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NOTES ON THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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I. "WE" IN 1 14; 3 11 AND 4 22

MUCH may be written about the personal and demonstrative pronouns in the Fourth Gospel, such as the cryptic *ἐκεῖνος* of 19 35. In the Prologue, when "the Logos became flesh and dwelt among *us* (*ἐν ἡμῖν*) and *we* beheld its glory," who are the *we* intended? Rendel Harris (*Prologue*, p. 33) says the believing Jews are meant. Loisy says, "The word *we* refers to the generation contemporary with the author, especially to the circle of the disciples . . . The evangelist speaks as an eyewitness of the life of Jesus, and the persons whom he associates with himself must be in the same position" (p. 187). So traditional comment generally has taken the words as the natural expression of John, one of Jesus' own personal circle. But the author's intent has surely no concern with chronology; still less has he in mind such followers of Jesus as are Jews rather than Gentiles. Whether of the first century or of the second, of the circumcision or of the uncircumcision, his "we" are simply Christians, especially the true spiritual Christians of the "Johannine" type, the "mystics," as Merx calls them, among whom the Logos tabernacled, who beheld (as "the world" did not) his glory, who, in the closely attached sixteenth verse, received from the *pleroma* of his grace and truth one grace upon another.

This same body of Christian "we" appears again in passages which have always been exegetical problems, 3 11 and 4 22. In 3 11, "What we know we speak and what we have seen we testify, and our witness ye receive not" (*ὃ οἶδαμεν λαλοῦμεν καὶ ὃ ἐώρακαμεν μαρτυροῦμεν καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἡμῶν οὐ λαμβάνετε*), clearly

we have "we Christians" over against "you Jews." Nicodemus and Jesus are the representatives or spokesmen of the two groups, as they confront one another in second century Asia Minor. The second person pronoun goes on in the plural in the next verse, "If I told you (*ὑμῶν*) the earthly things and ye believe (*πιστεύετε*) not, how if I tell you (*ὑμῶν*) the heavenly things will you believe (*πιστεύετε*)?" There is no possibility of rendering verse 11, as Bernard Weiss or Professor Riggs, for example, would do, "John the Baptist and I speak from experience." Weizsäcker (*Apostolisches Zeitalter*, p. 548) saw long ago that here not the Master, but the disciples of the later day, must be speaking. The case is still clearer in 4 22, "Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship (*προσκυνήσετε*) the Father. Ye worship (*ὑμεῖς προσκυνεῖτε*) what ye know not (*οὐκ οἴδατε*), we worship what we know (*ἡμεῖς προσκυνούμεν ὃ οἴδαμεν*), for salvation is of the Jews." Here, too, we have "we Christians" in pronouncement against a non-Christian world. The Samaritan woman who is for the moment the representative of the latter is not sharply individualized. A Jewish woman would have done quite as well, or a pagan like one of the Athenians to whom Paul spoke on Mars' Hill. Her initial question, based on the opposition of Jew and Samaritan, is turned by Jesus so deftly that Jew and Samaritan are grouped on one side, over against Christian on the other. The evangelist knows the historic antagonism of Jew and Samaritan, and pays it his respects in a word of the woman (4 9, where the phrase "for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" is surely interpolated scribal comment), but it plays no part in the development of the incident from Jesus' side. Indeed, the evangelist takes especial pains to indicate that it has no meaning for Jesus at all. He must needs pass through Samaria; his disciples go into a Samaritan village to buy food; he asks drink of a Samaritan woman, to whom he proceeds to give his highest teaching; her Messianic expectation is couched in quite the usual Jewish form, "I know that Messiah cometh, he that is called Christ. When he is come" etc.; his disciples wonder that he is talking with a woman (not that he talks with a Samaritan); the Samaritan villagers, in response to her query, "Can this be the Christ?"

