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ARTICLE VIII.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL AT YALE AND CHICAGO.

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Two publications, the one, a large book, and the other, a short essay—the book from the most widely known New Testament critic in America, and the essay from a candidate for a degree in a large university, are attracting the notice of New Testament scholars. Dr. Benjamin Wisner Bacon, of the divinity school of Yale University, has recently given us “The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate”;¹ and Dr. Frank Grant Lewis had, earlier, written a monograph which is published in the Chicago University “Historical and Linguistic Studies,” on “The Testimony of Irenæus to the Fourth Gospel.”²

We are thus enabled to see what is thought at two great institutions of learning on a matter of great interest at the present time.

In his Introduction, Dr. Bacon quotes Lightfoot’s characterization of two classes of opponents of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel thus:—

“(1) Those who deny the miraculous element in Christianity—Rationalists, (2) those who deny the distinctive character of Chris-

¹The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate. By Benjamin Wisner Bacon, D.D., LL.D., Buckingham Professor of New Testament Criticism and Exegesis in Yale University. New York: Moffat, Yard and Company. 1910.

²The Testimony of Irenæus to the Fourth Gospel. University of Chicago Historical and Linguistic Studies, Part VII. Vol. I. By Frank Grant Lewis, Ph.D. Chicago: Chicago University Press. 1900.

tian doctrine—Unitarians. The Gospel confronts both. It relates the most stupendous miracle in the history of our Lord (short of the Incarnation and the Resurrection), the raising of Lazarus. Again, it enunciates in the most express terms the Divinity, the Deity, of our Lord. And yet at the same time it professes to have been written by the one man, of all others, who had the greatest opportunities of knowing the truth . . . the Apostle who leaned on his Master's bosom, who stood by his Master's cross, who entered his Master's empty grave. If, therefore, the claim of this gospel to be the work of John the son of Zebedee, be true, if, in other words, the Fourth Gospel be genuine, the most formidable, not to say an insuperable, obstacle stands in the way of both classes of antagonists. Hence the persistence and ingenuity of the attacks; and hence also the necessity of a thoroughness in the defence."¹

Dr. Bacon thinks Lightfoot, if living now, would not use this language, in view of the publication of Drummond's "Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel," and evidently objects decidedly to the intimation that every denier of the genuineness of the Gospel belongs to either of the classes named. He may be neither a Rationalist nor a Unitarian, but he does not come behind either in "the persistence and ingenuity of his attacks" on the genuineness of this Gospel, as the reader will see.

Dr. Bacon asserts: "On this question ["the divinity, the deity, of our Lord," just mentioned] we are driven unavoidably to the alternative: Either Synoptics or John." After a setting forth of what he considers their different presentations of the person and work of Christ, he says: "Both views cannot be true, and to a very large extent, it is the science of literary and historical criticism which must decide between them" (p. 3).

It seems clear from this that he is decided in his opinion that the Fourth Gospel is a false gospel if the Synoptics are true gospels. It is well to remember this, as one's standpoint as to the character of the Fourth Gospel is likely to exercise a

¹Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays* (Macmillan, 1893), p. 47.

strong, if not controlling, influence on his estimate of the bearing of all facts touching its authorship. As has doubtless been often remarked, it is not facts alone which determine one's opinion in a case like this, but the *interpretation* of the facts. I think it will be clear as we proceed to examine this book, that this view of the author as to the spuriousness of the Fourth Gospel has no little influence on his interpretation of the facts bearing on its authorship.

It is well, too, to note, at the outset, the author's position as to inspiration and miracles. After discarding, or rather ignoring, as parts of the Synoptic Gospels, all concerning the incarnation, and speaking of the accounts of the resurrection and ascension, as an "apotheosis," he approves of the Synoptic story as quite natural — the miracles being, for him, of course, mere exaggerations unavoidable in such conditions:—

"The whole drama is a drama of real life. It demands the divine factor behind it just as all life does, just as the life of our own time does; because without this not even the simplest thing is intelligible. But for all the essential factors of the story *divine intervention is not required in any other sense* [Italics mine]. We say 'essential factors' for it can scarcely be required that we regard this tradition as miraculously exempted from the tendencies to exaggeration and legendary accretion to which all others are exposed" (p. 11).

All this would naturally lead us to expect to find the author exhibiting a marked "persistence" in his endeavor to show that the Gospel is not the production of the Apostle John and employing all his "ingenuity" in his efforts to do so. This expectation will not meet with disappointment.

Hence we find him making the rather strange assertion that, "In point of fact the Modern Form of the Johannine question scarcely concerns itself with the question of date"! (p. 21). Most of us probably consider the question of date quite important as bearing on the question of authorship. In this,

however, he is in full agreement with Dr. Ferris as he expresses himself in his late work, "The Formation of the New Testament," who surprised most of his readers by similar views as to the dates of New Testament books in general. Dr. Bacon's "ingenuity" is shown here by a distinction between "the existence of the substance of the Fourth Gospel before the end of the first century," which Dr. Sanday takes as "a considerable step towards the belief that the Gospel existed in writing,"¹ and the existence of the Gospel in its present complete form; and then between the existence of the Gospel, and its acceptance as the work of the Apostle John. Dr. Bacon is very unlike the schoolmen in most respects, for he is decidedly "modern," and rather disposed to treat such critics as Baur and Strauss as old fogies, but few of the schoolmen could use that keen, hair-splitting instrument, *distinguo*, with greater skill and ingenuity than he. It is an instrument which all must use who wish to reason accurately; but there is a very important matter which makes its use in this case, unavailing. That thing is testimony. All depends, of course, on the *kind* of testimony presented. In this instance, it is clear and convincing. One line of this testimony comes through Irenæus, who was bishop in Gaul in 177 A.D., and who was, in his youth, a pupil of Polycarp in Asia Minor, about 130 A.D., as Jülicher thinks.² Irenæus writes to his boyhood friend, Florinus:—

"I can tell also the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse; and also his entrances, his walks, the character of his life and the form of his body and his conversations with the people and his familiar intercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell; as also his familiarity with the rest of those who had seen the Lord. How also he used to relate their discourses, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord. Also concerning His miracles, His teaching. All these

¹ Criticism of the Fourth Gospel, p. 245.

