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AN INVESTIGATION CONCERNING THE  
AUTHORSHIP, DATE, AND PURPOSE  
OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by  
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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM, ITS IMPORTANCE, AND METHOD OF TREATMENT

In the realm of New Testament historical criticism there has been no problem so important and so critical, and which has drawn so much attention from the critical scholars, as has the problem of whether or not the Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John in the latter part of the first century.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

A statement of the problem. Ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century there has raged throughout Christendom a great controversy on this question of the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. The problem is simply this: Was the Fourth Gospel actually written by the Apostle John, or was it the product of some unknown writer of the second century?

This question of Johannine authorship has thus been one of great importance to both friend and foe of the Christian faith. The reason for this is self-evident. The Fourth Gospel claims to have been written by an eye-witness of all the things that Jesus said and did.<sup>1</sup> But the Fourth Gospel also contains the most elevated conception of the

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<sup>1</sup> John 21:24

Person and Work of Jesus Christ of any one of the Four Gospels. The Fourth Gospel is the basis for the doctrines of the Incarnation and Pre-Existence of Jesus Christ. It presents Jesus Christ as the Eternal One, the Only Begotten Son of God, Who came into the world to redeem it from its sin. Now the question that most critics have pondered is this: "How could an eye-witness have come to portray Jesus in such a way?"<sup>2</sup>

The answer of Baur and his disciples. Since the days of Baur, it has been maintained that the Fourth Gospel cannot be the work of an eye-witness. This has been the opinion of a long line of German, English, and American scholars. To question this has been, in the judgment of many, to expose oneself to the imputation of ignorance or incompetence.<sup>3</sup> But it should be remembered that this problem is a problem of criticism and not of dogmatism. If one is to arrive at a true historical answer, it will require an investigation that is as unprejudiced as possible.

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Clay Vedder, The Johannine Writings and the Johannine Problem (Philadelphia and Boston: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1917), p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

## II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Its paramount importance. The question of authorship, while a critical problem, has been one of not only first importance but also of great interest. Apologetic literature in former generations assumed that we had four independent witnesses to the life of Jesus in the four Gospels. Critical study has convinced most scholars, however, that we have just two witnesses: The Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John.<sup>4</sup> But many scholars have argued that since John's account of the life of Jesus Christ is so different from the Synoptics, it cannot be true. One of the purposes of this study will be to emphasize these differences, but to show that instead of disproving the fact that John wrote the Gospel they show that he did.

Maurice Jones states that "The question of the authorship of the Gospel of John is incomparably the most important of all the problems of New Testament Criticism. This is realized to the full extent by all investigators."<sup>5</sup> Or, as has been stated in the Greek Expositor's New Testament:

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Jones, The New Testament in the Twentieth Century (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1934), p. 359.

This is so because this Gospel is claimed to be written by a disciple who received the Master's special attention. If the claim is false, we have this paradox to justify; that the New Testament writing most eminent in ethical quality and spiritual insight was written by a man peculiarly deficient in these qualities. If, however, the claim is true, we have a portrait of our Lord and His ministry by the one who was nearest to Him and who understood Him best.<sup>6</sup>

The question of authenticity. Christendom has been vitally interested for almost two centuries now in knowing whether the Fourth Gospel represents Jesus as He was or whether it merely presents to us a second century picture of what the Church thought He ought to have been and to have said. Is it true as Loisy claimed that "the Gospel is not a testimony to the life of Jesus on earth but to the life of Christ in the Church at the end of the first century?"<sup>7</sup> Christian scholars have therefore sought to discover the truth by weighing the evidence fairly in order that they might find out whether this Gospel is only an interesting historical document, or if it is what it claims to be. These scholars have not been afraid of the facts, and as Vedder has pointed out: "There has been an apparent eagerness to discredit the Apostolic authorship of the Gospel and to remand

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<sup>6</sup> Marcus Dods, The Gospel According to John, Vol. I, W. R. Nicoll, editor, The Expositor's Greek Testament, 5 volumes (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), p. 655.

<sup>7</sup> Vedder, op. cit., p. 157.

its testimony to the domain of historical romance, which casts more than doubt upon the scientific impartiality of many critics."<sup>8</sup> Here then is the crux of the problem: If John wrote the Gospel, then it was written by an eye-witness and can be considered as trustworthy; if John did not write it, then many thoughts put forth by it may be false and the Gospel itself cannot be considered trustworthy. It is upon proving the unreliability of this Gospel that modern skeptics have placed great importance. Bishop Lightfoot wrote, as quoted by Jones:

The genuineness of St. John's Gospel is the center of the position of those who uphold the historical truth of the record of our Lord Jesus Christ given us in the New Testament. It enunciates in the most express terms the Divinity, the Deity, of our Lord, and at the same time professes to have been written by the one man, of all others, who had the greatest opportunity of knowing the truth.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, a very liberal scholar, Professor B. W. Bacon, in his book entitled The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate has stated:

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 359.

The Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel is the question of questions in all the domain of Biblical science. On this question we are driven unavoidably to the alternative--either Synoptics or John. Either the former are right in their complete silence regarding pre-existence and incarnation, and in their subordination of the doctrine of Jesus' Person, in presenting His work and teaching as concerned with the Kingdom of God with repentance and a filial disposition in life, as the requirement made by the common Father for that inheritance; or else John is right in making Jesus' work and message supremely a manifestation of His own glory as the incarnate Logos, effecting an atonement for the world which has otherwise no access to God. Both cannot be true.<sup>10</sup>

### III. METHOD OF TREATMENT

Method of organization. This, then, is the problem: Who wrote the Fourth Gospel? When was it written? What was the purpose for which it was written? This study shall be concerned entirely with the answers to these three questions. It shall have as its purpose the demonstration that the Fourth Gospel was written either directly or indirectly by the Apostle John, that it was written between the years 90 and 95 A.D., and that it was written for the express purpose of proving the Deity of Christ and of supplementing the historical record of the life of Christ as it is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels.

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<sup>10</sup> B. W. Bacon, The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1910), p. 3.

In the presenting of the evidence, after first of all making a brief historical sketch of the controversy itself, the investigator will then evaluate the external and internal evidence for the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, following which the objections to the traditional view shall be thoroughly examined, after which, by a comparative study of the Fourth Gospel with the Synoptics the investigator will attempt to show that the writer of the former was definitely trying to supplement the historical record of the latter. The final step will be to compile all the evidence and thus to demonstrate the authenticity and reliability of the Gospel of John as a product of the Beloved Disciple near the end of the first century.

The sources of evidence. In the discussion of this problem several different sources of data and evidence have been investigated. There will be references made to the purely historical evidences that have come down to us from the first four centuries. These include the writings that have emanated from the Ante-Nicene Fathers, certain heretics, as for instance the Gnostics, a few pagan writers, and the early canons as set forth by the early Church. The internal evidences shall include what the Fourth Gospel itself has to say about the question of authorship and purpose, the Synoptic Gospels, and the other Johannine writings. In addition to

these sources of data, the examination of the investigation and findings of nineteenth and twentieth century Biblical scholars has proved to be most valid. In addition to these, the investigator has explored independent avenues of thought and by a first-hand examination of the Biblical documents themselves has arrived at certain new observations and conclusions which will be presented throughout this present work.



## CHAPTER II

### A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE JOHANNINE CONTROVERSY

Before beginning an actual investigation of the evidence relating to the Johannine problem, the investigator has considered it necessary, in order to gain a more complete understanding of the controversy, to make a brief historical sketch of the progress and present state of this controversy.

Purpose of this sketch. In this historical sketch, it shall not be the purpose of the investigator to give it in complete detail, or to present all the arguments that each has put forth in defense of his respective position. The purpose, instead, will be to present a general view of how the controversy has progressed and how the situation stands at the present time. Thus, every work that has been written on this subject will not be mentioned, but only those works which give us a general idea of how the Johannine controversy has progressed. In the drawing up of this historical sketch, the investigator has depended a great deal upon the work of Godet, as his was the only work that gave such a sketch in sufficient detail to be really relevant to this present study.

The tradition of the Church. The tradition of the Christian Church in regard to the authenticity and the

authorship of the Fourth Gospel has been both universal and harmonious. In fact, whenever the Fourth Gospel was mentioned by the writers of the early Church, if it was not named as the work of the Apostle John, it was always assumed to be. The Fourth Gospel did not appear in the Christian Church or in tradition under any other name. Indeed, the name of John was the Fourth Gospel's introduction to the Church. Had there ever been any hesitation as to this point, some trace of it would have been bound to be preserved; but none has ever been found.<sup>1</sup>

So for well-nigh unto seventeen centuries, the unbroken tradition was that John the Apostle was the author of the Fourth Gospel. Irenaeus for instance has told us that "'John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned upon His breast himself, set forth the Gospel while dwelling in Ephesus, the city of Asia.'"<sup>2</sup> While Clement of Alexandria has been quoted by Eusebius as having written, as recorded by Jones:

That the tradition of the elders from the first is that John last having observed that the bodily things had been set forth in the Gospels, on the exhortation of his friends, inspired by the Spirit, produced a spiritual Gospel.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. E. Luthardt, The Apostle, Saint John (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1875), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Jones, The New Testament in the Twentieth Century (London: MacMillan Co., Ltd., 1934), p. 361.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 362.

Godet's division of the controversy. F. Godet in his "Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John" divided the history of the controversy into three divisions: (1) Those who absolutely denied that the Apostle John wrote the Gospel; (2) Those who affirmed that the Apostle John did write the Gospel; (3) The supporters of intermediate views.<sup>4</sup> This order of Godet will be followed in this work in giving a brief history of the controversy.

#### I. THOSE WHO HAVE DENIED THE JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP

The Gospel first questioned. Down to the end of the seventeenth century, the question as to whether or not John had written this Gospel had not ever been raised. The entire Church from the very beginning had attributed it to John. Midway in the eighteenth century some attacks of minor importance had been made by English Deists. Then in 1792, the English theologian Evanson made the first real criticism of the Fourth Gospel, pointing out the differences between it and the Apocalypse, and attributed the composition of the Fourth Gospel to some Platonic philosopher of the second century.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> F. Godet, Commentary on the Gospel of St. John (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1875), p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Loc. cit.

The early discussion in Germany. Germany soon took up the discussion, with several German theologians pointing out "the contradictions between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics, the exaggerated character of the miracles, and the metaphysical tone of its discourses."<sup>6</sup> They also pointed out the scarcity of literary traces establishing the existence of this writing in the second century.

Then in 1820, Bretschneider published his famous criticism of the Fourth Gospel. He put forth all the previous objections that had been raised with great force, and to these added others. He especially developed the contradictions between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. However, the result of this work was to call forth strong replies, so that in 1824 he declared that the answers to his book were "'more than sufficient."<sup>7</sup> Then in 1828 he declared that he had achieved his purpose "'of calling forth a more rigorous demonstration of the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>8</sup>

In 1824, the Gospel of John was rejected by Rettig, who claimed that the Gospel was written by a disciple of John and declared that "'the Apostle himself certainly did

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<sup>6</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Loc. cit.

not lack modesty to such an extent as to designate himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved."<sup>9</sup> Then in 1826, Reuterdaahl assailed as a fiction the tradition of the sojourn of John in Asia Minor. Strauss then published his book The Life of Jesus in 1835 which produced a great reaction on the problem of the authenticity of the Gospels. Shortly after this, Christian Hermann Weisse drew special attention to the close connection between the criticism of the history of Jesus and that of the writings in which it was preserved. He stated that John "had drawn up certain studies, which, when enlarged, became the discourses of the Fourth Gospel. To these, there was adopted at a later time an altogether fictitious historical framework."<sup>10</sup>

The criticism of Baur. In 1844, another period of the controversy began with the famous work of Ferdinand Baur. Baur emphasized the so-called polemic traits in the Gospel and fixed 170 A.D. as the year of composition. He did not attempt to name an author, however. Zeller then completed Baur's work by a study of the testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, in which he strove to sweep from history every trace of the existence of the Fourth Gospel before the year 170 A.D.

Hilgenfield around 1850 treated in a much more expansive way than had yet been done, the dispute about the Pass-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

over, and its relation to the authenticity of our Gospel. But he did show that the existence of the Gospel by 150 A.D. could no longer be doubted. He placed the date at about 130 A.D.

Later nineteenth century criticisms. In 1864, there appeared two important works. Weizsacker sought to prove that the writer of the Fourth Gospel only sought to reproduce freely the impressions he had received from hearing the Apostle John describe the life of our Lord. The second work was the radical work of Scholten, who sought to prove that the author was a Christian of Gentile origin, who after becoming a Gnostic sought to make this tendency profitable to the Church, and who wrote the Gospel around 150 A.D. In 1867 Keim in his History of Jesus violently opposed the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, taking his stand on the philosophical character of the writing; but he placed the date between 100 and 117 A.D. In 1871, Krenkle defended the sojourn of the Apostle John in Asia, and attributed the composition of the Apocalypse to him but not that of the Fourth Gospel.

Others in the nineteenth century who denied the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel were: Mangold, who thought the internal difficulty too great to assign the Fourth Gospel to the Apostle John; Renan, who thought the author was perhaps

a Christian to whom were confided the Apostles' traditions.

The critical position in the twentieth century. By the dawn of the twentieth century, critical scholars no longer could assign to the Fourth Gospel a date later than the first decade of the second century. But nevertheless, many scholars have vigorously denied the Johannine authorship of this Gospel. The most outstanding of these scholars have been: E. F. Scott, Moffatt, and B. W. Bacon.<sup>11</sup>

The attack by these scholars is opened by a resolute assault upon the Irenaeus tradition that the Fourth Gospel was written by St. John in his old age at Ephesus. They say that this has no foundation in fact. So, unable to deny the late first century date of the Gospel, they claim that there is no evidence that John spent the end of a long life in Asia Minor. On the contrary, they claim that there is a great deal of evidence to show that he ended his days by dying the death of a martyr in Jerusalem half a century before the time when he was supposed to have written his Gospel.<sup>12</sup>

## II. THOSE WHO HAVE DEFENDED THE JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP

The early nineteenth century defense of the tradition.

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<sup>11</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 375.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 376.

But while all this attack on the Fourth Gospel was going on, the defenders certainly were not inactive. Shortly after the opening attacks by the English Deists, two Englishmen, Priestly and Simpson, replied to the criticism of Evanson, while Storr and Suskind answered the early objections that were raised in Germany so well that Eckermann and Schmidt retracted their views. Continuing in their footsteps were Hug (1808), Eichhorn (1810), and Bertholdt (1813), all of whom declared themselves in favor of Johannine authorship. Then in the third decade of the nineteenth century Olshausen, Crome, and Hauff replied to Bretschneider so well that, as it has been noticed, even he was satisfied with their reply. Then Schliermacher in his Discourses on Religion proclaimed the Christ of John to be the true historic Christ, and critics so learned as Schott and Credner in like manner supported at that time the side of the authenticity.<sup>13</sup>

The replies to Strauss and Baur. After the appearance of Strauss' book The Life of Jesus in 1835, the replies of Tholuck and Neander were so outstanding as to draw from Strauss in his third edition the species of retraction in regards to the Gospel of John. Then from 1837 to 1844, Norton published his great work on the proof of the authenticity of the Gospels; and in 1843 Guericke published his

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<sup>13</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 24.



Introduction to the New Testament. Ebrard then made the first outstanding reply to Baur. But even greater defenses were made by Thiersch, whose reply was so brilliant that Baur was greatly irritated and said so in so many words. The most able and learned reply, however, to the works of Baur and Zeller was that of Bleek in 1846.<sup>14</sup> Then in 1848, Semisch "demonstrated the use of our four Gospels by Justin Martyr."<sup>15</sup> Then came Niermeyer who made a thorough study of both the Gospel and the Apocalypse, finding that both must have been composed by the Apostle John, and that the differences between them are to be explained by the profound spiritual revolution which took place in the Apostle in consequence of the fall of Jerusalem.

Late nineteenth century defenses. Luthardt around 1865 made a very able defense of the Fourth Gospel, and in 1866 Riggerbach, after thoroughly studying the Patristic writings, came out in favor of Johannine authorship. The great German scholar Zahn in 1868 then denied the existence of the Presbyter John as distinct from the Apostle John and wrote in favor of the traditional viewpoint. Likewise, Milligan in 1867 and Leimbach in 1874 denied that there has

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

ever existed another John beside the Apostle John in Ephesus. In 1872, M. H. Meyer defended the discourses of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. The same year Dr. Sanday of England began to publish his famous works in defense of the Fourth Gospel. Then between the years 1875-1885 there appeared a number of outstanding works defending the Johannine authorship of the Gospel. Beyschlag's brilliant work in 1875 contains perhaps the ablest answers to the modern objections. Weiss in 1880 stoutly defended the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. Then Nyegaard, a Frenchman, and Abbot, of Harvard, after a thorough examination of the external evidences, came out in favor of the traditional view. Dr. Wescott of Cambridge in 1880 also defended the Johannine authorship of the Gospel, treating all the critical questions with great forcefulness and tact.

The work of Bishop Lightfoot. The stage of the controversy highlighted by Baur was brought to a close by the decisive authority of Bishop Lightfoot, who in his two books Supernatural Religion and Biblical Essays proved conclusively that the external evidence made such a date as that advocated by Baur impossible. Lightfoot, some years later, as quoted by Jones, made the following statement:

We may look forward to the time when it will be held discreditable to the reputation of any critic for sobriety and judgment to assign to this Gospel any later date than the end of the first century or the beginning of the second.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 363.

Defenses made in the twentieth century. During the first part of the twentieth century the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel has been defended by a number of learned scholars. The most outstanding of these defenses have been made by: Professor Stenton, Dr. Drummond, Dr. Sanday, Theodore Zahn, and Dr. Thiessen.

