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NOTES AND STUDIES

THE JOHANNINE ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS.

THE day is perhaps over when the use of the Fourth Gospel as a historical source for the life of Jesus either exposed the user to the charge of credulity at the hands of critics, or at least threw upon him the onus of defending its historicity by elaborate arguments or else producing some independent confirmation of its statements. While the problems of its authorship and structure still remain unsolved, and while its discourses and dialogues often set forth the theological views of its author rather than the words of the persons of whom he writes, the established accuracy of many of its historical and geographical details¹ furnishes quite sufficient grounds for taking at least the narrative portion seriously, and for assuming that it rests on as reliable a tradition as the synoptic story, unless definite reasons to the contrary are forthcoming in the case of any special incident. If so much as this can be said without defying the dicta of modern critical experts, the vindication of historicity may perhaps be held to cover the general chronological scheme of the Gospel—always allowing for doubts that may be raised in regard to the position and interpretation of particular episodes and accidental dislocations of the text. It is the purpose of this article to discuss, on the basis of the view here set forth, two or three points in connexion with the early ministry of Jesus, as recorded in the first four chapters of the Gospel.

The story opens with a sort of diary extending over seven consecutive days, which we must presume to have fallen shortly after the Temptation and shortly before the first Passover of the ministry (ii 13). The seven days are marked as follows:—

1. The Jewish Deputation to the Baptist (i 19–28).
2. The first designation of Jesus by the Baptist as ‘the Lamb of God’ (i 29–34).
3. The second such designation: Jesus followed by Andrew and another (i 35–40).
4. Andrew brings Simon to Jesus (i 41–42).²

¹ Moffatt *INT.* 541–550.

² Adopting the reading *πρωτὶ* (‘early next morning’—so MSS b and e of the Old Latin version, and the Sinaitic Syriac) instead of the difficult *πρωτον* in v. 41. The *πρωτον* is generally taken to imply that, after Andrew had *first* brought Simon to

5. The call of Philip and Nathanael and the journey to Galilee (i 43-51).

6. A blank.

7. The Marriage-Feast at Cana (ii 1-11).¹

Then comes a stay of 'not many days' at Capernaum with his mother, brothers, and disciples (ii 12),² after which Jesus goes up to Jerusalem because the Passover is at hand. On arrival there he turns the traders out of the Temple courts (ii 13-22), and later has his interview with Nicodemus. In this dating of the cleansing of the Temple, the Fourth Gospel is at issue with the other three, which agree in placing that incident at the end of the ministry, a week before Jesus's death. Apart from those who for harmonistic reasons believe that there were two cleansings of the Temple, one at the beginning and one at the end of the Ministry,³ practically all critics agree in regarding the Synoptic chronology as historically true, and in discrediting the Johannine arrangement as a deliberate anachronism.⁴ The following considerations may, however, be urged as telling in favour of the Fourth Gospel on this point.

1. The 'triple tradition' of the Synoptics here reduces itself to the authority of Mark. We have no reason for supposing that Matthew and Luke had access to any information as to the date of the incident beyond the narrative of Mark.⁵

Jesus, the unnamed disciple (supposed to be John) then brought *his* brother James to Jesus (so e.g. Plummer in *Camb. Greek Test. ad loc.*—without even mentioning the variant reading, p. 61): but this is highly dubious.

¹ The marriage took place 'on the third day' (ii 1), i. e. counting the day of the marriage and the day last mentioned.

² The Rev. F. W. Lewis, whose interesting little monograph, *Disarrangements in the Fourth Gospel* (1910), I shall have occasion to quote, informs me that he equates this visit to Capernaum with that of Mt. iv 13, which begins the Galilean Ministry in the Synoptics, and hence finds it necessary to bracket the Synoptic statement that this took place after John's imprisonment (Mt. ii 12), out of deference to Jn. iii 24, which states that John was not yet cast into prison. But nothing is said in Jn. ii 12 ff. of an ensuing ministry in Galilee: the stay is one of 'not many days' and is followed by a visit to Jerusalem. It is much simpler to regard the Johannine and Synoptic visits to Capernaum as separate—putting the latter soon after the incident of Jn. iv 46-54 (cf. vi 1: v should follow vi—Lewis *op. cit.* 3-5, Moffatt *INT.* 554), and thus avoiding a contradiction between our two authorities in the matter of John's imprisonment.