² An Introduction to the New Testament, p. 403.

Polycarp told as having received them from eyewitnesses of the Word of Life,¹ in consistency with the Writings [or Scriptures, ταῖς γραφαῖς].”

The testimony of Irenæus to the Fourth Gospel could not have been better set forth, up to a certain point, than it has been in Dr. Lewis's monograph. His method is eminently thorough. His plan is to make an examination of the facts as they lie before us in the words of Irenæus, and his examination is both comprehensive in its scope and microscopic in its particularity. He finds in the writings of Irenæus which he examines one hundred and fifteen quotations from, and plain references to, the Fourth Gospel. This statement, however, gives a very inadequate conception of the amount of quotation of the Fourth Gospel to be found in Irenæus. Two hundred and fourteen verses, more than one-fourth of the whole number in the Gospel, are referred to in one place. Of these quotations and references, Dr. Ferris finds that twenty-seven are exact quotations in accordance with the Westcott and Hort text, or its equivalent in Latin. Another class of quotations he marks *v*, in his table, because, though the sense is the same, there is some *verbal* difference between the quotation and the Westcott and Hort text. Another class he marks *s*, because there is some difference in *sense*. A fourth class he marks *r*, to indicate that the passage is not strictly a quotation from, but a *reference* to, the Fourth Gospel.

Besides these four classes of passages he finds in a considerable part of the writings of Irenæus “a coloring” of thought which indicates the familiarity of the author with the Gospel. Again, John is sometimes *named* when no quotation is made.

In addition to all this, there are tables in which are indicated all the texts of the Gospel with the passages indicated in which

¹ John i. 1.

they are quoted, first in the order of the Gospel and then in the order of Irenæus.

It will be generally admitted that this is a fair and thorough way in which to go about the investigation of the testimony of Irenæus concerning the Fourth Gospel.

The result at which Dr. Lewis arrives is that the Apostle John, the beloved disciple, the son of Zebedee, wrote what we have in the Fourth Gospel, and that, for Irenæus, the Fourth Gospel was the Gospel of this John, and no other.

But here Dr. Lewis must show that he is a higher critic, and asserts that, for *us*, it is different — that Irenæus was “not a critic,” and may have been mistaken. Indeed, it seems as if some who aspire to distinction as specialists in biblical criticism regard descending from the lofty heights of higher criticism with almost as much horror as falling from grace. Dr. Lewis, at least, draws back as from the edge of a precipice to which evidence has brought him, as if in fear of being precipitated to the, to him, low level of tradition in the full acceptance of the Gospel as the Gospel of the Apostle John. How does he avoid this terrible fall?

By adopting the theory of his teacher, Professor Burton, that John did not write a Gospel, but only “booklets,” which a redactor, probably Polycarp, the instructor of Irenæus, gathered together and made into the Gospel which we now have. He seems not to think of the extreme improbability that Irenæus, the pupil of Polycarp, would have been ignorant of all this, and should never have had the slightest doubt that the Gospel was the Gospel of John. He seems, too, to have forgotten that the whole church, in which there were large numbers of contemporaries of Polycarp,¹ who, like him,

¹ As Irenæus speaks, in his letter to Florinus, of Polycarp as his instructor in his youth, some may imagine that Polycarp was his

had known John, handed it down as the Gospel of John, and that we have the Gospel by the side of the other three, as a complete Gospel in the Diatessaron of Tatian and in the oldest Syrian copy of the Gospels, probably still older than the Diatessaron. He seems to forget, too, that Basilides quoted it about 125 A.D., speaking of the words quoted as "in the Gospels." To show how certain Irenæus was as to the fact that John was the author of the Gospel, Dr. Lewis, after his searching examination, says:—

"The author of the Fourth Gospel was as certainly an apostle, for him, as though he had taken a page to state, argue and prove the point. He would have been astonished if he could have known that any reader could ever think otherwise. One can hardly believe that those who have been in doubt about the matter have read Irenæus."

Yet he still sticks to the theory of "booklets."

Dr. Bacon has another theory of dissection. Jülicher, who is himself a quite radical critic, makes the remark as to the treatment of this Gospel by a certain class of critics, who have been applying the fashionable theory of the composition of the Old Testament, to the New: "The schemes for its dissection are by this time innumerable."¹ Jülicher goes on to say:

only witness as to the Apostle John. But he had known many witnesses. Eusebius (H. E. iii. 23) alludes to the following from the second book of Irenæus on Heresies: "And all the elders of Asia who had been associated with John, the disciple of our Lord, testify that John delivered [i.e. the tradition of the Apostles] to them; for he continued with them until the times of Trajan." (Iren. Ad Haer. ii. 22. 5.)

Eusebius continues: "And in the third book of the same work, he shows the same thing in the following words: 'But the church in Ephesus, also, which had been founded by Paul, and where John continued to abide until the times of Trajan, is a faithful witness of the apostolic tradition.'"

¹ An Introduction to the New Testament, p. 395.

“These hypotheses must, however, be rejected *in toto*, because they do not take into account the similarity both in form and matter which extends to every part of the Gospel.” Each divider must, of course, have a new scheme of division, else he would not be original. The two schemes before us are quite different the one from the other; but they are both in the fashion of the time.