### III. MEDIATING POSITIONS

Intermediate viewpoints. There have been a few scholars, who being impressed by the reasons for and against the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, have thought by taking up a middle road position they were giving full weight to the evidences of the two opposing schools of thought. Some, like Weisse, have divided the Gospel into those portions which were truly Johannine and those which were added later. Schweizer divided it in a different manner. He thought that the narrations which had Galilee for the theatre of action must be eliminated as they were added at a later date to facilitate the harmony between the narrative of John and that of the Synoptics.<sup>17</sup> However, since the unity of the composition of our Gospel has been triumphantly demonstrated, the division of it in this external way has been abandoned.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

Summary. The various theories as to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel may therefore be classified as follows:

(1) Those who deny that the Apostle John had any participation at all in the composition of this Gospel and who claim that this Gospel is only a fictitious history. Examples of this viewpoint are to be found in the writings of Baur and Keim.

(2) Those who make the Fourth Gospel a free compilation of Johannine tradition and memoirs as did Renan and Hase.

(3) Those who think that the Fourth Gospel was written by a disciple of John who depended on the writings and remembered testimony of the Beloved Apostle. This point of view was expounded by Reuss and Weizsacker.

(4) Those who find in the Gospel a certain number of passages due to the pen of John and which were later amplified. This point of view was defended by Weisse and Schweizer.

(5) Those who defend the traditional point of view that the Apostle John was the author of the whole Gospel with the possible exception of a few later interpolations such as the one found in John 8:1-11.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCES OF JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP

In the main, there are three definite types of external evidences that relate to the problem of the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. In presenting the external evidences in this present chapter, the investigator will follow this three-fold division, namely: (1) The testimony of the early Church; (2) The testimony of Gnostic and pagan writers; (3) Recent discoveries of ancient manuscripts bearing on this question. In presenting these external evidences, especially in the first two divisions, the method of the investigator will be to begin with the latest evidences bearing on the subject, namely the writings of Eusebius, and then to make a chronological approach backward until the environs of the end of the first century are reached.

In this investigation, however, two things must be borne in mind: (1) The early Church writers very seldom quoted exactly or gave the book or author from which they were quoting. The reason for this was that their literary style was far less developed than would be true today. Furthermore, they were not writing for scientific enlightenment, but for spiritual profit. (2) It must also be remembered that great numbers of their writings have been lost. For example, the entire libraries of Origen, Pamphilus, and

others have been lost, so that it is a wonder that there is much evidence at all that relates to the genuineness of the Scriptural writings.

## I. THE TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

A general view of the evidence. A general view of the evidence has provided scholars with the certain viewpoint that the early Church unanimously accepted the Apostle John as the author of the Fourth Gospel. As Maurice Jones has pointed out:

Beginning with the last two decades of the second century we have the names of Irenaeus, Clement of Alexander, Tertullian, Theophilus, Heracleon, as well as the Muratorian fragment of the Canon, all of whom testify in the clearest manner to the Johannine authorship. The wide extent covered by this body of evidence deserves attention. Gaul, Alexandria, Carthage, Rome, Syria, Antioch, are all included in the list, proving that the Johannine authorship was accepted and acknowledged by the length and breadth of the Christian Church. The evidence of Tatian carries us one stage farther, for he must have published his Diatessaron, a kind of "Harmony of the Four Gospels," before the year A.D. 170. All four Gospels are there regarded as authentic records of the life of Christ and as forming a fourfold Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

All critics are agreed in general that from the year A.D. 170 onward, the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel was accepted by the great bulk from the Christian Church. It is with the earlier evidences that many critics have taken issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Jones, The New Testament in the Twentieth Century (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1934), p. 364.

The Johannine tradition is rooted in fact. John lived to an extreme age and he was still alive at the beginning of Trajan's reign (98-117), dying therefore about the year 100 A.D., as shall later be shown in detail. Polycarp, his disciple, died on February 23, 155 A.D., 86 years after his baptism. This has given to the Church an unbroken tradition from Jesus to Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, in other words from about 30 A.D. to 180 A.D.

The objection of the Alogi. In ancient times the genuineness of the Gospel of John was denied only by some persons whom Epiphanius called "Alogi," a nickname which meant both "deniers of the doctrine of the Logos" and "men without reason."<sup>2</sup> Marcus Dods, however, adds:

It is, however, generally admitted that their (Alogi) rejection of the Gospel is of no significance, and so far from suggesting that the Church in general rejected it, is rather an indication of the general reception of the Gospel as Apostolic. The fact that their difficulty with the Gospel was a doctrinal one, and that they appealed to no tradition in favor of their view; that they also denied the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse, and absurdly ascribed both books to Cerinthus. . . shows that they were persons of no critical judgment.<sup>3</sup>

The harmonious tradition of the Church that the Fourth Gospel was fully accepted as Johannine by A.D. 170 by the entire Christian Church is not doubted by anyone of note.

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<sup>2</sup> Marcus Dods, An Introduction to the New Testament (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1906), p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

However, the importance of this fact has often been underestimated and its significance usually missed. As Mr. Dods has said:

The question of the Gospel genuineness was not merely a literary question in which few were interested; it was a question in which every Christian had the deepest interest; and it is difficult to see how the whole Church could have been persuaded to accept it, especially such a Gospel as the Fourth, which so widely differs from the others, unless there was a general recognition that from the beginning these writings had been known as genuine.<sup>4</sup>

This is a fact of great importance. The Fourth Gospel was accepted by the entire Church and had received universal recognition within sixty or seventy years of its composition. Yet, as many critics have pointed out, the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics are so great as to be utterly unreconcilable. But contrary to the opinion of many scholars who have assumed that this fact disproved the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, this fact has clearly demonstrated to such men as Zahn, Godet, Sanday, Lightfoot, and others that the Fourth Gospel had to have an Apostolic origin. Having investigated other documents of antiquity that were definitely spurious, ungentine, or forged, this investigation shows that without exception they have followed the pattern of the writings that they were

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 45.



trying to imitate. This was not true in the composition of the Fourth Gospel. It did not follow the pattern set forth in the other accepted Gospels. In fact, it was in complete variance with them. At times it would seem that the writer of the Fourth Gospel contradicted or attempted to correct certain statements found in the Synoptics. At any rate, it left out of its pages most of what is found in the Synoptic Gospels and it set forth an almost entirely new set of events and happenings. The fact that the Church accepted this Gospel so quickly and so universally despite its great variance with the Synoptics is clear proof that the Church of the second century possessed certain knowledge of its Apostolic origin.

The conclusion of Norton and Bleek. Mr. Norton in his book The Genuineness of the Gospels, as quoted by Dods, has declared:

About the end of the second century the Gospels were revered as sacred books by a community dispersed over the world. There were, to say the least, sixty thousand of them in existence; they were read in the churches of Christendom; they were continually quoted and appealed to as of the highest authority. But it is asserted that before that period we find no trace of their existence, and it is therefore inferred that they were not in common use. . . . This reasoning is of the same kind as if one were to say that the first mention of Thebes is in the time of Homer. He, indeed, describes it as a city which poured a hundred armies from its hundred gates; but his is the first mention of it, and therefore we have no reason to suppose that before his time, it was a place of any considerable note.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

Another scholar, Bleek, in his Introduction to the New Testament, as quoted by Kerr, has stated:

My conviction at least is that an unprejudiced consideration of the external testimonies leads to the certain conclusion that our Fourth Gospel was recognized as trustworthy and a genuine work in Christendom before the middle of the second century. Furthermore, the position which the contending parties in all the second century Paschal controversies allow to our Gospel can be historically explained only on the supposition that the Fourth Gospel was known and recognized as genuine in the Church at large some decades before the middle of the second century, if not at the very beginning of it; and this fact in turn can only be explained upon the supposition that it is a genuine and Apostolic work.<sup>6</sup>

The problem arising from the evidences. The problem, then, that has confronted New Testament scholars for the past one hundred and fifty years has been how to explain the sudden emergence of the Gospel from the semi-darkness of the first half of the second century into the blazing sunlight of the second half of the century when the authoritative position of the Gospel and the Johannine authorship were acknowledged with hardly a protest. The explanation given by the exponents of the traditional view was that the process was nothing more than the ordinary development that would be perfectly natural in such a case. On the other hand, those who have rejected the traditional viewpoint of the Johannine authorship of the Gospel, have insisted that inasmuch as there were no clear

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<sup>6</sup> John Kerr, An Introduction to the New Testament (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1915), p. 57.

and repeated references to the Fourth Gospel and inasmuch as it was never attributed to John in the first half of the second century, it did not then exist. But these men deny the possibility of miracles and yet in their criticism of the Fourth Gospel demand a miracle in order to deny the Johannine authorship. They have felt that within a very short time after the writing of the Gospel thousands of copies should have been written and despite the slow means of communication, should have been distributed to every part of the Empire, and that it should have been universally accepted at once as Johannine.

The facts of the matter are: (1) With respect to the Synoptic Gospels it was at least fifty years before they were referred to and at least thirty years more before they were regarded as authoritative. They were not canonized until at least one hundred years after the first of them was written. (2) The same history of growth and development can be said to be true of every other New Testament book. There was not one of them that was accepted as Scriptural and authoritative until at least many years after its composition. (3) This same process occurred in the case of the Fourth Gospel. How could it have been otherwise?<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 370.

The testimony of Eusebius. Eusebius, the great church historian of the third century, had almost all of the Christian literature at his command. This is a fact that has often been ignored. The Church of today does not possess much of the writings that were at his command. As he was a most reliable historian and very painstaking in his research, to contradict him demands positive evidence. In his book on church history, there were no fewer than forty-six church writers whose books Eusebius knew and used. This did not include those writers whom he did not name and the writings of various heretics. With all of this knowledge at his command, Eusebius counted the Fourth Gospel among the uncontested writings of the Apostle John. He placed the Fourth Gospel among his "Acknowledged Books," about which there was never any question in the Church. Even the few heretics who rejected this Gospel rejected it for its contents and not because of disputed authorship.<sup>8</sup>

Eusebius in placing the Fourth Gospel among the uncontested writings of the New Testament did not appeal to single witnesses, but to the united testimony of Christendom. He did not go into minute detail in proving the Johannine

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<sup>8</sup> C. E. Luthardt, The Apostle, Saint John (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1875), p. 38.

authorship of the Gospel for he considered it unnecessary to prove that, as for him it was beyond all doubt. As Luthardt has pointed out, it would take strong evidence to make us throw out his testimony in regard to the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. For Eusebius, John was the author of the Fourth Gospel, and he rested his conclusion on a great mass of evidence at his disposal.<sup>9</sup>

The testimony of Origen. Origen, who wrote between the years 200-225, was the most learned teacher that the Church possessed until the time of Eusebius. This great man praised the Fourth Gospel as the "choice" one. The Church, as far as he knew it in space and in time, had only four Gospels, no more and no less. He rejected every other. This testimony of Origen was not the testimony of a single person only. It was the testimony of the Church itself.<sup>10</sup> In referring to the Fourth Gospel, and especially to the matter of authorship, Origen said:

Last of all that by John. Why need we speak of him who reclined upon the bosom of Jesus? It was John, who has left us one Gospel, though he confessed that he might write so many that the whole world could not contain them.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Cartledge, A Conservative Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1938), p. 153.

The testimony of Tertullian. By Tertullian's time, that is by 200 A.D., the Holy Scriptures were not a chance collection but a definite arrangement in four parts. This whole arrangement showed that not only recognition of the separate books, but the recognition of the canon itself, had a history. By this time there were several Latin translations, even in Africa, one of which enjoyed official authority. Now this translation was of the whole Bible, and as this appeared before A.D. 200, taking due regard to the methods of writing and translation, and the fact that it stood in prevailing use by that time, then this canon of the whole Bible must have been recognized by 150 A.D. at the latest. As each book in that canon would have had to be in use for quite some time to have gained canonical recognition, each book must have been composed even earlier; and as the Gospel of John belonged to this group, it is impossible to assign it to a later date than 125 A.D.<sup>12</sup>

Tertullian, born about 160 A.D., used the New Testament books to a great extent. He quoted from the Fourth Gospel freely and considered it as authoritative throughout the

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<sup>12</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 39.

Church. As Godet has remarked:

Would that be possible if this Father and this book were born in the same year, the one in Africa and the other in Asia? Furthermore, he quoted from a Latin translation that was so respected that Tertullian did not feel at liberty to deviate from it even when he disagreed with it. Moreover, this was a translation of another Latin translation that had already fallen into disuse, and yet some say that all this could have taken place in a few years' time.<sup>13</sup>

Tertullian has thus left abundant testimony to the Apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel. He quoted verses from almost every chapter, and from some chapters he quoted almost every verse. In addition to this, he referred his Gnostic opponent Marcion to the Apostolic churches, to Corinth, Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Rome, and the churches of John. He also appealed to the four Gospels, and we see from all of this that Marcion could not deny the general reception of the canonical Gospels. Tertullian in one place stated that "'John and Matthew formed the faith among us."<sup>14</sup> It is seen from this that Tertullian considered the two Gospels written by actual apostles and eye-witnesses as the two books above all others that were authoritative for the Christian Church.

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<sup>13</sup> F. Godet, Commentary on the Gospel of St. John, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1884), p. 189.

<sup>14</sup> J. A. McClymont, New Testament Criticism (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), p. 157.

The testimony of Clement of Alexandria. Clement of Alexandria about the year 190 A.D. declared: "John received the first three Gospels, and observing that they comprised the bodily things in the life of the Lord, he, at the insistence of eminent men in the Church, wrote a spiritual Gospel."<sup>15</sup> In another passage, Clement when quoting a saying of Jesus found in the Gospel of the Egyptians, made this reservation: "'That we do not find this saying in the four Gospels which have been transmitted to us.'<sup>16</sup> Clement quoted the Fourth Gospel hundreds of times and frequently cited John by name.<sup>17</sup>

The testimony of the second century canons. The Muratori and the Peshito fragments, which date back to 175 A.D., both presented New Testament canons which included the Gospel of John. The Muratori fragment was a Roman canon and the Peshito fragment was a Syrian canon. This has given to the Church the testimony of the African, Roman, and Syrian churches as to the early origin of the Fourth Gospel. The churches of Asia Minor, Egypt, and Gaul agreed with this testimony.<sup>18</sup> Hence it is seen that not only was the Fourth

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<sup>15</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 187.

<sup>16</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Cartledge, op. cit., p. 152

<sup>18</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 42.



Gospel acknowledged as Johannine everywhere, but it had become an integral part of the New Testament Canon. If by 175 A.D. the Canon could have been received and accepted in all parts of the world, every book in it must have originated several decades earlier in order for it to have gained acceptance in the received Canon. It is not to be considered possible that this Canon had its origin only at the middle of the second century. Every book in the Canon must have originated many years earlier in order for it to have been placed in the Canon, and the Canon itself to have gained universal recognition by the year 175 A.D.<sup>19</sup>

Testimonies emerging from the controversies. In the latter part of the second century there was a controversy of considerable importance between the Roman Church and the Church of Asia Minor regarding the date of Easter. This controversy had bearing on the question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel in that both sides appealed to this Gospel as authority for their position. Thus, in 170 A.D., Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis, in the Passover controversy, relied on the Fourth Gospel as a "perfectly recognized authority, even by his adversaries,"<sup>20</sup> most of whom were in the Western Church. At the same time, Melito, Bishop of

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 189.

Sardis, wrote: "Jesus being, at the same time, perfect God and man, proved His Divinity, by His miracles in the three years which followed His baptism."<sup>21</sup> It cannot be denied that the only source for the belief that Jesus' ministry was of three years' duration was the Fourth Gospel. Thus, by 170 A.D. the Fourth Gospel was appealed to as final authority in every controversy that arose in the Church. Such could not be the case if the Fourth Gospel was either the product of an unknown writer, writing midway in the second century, or the product of anyone except an Apostolic witness. Furthermore, for this Gospel to have gained such a place of authority required a period of considerable time. In addition to this, it should be noted that Theophilus at about this time in a defense of Christianity addressed to a pagan friend Autolycus, stated: "The Holy Scriptures teach us, and all the inspired writers, one of whom, John says. . . ."<sup>22</sup>

The testimony of Irenaeus. Irenaeus was the chief witness to John's authorship of the Gospel between 170 and 180 A.D. He was born in the year 140 A.D., and early in his life he talked of the Gospel of John as well established.

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<sup>21</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>22</sup> McClymont, op. cit., p. 157.

When it is remembered that his testimony is tied in with that of Polycarp, who was a hearer of John, the date for this tradition is pushed back to the very end of the first century itself. In fact, in a letter to Florinus which has been lost, but which Eusebius quoted at some length, Irenaeus spoke of Polycarp as one who had received the "Word of Life."<sup>23</sup> This statement has made of Polycarp a very early witness to the Johannine authorship of our Gospel.

Irenaeus wrote his big anti-heretical work about 180 A.D. At the persecution of 177 A.D., he was already a presbyter in Lyons. It must be remembered that he lived in Asia Minor until 170 A.D., and Polycarp, who was a great friend of his, died a martyr in 167 A.D., after having been a Christian for 86 years. So by his own testimony Polycarp could have been born at a date no later than 80 A.D. And inasmuch as Polycarp was a great friend and disciple of John, it is no wonder Irenaeus devoted so much time to the writings of John. Irenaeus did not write to prove the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, but instead he used John's writings to refute the false teachings of the Gnostics and other heretics. For Irenaeus, that the Fourth Gospel was written by the

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<sup>23</sup> Henry C. Vedder, The Johannine Writings and the Johannine Problem (Philadelphia and Boston: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1917), p. 142.

beloved Apostle John was an established fact. He also made mention several times of the sojourn of John in Asia and said: "That John lived until the time of Trajan who came to the throne in 97 A.D."<sup>24</sup> In his writings, Irenaeus made no less than 100 quotations from the Fourth Gospel. It is therefore seen that in his time there was no doubt that the Fourth Gospel was the work of the Apostle John.