come to Jesus, believe on him and recognize him as indeed the Saviour of the world, and he accepts the hospitality of their village for two days. In all this the historical antagonism of Jew to Samaritan is completely transcended. Jesus is certainly in no sense playing the rôle of a Jew, and the Samaritans are but a type, as the Jews commonly are, of the unbelieving world into which the Christian gospel comes and finds some scanty response. That these folk are Samaritans rather than Jews plays no part in the pragmatism of the passage, here or later. Therefore "ye," who worship that which ye know not, are "ye Samaritans and Jews and outsiders generally"; while "we," who worship what we know, are Christians, not Jews, not Samaritans. We worship neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem. And that makes it certain that the clause "for salvation is of the Jews," at the end of 4 22, is, like its analogue, "for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans," in 4 9, a scribal interpolation, and this time an erroneous one. So, on various grounds, have argued Arnold Meyer, Merx, Spitta, Kreyenbühl and others. The clause assumes that Jesus is here identifying himself with the Jews, in the "we" of "we worship." That is the last thing the Fourth Gospel Jesus could ever do; for this writer the term "Jew" is invariably a term of reproach for the hostile company that stands over against Jesus and his gospel. If the evangelist or his Jesus had conceivably wished to make a statement of this kind, identifying the Logos Son of God with the racial source of the historic man of Galilee, the term used would never have been "the Jews," but "Israel," which is regularly substituted when Judaism or one of its representatives is spoken of with approbation or even without censure. Imagine Nathanael being called "*a Jew* indeed in whom there is no guile," or saluting Jesus as "Son of God, king of *the Jews*" (1 47-49)! Furthermore the clause "for salvation is of the Jews" is logically not in point in the context. It does not in the least ground the precedent statement "we worship that which we know," in which, as in the whole context, the point is not *σωτηρία* (a word nowhere else found in the Fourth Gospel) but *προσκύνησις*, worship.

With the omission of this interpolated clause, then, we have again the proud Christian challenge to a non-Christian populace,

"Ye worship what ye know not; we worship what we know." It is thus the perfect parallel to 3 11, "We speak that which we know and testify of that which we have seen," and to the words of the Prologue, "The Logos became incarnate and tabernacled among us [or shall we not say: *in us*?] and we beheld its glory [though the darkness comprehended it not] and of its fulness we all received." Here the true Church speaks.

II. 1 43 AND ITS CONTEXT

The statement of 1 43, "On the morrow he was minded (*ἠθέλησεν*) to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth (*εὗρίσκει*) Philip and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me," has long been a puzzle on account of its awkward phrasing. *Who* was minded to go to Galilee? *Who* finds Philip? If Jesus, then the next clause, *καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς*, is very awkward. The subject of the preceding verbs clearly ought to be another than Jesus. Professor Bacon (*Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate* pp. 202—204; *Expositor*, Jan. 1922 p. 45) has argued that an original section describing the call of the sons of Zebedee has been here suppressed by an editor, the original subject of *ἠθέλησεν* and *εὗρίσκει* being then a name in that section, presumably John. But if any subject is to carry over the initial *τῷ ἐπαύριον* from a preceding section, can it not most easily be the last word of the present preceding section, the word just before *τῷ ἐπαύριον*, only the third word before *ἠθέλησεν*, namely Πέτρος? It is Peter who finds Philip. This immediately introduces into the context that sort of scheme and balance so attractive to the evangelist. Andrew finds Peter, Peter finds Philip, Philip finds Nathanael. Each man found in turn finds the next—a neat arrangement utterly ruined if we make Jesus or John or any other than Peter the subject here. Verse 44, also, becomes intelligible on this supposition, and in turn explains verse 43. Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew who found Peter and of Peter who found him. In other words the three *finders* of this three-fold episode belong to the same town and are grouped here in a single sentence otherwise pointless, with Andrew preceding Peter as he precedes him in the serial finding.