All who are old enough to have witnessed “the march of a generation through life,” have doubtless noticed that at different periods in the life of that generation the hats or bonnets of the ladies have passed through many changes in size and shape, and that at each of these periods a certain type was just right, and any other was not to be thought of, though there might be almost infinite variety under the prevailing mode.

For believers, the scheme of Dr. Lewis is free from the worst feature of Professor Bacon’s; it preserves for us the matter of the Fourth Gospel as coming from “that disciple whom Jesus loved,” though the precise form of its presentation may be due to another hand. This can hardly be called destructive criticism. But Dr. Bacon denies that John had any part in the production of the Fourth Gospel, which is destructive indeed.

Dr. Bacon denies that the Gospel of John was one of the “memoirs of the apostles” (pp. 23, 37, 92) to which Justin so frequently refers as his authorities. But, when we remember that Justin uses the four Gospels which we have, and these alone, that he describes them usually as “memoirs of the apostles,” and in one place as “memoirs of the apostles and their followers,” and then consider that Matthew and John were apostles, and Mark and Luke assistants of apostles in their work and followers in their journeys, and that Justin calls these memoirs “Gospels,” it looks very much as if the

Gospel of John must be one of these "memoirs of the apostles."¹ Then when we turn to the Diatessaron of Tatian and find that he combines the four Gospels into a harmony, using John's much more than any of the others, and remember that Tatian was Justin's disciple and companion after his conversion, it would seem as near demonstration as could be wished that the Fourth Gospel was one of these "memoirs" to which Justin is continually appealing. It is objected that Justin does not quote the Fourth Gospel as frequently as he quotes the Synoptics. We cannot, perhaps, know all the reasons for this, but we can see some reasons which explain the fact. It is certainly true that he quotes the first three Gospels much more frequently, and perhaps more in their own words, than he does the Fourth. Yet we must remember that the latter, for one thing, was written long after the others, so that a whole generation of Christians after the crucifixion had become familiar with the form of narrative and teaching which they came to have in common through the instruction given and received while all continued daily in the apostles' teaching and fellowship in Jerusalem, and carried it with them when they were scattered by persecution and went everywhere preaching it in the form in which they had been instructed. Naturally when the first three Gospels were published they were in the same form of narrative and teaching, and then almost another generation passed before the Fourth Gospel,

¹The view of such a New Testament scholar as Professor Th. Zahn of Erlangen is surely worthy of consideration. He says: "Justin . . . knew the Fourth Gospel as the composition of apostles and their disciples, which was also in use in religious services in his time. Since Justin lived in Ephesus between 180 and 135, and became a Christian there, his knowledge concerning the Gospels and their use in the Church was derived from this period and region." (Introduction to the New Testament, vol. iii. pp. 177 f.)

the "spiritual Gospel," came forth in a very different form, both of narrative and doctrine, from the others which, as Clement of Alexandria expresses it, had already presented the chief "bodily facts." Thus the Synoptic had become the stereotyped form before the Fourth Gospel — the "spiritual Gospel" — was issued.

It should be remembered, too, that the Fourth Gospel deals far more fully with the profounder aspects of the truth than the others — often under very plain words and apparently simple forms of expression, going down to unfathomable depths of meaning and then rising to heights of sublimity never reached by unaided human intellect. This being so, the instruction fitted for those who in the church had already been advanced in Christian knowledge by the preaching of apostles and by the Pauline Epistles and other New Testament books, would in large part be far beyond the comprehension of those entirely uninstructed in the doctrines of Christianity. Such was the Roman emperor to whom Justin addressed his two apologies, and such was the Jew of the "Dialogue." Hence, when a defense of Christianity was to be presented to Antoninus Pius it would be most fitting to exhibit it in the simpler and more elementary form of the Synoptics; and when the case was to be argued with Trypho, the Jew, it was not to be expected that the form suited to the fully instructed Christian mind would be used. In his case, too, it was essential that the plainest fulfilments of prophecy should be dwelt on, as they are, and that the Synoptic Gospels, and especially Matthew, should be the medium of instruction.

Yet who can read in Apology i. 61 the following, and believe that Justin was ignorant of the Fourth Gospel? Telling Antoninus of the ordinances of the Christian worship, he says, after referring to baptism, "For Christ also said, 'Except ye

be born again, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven,'” and immediately adds, “But that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into the wombs of those who brought them forth is manifest to all.”

There are several things about this quotation (which has no more than the usual inaccuracies of quotations from memory, as most of Justin's quotations from the Old as well as the New Testament evidently were) which are notable. A historical occurrence, the night visit and conference with Christ, of Nicodemus — a thing mentioned in the Fourth Gospel only — is indissolubly connected with these words. With this quotation then we are presented with a historical document and not an exclusively doctrinal one.

Then, the quotation contains the words of two persons. If only Christ's expression had been quoted, critics would have been swift to say, “Oh, this is only one of the *logia* of Christ.” This is surely estopped by the objection of Nicodemus. *His* words cannot be classed with “sayings” of Christ.

Besides this, How could these two expressions have gotten together as they come together here, and as we find them together in John iii. 3-5? Is it a mere coincidence?

Looking back to the preceding chapter of the First Apology, on the opposite page, we find Justin speaking of Moses taking brass and making “the figure of the cross,” and saying to the people, “If ye look to this figure and believe in it ye shall be saved.”¹ There is nothing in Numbers xxi., the passage here referred to, about the making of a cross of brass, but of a *serpent* of brass,² and our Lord speaks of the transaction as

¹ ἴδν. . . πιστεύητε ἐν αὐτῷ, σωθήσεσθε.