³ e.g. Farrar *Life of Christ* xiii init.; Plummer *op. cit.* 96. Mr J. M. Thompson (*Expositor* VIII ix 434) rightly urges that the Johannine dating is probably intentional, and that the section is probably not one of those that have been accidentally removed from the position originally assigned to them by the author.

⁴ Moffatt *INT.* 538.

⁵ 'The synoptic tradition really is derived from Mk's scheme, which is admittedly far from exhaustive. . . . The synoptic scheme rests ultimately upon a single line of historical tradition' (Moffatt, 541, 543).

2. The complete dependence of Matthew and Luke on Mark in a matter of this sort, and their inability to correct him, even when he is in error, appears from the fact that they both follow him in describing the Last Supper as a Passover, whereas we know from the Fourth Gospel that the meal was taken on the night *before* the Passover.¹

3. We must therefore face the possibility that, as against the Fourth Gospel, Mark (and with him the 'triple tradition') may be in error in regard to the date of the cleansing of the Temple, as he is in regard to the date of the Crucifixion.

4. Now Mark knew of only one visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, namely, that which culminated in his death; and he was therefore obliged to place any Jerusalem incident, which he desired to relate, within the last week of the life of Jesus. Here we have a very sufficient reason why he puts the cleansing of the Temple so late in his story: on his theory of only one visit to Jerusalem he had no other choice.

5. In making specific mention of only one visit to Jerusalem, Mark is followed by Matthew and Luke, whereas (apart altogether from the direct statements of the Fourth Gospel to the contrary) the Synoptics themselves contain numerous traits and touches, implying a ministry in Judaea and more than one visit to Jerusalem before the last; e.g. the lament over Jerusalem in Mt. xxiii 37 ff (‘how *often* did I wish to gather thy children’ &c.), several indications in Luke’s ‘larger interpolation’ (Lk. ix 51 ff—a definite start for Jerusalem [cf. x 1, 17]; x 38 f—a visit to Bethany; xi 51—the reference to the death of Zechariah at Jerusalem; xvii 11 originally describing a journey *from* Jerusalem [?]; xviii 10 ‘two men went up into the Temple to pray’), Mt. v 23 f (‘If therefore thou art offering thy gift *at the altar*’, &c.), and generally the Synoptic data of the last visit (which imply a longer connexion with Jerusalem than a single week).²

6. We are therefore at liberty to assign to an earlier visit to Jerusalem any incident placed by Mark in the last week of Jesus’s life, provided the reasons for doing so outweigh its connexions with that week. What reasons are there for believing that the cleansing of the Temple occurred earlier than the Triumphal Entry?

(a) First of all we may place the direct Johannine statement. This, of course, will have little weight with those who are shy of relying on the historical statements of the Fourth Gospel; but whatever historical worth attaches to various details of its narrative—and that is very considerable—may fairly be pleaded in support of its chronological framework, with the series of feasts. It is more difficult to believe that that

¹ There seems no doubt that the Johannine tradition is correct in this respect. See Moffatt, 544 f.

² Moffatt, 541–546.

framework was invented in order to supply a fictitious verisimilitude to a romance or to serve some theological purpose, than it is to suppose that it rests on the reliable memory of a personal disciple (not necessarily himself the author). And in regard to this particular incident, it is not easy to see what purpose the misplacement was meant to serve. 'Possibly', says Dr Moffatt,¹ ' . . . the writer simply introduced the incident at this point in order to emphasize the saying' (John ii 19) 'as a proof that Jesus foresaw his death and resurrection from the very beginning. He has thus reset the incident, under the influence of his pragmatism . . . he considered that the first public visit of Jesus to Jerusalem must have been marked by an open assertion of his divine authority'. But, as Mr J. M. Thompson has argued,² Jesus's words were probably taken by the evangelist 'as a prediction of the almost miraculous growth of the Christian Church', and the verses applying them to his death and resurrection (i.e. *vv.* 21 f) are 'the mistaken comment of an editor of great zeal for the prophetic power of "the scripture and the word which Jesus had said", but with little insight into their real meaning'. If so, the desire to exhibit Jesus's foreknowledge of his death and resurrection could have played no part in determining the early position of the narrative. The suggestion that the author wanted to mark the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem by a display of power is not so easily dismissed: but in itself what weight has it, compared with the factors that constrained Mark to put it at the other end of the ministry?