Other witnesses of the period 160 through 200 A.D.

Tatian between 160 and 170 verbally quoted John 1:5 and 4:24, the former of which he introduced by the words "that which was spoken" proving that he regarded it as Scripture, while the harmony of the Gospels which he produced included the Gospel of John.<sup>25</sup> St. Jerome around 200 A.D. wrote that Theophilus of Antioch between 168 and 182 A.D. composed a work in which he compared the four Gospels, a fact that implied the recognition of the Johannine authorship of this Gospel by the Church at large. Another fact to be noticed is that Heracleon, an acquaintance of Valentinus, composed a commentary on the Fourth Gospel between 150 and 170 A.D. Besides this, Irenaeus attested that the Valentinians "'used in full the Gospel of John.'<sup>26</sup> If even heretics, therefore

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<sup>24</sup> Cartledge, op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>25</sup> Kerr, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>26</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 190.

could have used the entire Fourth Gospel to support their position between the years 160 and 175 A.D., what remains therefore of the thesis that states that the Fourth Gospel did not originate until the middle of the second century?

Other witnesses of lesser importance during this same period included Apollinarius (175 A.D.), Athenagoras (177 A.D.), the letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne (177 A.D.), the Syriac translation (160 A.D.), and the old Latin translation (170 A.D.). By the year 160 A.D., the Fourth Gospel existed in Greek, Latin, and Syriac, and was an integral part of the Latin translations, and the Muratori Canon which was written in Italy or Africa, and which was read publicly in all the churches from Mesopotamia unto Gaul. When it is remembered that no other book of the New Testament gained such recognition for at least sixty years after its composition, it is certain that a date later than the very beginning of the second century is impossible for the composition of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>27</sup>

The testimony of Justin Martyr. From the writings of Justin Martyr there has come down to us his two Apologies (147-150 A.D.) and his Dialogue (155 A.D.). In these writings, Justin made many quotations that are very similar

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

to passages found in the Fourth Gospel, although he never quoted it directly. In his first Apology Justin Martyr described the worship of the Christians during the first half of the second century, and he wrote that the "Memoirs of the Apostles were read every Sunday in the public assemblies of the Church throughout Christendom."<sup>28</sup> As it is a known fact, undisputed by anyone, that from 160 A.D. on only four Gospels were read and considered as canonical by the Church, is it possible that twenty years earlier there would have been read throughout Christendom any others as a part of their worship services? No, such a conclusion is not possible. But the question that comes to mind at this point has been this: Why did Justin Martyr designate these books as Memoirs instead of as Gospels? Godet has given us a good answer to this question when he said: "Because he was addressing not Christians, but the Emperor, who would not have understood the Christian name Gospel, a designation without parallel in profane literature."<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Justin Martyr expressly stated in his first Apology: "'The Memoirs which I say were composed by the Apostles and by those who accompanied them.'"<sup>30</sup>

Justin's testimony, however, did not rest so much on individual quotations as on the general tone of his writings.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

But a few of the individual quotations deserve our attention. There has been no attempt to dispute the fact that there was a close relation which was not accidental between John 3:3-5 and a passage to be found in Justin's first Apology. It is true that this passage has afforded scholars certain difficulties. In it Justin spoke of regeneration, of being "born again," instead of "born from above" as it is in the Gospel.<sup>31</sup> Then the statement from Justin was in the second person, and not in the third as it is in the Gospel, and Justin changed the Johannine phrase "Kingdom of God" into "Kingdom of heaven." Thus, this statement of Justin had an affinity with St. Matthew 18:3. It almost looked as if Justin had combined from memory the two Scriptural passages in question.<sup>32</sup>

As far as the general tenor of his writings went, his conception of the Person of Christ, and his emphasis on the Logos doctrine, could have found their basis only in the Fourth Gospel. To be sure, his philosophy and his teachings with regard to the Logos were full of Alexandrian ideas, but the thought and the idea of the incarnation of the Logos of which Justin made full use was to be found only in St. John.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 368.

<sup>32</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 369.

Another fact of importance in connection with the testimony of Justin Martyr is that he named St. John as the author of the Apocalypse. Why then did he not also name St. John as the author of the Fourth Gospel? For the same reason that he did not name John as the author of the first epistle bearing his name. These two books were received as Johannine by the entire Church. They were among the undisputed writings of the Apostles. This was not true of the Apocalypse. Even Eusebius counted the Apocalypse among the disputed books. And it was quite a while after the death of Justin Martyr before the Apocalypse was finally received into the accepted Canon. Let it be remembered that some of the earlier canons did not include the Apocalypse in them.

All of this external evidence and testimony by Justin Martyr has had considerable weight, although care must be taken not to put unwarranted emphasis upon it, as in itself it has not been thoroughly convincing. Even as conservative a scholar as Dr. Sanday has held that Henry Drummond is too optimistic in endorsing affirmatively every item of evidence that has ever been alleged, and Staunton takes a very cautious view of the value of some of them.<sup>34</sup> But one thing is clear from the testimony of Justin Martyr. He clearly used the Fourth Gospel so that it is certain that by 120 A.D. the Gospel of John was being circulated.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 370.



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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 370.

The testimony of Papias. Papias was the Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor, who, according to Eusebius, wrote a book called An Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord.<sup>35</sup> Nothing but the preface of this book has been preserved for us, however. Eusebius has told us, however, that Papias used I John in his writings. This cannot be refuted because we no longer possess most of the writings of Papias, and as Eusebius was very accurate in all he said, there is no reason to doubt this.<sup>36</sup> Also, the usage of I John implies the usage of the Fourth Gospel, for these two go together. Simply because Eusebius does not mention Papias using the Fourth Gospel is no reason to deny that he did. Eusebius when quoting from Polycarp mentioned only that Polycarp quoted from I John and I Peter, and yet the writings of Polycarp that are yet extant are filled with quotations from the Pauline epistles. Thus it is seen that Eusebius did not mention all the books from which a writer quoted in his writings. So even though Eusebius does not mention the fact that Papias used the Fourth Gospel, this silence does not prove that Papias did not use it, or that it did not exist in his time.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 365.

<sup>36</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

In a Latin manuscript, Toletanus, though written in the tenth century, we find preserved a tradition that seems to be earlier than a similar one in Jerome, so that it may be considered as coming from the third century. It stated:

The Apostle John, whom the Lord Jesus loved most, last of all wrote this Gospel. This Gospel, it is manifest, was written after the Apocalypse, and was given to the churches in Asia by John while he was yet in the body; as Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, a disciple of John, related in his Exoterica.<sup>38</sup>

If this manuscript quoted Papias correctly, it becomes the earliest direct testimony to the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. An examination of this manuscript clearly attests that it was a genuine third century production. As Eusebius who wrote midway during the third century recorded no other tradition, there is no valid reason for rejecting the tradition that is found in this Latin manuscript. Stanton has summed up the evidence of Papias by declaring "that there is good reason to believe that he knew and used the Fourth Gospel."<sup>39</sup>

The testimony of Polycarp. Polycarp was born during the latter part of the first century and was reputed to have been a disciple of the Apostle John. Whether or not the traditions were true that taught that John resided in Asia Minor and lived up unto the very close of the first century

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<sup>38</sup> Cartledge, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>39</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 365.

will be discussed in another connection. Nevertheless, Polycarp claimed to have been a disciple of the Apostle John. Thus Polycarp was one of the earliest witnesses to the Johannine tradition, and he formed an unbroken link between John and Irenaeus. Polycarp has, however, left us only one short letter to the Philippians in which he made no direct references to the Fourth Gospel; but he did quote I John 4:3. Volkmar felt that this was forced, but the whole character of Polycarp's letter forbids this. It had many citations from Paul and Peter, and as Polycarp was a close friend of John, why should he not have quoted him also? It should also be noted that Polycarp also made references to Ignatius, which would place this letter around 105 A.D.<sup>40</sup> As has been said, Polycarp did not quote the Fourth Gospel, but that was not surprising, considering the brevity and the general character of his letter. And why should Polycarp mention John in a letter to the Church at Philippi? Paul was the founder of that Church, and in all probability John had never been there. Furthermore, Polycarp did quote the first Epistle of John, and whoever wrote one, wrote both.<sup>41</sup>

Even though Polycarp did not mention the Fourth Gospel, his silence is a fact of great importance. As Godet

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<sup>40</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>41</sup> Kerr, op. cit., p. 55.

has written:

Polycarp lived to the middle of the second century, and it was during this time that this Gospel spread to the whole Church. Now, if the Gospel was of doubtful origin, as Polycarp was the venerable leader of the Church, he would not have failed to try to expose it, especially as it gave some support to Gnosticism and the slightest denial by him would have profoundly shaken the conviction of the Church as to the genuineness of this Gospel. But nothing like that happened. History shows us no protest whatever from Polycarp or from the Early Church. None of the presbyters objected to it, so that the Fourth Gospel was received without dispute from one end of the world to the other as the work of the Apostle John, and this despite its most evident differences with the Synoptic Gospels. Thus, this absence of protest is a negative fact of very positive value.<sup>42</sup>

The testimony of Ignatius. Ignatius wrote around 110 A.D., and while some of the writings attributed to him are not genuine, yet the seven letters in the shorter recension have been shown to be. If so, they cannot be placed later than 110 A.D. In them we find various coincidences with the Fourth Gospel. He seems to have made almost direct quotations from John 3:8; 6:33, 51; 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; and 20:28. Thus it seems very improbable that the Gospel of John could have been written any later than 100 A.D. Especially to be noted is his letter to the Philippians, in which he spoke of a dispute with his opponents. He spoke of New Testament records which were called "the Gospel." And then just as the later Church did, he cut the exegetical

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<sup>42</sup> Godet, op. cit., pp. 224 f.

method short by appealing to the living tradition. Hence there was at that time a written account of the message of salvation. Because of this, the similarities in Ignatius to the Fourth Gospel confirmed the fact that the Fourth Gospel was a written document by that time.<sup>43</sup>

The letter to Diognetus. This letter which treated of the Divine Logos, the revelation He brought to His disciples of the higher truth, in fact, the whole treatment is without a doubt a treatise of the Fourth Gospel. John 3:16 and 15:19 are especially easy to identify in this letter, which was not written by Justin Martyr, but by another at a much earlier date. In this letter, the author made a reference to Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius, and he also made a remark about the enmity of the Jews against the Christians. These two facts pointed to a period of time before the destruction of Barkochbas in 135 A.D. Hence this letter must be assigned to an earlier date, and this has meant that the Gospel was then well known and could have been written at a date not later than 110 A.D., and perhaps considerably earlier.<sup>44</sup>

The epistle of Barnabas and Clement of Rome. The epistle of Barnabas cited Matthew's Gospel as Scripture. This letter was written between the years 96 and 106 A.D. In this

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<sup>43</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., pp. 73 ff.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

letter were many ideas and thoughts that were similar to the Fourth Gospel. In this epistle are to be found such passages as: "He came in the flesh"; "He was about to appear in the flesh, and to dwell among us"; "Moses makes the serpent a type of Jesus"; "Abraham. . .having looked forward in the spirit to Jesus"; and "the new law."<sup>45</sup> Now, while these statements do not prove the use of the Fourth Gospel by Barnabas, they at least indicate an association with the Gospel, or at least an association with Johannine terminology. From all outward appearances, it appeared as if the writer had had some knowledge or contact with the Fourth Gospel, although perhaps only slightly and for a short while, so as not to be too familiar with it, which would place the date of the composition of the Fourth Gospel slightly prior to this letter.

Clement of Rome produced a writing in 96 A.D., which contained no reference to the Fourth Gospel, nor did he show any clear sign that he knew it at all. However, there were some very notable coincidences of language in it with the first Epistle of John.<sup>46</sup> That Clement did not seem to have any knowledge of the Fourth Gospel is not at all surprising. He wrote at about the same time as other evidences indicated that the Fourth Gospel was composed. As Clement wrote from

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>46</sup> Kerr, op. cit., p. 55.

Rome, and the Fourth Gospel was composed in Asia Minor, it would have been almost impossible for Clement to have known anything about it even if it had been written several years earlier.

The testimony of John 21:24. John 21:24 is an external evidence and witness to the Johannine authorship of at least the first twenty chapters of the Fourth Gospel, the authenticity of which cannot be disputed. In fact, the entire twenty-first chapter can be considered an external witness to the Johannine tradition. At the close of the narrative, a reputed saying of Jesus in regard to the Apostle John was corrected. This saying reported Jesus as saying that John would not die. The author of the appendix corrected this by saying that Jesus had simply said: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"<sup>47</sup> When, then, would this correction have been needed? Certainly not a great while after his death, for the saying of Jesus would have then been forgotten, or at least it would not have troubled many. But the only time it could have troubled the faith of many would be either when John was growing feeble, or else just after he had died. It probably was when he was growing very aged and feeble that they asked: "Is John then going to die, notwithstanding the Lord's promise?"<sup>48</sup> This external witness,

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<sup>47</sup> John 21:22

<sup>48</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 220.



therefore, not only has disproved the second century date for the composition of the Fourth Gospel, but also the early death of the Apostle John. Thus, this witness belonged either to the days which immediately preceded or followed John's death. As for John 21:24, Godet has well stated:

Then, too, the contrast between the present participle "This is the disciple that testifieth" and the past participle, "and that wrote," seems to favor the former alternative, that is that John was yet living and yet testifying, but who had already written the Fourth Gospel. However you may interpret it, however, Chapter 21 is necessarily posterior and dates from the very time of John's life.<sup>49</sup>

## II. THE TESTIMONY OF Gnostic AND HEATHEN WRITERS

From the beginning of the second century, there arose in various parts of Christendom various heretical movements, especially Gnosticism. These heretical movements based their teachings at least partly upon the Holy Scriptures, and although they used the allegorical method of interpretation, in their writings are found many statements that have proved to be valuable external witnesses to the New Testament Scriptures. This was especially true with regard to the Fourth Gospel, for the Gnostics especially made much use of this New Testament document. It is with this evidence that the discussion will now deal.

The testimony of Marcion. The writings of Valentinius and his disciples who wrote in the second half of the second

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

century have already been discussed. Marcion was a Gnostic of the first half of the second century, who wrote between the years 125 and 145 A.D. He knew the Fourth Gospel and knew that it was the work of the Apostle John. He was a Gnostic and as such was opposed to the doctrine found in the Fourth Gospel; so he rejected from his canon the Gospels of Matthew and John, the two Apostolic Gospels. This was an indirect testimony of great evidence to the Apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel. In his writings there were hundreds of statements and quotations that he used to contradict teachings found in the Fourth Gospel. The result was that before the year 130 A.D. the Fourth Gospel was known and regarded both as Apostolic and Johannine even in Gnostic circles by that time.<sup>50</sup> Therefore it cannot be said that the Fourth Gospel did not originate until this time, for if it was accepted by Gnostic writers by the year 130, it must have been accepted as Apostolic by the Church long before. Let it also be remembered that Marcion grew up and lived in Asia Minor, the same place that the Fourth Gospel originated. If the Fourth Gospel, therefore, existed and was accepted as Apostolic by the Church, and if there was never any conflicting tradition, and if John lived in Asia Minor as late as the time of Trajan, and as Marcion could have been born at a date

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<sup>50</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 105.

no later than 105 A.D., then these facts are so closely joined together that no error of tradition could possibly have pressed in between them and have separated them.<sup>51</sup>

Another thing to be kept in mind is that it is impossible to understand the Montanistic movement which started in the year 156 A.D. except in the light of the Johannine discourses about the Paraclete.<sup>52</sup>

The disciples of Basilides. The disciples of Basilides made many references to the Fourth Gospel. Valentinus (140 A.D.) made many direct quotations from the Gospel; John 1:1-3 and 12:27 were quoted directly through his disciple Ptolemaeus. This Valentinian disciple expressly named John as the author of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>53</sup> Heracleon, a contemporary of Valentinus, wrote a complete commentary on John's Gospel. The fragments preserved by Origen revealed how he everywhere had to take refuge in the most forced meanings. As this commentary arose between 135 and 155 A.D., then the critical declaration of Baur that this Gospel did not appear until 160 A.D. is absolutely untenable. For Heracleon's commentary demonstrated with what unquestionable respect the

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>52</sup> Theodore Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. III (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909), p. 177.

<sup>53</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 96.

Fourth Gospel was held at this time. In fact, even though Gnosticism was a bitter enemy of pure Christianity, yet it had to reconcile itself to the Fourth Gospel and it never questioned the Johannine authorship of this New Testament writing, and this in turn has shown beyond all doubt how complete was the authority of the Fourth Gospel at that time. Thus, by 135 A.D., even the most zealous Gnostic did not deny the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. In fact, in a fragment of Theodotus, another contemporary of Valentinus, there were twenty-six direct quotations from the Fourth Gospel.<sup>54</sup>

The testimony of Basilides. Basilides was a Gnostic who died around the year 130 A.D., and who must have been born some time in the first century, and at the very latest 100 A.D. He was the leading exponent of Gnosticism at Alexandria around the year 125 A.D. Yet at such an early date Basilides was quoted by Hippolytus as saying: "'This is that which is said in the Gospels, 'That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.''"<sup>55</sup> The only conclusion to be derived from this evidence is that this Gospel existed before the year 125 A.D. and was recognized by the entire Christian Church as being of Apostolic origin.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>55</sup> Vedder, op. cit., p. 151.

