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as between individuals, would seem to be a mixed tribunal—again after the model adopted in non-established Churches of our communion—consisting of, say, four lay members of the Church of England, being judges or ex-judges, appointed by the Crown, and the Archbishop of the province other than that from which the appeal is presented, and two other Bishops, according to a rota settled by the Crown.

This, however, is a minor point. The foregoing observations will have answered their general purpose if they serve to emphasize the distinction between judicial and legislative functions, and the fact that no reform of the Ecclesiastical Courts can meet the present requirements of the Church unless there be also provided a satisfactory legislative machinery by which, with the assent of the Crown and subject to the veto of Parliament, she may exercise her power to decree rites and ceremonies and her authority in controversies of faith.

PHILIP VERNON SMITH.



ART. IV.—ST. JOHN, THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

“The disciple whom Jesus loved.”—ST. JOHN xx. 2.

IN almost every age of the Christian Church devout believers have dwelt upon the character and personality of St. John. The favoured disciple and the precious Fourth Gospel have ever been most edifying and welcome subjects of Christian meditation. In the first place, he was probably the youngest of our Lord's twelve Apostles, perhaps younger than his Master. If so, he was, in the language of Da Costa, the “Benjamin” of the revered company, and, as we gather from his own words, he was “the beloved disciple.” The New Testament affords us far more than a mere glimpse of the life of St. John in its relation to his fellow-disciples and to the Master. With perhaps the exception of St. Paul, no inspired writer has left a deeper personal impression on the sacred records. The notices of St. John which are furnished by the synoptists are all most instructive and important. They reveal certain additional facts of an honourable nature which St. John himself passes over in silence. If they must be recorded, it was enough that other writers should set them forth. In the spirit of true humility, he either did not consider them of primary importance to the substance of the inspired records, or else he simply preferred to pass them over in his own writings. In some instances, too, these notices afford glimpses into the character, and not merely the exist-

once, of St. John. It is the character of one who, in privileged companionship with our Lord, "silent in His light adores."

His individuality, even in the earlier Gospels, is marked and distinct. When our Lord called him to become a follower, a disciple, an Apostle, he at once obeyed the call, recognising in it a higher claim than that which bound him in a close human relationship (Mark i. 20). His prompt and self-denying obedience was no doubt due in a measure to the human attractiveness of the Divine Master who now called men to follow Him (Matt. iv. 21, 22; Mark i. 19, 20; Luke v. 10, 11; cf. Matt. x. 37). One of the clearest traits in St. John's character appears to have been his responsive appreciation of this attractiveness in the Saviour. It certainly appealed to all our Lord's disciples, but its influence was specially realized by St. John. In his case it seems never to have failed to elicit a suitable response. He believed that the truest reverence for the Master was only His just due. He was inconceivably greater than the greatest of the prophets, and to reverence Him accordingly was the least that he and his fellow-disciples could do, and we do not read of any occasion on which he failed to do it. Almost all the Apostles, at one time or another, were betrayed into the use of words, in their intercourse with our Lord, which might have seemed to imply that they entertained a lower estimate of His claims on their reverence; but this was not St. John's failing, whatever that might be. We read of no undue familiarity of speech with our Lord even on the part of "the Apostle of Love"; of no words spoken by "the beloved disciple" which can be deemed inconsistent with a feeling of heartfelt regard for his Lord.

Here, surely, we have a lesson for life, in our dealing with sacred things, in worship, and in our communion with a glorified and ascended Lord. *Reverence*—the reverence due to His holy Name; reverence of outward demeanour; reverence of spirit, too, in His holy worship; the spirit which moves us to do all we can to restrain wandering thoughts, and to check that freedom of expression in which the tongue outruns the heart or the lips speak lightly and unadvisedly (Ps. cvi. 33; Eccles. v. 2).

