels with him," his high imagery these have understood literally, as they had not an opportunity of correcting their ideas, like the fourth Evangelist, by a more matured experience. When John wrote, however, not only had "the Spirit of Truth come to lead him into all truth," but the hard teaching of experience had come to give him the true spiritual meaning of Christ's predictions. The vineyard had been taken from the wicked husbandman. The armies that had laid waste Jerusalem had prepared the way for the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. The Synoptists wrote amidst the clouds and darkness of the impending struggle; John when the thick clouds had passed, and the glory of a brighter day had beamed upon him. And why should he now record the old parables—once of doubtful import to him, by which it was pre-figured? Once it was indeed true, as the Synoptists tell us, that "no man knoweth the Son but the Father;" but John has realized that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The warnings of Jesus as to false Christs and false prophets are matters of the past, and "the true light now shineth."

The above suggestions, which the reader can amplify and verify for himself, will account in part for the altered style of this Evangelist. But another cause of the seeming difference in the mode of teaching here ascribed to Jesus may be clearly traced to the practice of Christ himself. In this Gospel we find him chiefly in controversy with Scribes and Pharisees, men of learning and intelligence on religious subjects; quite a different class from the rude peasantry of Galilee. Even in the Synoptics, when he

addresses himself to these, his language is very different from what it is to the unlettered multitude. When asked the question, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" the answer is, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." These parables he explains to his own disciples. But when he addresses himself to Scribes and doctors the appeal is plainly to "what is written in the law, how readest thou?" When these men accuse his disciples of violating the Sabbath by plucking and eating ears of corn on that day, his answer is a reference to "what David did," to what the priests themselves do blamelessly on the Sabbath; and, finally, he dismisses them with another reference to their own Scriptures; "But go ye and learn what that meaneth (Hos. vi., 6), I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." When these men would entrap him with their questions about the tribute money, the resurrection, and the great commandment of all, Jesus does not respond in parable, but in the words of Moses, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, &c.;" "God is the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; not the God of the dead, but the living;" and our duty is to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." When he in turn propounds a question, it is about what David meant in the 110th Psalm, "The LORD said unto my Lord, &c." And if he does tell them in a parable about "a vineyard let out to wicked husbandmen," it is almost in the language of Isaiah (v., 7), whose "vineyard of the Lord of Hosts was the house of Israel."

John's Gospel is chiefly occupied with these discussions with the Pharisees, in the city of Jerusalem itself, the seat of their power; so that we should expect a different style of teaching in it to that addressed to the rude peasantry of Galilee. And if in John, we find him telling these men that they "are not Abraham's children, but of their father the devil, and the works of their father they will do," what is this but the same in substance as the Synoptists attribute to him in the Temple when he reproaches them as "blind guides"—"whited sepulchres"—"devouring widow's houses, and for a pretence making long prayers." Their Prophets had foretold that the Messiah would be a "light to lighten the Gentiles" as well as "the glory of my people Israel;" and John represents Jesus as discussing this point with them—see chap. viii., 12, to the end—claiming to be that light, that Abraham their father had foreseen in him that light, in proof of which, at their temple's gate he opens



the eyes of one born blind, as when, in Galilee he directs the lepers whom he cleansed to "go show themselves to the priests, *for a testimony unto them.*"

Hence the high, exalted, spiritual tone of this Gospel; as well as that spirit of recrimination which some think so foreign to their ideal of Christ. It records, not parables to peasants who listened with admiration, but discussions about the meaning of their own Scriptures with learned doctors, who reviled and vilified this Nazarene. Christ claims in it, to be not only that "Son of David" whom these men expected, but one whom—even as the Synoptists tell us—"David had called *Lord*;"—of whom Isaiah had said that "the Gentiles should come to his light"—of whom Zachariah speaks as a Shepherd to be smitten—"the good shepherd that giveth his life for the sheep." To his own disciples, the old "vineyard of the Lord of hosts" being given over to destruction, Jesus is "the true vine and his Father is the husbandman." He is the spiritual "bread from heaven" of which if a man eateth he shall live for ever; "not as your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead." Many of those disciples thought this "an hard saying." Such language gave offence to them, and is not reported by the Synoptists. It is, however, the imagery in which high impassioned feeling clothes itself, and in which Jesus was wont to indulge himself as we learn from the Synoptics when he compares his coming to the lightning shining from the East even to the West. But such bold metaphors conveyed no meaning to many of his disciples. They were looking for one who was in a more substantial realistic manner to "have redeemed Israel." It was needful for Jesus to go from them, that *the spirit of truth* might come to them. Only after many years of watching, waiting, and profound reflection on his Master's teaching, did it come to *him* in all its fulness, of whom the Master said, "If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee." And then it was, though late in life, that Jesus was revealed to him as the divine or spiritual "word of God," "made flesh" for human guidance. He became "the true vine" of a more comprehensive Judaism than priest or Pharisee had ever dreamt of—"the great tree" of the Synoptics, whose very leaves would suffice for the healing of the nations—"the living water" or true Siloa, that "fountain" of which Zachariah speaks that should "be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." This purpose of his coming had been but dimly apprehended even by the Synoptists. But to John, not only

had the Comforter, but Jesus himself in spirit come according to his promise, and "led him into all truth."

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE SELF-ASSERTION OF THE CHRIST.

WE have now considered why it is that "for the pithy sayings and popular parables of the Three First Gospels, the Fourth substitutes long argumentative discourses;"\* and attributed it partly to the different class of individuals,—the Jewish doctors of Jerusalem—with whom Jesus is represented as discussing his claims to be considered the Christ. But there is another objection to the mode of teaching ascribed to him in this Gospel, on which Strauss in his "New Life of Jesus," has laid much stress, and which as it weighs heavily on the minds of many who have considered this question, may be worthy of some notice. This is the *self-assertion* which this book ascribes to Jesus, so inconsistent with his usual character for humility.

By the Synoptists, Jesus is represented as asking, "Why callest thou me good? none is good but one, that is God;" whereas by John he is represented as asserting himself thus—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"—"the Father loveth the son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth"—"I and my Father are one."

Strauss makes the most of this argument, and says:—

"The speeches of Jesus about himself in this Gospel are an uninterrupted Doxology, only translated out of the second person into the first, from the form of address to another, into the utterance about a self; and the fact that they are found edifying even at the present day, can only be explained by the habit of transforming them into the second person. When an enthusiastic Christian calls his Master, supposed to have been raised to heaven 'the light of the world,' when he says of him that he who has seen him has seen the Father that is God himself, we excuse the faithful worshipper such extravagance. But when he goes so far as the Fourth Evangelist, and puts the utterances of his own pious enthusiasm into the mouth of Jesus, in the form of his own utterances about himself, he does him a very perilous service."†

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\* See 6th page of Mr. Tayler's work.

† Authorized Translation of "A New Life of Jesus by F. Strauss, pages 272, 273. Published 1865.

If alleged against the doctrine of "plenary inspiration"—against those who advocate the full verbal accuracy of this Gospel—the argument may be possessed of some weight, but loses much of it—becomes indeed light as air, the moment it is admitted that the strength of those expressions may be due somewhat, or in great measure, to the enthusiasm of the Evangelist. We do not however mean to deny that Christ did not assert himself. If conscious of a divine mission it was his duty to have done so, in the very presence of those priests of Judaism. All prophets do so. Isaiah "cries aloud and spares not." Jeremiah "stands in the gate of the Lord's house and proclaims there his word." These men assert their superior knowledge. They declare themselves at one with God.

Strauss admits that parallel assertions of himself are to be found in the Synoptists; for instance when he says that "All things are delivered unto me of the Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, &c." If so, the argument loses all its force as an objection solely to the Authenticity of John's Gospel, which indeed its author would admit. It is plain, however, that there is an element of Christ's character, as portrayed in the two histories, actually coincident. But Strauss argues in page 275—that:—

"In the Fourth Gospel the substratum of all utterances of this kind lies in all that is said about the higher nature of Jesus;" whereas we conceive that those more frequent and emphatic utterances were owing to the position in which the Fourth Gospel places Jesus, namely, in direct collision with the priests and others in Jerusalem, and that this assertion, not of himself but of his high office—for he asserts that "of himself he can do nothing" (John v., 30)—is throughout the necessary result of this antagonism.

The very purpose for which John wrote his Gospel, as we have premised, was to show to the unbelieving Jews and Greeks at Ephesus and elsewhere, that Jesus had repeatedly, before his last visit to the holy city, asserted there his claims to the Messianic office, to be "the Light of the World," spoken of by the prophets. And this assertion of himself he does make, quite as emphatically, even according to the Synoptics, on his last visit: "What is this, then, that is written," said he to the Scribes (Luke xx., 17), "The stone that the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner." In his parable of the vineyard taken from them, he is "the Heir," "the Son," whom the lord of the vineyard sent unto them saying, "They will reverence my son." In his disputations with them, he asks, "Why say they

that Christ is the son of David? for David himself calleth him Lord, and why is he then his Son?" In his admonitions to his own disciples his warning is (Mat. xxiii., 8), "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren"—a mastery which he assumed, undoubtedly, to himself. In his description of the last judgment attributed to him by Matthew (xxv., 31, &c.), "The Son of Man comes in his glory, and all his holy angels with him." When adjured by the high priest, he asserts his claim to the title, "Son of God." And even in the distant Galilee, as we have seen, when the doctors of Jerusalem interpreted his words as blasphemous, when curing the sick of the palsy, he claims to have "power on earth to forgive sins."

It is not, therefore, to John's Gospel that this assertion of himself by Jesus is by any means confined. It shows itself on all occasions when he comes into collision with these Scribes and Pharisees. If we reject this Gospel on that account we must reject the others also. But the reason it becomes more prominent in John's is because Jesus is there brought into collision more frequently with these men; because it is, in fact, a Judean Gospel, written to show that his last visit to Jerusalem was not the first in which he put forth similar pretensions. Besides, when John wrote, the apprehensions of Caiaphas in counselling his death had become a fixed fact in history. Subsequent events had revealed the Christ in an aspect more consonant with his own lofty claims, as put forth by the Synoptists, which they did not seem at this time fully to comprehend. In John's day, he stood confessed as that "Light of the World" of which they had said nothing, but of which the prophets had written;—that "Son of David," whose lordship even David had acknowledged; that "Word of God," that goeth forth to regenerate the world.