(b) Secondly, the Fourth Gospel represents the Jews as saying to Jesus: 'Forty-six years has this temple been building' (John ii 20). Now it is of course possible to argue that the author, like the writer of a historical novel, calculated in cold blood the interval between the foundation of the Temple and the first Passover of Jesus's ministry, and framed this question accordingly. But is it not on any view at least as likely—and still more so, of course, if the Gospel narratives preserve on the whole valuable tradition—that the words actually reproduce, through the recollection of a spectator, what was actually said at the time? And if so, they could not have been spoken as late as a week before the death of Jesus: for the Temple was begun in 20-19 B. C., and the passover of the forty-sixth year would therefore be that of A. D. 27³—a likely date for the *commencement* of the ministry, but earlier than any date to which the crucifixion can plausibly be assigned.⁴ Unless therefore we are prepared to dismiss the words of the Jews as a calculated fiction, we

¹ *INT.* 538.

² *Expositor* VIII xiv 218-220.

³ C. H. Turner in *Hastings's DB.* i 405 b.

⁴ A. D. 27 was apparently the year of Pilate's arrival in Judaea, and Lk. iii 1, xiii 1, xxiii 12 shew that the crucifixion did not take place in the first days of his term of office (Turner *op. cit.* 410 b).

are driven to the conclusion that they must have been addressed to Jesus quite early in his ministry.¹

(c) There remains what may be called the psychological argument. Does the incident best fit the end or the beginning of Jesus's public life? The view usually taken is, that it is of a piece with the spectacular triumphal entry into Jerusalem, forming with it a public assertion of Messiahship, that 'it brings the enmity of the scribes and priests to a head . . . ; it is the natural climax of his ministry, a supreme effort to assert the rights of God in the headquarters of the nation, and his subsequent fate is the natural outcome of the deed'.² But this representation, while it explains certain features of the story, is not free from serious objections. The Outer Court, where apparently the cleansing took place, was not sacred soil; the sale of animals and the changing of money were necessary if the Temple-cultus was to be kept up at all; and if necessary, why should they not be permitted in the Court of the Gentiles as well as anywhere else? There is no reason to believe that the salesmen and moneychangers were all or for the most part dishonest; and in any case this special concern for the sanctity of a particular *place* does not harmonize very easily with the broad spirituality of Jesus, nor with his comparative indifference at other times to the Temple and the sacrificial system.³ Further, while his action did not involve the infliction of any personal injury on the offenders (the whip, as *vv.* 14, 15 shew, being used simply to drive the cattle)—scarcely even the use of physical violence towards them (for if one man expels a *crowd* it must be by the moral pressure of his personality, not the physical pressure of his hands)—nevertheless the whole proceeding was of a sufficiently violent and spectacular kind to form a striking contrast to that calmness and gentleness which Jesus normally both practised and commended: and the favourite plea that his wrath was rightly kindled at the sight of wrongdoing provokes the question why it was not more often kindled at the sight of more serious wrongdoing than that of which the traders in the Temple courts were guilty. On the whole, the difficulties of the

¹ The fact that Jesus was accused at his trial (Mk. xiv 58 ||) of using words similar to those of Jn. ii 19 does not prove that he had spoken these words a week before, and then only.

² Moffatt *INT.* 538.

