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ARTICLE I.

THE GENUINENESS OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.<sup>1</sup>

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THE Gospel that bears the name of John is one of the main pillars of historical Christianity. Christianity would indeed remain were the apostolic authorship and the credibility of this Gospel disproved; for before it was written, Jesus and the resurrection had been preached by faithful witnesses over a large part of the Roman world. Christianity would remain; but our conception of Christianity and of Christ would be materially altered. The profoundest minds in the church, from Clement of Alexandria to Luther, and from Luther to Niebuhr, have expressed their sense of the singular charm and surpassing value of this Gospel. In recent times, however, the genuineness of the fourth Gospel has been impugned. It was denied to be the work of John by individual sceptics at the close of the last century; but their attack was not of a nature either to excite or to merit much attention. Not until Bretschneider published (in 1820) his *Probabilia* did the question become the subject of seri-

<sup>1</sup> Bleek's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, 1862. Meyer's *Com. über das Evang. des Johannes*, 3 A., 1856. Schneider's *Aechtheit des Johann. Evang.*, 1854. Mayer's *Aechtheit des Evang. nach Johann.*, 1854. Ewald's *Jahrb.* III. s. 146 seq., v. s. 178 seq., x. s. 83 seq.

ous discussion. But the assault, which has been renewed by the critics of the Tübingen school, with Baur at their head, has more lately given rise to a most earnest and important controversy. The rejection of John's Gospel by these critics is a part of their attempted reconstruction of early Christian history. Starting with the assertion of a radical difference and hostility between the Jewish and the Gentile types of Christianity,—between the party of the church that adhered to Peter and the original disciples, and the party that adhered to Paul and his doctrine,—they ascribe several books of the New Testament to the effort, made at a later day, to bridge over this gulf. The Acts of the Apostles proceeds from this motive, and is a designed distortion and misrepresentation of events connected with the conflict about the rights of the Gentile converts. And the fourth Gospel is a product of the same pacifying tendency. It was written, they say, about the middle of the second century by a Christian of Gentile birth, who assumed the name of John in order to give an apostolic sanction to his higher theological platform, in which love takes the place of faith, and the Jewish system is shown to be fulfilled, and so abolished, by the offering of Christ, the true paschal Lamb. We hold that the fundamental proposition, which affirms a radical hostility between Pauline and Petrine Christianity, can be proved to be false, even by the documents which are acknowledged by the Tübingen school to be genuine and trustworthy; and that the superstructure which is reared upon this foundation, can be proved, in all its main timbers, to be equally unsubstantial. In the present Article, however, we shall take up the single subject of the authorship of the fourth Gospel, and shall make it a part of our plan to refute the arguments which are brought forward by the sceptical critics on this question—the most important critical question connected with the New Testament canon. But while we propose fairly to consider these arguments, we have no doubt that the attack upon the genuineness of John, has its root in a determined unwillingness to admit the

historical reality of the miracles which that Gospel records. This feeling, which sways the mind of the critics of whom we speak, is the ultimate and real ground of their refusal to believe that this narrative proceeds from an eyewitness of the life of Jesus. And were there nothing in Christianity to remove this natural incredulity, and to overturn the presumption against the occurrence of miracles, the ground taken by the Tübingen critics in reference to this question might be reasonable. It is right to observe that behind all their reasoning there lies this deep-seated, and, in our opinion, unwarrantable prejudice.

We have recorded the titles of some of the more recent defences of the Johannean authorship: Bleek's Introduction, in which the author discusses the question at length, with his wonted clearness and golden candor; Meyer's Introduction to his Commentary on John, which contains a brief, condensed exhibition of the principal points of argument; Schneider's little tract, which handles with ability certain parts of the external evidence, but falls far short of being a complete view; Ewald's Essays, which contribute fresh and original thoughts upon the subject, but are not without faults in opinion as well as temper; Mayer's copious treatise, in which the external testimonies are ably considered, though too much in the temper of a controversialist, and with occasional passages not adapted to convince any save members of the Roman Catholic church, of which the author is one. We intend to present our readers with a summary of the arguments, most of which are touched upon in one or another of these writers; although we lay claim at least to independence in weighing, verifying, and combining the various considerations which we have to bring forward.

That the apostle John spent the latter part of his life in Proconsular Asia, in particular at Ephesus, is attested by all the ecclesiastical writers after the middle of the second century. At the conference of Paul with the other apostles in Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 1 seq.; Acts xv.), which occurred

about twenty years after the death of Christ, John is mentioned, in connection with Peter and James, as one of the pillars of the Jerusalem church. Whether he was in Jerusalem on the occasion of Paul's last visit, we are not informed. It is in the highest degree probable that John's residence at Ephesus began after the period of Paul's activity there, and either after or not long before the destruction of Jerusalem. Among the witnesses to the fact of his living at Ephesus in the latter part of the second century, Polycrates and Irenaeus are of especial importance. Polycrates was himself a bishop of Ephesus near the end of the third century, and of a family seven of whose members had previously been bishops or presbyters in the same church. In his letter to Victor, he expressly says that John died and was buried at Ephesus.<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, who was born in Asia, says of the old presbyters, immediate disciples of the apostles, whom he had known, that they had been personally conversant with John, and that he had remained among them up to the times of Trajan (whose reign was from the year 98 to 117). Some of them, he says, had not only seen John, but other apostles also. Whether the ancient stories be true or not, of his fleeing from the bath on seeing there the heretic Cerinthus, of his recovering the young man who joined a company of robbers, or the more probable story found in Jerome, of his being carried in his old age into the Christian assemblies, to which he addressed the simple exhortation: "Love one another," they show a general knowledge of the fact of his residing at Ephesus, and of his living to an extreme old age. His Gospel, also, according to the testimony of Irenaeus, Clement, and others, and the general belief, was the last written of the four, and the tradition places its composition near the close of his life.

#### THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

Mayer begins his argument by an appeal to Jerome and Eusebius; the one writing in the latter, and the other

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., Lib. III. 31.

in the early, part of the fourth century; both having in their hands the literature of the church before them; both diligent in their researches and inquiries; both knowing how to discriminate between books which had been received without contradiction, and those whose authority had either been disputed or might fairly be questioned; and yet neither having any knowledge or suspicion that the fourth Gospel was not known to the writers of the first half of the second century, with whom they were familiar. This appeal is not without force; but instead of dwelling on the inference which it appears to warrant, we choose to begin with the unquestioned fact of the universal reception of the fourth Gospel as genuine in the last quarter of the second century. At that time we find that it is held in every part of Christendom to be the work of the apostle John. The prominent witnesses are Tertullian in North Africa, Clement in Alexandria, and Irenaeus in Gaul. Though the date of Tertullian's birth is uncertain, a considerable portion of his life fell within the second century, and his book against Marcion, from which his fullest testimony is drawn, was composed in 207 or 208. His language proves the universal reception of our four Gospels, and of John among them. These together, and these exclusively, were considered the authentic histories of the life of Christ, being composed either by apostles themselves or by their companions.<sup>1</sup> The testimony of Clement is the more important from his scholarly character and his wide acquaintance with the church. He became the head of the Catechetical school at Alexandria about the year 190. Having been previously a pupil of various philosophers, he had in his mature years

<sup>1</sup> Adv. Marcion, Lib. IV. c. 2; also c. 5. He says in this last place: "In summa, si constat id verius quod prius, id prius quod et ab initio, id ab initio quod ab apostolis; pariter utique constabit, id esse ab apostolis traditum, quod apud ecclesias apostolorum fuerit sacrosanctum." Then shortly after: "eadem auctoritas ecclesiarum apostolicarum caeteris quoque patrocinabitur evangeliiis, quae proinde per illas, et secundum illas habemus": here follows the enumeration of the four. It is historical evidence — the knowledge possessed by the churches founded by the apostles — on which Tertullian builds.

sought instruction from Christian teachers in Greece, in Lower Italy, in Syria, in Palestine, as well as in Egypt; and his works which remain prove his extensive learning. Not only is the genuineness of the fourth Gospel an undisputed fact with Clement, but, not to speak of other testimony from him, he gave in his lost work, the *Institutions*, quoted by Eusebius, "a tradition concerning the order of the gospels which he had received from presbyters of more ancient times;" that is, concerning the chronological order of their composition.<sup>1</sup> But of these three witnesses, Irenaeus, from the circumstances of his life as well as the peculiar character of his testimony, is the most important. A Greek, born in Asia Minor about the year 140, coming to Lyons and holding there first the office of presbyter, and then, in 178, that of bishop, he was familiar with the church in both the East and the West. Moreover, he had in his youth known and conversed with the aged Polycarp of Smyrna, the immediate disciple of John, and retained a vivid recollection of the person and the words of this remarkable man. Now Irenaeus not only testifies to the universal acceptance in the church of the fourth Gospel, but also argues fancifully that there *must* be four and only four gospels to stand as pillars of the truth; thus showing how firmly settled was his faith, and that of others, in the exclusive authority of the canonical gospels.<sup>2</sup> To the value of his testimony we shall have occasion again to refer. We simply ask here if it was possible for Irenaeus to express himself in

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., Lib. VI. c. 14. That the four Gospels alone were regarded as possessed of canonical authority is evident from other places in Clement. In reference to an alleged conversation between Salome and Jesus, Clement says: "We have not this passage in the four Gospels delivered to us, but in that according to the Egyptians." Strom., Lib. III. (See Lardner, Vol. II. pp. 236 and 251).

<sup>2</sup> Adv. Haer., Lib. III. 1. 1. This noted passage on the four Gospels thus begins: "Non enim per alios dispositionem salutis nostrae cognovimus, quam per eos, per quos evangelium pervenit ad nos; quod quidem tunc praeconaverunt, postea vero per Dei voluntatem in scripturis nobis tradiderunt, fundamentum et columnam fidei nostrae futurum." Like Tertullian, he makes his appeal to sure historical evidence. In speaking of Polycarp and the men who followed him,

this way — to affirm not merely the genuineness of the four gospels, but the metaphysical necessity that there should be four — if John's Gospel had been made known for the first time during his lifetime, or shortly before. With these noteworthy witnesses, we associate the great name of Origen, the successor of Clement at Alexandria, although Origen's theological career is later, terminating near the middle of the third century, he having been born but fifteen years before the end of the second ; for his extensive journeys through the Eastern church, and as far as Rome, and especially his critical curiosity and erudition, together with the fact that he was born of Christian parents, give extraordinary weight to the evidence he affords of the universal reception of John's Gospel. In the same category with Irenaeus, Clement, and Tertullian, belong the Canon of Muratori, or the list of canonical books which Muratori found in an old manuscript in the Milan library, and which is certainly not later than the end of the second century ; and the ancient Syriac version of the New Testament, the Peschito, having a like antiquity. In both these monuments the Gospel of John is found in its proper place. Nor should we omit to mention here Polycrates, the bishop of Ephesus, who, as we have said, represented the Asia Minor churches in the controversy concerning the celebration of Easter in the year 196, and in his letter to Victor the Roman bishop, alludes to John, who, he says, "leaned upon the Lord's breast," *ὁ ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος τοῦ κυρίου ἀναπαυόμενος*.<sup>1</sup> Even Hilgenfeld, one of the most forward of the Tübingen critics, does not longer deny that the expression is drawn by Polycrates from John xiii. 25 (xxi. 20). It proves the acceptance of John's Gospel by the Christians of Asia Minor.

he says of the former (III. 3. 4) : "qui vir multo majoris auctoritatis et fidelior veritatis est testis, quam Valentinus et Marcion et reliqui, qui sunt perversae sententiae." The curious attempt to show that there could not be more or fewer than four authoritative Gospels is in Lib. III. 11. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., Lib. V. c. 24.