That Jesus should so assert himself, I have said, was only his duty if possessed of a consciousness of a Divine mission, as it is wont for all Christians to believe. Grant the existence of such a consciousness, and it became incumbent on him to go up to Jerusalem, and so to assert himself, not merely to peasants in Galilee, but to the rulers of his country. That consciousness might, no doubt, have been the result of an insane enthusiasm, as those rulers thought, had not results established its veracity. That it was inconsistent with true humility and religious reverence cannot be admitted. Strauss says that "no man of true religious feeling could have uttered such expressions," but he must have

expressed it in some manner if he possessed the consciousness. The objection is one, therefore, that involves a denial of all consciousness of a divine mission on the part of Christ.

Strauss argues, however, as if the author of this Gospel attributed to Jesus, what the Synoptists do not, a super-human consciousness. But the evidence for this is clearly founded on expressions meant as descriptive of Christ's spiritual relation to us as the Divine Word. When he makes Jesus allude to his own *personal* qualifications, his human consciousness of weakness and humility breaks out in such expressions as the following: "I can, of mine own self, do nothing;" "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not;" "A man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God." In John, as in the Synoptics, Jesus disclaims all intention of coming to them "in his own name." Of himself he is nothing, and can do nothing. "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's that sent me." But he had come to them in that Father's name, and this is the gist of all his self-assertion. And in the strength of that self-conviction, and that he might be so glorified of God, he voluntarily laid down his life.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE STYLE.

THE style of any author is so much the result of his previous education, the peculiar tone and temperament of his mind, his familiarity with the language in which he writes, the influence of those with whom he has associated, and a variety of such circumstances, most of which can be so little known to us after the lapse of centuries, that the common reader might suppose the objection must be slight that is founded on the peculiar form of Greek in which this Gospel has come down to us. And yet one of the strongest objections to its authenticity is founded on this circumstance. In the New Testament, in addition to this Gospel, we have letters attributed, with great probability, to John, the style of which evince that they are from the same pen as the Gospel; but we have also the Book of Revelation—with equal probability, attributed to him also, which is both in style and

conception extremely different. Of this difference Mr. Tayler treats very exhaustively with his usual learning and research, discussing it through six sections of his work with a view to prove a conclusion, which he avers to be "irresistible," that—

"If the Apostle John be the author of the Apocalypse, he cannot have written the Gospel; if he wrote the Gospel, he cannot be the author of the Apocalypse."

Such is the conclusion, indeed, not only of Mr. Tayler, but of Strauss, De Wette, and other German writers; and yet, notwithstanding this marked difference in style, it is certain that both works were attributed to John by the early Fathers, though they did not fail to recognize this difference. The Apocalypse, it is conceded on all hands, is the earlier in point of time, but written, as Mr. Tayler says, "when he must have been fifty at the very least;" the Gospel, as usually maintained, written "in extreme old age," but for the authorship of which he thinks there is less evidence.

Commenting on this he says, in the second section of his work:—

"I do not hesitate to say that so complete a transformation of the whole genius of a writer between mature life and old age, as is implied in the supposition that John could be the author at once of the Apocalypse and the Gospel, is without a precedent in the history of the human mind, and seems to me to involve a psychological impossibility."

And yet Dr. Davidson, who is no less destructive in his criticism, says:—

"It is possible that the vehement and impassioned spirit which appears in the Apocalypse may have been transformed into the calm stillness which the work before us (the Gospel) exhibits—that age and reflection may have caused great mental development, so that the writer became speculative, mystic, spiritualistic, theosophic, in his last days. The philosophy of Alexandria"—I would say of Ephesus—"coming in contact with his Judaic mind, may have revolutionized it, while Hellenic culture widened his views of Christianity."\*

The doctor certainly thinks this change is "to the last degree improbable," and yet to him it does not involve "a psychological impossibility."

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\* Vol. ii., page 441.

Mr. Tayler's conclusion seems, therefore, a hasty one, and in saying that such mental changes are "without precedent in the human mind," seems to have forgotten "the complete transformation" that the events of not fifty years but *days* effected in the equally marked character of Peter and the Apostles "at a time of life when men's views and habits of thought are for the most part permanently fixed," a transformation which, instead of the trembling cowards that deserted or denied their Master in the hour of trial, made them his bold and intrepid defenders, who, in the very presence of their priests, taunted them with putting to death "the Holy One and the Just," and who, when cautioned to speak no more in that name, so nobly answered, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." If such was the transformation effected by the events of fifty days, what may or must have been the change produced by the events of—it may have been forty years or more, though Mr. Tayler says, "little more than thirty years between the composition of the two works"—those years, at any rate of ardent expectation as to what was coming on the world after the Holy City had been destroyed by the Roman armies, when these early Christians fully expected the Son of Man to reveal himself "in the clouds of heaven," at the head of still greater armies, "coming to avenge his own elect," and that "speedily," as he had been understood to promise?

"The most probable date for the composition of the Apocalypse (Mr. T. says) must be placed somewhere between 60 and 70 A.D.—the reign of Galba and the destruction of Jerusalem." If so it was written amidst those very "wars and rumours of wars" so ominously spoken of by his exalted Master, at the very time when his disciples had been taught—(Luke xxi., 28)—"to look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Like the old songs of triumph that we meet with in the Prophets over the destruction of Babylon—"Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, &c."—"How hath the oppressor ceased, the golden city ceased, &c."—so is this the song of an anticipated triumph of the early Church over all enemies of "the Lamb that was slain," but now "goeth forth conquering and to conquer." Newton assigns its composition to the reign of Nero. Irenaeus and the early Fathers to the persecution under Domitian. The German critics, Strauss, Ewald, De Wette, and others, substantially agree with Mr. Tayler, which date, as the latter says, "carries internal probability along with it." And if this be so,

it was written at the very time that the Roman eagles were mustering around "the carcass,"—when the writer's mind was no doubt eagerly pondering the prophecies to divine if possible what things were coming on the earth, and when an ardent imagination would be disposed to realize to itself visions of things that "must shortly come to pass."

The Book contains such visions as the language of the Master, as reported by the Synoptists—see Mat. xxiv., 30, Mark xiii., 24, &c.—would lead such a writer,—his imagination further stimulated by Hebrew prophecy, most likely to frame for himself. He anticipates events that would reveal to all the truth and greatness of his beloved Lord. Even to the High Priest, no less than to his own disciples Jesus is reported to have said, "Hereafter shall *ye see* the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and *coming in the clouds of heaven.*" And John who was present, and may have heard these words, thus writes in the Apocalypse (i., 7):—"Behold he cometh *with clouds*, and every eye shall see him, and *they which pierced him*, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." These visions, as Mr. T. observes, our author clothes "in the old prophetic diction and imagery" of which his mind is now full, and the meaning of which in his forced retirement he has been meditating. Hence it is that this book of his is so strongly impregnated with the idea of *Chiliasm*, "the prevalent belief of the primitive Church"—that Christ would reign personally on earth for a thousand years. Before he wrote his Gospel, however, these visions had given place to more enlarged views of the Saviour's mission. They had gradually faded before the dawning light of a deeper inspiration, or a more enlarged experience. And now "the word of God" is no longer seen by him as a conqueror on a war-horse, followed by heavenly armies, "ruling the nations with a rod of iron," and "treading them in the fierceness of his wrath;" but as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," "full of grace and truth."

The whole conception of the two works, therefore, is widely—though not, perhaps, as Mr. T. says, "*radically* different." In both, Jesus is "the word of God"—"*the Lamb* that was slain but is alive for evermore;"—who with his Father is to be "*the light* of the new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God." The conceptions of the writer are radically the same, but differing as widely in their development as the ardent visions of futurity in youth differ from the matured experience of age. And this at least may be said



in favour of our supposition that the respective dates of the two works seem to favour it; for it is certain that had John written the Gospel first, he could not afterwards have written the Apocalypse; but it does not follow that having written the latter first, surrounded by the thick clouds of a pregnant future, his mind may not have undergone that development so necessary to the Gospel's authorship.

Hence also the difference of style, or comparative purity of language used in the latter is readily accounted for. The Greek of the Apocalypse (as Mr. T. remarks, page 26), "is just such as we should expect from a man who had never learned it grammatically, but had picked it up from mere intercourse with those who spoke it." If written about the reign of Galba, John must have written it shortly after his departure from Judea, for fourteen years after Paul's conversion we find him (Gal. ii., 9) still an inhabitant of Jerusalem. At this time, his mind would be full of those Messianic expectations, nor would he have time to have acquired anything of that Hellenic culture which he would naturally derive from his intercourse with Greeks. He did not write his Gospel, however, till perhaps forty years afterwards—after a long residence in Asia Minor, where he must have become familiar with the language,—where experience and reflection "caused great mental development," and where coming into contact with the Greek philosophy, "his Judaic mind widened its views of Christianity." The language, "as Dr. Davidson says, is good Greek, much less Hebraistic than that of the Apocalypse, and even than that of the Synoptists,"—all which is naturally accounted for by his long residence amongst Greeks.

Besides are we not justified in assigning another reason for this difference? In writing the Apocalypse by himself, in his forced retirement in Patmos, brooding over the events he expected to be realized, in the full vigour of life, he did not require any assistance. The thoughts were his own, and the language was his own, quite unmodified as yet by foreign intercourse. But if the Gospel were the work of "his extreme old age," would he not require the hands and eyes of others to aid him in writing down these records of his Master's life? He did require, it is said, the hands and feet of others to bear him into the assemblies of the Brethren; where, in the very spirit of this Gospel, he usually preached the one short sermon recorded by Mr. Tayler—the admonition of his exalted Master—"Little children, love one another." Such a tradition surely adds probability to this question of authenticity. It shows

that in his old age, he was no longer the Boanargēs that he had manifested himself in youth—that time had mellowed his Christianity into a closer unity with the spirit of the Master. And would not such assistance, and his own previous use of the language for a period of perhaps forty years, account sufficiently for the greater purity of the Greek?