Again, we have said that St. John was the youngest of our Lord's Apostles. Everything seems to confirm the almost universal opinion; anyhow, the words in which another "young man," earnest, upright, and prompted by a noble spirit of inquiry, is spoken of in the Gospel, were profoundly true of St. John: "*Jesus beholding him, loved him*" (Mark x. 21; Matt. xix. 20). But we cannot overlook the fact that, so far as their revealed subsequent conduct is concerned, the

difference between these two young men, both "loved" by our Lord, is all in St. John's favour. Both of them saw that in the Saviour which was sufficient to attract them to Him, but St. John was "the beloved *disciple*." He realized in its highest and best form "the expulsive power of a new affection"—an affection for the Lord whom he never deserted—while the rich young ruler clung to his old idols. Nevertheless, we would not willingly wrong so earnest an inquirer after "eternal life," as the latter evidently was. We therefore pause to ask: Is it altogether unlikely that he returned who "went away grieved," but yet whom Jesus "loved" (Mark x. 21, 22)? Is it impossible that ultimately he came to a right decision, and joined the ranks of the disciples (Matt. xix. 26)? Is it impossible, under the circumstances, that in "Judas, surnamed Barsabas, a *chief man* among the brethren" (Acts xv. 22), we should see the erstwhile rich young *ruler* (Matt. xix. 20, 22; Luke xviii. 18)? In any case, St. John followed our Lord.

Then, proceeding with the records of the synoptists, we learn from St. Mark that "the beloved disciple" was not lacking in other qualities. He and his brother, St. James, received from our Lord the "surname Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder" (Mark iii. 17). This name, it has been said, was probably conferred upon them in allusion to the "fiery, intrepid zeal which marked their character." It was perhaps intended also to be a gentle reminder of the direction in which it would be necessary that their future self-discipline should lie. The fact that this name was given to them by our Lord would, we are inclined to think, act as a silent check upon any ebullition of feelings not in keeping with the sacred work to which they were now called and ordained. It would no doubt remind them that theirs was not to be a zeal without knowledge (Rom. x. 2). They were "the sons of thunder," but they were also now disciples of "the Prince of Peace." They were not, however, to suppose that discipleship would mean any loss of personal influence and force. They were not merely to acquire a "nameless winsome grace." They were to be brave and faithful witnesses in no easy-going cause. Indeed, one of the two brothers was to speedily follow the Crucified in the path of suffering, dying a martyr's death; the other was to survive all our Lord's Apostles, and to live a life of patient endurance. St. James was to resist evil unto blood (Acts xii. 1, 2; Heb. xii. 4). St. John was to be "clad in the strength of love's transcendent grace." They were not to be *without* zeal, but it was to be tempered with the truest knowledge and to glow in words of truth and acts of charity. Hence, when they would have called down fire from heaven

in order to destroy men, they were at once solemnly reproved in the words: "*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*" (Luke ix. 51-56). They were not to allow their actions or desires to be directed by the Elijah-spirit, but they were to partake of the spirit of their Master, and He came to save, not to destroy; to win, not to coerce men. Their zeal was to find an outlet in faithful endurance as well as in loving service. They were by no means to be lukewarm or apathetic in the cause of truth and righteousness (Rev. iii. 15, 16), the cause which so urgently demands both fervour and fidelity. It was certainly not for them to be indifferent or heedless of the highest good because the opposite spirit exposed its possessor to suffering or shame. In one word, the Apostolic spirit was not to be merely well content to escape both praise and blame. But, from what we have already seen of the character of St. John, he evidently was not cast in that mould. His zeal, although still mistaken, comes out plainly in the words: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us; and *we forbid him*, because he followeth not us" (Mark ix. 38). And in no words of his is there clearer evidence of his intense appreciation of the blessings of Christ's kingdom than in the request: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory," followed by the assertion that, if necessary, they (St. John and St. James) were able to "drink of the cup" of their Master's suffering (Matt. xx. 20-23; Mark x. 35-40).