Looking about among the fragments of Christian literature that have come down to us from the second half of the second century, we meet with Tatian, supposed to have been a pupil of Justin Martyr, though after the master's death the disciple swerved from his teaching. It is now conceded by Baur and Zeller that in his apologetic treatise, the *Oratio ad Graecos*, composed not far from the year 170, he quotes repeatedly from the Gospel of John.<sup>1</sup> There is also no reason to doubt that his work entitled *Diatesseron* — a sort of exegetical Harmony — was composed upon the basis of our four Gospels. Eusebius says that Tatian “having formed a certain body and collection of Gospels, I know not how, has given this the title *Diatesseron*, that is, the Gospel by the four, or the Gospel formed of the four, which is in the possession of some even now.” Precisely how the work was constructed from the four Gospels, Eusebius appears not to have known. He testifies, however, to the fact of its being in the hands of catholic Christians. At the beginning of the fifth century Theodoret tells us that he had found two hundred copies of Tatian's work in circulation, and had taken them away, substituting for them the four Gospels.<sup>3</sup> A Syriac translation of this work began, according to a later Syrian writer, Bar Salibi, with the opening words of the Gospel of John: “In the beginning was the word.” To this Syriac edition, Ephraem Syrus, who died in 378, wrote a commentary, as Syriac writers inform us; and this translation must therefore have been early made. The attempt of Credner to invalidate this evidence on the ground that the Syrians confounded Tatian with Ammonius, the author of a Harmony in the early part of the third century, is overthrown by the fact that Bar Salibi distinguishes the two authors and their works.<sup>4</sup> Considering all the evidence in the case,

<sup>1</sup> The following are examples,—*Oratio*, c. 13: *καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἅρα τὸ εἰσημένον ἡ σκοτία τὸ φῶς οὐ καταλαμβάνει.* c. 19: *πάντα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ γέγονεν οὐδε ἓν.* c. 5: *ὁ λόγος ἐν ἀρχῇ γεννηθείς.* See Bleek, s. 229.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. IV. c. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Theodoret Haeret., fab. 1. 20, as cited by Bleek, s. 230.

<sup>4</sup> See Meyer's *Einl.* s. 9. Lardner, Vol. II. p. 445. Bleek, s. 230.

together with the fact that Tatian is known to have quoted the Gospel of John in his *Oratio*, there is no room for doubting that this Gospel was one of the four at the foundation of the Diatesseron. Contemporary with Tatian was Theophilus, who became bishop of Antioch in 169. In his work *Ad Autolyicum*, he describes John's Gospel as a part of the Holy scriptures, and John himself as a writer guided by the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> This explicit statement is a most weighty item of evidence. In addition to this, Jerome states that Theophilus composed a commentary upon the Gospels, in which he handled their contents synoptically: "quatuor evangelistarum in unum opus dicta compingens."<sup>2</sup> There is no good reason for questioning the statement of Jerome respecting a work with which he appears to have been himself acquainted. A contemporary of Theophilus is Athenagoras. His acquaintance with the Prologue of John's Gospel may be inferred with a high degree of probability from his frequent designation of Christ as the Word. Besides this, he has the following passage, which is obviously founded on John x. 30: "The Father and Son being one; and the Son being in the Father, and the Father in the Son." Another contemporary of Theophilus, Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, in the fragments found in the Paschal Chronicle, makes a reference to the pouring out of water and blood from the side of Jesus (John xix. 34), and in another passage clearly implies the existence and authority of the fourth Gospel.<sup>3</sup> The Epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons, written in 177, and presenting an account of the sufferings of their martyrs in their great persecution under Marcus Aurelius, an epistle from which Eusebius gives copious extracts, contains a clear reference to John xvi. 2, in the passage where they say: "Then was

<sup>1</sup> Ὅθεν διδάσκουσιν ἡμᾶς αἱ θείαι γραφαὶ καὶ πάντες οἱ πνευματοφόροι, ἐξ ἧν Ἰωάννης λέγει· ἐν ἀρχῇ, κ. τ. λ. See Bleek, s. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Hieron. de viris ill. 25 and Ep. 151. Bleek, s. 230.

<sup>3</sup> See Meyer's *Einl.*, s. 9. There appears to be no sufficient reason for questioning the genuineness of these fragments, as is done by Lardner (*Vol. II. p. 315*), and Neander (*Church Hist.*, *Vol. I. p. 298, N. 2*). See Schneider, s. 52.

fulfilled that which was spoken by the Lord, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." The same epistle, applying the thought of 1 John iii. 16, praises the love of one of their martyrs who "was willing in defense of the brethren to lay down his own life."<sup>1</sup> But every testimony to the first epistle is, for reasons to which we shall advert hereafter, virtually a testimony for the Gospel.

We go back now to the first half of the second century, and among the remnants of early Christian literature which remain, where so much has irrecoverably perished, the writer who is most entitled to consideration is Justin Martyr. He was born about the year 89, and his life extended at least ten years beyond the middle of the next century. A native of Flavia Neapolis, near the ancient Sichem, he had visited various countries, having been at Alexandria and Ephesus before he came to Rome. He had, therefore, an extensive acquaintance with the church. It is well known that Justin in different places refers to works which are styled by him the Records or Memoirs by the Apostles and their Followers or Companions.<sup>2</sup> He quotes from these as the authentic and recognized sources of knowledge respecting the Saviour's life and teaching. He further states that they are read on Sundays in the Christian assemblies, where "all who live in cities or in country districts" meet together for worship. They are read, he says, in connection with the writings of the Old Testament prophets; and when the reader concludes, the people are instructed and exhorted "to the imitation of these excellent things."<sup>3</sup> The evangelical histories which he has in mind, then, were used in the public worship of Christians everywhere. What were these Records or Memoirs? This title, we may observe, was probably given to the gospel histories, partly for the reason

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., Lib. V. c. 1.

<sup>2</sup> τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων. Apol. I. 67. ἀπομνημονεύμασι, ἃ φημι εἶναι τῶν ἀποστόλων αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐκεῖνοις παρακολουθησάντων συνετάχθαι. C. Tryph., c. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Apol. I. 67.

that in Justin's view they bore a character analogous to Xenophon's *Memorabilia* of Socrates, and also because it was a designation intelligible to those for whose benefit he was writing. Of the direct citations from these gospel *Memoirs* in Justin, and of the numerous allusions to sayings of Christ and events in his life, nearly all plainly correspond to passages in our canonical Gospels. That the quotations are inexact as to phraseology, is not a peculiarity of Justin. He probably quotes from memory; and for his purpose it was not requisite that he should be verbally accurate.

Before we proceed to speak of his use of John in particular, we will advert to the question which has been warmly discussed, whether he quotes from *other* gospel histories than those in our canon. Considering that the cases of an allusion to sayings or transactions not recorded in the canonical gospels, are so very few, and that of these only one is explicitly referred by Justin to the *Memoirs* — a reference which may easily have sprung from a lapse of memory — it is not impossible that the source of his knowledge in these exceptional cases was oral tradition. Living so near the time of the apostles, when, as we know, some unrecorded sayings of Christ and circumstances in his life were orally reported from one to another, this supposition is by no means unnatural. Yet as written narratives, besides the four of our canon, were extant, and had a local circulation — especially the Gospel of the Hebrews among the Ebionite Christians — Justin may very likely have been acquainted with one or more of these, and thence derived the exceptional passages which we are considering. That either of these, however, was generally read in the churches (as were the *Memoirs* of which Justin speaks) is extremely improbable; for how could any Gospel which had been thus made familiar and dear to a multitude of Christians by being read in their assemblies, be suddenly thrown out and discarded without an audible word of opposition? How can such an hypothesis stand in view of the fact that by the time Justin died Irenaeus had already reached his manhood? It is

clearly established that Justin had mainly, if not exclusively, in view the same Gospels which we read in our Bibles, although, as we have said, he may have been acquainted with other less trustworthy narratives of the life of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence that the fourth Gospel formed one of Justin's authoritative Records or Memoirs cannot be gainsaid. In a long list of passages collected from Justin by Semisch and other writers, there is a marked resemblance in language and thought to places in the fourth Gospel.<sup>2</sup> In regard to many of these, to be sure, we are not absolutely obliged to trace them to this source. They may have been derived from unwritten tradition. But we are authorized to find the origin of this class of expressions in John, when we have assured ourselves, from other passages which admit of no doubt, that Justin made use of the fourth Gospel. And from this conviction there is no escape. We mention here only one, but perhaps the most obvious and striking, of the special quotations which Justin has drawn from this Gospel. Having described with some detail the method of Christian baptism, Justin adds: "For indeed Christ also said: 'except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' And that it is impossible for those who are once born to enter into their mother's womb, is plain to all." Here is a passage so peculiar, so characteristic of John's Gospel, that we are precluded from attributing it to any other source. Is it credible that Justin drew this passage from some other gospel, which suddenly perished and was supplanted by that bearing the name

<sup>1</sup> That by the ἀπομνημονεύματα Justin had in mind solely the four Gospels is earnestly maintained by Semisch, and by Professor Norton in his very able work on the Genuineness of the Gospels. Bleek holds that he had these mainly, if not exclusively, in view. Ewald, without any just reason, thinks that because the records are said to emanate from the apostles and their followers, he had reference to many such writings, which were in his hands. *Yahrb. d. Bibl. Wiss.*, VI. 60.

<sup>2</sup> The work of Semisch to which we refer — *Die Denkwürdigkeiten des Märtyrers Justinus* — is a thorough examination of the question: What Gospels were made use of by Justin?

of John? Writers of the Tübingen school have suggested that this, as well as other passages seeming to be from John, were taken by Justin from the Gospel of the Hebrews. Aside from the entire absence of proof in support of this assertion, all the information we have concerning the Gospel of the Hebrews warrants the declaration that it contained no such passages.

The Gospel of the Hebrews bore a great resemblance in its contents to our Gospel of Matthew. It was the product of a translation and mutilation of our Greek Matthew. There is much to be said in favor of the opinion, for which Bleek cogently argues, that the known fact of its resemblance to Matthew first gave rise to the impression that Matthew originally wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew tongue.<sup>1</sup>

The fact of Justin's acquaintance with John's Gospel, however, does not rest solely upon the evidence afforded by the citation of isolated passages. In his doctrine of the Logos and of the Incarnation, and in the terms under which the person of the Saviour is characterized, are indubitable marks of a familiarity with John. This peculiar type of thought and expression pervades the whole theology of Justin. And what makes the argument fully convincing is

<sup>1</sup> The occurrence of this passage relative to regeneration, in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies, with the same deviations from John that are found in Justin's quotation, was made an argument to prove that both writers must have taken it from some other Gospel — the Gospel of the Hebrews. But the *additions* to the passage in the Homilies, and the omission of the part concerning the impossibility of a second physical birth, — points of difference between Justin and the Homilies, — are quite as marked as the points of resemblance, which may be an accidental coincidence. There are two or three other citations, however, in the Homilies which present the same deviations as are found in the corresponding citations in Justin. But Dressel's edition of the Homilies which gives the concluding portion, not found in Cotelerius, furnishes an undeniable quotation of John ix. 2, 3 (Hom. 19, 22). This makes it evident that Hom. 3, 52 is a citation of John x. 9, 27, and also removes all doubt as to the source whence the quotation of John iii. 3 was derived. If the similarity of the Homilies to Justin, in the few quotations referred to above, is not accidental, it simply proves that Justin was in the hands of their author. This may easily be supposed. The date of the Homilies is in the neighborhood of 170. See on these points, Meyer's Einl. s. 10. Bleek, s. 228. Semisch, s. 193 seq.

the circumstance that Justin expressly attributes this doctrine to the Records or Memoirs as the source whence he had derived it.<sup>1</sup> "For I have proved," he writes, "that he [Christ] was the only-begotten of the Father of all things, being properly begotten by him as his Word and Power, and was afterwards made man of the virgin, *as we have learnt from the Records.*" Are we to believe that this whole Johannean type of doctrine was found in some unknown Gospel, which in Justin's day was read in the Christian congregations in city and country, but was suddenly displaced by *another* Gospel having just the same doctrinal peculiarity; a change which if it took place at all, must have occurred in the later years of Justin's life, and in the youth of Irenaeus? And yet Irenaeus knew nothing of it, had no suspicion that the fourth Gospel had any author but John, or that the fixed and sacred number four was made up by so recent an intruder!

But we have testimonies to the genuineness of the fourth Gospel prior even to Justin. The first of these we have to mention is Papias, who flourished in the first quarter of the second century. He wrote a work in five books entitled "An Explication of the Oracles of the Lord," in the composition of which he depended mainly on unwritten traditions which he gathered up in conversation with those who had heard the apostles. Eusebius states that "he made use of testimonies from the First Epistle of John."<sup>2</sup> That this epistle and the fourth Gospel are from the same author, has been, it is true, called in question by the Tübingen critics. But if internal evidence *has any weight*, is ever entitled to any regard, it settles this question in agreement with the established, universal opinion. In style, in language, in tone and spirit, the two writings have the closest resemblance, and to ascribe this resemblance in either case to the imitation of a counterfeiter, is to give him credit for an incredible

<sup>1</sup> Semisch, s. 188. Justin, c. Trypho. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb., III. 39.

refinement of cunning<sup>1</sup>. So that the testimony of Papias to the First Epistle is likewise testimony to the genuineness of the Gospel. Turning to the Apostolic Fathers, we find not a few expressions, especially in the Ignatian Epistles, which remind us of passages peculiar to John; but in general we cannot be certain that these expressions were not drawn from oral tradition. Yet in some cases they are much more naturally attributed to the fourth Gospel, and in one instance this can hardly be avoided. Polycarp, in his epistle to the Philippians (7), says: "for every one who does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is antichrist."<sup>2</sup> The resemblance of language to 1 John iv. 3 is striking; but a thought which in that form is so peculiar to this canonical epistle, being, as it were, the core of the type of doctrine which it presents, can hardly, when found in Polycarp, an immediate pupil of John, be referred to any other author.<sup>3</sup> Another and still earlier testimony is attached to the fourth Gospel itself (John xxi. 24). This testimony which purports to come from another hand than that of the author, has been attached to the Gospel, as far as we are able to determine, from the time when it was first put in circulation. If it be not part and parcel of a flagrant imposition, it proves the work to have been written by the beloved disciple.