That he had such assistance seems to me evident from the form of expression used in many places. Thus, in John xxi., 24—"This is the disciple which testified of these things, and wrote these things, and *we know* that his testimony is true,"—this which is adduced as a proof of spuriousness, seems rather the testimony of his amanuensis, or some members of the church at Ephesus to its genuineness. It is not such a record as would have been written by an author of himself; nor yet by a Church or Christian of "a disciple" who had not been an eye-witness. Take again John xix., 35—"He that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." This is evidently not the wording of the witness himself, but of another party who records his testimony. And in this opinion I am happy to find myself sustained by the critical acumen of Dr. Davidson, who, in commenting on this text in Vol. ii.—pages 436, 437—thus writes, "Here the pronoun *He* introduced before the word *knoweth* marks a person different from the eye-witness and testimony-bearer spoken of at the beginning of the verse, who may have been the Apostle John, or perhaps was so intended by the writer. The identification of the *writer* with the *eye-witness* is neither logically nor grammatically right in the verse, unless the words were—he that saw *bears record*, *i.e.*, bears witness now in the act of writing. The past "*bare record*" points to an author who has already got the testimony of an eye-witness, and refers to him as a credible person. 'His witness is true' are the words of an author appealing to an eye-witness—of one who is himself convinced, and wishes to assure his readers that the statement of his voucher is trustworthy."

To the above excellent criticism may we not add, however, do not the words "he knoweth" imply that the eye-witness he appeals to was actually present, or, at least, living at the time, and ready to confirm his testimony? In like manner John is not spoken of by name in the Gospel, as he is in the Revelation, but as "the disciple whom Jesus loved"—who "leaned upon his breast at supper"—not as a writer would speak of himself, but as another would speak of one beloved and venerated as being beloved of the Master.

Offence has been taken at this language as if it were a boast, and such as could not have been written of himself by a disciple of Jesus. It is a boast, and yet not written of *himself* by any disciple. But it is written by a disciple of an old man that the Church of Ephesus had much reason to be proud of, as being now the only surviving witness of the Master, who with Peter, and James his brother, had been specially admitted to his confidence; of one to whom that Master said, even when reproofing Peter, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." John had indeed tarried till the kingdom of the Master came. It had not come, however, in "those clouds of heaven," and inaugurated with a warrior on "a white horse," and those legions of armed angels, such as he had in the Apocalypse expected. Now he had learned, what he had not then, that his Master's kingdom was "not of this world," as had been said to Pilate. Jesus is no longer in his estimation "the avenger of his own elect," but the "bread of God," given of heaven to nourish our humanity—"the living water" of which "he that drinketh shall never thirst."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE INTRODUCTION.

MUCH objection has been made to the introduction of this Gospel, as if it were impossible, under any circumstances, that this could have been the composition of a Galilean fisherman; and its doctrine of the Logos, from its being in the hands of controversialists, the chief corner stone on which to build up the temple of the Saviour's Deity, has been made, by critics, to fall upon and grind to powder, as they think, the authority of the Evangelist himself. And it is, no doubt, in its conception, peculiarly remarkable. Matthew, writing for the benefit of Hebrews, entitles his work—"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham;" and gives us, from the days of Abraham, the genealogy of "Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called the Christ." Mark, who writes more for the benefit of Gentiles, passes over this genealogy, and makes the beginning of his Gospel coincident with "the voice of him crying in the wilderness." Luke gives us a number of prenatal statements about the parents of both John and Jesus, and seems to have been most diligent in collecting

traditions about their birth and infancy. But this Evangelist, in his introduction, treats Christianity as not of earth but heaven,—not as “the word” of one born of human parentage, but as that of the Eternal himself, embodied for our instruction in humanity or “flesh.” Without a reference to Abraham, to David, or to any human lineage, taking us at once up to the great source of all, as Moses commenced his narrative thus—“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” so John writes—“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.”

This introduction is certainly very unlike the plainness and simplicity of the other narratives; and when, moreover, it goes on to speak of the creative power and life-giving energy of that word—“in which was life, and the life was the light of men”—such refined speculations, it is argued are more akin to the thoughts of some Greek philosopher than a Galilean peasant—that the very language used—the words *Logos*, *Phos*, *Zoe*, &c.—all betray such utterances. And hence the authorship of this Gospel is attributed to some Gentile convert to Christianity, who, some time during the second century, has been aiming, under sanction of the Apostle's name, to incorporate with Christianity the doctrines of Plato, or the refined speculations of the Alexandrian philosophy.

It becomes us, therefore, to account for this peculiarity on the supposition that it was written by John, the son of Zebedee. And to counterbalance such objection we have, it is to be remembered, in addition to the concurrent testimony of antiquity that this Gospel was the work of that Apostle, those remarkable coincidences already pointed out, proving it to be the work at least of an eyewitness. If the work of John, therefore, why is it that he begins his history of Jesus in this remarkable manner?

To answer this question with any degree of satisfaction to the general reader, we must call his attention to the time, place, and purpose in and for which John is supposed to have written. Matthew Levi, surrounded with the prejudices of his own countrymen, who took offence at the humble origin of the Saviour's life, and thought that no good thing could come out of Nazareth, is careful to record his birth at Bethlehem, and to prove his lineal descent from David, and the fulfilment of prophecy in his life and birth. Mark, the companion of Peter in his travels, writing at Rome, omits such genealogy as unnecessary to Gentiles, and confines himself to the words and actions of the Saviour's life.

Luke, the companion of Paul in his imprisonment (Col. iv., 14), collects all the facts and traditions he has heard of Jesus, and fixes carefully the date of those events (though it is now evident that in one respect he is in error) to that portion of the reign of Augustus when "Cyrenius was governor of Syria," and to "the *fifteenth* year of the reign of Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea." But when John wrote all this interest about the personal history of Jesus had declined. Christianity had become an established fact. Through Paul's labours it had far outgrown its Palestinian origin;—had been preached in Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece,—in haughty Rome itself, even in the palace of the Cæsars,—and had fully entered on its deadly struggle with the mythologies of the world. A resident of Ephesus at the time he wrote, and probably for some thirty years before at least, his mind had outgrown its narrow Jewish associations. In the presence of another civilization that his youth knew not of, he had learned much from his residence amongst Greeks. Adapting his language to their ideas, he usually speaks of "the Jews" generally as the opponents of Jesus, without confining that hostility, as the Synoptists do, to the Scribes and Pharisees. In his ninth, eleventh, and eighteenth chapters, indeed, he does particularize that sect as the most active, but usually he uses the more general term Jews. His Gentile readers knew little of these sections of his countrymen, and he was more intent on combating the "vain jungling" of their philosophy. His life, prolonged to a period much beyond that of his fellow Apostles, enabled him to combat the inroads that that was making on the simplicity of the early faith. How or when he became overseer of the church at Ephesus we have now no accurate means of knowing. It was one of those that Paul had planted. Before its planting "a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus, and spake and taught diligently, knowing only the baptism of John" (see Acts xviii., 24.) After he had left for Achaia, "Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost?' And they said, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.' And he said, 'Unto what then were ye baptized?' And they said, 'Unto John's baptism.'" Whereat Paul explained to them Christianity more perfectly, and "baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Such is the account we have of the first foundation of this

church at Ephesus. On this occasion we are told, that Paul went into the synagogue of the Jews and spake boldly for the space of *three months*, "disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of *two years*, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both *Jews* and *Greeks*." This Tyrannus, a teacher of some form of Grecian philosophy, was no doubt one of those whose eloquence and refined speculations had attracted the youth of those days in numbers to his school. Here then the very cradle of Christianity at Ephesus was the school of a Greek philosopher. And that the Apostle had a marked success we learn for "so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed that Demetrius, a silver smith, and his fellow-craftsmen who made silver shrines for Diana," took alarm lest their craft should be set at nought, and "the Temple of the Great Goddess destroyed whom all Asia and the world worshipped." Having escaped this peril, Paul passed into Macedonia, and on his next visit to this region, sent for the elders of the church, told them of the "bonds and afflictions that awaited him at Jerusalem," so that they "should see his face no more," and thus emphatically warned them—"For after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also *of your own selves* shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them."

To guard against these evils, he left Timothy with them when he went into Macedonia—if we may credit his first letter to him—that he might charge some that they teach no other doctrine; neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying. To him he addressed two letters to the same purpose, though their authenticity is also disputed by our modern critics. And as if not satisfied with this, he addressed to themselves another when confined at Rome a prisoner, full of much excellent exhortation as to their conduct, though the authenticity of this is also disputed, and Dr. Davidson enumerates five considerations which, taken together, he thinks, "suffice to cast strong doubts on its Pauline authorship"

Be this as it may, it was amongst this people that we find John at a period still later. *When* he came there, we have no definite information. It is supposed to have been after the death of Mary the mother of our Lord, who had been committed to his care. For

a time he appears to have remained in Jerusalem. "He goes up with Peter to the temple at the hour of prayer." In the reign of Claudius, Herod had slain James his brother with the sword. "Fourteen years after Paul's conversion, he and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem, where he tells us he found James and Cephas and John who seemed to be pillars." After this we find no mention of him in connexion with the church at Jerusalem, when it is reasonable to suppose he went to Ephesus. There he would come into immediate contact with the philosophy of the Greeks. Paul in his day had complained of its "fables and endless genealogies"—in all likelihood its doctrine of emanations. And in John's time, the subtle Greek intellect must have made still greater inroads on the Christianity that Paul had preached. Unnecessary indeed would it be for John to prove to these men the royal lineage of Jesus. The wondrous works and life of Christ, his perfect character and resurrection from the dead, must rather have disposed them to look on and revere him with something akin to divine honours. To their minds he would gradually be divested of his fleshy attributes, and assume the character of a celestial visitant. Philosophy would identify him with one of those Aeons which she taught had proceeded from the great source of life. We find the idea very early prevalent that Christ had not actually "come in the flesh"—that his bodily appearance was no more than an appearance—that it was to degrade the Christ to hold the doctrine of his incarnation, or in any way to associate him with matter—in its view the source of evil; and that consequently the whole facts of his sufferings, death, and resurrection were no more than a dramatic representation.