² Is there not a mistake in the translation here of *ποιήσαι τύπον σταυροῦ*? *Τύπος* may mean either a “figure” or a “type” foreshadowing something to come, and Justin uses the word in this biblical sense, e.g. in Dialogue xl. and xli. Moses did make a serpent of brass, and

typical of the lifting up of himself on the cross. It is remarkable that in speaking of the event in the wilderness, Justin uses words which were spoken by Christ of his own crucifixion. When we find Justin introducing into the account of the lifting up of the serpent a cross, and using the words, "If ye believe in it ye shall be saved," we are quite sure that he has read John iii. 14, 15.

Dr. Bacon denies that Justin quoted the Fourth Gospel, and, with inimitable strategy, attacks this point of the position, for he knows that it must be carried before he can enter and despoil the fortress.

In chapter lxiii. of the Apology, Justin, speaking of the Jews, says, "They are justly upbraided by Christ Himself as knowing neither the Father nor the Son." Where could this come from except John viii. 19 ("Ye neither know me nor my Father," etc.)?

To the "Word made flesh," frequent allusion is made. He did not get this from Plato or from Philo, but, as Dr. Bacon must know, from John. In Dialogue cv. he calls Christ "The only begotten of the Father," and refers to the "memoirs" in doing so, which, in another place, he refers to as called "Gospels." He also refers to John the Baptist's words, "I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying"; and the Fourth Gospel alone attributes this expression to John the Baptist.

Now, though the Fourth Gospel is much less quoted than the Synoptics, it has long been recognized that Justin's thought seems to be more under the influence of this Gospel than any other. His *logos* doctrine may be tinged with views previously held as a Greek philosopher, but his doctrine is by no means that lifted up was a type of Christ lifted up on the cross. But whichever may be the correct translation, the two transactions are connected by Justin as they are in John iii. 14, 15.

means that of Greek philosophy, nor is it Philo's, but that of the Fourth Gospel, with only traces of other influences. Dr. Vedder, in his "Our New Testament, and How Did We Get It?" has this to say:—

"Throughout his [Justin's] writings he makes prominent the doctrine of the Logos, which he must have received either from John or from Philo. But there is a notable difference between these two forms of the Logos doctrine, the differentiating feature being the *incarnation*, which is fundamental in John's theology, but utterly foreign to Philo's philosophy. Now this is the very thing on which Justin seizes and exploits to the utmost. He could have derived this from no other source than the Fourth Gospel—at least, no other source has been even plausibly conjectured" (p. 78).

It has already been stated that a passage in Dialogue cv. indicates that Justin considered the Fourth Gospel one of the "memoirs of the apostles," a thing denied by destructive critics. Here is the passage:—

"For that he was the only begotten of the Father of the universe, having been begotten by Him in a peculiar manner as His Logos and Power, and having afterward become a man through the Virgin, as we have learned through the 'memoirs,' I showed before." Now, as Dr. Vedder observes, "The idea that Christ was the only-begotten Son could be derived from no other source than the Fourth Gospel."¹ So we may confidently affirm that Justin refers to the Fourth Gospel as one of the "memoirs of the apostles" (p. 79).

Professor Gildersleeve, referring to the contention of the Baur school, says, "One great objective point in the whole struggle is the date of the Fourth Gospel. If Justin was acquainted with the Fourth Gospel, the whole fabric of a great historical school falls to the ground."²

Dr. Bacon has been forced by incontrovertible evidence to

¹The expression occurs in 1 John iv. 9. But this Epistle Dr. Bacon considers an epilogue to the Gospel, written after Justin's death.

²The Apologies of Justin Martyr. With an Introduction and Notes. By Basil L. Gildersleeve, Ph.D. (Gött.), LL.D., p. xxxvi.

acknowledge that this whole fabric of the Baur school *has* "fallen to the ground." Yet while acknowledging the traditional date as practically correct for the original writing, he uses all his ingenuity in endeavoring to lead his readers to believe that the so-called prologue, epilogues, and interpolations were added at a time considerably later than that at which the original work was composed, that this was not generally accepted as a Gospel till after these appendages were tacked on, and that it was not recognized by Justin as one of the four Gospels. The evidence of Justin himself shows that Dr. Bacon is mistaken, and his engines of attack on the Fourth Gospel at this point "fall to the ground," and must follow the speculations of Baur, Strauss, and their followers to the scrap-heap of antiquated novelties.

Professor Bacon has decided that there should be nothing of the "supernatural," as that term is generally understood, about the "nature and mission" of Christ (pp. 10, 11). Hence, anything in the Gospels indicating that the work of redemption, in which the church has believed from the beginning, is out of the order of mere natural phenomena, must be discarded. The Fourth Gospel is too full of the supernatural for Dr. Bacon, and therefore, he thinks, cannot be genuine. To make this appear in spite of the great body of tradition assigning it to the Apostle John as its author, much must be done. Dates, places, characters, conditions, and situations must be arranged to suit the adverse conclusion. It must be represented that about 170 A.D. there is a great effort at Rome to put the Fourth Gospel on a footing with the other three, and that there is a great contest¹ there between the advocates and

¹ Professor Bacon represents Irenæus as engaged in a heated controversy with the Alogi about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. The question with Irenæus was not the authorship of the Fourth Gospel but about the divine authority of "the holy quarterion of

opposers of this movement. For this purpose, it is found necessary to change the usually acknowledged date of the activity of Caius (or Gaius) of Rome from 210 A.D. to 170.¹

When Irenæus, a pupil of Polycarp as early as 130 A.D.,² speaks of the Fourth Gospel as one of the four on which the Christian faith rests, his testimony must be discredited, though Polycarp, his teacher, was a contemporary of the apostle for at least thirty years and intimately associated with him.