An important part of the external evidence for the genuineness of the fourth Gospel, is the tacit or express acknowledgment of the fact by the various heretical parties of the second century. Significant, in connection with this point, is the circumstance that the Artemonites, the party of Unitarians who came forward in Rome near the end of the second century, did not think of disputing the apostolical origin of that Gospel to which their opponents were indebted for their strongest weapons. Had the fourth Gospel

<sup>1</sup> On the certainty that the first Epistle was written by the author of the Gospel, see De Wette's Einl. in das N. Testament, § 177 a.

<sup>2</sup> τῆς γὰρ θεοῦ ἀν μὴ ὁμολογῆ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα ἀντιχριστὸς ἐστι. Ad. Phil. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer's Einl. s. 5.



first been heard of within the lifetime of the old men then living in the Roman church, we should look for an attack from this Unitarian party, who did not lack ability, upon its authority. But no doubt of this kind was expressed. From the disputes which agitated the middle part of the century, however, the argument we have to present is mainly derived. If the fourth Gospel was acknowledged to be the work of John by Marcion, the Valentinian Gnostics as well as their opponents, and at the epoch of the Montanistic controversy, the most sceptical must give up the attempt to bring down into the second or third quarter of the second century the date of its authorship.

We begin with Marcion. Marcion was a native of Pontus, and came to Rome about the year 130. In his enthusiastic and one-sided attachment to Paul's doctrine, he exaggerated the contrast of law and gospel into an absolute repugnance and contrariety, rejected the Old Testament, regarding the God of the Old Testament as an inferior Divinity, hostile to the Supreme Being, and consequently was led to make up a canon of New Testament writings to suit himself. His Gospel, as the church Fathers testify, was a mutilated copy of Luke, so altered as to answer to his peculiar tenets. The priority of our Luke to Marcion's Gospel is now generally allowed, even by the Tübingen critics who had previously taken the opposite ground. There is, indeed, no room for doubt in reference to this fact. Not only is Marcion known to have altered the Pauline Epistles to conform them to his opinions, but the fragments of his Gospel which have been preserved, are plainly the product of an alteration of corresponding passages in our third Gospel. But our present inquiry relates to John. Was Marcion acquainted with the fourth Gospel? The negative has been stoutly maintained by the school of Baur, in opposition, however, to decided proof. We learn from Tertullian that Marcion rejected John's Gospel — a fact which implies its existence and general reception; and Tertullian explains his motive in this procedure. Tertullian says:

“But Marcion having got the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, who blames the apostles themselves, as not walking uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, and also charges some false apostles with perverting the gospel of Christ, *sets himself to weaken the credit of those Gospels which are theirs*, and are published under the name of apostles, or likewise of apostolical men.”<sup>1</sup> That is to say, conceiving, like the modern school of Baur, that there was a hostility between Peter, James, and John on the one hand, and Paul on the other, and making himself a partisan of Paul, he rejected everything that came from them. Tertullian makes it clear that by “the Gospels published under the name of apostles or likewise of apostolical men,” he intends the four of our canon.<sup>2</sup> Hence the Gospels which he says were rejected by Marcion must be Matthew, Mark, and John. Again, Tertullian, speaking of the adoption by Marcion of Luke’s Gospel alone, says: “Now, since it is known that these (Matthew, Mark, and John) have also (as well as Luke) been in the churches, why has Marcion not laid hands on these also, to be corrected if they were corrupt, or received if incorrupt.”<sup>3</sup> Tertullian would convict Marcion of an inconsistency in laying aside the other Gospels,<sup>4</sup> not pretending to purge them of fancied corruptions, and yet not receiving them. Once more, in regard to a certain opinion of Marcion, Tertullian says, addressing Marcion, that if he did not *reject some and corrupt* others of the scriptures which contradict his opinion, the Gospel of John would convict

<sup>1</sup> Sed enim Marcion nactus epistolam Pauli ad Galatas, etiam ipsos apostolos saggillantibus ut non recto pede incedentes ad veritatem evangelii, simul et accusatis pseudapostolos quosdam pervertentes evangelium Christi, connititur ad destruendum statum eorum evangeliorum quae propria et sub apostolorum nomine eduntur, vel etiam apostolicorum, ut scilicet fidem, quam illis admittit, suo conferat. Adv. Marcion, Lib. IV. c. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Adv. Marcion, Lib. IV. c. ii. “Denique nobis fidem ex apostolis Ioannes et Matthaeus insinuant, ex apostolicis Lucas et Marcus instaurant,” etc.

<sup>3</sup> Adv. Marcion, Lib. IV. c. v. Igitur dum constat haec quoque apud ecclesias fuisse, cur non haec quoque Marcion attigit aut emondanda, si adulterata, aut agnoscenda, si integra? etc.

<sup>4</sup> “Quod omissis eis Lucae potius institerit.” *Ibid.*

him of error.<sup>1</sup> The correctness of Tertullian in these statements has been impeached, but he had taken pains to inform himself concerning the life and opinions of Marcion, and there is no good ground for charging him here with error. His accuracy is confirmed by the explanation he gives of the origin of Marcion's hostility to the apostles, as proceeding from his wrong view of the passage in Galatians. We must conclude, therefore, that when Marcion brought forward his doctrine, the fourth Gospel was extant, the acknowledged work of John.

The general reception of John as an apostolic work preceded the Valentinian Gnosticism. Valentinus, the author of the most vast and complete of all the fabrics of Gnostic speculation, came to Rome about the year 140. That the Gospel of John was admitted to be genuine, and used as such, by his party, is well known. Irenaeus speaks of the Valentinians as making the most abundant use of John's Gospel: *eo quod est secundum Johannem plenissime utentes.*<sup>2</sup> Heracleon, one of the followers of Valentinus, wrote a commentary upon John's Gospel, from which Origen in his work upon John frequently quotes.<sup>3</sup> Ptolemaeus, another follower, expressly designates the Prologue of John as the work of the apostle, and puts his own forced explanation upon its contents. The precise date of Heracleon and Ptolemaeus we cannot determine, but they must have written not far from the middle of the century. But did Valentinus himself know and acknowledge the fourth Gospel as the work of John? This we might infer with great probability from its acceptance by Heracleon and his other followers. We should draw the same conclusion from the silence of Irenaeus as to any rejection of John's Gospel by Valentinus, and from his statement as to the use of it by the school in

<sup>1</sup> "Si scripturas opinioni tuae resistentes non de industria alias reiecisses, alias corrupisses, confudisset te in hac specie evangelium Iohannis," etc. *De Carne Christi*, III.

<sup>2</sup> *Adv. Haer.*, III. 11. 7.

<sup>3</sup> The passages in Heracleon referred to by Origen are collected in Grabe's, *Spicilegium*.

general. Moreover Tertullian contrasts Valentinus and Marcion in this very particular, that whereas the latter rejected the scriptures, the former built up his system upon perverse interpretation. Valentinus, he says, did not adjust the scriptures to his material — his doctrine — but his material to the scriptures.<sup>1</sup> Marcion made havoc of the scriptures; Valentinus *autem pepercit*. And Tertullian says, directly that, Valentinus appears to make use of the whole instrument," i.e. canonical Gospels. Here the word "appears," does not indicate any doubt in Tertullian's mind upon the point in question. This will be evident when we quote his entire sentence: "for if Valentinus appears to make use of the entire instrument (i.e. our scriptures), he put his hands upon the truth with a not less artful spirit than Marcion."<sup>2</sup> The *videtur* is either the concession of an adversary, Tertullian not being able to charge him with an actual rejection of any of the Gospels, however tempted to bring such a charge by polemical feeling; or it signifies a pretence on the part of Valentinus, — an ostensible use, while in fact he explained away their real contents. But aside from this evidence, we are furnished with direct proof of the fact that Valentinus used and acknowledged the Gospel of John, through the lately found work of Hippolytus. Hippolytus wrote the "Refutation of all Heresies" in the earlier part of the third century. He devotes considerable space to the systems of Valentinus and the Valentinians, which he traces to the mathematical speculations of Pythagoras and Plato. In the course of his discussion, referring to Valentinus, he writes as follows: "All the prophets and the law spoke from the demiurg, a foolish god, he says — fools, knowing nothing. On this account it is, he (Valentinus) says, that the Saviour says: 'all that came before me

<sup>1</sup> "Valentinus autem pepercit, quoniam non ad materiam scripturas excogitavit . . . . auferens proprietates singulorum quoque verborum." De Praescript. Haeret, c. xxxviii.

<sup>2</sup> "Neque enim si Valentinus integro instrumento uti videtur, non callidior ingenio quam Marcion manus intulit veritati. De Praescript., c. xxxviii.

are thieves and robbers.'"<sup>1</sup> The passage is obviously taken from John x. 8. The pretension of the Tübingen critics that the author here ascribes to the master what belongs to his pupils, is improbable; since Hippolytus, while coupling Valentinus and his followers together in cases where their tenets agree, knows how carefully to distinguish the different phases of belief in the schools. The peculiarities of the Italian Valentinians, Heracleon and Ptolemaeus, of the oriental Valentinians, Axionikus and Ardesianes, and the special opinions of other individuals of the party, are definitely characterized. We have in their disposition of this case a specimen of the method of reasoning adopted by Baur and his followers. Hippolytus, we are told, may have attributed to Valentinus what belongs only to his pupils. Granted, he may have done so. The supposition is possible. But what is the evidence that in this instance he did so? We are to assume that he is right until he is proved to be wrong. We are not arguing about what is possible or impossible; but we are discussing points where probable reasoning alone is applicable. So, these critics tell us it is *possible* that Polycarp quoted an anonymous sentence current at the time, which is also taken up into the first epistle bearing the name of John. It is *possible* that this or that writer drew his passage from some lost apochryphal work. The possibility we grant, for in these matters demonstration is of course precluded. But the suggestion of a mere possibility on the opposite side against a presumptive, natural, and probable inference, deserves no better name than a subterfuge.

When we look at the interior structure of the system of Valentinus, we find that the characteristic terms employed by John are wrought into it, some of them being attached as names to the aeons which, in a long series of pairs, constitute the celestial hierarchy. Among these pairs are such as *μονογενής* and *ἀλήθεια*, *λόγος* and *ζωή*. The artificial and fantastic scheme of Valentinus, so in contrast with the

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus (Dunker and Schneidewin's ed.), Lib. VI. 35.

simplicity of John, wears the character of a copy and caricature of the latter. That it has this relation to John we cannot, to be sure, demonstrate; for it may be contended that both the Gnostic and the author of the fourth Gospel took up current terms and conceptions, each writer applying them to suit his own purpose. But the freshness and apparent originality of John's use of this language, not to speak of the other proofs in the case, are decidedly against this theory of Baur. When we bring together all the items of evidence which bear on the point, we feel warranted to conclude with confidence that not only Ptolemaeus and the other disciples of Valentinus, but also their master, alike with his opponents, acknowledge the apostolic authorship of the fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Through Hippolytus, we are provided with another most important witness in the person of Basilides, the other prominent Gnostic leader, who taught at Alexandria in the second quarter of the second century. Among the proof-texts which Hippolytus states that Basilides employed, are John i. 9: "This was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" and John ii. 4: "My hour is not yet come."<sup>2</sup> In the passage in Hippolytus containing these quotations ascribed to Basilides, and in the closest connection with them, stand his essential principles and characteristic expressions; so that the suggestion of a confounding of master and pupils on the part of Hippolytus has not the shadow of a support.