Some scholars have sought to avoid this conclusion by maintaining that Hippolytus was not actually quoting from Basilides, but from one of his later disciples. Matthew Arnold, a great scholar in his own right, has said in answer to this objection:

It is true that Hippolytus sometimes mixed up the opinions of the master of a school with those of his followers, so that it is difficult to distinguish between them. But if we take all doubtful cases of that kind and compare them with our present case, we shall find that it is not one of them. It is not true that here, where the name of Basilides has come just before, and where no mention of his son or of his disciples has intervened since, there is any such ambiguity as is found in the other cases. . . . In this particular case he manifestly quoted Basilides, and no one who had not a theory to serve would ever dream of doubting it. Basilides, therefore, about the year 125 of our era, had before him the Fourth Gospel.<sup>56</sup>

The evidence of earlier heretics. Hippolytus also has given us an account of heretical movements which preceded Basilides in point of time. In these bits of evidence, testimonies are found reaching back to the year 100 A.D. itself. Marcus Dods has well summed up this evidence by saying:

These sects, the Naasseni and Peratae, make large use of the Fourth Gospel, and whoever will read the fifth book of the Philosophumena will find it hard to believe that this Gospel did not exist in one form or another in the earliest years of the second century. The question of the authorship of the Gospel is not settled by these quotations but the question of its existence is. A document virtually identical with our Fourth Gospel was freely used in the very beginning of the second century.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Matthew Arnold, God and the Bible (New York: MacMillan and Company, 1883), pp. 268 f.

<sup>57</sup> Dods, op. cit., p. 47.

If the testimony of Polycarp and the chain of external evidence both to the existence and to the authorship of this Gospel were to be added to the above evidence, the conclusion would seem to be conclusive. For Polycarp suffered martyrdom 86 years after his baptism in the year 167 A.D., and he must have been alive during at least a portion of John's residence in Asia. Furthermore, he used to speak to his scholars of "the intercourse he had with John and the rest of those who had seen the Lord."<sup>58</sup> Then Irenaeus, who was the student and disciple of Polycarp, assigned the Fourth Gospel to John; and he could not have done this and have given to the Fourth Gospel the important place he gave to it unless he had received this knowledge with the sanction of Polycarp. "The person of Polycarp, the living sign of the unity of the faith of the first and second centuries, is in itself a sure proof of the Apostolicity of the Gospel."<sup>59</sup>

### III. JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP SUBSTANTIATED BY RECENT DISCOVERIES

The Odes of Solomon. In 1909 the Syriac manuscript of the Odes of Solomon was discovered and published by Rendel Harris and this manuscript has proved of great importance in helping to decide the question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. Much has been made by the opponents of the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>59</sup> Loc. cit.

Johannine authorship of the Gospel of John of the fact that the Gospel seems to be Alexandrian in spirit and phraseology, and could not therefore be the work of a Jew of Palestine. Rendel Harris, the discoverer of these Odes, believed them to be Christian dating from the last quarter of the first century. Harnack, another outstanding scholar, believed them to be of Jewish origin, but edited by a Christian. Both agreed that they reflected an aspect of Christian thought which had hitherto been represented by the Johannine writings. Strachen said in the Expository Times in 1911:

The Odes of Solomon bear no trace whatsoever of Hellenic speculative thought and they prove that ideas like Light, Life, Truth, Knowledge, Immortality are not Hellenic but Jewish. The same mystical element that we find in the Johannine writings appears in them. Harnack emphasizes the fact that the Odes prove that in the Johannine theology, apart from possibly the Prologue, there is nothing essentially Hellenic, and therefore, that a large part of the supposed Alexandrian element in the Fourth Gospel is really Jewish. If that is true, a great many arguments for a second century date and a large number of objections to the Johannine authorship cease to have any validity.<sup>60</sup>

The Diatessaron manuscript. The discovery of the Diatessaron manuscript, which was brought to light in 1880 from a publication by the Mechitarist Fathers of an Arminian translation in 1836, by Abbot and Harnack, confirmed the disputed statement of Dionysius that Tatian used all four Gospels. The discussions which followed led to the further

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<sup>60</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 382.

discovery of Arabic manuscript of the Diatessaron itself in the Vatican library, and to the discovery of a beautiful Arabic manuscript in Egypt in 1888. These proved that by 160 A.D. the Fourth Gospel was not only in existence but already had acquired equal standing with the Synoptics, and that all four Gospels were considered inspired.<sup>61</sup> This was remarkable, that in sixty-five years at the most, the Fourth Gospel could have been received in all parts of the Roman Empire as Apostolic and of equal authority with the Synoptic Gospels, although they were written many years prior to it.

The Mount Athos discovery. The *Philosophumena* of Hippolytus was discovered at Mount Athos in 1842, and in it were found first-hand quotations from Basilides, the Gnostic heretic of the first quarter of the second century. In these quotations were found acknowledged quotations from the Fourth Gospel, so that even Keim was forced to admit that the Fourth Gospel existed in the time of Basilides and that the Gnostics made use of this book. Thus, this Gospel existed from the very time of the last years of the life of John if the Church tradition about him was true. If John lived until the time of Trajan as claimed by the harmonious tradition of the second century Church, then he could have written the Fourth Gospel.<sup>62</sup> The decisive question then is whether or not John

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<sup>61</sup> D. A. Hayes, John and His Writings (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), p. 128.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 129.



actually did live in Ephesus between 90 and 100 A.D. This question will be discussed in complete detail in Chapter VI of this present work. Another important discovery to be noted at this point was the discovery of the twentieth of the Clementine Homilies, in which was contained a quotation from the Fourth Gospel so plain that it had to be acknowledged by all as genuine.<sup>63</sup>

The John Rylands manuscript. The most important discovery in New Testament criticism in the twentieth century was the discovery of the Rylands manuscript. In 1920 A.D., Grenfell acquired some papyri for the John Rylands Library of Manchester, among which C. H. Roberts later discovered a scrap of paper containing five verses in Greek. These verses quickly proved to be five verses from the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel of John. Dr. Kenyon, a great authority on Greek manuscripts, has said of this one that "It can be confidently assigned to the first half of the second century."<sup>64</sup> The date for this manuscript has now been well established to be no later than 130 A.D.<sup>65</sup> Thus, by the year 130 A.D., the Fourth Gospel had not only been written, but had "spread to a

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>64</sup> Henry C. Thiessen. Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmann Publishing Co., 1943), p. 164.

<sup>65</sup> Loc. cit.

provincial town in Egypt, which goes far toward confirming the traditional date of composition in the last years of the first century."<sup>66</sup> Thus it is certain that if the Fourth Gospel could have been written and carried down to a small provincial town in Egypt by the year 130 A.D., there is no reason for saying that it would have been impossible for the Apostle John to have written the Gospel on the supposition that he lived until the time of Trajan, which supposition will be positively demonstrated.

A summary of the external evidences. The external evidences that supported the Johannine tradition that have come down to us from the second and third centuries are most comprehensive and complete. The practically unanimous tradition of the Christian Church from the year 160 A.D. onward was that the Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John and that by that time it had been received as of equal, if not of superior, authority to the three Synoptic Gospels. The only note of protest was voiced by the Alogi, who objected to the Logos doctrine and ascribed the Fourth Gospel to Cerinthus, a Gnostic. However, this was not another tradition, for Cerinthus was an Ephesian, a contemporary of the Apostle John, and one who disputed with him while he was yet alive. Thus, even they have provided evidence that

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

testified that the Fourth Gospel was composed in Asia Minor at the close of the first century. Furthermore, no scholar has ever taken seriously the claim that Cerinthus was the author of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>67</sup>

The combination of all these external witnesses that favor the Johannine tradition, and the total absence of any testimony to the contrary, appeals with an all but irresistible force and compels the Christian Church to think once, nay, a hundred times, before denying the Apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel. But the greatest of all the difficulties in the way of denying the Johannine authorship, as Maurice Jones has well pointed out, is that no satisfactory answer is given to this question: "If St. John did not write the Fourth Gospel, who did?"<sup>68</sup> The critical scholars have been at variance with one another on this all-important point. The name of John, the Presbyter has been suggested by Harnack, while Moffatt has said that this is possible but by no means probable, while Bacon has rejected the suggestion with all the scorn of which he is capable.<sup>69</sup> Maurice Jones in this same connection has well written:

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<sup>67</sup> Vedder, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>68</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 338.

<sup>69</sup> Loc. cit.

Yet it seems almost impossible to conceive that the writer of a book of the unique character and sublimity of the Gospel could have produced such a book and then to have entirely disappeared from history, as he must have done if the theory of the modern critic is to be accepted.<sup>70</sup>

On the basis of the external evidence, then, there is no valid reason for denying that John was the author of the Fourth Gospel. Will the same hold true for the internal evidences of the Gospel itself? It is with this area of evidence that the investigation will now be concerned.

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<sup>70</sup> Loc. cit.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP

It has been seen that the tradition of the Church has been practically unanimous in the opinion that the Apostle John was the author of the Fourth Gospel. The external evidences for this point of view have been shown to be most compelling if not overwhelming. It will be the purpose of the investigator in this present chapter to point out the internal evidences accruing from the Fourth Gospel itself. The question now to be answered is this: What does the Fourth Gospel itself have to say in regard to who was its author? The means of doing this has been in the past by scholars of all ranks to answer this question by the means of elimination on the basis of internal evidence. It is certainly true that a careful study of the Gospel will reveal innumerable verses that collaborate the verdict of the external evidences.

#### I. THE AUTHOR WAS A JEW

His familiarity with the Old Testament. The author of the Fourth Gospel was thoroughly familiar with the Old Testament, and not only this, but also with Jewish usages, customs, and opinions.<sup>1</sup> He quoted from the Old Testament frequently,

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<sup>1</sup> John H. Kerr, An Introduction to the Books of the New Testament (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1915), p. 59.

in fact as frequently as the most Jewish Gospel, that of Matthew. Examples of his use of the Old Testament are to be found in 1:23: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." This was a direct quotation from Isaiah 43. Again in 2:17 was written: "And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up," which was a direct quotation from Psalms 69:9. In fact, the author of the Fourth Gospel made no less than one hundred and two references to the Old Testament. Furthermore, in two distinct cases he quoted directly from the Hebrew Scriptures and not from the Septuagint. Thus, in 13:18 the author quoted directly from Psalm 41 as it is found in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in 19:37 he quoted directly from Zechariah 12:10.<sup>2</sup>

His acquaintance with the Jewish feast. The author of the Fourth Gospel was very well acquainted with the Jewish feast. As Mr. Salmon has pointed out: "It is remarkable that this evangelist who is said to be anti-Jewish, has alone recorded our Lord's attendance at these feasts, and has used them as landmarks to divide the Gospel history."<sup>3</sup> Three passovers were directly mentioned by the author of

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<sup>2</sup> George Salmon, An Historical Introduction to the New Testament (London: John Murray and Company, 1904), p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

this Gospel (2:13, 23; 6:4; 13:1; and 18:28). Another feast, not identified, was mentioned in 5:1, and the Feast of the Tabernacles was spoken of in 7:37. Mention was also made of the Feast of Dedication, which commemorated the dedication of the temple after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes.<sup>4</sup>

The Hebraism of the Fourth Gospel. That the writer was a Jew is apparent from the Hebraistic style that he used in writing the Fourth Gospel. Keim has rightly spoken of the language of this Gospel as "a remarkable tissue of genuine Greek lightness and skill, and of Hebrew forms of expression, in all their directness, childishness, figurativeness, and awkwardness."<sup>5</sup> Dr. Sanday has declared as quoted by Kerr:

While the book is written in Greek, it is thoroughly Hebraistic in style. The Hebraism comes out less in the vocabulary than in the construction of the sentences, the fondness for parallel clauses, the frequent repetition of the same thought, with slight modifications of sense and form, the simple mode of conjunction, and the absence of complicated periods.<sup>6</sup>

The style of thought was certainly Jewish. For as Mr. Dods has declared: "Its argumentative discourses are carried on

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>5</sup> Marcus Dods, An Introduction to the New Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1906), p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> Kerr, op. cit., p. 59.

by the Juxtaposition of consecutive ideas rather than by their rigid logical Concatenation effected by means of particles."7

His Jewish conceptions. The author was not only familiar with the Hebrew Old Testament, but he also possessed specifically Jewish conceptions. He had the Jewish conception of a Messiah (1:19-28; 4:25; and 6:14-15), the relation of the Jews to the Samaritans (4:9), the Rabbinical idea that a teacher should not converse with a woman (4:27), and the connection of sin with affliction (9:23).8 And surely, no one but a Jew could possibly have written the seventh chapter of the Fourth Gospel.9 Matthew Arnold has held that the evangelist spoke of the Jews and their usages as if they belonged to another race from himself. He said, as quoted by Dods:

It seems impossible to think that a Jew born and bred--a man like the Apostle John--could ever come to speak thus. Here is a Jew talking of the Jews' Pass-over, and of a dispute of some of John's disciples with a Jew about purifying. It is like an Englishman writing of the Derby as the English people's Derby. An Englishman would never speak so.10

But Marcus Dods has refuted this argument of Matthew Arnold by declaring:

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7 Dods, op. cit., p. 49.

8 Loc. cit.

9 Ibid., p. 50.

10 Loc. cit.



But, this is faulty criticism. An Englishman who had been thirty years abroad and who was writing for foreigners, would use precisely such forms of expression. And, in point of fact, the Evangelist Mark, who wrote for Gentile readers, does adopt a similar style, explaining to persons unfamiliar with Jewish ways, customs familiar to himself.<sup>11</sup>

When the Apostle John wrote this Gospel, he had been residing in Ephesus for close to thirty years, and as will be later pointed out, he wrote his Gospel for Gentile readers, most of whom were very unfamiliar with Jewish ideas and customs, especially since the destruction of Jerusalem had taken place about twenty-five years prior to that time. Thus, there is no valid reason for supposing that the Fourth Gospel was written by anyone except a Jew.

## II. THE AUTHOR WAS A PALESTINIAN JEW

His knowledge of Palestine. That the Evangelist was a Palestinian Jew is inferred from the fact of his minute acquaintance with the topography of the Holy Land.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in 2:1 he spoke of Cana of Galilee, showing that he knew that there were two localities by that name in the land of Palestine. In 1:28 he spoke of Bethabara beyond the Jordan, once again showing his minute acquaintance with even the minor localities of the Holy Land. In 11:18 the author, in describing the location of Bethany, said that "Bethany was

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<sup>11</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 260.

nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off." Is it possible to conceive of anyone but a Palestinian Jew, one who was very familiar with the geography of Palestine, making such a description? Other examples of the Evangelist's familiarity with the topography of Palestine are to be found in: 1:44; 3:23; 4:11; 4:35; and 4:46. The author of the Fourth Gospel also knew Jerusalem very well. He spoke of the Pool near the sheep gate, having five porches; of the temple treasury; of Solomon's porch; of the Pool of Siloam; of the Brook Hebron; and of the place that is called in the Hebrew tongue Golgotha.<sup>13</sup>

The Evangelist also made a most graphic description of the Temple upon the occasion of its cleansing by Jesus Christ. He told of the kinds of animals that were kept in the Temple for the sacrifices, he described these animals as crowding its courts, he described the money-changers as sitting and the sellers of the animals as standing. Such a graphic description would be possible only to a Palestinian Jew who had for years frequented the temple.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, it is seen that the author evinced the most intimate acquaintance with the historical and the geographical features of the country. The Fourth Gospel was filled with vividness and correctness of description. Renan has said of John 4:1-38, as quoted by Kerr, that: "Only a Jew

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<sup>13</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

of Palestine who had often passed the entrance of the valley of Sychem could have written that."<sup>15</sup>

The Palestinian consciousness of the Evangelist. The writer's consciousness was Palestinian. The "we know" in 4:22 by which the speaker identified himself with the Jews in contrast with the Samaritans, held as good for the Evangelist as for the speaker. The conclusion that the composer of the Fourth Gospel was a Palestinian Jew cannot easily be denied in the light of this verse.<sup>16</sup> John 10:34-35 and 6:37, 44 are other verses that substantiate the above conclusion. Besides this, the Evangelist's whole style wore a Jewish cast. No Gospel had a more symbolical character than it did. A great deal of its speech was figurative. The whole history of Jesus' life had a symbolical meaning for the author of this Gospel.<sup>17</sup> The Evangelist also possessed thorough and complete knowledge of Jewish customs and ideas. He knew of the Sabbath laws (5:1 ff.; 9:14; and 7:22); of the Jewish expectation of Elijah (1:21); of the obscurity out of which the Messiah would come (1:21, 47; 7:27).<sup>18</sup>

His knowledge of local jealousies. That the Evangelist was a Palestinian Jew is also seen in his knowledge of the

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<sup>15</sup> Kerr, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>16</sup> C. E. Luthardt, The Apostle, Saint John (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1875), p. 169.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

p. 172.

local jealousies that existed in Palestine, especially during the first century.<sup>19</sup> In 1:46, he recorded the jealousy between Judea and Galilee. When Nathanael was told about Jesus, he said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" In 7:41 some of the Judeans asked, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" Then in 7:52 the Pharisees said unto Nicodemus, "Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Another thing to be noticed in this same connection was that the Evangelist recorded the scorn of the Pharisees for the common people. In 7:49 they were reported to have said: "This people who knoweth not the law are cursed."