We may say, moreover, that in this too confident assertion of ability to suffer there was doubtless something better and higher—namely, a *willingness* to do so. St. John's *knowledge* was at fault, but not his *will*. He needed a clearer perception of the meaning of his words as well as of the work which would have to be accomplished before that "glory" of which he spoke could be fully revealed. Three, at least, of our Lord's earliest disciples needed a special training for the work which lay before them, and they stood in the front rank of the Apostles. They were full of impetuous zeal, and were devoted in their attachment to Christ. Their training, then, might well proceed in that closely-knit companionship which they were permitted to enjoy with the Master. Peter, James, and John were the favoured witnesses on the three important occasions of our Lord's Transfiguration, His raising from death the daughter of Jairus, and His mysterious Agony in the Garden (Matt. xvii. 1, 2 *et seq.*; Mark v. 37 *et seq.*; Luke viii. 41, 51 *et seq.*; Mark xiv. 33 *et seq.*). Of these three Apostles, Peter thrice denied our Lord, and only "the beloved disciple" beheld, in his Patmos exile, and before he

passed away from this life, the glory of his Ascended Lord. Peter, however, was associated with John in preparing for our Lord's last Passover; they followed Him when He was brought before His judges; they visited the empty tomb together on the first Easter morn; and to Peter specially did an angel send the message of the Resurrection. In all this Peter shares the distinction with his brother-Apostle. But it is with "the beloved disciple" that we are chiefly concerned on the present occasion, and therefore we now turn from the synoptists' portraiture of St. John to the Fourth Gospel, the Epistles which bear his name, and the Book of the Revelation. Here we have the Apostle, Evangelist, and Seer on the great plane, so to speak, of his faith, work, and testimony. Here we have many different and glorious evidences of the fervent, constant, spiritual character of St. John not found in "the great common cycle of apostolic testimony" of the synoptists. Here the Apostle and his readers are carried forward from one profound truth to another, and have a deeper and more perfect insight into the full and ultimate meaning of the Gospel of the grace and truth of God. So that Alford truly observes: "In reading St. John's Gospel, we seem to see our Lord on a different side from that on which we have contemplated Him when reading the three" earlier Gospels.

It may also be said that the Apostle St. John of the synoptists is wonderfully matured and developed in spiritual perception and power in "the disciple whom Jesus loved" of the Fourth Gospel. And the fact is surely reasonable enough, for a growing perception of our Lord's true character would certainly be productive of a deep spiritual experience in the character of such a disciple as St. John. It is not too much to say that there are the truest evidences of this spiritual development in the Apostle throughout the Gospel which bears his name. In setting forth the profound teaching of revelation, it is distinctly in advance of the synoptic Gospels. Its characteristic subject-matter is such as we can well believe would be most likely to be treasured up in the mind of its inspired writer. In the first three Gospels we do not read of St. John ever stumbling at the most mysterious of our Lord's utterances. His attitude towards our Lord was in some respects like that of Mary in the home at Bethany. In all his writings we have the clearest proofs that he possessed a calm, meditative, and spiritually elevated mind, intent on emphasizing the greatest and most mysterious truths of Divine Revelation, and entering more and more into "the mind which was in Christ." St. John evidently was able to deeply sympathize with all his Master's expressed thoughts and desires, as well as with His plans. This was chiefly St. John's

attitude towards our Lord during His earthly ministry. Consequently, he understood more clearly the meaning of His words, he saw more exactly the character of His movements, and he realized more completely the issue of His purposes, and, as time passed away, he dwelt more upon these things, and finally decided to commit to writing the record of what he so certainly "knew," and had himself received (John xix. 35, xxi. 24; 1 John i. 1-3). It has been well said that "everything relating to St. John seems to partake of the sanctity which invests the person and recollections of his Divine Master." Many passages in his writings are specially characterized by that sacred phenomenon; and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, no New Testament writings display a more intimate acquaintance with the profoundest truths, or are endowed more richly with the principle of love, which is pre-eminently the principle of the spirit of Christ, than the writings of St. John. For instance, in his Gospel we may mention i. 1-14, 16-18; vi.; parts especially of ix.-xi.; and xiii.-xvii., "which close the teaching of Christ in the flesh, and introduce the teaching of Christ in the Spirit."

Again, a characteristic, as we have already said, of St. John's writings is that he also enters more closely and particularly into our Lord's mind. He certainly does not merely furnish us with second-hand information. Nor does he confine himself to setting forth the records of what he saw, although he gives us details which only an eye-witness would venture to record (St. John i. 14; 1 John i. 1-3, v. 9; Rev. i. 2, 12-17, 20; St. John xix. 35, xx. 8, 30, 31, xxi. 24). He knows the *hour* of the day when certain events took place (St. John i. 39; iv. 6; xix. 14; *cf.* xiii. 30; xx. 1), and his description of them is full of the force and directness of one who wrote from personal observation.