³ Cf. Mt. iv 5-7, v 23 f, ix 13, xii 6, 7, xxiii 35, xxiv 1 f and parallels; Mk. xii 32-34; Jn. iv 20-24. *Per contra*, Mt. v 35, viii 4, xii 5, xxiii 16 f. Other allusions (e. g. Lk. xviii 10), and the fact that Jesus frequented the Temple courts and taught in them (probably because people naturally congregated there), do not tell us anything to the point. Mr Oesterley (*Hastings's Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* ii 712 f) finds the ordinary explanation of Jesus's conduct so difficult that he adopts the view that Jesus really meant by it 'to abrogate entirely the Jewish sacrificial system'.

episode as usually explained are so great that we cannot feel at all confident that the prevalent view is necessarily superior to the Johannine, which makes the act one 'not of messianic authority, but of a prophetic or reforming zeal'.¹ The criticisms of the act which have just been suggested may be beside the mark; but insofar as they have any weight they would tell in favour of putting the incident at an early point in Jesus's career, before the attitude and policy that were to guide his ministry had been clearly and definitely settled in his own mind.

The story of what Jesus did at the Passover (John ii 13-25) is succeeded by that of his interview with Nicodemus (John iii), which begins indeed as a *bona fide* conversation, but gradually tails off into a series of Christological reflexions on the part of the author himself. How much of the conversation is genuine history, and where exactly the reflexions of the author begin, are difficult questions, but the latter embrace at least iii 16-21 and 31-36. It is generally recognized that the intervening verses (22-30), describing Jesus's ministry of baptism in Judaea and a further testimony of the Baptist to him, are out of place, and disturb the obvious connexion between 10-21 and 31-36. The question is, where ought 22-30 to be placed? Several recent writers agree in inserting them between ii 12 and ii 13, i. e. between the brief stay at Capernaum and the first Passover visit.² I must confess that I find the reasons given for this particular readjustment entirely unsatisfying. Mr Lewis says: '... the lack of transition between 12 and 13 in II is not after the manner of the Evangelist. The passing of Jesus from Galilee to Judaea is always noted, as is that from Judaea to Galilee. Here it is not. After a journey from Judaea to Galilee elaborately described (I 43-II 11) Jesus settles in Capernaum with his family (II 12) —and almost immediately we find him going, not into Judaea, but directly to Jerusalem. We miss the usual phrase, covering an interval, "after these things". As the narrative stands, Jesus was back in Jerusalem three or four weeks after leaving Judaea. This can scarcely have been.'³

Now the lack of transition between ii 12 and ii 13 is, to say the least, not very obvious. It is not true to say that the passing of Jesus from Galilee to Judaea is always noted. We have in v 1 the words: 'After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem' (i. e. from Galilee, vi 59: vi having originally preceded v. Cf. xi 55 'Now the passover of the Jews was at hand: and many went

¹ Moffatt l. c.

² Lewis *Disarrangements* &c. 25-31; Moffatt *INT.* 553 note †; J. M. Thompson in *Expositor* VIII ix 422.

³ Lewis l. c. Similarly Thompson (l. c.): 'The sudden transition from Capernaum to Jerusalem without the usual mention of Judaea is . . . awkward.'

up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover to purify themselves'). I cannot find a single instance in which Jesus is expressly said to have gone up to Jerusalem *from Judaea*, as the proposed adjustment would here make him do (going to Judaea is spoken of in vii 1, 3 [verse 10 mentions neither Judaea nor Jerusalem], xi 7; and going from Judaea to Galilee in iv 3, 47, 54; xii 12 speaks of Jesus as about to come to Jerusalem when he was already at Bethany, i. e. in Judaea, but the last mention of Judaea is as far back as xi 7). The elaborately described journey of i 43-ii 11 is not one *from Judaea* to Galilee, but apparently from Beth-abara near Beth-shan, or in any case from some place 'beyond the Jordan' (i 28: see Conder in Hastings *DB.* i 276): this makes the immediately ensuing journey to Jerusalem a perfectly reasonable proceeding. As for the phrase 'after these things', whatever we may think of the need for it in ii 13, we may be morally certain that the author would not have commenced two consecutive verses (ii 12, iii 22) with *μετὰ τοῦτο* and *μετὰ ταῦτα*, which is what he does on the theory in question. Dr Moffatt considers that this theory 'probably solves most of the difficulties', and adds in its support the supposed close affinity between ii 6 (the water-pots at the wedding for purifying) and iii 25 (the dispute between a disciple of John and a Jew about purifying), between ii 2, 9 (the marriage at Cana: the bridegroom and his friend) and iii 29 (John's reference to Jesus as the bridegroom and himself as the bridegroom's friend), and between ii 12 (the stay at Capernaum) and iii 22 (the coming into the land of Judaea): but these points of contact are the reverse of striking, and quite insufficient to justify placing iii 22-30 after ii 12. The same may be said of Mr Lewis's contention that his arrangement brings iii 27-30 closer to John's words about Jesus in i. A further objection to this setting is that it leaves the interval between Nicodemus's interview (? shortly after Passover) and the ensuing December (four months before harvest—iv 35; see below) an absolute blank.