The history of the temple. The author was also familiar with the history of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. In John 2:20 he stated: "Forty and six years was the temple in building." This statement placed the beginning of Christ's ministry in perfect agreement with that date which we are led to believe from other considerations was the actual date at which Christ was baptized and entered into His ministry.<sup>20</sup> It was in this same connection that Salmon said:

Is it credible that a foreigner in the second century, when the science of chronology was unknown, could have had the information rightly to state the interval between the beginning of the Temple-building and the beginning of our Lord's ministry, or that if he had made a random guess, that he could have hit the truth so accurately?<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 260.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

The Evangelist lived in the first century. Another fact that has emerged from the study of the Fourth Gospel is that the Evangelist was not only a Palestinian Jew, but that he lived in Palestine during the first century, especially before 70 A.D. Such a fact has not been difficult to show, for the subjects which have excited interest or controversy have differed from age to age. The subjects that interested, or which produced controversy, in Palestine in the first century, are known to all scholars. The question then is: Does the Fourth Gospel reveal these controversies in such a way that there is no question that the author was a Palestinian Jew who lived prior to 70 A.D.?

The Messianic idea in the Gospel. The Messianic idea that is found in the Fourth Gospel is the one that existed before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.; that is, the Jews in the Fourth Gospel expected a Messiah who should deliver the Jews, make of Israel a great nation, and make the Jews the rulers of the earth. But as Salmon has pointed out, this hope was quelled by the destruction of Jerusalem and "it is unbelievable that a writer of the second century could have reproduced these Jewish hopes as if they were part of the atmosphere which he himself breathed."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

Other similar factors in the Fourth Gospel. The Evangelist discussed and related the Sabbath controversy in precisely the same manner as was done by the Synoptic writers. The writer of the Fourth Gospel recounted how Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and how this incurred the wrath and enmity of the scribes and Pharisees. In all of this, there was not the slightest bit of variance from the account that is found in the Synoptic Gospels. Furthermore, the author of the Fourth Gospel related that Jesus considered Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath, even as it is found in the Synoptics.

Then the author of the Fourth Gospel was most familiar with certain fundamental facts concerning the coming of the Messiah. He knew that the Messiah would not be born in Galilee, but in Bethlehem of Judea. Evidences of this are to be found in: 7:27; 7:51; 7:42; and 12.34.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel showed no knowledge of the controversy raised by the Gnostics early in the second century. He was not concerned with the origin of evil; he did not refer to the idea that matter is evil, or even show any evidence that he knew that such a doctrine existed. He also showed no sign that he had any knowledge whatsoever of the Gnostic teaching that there existed many intermediaries between God and man. He also evinced no knowledge whatsoever of the Docetic view of the Person of

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

Christ, for he considered Jesus to be truly both human and Divine. In summary, then, the writer of the Fourth Gospel proved himself to be a person who lived in the first century because he was familiar with the subjects that excited interest and which produced controversy in the first half of the first century, and because of the entire lack of evidence that he knew anything about the controversies which stirred the Church in the second century.<sup>24</sup>

### III. THE WRITER WAS AN APOSTLE

The author was an eye-witness. Descriptions that are given by eye-witnesses are characterized by their circumstantiality and graphic detail. As Marcus Dods has stated: "Imagination cannot take the place of eyesight."<sup>25</sup> The author of the Fourth Gospel spoke of real places, of real persons, and of real events. And let it be remembered, that fiction, as a branch of literature, had not yet been developed. A study of this Gospel reveals that it abounds with evidence which shows that it was written by an eye-witness. In the words of Mr. Dods:

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>25</sup> Dods, op. cit., p. 51.

The immense stretch of corn land 'round Sychar, the relative positions of the fishing villages on the Sea of Galilee, the tessellated pavement on which Pilate gave judgment, the temple arrangement, and other details freely interwoven with his narrative, could not have been described from his imagination. And finding this is so, we conclude that those other details which cannot be checked such as the mention of the very time at which this and that occurred, are also due to the fact that the writer was a witness of what he describes. And when to this is added the express assertion of 19:35 and 21:24, we are confronted with the alternative, either an eye-witness wrote this Gospel, or a forger whose genius for truth and for lying are alike inexplicable.<sup>26</sup>

The fact that the author was an eye-witness can be assumed from the host of particular chronological statements, such as no other Gospel possessed. He even named the day, the part of the day, and at times even the hour at which a particular event occurred. He named the day in: 1:29; 1:35; 1:44; 2:1; 4:43; 4:52; 6:22; 7:14; 7:37; 11:6; 11:17; 12:1; 12:12; 13:1; 20:1; and 20:26. He named the parts of the day in: 3:2; 6:16; 13:30; and 18:28. He named the hour of the day in: 1:39; 4:6; 4:52; and 19:14. There was nothing sought in these statements. They stood at his command when he needed them. In them is seen the evidence of a personal eye-witness account.<sup>27</sup>

The author was a disciple. The Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel frequently repeated the reflections or the comments of Jesus' disciples, which would not have occurred

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>27</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 176.

<sup>28</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 265.



to one who was not also a disciple. Thus, the effect of his first miracle was that "His disciples believed on Him," (2:11). Why was this prominence given to the reflections of His disciples? Could it have been possible that a forger of the second century, who wished to exhibit the glory of the Logos, would say what sounded so much like a truism, that is, that His disciples believed on Him?<sup>28</sup> As Salmon has pointed out:

It would surely have been more to the point to tell the effect upon the guests: and a forger would hardly have failed to do this. But all is explained when we suppose that a disciple is speaking, and recording how that favorable impression produced by the testimony of the Baptist, which had disposed him to join the company of Jesus, was changed by this miracle into actual faith.<sup>29</sup>

Then in chapter 20 there occurred a touch which so definitely was that of a disciple that it is impossible to ascribe it to a forger of the second century. The Evangelist at that point said that the other disciple "went in, and saw, and believed,"<sup>30</sup> while at the same time not a word was said as to the effect that which Peter saw had had on him. Is it not plain that the writer was relating his own experience of how he came to believe in the resurrection? As has been pointed out:

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<sup>28</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 265.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>30</sup> John 20:8.

A forger would have described what had happened in the minds and hearts of both. Furthermore, if this is the work of a forger trying to pass it off as the work of the Apostle John, would he not have recorded John as being the first to see the Lord? But no, the disciples are made to return to their own homes, and Mary Magdalene is given the honor of being the first one who enjoyed the sight of the risen Saviour.<sup>31</sup>

The Pragmatism of the Gospel. Dr. Sanday has found an argument for the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel in what he has called "The Pragmatism of the Gospel."<sup>32</sup> It would be perhaps better, though, merely to say that this is a valid argument for the Apostolic authorship of the Gospel. But nevertheless, by that terminology Dr. Sanday meant, as summarized by Maurice Jones:

The abundance of detail which is a very marked characteristic of the Gospel, the attention which the author pays to time, persons, and places, the variety of characters that passes before us in the Gospel, and the graphic nature of some of the descriptions.<sup>33</sup>

In this same connection, the aforementioned Mr. Jones has written:

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<sup>31</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 267.

<sup>32</sup> William Sanday, The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 83.

<sup>33</sup> Maurice Jones, The New Testament in the Twentieth Century (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1934), p. 372.

Now there occurred one tremendous catastrophe between the time that the events recorded in the Gospel took place and the time when the record was actually written, viz., the destruction of Jerusalem, which altered the condition of Judaism absolutely. Previous to 70 A.D., its system of worship, its hierarchy, and everything else associated with Judaism, had its center in the Holy Place in the Holy City. Now with one single stroke the whole of the temple system, the hierarchy, the Sanhedrin, as hitherto constituted came to an end. Now it is maintained by those who ascribe the Gospel to the Apostle that a careful examination of it gives us a description of Judaism as it existed before and not after the catastrophe. This statement is supported by the following considerations:

(1) Great stress is laid in the Gospel on the periodical visits to Jerusalem which were not a prominent feature of Jewish life towards the end of the first century. Again the references to the Temple are marked by a minute accuracy which would be all but impossible at a period when the Temple was in ruin and had long ceased to be frequented for the purposes of worship.

(2) The marked distinction between sects, Sadducees, and Pharisees, so prominent a feature in the time of our Lord, and so carefully emphasized in the Gospel, had largely disappeared before the end of the first century.

(3) The Messianic hope of the Gospel is still in its early stage.

(4) The arguments concerning Judaism and the references to it in the story of the woman of Samaria point decidedly to a Judaism of the pre-destruction period, and the Jewish ideas combated in the Gospel are essentially those of the earlier and not of the later period.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the Evangelist of this Gospel must have been an eye-witness of the things that Jesus said and did, and in fact, he expressly claimed this in 1:14, 19:35, and 21:24. Furthermore, he must have been an Apostle. This is proved by the fact that only one who belonged to the innermost circle of the disciples could have been a witness to all the things he so graphically related. The Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 373 f.

initiated his hearers into the peculiar relationships which Jesus maintained with them, and he especially loved to recall the striking words that Jesus employed to describe their characters and the secret thoughts that they often possessed: (1:38-50; 4:31-38; 6:5-9; 6:70; 9:2; 11:16; 12:21, 22; 13:6-9; 13:23-30; 14:5-8; 14:22; 16:17-30; 18:16; 20:3-8; and 20:28).<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, it is clear from a study of the Fourth Gospel that the author was not only an Apostle, but that he wrote his Gospel a great number of years after the events he recorded had actually happened, and that a great deal of the material that he used was written from memory. For instance, he recorded a number of feasts at Jerusalem to which Jesus went. He positively identified all of them but one. But in John 5:1, he wrote: "After this, there was a feast of the Jews." Almost every scholar is agreed that the Feast of the Passover or the Feast of the Purim was what the Evangelist here referred to. These feasts occurred a month apart so that an Apostle writing between sixty and seventy years after this visit of Jesus had occurred might have been confused as to which feast it actually was. Thus, the writer of the Gospel in Chapter 5, in not identifying the feast, gives us another sure mark that the Fourth Gospel was written by one Jesus' Apostles. A spurious author would have positively identified every event so as to make his work look authentic.

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<sup>35</sup> Kerr, op. cit., p. 60.

An eye-witness writing decades after the events happened would have been prone to forget some minor details, such as this. This is, then, a definite mark of Apostolic authorship and proves the Gospel's historicity, because when he was not sure, he did not positively identify the event; but when he was sure of the facts of time and place, he did. Thus this Gospel was written by one of Jesus' Apostles.

#### IV. THE WRITER WAS THE APOSTLE JOHN

Direct claims of authorship. Nowhere in the Gospel did the author clearly identify himself. But three times he made claims of being an eye-witness and a disciple of Jesus Christ. In John 1:14 he wrote: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." In fact, the pronoun "we" occurred three times in the Prologue, so that the author in the Prologue was indirectly asserting that he was one of the men who had beheld the Logos when He became flesh and dwelt among men. As the German scholar Zahn has said:

The use of the aorist tense three times in these statements, the subject of the last verb and the object of the first, makes the writer's meaning perfectly clear. John does not regard himself as simply one of the fellow-countrymen of Jesus who saw Him occasionally, but reckons himself among the eye-witnesses from the beginning--the disciples who believed on Jesus and who were in constant fellow-

ship with Him; since Jesus had revealed His glory, not to those who had seen some of His wonderful deeds, or who had only heard of Him, but to the disciples who believed on Him. To this circle the author belonged.<sup>36</sup>

Indirect evidences of Johannine authorship. It has already been observed that the Gospel of John was the only one of the four Gospels that made a categorical statement as to the identity of the author, when in John 21:24 it was definitely stated that the Gospel was written by "the disciple whom Jesus loved." In addition to this explicit claim of authorship, there are also several passages where the impression conveyed is indirect. In the story of the first call of the Apostles in John 1:35-51, the author of the Gospel only named four of them, but it is sure that there were at least five, if not six, who became followers of the Lord at the time recorded in the first chapter. In 1:40, it is said that one of the two who heard John speak of Jesus and who then followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. The other man was not named. There is a dispute as to whether or not this other disciple, like Andrew, went and brought his brother to the Lord. If he did, then there were only five disciples mentioned in this chapter, one of whom was not named. This one was the silent spectator in the background who told the story and who wrote the Gospel.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Theodore Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. III (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909), p. 209.

<sup>37</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 372.

The important question is this: Who was this unnamed disciple?

In the eleventh chapter there is found another indirect evidence as to who wrote this Gospel. As has been well observed:

This also seems to represent the recollections of one who had been present at the events of the day who had moved freely to and fro among the members of the household, and had probably talked with them after the day was over.<sup>38</sup>

Other episodes that point to the identity of the author were the two episodes on the night of the Last Supper and the events of the post-resurrection period. These all point to one who had been on most intimate terms with Jesus, to one who had been with Jesus from the beginning, and to one who went with Jesus everywhere. Of the twelve disciples, there were only two who would satisfy these requirements. These were James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

The family of Zebedee. One of the most interesting things about the Fourth Gospel is that the sons of Zebedee were never mentioned by name, and neither was their mother. As Zahn has declared:

How are we to explain the fact that no mention is made of the names of this family, all the members of which were so close to Jesus, and the fact that in this Gospel, in which the personal characteristics of the members of the Apostolic circle are more strongly brought out than in any other; yet there is complete silence concerning two Apostles of the first rank.

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38 Loc. cit.

But the only credible reason for the absence of the names of James and John and of their entire family in the Fourth Gospel, is the aversion of the author of this book to introducing himself by the use of "I" or by the use of his name into the history, which to him and his readers was sacred--an aversion which is manifested in different ways by the other evangelists and the author of Acts.<sup>39</sup>

From the other Gospels it is learned that the mother of John and James was Salome, and that she was one of the women who accompanied Jesus in His itinerant ministry. She also ministered to Jesus and His disciples from her own substance, as the family of Zebedee was apparently quite wealthy. Likewise, the other Gospels declare that she was present at both the death of Jesus and at His resurrection, and they also teach us that she was one of the most devoted among the women disciples of Jesus. Yet the Fourth Gospel did not mention her name. An American scholar by the name of Hayes has said:

What reason can be given for this if it was written by a second century writer trying to pass it off as the work of John? If that were true, the forger would try his best to bring out the connection of the writer with Salome. . . .Some definite connection would have been established. But we find none. Then why is not the mother of Jesus mentioned by name? The name of Mary does not once appear. Is it not because after the death of Jesus, she became a member of the family of John and thus John makes her to share in the anonymity of his entire family.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Zahn, op. cit., p. 211.

<sup>40</sup> D. A. Hayes, John and His Writings (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), p. 18.



It could also be said that there would be no valid reason for a second century writer to fail to mention either James or John or Mary the mother of Jesus, or Salome, even if he was not trying to pass his work off as that of the Apostle John. It should be remembered that by the second century the mother of Jesus was being exalted. If the author was a Christian of the second century, why would he not mention her by name? The only man in all of Christian history who could have written this Gospel and who would have had a valid reason for remaining silent on all the members of the household of Zebedee and for not mentioning the mother of Jesus by name in writing an account of the life of Jesus was the Apostle John.

John the Baptist. In the Synoptic Gospels whenever mention was made of the forerunner of Jesus, he was given the title of John the Baptist. But in the Fourth Gospel, when the Evangelist referred to this selfsame person, he never used that title but simply called him by his given name John. The Synoptic writers had a valid reason for referring to John the Baptist in that manner. They had to keep the identity of John the Baptist and John the Apostle distinct in their minds. The only case when that would not be true would be if the writer was one or the other. It is obvious that John the Baptist could not have written the Fourth

Gospel. The only one who could have written the Fourth Gospel was the Apostle John. Thus, the writer of the Fourth Gospel called the forerunner of Jesus simply John because the writer was John the Apostle, and because the early Church knew that it was written by him.

The testimony of John 21:24. As has been noticed, this verse claimed that the writer of the Fourth Gospel was the disciple whom Jesus loved. It is true that the second half of this verse is obviously an interpolation, but this is no serious objection, for every ancient manuscript contained this verse in its entirety.<sup>41</sup> It is not known who inserted it, but the "we" in the interpolation vouched for the Gospel and its author. But as Vedder has declared:

But who will vouch for this anonymous witness for an otherwise anonymous writing? But we have the best voucher we could have, the entire Church of the second century. In the absence of a single hint to the contrary, in all the patristic literature, it establishes a presumption of the correctness of the statement that can be set aside only by some positive evidence to the contrary.<sup>42</sup>

Summary: The internal evidence of the Fourth Gospel points convincingly to the fact that the Apostle John was its author. Godet has made a very fine and comprehensive summary of this evidence when he wrote:

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<sup>41</sup> Henry Clay Vedder, The Johannine Writings and the Johannine Problem (Philadelphia and Boston: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1917), p. 157.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

If we possess no historical data regarding the author of the Fourth Gospel, we should nonetheless be led to a positive result by the indications which the book itself supplies. The nature of the language, the freshness and dramatic vivacity of the narrative, the accuracy and precision of the descriptions, the peculiar manner in which the forerunner and the sons of Zebedee are spoken of, the love, the fervid tenderness of the author for the person of Jesus, the irresistible charm shed over the Gospel history--all leads us to the following result: The author of this work can only be a man born in Palestine, only an eye-witness of the ministry of Jesus, only an Apostle, only the beloved Apostle, only that John whom Jesus had bound to His person by the celestial charm of His teaching, only that John who reposed on His bosom, and who stood near His cross.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> F. Godet, Commentary on the Gospel of St. John (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1884), p. 262.

## CHAPTER V

### ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP BASED ON INTERNAL EVIDENCE EVALUATED

The main arguments against the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel have been based upon the internal character of the Gospel itself. There have been on the whole three central arguments of this type, together with many separate and independent arguments based on points of real difficulty in the Fourth Gospel. The three central arguments have been: (1) The argument based upon the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse; (2) The argument based upon the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels; and (3) The argument based upon the theory that the Fourth Gospel was not an historical account of the life of Christ but merely a theological treatise by a Christian imbued with Alexandrian ideas. These arguments will be discussed and evaluated in order to determine if there is in them any valid reason for denying the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. The fourth division of this chapter will be concerned with evaluating the other separate and lesser arguments.