John could not live and breathe in such an atmosphere without his thoughts and language manifesting a continual reference to this philosophy. His duty was to meet it, to combat it, to preserve uncorrupted by it, if that were possible, the simplicity and truth of Christianity. The latter idea he does combat, especially in his Epistles. He tells us that Jesus Christ had "come in the flesh," and to deny it was "that spirit of antichrist whereof we have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world." Paul writing to Timothy warns him to "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my Gospel." Even in Timothy's day therefore this disposition to disincarnate Christ was showing itself. And hence the testimony in John's Gospel that "he that saw it bare record and his record is true, &c."—and also in his Epistle that "there are three that bear

record—the spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.”

It is however the other Platonic doctrine we find alluded to in this Introduction. Philosophy had taught that there were certain Aeons or emanations, proceeding from the great Source of life—that God himself was inaccessible to man, dwelling with those Aeons in some divine *pleroma*—a word indicating to their minds the fulness or perfection of his own existence;—that of these Aeons one was the Demiourgos, the active principle, the world-creator, another the Logos, or thinking principle, the type in the divine mind according to which the world was made. Others were Zoe, the life-giving principle, and Phos or light, the principle that imparteth to us understanding. Such was the philosophy to be combated by the plain fisherman of Galilee—the “profane and vain babblings” and “doctrines of demons” against which Paul warns Timothy, “a wisdom by which as he testifies (1 Cor., i., 21) the world knew not God.” Paul was evidently impatient of it. John lived amongst it, thought deeply of it, disputed with its advocates. Has he here adopted it, or how, in this introduction, does he treat it?

In sitting down to give us a new history of the Gospel message, one object we have attributed to him was to supply the omissions of the former Evangelists in that part of Christ's history that relates to his intercourse with the Chief Priests and scribes in Jerusalem itself. Another was, according to Irenaeus that—

“Being desirous to extirpate the errors sown in the minds of men by Cerinthus and those called Nicolaitans, he published his Gospel in which he acquaints us that there is *one God* who made all things by his word, and not as they say, one who is the Creator of the world, and another who is the Father of the Lord—one the son of the Creator, and another the Christ from the super-celestial abodes, who descended upon Jesus the son of the Creator, but remained impassible, and afterwards flew back to his own *pleroma* or fulness.”\*

However unreliable this may be as an historical authority, and however seemingly confused this statement to us, the writer of this seems to have grasped better than some modern commentators the real purport of John's Introduction. We are to consider how his views of his exalted Master would be refined, elevated, and

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\* Irenaeus adv. Haeres, lib. iii., c. 11, as quoted by Horne in his Introduction.



spiritualized by time, and deep meditation on his ministry and office. That John could ever have divested himself of his human associations with his beloved Master—he who had leaned on his breast at supper, whose feet had been washed by him, who had been the painful witness of his final sufferings, and the trusted guardian of his mother till his death—that he a Jew could have so far divested himself of these thoughts and recollections as to believe him to be “very God of very God,” as some Christians affirm that he here teaches, it would indeed be most difficult to believe. And if this were here asserted, it would go far to invalidate this Gospel’s authenticity. But his Master’s wondrous life, and still more wonderful appearance after death, would greatly exalt his ideas of his mission. Christ had spoken of himself as “the true-vine” that God had planted in the earth—as “the stone, the tried stone” spoken of by the Prophet that had been set at naught by his nation’s builders; as “the bread of God that cometh down from heaven.” John may have treasured up many sayings of his Master that are not given us by the Synoptists. These he may have made the subjects of his testimony and daily meditations. Spared to a great age his ardent realistic expectations, cooled and spiritualized by mature experience, we can well understand how he would attain to those conceptions of Jesus given in this history.

He would learn to regard him as the divine personification of a spiritual “life,” as the embodiment in humanity of that “Word” which in “times past had been spoken unto the Fathers by the Prophets,”—as a man sent of God for human guidance—the true spiritual “way” which leads humanity up to God. In the narratives of the other Evangelists, the Saviour had given expression to some beautiful parables. In reference to himself he had talked of “a sower sowing the word,” and the word, like seed, had fallen by the wayside, which the birds of the air devoured up. But in John’s more expressive phraseology Christ was himself *the word*, the expression of the Divine will to man,—“the bread” to be eaten if we would live for ever,—“the way” to be trodden if we would not err,—“the light” that enlighteneth every man. In the strength of this imagery he seems to lose for a time the Saviour’s personality, that the reader may comprehend more perfectly this his mediatorial office. To the weeping Martha, by the grave of Lazarus, Jesus is “the resurrection and the life.” To the woman of Samaria, by the well of Jacob, he is “the living water, of which whosoever drinketh shall never thirst.” Apart from Jesus, man had no way, in John’s

estimation, of arriving at a true knowledge of God. But "he that had seen him had seen the Father." "No man could come unto the Father but by him." "For no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

These exalted ideas of his Master, not only his own meditations, but his disputations with these philosophers, would tend to strengthen. And what wonder if, in sitting down to write this history, his language should assimilate to that used by them, while he combats the ideas developed in their schools? They had talked of a *light* emanating from God, and a *word* and *life*, and spoken of these as distinct personal realities. But to John there was but one life, one light, one word—that which existed in the mind of Deity, and had, in these latter days, been "made flesh and dwelt among us." The fountain or source of that light or word was, as those philosophers taught, the great source of all. But of such Aeons or emanations as they spoke of, no more than of that "sameness of substance and equality of persons" so fiercely contended for by Christians in after ages, John knew nothing,—here at least he affirms nothing, save indeed to annul their existence. His beloved master was his master still, the son of Mary who had expired upon Calvary, whose body had been pierced, to whose humanity the blood and water had borne their silent, but indisputable testimony. But far above and beyond this, in his estimation, shone out that revelation of the Invisible, of which the life of Jesus was but the embodiment. It is not so much the personal history of Jesus of Nazareth as of that *life* and *light* and *word* that shone in him, and spoke by him, that John sits down to write. In his eyes *then*, as to the Greeks around him, Christ's personal descent is nothing, the circumstances of his birth are nothing to the purpose. The all-absorbing topic is, no mundane facts about Bethlehem or Nazareth, but the history of that Divine word that spoke to man in his Master's life,—of that light which shone amidst human darkness, and which the darkness comprehended not,—of that life which is not subject to the power of death. What is it to him now that this life began in the reign of Cæsar Augustus, and terminated in that of Tiberius? The unbelieving Jew had stigmatized the Gospel as a new religion, and the believing Greek would mould it into a new theosophy. The former boasted of his *law*, as if it were eternal, existing ever in the mind of God. John tells him that equally eternal is this new religion, that "in the beginning was the word, and the word was

with God, and the word was God,"—that eternal as the Deity was this great principle of religious truth.\* The Greeks talked of a world Creator, and of an Aeon of light, and an Aeon of life, but "in it was life, and the life was the light of men;" according to it were all things made, and without adaptation to it "there was nothing made that was made." To the shining of such a light there came a man sent of God to witness. John "was not that light," as some of his followers had imagined; but was sent to bear witness of that "which is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Considering the circumstances in which John was placed then, I would ask, is not such a suitable introduction to his history of what he calls the Word, or Christianity? It is not such an introduction as he would have written in Judea, surrounded by his own countrymen, still full of their Jewish expectations. Nor is it one that he could have written till near the close of the first century, when such expectations were no longer tenable, and then only after deep profound reflection on the Divine origin and spiritual nature of the mission of the Christ.

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## CHAPTER V.

### WHEN WRITTEN?

THIS is a question to be determined more by external than internal evidence; but as an argument has been deduced from the latter to remit the work to a post-Apostolic age, its consideration comes naturally within the scope of the present work. Mr. Tayler, in the eighth section of his work, "On the Internal Indications of a Later Age in the Fourth Gospel," page 88, thus writes:—

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\* In confirmation of the view here stated, I quote the following passage from Strauss's "New Life of Jesus," Vol. ii., page 56 :—"The name of Messiah, as well as the nation and their law, was considered by the Jews as among those things that had existed in the mind of God, even before the creation of the world: that is, as God—as they were taught by their own selfishness to believe—made the world for the sake of the Jewish people, and for their sake also would send the Messiah into the world, he must, at the same time that he sketched the plan of the universe, have also had in his mind the Messiah, and his mission to it. Now the course of ideas of this kind is well known. What was previously intended is converted into a fact already executed; the *ideal* becomes the *real* pre-existence."

“The doctrine of the Logos, modifying the whole conception of the person and ministry of Christ, which pervades from beginning to end this remarkable book, could not, I think, have blended itself so intimately with the popular preaching of Christianity at a very early age. The facts recorded in the Synoptists are, it is true, *implied* in the mingled narrative and argumentation of the Fourth Gospel;\* but they are kept subordinate to the leading idea of the writer; they are evidently combined and moulded with a view to develop it. As we read, we find it difficult to resist the impression that the simpler and more natural history contained in Matthew or in Luke must have gone before,† and that this was more strictly conformable to primitive tradition than the idealized vision of the incarnate Word held up by John. No doubt the doctrine of the Logos existed anterior to the Apostolic age, but it was confined to the higher sphere of philosophical thought, and came into no direct contact with the popular mind.”

On these grounds he proceeds to argue that this Gospel *could not* have been written before the middle of the second century. In page 150, indeed, Mr. Tayler acknowledges that—

“In every critical inquiry of this kind it is more easy to obtain a negative than a positive result. If I am asked who was its author, or when was it written, I confess I am unable to give a categorical answer. If Papias, as Eusebius says, cited testimonies from the First Epistle of John—as I can have little doubt that the author of that Epistle and the Gospel were one and the same person—the author must have been living, and *both works* probably written *before* the middle of the second century. The death of Papias is usually assigned to 163 A.D. We find thus a probable *terminus ad quem*. Can we suggest a *terminus a quo*? . . . . Such a time I find most clearly indicated in the results of the suppression of the Jewish revolt under Bar-Cochba subsequent to 135 A.D. This is, of course, nothing more than conjecture, supported by no direct evidence.”

That we may not be fighting about shadows, let us fix a *terminus ad quem*, beyond which we cannot suppose the authorship of this Gospel to have extended, if Apostolic; and then see how much longer period Mr. Tayler requires for this doctrine to “come into direct contact with the popular mind.” The precise date, of course, it is impossible to fix, but there is no valid reason

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\* If so, the one does not “exclude the other,” as argued in the first section, p. 7.