We have to touch upon one other movement in the second century, the controversies connected with Montanism. The main features of Montanism were the Chiliasm, or expectation of the Saviour's millennial reign and speedy advent, and the prophecy or ecstatic inspiration. In the millennial doctrine, as well as in the belief in the continued miraculous gifts of the Spirit, there is a striking resemblance between the Montanists and the followers of Edward Irving. We cannot say how far Montanism professed to found itself on John's Gospel, because we know not pre-

<sup>1</sup> See Schneider, S. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Hippol., Lib. VII. 22, 27.

cisely when in the development of the sect the claim to the presence of the Paraclete, in this form, was set up. We allude to Montanism, therefore, to speak of a certain party that opposed it. Irenaeus speaks of some who, in their opposition to the recent effusions of the Divine Spirit upon men, do not accept of the Gospel of John, "in which the Lord promised that he would send the Paraclete, but at the same time reject both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit."<sup>1</sup> Shortly before he had spoken of some who would fain exhibit themselves in the character of searchers for truth, possibly referring to this same class. Epiphanius describes a class of zealous opponents of Montanism, who were probably the same mentioned by Irenaeus. Epiphanius styles them Alogi, as opposing the Logos Gospel. They maintained that the Gospel of John did not agree with the other three Gospels, in regard to various points in the life of Christ, — as in the omission of the forty days temptation, and in the number of passovers he is said to have kept.<sup>2</sup> Their opposition, however, is really an argument for the genuineness of John. It shows the general acknowledgment of this Gospel at the time when they made their opposition, which was not long after the middle of the second century. It proves that their opponents, the Montanists, and the church generally, received it. Moreover, their groundless ascription of the Gospel to Cerinthus is a valuable testimony from them to its age; for Cerinthus was a contemporary of John. Baur's unfounded praise of the critical spirit of this insignificant party, is strange, considering that they also rejected the Apocalypse, which he holds to be the genuine work of John. It seems probable that the Alogi were led by their strong hostility to the Montanistic enthusiasm to dislike the fourth Gospel when Montanism claimed to find a warrant for itself in the promise of the Spirit, and on this doctrinal ground, making use also of the apparent historical differ-

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Lib. III. 11. 9.

<sup>2</sup> For a full explication of the character of the Alogi as they are described by Epiphanius and Irenaeus, see Schneider, s. 38 et seq.

ences between the fourth Gospel and the other three, they rejected it. Precisely what was the nature and reason of their opposition to the doctrine of the Logos we know not; but their feeling on this subject accords with their rationalistic turn of mind. The circumstances of their opposition, as we see, are a strong indirect argument for the antiquity and genuineness of the Gospel they rejected.<sup>1</sup>

Thus far we have dealt, for the most part, with those isolated passages of the early writers wherein the existence and authoritative standing of John's Gospel are presupposed. Not all these separate items of evidence are of equal strength. Together they constitute an irrefragable argument. And yet the main, most convincing argument for the genuineness of this Gospel is drawn from the moral impossibility of discrediting, in such a case, the tradition of the early church. Let us consider for a moment the character of this argument.

We begin with observing that, on matters of fact in which men are interested, and to which, therefore, their attention is drawn, and in regard to which there are no causes strongly operating to blind the judgment, the evidence of tradition is, within reasonable limits of time, conclusive. An indi-

<sup>1</sup> We are also entitled to cite Celsus as a witness to the fourth Gospel. The date of Celsus is about the middle of the second century. He professed to derive his statements concerning the evangelical history from the writings of the disciples of Christ. The great body of his statements are plainly founded on passages in our canonical Gospels, especially in Matthew. But Celsus speaks of Christ being called by his disciples the Word. He speaks of the blood which flowed from the body of Jesus, — a circumstance peculiar to John's narrative. He also says: "To the sepulchre of Jesus there came two angels, as is said by some, or, as by others, one only." Matthew and Mark mention one only, Luke and John two. Again, Celsus gives the Christian narrative of the Resurrection as containing the fact that Christ, "after he was dead, arose, and showed the marks of his punishment, and how his hands had been pierced." This circumstance is recorded only in John xx. 27. It is indeed "possible," as Meyer suggests, that Celsus found these things in apocryphal gospels, but the probability is the other way. Meyer should not have so lightly valued the testimony afforded by Celsus. These passages from Origen against Celsus, may be found in Lardner, Vol. II. p. 220 and p. 239. To the testimony of the Clementine Homilies, we have before adverted.



vidual may perpetuate his testimony through the instrumentality of one who long survives him. The testimony of a generation may in like manner be transmitted to, and through, the generation that comes after. Next to the testimony of one's own senses is the testimony of another person whom we know to be trustworthy. And where, instead of one individual handing over his knowledge to a single successor, there is a multitude holding this relation to an equal or greater number after them, the force of this kind of evidence is proportionably augmented. Moreover, the several generations do not pass away, like the successive platoons of a marching army, but the young and the old, the youth and octogenarian are found together in every community; so that upon any transaction of public importance that has occurred during a long period in the past, witnesses are always at hand who can either speak from personal knowledge or from testimony directly given them by individuals with whom they were in early life familiar.

Few persons who have not specially attended to the subject, are aware how long a period is sometimes covered by a very few links of traditional testimony. Lord Campbell, in his *Lives of the Chancellors*, remarks of himself, that he had seen a person who had seen a spectator of the execution of Charles I., in 1649. A single link separated Lord Campbell from the eyewitness of an event occurring upwards of two hundred years before. Suppose this intervening witness to be known by Lord Campbell to be a discriminating and trustworthy person, and we have testimony that is fully credible. A neighbor of our own,<sup>1</sup> the most honored among the scientific men of the country, recalls the last years of a grandparent who in her turn remembered her own grandparent, who was the daughter of John Alden of Plymouth, an emigrant in the *Mayflower*. In this instance, the memories of three persons "reach back more than two hundred years, to the active life of the Pilgrims." Every man of seventy who can unite his memory

<sup>1</sup> Professor Silliman.

with the memories of the individuals who had attained the same age when he was young, can go back through a period of more than a hundred years. He can state what was recollected fifty years ago concerning events that took place a half century before. If in reference to a particular fact, we fix the earliest age of trustworthy recollection at fifteen, and suppose each of those, whose memories are thus united, to give their report at the age of eighty, there is covered a period of one hundred and thirty years. We can easily think of cases where from the character of both the witnesses the evidence thus derived would be entirely conclusive.

But traditionary evidence had a special security and a special strength in the case of the early Christian church. The church, as Mayer forcibly observes, had a physical and spiritual continuity of life. There was a close connection of its members one with another. "Like a stream of water, such a stream of youths, adults, and old men is an unbroken whole." The church was a community — an association. A body of this kind, says Mayer, recognizes that which is new as new. It is protected from imposition. How would it be possible, he inquires, for a new Augsburg Confession to be palmed upon the Lutheran churches as a document that had long been generally accepted?

In estimating the force of this reasoning we must take notice of the number of the early Christians. We must remember that at the close of the first century Christianity was planted in all the principal cities of the Roman Empire. It was in the great cities and centres of intercourse, as Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Alexandria, Rome, that Christianity was earliest established. As early as Nero's persecution (A.D. 64) the Christians who were condemned, constituted, according to Tacitus, a "great multitude." In Asia Minor, in the time of Trajan, or at the close of the century, they had become so numerous that, according to Pliny, the heathen temples were almost deserted. A century later, making due allowance for the rhetorical exaggeration of Tertullian, and not depending on him alone, we

are certain that the number of the Christians had vastly multiplied. In every part of the Roman Empire, in all places of consideration, and even in rural districts, Christian assemblies regularly met for worship. And in all these weekly meetings, the writings of the apostles were publicly read, as we learn from so early a writer as Justin Martyr.

Now we have to look at the Christian churches in the second century, and ask if it was possible for a history of Christ, falsely pretending to be from the pen of the apostle John, to be brought forward twenty, thirty, or forty years after his death, be introduced into all the churches east and west, taking its place everywhere in the public services of Sunday? Was there no one to ask where this new Gospel came from, and where it had lain concealed? Was there no one of the many who had personally known John to expose the gigantic imposture, or even to raise a note of surprise at the unexpected appearance of so important a document of which they had never heard before? How was the populous church at Ephesus brought to accept this work on the very spot where John had lived and died?

The difficulty, nay the moral impossibility, of supposing that this Gospel first saw the light in 160 or 140 or 120, or at any of the dates which are assigned by the Tübingen critics, will be rendered apparent, if we candidly look at the subject. We have spoken of Irenaeus and of his testimony to the undisputed, undoubting reception, by all the churches, of the fourth Gospel. If this Gospel first appeared as late or later than 120, how does it happen that he had not learned the fact from the aged presbyters whom he had known in Asia Minor? Irenaeus, before becoming bishop, was the colleague of Pothinus at Lyons, who perished as a martyr, having, as the letter of his church states, passed his ninetieth year. Here was a man whose active life extended back wellnigh to the very beginning of the century, who was born before John died. Supposing John's Gospel to have appeared as late as 120, the earliest date admitted by

any part of the sceptical school, Pothinus was then upwards of thirty years old. Did this man, who loved Christianity so well that he submitted to torture and death for its sake, never think to mention to Irenaeus an event of so great consequence as was this late discovery of a Life of the Lord from the pen of his most beloved disciple, and of its reception by the churches? Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, at the time of his controversy with Victor, describes himself as being "sixty five years of age in the Lord," as having "conferred with the brethren throughout the world, and studied the whole of the sacred scriptures;" as being also of a family, seven of whose members had held at Ephesus the office of bishop or presbyter. According to his statement, his own life began as early at least as the year 125, while through his family he was directly connected with the contemporaries of John. How is it that Polycrates appears to have known nothing about this late appearance of the wonderful Gospel which bore the name of John, but was the work of a great unknown? How is it that the family of Polycrates either knew nothing of so startling an event, or if they knew anything of it preserved an absolute silence? Clement of Alexandria had sat at the feet of venerable teachers in different countries, of whom he says that they "have lived by the blessing of God to our time, to lodge in our minds the seeds of the ancient and apostolic doctrine." From none of these had he derived any information of that event, so remarkable, if we suppose it to have occurred — the sudden discovery of a gospel history by the Apostle John, of which the Christian world had not before heard. Justin says that in the churches there are many men and women of sixty and seventy years of age, who have been Christians from their youth; and he is speaking only of the unmarried class.<sup>1</sup>

So at every preceding and subsequent moment in the first half of the second century, there were many old persons in every larger church whose memory went back far into the apostolic age. Now if the statement of Irenaeus and

<sup>1</sup> Apol. I. 15.

his contemporaries as to the composition of the fourth Gospel by the Apostle John was false, and this work in reality saw the light not till long after his death, when some forger offered it for acceptance, how is it possible that there should be none either to investigate its origin when it first appeared, and none afterwards to correct the prevalent opinion concerning it?

There is no way for the sceptical critic to meet this positive argument, founded on the unanimous voice of tradition, and this negative argument *ab silentio* in refutation of his theory, unless he can prove that the Christians of the second century were so indifferent as to the origin of their scriptures that they received whatever might offer itself to their acceptance, provided the contents were agreeable to their doctrines and prepossessions. If there were few or none who were either inquisitive or competent to judge of the real claims of a book that professed to be an authentic and apostolic history of Christ, then an imposture of this magnitude might be successful, provided a person were found shrewd and unscrupulous enough to undertake it. But how stands the fact? The greater portion of the early Christians were undoubtedly from the poorer class. Even these must have been deeply interested in obtaining authentic accounts of that Master for whom they were offering up life itself. But they had among them trained, inquisitive scholars — men educated in the schools of philosophy. Justin Martyr and the Greek Apologists are not liable to the charge of illiteracy. It was a time when Christianity had to answer for itself, as well in treatises addressed to the public magistrate as before the civil tribunals. It is, moreover, a noteworthy fact that the writers bring to the scriptures the test of historical inquiry. They do not ask what book is doctrinally acceptable, but what book bears the stamp of an apostolic approval. Clement may bring forward a statement from an apocryphal Gospel of the Egyptians, but he is careful to warn the reader that it is not contained in the four Gospels which “have been

handed down to us." Irenaeus and Tertullian insist only upon the historical evidence that the canonical scriptures are apostolic. Nothing but authentic tradition is of any weight with them on the question. All the knowledge we have relative to the formation of the New Testament canon goes to disprove the imputation of carelessness or incompetency brought against the Christians of the second century. There is proof that the four Gospels of our canon were distinguished, as having pre-eminent authority, from all other evangelical histories in the early part of the second century. All other narratives of the life of Christ, including those of the many writers of whom Luke speaks in the introduction to his Gospel, as well as those of subsequent authors, were discarded, and, if used at all, were explicitly treated as not endued with authority. Four, and only the four, in the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian, were regarded as apostolic and canonical. Lechler<sup>1</sup> mentions an example from Eusebius illustrating the feeling of church teachers at that time. Serapion, who was bishop of Antioch about 190, found in circulation at Rhosse (Orossus), a town of Cilicia, an apocryphal gospel called the Gospel of Peter. He says in regard to it: "We, brethren, receive Peter and the other apostles as Christ himself. But those writings which falsely go under their name, as we are well acquainted with them, we reject, and know also *that we have not received such handed down to us.*" This is one expression; but it falls in with the whole current of the evidence in relation to the temper of Irenaeus and his contemporaries.