1. A COMPARISON OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL  
AND THE APOCALYPSE

A statement of the argument. It has been claimed that the differences in matter and form that exist between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse are so great that they could not have been written by the same author. Thus the custom of the school of destructive criticism has been to attribute the Apocalypse to the Apostle John while denying that he wrote the Fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup> These differences were first noticed by Dionysius of Alexandria who lived in the third century. However, unlike some of the modern critics, he argued from this that as John was the author of the Fourth Gospel, he could not have been the author of the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup>

Is this alternative necessary? It is not altogether sure, as shall be seen, that it is necessary to make a choice. But if it were necessary to make a choice between the two, on the basis of external evidence, the Fourth Gospel and not the Apocalypse would have to be assigned to the Apostle John.<sup>3</sup> It must be remembered that it was the Fourth Gospel that was recognized by the Church universal and even by heretical writers, even as early as the middle of the second century,

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<sup>1</sup> F. Godet, Commentary on the Gospel of St. John (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1884), p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> George Salmon, An Historical Introduction to the New Testament (London: John Murray and Co., 1904), p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit.

while the authenticity of the Apocalypse was questioned until the very time of Eusebius himself.<sup>4</sup> However, even in the case of the Apocalypse, there was a long list of second century witnesses to the Johannine authorship of that book, but this subject is outside the regions of this research.

Another fact to be remembered is that the Apocalypse testified to the sojourn of John in Asia, so that there was no possibility that such a great error of tradition could have occurred between the time that the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel were written. If the Apocalypse is accepted as Johannine, then the tradition about John living in Asia Minor until the time of Trajan must also be accepted. And this means that there is no longer any reason for denying that John could not have written the Fourth Gospel.

The name of John. The name John was not once mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, while in the Apocalypse it occurred three times. The Apocalypse claimed to have been written by the Apostle John (Rev. 1:1-4). On the other hand, there is no definite assertion as to who wrote the Fourth Gospel. This fact has often been pointed out and used as a reason for denying the Johannine authorship of the Gospel.<sup>5</sup> But it should be

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

noticed that in the Old Testament, every historical book was an anonymous writing, while every prophetic book gave the name of the prophet to whom the prophecy was given and who wrote the book. The only exception was in the case of the historical book of Nehemiah. Thus, the Apostle John, a Palestinian Jew, was only following the custom of his people when he made no direct claim of authorship of the Fourth Gospel, while on the other hand definitely stating that he was the author of the book of the Revelation.<sup>6</sup>

The extent of the differences. Many critics have thought that the differences in mode and thought preclude the idea of their both proceeding from one hand. Thus, Mr. Taylor, an English critic, has stated as quoted by Dods:

The Apocalypse is pervaded with the glow and breathes the vehement and fierce spirit of the old Hebrew prophecy, painting vividly to the mental eye, but never appealing directly to the spiritual perception of the soul. When we turn to the Fourth Gospel we find ourselves at once in another atmosphere of thought, full of deep yearnings of the unseen and eternal, ever soaring to a region which the imagery of things visible cannot reach. We at once recognize in the authors of the Apocalypse and the Gospel a genius essentially distinct.<sup>7</sup>

These differences have weighed so heavily with many critics that they have declared it to be "a psychological impossibility

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<sup>6</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup> Marcus Dods, An Introduction to the New Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1906), p. 56.

that the same writer should have produced both books; and as the Apocalypse is accepted by modern criticism as the work of John, the Gospel must be rejected."<sup>8</sup>

But on the other hand, it has been pointed out by a great conservative scholar:

But were we only to consider the versatility possessed by some writers, we should shrink from dogmatically affirming that the production by one mind of two books so different as the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel is a psychological impossibility. And certainly the differences between these books have been exaggerated. It will scarcely be denied nowadays that they are identical in their theological ideas--in the exaltation of Christ's Person, in His redeeming work and His sacrificial death, and in the ingathering of the nations. The imagery in the two books is also very similar; and as Canon Westcott has noticed, even the plan or guiding conception of both is the same: Both present a view of a supreme conflict between the powers of good and evil. . . . In both books Christ is the central figure. His victory is the end to which history and vision lead as their consummation.<sup>9</sup>

The style of the writings. In the Gospel the Greek that was used was not of a high literary quality, it is said, but it was correct, easy, and characterized by its simplicity. On the other hand, as some have pointed out, the Greek of the Apocalypse was much more complex.<sup>10</sup> But was not the Gospel more or less a simple historical account of things that Jesus was reported to have said or done? While on the other hand,

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<sup>8</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 53.



was not the Apocalypse a vast, intricate, and complicated prophecy?

The author of the Apocalypse has been accused of breaking the rules of Greek syntax, while this was not true of the Gospel, which was written in correct Greek. In the book of the Revelation there were violations of the most common grammatical rules. Then a number of appositions in the nominative are changed to substantives in the genitive and the dative cases. But these violations of common Greek grammatical rules cannot be explained on the supposition that the author of the Apocalypse was ignorant of them, for in other passages in the same book he observed them. As Godet has pointed out: "At every turn we find in this same book appositions in their regular cases."<sup>11</sup> Then the irregularities in the Apocalypse have their comparisons in the Gospel in such passages as 6:39 and 17:2.<sup>12</sup> Thus the violation of the common rules of Greek syntax in the Apocalypse and the almost perfect usage of them in the Gospel cannot be explained upon the basis of different authorship, for the author of the Apocalypse at times showed great knowledge of the most complex usages of the Greek language. They can only be explained upon the basis of the subject matter that was being discussed.

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<sup>11</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 243.

It has also been said in this same connection that the Gospel is free from solecisms, while the Apocalypse is not. But as Bishop Westcott has remarked: "'To speak of St. John's Gospel as written in very pure Greek is altogether misleading. It is free from solecisms, because it avoids all idiomatic expressions.'"<sup>13</sup> However, despite this explanation, there remain differences that need to be explained. Salmon has given us such an explanation when he said:

The Apocalypse was written between ten and twenty years before the Gospel. Afterwards, coming to Ephesus, living in a Greek city, having Greek disciples, expounding the Gospel to cultured Greeks, he could not fail to acquire greater facility in its use, and a power of expressing his ideas such as he had not possessed when he wrote the Apocalypse.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, if the Gospel did not show better Greek than the Apocalypse, that would be a reasonable ground to suspect the Johannine authorship of the Gospel. But the case has proved to be exactly what would be expected of an Hebrew author who for a score of years had spoken little Aramaic at all, and who was living and teaching in a cultured Greek environment.<sup>15</sup> Then too, having written his Gospel among cultured Greeks, he may have had the assistance of a number of Greek scholars to check his writing, or even to have served as his amanuensis

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<sup>13</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

in the writing of the Gospel, as St. Paul did upon many occasions.<sup>16</sup> Then it should be remembered that as St. John wrote his Gospel when quite aged that this could have been the case, while on the other hand he was not so old when he wrote the Apocalypse, and he wrote it while he was banished to the Isle of Patmos.

The vocabularies of the writings. The vocabularies of the writers of these two books are said to be vastly different, hence they could not have been written by the same author. Now it is true that in the Apocalypse there are words lacking, or only rarely appearing, that are very common in the other Johannine writings. But let it not be forgotten that the subjects treated in the Apocalypse were vastly different from the subjects treated in the other Johannine writings, and this fact would of necessity demand a vastly different vocabulary.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, a careful examination of the language of the five books of John reveals:

So much affinity of thought and diction between the various books that we can feel confident that all must have proceeded, if not from the same author, then certainly from the same school.<sup>18</sup>

Then in both the Gospel and the Apocalypse, ideas and words had much in common. In both books Jesus was the Word,

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<sup>16</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>18</sup> Loc. cit.

the Lamb, the Light, and the Giver of the water of Life. In fact, Mr. Evans in his book St. John, the Author of the Fourth Gospel has shown that there are over two-hundred verbal agreements between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse.<sup>19</sup> Thus the similarities of vocabulary are far more striking than the differences, and as Salmon has pointed out: "I suppose that there are no two works of the same author between which some points of difference might not be found by a minute critic."<sup>20</sup> This same author has also pointed out:

Some years ago Dr. Stanley Leathes applied to our English poets the methods of minute criticism that have been freely used on our sacred books. He found that of about 450 words in Milton's "L'Allegro" over 300 are not found in the longer poem "Il Penseroso," and over 300 do not occur in the still longer poem "Lycidas." So likewise, of about 590 words in Tennyson's "Lotos-eaters," there are 360 which are not found in the longer poem "Enone."<sup>21</sup>

The Christology of these writings. The Christology of both the Gospel and the Apocalypse was identical. Jesus was called in Rev. 19:13, "The Word of God." Thus critics like Renan and a host of others who attributed the Apocalypse to the Apostle John and who assigned to it an earlier date

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<sup>19</sup> Dods, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

than even orthodox critics have assigned to any of the Johannine writings have overlooked the fact that in the Apocalypse the title "Logos" was given to Jesus Christ, and that the main objection of many of these main critics to the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel was its Logos doctrine, which they have claimed is a mark of a much later date.<sup>22</sup> This objection completely disappears when it is seen that this doctrine is also taught in the Apocalypse.

Then the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse were the only books in the New Testament that called Jesus Christ "the Lamb of God." This title appeared in John 1:38 and 11:51. It also is to be found in Rev. 5:9. Then the piercing of our Lord was recorded only in the Johannine writings. Examples of this are to be found in John 19:34 and in Rev. 1:7.

Another phrase of frequent occurrence in all of the Johannine writings is the phrase "He that overcometh." This phrase does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament. It is found in the following passages: John 16:33; Rev. 2:7; 2:11; 3:5; 12:11; 21:7; I John 2:13; 4:4; and 5:4. Furthermore, the remarkable word translated "truth" occurred

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 214.

nine times in the Gospel, four times in the first Epistle, ten times in the Apocalypse, and only five times in all the rest of the New Testament. It would therefore seem from the usage of this word alone that the same author wrote both the Gospel and the Apocalypse.<sup>23</sup>

Many other similarities are to be found in a careful study of these two books. For instance, in Rev. 2:17 Jesus promised to believers "the hidden manna"; while in John 6:32 Jesus claimed to be "the hidden manna." In John 7:37, Jesus said: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink"; while in Rev. 22:17, it is stated: "Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." These are but a few of the similarities that exist between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse. But they are sufficient to show that the differences that do exist are not nearly as great as it is sometimes claimed.

The usage of abstract terminology. Again it is said that the Gospel made use of abstract terminology whereas the Apocalypse loved to clothe the idea in a figure. Thus, the Gospel used the word "light" while the Apocalypse used the phrase "the lamp of the holy city."<sup>24</sup> But we should not forget that the Gospel is the calm reproduction of the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>24</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 244.

history of the life of Christ, while the Apocalypse was the work of ecstasy and vision.

The use of Aramaisms in the Apocalypse. The author of the Apocalypse used Aramaisms, while the Gospel used the Hellenic language entirely and correctly. But it must be remembered that the Apocalypse was written under the influence of the prophetic delineations of the Old Testament, while the Gospel simply related the events of which the author was an eye-witness. In fact, the Dutch Theologian Niermeyer was the first to observe that the differences between these two books are what we would expect, taking the subject matter into account, if they both had proceeded from the same author.<sup>25</sup>

The real unity of style. The real unity of style between these two writings is readily apparent to one who has carefully studied them. They both used the same favorite expressions: "To do the truth"; "to hunger and thirst"; "to keep the commandments"; and the term "amen, amen."<sup>26</sup> Then there are many exact comparisons. Rev. 3:20 described the intimate communion of Christ with the believer as did John 14:23. Rev. 7:15-17 described the heavenly blessedness

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<sup>25</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

of the believers and this had its counterpart in such passages as John 1:14; 10:1-16; and 14:1-4. Another analogy is found in the quotation from Zech. 12:10, in Rev. 1:7, where the author corrects the translation of the Septuagint exactly as was done in the Fourth Gospel in 19:37.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the author of both of these writings showed a great love for the use of triplets. Thus, in the Prologue to the Gospel, the author used such triplets as: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1); "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3); "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" (John 1:10); "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13); and "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). The author of the Apocalypse also showed a great love for the use of triplets. Examples of this are: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (Rev. 1:3); "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him" (Rev. 1:7);

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 246.



"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14); "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot" (Rev. 3:15).

Another great fact to be noticed is that the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse are the only books in the New Testament to record the great claims of Jesus that began with the words "I am." Thus, such statements are found in the Fourth Gospel in: 6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; and 15:1. In the book of the Revelation, similar claims are found in: 1:8; 1:11; 1:18; 21:6; 22:9; 22:13; and 22:16. Such similarities of language and of expression are too great to have been a mere coincidence. These clearly show that the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse have come forth from the same hand.

The harmony of their theological concepts. The harmony that exists between what they taught is also most remarkable. Both the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse tell of the love of God for His Own and of judgment and wrath for the ungodly (John 3:36b, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"; and Rev. 2:23b, "I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works").<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

Then the Christology of the Apocalypse is identical with that of the Gospel. To both, Jesus is the everlasting Son, the sacrificial Lamb of God, and the Saviour of the world. The way of justification is also the same in both writings. Salvation in the Apocalypse is by a Divine gift (7:10), is by the blood of the Lamb (7:14), and it is by this blood that saints gain the victory over sin and over Satan (12:11). Justification and sanctification are therefore the fruit of faith in Christ's death, just as it was in the Gospel.<sup>29</sup>

The conception of the Church is the same in both. They taught that the Church was composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers. Then a general comparison of the Apocalyptic drama with that of the Gospel leads us to hold that they were both written by the same author. They both depicted the triumph of light over darkness, of Jesus over Satan, and of faith over unbelief.<sup>30</sup>

Summary. Thus we come to this conclusion, that the only difference between these two New Testament books lies in the subject matter treated. The Gospel treated the history of the life of Christ, while the Apocalypse dealt with the coming of Christ's Kingdom on earth. The one spoke of the

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<sup>29</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

first coming of Christ which was in the past; the other spoke of the second coming, which is yet in the future. But except for this difference, the books are identical in progress, in scope, in belief, in concept, in language, and in style.<sup>31</sup>

## II. A COMPARISON OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND THE SYNOPTICS

The problem that confronts us. Even a superficial study of the four Gospels reveals that there are certain differences between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel. Thus, many scholars, in pointing these out to us have argued that these differences are so great that the Fourth Gospel could not have been written by an eye-witness and an Apostle of Jesus Christ. They have thus denied the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel because it appears to be so different from the Synoptics. But two facts need to be kept in mind, which shall later be substantiated. First, the differences that exist are not nearly so great as they are sometimes claimed to be. Second, the Fourth Gospel was written for the purpose of supplementing the historical record of the Synoptic Gospels, and this fact accounts for every difference that does exist.

It is true that there are certain problems in this connection that confront a Christian scholar. In the first

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<sup>31</sup> Loc. cit.

place, the Synoptics told of only one visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, while John told of many. Secondly, in the Fourth Gospel there are to be found but few hints of a Galilean ministry, while in the Synoptics we have little evidence of a Judean ministry of Christ before His final visit to Jerusalem. And thirdly, the differences that exist in the conception of the mission work of Jesus Christ are such that some have thought them to be unreconcilable. The Synoptics depicted Him as being mainly concerned with the establishment of the Kingdom of God, while the Fourth Gospel represented Jesus as a revelation of Divine glory, effecting an atonement for sin, without which forgiveness and salvation would be impossible.<sup>32</sup>

The character of the Fourth Gospel. The character of the Fourth Gospel is both elevated and lofty. And because of its contents, radical criticism cannot concede this Gospel to have been the work of an eye-witness. It believes only in a human Jesus; how then could an intimate companion of a human being ever come to consider him to be the pre-existent Logos, the sinless One, the Son of God, in fact very God Himself?<sup>33</sup> Then in the Synoptic Gospels, James and John were called the

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<sup>32</sup> Henry Clay Vedder, The Johannine Writings and the Johannine Problem (Philadelphia and Boston: The Griffeth and Rowland Press, 1917), p. 160.

<sup>33</sup> Samuel A. Cartledge, A Conservative Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1938), p. 160.

sons of thunder (Mark 3:17); and (Luke 9:51). How could this son of thunder have possibly been the disciple whom Jesus loved and who wrote this Fourth Gospel?<sup>34</sup> The answer to this, of course, is very simple. Who can possibly say how much effect the life of Jesus would have on a man who had been in constant fellowship with Him for a period of three years?

The deliberate changing of the Synoptic record. It is said that the Fourth Gospel at times deliberately changed the Synoptic record. The most evident cases of this are said to have been: (1) The placing of the cleansing of the temple at the beginning instead of at the close of the public ministry of Jesus; (2) The dating of the Last Supper on the fourteenth of Nisan (the night before the Passover), instead of the fifteenth of Nisan. In contrast, the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the sea occur in the same order as they are found in the Synoptic record, and the general order of the events of the last week were similar to that of the Synoptic account with the exception of the time of the anointing of Jesus in Bethlehem.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Fowler, History and Literature of the New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 401.