But he was not only an eye-witness: he evidently enjoyed in a pre-eminent degree the confidence of his Master. We have unmistakable evidence that this fact was known to the other Apostles (St. John xiii. 23, 24). Moreover, as in the case of human friendship, a "union of hearts" begets increasing mutual knowledge; so while our Divine Lord "knew all men," knew their thoughts, motives, and imaginations, He allowed St. John to possess a more intimate knowledge of his Lord than that which was possessed by his fellow-disciples. St. John not only records our Lord's actions and words, as the other Apostles might also have done: he speaks of His knowledge (ii. 24, 25; v. 6; vi. 61; xiii. 3, 11; xviii. 4), motives (vi. 6; vii. 1), of His "groaning in the spirit" (xi. 33, 38), and of His being "troubled in spirit" (xiii. 21). Indeed, whole passages in his writings are so steeped in this wonderful

personal knowledge that, apart from the belief that the Evangelist speaks of himself in the precious periphrase, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," they unmistakably proclaim themselves to be the work of one who enjoyed that distinction: for he is present on most of the important occasions, public and private, of our Lord's life. He is an attentive listener to, and observer of, all that is said and goes on around him. He hears what the people say when the Father speaks to our Lord from heaven, and records their different explanations of what they imperfectly heard, at the same time giving the real words and character of the Divine Speaker (xii. 28, 29). He is not only acquainted with the chief places mentioned in the Gospel narrative, and is able to point out their situation (i. 28, 44; ii. 1; xi. 18; xxi. 2), but also recalls events which had previously taken place, and speaks with a definite knowledge of details, and of the circumstances and actions of individuals, connected with the Gospel history (xix. 39; cf. iii. 1, 2; xi. 49; xviii. 13). It is also deserving of notice that he was a welcome guest in the home of Lazarus and the sisters, which fact was no doubt due, not only to his personal qualities, but also to his host's knowledge that he was "the Master's" (xi. 28) beloved disciple and friend.

If, moreover, St. John's mother and the Virgin Mary were sisters, that fact also illumines the intimacy which existed between Master and disciple, especially as it is recorded that our Lord's brethren did not believe in Him during the time of His earthly ministry (vii. 5). St. John's faith and devotion were a noble set-off against their unbelief and opposition. His attachment to our Lord was at least as ardent as His brethren's unbelief was stolid. His feelings were not those of a mere emotional admiration for goodness (Mark x. 17, 18). The earnest spirit in which he followed Christ even prompted him on one occasion to prohibit another's good work who "followed not with" them (Luke ix. 49). The fact that the man did his good work in outward separation from the Master and His Apostles seemed to St. John a plain proof of his lack of *esprit de corps*. In keeping with this view of the Apostle's action on this occasion is also the fact that the denial of the Master by a *brother disciple* in a time of sore temptation did not weigh with St. John to break off friendly intercourse with the delinquent. In company with St. Peter he visited the empty sepulchre on the first Easter morning (St. John xx. 2, 3). With his true insight into our Lord's character, he no doubt anticipated His forgiveness of the penitent Apostle. And the last verses of St. John's Gospel are also concerned with the two Apostles, and with our Lord's restoration of St. Peter to his Apostleship. Then, when Peter was forgiven

and restored to his Divinely appointed work, he would have the Master turn His gaze upon his friend and appoint his work also: "*Lord, and what shall this man do ?*"

Lord, and what shall this man do ?

Ask'st thou, Christian, for thy friend ?

If his love for Christ be true,

Christ hath told thee of his end :

This is he whom God approves,

This is he whom Jesus loves.

* * * * *

Gales from Heaven, if so He will,

Sweeter melodies can wake

On the lonely mountain rill

Than the meeting waters make.

Who hath the Father and the Son,

May be left, but not alone.

(1 John i. 3 ; ii. 23, 24). "*Jesus saith unto him (Peter), If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou Me*" (St. John xxi. 19-22). And so it came to pass that in time Peter followed his Lord in the path of suffering, self-denial, and death. "Followed" Him in a path which leads through death to an endless life and eternal glory, while John "tarried" behind, the last of the Apostles, bearing the burden of life not only in its hot noontide, but long after its evening shadows had fallen around him ; and then he, too, went to his rest and his reward.