† Undoubtedly, but why “resist the impression?”

for placing it earlier than the last decade of the first century, which some of the ancient Fathers do; and modern critics, such as Le Clerc and Bishop Tomline, assign it to the ninety-seventh or eighth year of the Christian era. It is even quite possible that it was not composed till the first decade of the second century consistently with its Apostolic authorship. Irenaeus tells us, as quoted by Eusebius, that John continued with them "till the times of Trajan," A.D. 98 to 117. And Mr. Tayler supposes (page 12) "John to have been not more than 18 or 20 when he joined the ministry of Jesus." If, then, he lived and wrote his Gospel "in *extreme old age*," we can hardly assign to him a less period of life than close upon 100 years. We have many examples of men in our own day whose lives have exceeded this, and whose mental faculties have been unclouded till near their death. This would place his death about the 110th year of the Christian era, and the writing of the Gospel not many years previously.

How much longer, however, does Mr. Tayler require for the doctrine of the Logos to "modify the whole conception of the person and ministry of the Christ?" On this point he is somewhat indefinite, but by the above extracts, as we have seen, he fixes his *terminus a quo*, after which it must have been written at 135 A.D., the date of the "suppression of the Jewish revolt under Bar-Cochba." But this, he admits, is only "conjecture, supported by no direct evidence." Here, then, the only difference betwixt Mr. Tayler's and the date above assigned is some thirty or forty years, if so much, for this *terminus* is quite conjectural; and yet, on the strength of this supposition, that "the doctrine of the Logos could not at an earlier period have come into direct contact with the popular mind," we are called on to reject the testimony of antiquity as to this Gospel's Apostolic authorship! Nay, further, as Papias died in A.D. 163, and yet quotes John's Epistle in his writings long anterior to his death, it is plain the Epistle, and, according to Mr. Tayler's admission, the Gospel also, must have been in existence before, and, perhaps, for some considerable time before he quoted them, so that this "probable *terminus ad quem*" may be antedated by perhaps some thirty years.

But further, the revolt of the Jews under Bar-Cochba, and its suppression by Hadrian, had really nothing to do with popularizing the doctrine of the Logos in the far distant Ephesus. Had the Gospel been written in Judea it is just possible that there might have been something in Mr. Tayler's conjecture. The final

dispersion of the Jews must have destroyed, amongst Christians, any remaining traces of a Judaic spirit, and may have given freer access to Hellenic and Oriental forms of thought. But in Ephesus and Greece, Christianity had come into contact and collision with the Hellenic theosophy long anterior to the revolt of Bar-Cochba. Nor have we any reason to think that the doctrine of the Logos had at all "blended itself with the *popular* preaching of Christianity" at the time when the book was written. The author was evidently one of those men who originate new views of truth, not one who follows subserviently the popular faith.

In page 84 Mr. Tayler admits that this Gospel had obtained "the full and undoubting suffrage of the Catholic Church as the production of an Apostle" in the time of Theophilus of Antioch, 178 A.D. Indeed, Theophilus, whose testimony is unquestioned, quotes the work in these words, Lib. 2:—

"These things the Holy Scriptures teach us, and all who are moved by the Holy Spirit, among whom John says, 'In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God.'"

Theophilus is said to have been bishop before 170 A.D. Eusebius places his episcopate under the reign of the Emperor Verus, which terminated 180 A.D. In his time, therefore, this Gospel was distinctly recognized as the work of John. It must have existed for some considerable time previously to have obtained for itself the "full and undoubting suffrage of the Catholic Church as the production of an Apostle." Had there been just grounds of suspicion, as in the case of the Apochryphal Gospels, or the letter to the Hebrews and 2nd Peter, we might expect such doubts to have come down to us. And yet, on the strength of such conjectures as Mr. Tayler's, we are to set aside this suffrage of antiquity! In this nineteenth century we know how difficult it is to gauge public opinion even on political questions, not to speak of philosophical speculation, without an appeal to the constituencies. To attempt, then, at the end of eighteen centuries, to gauge so accurately the progress of a doctrine in the popular mind requires surely more data than we could now possibly adduce! A conjecture of this kind is surely a very unstable fulcrum on which to rest the lever that is to overthrow "the undoubting suffrage" of the church of the second century.

But the fact of Papias quoting John's First Epistle, and the testimony of Theophilus to the Gospel itself, are not our only

authorities, as Mr. Tayler admits, for the early existence of this Gospel in the second century. Omitting the disputed Epistles of Ignatius, and the work against Heresies ascribed to Hippolytus, which furnished to the Chevalier Bunsen's mind conclusive evidence of the authenticity of this Gospel,\* Justin Martyr, who lived under the reign of Antonius Pius, A.D. 138 to 161, in his "Dialogue with Trypho," calls Christ "the blameless and just *Light* sent by God to men"—an epithet applied to him only in this Gospel. He calls Jesus "the only begotten Son of the Father," as John does, and has the same image, as we find in John xv., about the pruning of the vine tree. In his "Apology" he speaks of us in the language of John "eating the flesh and drinking the blood" of Jesus in the Eucharist, and says, "Christ said, unless ye be born anew ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven," a reference to Christ's words, as reported John iii., 3.

In commenting on these passages, Mr. Tayler remarks, p. 62:—

"If there be reason to believe, on independent grounds, that the Fourth Gospel was generally received as an authoritative and Apostolic work before 138 A.D., it would not be an unfair inference that familiar acquaintance with the Gospel had occasioned this general similarity of thought and expression which I have pointed out in several passages between the Martyr and the Evangelist. But the similarity in no one instance amounts to a citation, and the conformity to the presumed original is much less close than what it is in innumerable passages to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, &c."

If the above last cited quotation from Justin Martyr does not "amount to a citation" from John, it looks very like it certainly, for in what other place do we read that Christ said, "Unless ye be born anew ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven?" And that the general similarity of thought and expression is much less close than to the language of Matthew and Luke is easily accounted for, when we remember that these Gospels are supposed to have been written at least thirty years before John's. The latter, in Justin's time, could not have been much over that time in existence.

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\* In Vol. ii., page 134, of his "Hippolytus," the Baron writes:—"For the hypothesis about Marcian having, in the middle of the second century, used a more authentic and not a mutilated text of the Third Gospel, *is not more tenable* than that of referring the origin of the Fourth to about the end of the same century. The Canon then contained the Four Gospels as we have them."

He and his readers, therefore, must have been much more familiar with the former than the latter. And indeed the latter had not had time as yet to receive that "full and undoubting suffrage" of the Church, which it had when quoted by Theophilus.

We are to remember the time it required in those days to multiply copies, to disseminate them through distant countries, to assure churches far removed from one another, without our means of intercourse, of any writing's Apostolic origin. Justin does not cite John's, nor either of the earlier gospels of Matthew or Luke, *by name*. He does mention John as the author of the Apocalypse. But the Apocalypse was one of the earliest writings of the New Testament, save some of Paul's letters, written in all likelihood before any of the Gospels. It had been, when Justin wrote, for a long period in the hands of Christians, and recognized by them as an Apostolic work. The recognition of these works as Apostolic was not, at this time, the work of a general council, as it became in a later age. Mr. Tayler complains (page 145) of "the church suppressing criticism by authority." But the complaint applies to a future period. To no church decree does this Gospel owe its first recognition as Apostolic. This was the work of independent churches, far removed from one another, speaking different languages, without any regular means of intercourse. It was their coincident acceptance of writings, conveyed to them by the hands of missionaries, in whose statements they had confidence. These Christians were certainly not critical, and may have been credulous, but from such testimony could hardly withhold assent. The Apocalypse, on account of its Chiliastic views, being in fact the expression of the *then* hopes and expectations of the church, was no doubt popular, and is often quoted. The Gospel, written some thirty or forty years afterwards, the fruit of a more mature experience, becomes in its turn the expression of the views of Christians. Bearing in mind its date, we find it obtains recognition quite as early as the other. And, as Mr. Tayler well observes:—

"By a curious change of position, the Fourth Gospel then first obtains the full and undoubting suffrage of the Catholic Church as the production of an Apostle, when the Apocalypse is beginning to fall in reputation, and doubts are already insinuated against its authenticity."—P. 84.

This was the natural action, not of church authority, but of a new generation of Christians freely forming its opinion of the Apostolicity and appropriateness of the respective works.



In reply, therefore, to the question prefixed to this chapter, we have this Gospel quoted as John's by Theophilus, and in his time received as such by the Catholic Church before A.D. 180. It is evidently referred to, if not cited, by Justin Martyr, probably about A.D. 150. At a still earlier period we find the First Epistle of John quoted by Papias, a work admittedly by the same author. We have no reason to place it earlier than the last year of the first, or in the first decade of the second century. And therefore it seems to have obtained recognition quite as early comparatively as the Synoptics, or the other works of this Evangelist.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE LOGOS.

In the argument for the post-Apostolic date of this Gospel, which I have been combating in the last chapter, Mr. Tayler makes two assumptions, which are, however, the basis of his argument, the validity of both of which I must call in question. The first is, that this "doctrine of the Logos modified the whole conception of *the person* and ministry of Christ" in the mind of the author; the second, that "it pervades from beginning to end this remarkable book."

With respect to the latter it is for the reader to decide. To me the doctrine pervades only the opening verses of the first chapter. Even in it the word Logos only occurs in two verses, in the 1st and 14th. In the 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, the synonyme used for it is *Phos*—light. In the remainder of the Gospel, the word *Logos* occurs about seventeen times; but not once with any reference to the doctrine of the Logos. It is used to denote Christ's own word—John ii., 22, "They believed *the word* which Jesus had said"—xii., 48, "*The word* that I have spoken the same shall judge him"—xiv., 24, "*The word* which ye hear is not mine," &c.—xv., 20—"Remember *the word* that I said unto you." It is used to denote the word of the Apostles—xvii., 20, "who shall believe on me through *their word*." It is used in reference to the Jewish scriptures—xv., 20, "That *the word* might be fulfilled which is written in their law." And it is used to denote the word of God—xvii., 6, "Thine they were, and they have kept *thy word*." But in no instance, save in John i., 12, and i., 14, can it be interpreted to

refer to the doctrine of the Logos.\* Immediately after this introduction, Jesus is spoken of as the Synoptists speak of him. In i., 17, he is contrasted with Moses—"The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." In i., 38, the two disciples to whom the Baptist pointed him out as the "Lamb of God," ask him, "Master, where dwellest thou?" and they "abode with him that day." And in i., 45, Philip calls him "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

In his spiritual aspect, indeed, Jesus is not only "the word" of God, but "the lamb of God," "the light of men," "the true vine," "the living water," "the bread from heaven," "the shepherd that giveth his life for the sheep." But all these are similes derived from the Hebrew prophecies, not from the Alexandrian philosophy. Dr. Davidson speaks of this as a "metaphysical idealism" by which this Gospel is characterized, and says "there is a symbolism showing the same philosophical tendency as that of Philo." The only symbolism is this rich Eastern imagery derived from the Hebrew prophets, so absolutely necessary to the expression of the author's spiritual ideas. These certainly are "metaphysical" in so far as all spiritual ideas transcend the region of pure physics. But in John we have no such abstruse speculations as we understand by the word *metaphysics*. And if John represents Jesus as discussing matters with the Jews, it is the very realistic question whether "the works that I do bear witness of me"—whether the physical facts of opening the eyes of one born blind and curing an impotent man prove him to be "sent of God."