The new events recorded in the Fourth Gospel. It is, however, the additional material rather than any changes in the parallel incidents that makes the Fourth Gospel so widely different from the Petrine-Marcan Gospel. But instead of their simple outline: The baptism and wilderness temptation, followed by a northern ministry, then a journey through Perea to Jerusalem, a last week and resurrection ministry; we have the testimony of John the Baptist followed by the call of the first disciples beyond the Jordan, a return to Galilee, and a ministry in Jerusalem at the Passover season, all of which seem to precede the northern ministry of the Synoptic account.<sup>36</sup>

The main differences stated. Maurice Jones in his book The New Testament in the Twentieth Century has given us a concise list of the differences that exist between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics when he stated as follows:

(1) Instead of a plain, simple narrative accompanied by little in the way of comment, we are lifted at once to the contemplation of eternal thoughts.

(2) The birth stories and genealogies are replaced by the heavenly procession of the eternal Logos from the Divine Father.

(3) Instead of the homely life of Nazareth we find ourselves listening to elaborate discussions in the Temple courts and the practical simplicity of the Sermon on the Mount gives way to the mystical and exalted language of the farewell discourses.

(4) Many of the main characters in the drama are either new or endowed with an importance which was not theirs before, such as Nathanael, Nicodemus, and Lazarus.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 402.

(5) The Synoptics place the chief scene of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, but in St. John, Jerusalem becomes the center of interest, and the period covered by the ministry is extended from one year to three.

(6) Many important incidents are omitted such as the Virgin Birth, our Lord's baptism, the temptation, the Transfiguration, and the agony in the Garden, and the Ascension are not so much as referred to.

(7) Other events are placed in an entirely new setting, e.g., the cleansing of the Temple, the call of the disciples, and the Eucharistic teaching.

(8) Jesus is no longer considered the wonderful teacher and healer, or the prophet, but the eternal and revealed Son of God.

(9) The Kingdom of God has practically no place here, and attention is centered instead on the Person of Christ, His eternal attributes, His pre-existence, His mission to reveal the Divine Father and through His own humanity to lift men into fellowship with God.

(10) He speaks no longer in parables, but in long discourses on abstract conceptions such as life, light, witness, flesh, glory, grace, and truth.

(11) Miracles are no longer actions dictated by mercy, but were done to reveal the glory of God and the mystery of His Divine Son.

(12) Most significant of all is the contrast between the Synoptic representation of the gradual development of the consciousness of His Messianic claims on the part of the disciples as compared with the immediate and absolute recognition of His Divine prerogative which meets us in St. John from the very first.<sup>37</sup>

The implication of these differences. These differences that exist between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels have been often used by critics to deny the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. It is said that the discourses in the Fourth Gospel are so dissimilar from

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<sup>37</sup> Maurice Jones, The New Testament in the Twentieth Century (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1934), pp. 391 ff.

the discourses of Jesus in the Synoptic record, that they could not be historical, or an authentic account of what Jesus actually said. Vedder has well answered this objection when he said:

If John or another is the composer of these discourses, . . . and not a recorder of historical fact, we have this astonishing phenomenon: the author of the most profound and eloquent religious teaching in the history of the world was not Jesus, and men have altogether been led astray in hailing Him as the great teacher of mankind, for here was a disciple who was greater than his master. Is that credible? Is not almost any other solution more credible than that? Is not the solution offered by the great exegete, Meyer, much more preferable? Meyer says: "The manifestation of Jesus as the Divine-human life was intrinsically too rich, grand, and manifold not to be represented variously, according to the varying individualities by which its rays were caught and according to the more or less ideal points of view from which those rays were reflected."<sup>38</sup>

The omission of the birth of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel, unlike the Synoptics, did not mention that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, or that He was born of the lineage of David. In fact, it reported more than one uncontradicted assertion of the opposite. In John 1:46, Nathanael said to Philip: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth," an objection that neither Philip nor the author of the Gospel took time to refute. Again in John 7:41, the same objection appeared when the people were discussing Christ. The Scrip-

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<sup>38</sup> Vedder, op. cit., p. 168.



ture at that place said: "Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" Thus the author of this Gospel recorded that some of the Jews rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah because He was thought to have been born in Nazareth of Galilee instead of in Bethlehem of Judea as the prophets had foretold. And the author of the Fourth Gospel did not give the slightest hint of how this difficulty was to be overcome.

But the assertion that the Evangelist did not know how to refute this objection is according to Salmon "too absurd to require serious refutation."<sup>39</sup> The author of the Fourth Gospel certainly believed in the Old Testament. He also believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Furthermore, it has been pointed out:

How is it possible that he (John) could take pleasure in bringing out the fact that the Jews held that there was a contradiction between acknowledging the Messiahship of Jesus and acknowledging the truth of the Old Testament prophecies, unless he had in his own mind some way of reconciling this alleged contradiction? And since critics of all schools hold that John's Gospel was written at so late a date that the Synoptic accounts of our Lord's birth at Bethlehem, of the seed of David, must then have been many years in circulation and have had time to become the general belief of Christians, it is ridiculous to think that John had any way of answering the Jewish objection different from that which must have occurred to all his readers.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 277.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 278.

The facts of the case are these. The virgin birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea had been recorded by both Matthew and Luke, and by the end of the first century was a well-known fact to all Christendom. John, therefore, felt no need of repeating a fact so well known that to have done so would have been but needless repetition. Furthermore, John showed that he believed in the virgin birth by such passages as John 1:14, where he stated that the Word became flesh, where the Greek word translated "became" is the same Greek word that is used of spiritual birth, meaning a birth that is entirely dependent upon the power of God. Thus, John, while not recording the virgin birth, showed by his use of this word that he believed Jesus was born of a virgin.

The Evangelist's use of the Synoptic Gospels. It is quite evident that the author of the Fourth Gospel made considerable use of the Synoptic record. This fact should be noted, however, that no writer ever was more in the habit of trusting the previous knowledge of his readers. And why should this not be so? This Evangelist wrote, not when Christianity was relatively new, but at a time when the facts of a great portion of the life of Christ were well known, at least to the Christian communities, both because of tradition and because of the circulation of the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

That this was so appears certain from the following facts:

(1) He described Andrew in John 1:40 as Simon Peter's brother, although Simon Peter had not yet been mentioned. Thus, the author of the Fourth Gospel assumed that Simon Peter was a well-known personage. This was so because of the prominent place that Simon Peter played in the Synoptic Gospels, which by that time had been circulated throughout Christendom and were well known. (2) In John 3:24, the author made a parenthetical remark that John the Baptist was not yet cast into prison, yet he did not tell anything about the tragic ending of his life, assuming that it was well known. And it should be remembered that the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist was told at length in each one of the Synoptic Gospels. Thus John who in writing this Gospel had as one of his main purposes that of telling things that Jesus said and did that had not yet been recorded, in other words intended his Gospel to be an historical supplement to the Synoptic record. He thus did not re-tell things that had already been well described in the Synoptic Gospels and which would therefore have been well known throughout Christendom. (3) The Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel did not relate the appointment of the twelve Apostles, but he assumed it to be a well-known fact when he stated in John 6:70: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (4) In John 6:42, the author reported the Jews asking, "Is not this Jesus, the

son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" The author of the Fourth Gospel had not mentioned the name of Joseph before, yet he assumed that it was a well-known fact that Joseph was the earthly father of Jesus. (5) The baptism of Jesus was not expressly mentioned by the author of the Fourth Gospel, but it was implied in the account in the first chapter in which John the Baptist gave testimony to the fact that he saw the Spirit descending upon Jesus. (6) The Ascension of Christ was not related in the Fourth Gospel, but it was thrice referred to (3:13; 6:62; and 20:17). That John knew of the Ascension of Christ is certain from the last of these verses when in describing the first resurrection appearance of Jesus he related Jesus talking to Mary Magdalene and saying to her: "Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

(7) A number of passages are found in the Fourth Gospel in which characters spoke under misapprehensions, but which the author did not usually correct, although he did once in 2:20-21; but he did that then because that event was not recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. In the other places he simply assumed that the readers of his Gospel knew the Synoptic accounts well enough to sufficiently recognize the error. Examples of this are found in: 7:35; 7:36; 3:4; 4:15; 6:52; 11:50; and 19:21.

It should be especially noticed that the answer that Jesus gave to Nicodemus in John 3:4 would be completely unintelligible to one who had not already become impregnated with Christian ideas.<sup>42</sup> Thus the fact that there are many events that were recorded in the Synoptic Gospels that do not appear in the Fourth Gospel is no argument against the Johannine authorship of this great New Testament writing. John simply assumed that these facts were already well known and did not feel it necessary to re-tell them.

The Eucharistic teaching of the Fourth Gospel. The omission in the Fourth Gospel of the account of the institution of the Eucharist is oftentimes suggested as a major reason for denying the Johannine authorship of this Gospel. However, the fact that it is omitted, even though a fact of great importance, does not prove any such thing. It has already been pointed out that the author of the Fourth Gospel had the Synoptic narrative at his command, and that he did not record in his Gospel events that had been well described in the Synoptic record. Furthermore, there is a rather distinct reference to the Eucharist in John 6:51-57: "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood hath eternal life." This surely was both a reference to and an explanation of the Eucharist. Furthermore, the author of the Fourth Gospel certainly was well acquainted with it, for by this time Christians everywhere were observing it.<sup>43</sup>

Jesus' loss of popular favor. In the sixth chapter of John is found the account of Jesus' feeding of the five thousand, His walking upon the sea, and His great discourse upon the bread of Life. This discourse, because there is not a hint of it in the Synoptic narrative, is thought to be unhistorical. The Johannine account, however, dated the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand near the time of the Passover, which agrees with the general time of the year that it was reported to have occurred in the Synoptic record which said in the Gospel of Mark that there was "much green grass" upon the ground (Mark 6:39).

After the miraculous feeding, the discourse on the bread of Life led many to turn away from Jesus. Now the question is, was this account historically accurate? There is really no disagreement with the Synoptic account, for it would take more than two great miracles to explain the sudden turning away from Jesus by a great number of His followers which took place at this time as recorded by all four Gospels.<sup>44</sup> Jesus had won popular acclaim because of His miracles. Thus, these two miracles could not have turned popular favor against Him, especially among a people whose rich tradition of miracles by men of God were so much a part of them. Only the hard teaching of Jesus in His discourse on

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<sup>44</sup> Fowler, op. cit., p. 402.

the bread of Life following that miracle as recorded by the Fourth Gospel can explain the turn of popular opinion against Him, and this in turn can only be explained by the fact that this Gospel was written by a very close and constant disciple and eye-witness of Jesus Christ.

The number of visits that Jesus made to Jerusalem.

The Synoptic Gospels recorded no visit of Jesus to Jerusalem prior to the last week of His ministry. They also did not mention any feasts until the Feast of the Passover at which Jesus was crucified. The Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, mentioned at least six feasts and at least five visits of Jesus to Jerusalem. Also, if we had none but the Synoptic record, we would imagine that Jesus' ministry lasted only one year, but from the Fourth Gospel it appears that His ministry was of at least three years' duration. This difference used to be one of the stock objections to the Johannine authorship of this Gospel.<sup>45</sup> They have argued that this would completely contradict the Synoptic narrative, and thus the Johannine account cannot be true. But even such a liberal scholar as Renan has pronounced that on this question "there is a signal triumph for the Fourth Gospel."<sup>46</sup>

There are many reasons for believing the historicity of the Johannine account. First, it would be very improbable

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<sup>45</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>46</sup> Loc. cit.

that Jesus Christ should have failed to do what every devout Jew made a point of doing, that is, attending the feasts at Jerusalem. Secondly, we know that our Lord's disciples attended the various feasts at Jerusalem. After the crucifixion, although they were afraid of the Jews, nevertheless they returned to Jerusalem for Pentecost. There is no reason for thinking that Jesus during His public ministry should not have attended some of these feasts. Furthermore, the early popular acclaim of Jesus in Galilee cannot be explained except upon the basis of the Johannine record which told of a previous visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, and a Judean ministry with miracles that preceded His Galilean ministry. And then it should be remembered that even St. Paul made it a point to attend the feasts at Jerusalem, even against the pressing entreaties of Gentile converts.<sup>47</sup> Thirdly, if our Lord came to Jerusalem but once, how can we conceive either of the great receptions that He was given at that time by the common people who lived in Jerusalem, or the extreme enmity and jealousy of the Jerusalem priests and rulers, who should suddenly decide to slay Him, and succeed at once in bribing one of Jesus' disciples, and execute all their schemes in five short days? And as Salmon has pointed out:

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 292.



All becomes plain and intelligible, if we accept John's account that Jesus and the Jewish rulers had been more than once in collusion in Jerusalem, so that He was well known to these rulers, who had resolved on His death long before His last visit to the city.<sup>48</sup>

The triumphant entry of Jesus. All four Gospels recorded the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The Synoptic Gospels, however, gave no explanation for the great acclaim that Jesus was given when He entered the city. Only the Fourth Gospel has given to us a satisfactory reason for the great acclaim that Jesus received on His entrance into Jerusalem, and of the great crisis that took place on this visit less than a week before His death. The Fourth Gospel has given as the first reason for this great crisis the performing by Jesus of the miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It was this miracle that caused the ruling body of Jerusalem to determine to put Jesus to death. It was this miracle that caused the common people of Jerusalem to believe in Him as the Messiah. This miracle alone can explain the great reception and the great crisis of the last week of Jesus' ministry.

The decisive factor which shows that this last visit of Jesus to Jerusalem was not His only visit during His public ministry is that in the book of Acts we find the headquarters

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

of the disciples and the center of the Apostolic mission was at once established in Jerusalem, which would have been highly improbable if not impossible if Jesus' entire ministry had been in Galilee, and if the Apostles had not arrived in Jerusalem until a few days prior to Jesus' death on Calvary. "Thus, we must accept the Johannine account as true."<sup>49</sup>

This is not to say, however, that the Fourth Gospel contradicts the Synoptic account. It only supplements it. It must be remembered that a good portion of the Synoptic narrative is based upon two documents, the basic Petrine-Marcan narrative and a document known as "Q" to present-day New Testament scholars, which document was a Galilean compilation of things that Jesus had said and done in Galilee. Furthermore, when the Synoptics are examined closely it is seen that even in them there are several traces of a Judean ministry. This is proved by the following facts: (1) Luke 4:44 in three of the most ancient manuscripts reads: "And he preached in the synagogues of Judea," instead of "And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee" as it is found in the modern translations.<sup>50</sup> (2) The Synoptics tell us that Judas the traitor was a native of Kerioth in Judea. (3) Luke 23:51 mentioned that Joseph of Arimathea, which was a city of the Jews, that is a city in Judea, was a disciple of Jesus.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

(4) The account of the borrowing of the ass at Bethphage implied that our Lord was already known there. (5) The demand for the room at Jerusalem in which to eat the Passover, which was readily given, implied that Jesus and His disciples were well known by their host and by Jerusalem (Luke 22:7-13). Furthermore, the language of Jesus, and especially the words, "The Master saith unto thee,"<sup>51</sup> clearly indicates that Jesus was recognized as Lord and this could only be so on the basis of previous visits to Jerusalem in which He made public claims of Messiahship. (6) The supper given at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper was clearly given by friends and not by strangers (Matt. 26:6-13). (7) Even more decisive were the words of Jesus recorded both by Matthew and Luke: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together." (Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34). This plainly indicated that Jesus had several times prior to the triumphant entry visited Jerusalem and had tried to win the people of that city unto faith in Himself. (8) There are three verses, one in each Synoptic Gospel placed at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus Christ in Galilee, which clearly indicated a previous ministry in Judea. In Matt. 4:12 we find these words: "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison he departed into Galilee." Also Mark 1:14:

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<sup>51</sup> Luke 22:11.

"Now after that John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee"; and Luke 4:14: "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about." How could this have occurred, that is, that His fame could have gone throughout all the region of Galilee, even before He had performed any miracles therein, for these verses occur before any of His miracles had occurred, and even in the Lucan account before He had begun to teach? How would this have been possible if it were not for a previous ministry in Judea and the great manifestations of His power there? Furthermore, it should be observed that after John was put into prison, (and remember that John's ministry was in Judea), the Synoptics recorded that Jesus departed into Galilee. From whence did He depart? Evidently from the region where John had been laboring, namely Judea. Hence, even though the Synoptics did not record the Judean ministry of Christ, they gave clear indication of such a ministry, and that in the main this ministry preceded the Galilean ministry.

The personage of Jesus. Many scholars have argued that the Fourth Gospel seemed to present a different personality from that which was presented in the Synoptic Gospels. In the Synoptics is found a picture of a humble, genial Son of man,

but in the Fourth Gospel is found a "self-asserting, controversial person, making claims which find no parallel in the Synoptics."<sup>52</sup> But in answer to this, it is enough to point out that in Matthew 25:31, Jesus claimed the highest prerogative of all, that of being the supreme Judge of the universe. The Fourth Gospel recorded no claim of Jesus that was superior to this. Then in Matthew 11:27, Jesus claimed the same relation to and the same knowledge of the Father as the Fourth Gospel exhibited Him as claiming.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the Synoptic Gospels taught that Jesus was the fulfilment of all the Old Testament prophecies and behind all of His teachings there was the implicit authority of the One who was more than man. Also Jesus claimed for Himself the title of the Son of man, which as Bernard has pointed out: "It is a title which, properly understood, includes all that 'Christ' connotes; but unlike the title 'the Messiah,' it does not suggest Jewish particularism."<sup>54</sup>

The words and utterances of Jesus. It has been stated that there certainly is a distinction between the utterances of Jesus as reported by the Synoptics and the utterances of

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>54</sup> J. H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John, Vol. I, S. R. Driver, A. Plummer, and C. A. Briggs, Editors, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1948), p. CXXXI.