Tatian, who wrote his Diatessaron, as is generally agreed, at Rome and probably in collaboration with Justin Martyr (150-165), not only used the Fourth Gospel in his harmony of the Gospels, but began with it, and used it much more largely in this work than any of the other Gospels. This is undoubted evidence that the Fourth Gospel was then, and had long been, established in the faith of Christians. The Gospel is found in the Diatessaron, not lacking its twenty-first chapter and all the passages which Dr. Bacon represents as added by a redactor, but in its entirety. Yet Tatian must be represented as preparing the Diatessaron in order to settle the question between the contestants in this imaginary ecclesiastical war at Rome (p. 99). If such authorities as Kurtz, Zahn, Harnack, Gregory, Blair's Chronological Tables, etc., are right in dating the Gospels." False Gospels had been written which were to be excluded from the collection of the true, that the designs of their heretical authors might be defeated. Drummond, whose scholarship will hardly be questioned, has this to say:—

"Even in the famous and foolish argument about the four Gospels, he [Irenæus] betrays no knowledge that authorship was called in question, and his sole object is to prove that four is the proper canonical number. For him, as has been said before, no Johannine question existed. It is sometimes convenient to paint a tempest in a teapot as a cyclone. But, is it quite honest?"

¹ Eusebius says that Caius arose during the episcopate of Zephyrinus (197-217 A.D.). (H. E. II. 25.)

² Zahn, *op. cit.*, vol. III. p. 177.

Caius' contest with Proclus¹ at 210 A.D., the Diatessaron would then be more than forty years old. The Diatessaron is a witness of an already formed Gospel canon, not an instrument in forming one.

The twenty-first chapter — the so-called 'Appendix'² — which, as Dr. Bacon acknowledges, represents the Apostle John as the author of the Gospel, together with all passages in the Gospel indicating that the writer was an eye-witness, must be made out to have been added by another hand more than fifty years after the Gospel was written (p. 219), and this, in the face of the fact that these passages are in all the earliest Greek texts and in the *Syr. Sin.*, and the Diatessaron. All this, though from a Bacon, seems eminently anti-Baconian. How desperate must be the cause which demands such *tours de force* to sustain it!

These are by no means, however, all the forced marches which Dr. Bacon makes in order to reach his predetermined conclusion. In order to discredit John's residence in Ephesus, he dates Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians 80–100, his address to the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx.) as late as 85–95 A.D., the Pastoral Epistles as late as 90–100 A.D., and First Peter after

¹ It seems doubtful, if not more than doubtful, whether Caius (or Gaius), Dr. Bacon's great hero in the strife about the Fourth Gospel, really discredited its Johannine authorship at all, though he did ascribe the authorship of the Apocalypse to Cerinthus.

"When Caius of Rome accepted the negative conclusions of the Alogi with reference to the Revelation, but rejected them in the case of the Gospel," etc. (Zahn, *op. cit.*, vol. III. p. 181.)

In his article on Caius in the *New Schaff-Herzog*, Harnack does not represent him as rejecting the Fourth Gospel, but as denying the Johannine authorship of the Revelation.

² Jülicher argues with great force to show that the twenty-first chapter is not an "appendix" at all, but the conclusion of the Gospel written by the author himself. (See his Introduction to the New Testament, p. 394.)

the time assigned to John's residence in Asia.¹ The Epistles of James and Jude, too, he dates 90-100 (pp. 162, 163). In spite of the great mass of testimony that John lived to extreme old age—"to the times of Trajan"²—it is insisted that John was slain at the same time with his brother James.³

Professor F. C. Burkitt, in reply to an inquiry of Professor Drummond, says: "The native Syriac-speaking church had, so far as I know, no knowledge that St. John was killed at Jerusalem. According to the Doctrine of Addai (Phillips, p. 44) the book of Acts was sent to Edessa by John from Ephesus." No one doubts Professor Burkitt's scholarship, or his "liberality."

Dr. Bacon dissects the Gospel of Mark as mercilessly, and rearranges the fragments as confidently, as he does in the case of the Fourth Gospel.⁴

A critic, whether dealing with the Scriptures or any other writings, is disqualified if he has made up his mind beforehand as to the merits of that which he is expected to examine with unprejudiced mind and decide upon. The judge who has made up his mind in advance as to the case before him, and rules out all evidence which does not point to his con-

¹ On the question of John's residence in Asia, such a critic as Carl Weizsäcker, of Tübingen, has this to say: "We obtain the key to the question, however, if it can be established that the Apostle John governed the church in Ephesus in the last years of the century. And this is, in fact, supported by evidence that up to the present day cannot be regarded as having been shaken." (*The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church* (2d Ed., Williams and Norgate, London), vol. II. p. 166.)

² *Irenæus, Ad Haer.* II. 25. 5.

³ On the uncertain interpretation of the doubtful de Boor fragment on which Professor Bacon relies for this conclusion, so favorable to his contention, see Dr. Sanday's *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 107, 250.

⁴ See his *Beginnings of Gospel Story*.

clusion and admits testimony, however doubtful, or even incredible, if it happens to favor that conclusion, is surely incompetent to decide the case. The author of the book before us, as we have seen (p. 697), thinks that there is nothing supernatural in the birth, teachings, miracles, or resurrection of our blessed Lord.

He says of the Synoptic story, that "Its keynote is not incarnation but apotheosis." We had always thought that Matthew and Luke told us something about an incarnation, and that, according to them, there was something out of the usual order of human births. But it seems that Professor Bacon discards these accounts, and does not even recognize the existence of them in the Synoptic Gospels, in spite of the fact that they are in all our earliest Greek texts and earliest versions.