In his human aspect, Jesus is still in this Gospel, as intensely as

\* In Vol. ii., page 327, Dr. Davidson, whilst analyzing the contents of John's Gospel, remarks:—

"It is observable that the appellation *the word* does not occur in the speeches of Jesus himself; but that is no argument *against* its being synonymous with Christ."

If this were so, however, it might be an argument *for* their being synonymous, as the Doctor imagines; but what is the fact? In xii., 48, as we have seen, the appellation *the word* occurs in a speech of Jesus, and the faculty of "judging" is attributed to it—"The word ( $\delta$  λόγος) which I have spoken the same shall judge you in the last day." In xiv., 24, "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." Is this, I wonder, "no argument against its being synonymous with Christ?" Again, xv., 3, "Now ye are clean through the word ( $\tauὸν$  λόγον) that I have spoken unto you." Or what will the Doctor make of xv., 25, "That the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law?" Are not the above speeches attributed to Jesus? And does not this last use of it make the phrase synonymous with *the memra* of the Targums, but not with the appellation Jesus Christ?

the others, "the Son of man," personally known to these Jews as possessing no ability of himself—vii., 28, "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am." He is, as he tells the Jews (viii., 40), "a man that hath told you the truth, that I have heard of God"—the master upon whose bosom (xiii., 23) the disciple whom he loved leaned at supper,—vi., 42, "Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know." The hard realistic fact of Christ's body being pierced with a spear, to which John so emphatically testifies, is surely no symbolism, though Dr. D. would symbolize the blood and water, which John certainly adduced as evidence of the fact. And if John makes Christ say, "Whatsoever things the Father doeth these doeth the Son likewise;" Matthew attributes to him this language, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father," &c. And if in the former we read that God had given Jesus "power over all flesh," in the latter we are told, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

So far then from the "doctrine of the Logos pervading from beginning to end this remarkable book," we only find it in the introductory verses. Whenever the phrase is again used, as it is frequently, it is in the same senses as it is used by the Synoptists. In the explanation of the parable of the sower, we are told (Mark iv., 14) that "the sower soweth *the word*," and again (Luke viii., 11) that "the seed is the word of God." And thus we read in John xv., 3—"Now ye are clean through *the word* that I have spoken unto you." And if John, in his introduction, uses it in a higher sense, it is because reflection had taught him that that word of the sower was emphatically embodied in the life and character of the sower himself.

With respect to the other assumption made by Mr. Tayler that "this doctrine of the Logos modified the author's whole conception of the person and ministry of Christ," we have already stated that John's discussions with those philosophizing Christians of Ephesus would emancipate his mind from its narrow Jewish peculiarities, and assist his own reflections in leading him to those enlarged and spiritual conceptions of his Master's office. But that the Platonic doctrine of the Logos, as taught either at Alexandria or Ephesus, modified his conception of the *person* of his Master,—of this I am utterly at a loss for proof. This very introduction is a contradiction of the Platonic doctrine. In it the Logos is not "God from God" as the Church afterwards expressed it, but "the word *was* God." In the words of Irenaeus, he published his Gospel to "show there

is one God who made all things by his word, and not one the Creator of the world, and another the Christ from the super-celestial abodes." The Johannine doctrine therefore is very different from that of these Platonists.

Nor is it, as Dr. Davidson admits, coincident with the doctrine of the Jewish Philo. In Vol ii., page 341, he says:—

"The Fourth Gospel has an important advance upon Philo's doctrine, when it announces the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus. In this respect the author expresses an idea foreign to the Alexandrian philosophy. Whence this element was derived we cannot tell."

Why not evolve it therefore from the depths of the Apostle's consciousness? Why not suppose him capable of working out the glorious thought of the divine word—the expression of the divine will, being manifested in the life and character of Jesus?

What really modified John's conception of his Master's office was, as we have seen, the mature experience of those thirty years or more, by which he had outlived his brethren and the destruction of Jerusalem, and during which the spirit of truth had come and "led him into all truth." Even in Paul's writings, though himself a "Hebrew of the Hebrews, and touching the law, a Pharisee," in consequence of his education, and intercourse especially with men of other countries, we see that tendency to spiritualize and emancipate Christianity from the contracting influence of Judaism which we find so fully developed in John's later writings. If we turn to Matthew, a tax-gatherer of Galilee, who writes his Gospel amongst Hebrews, and probably before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, we find those materialistic and Chiliastic views that so distinguish the Apocalypse. "*Immediately after* the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory"—Matt. xxiv., 29-30. Mark also writes—xiii., 24—"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven—and then *shall they see the Son of man* coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and gather together his elect. Verily I say unto you that *this generation shall not pass* till all these things be done."

These are words which these Evangelists attribute to the Christ himself. What wonder if they had kindled thoughts and expectations amongst Christians of their real literal fulfilment? Accordingly when the Holy Land was invaded by Rome's conquering armies, and "the abomination that maketh desolate" set up, the persecuted disciples began to "rejoice and lift up their heads," believing in the truth of their Master's promise that their "redemption draweth nigh." John, an exile in the isle of Patmos, "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"—pondering on the words of his exalted Master, on the mystic visions of Ezekiel and other Prophets, and trying to forecast the future, sees also visions of the coming glory of our Saviour's kingdom, and sings his anticipatory song of triumph. He sees "one like the Son of man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" who gives him a message to the seven churches;—again he sees "the throne of God in heaven, and in the hand of Him that sat upon it a sealed book written—and none able to open that Book but "the Lion of the tribe of Judah of the root of David." The opening of those seven seals by "the Lamb that was slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God" is next beheld by him, and the pouring forth of all sorts of calamities upon the earth. And finally he sees the Lamb as "the Amen the faithful and true witness"—whose name is "the Word of God"—"to whom a bow and crown are given"—mounted on "a white horse," leading forth the armies of heaven, "conquering and to conquer."

The ardour of imagination, however, which kindled these visions had long given place, ere he wrote his Gospel, to the more spiritual conception of a "Sun of righteousness." The Apocalypse he had entitled, "The revelation of things which *must shortly come to pass.*" But "in his patience he had possessed his soul," and for another generation had been spared to "tarry" on the earth; and yet no "coming in the clouds of heaven" as he once anticipated. He is now an old man who feels that he too must soon "put off his tabernacle." The idea had gone abroad among the brethren that "this disciple should not die"—an idea which his great age seemed now in some degree to warrant. Yet Jesus said not unto him that he shall not die, but, "if I will that he tarry till I come." *What did it all mean?* He had tarried, but Jesus came not as he once expected. He had come, however, as the enlightening word of our humanity. He had become to his soul as the heavenly manna, upon which their fathers had fed when in the

wilderness. And he now sees in him, not the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" who is to make "all nations wail because of him," but "the true vine" of God's planting on the hills of Judah whose branches shall expand from the East to the West and from the North unto the South.

## CHAPTER VII.

### JOHN'S DOCTRINE OF THE LOGOS.

THERE are two features which distinguish the Johannine doctrine of the Logos, which should be carefully noted, as the varied senses in which the term is used by different writers, have led to much confusion. We have seen from Dr. Davidson that it is not identical with the doctrine of the Jewish Philo. Nor is it coincident with, but expressly contradictory of the doctrine of the Platonic Greeks. And it is equally opposed to the Christian doctrine elaborated afterwards in the schools of Alexandria, and which was so clearly embodied in the original form of the Nicene creed—that the word was "God *from* God, light *from* light, very God *from* very God." In all those conceptions of it, the Logos was a different person, Aeon, or hypostasis from the *pleroma* or source from which he emanated—the Athanasian Creed even forbidding us to confound the persons; whereas John's statement is a distinct denial of this, his assertion being that the Word,—whatever he meant by it—*"was God."*

What he really means by the phrase, it is only just to our author to gather from his own subsequent use of it. It is not for us to affix to it what may be a fanciful or fictitious meaning. And if we thus compare scripture with scripture, we see at once that it is a phrase of most frequent use, not only in this, but other parts of the sacred writings. When the Prophet says, "The Lord had sent *a word* against Jacob, and it has lighted upon Israel," no one thinks of personifying it, or supposes that the Prophet makes any allusion to the doctrine of the Logos. Nor do we, when we read the beautiful parable of Jesus about "the sower sowing *the word*." In John's most frequent use of the term, it denotes, as we have seen, the word of Jesus, and so expresses what we do by the term Gospel, though not in the sense in which we limit it to the writings of an Evangelist, but in the higher sense of the Gospel message, and of which Jesus

was, in the conception of John, the actual embodiment. In sitting down to write a history of this Gospel message, he claims for it a divine origin, but denies to it an existence as a distinct person or hypostasis from God till its manifestation in the life and character of the Redeemer, declaring that "the word *was* God"—the expression of the divine mind itself.

This is one peculiarity of John's doctrine, expressed more fully in his First Epistle—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of *the word of life*; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us"—in the person of course of Jesus of Nazareth. These emphatic and reiterated assertions of hearing, seeing, looking upon, and handling, are evidently used in refutation of the Gnostic doctrine of the unsubstantiality of Christ's person, whilst the writer affirms the eternity, not of the man Christ Jesus, but of *the life* thus manifested—a term which he uses as synonymous with "the word" or Logos spoken of in the Gospel.