Having thus surveyed the external proofs of the genuineness of John, we pass to consider the

#### INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

1. The fourth Gospel claims to be the work of the Apostle John; and the manner of this claim is a testimony to its truth. The author explicitly declares himself an eyewitness

<sup>1</sup> Studien u. Krit. 1856. 4. s. 871.

of the transactions recorded by him (i. 14. compared with 1 John i. 4, 14; John xix. 35; compare also xxi. 24). In the course of his narrative, one of the disciples, instead of being referred to by name, is characterized as that "disciple whom Jesus loved" (xiii. 23; xviii. 15; xix. 26; xx. 2 seq; xxi. 7). In the appendix to the Gospel (xxi. 24; compare v. 20) this disciple is declared to be its author. And we cannot well explain this circumlocution, except on the supposition that the author resorts to it in order to avoid the mention of his own name. Now, who of the disciples most intimate with Jesus is referred to under this description? Not Peter; for Peter is not only repeatedly spoken of by his own name, but is expressly distinguished from the disciple in question (xiii. 24; xx. 2 seq.; xxi. 7; 20 seq.). Not James; for besides the proof derived from the universal supposition of the ancient church, that James was not the person denoted, we know that he was put to death early in the apostolic age, while we learn from John xxi. 23, which is otherwise confirmed, that the disciple in question must have reached an advanced age. If it be granted that the author, whoever he may have been, was one of the original disciples, James is excluded, because the Gospel was evidently written later than his death and out of Palestine. But if the disciple whom Jesus loved is not Peter or James, who can it be but John? That the author would represent himself to be John, is also strongly suggested by his omitting to attach to the name of John (the Baptist) the usual appellation *ὁ βαπτιστής*, especially when we observe that he is elsewhere careful, as in the case of Peter and of Judas, to designate precisely the person meant. Supposing the writer to be himself John the *Evangelist*, and moreover to have stood, as a disciple, in an intimate relation with the Baptist, we have a double reason for his omitting in the case of the latter this usual title. The connection of the beloved disciple with Peter (xx. 2 seq.; xxi. 7; and also xviii. 15 seq., where the *ἄλλος μαθητής* is none other than the beloved disciple) is another argument tending to show that John is meant; since we

find afterwards, in the Acts, that John and Peter are closely associated.

Indeed, it is held by Baur that the design is to lead the reader to the inference that John is the author. Now, if we suppose that this inference is the simple fact, we have in the modest suppression of his name by John the manifestation of a certain delicacy of feeling, which is consonant with the spirit of the work. It would be connected with its real author by those to whom he gave it, without any proclamation on his part of his relation to it; as in truth it was ascribed to John from the outset. On the contrary, supposing the Gospel not to be genuine, we are obliged to attribute to the author a refinement in fraud, an outlay of skill in deception, wholly inconsistent with the simplicity and pure tone of this Gospel, and not likely to exist in a literary forger. Judging from other known specimens of apocryphal literature, and from the intrinsic probabilities in the case, we should expect of such a fraudulent writer, that he would boldly and openly assume the name and apostolic authority of John, instead of leaving the authorship to be ascertained in the manner we have indicated, by a careful inspection and combination of passages. The indirect, modest way, then, in which the author discovers himself carries with it the unmistakable character of truth.

2. The truth of this claim of the fourth Gospel to have John for its author, is confirmed by the graphic character of the narrative, the many touches characteristic of an eyewitness, and by other indications of an immediate knowledge, on the part of the writer, of the things he relates.

In respect to these points, which mark the narrative as the product of an eyewitness and of one directly cognizant of the facts, none of the other Gospels can be compared with the fourth. We have not in mind here the general plan and outline of the history, which will be considered under another head, but rather the style in which the various incidents are presented. Of this pervading peculiarity of the fourth Gospel our readers will be reminded by a few



examples. As one instance, we may refer to John ii. 35 seq., where an account is given of the calling of the disciples: "again the next day after" — the day is thus definitely given — "John stood and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked," — here we have the position of both John and Jesus, — "he saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus *turned and saw them following*, and saith," etc. In reply to their question, "'Where dwellest thou?' He saith unto them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day, *for it was about the tenth hour.*" Supposing the writer to have been one of these two disciples, speaking of an event that would be indelibly stamped upon his memory, this minuteness of description would be natural. If we have not an eyewitness, we have a subtle and painstaking deceiver. For another example of vivid recollection we may refer to John xiii. 21 seq., in the description of the last supper. We are told that Jesus was troubled in spirit, "and said, 'Verily, verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me.' Then the disciples *looked one on another*, doubting of whom he spake." There is first an interval of silence, and looks of inquiry and fear cast from one to another; but who would venture to ask the question which of their number was to be faithless? "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of the disciples whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore *beckoned to him*" — he signified his wish by a motion of the hand — "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 replies that he will point out the individual by handing him the sop. This silent act, understood by John, was followed by the remark of Jesus to Judas: "That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him." Some of them, we are told, thought that Judas was directed to buy those things that they 'had need of against the feast, or to give something to the poor.'

Who can avoid feeling that the writer is here presenting a scene that was pictured on his memory? How unnatural, as well as painful, is the supposition of a carefully contrived fiction! Another instance of particular recollection is found in John xviii. 15 seq., where, in connection with the account of the bringing of Christ before Caiaphas, we read: "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple; that disciple *was known unto the high priest*, and went in with the Jews into the palace of the high priest. *But Peter stood at the door without.*" Peter had no such means of admission. "Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high priest, and *spake unto her that kept the door*, and brought in Peter." There the inquiry of this door-keeper drew from Peter his first denial of a connection with Christ; and we read further: "The servants and officers stood there, *who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold*: and they warmed themselves, and Peter stood with them and warmed himself." The circumstance of there being a fire is mentioned by Luke, but in the manner of stating it in John, as well as in the preceding circumstances that are peculiar to him, we find the clearest signs of a personal recollection. The record of the inward conflict and vacillation of Pilate as displayed in his conduct (ch. xix), is characterized by the same features, which show it to be a vivid recollection of circumstances witnessed by the writer. So there is much in the narrative of the crucifixion having the same peculiarity. Thus we read (vs. 26, 27): "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, 'Woman, behold thy son.' Then saith he to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother.' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home." And again we read (vs. 34, 35): "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. *And he that saw it bare record*, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." Is this too a fiction, which the author sought to

commend to credence by a solemn asseveration, or is it a simple, faithful reminiscence?

What a lifelike description, and how true to the conceptions elsewhere gained of the respective characters, is the account of the running of Peter and John to the empty sepulchre. They "ran both together;" but the other disciple, outrunning Peter and arriving first at the sepulchre, pauses, and, *stooping down* to look in, sees "the linen clothes lying;" yet struck, perhaps, with a feeling of awe, enters not. "Then cometh Simon Peter following him;" but not sharing in the hesitation of his companion, with characteristic impetuosity, at once goes in, "and seeth the linen clothes lie, and *the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes*, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then," encouraged by the example of his more forward associate, "went in also that *other disciple*, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed" (xx. 3-9). The same freshness and naturalness which belong to the record of outward events are found in the portrayal of mental experiences. We mention, as an example, the notice of the refusal of Thomas to believe without seeing, and of the reaction of his mind on being shown the print of the nails (John xx. 24-30); and the refusal of Peter to have his feet washed by the Master, followed by the request: "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (John xiii. 9). The ninth chapter, which describes the healing of a man who had been blind from his birth, and the eleventh chapter containing the narrative of the raising of Lazarus, in their naturalness, vividness, and fulness of detail, cannot fail to impress the candid reader with the conviction that the writer was personally cognizant of the circumstances he relates. In how simple, unartificial a strain does the narrative, in each case, proceed! And in how lifelike a way are the circumstances linked together! Observe, in the first narrative, the exclamation of the neighbors on seeing the man's sight restored: "Is not this he that sat and begged?" the different voices: "some said, 'this is he;'" others said,

'it is like him;' but he said, 'I am he;'" the evident perplexity of the Pharisees; the parents' way of prudently evading a direct answer to their interrogatories by referring them to the man himself: "he is of age, ask him;" the *naïf* energy with which he confronted the Pharisees' queries. In reading this passage of the fourth Gospel, it is difficult to resist the impression that the writer is stating, in a perfectly artless manner, circumstances that fell within his own immediate knowledge. Not less strongly is this impression made of the writer's immediate knowledge, as well as fidelity, in reading the eleventh chapter. Notice, for example, this passage in the conversation of Jesus with his disciples before he started for Bethany: "after that he saith unto them, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.' Then said his disciples, 'Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.' Howbeit Jesus spake of his death; but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.'" This conversation was surely remembered. What motive would lead one to invent such a conversation? Observe, also, the graphic minuteness of the following statements (vs. 28 seq.): Martha, who had gone out to meet Jesus, when she had spoken with him, "went her way and called *Mary her sister secretly*, saying, 'the Master is come and calleth for thee.' As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, 'she goeth unto the grave to weep there.'" We must suppose here either an accurate knowledge on the part of the writer, or an elaborate and gratuitous skill in contriving falsehood. Who can follow this narrative through, and note the expressions of deep-felt human feeling,—including the reference, in a single word, to the tears of Jesus,—and not be struck with the obvious truthfulness of the writer? Or are there no marks by which sincerity and truth can be distinguished from fraud?

It were easy to multiply illustrations of that quality of the fourth Gospel upon which we are remarking. Indeed there is no chapter, and hardly ten consecutive verses, where this immediate acquaintance of the writer with the facts he narrates does not appear. When he refers to the testimony of John the Baptist, the language is: "This is the record of John;" "John bare record" (John i. 19, 31). He gives the name of the servant whose ear was cut off by Peter: "the servant's name was Malchus" (John xviii. 10). The place of events is defined chronologically; e.g. "*The day following* Jesus would go forth into Galilee" (i. 43); "*The third day* there was a marriage in Cana" (ii. 1); both these dates referring back to the call of Andrew and of the other disciple whose name is suppressed; "and they continued there [in Capernaum] not many days" (ii. 12); he "sat thus on the well, and it was about the sixth hour" (iv. 6); "after two days he departed thence [from Sichem], and went into Galilee." There is evidence that the author was acquainted with portions of the evangelical history which he does not record. Thus we read (iii. 24): "for John was not yet cast into prison"; but no account of his being imprisoned is afterwards given. An acquaintance with this fact is presupposed in the reader, as well as indicated in the writer.

We have no need to pursue the topic further. We find everywhere in this Gospel the air and manner of an eyewitness and participant in the scenes recorded.<sup>1</sup>

3. The general structure and contents of the fourth Gospel, considered as a biography of Christ, are a convincing argument for its historical truth and genuineness. We

<sup>1</sup> Among the illustrations of the present topic referred to by De Wette (Eint. in das. N. T. § 104), and which we have not especially noticed, are John v. 10 seq. (the circumstances that followed the cure wrought at the pool of Bethesda; the questions put to the man who had been healed, by the Jews; his not knowing who it was that had healed him; his subsequent meeting with Jesus in the temple); vii. 1 seq. (the secret journey of Christ to the feast of Tabernacles, after the conversation with his unbelieving relatives); xii. The whole of chap. iv. (the interview of Christ with the woman of Samaria), is a striking example of vivid, detailed narration.

come now to the decisive point in the conflict between the advocates and the opponents of the genuineness of this Gospel. It is contended by the latter that the representation which is found in the fourth Gospel, both of the course of events in the life of Christ and of the character of his teachings, is not only "divergent from that of the other Gospels, but absolutely incompatible with it;" and that since these Gospels in this respect are right, the fourth cannot be the work of an apostle.

The difference between the fourth Gospel and the other three, in the particulars referred to, is in truth very palpable and very important. The impression made by the first three, or synoptical Gospels, regarded by themselves, is that Jesus after his baptism and temptation, repaired to Galilee, and remained there until shortly before his death, when he went up to Jerusalem to the passover. They record his teachings and miracles in Galilee and on this journey to Jerusalem, but say nothing of any intermediate visits to that city, and nothing of any prior labors there. From the synoptical gospels alone, the impression would be gathered that the period of his ministry was only a year. On the other hand, John distinctly mentions not less than two journeys of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem previous to the last (ii. 13; v. 1), and seems to justify the conclusion that in each of these visits he remained a considerable time either in the city or in its neighborhood. The duration of his ministry, according to the fourth Gospel, cannot be less than two years and a half, and may possibly exceed three years. Not less remarkable is the difference in the style of the Saviour's teaching in this Gospel, compared with the representations found in the other three. In the synoptical gospels, Christ utters either brief, sententious apothegms, or parables; while in the fourth Gospel we have extended dialogues and long discourses in quite a different vein. Other minor points of difference might be mentioned, but these which we have named are of chief importance.