Further, when we turn to the Epistles of St. John, the same characteristics of "the beloved disciple" are everywhere distinctly seen and confirmed. Here we meet with a tenderness which cannot be mistaken for weakness, love combined with the most real firmness, a decisiveness in behalf of the Christian faith, purity, and claims, together with the keenest perception of the intense reality and worth of these things, which well accord with what we have already seen of this Apostle's character and intercourse with our Lord (1 John i. 7 ; ii. 1-10, 15-24 ; iii. 1-10 ; iv. 7-21 ; v. 1, 9-15, 20, 21 ; 2 John 2-4, 7, 9-11 ; 3 John 3-5, 11). And just as it has been said that "the heavenly element, which forms the background of the first three Gospels, is the atmosphere of the fourth," so, too, the grand purpose of St. John's Gospel (xx. 31) appears and reappears in his Epistles (I. ii. 22-24 ; iii. 23 ; iv. 2, 3 ; v. 1, 10-13, 20 ; II. 9). Moreover, such passages as St. John xiv., 1 John iii., and Rev. i.-iii., xxi., xxii., have in all ages appealed to multitudes of hearts with a power and solace peculiarly their own. They have been believed to possess such a wealth of Divine assurance, such a harvest of promised joys, such treasures of Divine love and foregleams of the Christian's future experience of peace and bliss, that we do not find else-

where in the New Testament; in fact, they are redolent of the Divine Speaker and His loving words in St. Matt. xi. 28-30. It is surely well to remember, when studying such portions of the Book of Life, that we "are permitted to draw near, and invited to listen, and to learn, and to live." We need to "ponder" such passages "in our hearts" (Luke ii. 19). In the writings of St. John we have the deepest truths of Christianity; and, without doubt, he was best fitted to pen those truths, "whose head had rested on the Lord's breast, who had stood beside the Cross, had witnessed the Ascension, had cherished till her death the Mother of the Lord, had seen the Jewish dispensation closed and the Holy City overthrown, and to whom the beatific visions of the Apocalypse had been granted" (Dr. Plummer). In the words of St. John, we have, so to speak, the very "tones of the heavenly harmonies"; and he, the beloved disciple, is truly "the Apostle of Love."

In no uninspired portraiture is the Apostle set before us more beautifully and pathetically than in the following too little-known poem on "St. John the Aged," which appeared anonymously several years ago in a magazine published at Philadelphia:

I'm growing very old. This weary head
That hath so often leaned on Jesus' breast
In days long past, that seem almost a dream,
Is bent and hoary with its weight of years,
These limbs that followed Him, my Master, oft,
From Galilee to Judah; yea, that stood
Beneath the cross, and trembled with His groans,
Refuse to bear me even through the streets
To preach unto my children. E'en my lips
Refuse to form the words my heart sends forth.
My ears are dull; they scarcely hear the sobs
Of my dear children gathered round my couch;
My eyes so dim they cannot see the tears.
God lays His hand upon me—yea, His *hand*,
And not His *rod*—the gentle hand that I
Felt those three years, so often pressed in mine,
In friendship such as passeth woman's love.

I'm old, so old! I cannot recollect
The faces of my friends, and I forget
The words and deeds that make up daily life;
But that dear face, and every word He spoke,
Grow more distinct as others fade away;
So that I live with Him and holy dead
More than with living.

Some seventy years ago
I was a fisher by the sacred sea:
It was at sunset. How the tranquil tide
Bathed dreamily the pebbles! How the light
Crept up the distant hills, and in its wake
Soft purple shadows wrapped the dewy fields!

And then He came and called me : then I gazed
For the first time on that sweet face. Those eyes
From out of which, as from a window, shone
Divinity, looked on my inmost soul,
And lighted it for ever. Then His words
Broke on the silence of my heart, and made
The whole world musical. Incarnate Love
Took hold of me, and claimed me for its own ;
I followed in the twilight, holding fast
His mantle.