With all that is supernatural taken out of the records of the Synoptic account, he is willing to say that they contain a story that is "intelligible." He does not say it is true, even then; but, "intelligible." As to the Fourth Gospel, so filled is it with claims, expressed or implied, of the true divinity of Christ, that its historicity is denied altogether. Twisting the meaning of the phrase "spiritual Gospel" into that of unhistorical Gospel, a signification entirely foreign to that of Clement of Alexandria, who used it, he represents that the Gospel is wholly untrue as to the facts of Christ's life on earth, and only true in the sense that it symbolically represents the developed Paulinism of the end of the first century (pp. 278, 340). Dr. Bacon suggests that the Gospel was probably written by the venerable stranger who met Justin Martyr while a heathen philosopher, and so convinced him of the reasonableness of Christianity and of the validity of its claim to be the only true religion that he became a believer, and after a career

of earnest and fearless service as a defender of the faith, laid down his life as a witness for the truth.

Who (but Dr. Bacon) can believe that this venerable stranger who brought the philosopher Justin to Christ, could have been guilty of writing a Fourth Gospel, throughout indicating accurate first-hand knowledge of Christ's words and deeds, if it were a false pretense, and the production were the entirely unhistorical account that Professor Bacon would persuade us that it is?

Dr. Bacon would have us believe that the twenty-first chapter was added in Rome about 150 A.D. (p. 219) to make the Gospel appear to have been written by the Apostle John.

Who can believe that more than a half-century after the Gospel was written, a so-called appendix, and interpolations indicating, and even claiming, as in xix. 35,¹ that the writer was an eye-witness of what he related, and that he was the Apostle John, were added to this original Gospel by some unknown redactor, and that the writing would have been immediately accepted by the whole Christian church as a true Gospel written by John?

Who can believe that this Gospel, thus gotten up and thus doctored, would have been quoted by orthodox and heretics in their contests as authoritative, and without challenge of its genuineness?

Above all, who can believe that a religion founded on such a fraud could have been, for nineteen centuries, the greatest moral force in the world?

To prove that the author of the Fourth Gospel is not an independent witness, nor a personal witness at all, but dependent on the Synoptics for what he gives that is at all authentic,

¹"And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe."

he endeavors to make out that the Samaritan woman at the well is no other than the Syrophenician; that Nicodemus is the rich young man who came to Christ to find how he might obtain eternal life, and went away sorrowful; that the beloved disciple who leaned on his Master's bosom at the Supper is no man of flesh and blood at all, but only an idealized figure suggested by Mark xiv. 18-21.¹ The beloved disciple at the tomb he makes an "invisible companion of Peter in the hurried visit to the tomb borrowed from Luke 24:12." Standing by the cross he is, if possible, still more shadowy.

Speaking of the Lord's mother at the cross (John xix. 25) with this disciple, he says of the scene presented, that it "suggests that here too it is not a flesh and blood disciple, nor a flesh and blood mother, that enters upon the scene. This mother, rather, as we have seen, is she of whom Jesus speaks in Luke 11:27 f., 'they that hear the word of God and keep it; perhaps in a narrower sense the representative of the adherents of an older faith which had not known the day of its salvation, finding a home with that younger *ecclesia* which took its start from the cross as the essence and substance of the gospel'" (p. 317 f.).

Here is spiritualizing indeed. Yet it is in line with Dr. Bacon's low estimate of the value of all the Gospels as authentic accounts. The plain declaration of a personal knowledge of Christ Jesus in 1 John i. 1-4 is represented as referring, not to physical, but to spiritual sight, hearing, and contact. Worse yet, the Transfiguration, too, is declared to be of the nature of an ingenious "device" (p. 287). Professor Bacon's method of dealing with the text would, of itself, utterly discredit his book's claims as a scientific investigation of the Fourth Gospel. Instead of going to work to find as nearly as possible the original text by the scientific

¹"But the disciple of Jn. 13:23-30 is *not* a disciple of flesh and blood. He is the *interpreter* of the 'Petrine' story of the announcement of the betrayal" (p. 317).

methods of textual criticism, he seems first to decide what the text *ought* to be to establish his views, and then arranges it accordingly, often without the slightest manuscript evidence, and even where the evidence of manuscripts and versions, too, is all against him. Marcion was hardly more ruthless in hacking and trimming to bring the record into accord with his views. Marcion's mutilated Luke, with parts of John put in,¹ with accounts of the nativity and all that militated against his theories eliminated, and with additions which he thought favored them, was perhaps about as scientifically determined a Gospel of Luke as Professor Bacon's Fourth Gospel is a scientifically determined Fourth Gospel.

All who have looked into the matter at all know that there are some interpolations in the "received text" of the New Testament, just as there are interpolations in the texts of the Greek and Latin classics. Most modern textual scholars would take as instances the "pericope" of the adulteress in John, and the concluding verses of Mark. But why do they hold this opinion? Not because there is some theory to be sustained or overthrown; but because the best manuscripts and earliest versions, in their opinion, indicate that these passages were not in the original text. The exclusion or bracketing of such passages is a very different thing from the process of Dr. Bacon, when, to establish his view, that the Fourth Gospel was not written by the Apostle John, he takes out the thirty-fifth verse of the nineteenth chapter,² and

¹"The whole of John xlii. 4-xv. 34; xvi. 19, possibly also portions of John vi. 33 ff., were found in Marcion's Gospel, and it cannot be proved that these passages were incorporated into this Gospel by his disciples and not by Marcion himself about 145." (Zahn, *op. cit.*, vol. iii. pp. 176, 177.)

²"And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe." (R. V.)

every passage throughout the Gospel which indicates that the writer was an eye- and ear-witness of the deeds and words of Christ, and ascribes the authorship of the twenty-first chapter to some later writer because it indicates that John wrote the Gospel, when the earliest versions and manuscripts present the Gospel with these passages in it.¹

One cannot read a discussion of this character without asking the question, "What would be the effect produced by the general acceptance of the views set forth?" The Fourth Gospel is asserted to be entirely unhistorical, except where it depends on the other Gospels, and along with this assertion comes more than an intimation that we have only a modicum of really historical matter in the Synoptic Gospels.