Before we proceed to consider in detail the bearing of these peculiarities of John upon the main ques

us, we offer one preliminary remark. The more serious the difference between the contents of the synoptical gospels and of John, the greater is the difficulty to be met by the opponents of the genuineness of the latter. For how could a Gospel which so runs athwart the accepted views of the life and teaching of Christ, be brought forward and gain credence unless it were *known* to have the sanction of an apostle? The later the date assigned to the Gospel, the greater is the difficulty. What *motive* for a forger, fabricating his work long after the apostolic age, to depart from the traditional and certified conception of Christ's life and teaching? And supposing him to have a motive to do this, how could he succeed? These are questions to which the opponents of the genuineness of the Gospel find it impossible to give any satisfactory answer. Even if they were to show that the contrast between John and the synoptical histories amounts to an incompatibility, they only increase thereby the difficulty of solving the problem we have suggested. What inducement had a writer of the second century to deviate, without necessity, and to so extraordinary an extent, from the long prevalent and authorized view of the Saviour's life? And how was the church persuaded to accept this new version of his career? Such is the hard problem presented to the sceptical critic. On the contrary, if it can be made to appear, on a careful investigation, that in these very particulars which are made the ground of objection, the fourth Gospel unquestionably presents historical truth; that incidentally it supplements the other three just where they need explanation; and especially that this Gospel alone presents a consecutive and connected view of the life of Christ, we have gone far towards establishing its apostolic authorship. We have not only obviated the principal objection, we have also furnished a positive and convincing argument on the other side. Its historical peculiarities, so far from being a fatal objection against, will be seen to be a conclusive argument for, its genuineness. Only an apostle could have thrown this flood of light upon the course of events in the life of Christ. Only an apostle could

have brought to the support of his narrative an authority sufficient to obtain for it credence. We shall be obliged to notice with brevity the various considerations connected with the present topic.

1. The journeys of Christ to Jerusalem and his ministry there. For reasons which we cannot with certainty determine, the synoptical gospels confine themselves to the Galilean ministry. The question is: have we ground for concluding, independently of John, that Jesus had repeatedly visited that city and labored there? The synoptical gospels say nothing inconsistent with his having done so; they are simply silent upon the subject. It would certainly be more natural to suppose that Jesus who claimed to be the Messiah, even if his ministry had continued but a year, would during this time have gone up to Jerusalem, both as an act of compliance with the law and as a means of gaining access to such a multitude as the festivals brought together. It is not easy to account for the fanatical hatred of the Pharisees in Jerusalem towards him, if we suppose that he had never crossed their path, save in casual encounters with them away from Jerusalem in Galilee.

Various facts mentioned in the synoptical gospels seem to presuppose such previous labors on his part in the capital. Thus Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrim, is said, in the synoptical Gospels, to be a disciple of Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 57 seq.; Luke xxiii. 50 seq.; Mark xv. 42 seq.); but Joseph was a resident of Jerusalem, having, as we are told, a tomb there. There, it is probable, he became acquainted with Christ. Again, we learn from Luke (x. 38 seq.) that Jesus stood in such intimate relations with the family of Martha and Mary, as imply a previous stay in that neighborhood prior to this last visit. But we are happily furnished with a conclusive proof of the Saviour's repeated visits to Jerusalem, in the lamentation he uttered over the city as recorded by both Matthew and Luke (Luke xiii. 34 seq.; Matt. xxiii. 37 seq.): 'Ιερουσαλήμ, 'Ιερουσαλήμ . . . . ποσάκις ἠθέλησα ἐπισυνάξαι τὰ τέκνα σου . . . . καὶ οὐκ ἠδελήσατε κ. τ. λ.



Baur would make it out that the whole Jewish people are apostrophized under the term "Jerusalem," as the centre and home of the nation. This interpretation seems improbable, when we remember that, when the Saviour uttered these words, he was gazing upon the city. It is demonstrated to be false by the context in Luke. Immediately before, in the preceding verse, the Saviour said: "for it cannot be *that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.*"

This passage proves, therefore, that Jesus had again and again preached at Jerusalem and labored to convert its inhabitants. The fourth Gospel is incidentally but convincingly sustained, in attributing a prolonged ministry to Christ and repeated labors at Jerusalem, by the synoptical gospels themselves. But suppose a writer in the second century to have set himself to the work of composing a fictitious gospel for the purpose of indirectly inculcating a dogmatic system of his own; how certain that he would have adhered to the traditional view of the course of the Saviour's ministry! By giving it a longer duration, and introducing visits to Jerusalem and labors there not mentioned by the received gospels, he would only invite suspicion and expose himself to detection. No advantage could be conceived to follow such a wide departure from the prevalent conception, which would not be immeasurably outweighed by the certain disadvantages and perils attending it. It must have been, then, from a regard to historical truth and from a knowledge of the facts, that the author of the fourth Gospel has so constructed his history. And this author, whoever he was, had an authority with Christians so great as to enable him to vary thus widely, without the imputation of error, from the prevalent tradition.

The more the general plan of the fourth Gospel is examined, the more is it seen to rest upon the solid foundation of historical verity. The progress of events in the life of Jesus, from the beginning onward to the final result, is clearly understood from this Gospel. We see how it came to pass that though "he came to his own, his own received him

not." The vacillation of the people, now turning in his favor, and now, as he disappointed their expectations, turning against him, together with the origin and growth of the implacable hostility of the Jewish leaders, are made entirely comprehensible.

And the fourth Gospel alone gives an adequate explanation of the way in which the catastrophe was brought on. We see how the consequences of the raising of Lazarus obliged the Pharisees to proceed at once to the most decisive measures against Jesus. It was this event, and the effect of it upon the minds of the people, that precipitated the result. In regard to this closing portion of Christ's life, we have in John the clue to the solution of what is left, in part, unsolved in the other gospels. A narrative is commended to credence by being thus consistent and intelligible. The same distinction, the same verisimilitude, belongs to the account of the Saviour's resurrection, a section of the history in which the synoptical gospels are especially fragmentary. In John we have a view, as clear and coherent as it is artless and natural, of the transactions that followed his reappearance from the tomb.

2. In considering the credibility of the fourth Gospel, as this question is affected by a comparison of its matter with the contents of the other three, we have to notice the difficulty and apparent discrepancy upon the date of the crucifixion, and also the paschal controversies of the second century, in their bearing upon this point of chronology.

It is well known to every student of the Gospels that there is difficulty in reconciling the statement of the first three, respecting the date of the last supper, and consequently respecting the date of the death of Christ, with the statement of John. All the evangelists agree as to the day of the week, that the supper was on Thursday evening, and the crucifixion on the next or Friday morning. The synoptical gospels, however, appear to place the last supper in the evening when the Jews ate the passover meal; i. e. on the evening of the 14th Nisan, or, according to the Jewish reckon-

ing the beginning of the 15th Nisan. The fourth Gospel, on the other hand, appears to place the last meal of Jesus with the disciples on the evening before the passover supper of the Jews, i. e. on the 13th, or, according to the Jewish reckoning, the 14th, Nisan, and the crucifixion on the morning immediately before, instead of after, this Jewish festival.

The Tübingen critics regard the two representations as really inconsistent and irreconcilable; and on this ground, as they hold that the fourth Gospel is incorrect, they maintain that it could not have proceeded from John. If the two representations can be fairly harmonized with each other, of course their argument vanishes with the foundation on which it is built. Without pronouncing judgment on the various modes which have been proposed by Dr. Robinson and other harmonists for reconciling the two accounts, let us consider the effect, as regards the credibility and genuineness of the fourth Gospel, of admitting that the discrepancy is real and irremovable. The diversity of the principles of criticism which are adopted by the major part of the able defenders of supernatural Christianity and evangelical doctrine in Germany, from those in vogue among us, is remarkably exemplified by their treatment of the particular question before us. Not only do Neander, Bleek, Meyer, and others hardly less distinguished, coincide with their adversaries in admitting that the discrepancy is irremovable; but Bleek builds upon it an earnest argument for the credibility and apostolic authorship of John.<sup>1</sup> He insists, with much force, upon the improbability that a writer in the second century, who wished to be considered an apostle, would contradict the three gospels and the accepted tradition of the church, on such a point as the date of the last

<sup>1</sup> It should be stated that these critics do not consider the first Gospel, in its present form, to emanate from the Apostle Matthew. See Neander's *Leben Jesu*, s. 10. Bleek's *Einl.*, s. 88 seq. The first Gospel is held to stand in substantially the same relation to the apostles as the other two; and the historical position of all three is indicated in Luke i. 1, 2, i. e. they record the things which were delivered to their writers by eyewitnesses. It is not the eyewitnesses themselves, but those to whom they spoke.

supper and of the crucifixion. Who but an apostle, or one thoroughly acquainted with the facts, would think of making himself responsible for such a deviation? Who, but an apostle, could hope to be believed? In a word, how extremely unnatural that a forger should think of assigning another date to these leading facts in the evangelical history! Bleek, also, endeavors to show that the supposition that the crucifixion took place on the morning *before* the passover lamb was eaten, is corroborated by incidental statements in the synoptical gospels themselves, as well as by all the probabilities in the case; so that the accuracy of the fourth Gospel, in this particular, is established, and thus a strong argument is furnished for its general credibility.

The opponents of the genuineness of John attempt to draw a support for their cause from the paschal controversies of the second century. These arose from a difference in practice in regard to a certain festival celebrated about the time of the Jewish passover. There was discussion on this difference in which the churches of Asia Minor were opposed by the church of Rome, on the occasion of Polycarp's visit to Anicetus of Rome about the year 160; then ten years later, in which Claudius Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, and Melito of Sardes took part; and especially at the end of the second century, when Victor, bishop of Rome, proposed to break off fellowship with the Asia Minor bishops on account of their refusal to abandon their ancient custom. In these controversies, and in the defence of their practice, the Asia Minor bishops were in the habit of appealing to the authority of the apostle John, who had lived in the midst of them.

Everything turns upon ascertaining the real point of difference and the real character of the Asia Minor observance. So much is certain, that this observance, whatever may have been its origin or significance, occurred on the evening of the 14th, or, in the Jewish reckoning, beginning of the 15th Nisan. Baur holds that it was established as a commemoration of the last supper, the passover meal of Jesus with his

disciples ; and hence infers that John, whose authority supported the Asia Minor observance, could not have written the account of the last supper in our fourth Gospel.

But Baur's argument is on a foundation of sand. It is clear from the earliest discussions on the subject, that the difference did not consist in a diverse mode of observing the same festival ; but that in Asia Minor *there was a festival which did not exist at Rome.* This commemoration was on the 14th Nisan, on whatever day of the week it might fall ; whence the adherents of the Asia Minor custom were called *quartodecimani*, while Occidental Christians observed Friday and Sunday of each week as the days, respectively, of the Lord's death and resurrection. A day was observed by the Asia Minor Christians which was not observed at Rome. Nor is there any probability that the Asia Minor festival was established as a commemoration of the last supper.

There are two views as to the origin of their festival. It was the final view of Neander, and is the opinion of Meyer and Schneider, that it commemorated the death of Christ—the sacrifice of the true paschal Lamb, of which the Mosaic paschal lamb was the type (1 Cor. v. 7 ; John xix. 36). If this be the fact the festival accords with the supposed chronology of John's Gospel. The fragment of Apollinaris has been supposed to connect the Asia Minor festival with the last supper and to defend the correctness of the day of its observance by an appeal to Matthew. But Schneider forcibly argues that Apollinaris is reporting, not his own view, which was that of the *quartodecimani*, but the view of a smaller party of Judaizers, from which he dissents ; so that Apollinaris (as also the fragment of Hippolytus) is really a witness to the agreement of the *quartodecimani* with the chronology of the fourth Gospel. The other hypothesis concerning the design of the Asia Minor festival, is that of Bleek, De Wette, and others, who consider this festival to have been originally the Jewish passover, which the Jewish converts at Ephesus and elsewhere had continued to observe, and with which in their minds Christian ideas and associations were more and

more connected. In particular, there was naturally associated with it the recollection of the last supper of Jesus with the disciples. There was no such reference originally connected with the festival, nor did this association of it with the last supper grow up until long after the death of John. This apostle did not interfere with a commemoration which he found established in Ephesus and other places in that region. Bleek shows that the theory of an original reference of the Asia Minor festival to the last supper would imply an earlier origin of the yearly Christian festivals than we have any reason to think belonged to them. It is not inconsistent with Bleek's general view, to adopt Schneider's interpretation of Apollinaris, in which case even this writer affords no proof of an association by the quartodecimani of their festival with the Saviour's last supper. This hypothesis relative to the character of their commemoration, that it was at the outset simply the Jewish passover, which in Rome and in other churches where the Gentiles were more predominant, was not kept up, appears to us to be best supported. In any case the charge that a contradiction exists between the early Asia Minor tradition concerning John's testimony and the chronology of the fourth Gospel is without foundation.