Then the fact that Peter, like his two colleagues, is from Bethsaida in Galilee, serves as a motive for the otherwise wholly unmotivated statement that he wanted to go to Galilee. He was starting for home. Before setting out, he finds his fellow-townsmen and brings him to Jesus.

III. "I GO NOT UP TO THIS FEAST"

One of the most difficult passages of the Fourth Gospel is 7 8, in which Jesus says to his unbelieving brothers, "Go ye up unto the feast. I go not up unto this feast." (*ὕμεις ἀνάβητε εἰς τὴν ἑορτὴν, ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀναβαίνω εἰς τὴν ἑορτὴν ταύτην.*) Yet two verses later, when his brothers were gone up to the feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret. It does not read well. We do not wonder that early scribes sometimes, in view of verse 9 ("and having said these things to them, he abode in Galilee"), substituted for the intolerable *οὐκ* the relief of *οὐπω*, which could be supplied from the next clause. Our only wonder is that anyone can believe that the easy *οὐπω* was original and was altered by scribes into the impossible *οὐκ*, which from the earliest times has made the phrase a sore point. The third-century neo-platonic critic of Christianity, Porphyry, was not the first, nor was Schopenhauer the last to find here evidence of a lamentable inconsistency on the part of the Christians' Master. The struggles and evasions of the commentators on the passage form a remarkable exhibit in the history of exegesis. And yet each new commentator must add another attempted explanation to the list. The evangelist, it must be admitted, is not afraid of contradictions, as witness his denial in 4 2 of his previous three-fold statement that Jesus was baptizing. And yet we should probably assume that in his own mind the contradictions are only on the surface, incident to his literary method, a matter of his phrasing rather than of his intent. If we look more closely here we may let *οὐκ* stand and still escape the charge of absolute contradiction. What Jesus says is, "Do you go up *εἰς τὴν ἑορτὴν*. I go not up *εἰς τὴν ἑορτὴν ταύτην*." The repetition of "to the feast" indicates that the *purpose* of the journey is essential to the meaning. Is not this after all the

point? The brothers went up *to the feast*; they left in time, and as good, orthodox, pious Jews reached the holy city and began to participate in the rites and observances of the sacred occasion. That is what they went for. Jesus had no intention of going *to the feast*; he waited therefore in Galilee until the feast was well under way, thereby establishing his independence of any obligation or purpose to attend the feast. Only when the festival was half over did he appear in Jerusalem, not to engage in any way whatever in the celebration, but only to take advantage of the great throngs there gathered, to speak his message. Notice the three-fold repetition of the phrase about the feast: You go up to the feast; I'm not going up to this feast; his brothers went up to the feast. Then, later, Jesus himself also *went up* (τότε καὶ αὐτὸς ἀνέβη, verse 10), with very significant omission of the *εἰς τὴν ἑορτὴν*. So (verse 11) the Jews were looking for him *ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ* and he was not there. But he did go up *incognito* to the city, and taught. He would not travel with the companies of pilgrims, nor go at the appointed festal time, for *he was not going to the feast*.

What we find here, moreover, is characteristic of all the references to the feasts in the Fourth Gospel. Jesus always goes up to Jerusalem *at the feast-times*, but never *to the feasts*. He finds on these occasions large gatherings of people whom he can address, it is a favorable opportunity for him to be heard, but it is never suggested or hinted that he took any part whatever in the festal observance itself. We could not imagine the Fourth Gospel Jesus piously eating the Passover supper, following its prescribed ritual, though he goes to Jerusalem *at the Passover*. So far from showing him a loyal Jew, as some traditional commentators have supposed, these feasts only furnish another opportunity of marking Jesus' complete detachment from every requirement of the Jewish religion. Upon every such occasion in the gospel, he might say to his fellows, "You go up to the feast; I'm not going up to this feast," and yet go up, when it is late enough to demonstrate that his object is not the ceremonial one. In Jerusalem at the feasts, he never goes to Jerusalem to the feasts.