Oh, what holy walks we had !
Through harvest fields, and desolate, dreary wastes ;
And oftentimes He leaned upon my arm,
Wearied and wayworn. I was young and strong,
And so upbore Him. Lord, now I am weak,
And old and feeble ! Let me rest on Thee !
So put Thine arm around me closer still !
How strong Thou art ! The daylight draws apace :
Come let us leave these noisy streets, and take
The path to Bethany ; for Mary's smile
Awaits us at the gate, and Martha's hands
Have long prepared the cheerful evening meal ;
Come, James, the Master waits, and Peter, see,
Has gone some steps before.

What say you, friends ?
That this is Ephesus,¹ and Christ has gone
Back to His kingdom ? Ay, 'tis so, 'tis so,
I know it all, and yet just now I seemed
To stand once more upon my native hills,
And touch my Master. Oh, how oft I've seen
The touching of His garments bring back strength
To palsied limbs ! I feel it has to mine.
Up ! bear me to my church once more,
There let me tell them of a Saviour's love ;
For by the sweetness of my Master's voice
Just now, I think He must be very near,—
Coming, I trust, to break the veil which time
Has worn so thin that I can see beyond,
And watch His footsteps.

So raise up my head.
How dark it is ! I cannot seem to see
The faces of my flock. Is that the sea
That murmurs so, or is it weeping ? Hush !
" My little children. God so loved the world
He gave His Son ; so love ye one another,
Love God and men. Amen." Now bear me back.
My legacy unto an angry world is this—
I feel my work is finished. Are the streets so full ?
What call the flock my name ? The holy John ?
Nay, write me rather Jesus Christ's beloved,
And lover of my children.

¹ Bishop Lightfoot says that " the last surviving Apostle's latest years were spent in the church at Ephesus " (Essay on the " Christian Ministry " in his work on the Epistle to the Philippians ; 7th edition).

Lay me down
 Once more upon my couch, and open wide
 The Eastern window. See, there comes a light
 Like that which broke upon my soul at even,
 When, in the dreary Isle of Patmos,¹ Gabriel came,
 And touched me on the shoulder. See, it grows,
 As when we mounted towards the pearly gates!
 I know the way! I trod it once before.
 And hark! it is the song the ransomed sung
 Of glory to the Lamb! How loud it sounds;
 And that unwritten one! Methinks, my soul
 Can join it now. But who are these who crowd
 The shining way? Say! joy! 'Tis the eleven!
 With Peter first; how eagerly he looks!
 How bright the smiles are beaming on James' face!
 I am the last. Once more we are complete,
 To gather round the Pascal feast.

My place
 Is next my Master! Ob, my Lord! my Lord!
 How bright Thou art, and yet the very same
 I loved in Galilee! 'Tis worth the hundred years²
 To feel this bliss! So lift me up, dear Lord,
 Unto Thy bosom. There shall I abide.

JOHN R. PALMER.

¹ Bishop Christopher Wordsworth observes in his Greek Testament on Rev. i. 9: "There is a beautiful mildness in the expression, 'I was in the island'—I became—I found myself—for the sake of God's Word, an inmate of Patmos. He regards his banishment like a voyage and sojourn in a pleasant place, for he was there visited by Christ. The expression is characteristic of the spirit of a holy martyr when speaking of his own sufferings for Christ. Cf. the use of *ἐπέβη* in John vi. 21, x. 35. How striking the contrast between St. John the Evangelist, an exile in Patmos, and Seneca, the philosopher, an exile in Corsica!"

Moreover, "Patmos, a rugged and bare island, now Patmo or Palmosa, is one of the Sprades. Its circumference is nearly thirty miles, and it is in that part of the Ægean which is called the Icarian Sea." See also a beautiful passage in Dr. H. C. G. Moule's little volume, "Life in Christ and for Christ," ch. v. (Hodder and Stoughton).

² Bishop Wordsworth says: "By the mercy of God, the life of the Apostle and Evangelist St. John, the beloved disciple of Christ, was extended to the beginning of the second century after Christ" (Greek Testament, Introduction to the First Epistle of St. John).

"St. John is said to have been about a hundred years old at the close of the Emperor Domitian's reign, and the latter died Sept. 18, A.D. 96" (*ibid.*, Introduction to the Book of Revelation).