4. The discourses of Christ in the fourth Gospel. These have been used as an argument against the apostolic origin of this Gospel: an argument founded on their inherent character; their relation, both as to form and matter, to the teaching of Christ recorded by the synoptical evangelists; the portraiture of Christ which they convey; their fitness to the circumstances under which they are alleged to have been spoken; their uniformity, both with each other and with the expressions of other characters in the Gospel, as well as with those of the author himself.<sup>1</sup>

Under this head we shall chiefly follow Bleek, regretting, however, that we are under the necessity of abridging his excellent suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> Bleek, s. 194.

That the discourses of Christ in John stand in contrast, in important respects, with his teaching in the other gospels, is not denied. The first question is whether the contrast is so great that both styles of teaching could not belong to the same person. Here Bleek pertinently refers to the case of Socrates, and to the opinion that is coming to prevail, that the representation in Plato has much more of truth than was formerly supposed; an opinion held by such men as Schleiermacher, Brandis, and Ritter, and commended by the apparent necessity of supposing a more speculative element in the teaching of Socrates than Xenophon exhibits, if we would account for the schools of speculative philosophy that took their rise from him. He must have had another side than that which we discern in Xenophon's record. How much easier is this to be supposed in the case of Him who was to act effectually upon every variety of mind and character! How natural and inevitable that each of his disciples should apprehend Christ from his own point of view, according to the measure of his own individuality; so that for the understanding of Christ in his fulness, we have to combine these various, but not incongruous, representations of him!

But, as in a former instance, we find in the synoptical writers proof that the fourth Gospel in the character of the discourses attributed to Christ, does not depart from historical truth. As to their form, we are told, especially in Matt. xiii. 10 seq., that the Saviour, at least in discoursing to the disciples, did not confine himself to the gnomes and parables; that he spake thus to the people on account of the dulness of their understanding, while to the disciples it was "given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." The statements (Matt. xiii. 34; Mark iv. 34) that he never spake to the people save in parables, are of course of a general character, and, fairly interpreted, are not inconsistent with his addressing the people at times in accordance with the reports of John. Occasionally in the synoptical Gospels, moreover, we meet with expressions of Jesus in striking con-

sonance with his style in the Johannean discourses, and thus giving us a glimpse of another manner of teaching which the synoptical writers sparingly report. The most remarkable example is Matt. xi. 25 seq. (compare Luke xi. 21 seq.); the ejaculation of Jesus, beginning: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." How perfectly in harmony with the style of Jesus in the latter part of John!

As to the contents of the fourth Gospel, it is freely granted that the higher nature of Christ and the relation of the Son to the Father are here a much more predominant theme. Essentially the same conception of Christ, however, is found in the first three gospels. In them he is the Son of God, in a higher than any official sense: he is the judge of the world. And in several passages, we find him claiming the lofty attributes given him in John, and in the same style. Thus in Matt. xi. 27 he says: "All things are delivered to me of my Father; and *no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.*" This mutual knowledge, exclusive, superhuman, and perfect, on the part of the Son and the Father, is affirmed here in the peculiar manner of the fourth Gospel. In Matt. xxii. 41 seq. (compare Mark xii. 35 seq.; Luke xx. 41 seq.) we have a plain suggestion of the fact of his pre-existence.

The objection that the discourses of Christ in John have a close resemblance to the style of the evangelist himself and to that of his first epistle, is obviated when we remember that, as a result of his peculiar relation to Christ, the Saviour's mode of expression would naturally be taken up; that we are under no necessity of supposing that he aimed to give a verbally accurate report of the Master's teaching; and that some freedom as to style is unavoidable in abbreviating and selecting the portions of his discourse for which there was a place in so brief a work. All this, as well as



that thorough inward digestion and assimilation, on the part of the evangelist, of the Saviour's discourses, which were consequent on the length of time that had elapsed since they were heard, will account for the peculiarity in question, without impairing in the slightest degree the historical truth and substantial accuracy of the Johannean reports.

The falsehood of the assertion that these discourses are fictitious and put into the mouth of Jesus by the writer, after the manner of the ancient Greek and Roman historians, is evinced in particular by certain briefer expressions which are interspersed in them, and which admit of no explanation except on the supposition that the reports are faithful. A signal example is John xiv. 31, where, in the midst of a long discourse to the disciples, occur the words: "Arise, let us go hence!"<sup>1</sup> They are not followed by any intimation that the company actually arose and left the place where they were. On the contrary, the discourse goes on, in the words: "I am the true vine," etc. But if we suppose what follows to have been spoken by the way; or, which is perhaps more natural, if we suppose that having spoken the words first quoted which summoned the disciples to quit the place where they were, the Saviour's interest in his theme and love for them led him to go on still longer, while, it may be, they all remained standing, then these words have a proper place and meaning. The circumstance would imprint itself on the recollection of John, and it affords an impressive proof of his fidelity in reporting his Master's discourses. But no reason can be given why a forger should have introduced this fragmentary, unexplained phrase. Had he chosen to interrupt the discourse by such a phrase, he would infallibly have added some other statement, such as: then they arose and went. This little phrase, to a candid reader, is a most convincing item of evidence. Bleek also dwells upon the character of the prophetic utterances of Christ in John, especially of the predictions relative to his own death. The fact that they are in the form of inti-

<sup>1</sup> ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐνταῦθα.

mations, rather than distinct declarations, will better account, in the view of Bleek, for the misunderstanding of them on the part of the disciples. The form in which they appear in John wears, in his opinion, the stamp of historical truth, since it is altogether probable that in this form they were actually spoken. Especially, as Bleek thinks, is the historical fidelity of the evangelist shown by those passages from Christ upon which the evangelist puts his own interpretation drawn from an observation of the subsequent event. Such are John ii. 19: "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again," where we are told that the obscure reference to the temple of his body was discerned by his disciples not till after the resurrection; and John xii. 32: "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," to which the evangelist appends a similar explanation. There can be no doubt in these instances that the apostle has faithfully reported the sayings of Jesus; and this fact must be even more evident to those critics who do not hesitate to question, in these cases, the perfect correctness of the disciples' interpretation.

5. The Hellenic culture and the theological point of view of the author of the fourth Gospel are made an objection to the Johannean authorship. They prove, it is maintained, that the work does not belong to the apostolic age, was not written either by a Palestinian or by any other Jew, but by a Gentile Christian of the second century. In the notice of these several points we principally follow Bleek.

(1) Was the author of the fourth Gospel a Jew? It is objected that his manner of referring to the Jews proves him not to be of their number. Thus we read of the "Jews' Passover," "the Jews' feast of tabernacles," the "feast of the Jews," the "preparation of the Jews," the "ruler of the Jews" (ii. 6, 13; iii. 1; v. 1; vi. 4; vii. 2; xi. 55); and frequently the author, alluding to the adversaries of Jesus and those with whom he came in contact, speaks of them in general as *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι*. This style is capable of explanation only on the hypothesis that the Gospel was written late

in the apostolic age, when the Christian church had come to be fully independent of the Jewish, and by a writer who was himself outside of Palestine, and addressed his work not only to Jews, but also, and still more, to Gentiles and Gentile Christians. And this supposition, which removes the difficulty, is itself the church tradition concerning the composition of John.<sup>1</sup> But independently of this tradition, there can be no doubt that the author was of Jewish extraction. In proof of this, Bleek refers to the writer's familiarity with the Jewish laws and customs, which is so manifest in his account of the events connected with the Saviour's death; to the pragmatism of the Gospel, so far as the fulfilment of Old Testament predictions and promises is frequently pointed out; and to the fact that a portion of these citations are translated directly from the Hebrew, instead of being taken from the Septuagint, — a fact that is conclusive in favor of his Jewish, and strongly in favor of his Palestinian, origin. It occurs to us, also, that Baur, in conceding that the author professes to be the Apostle John, may be himself challenged to explain why he is so negligent in affording evidence of a Jewish extraction. Surely, so expert a counterfeiter would not have forgotten a point so essential to a successful attempt to personate the apostle. The charge that errors are found in John inconsistent with the hypothesis that the author was a Palestinian Jew is without foundation. That Bethany (the true reading for "*Bethabara* beyond Jordan," in John i. 28) was either the name of a place in Peraea, or was a slip of the pen for Bethabara; that, at any rate, the writer did not misplace the Bethany where Lazarus dwelt, is demonstrated by John xi. 18, where this town is expressly said to be fifteen stadia from Jerusalem. The assertion that in the designation of Caiaphas as high priest for that year, ἀρχιερεὺς τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐκείνου (xi. 51; xviii. 13), the author implies a belief that the high priest was changed every year, is entirely unwarranted

<sup>1</sup> Even Paul speaks of his "former conversation in the Jews' religion"; of his profiting "in the Jews' religion," Gal. i. 13, 14.

by anything in the text. The term "Sychar" for the old city Sichem, instead of being a blunder, may be an old pronunciation of the Jews and Samaritans of that time. As used by the Jews there may lurk under it a reference to the hated character of the Samaritans; or, finally, it may be simply an error of transcription.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The objection is made that a Galilean fisherman, like John, could not be possessed of so much Greek culture as the fourth Gospel discovers. But the family of John were neither in a low station, nor in straitened circumstances. He was certainly trained by his pious mother in the knowledge of the Old Testament. He may have been early taught the Greek language, which was then so widely diffused. The report which the members of the Sanhedrim had heard that Peter and John were unlearned and uncultivated men (Acts iv. 13) can only signify that they were not educated in the schools of the Rabbis. Had John not attained some mastery of the Greek language, it is not so likely that he would have taken up his residence in the midst of Asia, where only Greek was spoken, even by the Jews. And during his prolonged residence there his familiarity with the language would doubtless increase.

(3) The type of doctrine in the fourth Gospel, and especially its Christology, have been thought to be an argument against its composition by John, the Palestinian Jew. In particular, the Logos idea in John, it is said, was an Alexandrian notion, borrowed from the Greek philosophy, and introduced into Christian theology at a later period. We cannot enter at length into the discussion of this point. We simply say that, as regards the language or the *form* of the doctrine, it may have been derived from the book of Proverbs and from Sirach, and not improbably was derived from this source, though further developed, by Philo himself. Elsewhere and earlier in the New Testament itself, if not in the Epistle to the Hebrews, yet undeniably in the Apocalypse, we meet with the Johannean terminology. But,

<sup>1</sup> See Bleek, s. 209.

even if the language pertaining to the Logos came at first from the Greek philosophy, it may have been taken up by John, as a fit designation of the preëxistent Christ. Properly qualified, it became a vehicle for conveying his conception of the Son in his relation to the Father. In the use of this term, John enters upon no speculation. He would rather turn away the mind from vain speculations, from the unprofitable discussions about the Logos that may have been current, to the living, historic Revealer of God, the actual manifestation of the Invisible One, the Word made flesh, which had "dwelt among us." And accordingly after the first few verses, we hear no more of the Logos. As to the matter of the conception, we utterly deny the theory of the school of Baur, that the early church was Ebionite, regarding Christ as a mere man. We hold that this theory is abundantly refuted by passages in the synoptical Gospels and Pauline Epistles, and is proved to be false by a fair view of the early history of the church. The theology of Philo, it deserves to be remarked, contains nothing more than the vaguest conception of the Messiah, and is throughout far more speculative than ethical; affording, therefore, no materials for that conception of Jesus Christ which is found in John, and which only an intuition of the living person of Christ could have awakened. The conception of Christ in John is the product of the impression made by Christ himself upon the soul of the disciple.

(4) We have to notice another objection emanating from the school of Baur, that the free and liberal spirit of the fourth Gospel toward the Gentiles is inconsistent with the position attributed to John in Galatians ii. 9. But this objection proceeds from the assumption underlying the whole system of the Tübingen school, that Peter and the other Jerusalem apostles were radically opposed to the doctrine of Paul relative to the rights of the Gentiles; that they were, in short, Judaizers. We hold this assumption to be demonstrably false, and the fabric of historical construction reared upon it to be a mere castle in the air. There is noth-

ing improbable in the circumstance of the inquiry for Jesus made by the devout Greeks (John xii. 20) at which Baur stumbles. Even in Matthew, which Baur regards as pre-eminently a Jewish-Christian Gospel, is recorded the Saviour's emphatic commendation of the Centurion's faith (viii. 10 seq.); the distinct prediction that the kingdom should be taken from the Jews, and given to another people (xxi. 43); the injunction to preach the gospel to every creature (xxviii. 19); the prophecy that it should be preached to all nations (xxiv. 14); and the parables describing the universal spread of the gospel (ch. xiii.). We are not to leave out of view, in considering the spirit of the fourth Gospel with reference to Gentile Christianity, the inevitable effect of great providential events, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was one, and of the long interval of time during which the distinct character of the Christian church and the broad design of Christianity had become more and more plain. In this objection of Baur, the attempt is made to uphold one false proposition by another that is equally false.