Dr. Bacon may be able to live a Christian life and have a personal faith in Christ, even while he holds these views; but how will it be with minds unable to perform such a feat? Dr. Bacon's criticism comes perilously near that of the eighteenth century which the late scientist, George Romanes, pronounced the worst of all criticism — a criticism so destructive as to sweep away the very foundations of Christian belief — the denial of the historicity of the great Redemption through Christ.

Worst of all is the belittling of Christ. Dr. Bacon's great objection to the Fourth Gospel is that it exalts our blessed Lord — that it takes the harmless reformer and remarkable teacher, the Jewish healer and exorciser, as he would have it (pp. 10, 11), and makes Him the Word of God, the Creator, the Son of God — one with the Father. He thinks of a process started by Paul of idealizing till the Jesus of the mutilated Synoptics becomes the Lord of Glory, exalted to the

¹The twenty-fifth verse of the twenty-first chapter is lacking in some manuscripts, but the rest of that chapter has as full manuscript evidence as any part of the Gospel.

right hand of the Father, and this process carried on, till about the end of the first century, some one, as it were, standing on Paul's shoulders, idealizes still further, in the Fourth Gospel, and exalts the Galilean to the highest seat of Deity.

We are charitably to hope that Dr. Bacon can be a Christian without a Christ; but how would it be if men in general were led to believe that the Christ of the Scriptures, the Christ of all believers till now, was an imaginary, idealized figure, crowned and robed and enthroned and deified by the speculations of a Paul and the mysticism of a pseudo John?

To see how far Professor Bacon can go in denying the historical truthfulness not only of the Fourth Gospel, but of all four, one needs only to open at pages 286 and 287, for instance, and look first at one and then across at the other. He will see such expressions as these:—

“How small was the residuum of really authentic narrative tradition at command of the Greek-speaking Church may be inferred from the fact that none of the later evangelists have anything of material value to add to the Markan narrative outline” (a statement which every Bible reader knows to be untrue) (p. 286).

“Its [the Second Gospel's] primitive device of a Transfiguration vision informing the leading disciples by a Voice from heaven of the transcendental nature and mission of Jesus” (p. 287).

Can any one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and loves him in sincerity understand how another believer can use such language as this? Can such a one be blamed if a feeling of indignation is manifested when such words are uttered? Profanity from ignorant lips is shocking; but what are we to think of one who has been chosen to the high office of a teacher of teachers who are to be fitted to go forth to “speak to the people all the words of this life,” writing thus of Christ's nature and mission. We are assured that Christ has been exalted to be “a Prince and a Saviour;” but this learned professor would have us believe that this ex-

altation was not of God but of designing men through the employment of the "primitive device of a Transfiguration vision." What gospel, what "words of this life," can those who follow such teachings have to preach? How could one preach the gospel, the good tidings of salvation, if there were no Saviour with power to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by him? But, thanks be unto God, there is such a Saviour. Yes, in spite of all that worldly-wise men may say, the day is coming, and they will see it, when "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Our author asserts that "the silence regarding John as an author is simply more marked the nearer we draw to the time and place of origin of the Gospel" (p. 92). This will perhaps impress very deeply those who have not thought of the reason for it, and do not know that almost all ancient writings are liable to the same charge against their genuineness.

Suppose we should give Dr. Bacon the task of proving that Tacitus wrote the "Histories" that are universally regarded as his. He would probably find abundant quotations from, or references to, them, in books of the time of the Renaissance and after, while the book, with notes in every modern language, is found in the schools of every country in Christendom to-day, with no hint of doubt about the authorship. But let him go back to within a century of the death of Tacitus, who was a contemporary of the Apostle John. How many quotations will he find when he "draws near to the time and place of the origin" of the "Histories"? He would find just one passage of this work cited during the whole century after its production, and that one, just at its end, by Tertullian.¹ Yet Tacitus

¹ See Bishop R. E. C. Welldon's article in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, October, 1907.

was a very eminent man, and in some respects one of the greatest of historians. Coming to the works of contemporaries of Tacitus, it appears that Tacitus himself, much as he wrote, fails to mention some of the most eminent. It is stated that " Tacitus does not think it worth while to mention the *Histories* of the Emperor Claudius, the *Tragedies* of Seneca, or the *Punica* of Silius Italicus. Even the poet Martial is not mentioned by him." ¹

Is it not true of the best known works of antiquity, that " the nearer we draw to the time and place " of their origin, the silence is more and more marked?

One reason for this is plain. The further we go back into antiquity, the smaller the remains of literature become. Most books of every age are either still-born, or die in early infancy; and books that may have been often quoted in contemporary works that have perished, may not be mentioned in the small remnant that has survived to our times.

In striking contrast to the case of the undisputed " *Histories* " of Tacitus quoted in extant works, one within a century after it was written, stands that of the Fourth Gospel written near the same time.

Tertullian quoted the " *Histories* " once. He uses the Fourth Gospel very extensively as the Gospel of the Apostle John. Tertullian used the Gospel with perfect confidence as of apostolic authority — and he was a Montanist, and Montanus relied on this Gospel above all others, and used its promise of the coming of the Paraclete as the chief stay of his main contention. He had very early evidence. Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, and his contemporary for thirty or forty years, had not the slightest misgiving. Therefore Polycarp could

¹ Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurellus*, p. 120; quoted in Dr. Sanday's *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 35, note.

hardly be supposed to have had a different view of it, and he was the disciple of John and his contemporary for thirty years.

Hippolytus, born about the middle of the second century, a pupil of Irenæus, a learned writer most intimately acquainted with all the beliefs and unbeliefs of the age, has not a shadow of doubt, and he quotes "Basilides himself" as quoting the Fourth Gospel¹ in support of his Gnostic views. He also represents the other great Gnostic leader, Valentinus, as using it, and gives several quotations from the still earlier Naaseni or Ophites, containing passages from the Fourth Gospel.