It is also worthy to be noted that the terms "the word" and "light" are also used synonymously by John, two distinct Aeons in the Platonic philosophy, the latter of which has never been personified like the Alexandrian Logos, in the Christian mythology. In the early church at Ephesus, indeed, there seems to have been a tendency on the part of these Platonists, to identify John the Baptist with their Aeon of light. The idea is not one, however, that we find taking any general hold on the Christian mind; though this Evangelist devotes several verses of this introduction expressly to combat it. The idea may have arisen from the teaching of Apollos in that city, who, as we read in Acts xviii., 25, "spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord *knowing only the baptism of John*." However this may be, the circumstance that the Evangelist devotes several verses to combat the idea that the Baptist was "the true light" shows that he had in view in writing this introduction the crude ideas of the Greek Platonists at Ephesus, and not the more developed doctrine of the Alexandrian theology.

That John should speak in his Gospel of his exalted Master as an embodiment of that "word which was in the beginning with God and was God," should not appear strange to those who admit the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse. There, we find it said of the warrior on "the white horse" that "his name is

called the *Word of God*." At this early period therefore the idea had occurred to the mind of the writer. It is not possible that "the doctrine of the Logos could have blended itself at this early period with the popular idea of Christianity." Nor was it at all necessary in order to account for it. The idea was a natural one—one that must readily have presented itself to the mind of this Apostle. He that had come, in the language of his own parable, sowing the divine word, and had gone to heaven, leaving after him no record of that word, but the vivid and endearing recollection of his own exalted character,—how natural that he should be spoken of by a writer of John's imagination as that word itself! It is quite usual for Paul to use the terms Jesus Christ as expressive of the Gospel, as in that passage, "we preach Christ." Peter speaks of "the word which God sent to the children of Israel preaching peace by Jesus Christ." And John speaks of that word which was sent as Jesus Christ, or embodied in the person of Christ himself, and hence he calls him "the word of God."

On this point, however, Dr. Davidson remarks with his usual keen critical sagacity—Vol. i., page 334:—

"The Messiah is called *the Word of God* in the Apocalypse (xix., 13), in the Gospel he is called *the Word* absolutely. The two phrases show a different theological standpoint, the former savouring of Palestinian, the latter of Alexandrian metaphysics. The one is the well-known *Memra of Jehovah* so frequent in the Targums, the other resembles Philo's idea."

And again in Vol. ii., page 297, when commenting on the First Epistle of John, the Doctor writes:—

"Christ is not termed the *Word* absolutely, as he is in the Gospel. He is *the life, the eternal life* which was with the Father, the Son of God, not *the Word*. High as the epithets are they imply a conception of his person inferior to the Gospel's."

However we may admire the critical acumen of these remarks, it is more conspicuous than their correctness. For in no place in John's Gospel is "the Messiah" or "Christ called the Word absolutely." What is said is that the Logos or Word "was made" or revealed in "flesh" in the person of Jesus—a very different statement truly. To verify this, the reader has only to substitute the term "*Messiah*" or "*Christ*" for "*Word*," and see how it would read. "In the beginning was the Messiah or Christ, and the Messiah or Christ was with God, and the Messiah



or Christ was God;—and the Messiah or Christ was made flesh”—*that is, was made the Messiah or Christ!* The two terms therefore are not convertible. This is not what John affirms. He does not call Christ “the word absolutely,” but affirms that the word—evidently a different conception from the living Christ—was revealed in the character of the Messiah. That the incarnation of that Word which he here affirms, was not Philo’s idea, the Doctor, as we have seen elsewhere admits. And it may reasonably be doubted, if he had not got this Alexandrian theory previously in his mind, whether he would have found it in the Gospel of John.

To those, however, who admit identity of authorship betwixt the Gospel and John’s First Epistle, it may be well to note that Dr. D., after citing the testimony of the Fathers to the latter as being the work of the Apostle, thus writes, Vol. ii., 293:—“Thus the latter is well attested by the voice of antiquity. As far as external evidence reaches, the authenticity seems to be secure.”

And in commenting on the internal evidence, he admits that “the Epistle moves in the same circle of ideas as the Gospel”—that “its leading views and representations are alike”—that “the same images are used,” and “the verbal coincidences are most striking”—a list of which he has adduced. And yet he thinks that “internal evidence is not favourable to Apostolic authorship,”—and that “the deviations of the Epistle from the Gospel, though not numerous, are inconsistent with sameness of authorship.”

As some of his reasons for so thinking would lead my mind to a directly opposite conclusion I would here briefly refer to two of them. One has been already cited. It is that “Christ is not termed the Logos or *Word* absolutely as he is in the Gospel,”—on which it may suffice simply to remark that the pen that wrote the following sentence—“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth”—was the one to which we would naturally attribute such lines as these—“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen *with our eyes*, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, for the life was manifested, &c.” Here if he does not call him “the Word absolutely,” he speaks of a “Word of life,” and a “life that was manifested” in Jesus, as the author of the Gospel says, “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” And it is plain that both writings affirm the manifestation in flesh, or the reality of that living body in which *the Word* or *life* was manifested.

Another reason of the Doctor's for thinking "the internal evidence not favourable to Apostolic authorship" is—

"There is little doubt that the water and the blood in xix., 34, are symbolical, representing the cleansing and atoning efficacy of Christ. But in the Epistle the language—'This is he who came by water and blood,' water and blood denoting baptism and the supper—the two sacraments he instituted."

How anyone can see a symbol of "the atoning efficacy of Christ" in the text, John xix., 34, I must confess my total inability to understand. To me the writer is using no symbol, but testifying most emphatically to a *fact*, or what he believed to be a fact. Nor is First John v., 6, more symbolical. The writer says: "This is he that *came* by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood." What had Christ's own coming to do with "the two sacraments?" He came, however, not "by water only" in his own baptism, when John bore witness to him, but "by water and blood," when the thrust of the soldier's spear sealed the testimony of the cross. Thus the sentence contains two distinct references to the Gospel record, proving too that the Gospel must have been in existence when this Epistle was written. And to impute symbolism to a writer who is evidently appealing to facts in attestation of his record, however sagacious, is hardly a just mode of criticism. And yet it is on the strength of such arguments we are called on to set aside the unanimous testimony of antiquity! Criticize as we will, however, that spirit of *earnestness* which so markedly characterizes this letter evinces it to be no spurious production, but the dying testimony of the old Apostle to what "his eyes had seen, his ears had heard, and his hands had handled of the word of life;" whilst "the weakness and repetitions" so manifest in the second chapter (on which the Doctor comments in his tenth reason) as unmistakably betray the tautology and infirmity of extreme old age.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONCLUSION.

WE have now completed the task which in the introduction we sketched out. We have confined ourselves solely to such internal marks of authenticity as imply the testimony of an eye-witness, or

coincide with and explain the testimony of other witnesses. And we have endeavoured to answer such objections as have been founded on the mode of teaching, style, and such like evidence. The argument would be greatly strengthened by a view of the external evidence, but this has been already given to the public by Mr. Rowland in his "Evidence from Tradition and from the Fathers, applied in support of the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel." As much has, of late years, been advanced to invalidate the authority of that book in the New Testament, which gives us the most exalted spiritual view of the mission of Christ, it has been our object to lay before the English reader some knowledge of what may still be said in its support. And if, in doing so, we have ventured to question the conclusions of men of great learning and ability, whose praise is deservedly in all the churches for their fearlessness and honesty, it is in no spirit of presumption, but from a strong conviction of the invalidity of their arguments.

The argument that weighed most heavily with Mr. Tayler against the validity of this Gospel, if we may judge from the weight attached to it in his work, was the great difference in style and matter betwixt it and the Apocalypse. And yet, as Dr. Davidson has remarked:—

"It will not satisfy the demands of criticism to assume the non-authenticity of the Gospel from the authenticity of the Apocalypse, or the contrary, because respectable scholars still maintain identity of authorship."

And though he afterwards remarks "that the critical sagacity of those who attribute both to John cannot be applauded," yet I must confess that, after a careful study of his own arguments on either side, those adduced for that identity decidedly preponderate.\*

\* That the reader may be able to judge for himself of the strength of this evidence, I will here enumerate a few of the particulars.

1st. We have seen that in both Jesus is spoken of, in one way or other, as manifesting forth in his own person the Divine word—a mode of speaking of him that we never find used in the Synoptics.

2nd. In both Jesus is called "a Lamb," which the Synoptists never do, nor is he so called elsewhere in the New Testament, save in Acts viii., 32—a quotation from Isaiah liii., 7, where it is said that "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," and in I. Peter i., 19—by Peter of course, who was John's companion in the ministry for a time. Dr. Davidson founds an objection upon this that in the Revelation it is the neuter noun *ἀρνίον* that is used, whereas in the Gospel it is *ἀμνός*. The idea, however,

This is not the place, however, to enter on the critical discussion, nor, in considering the question, have we noticed the doubts cast upon the Apostolic authorship of The Revelation by Dionysius of Alexandria, and other early fathers, who attributed it to John the Presbyter of Ephesus. This we did not, as it seems to us the historic evidence for its Apostolic authorship decidedly preponderates. And there is so much in common in both works in their mode of speaking of the Christ as "the Lamb of God," "the Word of God," the light of the new Jerusalem; he that sendeth the "hidden manna," or "bread from heaven," and giveth to drink of the "river of the water of life;" that both seem in these respects the production of the same mind.

The strongest argument against this—one that I do not remember to have seen noticed by our critics—is that the Apocalypse contains no such internal evidence as the Gospel does, that its author had ever been in company with Jesus during his ministry on earth. He ever speaks of him as one who had never seen him but in vision—as Paul does when he writes "the second man is the Lord from heaven." The author sees one "like the son of man" walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, but the description of his person is evidently taken from the Book of Daniel. And when he saw him "he fell at his feet as dead."

is the same, and the Apocalypst may use the neuter, either from his habit of speaking of it as a "lamb that was slain," or perhaps from his want of familiarity with the Greek tongue at the time, whereas in the Gospel he may use *ἀμνός* in reference to his meekness and innocence, for it was not a lamb but a goat that took away the sins of the Israelites into the wilderness.

3rd. Both speak of Jesus as "the light," see Rev. xxi, 23; John *passim*, which the Synoptists never do, save Luke ii., 32, who applies to him the prophetic epithet "a light to lighten the Gentiles," &c.