There is one objection not to be separated entirely from the one last considered, but which is more serious and important than any we have named. The other difficulties which we have noticed, though not unworthy of consideration, vanish, and in most cases even turn into arguments for the contrary side. But the difficulty we have now to speak of, is of greater magnitude. It is strongly maintained by those who impugn the genuineness of John that the Apocalypse which they hold to be his work, cannot come from the same author as the fourth Gospel. It cannot be denied that there exists a great disparity, both in language and thought, between the Apocalypse and this Gospel. "The language [of the Apocalypse] is incomparably rougher, harder, more disconnected, and exhibits greater errors than is true of any other book in the New Testament, while the language of the Gospel, though not pure Greek, is in a grammatical view incomparably more correct."<sup>1</sup> This con-

<sup>1</sup> Bleek, s. 626.

trast between the style of the two books was stated as long ago as the middle of the third century by Dionysius of Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> So there are various special peculiarities of language in the Gospel which are missed in the Apocalypse. "A still greater and more essential difference is discovered when we look at the contents, spirit, and whole character of these writings."<sup>2</sup> Under this head, Bleek refers in particular, to the different position of the Apocalypse with reference to the Jewish people, so opposite to that of the Gospel, where *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι* is often, without qualification, the designation of the opposers of Christ; to the definite expectation of the second advent and millennium, together with the conception of anti-Christ as a particular individual, which is unlike the conception found in 1 John ii. 18 seq.; iv. 3. We have to weigh the objection to the genuineness of the Gospel which these differences have suggested.

1. The impossibility that both books should have the same author is not established. The Apocalypse was written shortly after the death of Nero and shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem. The interval prior to the composition of the Gospel was not far from twenty years, — a period giving room for important changes in the style and habits of thought of any writer; an era, too, most eventful, as concerns the development of the plan of providence relative to the Jewish nation. That they were destined, as a body, to reject the gospel, and to be rejected of God, was made manifest. It must be confessed that the force of our remark, so far as it pertains to the change in style and modes of thought, is weakened by the fact that, when the Apocalypse was written, John must have been sixty years old; a period of life after which important changes of this character are less likely to occur. But another consideration is to be taken into the account, — that the mood of mind and feeling out of which the Apocalypse was written was altogether peculiar and extraordinary, as was the state of

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., Lib. VII. 27.<sup>2</sup> Bleek, s. 627. .

things in the midst of which the author wrote. The same author, at such a time, when his soul was stirred to its depths by the terrible events, either present or "shortly to come to pass," and writing under the impulse of prophetic inspiration, would fall into quite a different style from one that would be natural in a calmer mood, when his only object was to set down recollections of Christ and his teaching. Moreover, there are not wanting various points of resemblance, both in language and matter, between the two works. To prove this relationship, we have the authority of Baur himself, from whom we translate the following passage: "We cannot ignore the fact that the evangelist put himself in thought in the place of the Apocalypst, and designed to make use, for the ends aimed at in his Gospel, of the consideration enjoyed by the Apostle John, who, as apostle, as author of the Apocalypse, and as having been for so many years the principal head of their churches, had become the highest authority with the Asia Minor Christians. Nay, it is not merely the borrowing of the external support of so distinguished a name; there are not wanting, also, internal points of affinity between the Gospel and Apocalypse; and one cannot forbear to wonder at the deep geniality, the fine art with which the evangelist, in order to transmute spiritually the Gospel into the Apocalypse [um die Apokalypse zum evangelium zu vergeistigen] has taken up the elements which he has conveyed over from the point of view of the Apocalypse to the freer and higher point of view of the Gospel." <sup>1</sup> Now admitting that so close an inward relationship connects the Gospel with the Apocalypse, why not refer this to the natural development of the author's own mind and the progress of his views, rather than ascribe it to a hateful fraud and lie? If the art of the forger was so clever and admirable, how can we accept Baur's further view, that he has palpably and obviously betrayed himself? Whatever opinion is entertained of the authorship of the

<sup>1</sup> Baur's "Das Christenthum," etc., s. 132.



Apocalypse, the Tübingen theory is convicted of a gross inconsistency.

2. But even if it were established that the Apocalypse and the fourth Gospel are not from one author, the verdict must still be given in favor of the genuineness of the Gospel. Bleek agrees, on the whole, with De Wette and Baur in supposing that we are compelled to reject the Johannean authorship of one or the other, and in common with Neander and many other critics of the evangelical as well as the unbelieving school, holds the opinion that the Apocalypse is not the work of John. As we have said, *provided the dilemma can be made out to exist*, this is the reasonable opinion. The Apocalypse has no doubt been in the church since the date we have assigned for its composition. As early as Justin Martyr it was quoted as the work of the Apostle John; but its genuineness was also early questioned. It was questioned not only by the Alogi, but also by the Roman presbyter Caius (circa 200) who likewise ascribed it to Cerinthus.<sup>1</sup> Dionysius of Alexandria, the pupil and successor of Origen, to whose opinion on the style of the Apocalypse we have adverted, endeavors to prove from internal evidence that the Apostle John did not write the work, and is inclined to attribute it to a contemporary of the apostle at Ephesus, John the presbyter. Eusebius leans to the same opinion. He, also, hesitates about placing it among the Homologoumena, or New Testament writings, which were universally received as apostolical.<sup>2</sup> It was not included in the ancient Syrian version. Long after it was received universally in the Western church, doubts concerning its genuineness continued in the East. If written by John the presbyter, "a holy and inspired man," as Dionysius supposes him to be, the later habit of ascribing it to the apostle, may have been a mistake for which the real author was not responsible. And if the denial of its genuineness sprang from the great reaction of the church in the second century against Chiliastic views, it was supported, as we

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., Lib. III. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb., Lib. III. 25.

have seen in the case of Dionysius by critical arguments. The evidence for the apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse is far from being equal to the accumulated weight of evidence for the Johannean authorship of the fourth Gospel. For the former, the main proofs of a composition by the apostle are external. In the case of the fourth Gospel, besides having all that can be asked in the way of external evidence, we are able to add the most impressive internal proofs of its genuineness.

In giving the internal evidence for the genuineness of John, it would be a great oversight to omit a notice of the proof afforded by the last chapter. Every reader of the Gospel will observe that in the last verses of the twentieth chapter the author appears to be concluding his work. It is evident that at least the last two verses of the twenty-first chapter are from another hand. One opinion is, that the whole chapter emanates from some other pen than that of the author of the Gospel, while others think that only these concluding verses constitute the addition by another. Let us first take for granted the last supposition. The whole chapter — these verses included — has been connected with the work from its first promulgation. These verses, then, are the independent testimony of one who was not himself the writer, to the fact of the composition of the work by John. If John be *not* the author, the writer of these verses was an accomplice in the fraud. But suppose the entire chapter to be written by him, which was the view of Grotius, and is held by many living critics on the evangelical side, as well as by Zeller and other disciples of the Tübingen school; the argument is then stronger. The statement in vs. 23, relative to the idea that the apostle was not to die, is one which could only have been required shortly after his death occurred. Forty or fifty years after that event there could have been no call for such an explanation. The appendix, then, was composed soon after the death of John. Suppose it to be written by friends to whom he had de-

livered his Gospel, and from whom it went forth to the world, and the whole phenomenon is explained.

In closing up this array of evidence, we beg the reader to apprehend distinctly the position of Baur and his school. When these critics come to John's Gospel they have to give up their favorite mythical theory. We hear nothing of the unconscious working of the mythopoeic faculty. Here is no collection of tales produced from the unreflecting imagination of the early church, brooding over their departed Lord. But the ground taken is that the fourth Gospel is a stupendous fraud, most cleverly executed, — a deliberate invention of incidents which were known by the writer never to have occurred, but which he has framed together into a history, not scrupling to introduce an ingenious lie for the purpose of assuring the reader that John was its author! Whether the Gospel bears the marks of being the child of so much mendacity we must leave the candid reader to judge.

It is incredible that a work of the power and loftiness of the fourth Gospel should have sprung up in the second century. Let any one who would understand the difference between the apostolic and the next following age undertake to read the apostolic Fathers. He will be conscious at once that he has passed into another atmosphere. He has descended from the heights of inspiration to the level of ordinary, and often feeble, thinking. In the first half of the second century there is no writer of marked originality; none who can be called fresh or suggestive. To set a work like the fourth Gospel in that age is a literary anachronism. That a writer, towering so above all his contemporaries, should stoop to wear a mask, and gain his end by a hateful, jesuitical contrivance, is a supposition burdened with difficulties. The irrational character of this hypothesis, Neander has well shown in a passage with which we conclude the present essay.

“ The whole development of the church from Justin Martyr onward testifies to the presence of such a Gospel, which

operated powerfully on men's minds. It cannot be explained from any succeeding mental tendency in the following age, nor from the amalgamation of several. To be sure, this production existed as a representation of a higher unity, as a reconciling element with reference to the contrarieties of that age, and could exert an attractive power over minds of so opposite a kind as a Heracleon, a Clement of Alexandria, an Irenaeus, and a Tertullian. Where should we be able to find in that age a man, who was elevated above its contrarieties [gegensätze], by which everything is more or less swayed? And a man of so superior a Christian soul, must needs skulk in the dark, avail himself of such a mask, instead of appearing openly in the consciousness of all-conquering truth and in the feeling of his mental pre-eminence! Such a man, so exalted above all the church Fathers of that century, had no need, forsooth, to shrink from the conflict. He must certainly have put more confidence in the might of truth than in these arts of darkness and falsehood. And how can it be shown that such a man, when he is contemplated from the point of view of his own age, would have been restrained by no reverence for sacred history, by no scruples, from falsifying a history, the contents of which were holy to him, through arbitrary fictions, manufactured in the interest of a given dogmatic tendency, — through lies, in fact, which were to find their justification in the end to be attained by means of them? And how unskilfully would he have proceeded if, in order to attain his end, he presented the history of Christ in a way that was in absolute contrast with the universally accepted tradition! Nay, only from such an apostle, who stood in such a relation to Christ as a John stood, who had thus taken up into his own being the impression and image of that unique personality, could proceed a work which stands in such a relation to the contrarieties of the post-apostolic age. It is a work out of one gush, original throughout. The Divine in its own nature has this power of composing differences, but never could a product so fresh, so original

in its power (urkräftiges) proceed from a contrived, shrewdly planned, reconciliation of differences. This Gospel, if it do not emanate from the Apostle John and point to that Christ, the intution of whom, on the part of the writer, gave birth to it, is the greatest of enigmas."<sup>1</sup>

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## ARTICLE II.

### CHARLES WESLEY AND METHODIST HYMNS.

BY REV. FREDERIC M. BIRD, PHILADELPHIA.

(Continued from No. 81, p. 162.)

WE are now at liberty to glance over whatever may be most striking and important among the various poetical publications of the Wesleys. Their earlier volumes bear the names of both brothers, with nothing to distinguish the respective authorship of the separate poems; but it has been generally agreed by those who best understand the matter, to ascribe all the translations to John, and all the original poems — except in a very few cases, where there is some

<sup>1</sup> Neander's *Ges. d. Pflanz, u. Leit. d. Kirche*, 4 A. B. 2. s. 637.

The genuineness of the fourth Gospel has found an unexpected supporter in the person of M. Renan. In his recent *Life of Jesus*, he holds that the existence of this Gospel is presupposed, just as we have attempted to prove, in the controversies of the first half of the second century. By the force of the external evidence, and also by the historical truth which he is compelled to recognize in passages of the narrative, he is led to believe in the genuineness of at least the narrative parts of the work.

The embarrassment into which Renan is thrown by conceding that this history of Jesus is the work of an eyewitness, while he is yet unprepared to believe in miracles, is no concern of ours. We leave him to settle this matter with his disturbed friends of the *Westminster Review*. We simply record it as a very significant fact, that a writer who in treating of the *Life of Christ* plants himself on a theory of naturalism, is yet obliged in candor to allow that this Gospel is genuine. Strauss himself was for a time inclined to adopt the same view, and was finally kept from doing so only by seeing the fatal consequences that would ensue to his entire theory.