Marcion interpolated Luke with passages from it. Origen, who tells us in his Commentary on John that of all the Gospels he considers the Gospel of John the "first fruits" (i. 6), quotes many comments on the Fourth Gospel by Heracleon, the friend and follower of Valentinus the Gnostic. Heracleon treats the Gospel as Holy Scripture. Origen, criticizing Heracleon's commentary, would surely have told us, among his many criticisms, if Heracleon had been guilty of (what would have seemed to him damnable heresy) ascribing the Gospel to any other than the beloved disciple.

¹ Just here it should be noted that Basilides, the Gnostic, quoted the Fourth Gospel, and speaks of the words as "*in the Gospels,*" and that Hippolytus, who has preserved these quotations, also gives others from Valentinus and even from the Ophites. We should notice especially that orthodox writers a little later on, speaking of these quotations of the Fourth Gospel by heretics, charge them with *misinterpretation* of the Gospel, indeed, but with the full acknowledgment of the authority of it as Scripture. So it is clear that the Gospel was already, long before the Alogi were heard of, and almost a century before Calus of Rome (*circa* 210), recognized as authoritative by the parties in the church most decidedly opposed to one another. Hence, it is natural to conclude that the Fourth Gospel was unquestioned before the secession or exclusion of Gnostics.

Dr. Sanday remarks:—

“But the way in which Heracleon sits down to write this commentary shows that he is not introducing any new conception but is acting upon one which is already settled and established. All the other Valentinian leaders, as well Ptolymaeus, his colleague in the West, as those of the Anatolic or Eastern branch of the school, our knowledge of which is derived from the *Excerpta Theodoti*, place the Fourth Gospel with the other Gospels on the same footing of divine authority.”¹

Professor Gregory, of Leipzig University, says of Basilides, who quoted John and other New Testament books:—

“Now, it is extremely strange that . . . [he] should do what no one had done before him . . . namely, quote the books of the New Testament in the same way as the books of the Old Testament.”²

Of the very early, and universal acceptance of the Fourth Gospel as of divine authority by those who held most divergent views, Drummond remarks:—

“That not only the Catholic [i.e. universal] Church scattered throughout so many lands, but such diverse schools of heretics in East and West, who were so glad to pierce every weak point in the Catholic armor, should agree to accept as apostolic a work which was first published in the very heat of their controversies, is not easily believed.”

“The general probabilities of the case, then, support this conclusion, which we have reached by an examination of details, that the Gospel is older than the great Gnostic controversies, and was securely established in the respect of Christians before the serious divisions in the Church began.”³

So also, when we find Justin making use of the Fourth Gospel, and with his thought so redolent of its Christology, we may be sure that he was not doing a new and unheard-of thing. His account of the Gospels, or “memoirs of the apostles,” being used in religious services along with the prophetic books of the Old Testament, was what he had long known as the practice of Christian worshipers. When we see

¹ Bampton Lectures, p. 307.

² Canon and Text of the New Testament, pp. 69 f.

³ Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, p. 334.

his pupil Tatian using the Fourth Gospel so extensively in making up his Diatessaron, we may be sure that he is not striking out on some new line. He is only following his teacher and those who for years before him had been using the Fourth Gospel, as well as the others as holy scriptures.

Instead of one quotation, a century after its production, as in the case of the "Histories" of Tacitus, we have in the "Diatessaron" the whole Fourth Gospel, with a small exception, placed there by a man who must have been born not very long after the Gospel was written.

Then we have the entire Gospel with the other three in the Syriac Palimpsest, discovered at Mount Sinai, containing a text which many critics consider older than the Diatessaron. In both these codices, the Gospel is found entire and not in the inchoate condition in which Dr. Bacon paints it as coming to Rome for the finishing touches of a skilful prestidigitator or redactor.

The reader must be referred to books on the subject in order to see the full evidence of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel; but this glance at a portion of it ought to impress one with the strange incredulity of those who can doubt it. No one suggests a doubt of the "Histories" of Tacitus with its one quotation in the century after it was written. Why should any one doubt the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel? There is one conceivable reason — they don't like it. There were early heretics who resented its interference with their views, and we may always expect that some, especially those who do not believe that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," will make great efforts to discredit the Fourth Gospel.

Zahn has drawn attention to the fact that the names Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John under which the four Gospels appear are found attached to them in the oldest manuscripts.¹ This is one of the indications of the practically universal acceptance from the beginning of these books as from these authors. In the case of ordinary books this of itself would be taken as *prima facie* evidence of genuineness, even if they were not accredited by the great mass of external and internal evidence which we have for the Fourth Gospel.

It would be an interesting experiment to see Professor Bacon sit down with pen in hand and attempt to set down all the evidence which, from his vast stores of erudition, he could collect about 100 A.D. How many would he find better accredited as genuine than the Fourth Gospel?

The number, I imagine, would be very small, and, in most cases, manuscripts centuries later than the *Syr. Sin.* and the Diatessaron (and even than the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.), under the names of the supposed authors, would be the chief evidence of genuineness.

As a result of this necessarily imperfect presentation of the case, we may feel assured that in the Fourth Gospel we have the accounts of some of the words and deeds of our Redeemer from him who was the disciple whom Jesus loved and who of all others was best fitted to give us the deepest truths which He uttered.

¹ "Leaving out of account the denial of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel made at a comparatively late date, *circa* 170, by the Alogi, who declared it to be the work of the heretic Cerinthus, the tradition of the Church embodied in the titles of the Gospels was contradicted by no one in the second century." (Zahn, *op. cit.*, vol. II. p. 389.)