The best and simplest arrangement is to put iii 22-30 after iii 36. There is no real reason why Jesus should not be said to have gone from Jerusalem into the land of Judaea. We thus avoid the impossibility of two consecutive verses beginning 'after this': the phrase 'Jesus went up to Jerusalem' of ii 13 refers quite naturally, like the same phrase in v 1, to a journey from Galilee: the chasm of eight months or so between Passover and December is spanned, however scantily: and above all, the reference to Jesus baptizing (iii 22) and the complaint of John's disciple about Jesus's success (iii 26) are brought into fitting connexion with iv 1 f ('So when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John', &c.).

We pass on to the incident which took place at the well of Sychar. The narrative is perhaps one of the best instances we could have of that blending of genuine record with free construction which seems so characteristic of this Gospel. All except the actual conversation with the woman (iv 9-26) bears the stamp of verisimilitude. The incidents are perfectly natural; and the words of Jesus are quite in the synoptic manner (with iv 32, 34 cf. Mt. iv 4 ||; with 35 cf. Mt. ix 38 and the various agricultural parables; with 38 cf. Mt. xiii 16 f). The dialogue between Jesus and the woman, on the other hand, except the mere request for a drink, has several features highly improbable in real life. The way in which Jesus speaks of the living water (10-15), allowing the woman to think it was some material beverage, is needlessly misleading. The reference to the woman's five husbands is, to say the least, extraordinary, and may conceivably be a symbolical allusion to the five foreign races brought to Samaria (2 Kings xvii 24, 25). The introduction of the discussion as to the proper place for worship (20) has no connexion with what precedes. Almost equally abrupt is the woman's appeal to the Messiah (25). And could the words: 'Salvation is from the Jews' (22) ever have actually fallen from Jesus's lips? His explicit avowal of Messiahship (26) is out of keeping with the reserve—not to say the secrecy—with which we know from the Synoptics that he treated it; and it fits but ill with the woman's doubting suggestion (29): 'Can he be the Christ?' Unlike the story of the interview with Nicodemus, the narrative here clearly states (8) that there were no witnesses to the dialogue beyond the two participants: and it is not very easy to imagine Jesus or the woman retailing its details to one or more of the disciples. It looks very much as if the author of the Gospel took advantage of the occasion of a real, though unknown, conversation between Jesus and the woman, to use it as a blank space upon which he could inscribe what he believed to be his Master's views on such great topics as the comparative claims of the temples of Jerusalem and Gerizim, the true nature of worship, and the life eternal—as well as depicting his superhuman knowledge (17 f) and his Messianic self-consciousness (26).

The date of the incident is fixed by iv 35 as about the middle of December, harvest usually commencing (with barley) in the warmest and most fertile places about the beginning or middle of April.¹ It is difficult to imagine how any other interpretation could ever have been seriously entertained. It has, for instance, been suggested that 35 b and 36 refer to the actual harvest, and that 35 a contains a proverbial phrase alluding to the average interval between seed-time and harvest.²

¹ Hastings's *DB*, i 49 b, 408 a (note).

² Farrar *Life of Christ* i 207, n. 1 (ch. xv near the beginning): C. H. Turner in Hastings's *DB*, i 408.