4th. In John vii., 37, Jesus says, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink," and in Rev. xxi., 6, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

5th. As Dr. D. remarks—"In Apoc. ii., 17, Jesus promises believers the hidden manna," in the Gospel, vi, 32, "the true bread from heaven."

6th. In John xix., 37, the author quotes Zach. xii., 10—"They shall look on him whom they pierced." And in Rev. i., 7, we read—"And they which *pierced* him," showing the same thought in the mind of the writer, and that it dwelt on the *fact* of the soldiers having pierced the side of Jesus, to which John testifies.

In addition to the above, Dr. Davidson points out a number of words and peculiar phrases common to both writings, and justly remarks—"The manner of writing in the Apocalypse often reminds one of that in the Fourth Gospel and First Epistle, where the same idea is expressed, both positively and negatively, and a certain parallelism of thought and expression may be noticed."—See Vol. i., page 331.

“And he laid his right hand upon me, saying ‘Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.’” All this is very unlike what a companion of Jesus during his ministry on earth might be expected to have written of him. Besides, the revelation itself is not given by Jesus personally to John, as he appeared to Paul, but it is “sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John.” Throughout the book we find no such reference as an Apostle would have made to his earthly ministry—no such presumptive evidence for its Apostolic authorship as John’s Gospel manifestly displays. In this respect the presumption is much in favour of the opinion of Dionysius. And yet the historic evidence refers it decidedly to John the Apostle.

Whether or not the work of an Apostle, it is evident that the Apocalypse was the work of the Apostolic age. Written about the reign of Galba, as Dr. Davidson shows satisfactorily, and before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, its Christology differs no less remarkably than that of John’s Gospel from that of the Synoptists. The arguments of Mr. Tayler drawn from this source, for the post-Apostolic authorship of the Gospel would apply equally to the Apocalypse. In page 181 he writes:—

“Did we know him (Christ) through the Fourth Gospel alone, we would not doubt that the author of that work regarded him as something more than human—the incarnation of the Eternal Word.”

Without stopping to controvert the statement, permit me to ask, however, how does the author of Revelation speak of him?—as “one who is set down with the Father in his throne,” and who with the Father is worshipped by the “thousands of thousands” that surround the throne in this manner,—“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing.” There is then surely no argument to be deduced from the Christology of the Gospel more unfavourable to its Apostolic authorship than what may be founded upon this.

Mr. Tayler is more judicious when he writes, page 174:—

“The Synoptical Gospels have preserved the oldest Palestinian traditions of the person and public ministry of Jesus. In the Epistles of Paul we get an insight into the heart of the earliest controversy to which the new religion gave rise. The Fourth Gospel contains the reflections of a

profoundly devout and meditative spirit (probably of the Church of Ephesus) on a survey of the ministry of Christ, interpreting it from his own lofty point of view, and giving it the comprehensive application which to that wider ken it seemed at once to yield. Briefly, we may say, the Synoptists record the original facts, Paul and John exhibit the results of a later reflection on those facts."

Just so; but why not suppose "the profoundly devout and meditative spirit, probably of the Church of Ephesus," to have been that of the old Apostle who had long out-lived Paul, and who was most interested, *if not fitted*, to take that "comprehensive survey of the ministry of Christ?" Who could take it so well and comprehensively, in the profound stillness of mature old age, as that disciple who had "leaned on his breast at supper," who had been with him from his annunciation on the banks of Jordan, till he hung upon the Cross of Calvary, who had received from him his last great earthly trust? Mr. Tayler seems to have thought that it was impossible for the Apostle to have passed through so remarkable a mental change as that indicated by the transition from the seer of Apocalyptic visions to the more sublime seer of the religion of humanity. He compares the case to two of our own poets, Milton and Dryden, who "passed through remarkable mental changes;" but theirs, surely, were nothing to the Apostles'? Look at Paul, who, at a mature time of life, emancipated his mind from all the narrowness, and bitter, persecuting spirit of an intolerant Pharisaism, and who, without the advantages of a living personal intercourse with the Christ, save in vision, became the chosen exponent of the free liberty of gospel truth, with whom "circumcision availeth nothing, nor uncircumcision, but that faith which worketh by love." Paul attained to this liberty suddenly—may we not say miraculously, compared with John—far outstripping Peter and the Apostolic College at Jerusalem in the wide comprehensiveness of his views of truth. May not John's mind, by more mature reflection, have attained to the same wide comprehensiveness? His Epistles, indeed, hardly display the full liberality of the Apostle to the Gentiles. But he had before him the example of how Paul had preached Christianity. His lot in mature life was cast among those very churches that the more active zeal of Paul had planted. Would not Paul's teaching and spirit also assist in more maturely elaborating his own, as given in this record of the life? The great revolution caused by the mission of Jesus in all his followers' thoughts, and views, and feelings, was such as has never been

equalled in the world's history; so that it is vain to compare John's case to that of any European author.

In one respect, however, John, as he had been permitted to outlive, had also been enabled to surpass Paul. The latter's letters—at least the earlier ones—unmistakably indicate the Chiliastic expectations on his part, that so remarkably distinguish John's Book of Revelation. Paul even anticipates the end at an earlier date—the coming of the Christ in glory previous to his own decease—for thus he writes in his First letter to the Thessalonians—iv., 17—“Then *we which are alive and remain* shall be caught up together with them in *the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*, and so we shall ever be with the Lord.” These views of Christ's second coming, John was privileged to outlive. Long before the earliest date that critics have assigned to his Gospel, he must have begun to question their correctness. He had lived to see the whole generation of those who lived full in the expectation of this realization of the faith—all save himself gone to sleep and, “lo, the end is not yet.” And hence we find in this Gospel that wide and spiritual interpretation of the mission that regards its purpose to be the enlightening of humanity,—the “gathering into one of the children of the living God,” that there may be “one flock and one Shepherd.”

That the Book may have been written within about thirty years of the time of this Apostle—certainly within fifty—Mr. Tayler admits. Why, then, set aside the evidence of the early Church? or why suppose an imposition practised upon those Christians at Ephesus some of whom must have remembered the Apostle? Or why not rather attribute the work to him whose personal interest, mature age, and varied experience enabled him, beyond any other that history informs us of, to survey in a “profoundly devout and meditative spirit, the ministry of Jesus?” That such proceeding would be just, will I think appear to the reflecting reader from the very embarrassment of critics adverse to its authenticity to assign an otherwise probable date and authorship to the book. In page 150 Mr. Tayler writes—“If I am asked who was its author, and when was it written, I confess I am unable to give a categorical answer.” And though Dr. Davidson fixes the date to about A.D. 150, on the question of authorship in Vol. ii., page 445, he writes—

“The subject presents a variety of embarrassing circumstances so that it is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. Though the balance

of evidence is clearly against the Gospel's authenticity, it is not easy to account for the early belief of its Johannine origin otherwise than by assuming that it arose in the circle of John's disciples about Ephesus under influences posterior to that Apostle."

But how could that "circle of disciples" have been imposed on, some of whom must have remembered John?

Again in page 446 the Doctor writes—

"It is singular that the author should have remained in *miraculous concealment*, when we look at the fact from a modern standpoint."

Verily it is a miracle on the Doctor's theory, not only that the author should have so concealed himself, but that he so imposed his spurious work on John's disciples about Ephesus within less than fifty years of the Apostle's death!

Much has been said of the title "Boanerges," applied by Jesus to him and his brother in their youth. The fiery spirit which that indicated had, in all likelihood, in the reign of Herod Agrippa cost the latter his life. And though it no doubt contributed its fire to the visions of the Apocalypse, and accounts for that hostility to Judaism, or rather to Jews generally that marks this Gospel, yet in the order of nature, not to speak of the teachings of the Master, it had had full time to burn itself down to those calm, but still bright embers of inspiration that distinguish the writings of this Evangelist. To what purpose, too, to revive the old story discredited by Lardner, of John rushing out of the bath at Ephesus from Cerinthus? If he did so, which is not impossible, he was at least a younger man—perhaps fresh from Palestine—his mind still full of Jewish narrowness—than when he required to be carried into their assemblies, and preached the sermon so consonant to the spirit of this Gospel—"Little children, love one another."

Mr. Tayler seems to have thought that his calling in question the authenticity of this Book would not lessen its spiritual value, nor *much* unsettle in the minds of others that habitual reliance on a divine authority that most feel so essential to the support of faith,—that "true faith does not depend on the mere words of a book"—that it is "the deep mysterious sympathy that binds together all spiritual natures which has its *fons et origo* in that new life infused into the soul of our humanity by the loving character and spirit of the Great Master." But who does not feel that in thus thinking, our reverend brother was only judging others by his own more



lofty and Christian experience? Who, that has but little time to judge of such things, has not found his own faith in "Jesus and the resurrection" somewhat shaken by the very doubts that one so learned and good and truthful has thus cast on this, once the most prized portion of the Christian scriptures, and who, possessing less of that "deep sympathy with the pure and spiritual" has found his mind, all unwillingly it may be, merging into the dark night of unbelief?

And yet, strange it is, that our lamented Brother should not have recognized in this Gospel the testimony of that mind whom the great Master loved; for one more truly in unison with it was not to be found in any of our churches. He, if any of us, had surely "eaten of that bread which cometh down from heaven," and drunk of that water which can eternally assuage the thirst. In his character was that glorious aspiration realized "that they may be one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." His religion was free from all dogma and exclusiveness, settled and grounded, and in deep sympathy with that spiritual life which John tells us was incarnated in Jesus. None, I am convinced, more highly prized John's views of Christianity than he who had come to the "irresistible conclusion" that that Apostle was not the author of this Gospel. Our human conclusions may, however, be erroneous,—and that his have been so in this case, it has been my endeavour to demonstrate, with all respect for the memory of their author. But it is not so with our diviner sympathies. Those that unite us to the true, the good, the holy,—those must be eternal and immutable as the God who made us. Those, as they depend not on "the letter that killeth," "cannot be shaken," no more than John's Gospel itself, by the vain breath of criticism. These, then, with our deceased friend let us "hold fast"—to use the imagery of the Apocalypse, "walking with him in white," that Jesus may "confess our names before his Father and before the angels."