On this shewing the incident occurred in the middle of harvest, about May. Origen's remark (which Mr Turner seems to regard as decisive in favour of this view), that as much as eight or nine months could not have elapsed since the Passover of ii, has little weight when the necessary transposition of v and vi is made: for it fills up the gap in one part of the narrative only to leave a still larger gap in another place, viz. between the arrival in Galilee (iv 43-45) in May and the Passover (April or May) of the next year (vi 4). Only the story of the cure of the courtier's son (iv 46-54) is then left to fill the void—a point which Mr Turner appears to have overlooked. Further, even if we could get over the difficulty of imagining a proverb of the form *ἐν τετράμηνός ἐστιν, κτλ.*,¹ we should be faced with the very pertinent question as to what the meaning of the two verses 35 and 36 would then be. It will be found impossible on this basis to give them any sense at all suitable to the context in which they occur. The only natural exegesis is to take 35 a as referring to the casual remarks of the disciples as they looked at the springing corn, and 35 b as referring to the spiritual harvest which Jesus saw waiting to be reaped in the crowds of white-clad Samaritans who were approaching him.

If we may now combine the results at which we have arrived in regard to the Johannine narrative, with the opening of the Synoptic story, we obtain the following rough framework:—

A. D. 27.	Beginning (or end of	{ Pontius Pilatus arrives in Judaea as Procurator (Lk. iii 1: cf. Turner <i>HBD.</i> i 410 b).
A. D. 26.)		{ Mission of John the Baptist (Mt. iii 1-12).
Jan.-Mar.		Baptism and Temptation of Jesus (Mt. iii 13-iv 11 s).
March.		The incident of the seven days of Jn. i 19-ii 11 (see above, pp. 1 f).
Mar.-April.		The short stay at Capernaum (Jn. ii 12).
April.		Passover: the cleansing of the Temple: the interview with Nicodemus (Jn. ii 13-iii 21, iii 31-36).
May-Dec.		Jesus baptizing in Judaea (Jn. iii 22-24, iv 2).
? Nov.		Dispute between a disciple of John and a Jew. John's further testimony to Jesus. (Jn. iii 25-30).

¹ Plummer (*Camb. Gk. Test. ad loc.*) rightly says: 'No such proverb is known, and a proverb on the subject would have to be differently shaped', and, we may add, differently introduced.

- Dec. Jesus starts for Galilee (Jn. iv 1, 3). John rebukes Herod and is imprisoned (Mk. vi 17-20 ||s; Josephus *Antiq.* XVIII v 2). Jesus near or at Samaria (Jn. iv 4-42). On hearing of John's imprisonment he goes on to Galilee (Mt. iv 12 ||s; Jn. iv 43-45); passes through Nazareth (Mt. iv 13 [καταλιπὼν τὴν Ναζαρά]; Lk. iv 16-30 belongs to a later occasion [see verse 23]); reaches Cana, where he cures the son of the courtier of Capernaum (Jn. iv 46-54); goes on to Capernaum himself (Mt. iv 13);
- ? A. D. 28. Jan. and there opens the Galilean ministry with the proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Mt. iv 17 [ἀπὸ τότε] ||s).

C. J. CADOUX.

PROFESSOR TORREY ON 'ACTS'¹

PROFESSOR C. C. TORREY, of Yale, published in 1916 a pamphlet of 72 pages in the *Harvard Theological Studies*, which on my return to ordinary University life I find to be not so well known in England as it deserves to be. I must confess at once that I am not in the least convinced of the correctness of Professor Torrey's main conclusions, but I am greatly impressed by the skill with which he has stated and defended them. It is rather an ungracious thing to introduce a friend and then to try to knock him down, and my excuse for doing this metaphorically to Professor Torrey's theory is my sense of the importance of his work and the danger of leaving it unanswered.

Professor Torrey's pamphlet consists of three chapters. In chap. i he elaborates his startling theory that the first half of Acts, viz. i 1-xv 35, is not only based to some extent on Semitic sources, but is actually a translation from an Aramaic document (pp. 3-41). In chap. ii he defends the integrity of the second half of Acts, viz. xv 36-end (pp. 42-54), and in chap. iii discusses the relation of the two parts, incidentally concluding that the date of Acts was early and that St Luke's Gospel was written before A. D. 61 (pp. 55-72). A good deal of chap. ii is concerned with Norden's *Agnostos Theos*, and since

¹ C. C. Torrey *The Composition and Date of Acts* (Harvard Theological Studies I), Cambridge (Mass.), 1916.