Jesus as reported by the author of the Fourth Gospel. But as Marcus Dods has said:

In the first three Gospels the utterances of Jesus are terse and epigrammatic; in the Fourth they are discursive and argumentative. Now this is not always true but this certainly is a general characteristic. Thus, in the opinion of Renan, the proclamation of Himself as Divine and the long argumentations that follow each miracle, are insufferable alongside of the "delicious sentences of the Synoptics." Dean Chadwick says, however, in a realistic approach to this matter that "It is not unnatural, after all, that if Jesus found Himself among bitter controversialists, He should adopt for awhile that intention of proving a theme, and of convincing adversaries which is so painful to Mr. Renan."<sup>55</sup>

It is thus recognized by all authorities that there are differences of considerable note that exist between the discourses of Jesus as reported by the Synoptists and the discourses of Jesus as recorded in the Fourth Gospel. But several facts should be noted in this connection. First, if John had had nothing new to tell us about Christ, he would not have written his Gospel at all. John, without a doubt, knew of the Synoptic Gospels, and the very fact that he, an eye-witness and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, decided to write another Gospel is clear proof that he had new aspects of Christ's person, works, and teachings that he felt needed to be presented. Second, it should be remembered that in the Fourth Gospel, on the whole, the discourses of Jesus were directed toward an entirely different class of people than

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<sup>55</sup> Dods, op. cit., p. 58.

the ones He taught in the Synoptic Gospels. It is in this same connection that Marcus Dods in the Expositor's Greek Testament has written:

The Synoptists enable us to conceive how Jesus addressed the peasantry and how He dealt with the scribes of Capernaum; but after all, was it not also of the utmost importance to know how He was received by the authorities of Jerusalem and how He met their difficulties about His claims? Had there been no record of those defenses of His position, must we not still have supposed them and supplied them in imagination?<sup>56</sup>

Let it also be remembered that with the exception of the private conversation of Jesus with the woman of Samaria in chapter 4 and His discourse on the "bread of Life," which followed the feeding of the five thousand in chapter 6, every discourse of Jesus that was recorded in the Fourth Gospel took place in Jerusalem or in its environs. Furthermore, prior to the last week of Jesus' ministry, the Synoptic Gospels did not record any visit of Jesus to Judea and hence did not record any of the things that Jesus said or did on His many visits there. Also, in the Synoptic Gospels, on the whole Jesus addressed the common people of Galilee. And did He not expressly say that He spoke unto them in parables in order that they might understand the great truths that He was trying to convey to them? (Matt. 13:10-15). But when He

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<sup>56</sup> Marcus Dods, The Gospel of John, W. R. Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. I (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 675.

was addressing the elders, the priests, and the scribes of Jerusalem, who were well grounded in the Old Testament Scriptures, there was no need for Jesus to speak to them in parables, and except for a few occasions He did not.

There is yet another reason why the discourses of Jesus as recorded in the Fourth Gospel should be considered as authentic, even if they are as different from the Synoptic discourses as it is sometimes claimed. The reason is this, that the accusation which the elders, the priests, and the scribes of Jerusalem brought against Jesus during His trial before the Sanhedrin and then before Pilate was such as can only be accounted for on the basis that Jesus said what the Fourth Gospel reported that He said. When Jesus was brought before Pilate, the elders and the chief priests came and accused Him saying: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, . . . saying that He Himself is Christ a King. . . . He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry." (Luke 23:2, 5). It was not said that He was being accused because He performed miracles, or because He taught in parables, or because He was an ethical and moral reformer. They accused Him because they said He made Himself out to be the Christ, that is, the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. When Jesus appeared before the Sanhedrin, the first thing they asked Him was this question: "Art Thou the Christ? tell us." (Luke 22:67). In Mark it is recorded that they asked Him:



"Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14:61). In Matthew it is also said that the high priest said unto Jesus: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." (Matt. 26:63). Furthermore, each of the three Synoptic Gospels recorded that the answer of Jesus to the Sanhedrin was such that they accused Him of blasphemy and condemned Him to death. The impression that these questions which the Sanhedrin addressed to Jesus give is that it is certain that Jesus must have upon many occasions put forth explicit claims that He was the Christ, the Son of God. It is however clear that Jesus could never have incurred the supreme hatred and enmity of the Sanhedrin, and been condemned to death by them, simply on the basis of His teaching in parables, or even on the basis of His Synoptic miracles. The Passion of Jesus can only be explained on the basis of the Johannine narrative. Furthermore, each of the Synoptics recorded (except Luke) that false witnesses appeared before the Sanhedrin and said: "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." (Mark 14:58; Matt. 26:61). The Synoptic Gospels recorded no saying of Jesus that could have been restated in that fashion, but the Fourth Gospel did, when in John 2:19 it recorded Jesus as saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will

raise it up." But the Evangelist added in verse 21, "But he spake of the temple of his body." Thus, even if the differences in the discourses of Jesus as found in the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel were so great as to be unreconcilable, still there would be no valid reason for denying that they are authentic or that John was not the author of the Fourth Gospel.

A comparison of the discourses of Jesus. The discourses of Jesus have been compared by many outstanding scholars, and their conclusion on the whole has been that while there are outstanding differences, yet they are not as great as is sometimes maintained. Sabatier, an outstanding scholar, has said: "'A comparison of these discourses with those of the Synoptics proves that at bottom the divergence is not so great as it appears to be at first sight.'"<sup>57</sup> Is there not, after all, in the Fourth Gospel a multitude of direct, forcible, and brief statements that are characteristic of the sayings of Jesus in the first three Gospels? As Godet has pointed out, there are:

At least twenty-seven sayings of Jesus occurring in John which appear almost identically the same in the Synoptics. It is also impossible for anyone to maintain that these sayings break the connection of either the text in the Fourth Gospel or the text of the Synoptics in the least.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>58</sup> Loc. cit.

Godet then proceeded to give a few examples of this, four of which are:

John	The Synoptics
4:44: "For Jesus Himself testifieth that a prophet hath no honor in his own country."	Mt. 13:57: "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country." (Mark 6:4 and Luke 4:24).
6:20: "It is I, be not afraid."	Mt. 14:27: "It is I, be not afraid." (Mark 6:50).
12:8: "For the poor ye have with you; but me ye have not always."	Mt. 26:11: "For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always." (Mk. 14:7).
20:23: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted. . . ."	Mt. 18:18: " whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." 59

A further comparison of the discourse of Jesus has revealed the following facts, as set forth by Archbishop J. H. Bernard:

(1) All accounts record the authority with which Jesus spoke. It astonished the people in the synagogue at Capernaum (Mark 1:22; 6:2), as it astonished the Sanhedrin police at Jerusalem who had been so overawed that they did not arrest Him (John 7:46).

(2) Paradoxes have been called the "burrs" of literature because they "stick"; and one of our Lord's methods was to teach by paradoxes. Of such sayings John mentions some which the Synoptists also have, e.g. John 12:25 (the most famous of all) and 13:20. In addition, he has preserved some of which are not found elsewhere, e.g. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me" (John 4:34); "Work not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life" (6:27); and "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (15:13). These are all addressed to inquirers and disciples, and are of a type with which the Synoptic Gospels have made us already familiar. So, too, the beautiful illustration of the woman in travail (16:21) recalls the manner of the speech of Jesus in the Synoptics.

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59 Ibid., p. 155.

(3) It is common both to the Synoptic and to the Johannine tradition that while Jesus spoke in parable or mystery to outsiders (Mark 4:34, John 10:6) He was accustomed to explain His meaning more fully to His disciples (Mark 4:34; 7:17; John 16:25,29). Yet even they did not quite understand His words (Mark 9:32, John 16:29): always there was a certain aloofness in His bearing, and despite His tender affection for His near friends they were afraid of questioning Him too far (Mark 9:32, John 2:4).

(4) Some critics have rightly called attention to the form in which the discourses in cc. 3, 4, 6 are cast, and which has been called their "schematism." A saying of deep import is uttered by Jesus; His hearers misunderstand it after a fashion that seems stupid; and then He repeats the saying in a slightly different form before He explains it and draws out its lesson. At least six instances of this may be noted in John: (a) Jesus says, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (3:3); Nicodemus asks, "How can a man be born when he is old?" (3:4); and then Jesus repeats the saying in the form: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (3:5), explaining it further in vv. 6, 7, 8. (Other examples of this are found in John 4:10-15; 4:32-34; 6:27-41; 6:41-43; and 6:51-60).

It is a remarkable circumstance that discourses such as those in cc. 3, 4, 6 do not occur anywhere else in the Gospel. Cc. 5, 7-12 are full of the discourses of Jesus, but John does not report them on the lines of those which have been cited. . . . If the method or plan of the discourses indicated in Part I is entirely the invention of the evangelist, . . . how is it that no trace of this method is found in Part II? The fact is that the discourses in Part I of the Fourth Gospel are not reported as polemical arguments; they were addressed to sincere inquirers and well-wishers who were seeking discipleship. That is, it deals with situations similar to those described in the Synoptic Gospels, and especially in Mark. And, accordingly, the method which Jesus used in teaching as set out in Part I of John is indicated also in the Synoptic narratives. It is the method of paradox, followed by an explanation. In this, it resembles the method of teaching by parable.

Thus at Mark 7:15-23, Jesus puzzles the disciples by saying: "Nothing from without the man, going into him, can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that can defile him." The disciples see that this is a "parable," but they do not understand. Jesus then repeats the saying and explains it. Again,

at Mark 8:15-20, Jesus says to His disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." The disciples are dull enough to think He is speaking about some kind of bread. He explains with a rebuke what He means, and repeats His precept again (cf. Mt. 16:11f.). . . . In short, the plan on which the teaching of Jesus to inquirers and disciples was fashioned, according to the Synoptists, recalls at several points the discourses addressed to such hearers according to the Johannine report of them in Part I of the Fourth Gospel.

(5) The form of the polemic against Jewish objectors in Part II of the Fourth Gospel has disconcerted some readers as savouring of Rabbinical subtlety, rather than of what is thought to be evangelical simplicity. In particular, the Rabbinical arguments at John 7:22f., 8:17, and 10:34 do not appeal directly to a modern mind as very convincing or on a lofty plane of thought. But if John 7:22f. be only an argumentum ad hominem, the same might be said of the puzzling query, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" (Mark 11:30). The truth is, that the polemic which John records is not dissimilar from the kind of argument which is represented by Mark as being used against similar opponents, viz. the scribes and Pharisees. Such opponents had to be met with their own methods of argument, and this is brought out by the Synoptists as well as by John, although they are so much less familiar with the story of the rejection of Jesus at Jerusalem than he is. . . .

(6) The Discourses of Farewell (cc. 13:31-38, 14, 15, 16, 17) stand alone, and are not strictly comparable with any other sayings in the Gospels. . . . These sayings are unique, because the circumstances were unique, and the speaker unique. . . . We cannot expect to find literary parallels to utterances such as these.<sup>60</sup>

The usage of the title "The Son of man." The historicity of the discourses of Jesus as recorded by the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel is clearly shown by his usage of the title "The Son of man." This title as a designation of Jesus Christ is found in the New Testament outside of the four Gospels only at Acts 7:56. It was never employed by the

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<sup>60</sup> Bernard, op. cit., pp. cviii ff.

Apostle Paul, neither was it adopted by Christian writers of the sub-Apostolic age. In fact, this title is not used by a single second century writer in referring to Jesus Christ except upon those occasions when they were directly quoting from the Gospels.<sup>61</sup> In the Gospels it occurred about eighty times (twenty-nine times in Matthew, fourteen times in Mark, twenty-five times in Luke, and twelve times in John), and always this title was used by Jesus as a designation of Himself. None of the Evangelists ever used this title themselves. It was never used of Him by them when reporting His deeds or His words. As Bernard has well remarked:

That Jesus should have made a practice of speaking of Himself in the third person is very remarkable, and it is not less remarkable that no one seems to have thought it curious. But that He did so speak, describing Himself either as the "Son of man" or less frequently as "the Son" is attested by all four Gospels, and by the several strata of narrative which modern scholarship has detected as underlying the evangelical records. A table drawn up by Dr. Armitage Robinson conveniently exhibits the distribution of the title in the Synoptic Gospels, and shows that it appears (1) in Mark, (2) in the document which critics call Q, (3) in the matter peculiar to Luke, and (4) in the matter peculiar to Matthew. So deeply rooted is this title in the traditional report of the words of Jesus, that in two passages at least it has been inserted by the later Evangelist where it is absent from their Marcan source. Thus Mark 3:28, "all their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men," becomes "whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him," at Matt. 12:32. And again the momentous question, "Who do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27, Luke 9:18), assumes in Matthew 16:13 the form, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" or (according to some MSS.), "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" Such editorial alterations presuppose a fixed tradition that Jesus habitually spoke of Himself as "The Son of man."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., cxxii.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. cxxii f.

It has already been pointed out that in using this title in referring to Himself, Jesus used it with the full implication that He was the fulfilment of all Messianic prophecy. He did not call Himself the Christ, although He did not deny, when asked, that He was the Christ. But He preferred to use a greater and a more far-reaching designation of Himself. He was not only the deliverer of the Jewish nation, but the deliverer of all peoples, being the "Son of man" Who had come down from heaven. With this in mind, when the passages in the Gospels in which Jesus called Himself "The Son of man" are examined, the significant fact that emerges is that these passages relate to the Advent of Jesus in glory and triumph as the judge of nations and of individuals. These eschatological passages are to be found in every strata of the Evangelical record. In the Marcan tradition we find the following passages:

Mark 14:61: "The high priest asked him, art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Mark 8:38: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words . . . the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

Mark 13:26: "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send forth the angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

In the non-Marcan material (Q) common to Matthew 24 and Luke 12 and 17, the following passages are found:

Matt. 24:27, Luke 17:24: "As the lightning . . . so shall be the coming of the Son of man."

Matt. 24:37, Luke 17:26: "As were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man."

Matt. 24:44, Luke 12:40: "In an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh."

In those portions that are peculiar to Luke are to be found the following passages:

Luke 18:8: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

Luke 21:36: "Watch and pray that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

In those portions that are peculiar to Matthew, the following eschatological passages are to be found:

Matt. 10:23: "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come."

Matt. 13:41: "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity."

Matt. 25:31: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another."

In the Fourth Gospel, the title "The Son of man" is used in the same connection. Its usage is found in this Gospel in the following passages:

John 5:26, 27: "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."



John 1:51: "Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Archbishop Bernard has also pointed out another connection in which this title was used by Jesus when he wrote: "It is the title which He specially employed, when He was foretelling to His disciples the Passion as the inevitable and predestined issue of His public ministry."<sup>63</sup> This usage appears repeatedly in both the Marcan and the Johannine narrative.

Mark 8:31: "He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected . . . and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Matt. 16:21; Luke 9:22).

Mark 9:12: "How is it written of the Son of man that he should suffer many things and be set at nought?"

Mark 9:31: "The Son of man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again" (Matt. 17:22; Luke 9:44).

Mark 10:33: "The Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes, . . . and they shall kill him, and after three days he shall rise again" (Matt. 20:18; Luke 18:31).

John 3:14: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."

John 8:28: "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

John 12:23: "And Jesus answered them, saying. The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

John 13:31: "Therefore, when he was gone out (Judas, the traitor), Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

There can only be one conclusion to the manner in which the four Gospels reported Jesus as using this title of Himself; that is, that all four Gospels contain authentic accounts of the sayings and words of Jesus Christ.

The apprehension of Jesus as Messiah by the disciples.

In the Synoptics, it is claimed, the apprehension of Jesus as Messiah by the twelve disciples was a gradual thing, while the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel seems to declare that the disciples believed that Jesus was the Messiah, or the Christ, from the very beginning.<sup>64</sup> According to the Synoptists, the first confession of faith in Christ was that of Peter in Matt. 16:16; Mark 8:29; and Luke 9:20. While in the Fourth Gospel, John the Baptist when he saw Jesus said: "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36), and Andrew that same day said to Peter: "We have found the Messias, which being interpreted is, the Christ." (John 1:41). The next day, both Philip (John 1:45), and Nathanael (John 1:49) made similar confessions of faith in Jesus as the Christ.

But it should be noticed that some of whom Jesus cured of diseases and mental disorders acclaimed Jesus as Messiah and confessed that He was the Son of God early in His ministry (Mark 3:12; 5:7; Matt. 8:29; Luke 4:34 and 4:41). Also, when John the Baptist sent messengers to find out if Jesus was actually the Christ, the answer that Jesus gave could not have

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<sup>64</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 411.

been misinterpreted by the Baptist (Matt. 11:2-6; and Luke 7:19-23). Furthermore, the Synoptic Gospels gave no indication as to when Philip or Nathanael came to believe that Jesus was the Christ. Furthermore, that John the Baptist recognized Jesus as the Christ when he first saw Jesus is clearly taught by Matthew (3:11-17). Then in the Fourth Gospel, as in the Synoptics, Jesus preferred to speak of Himself as "the Son of man" rather than as "the Christ." In John 10:24, the Jews accused Him of being ambiguous as to His claim that He was the "Christ," and only once did He explicitly affirm this claim in the early portions of the Fourth Gospel (John 4:26). The Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel did not tell of Peter making a confession of faith until John 6:69. And as Maurice Jones has remarked:

The significant phrase (of the Synoptics), "Verily, I say," is the ultimate sanction of each commandment. And behind all the teaching there stands the authority of the Person. Thus, the main purpose of the Synoptists is to reproduce the impression Christ made on men, and in St. John, the underlying purpose becomes explicit.<sup>65</sup>

As to the confessions of faith by Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael in chapter one of John, Bernard has said:

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65 Loc. cit.

According to John, the recognition of Jesus as the Christ by Andrew, by Philip, and by Nathanael was swift and unhesitating; although it is noteworthy that nothing of this kind is told of Peter, whose confession of faith is not recorded until 6:69. The Synoptists suggest . . . that the disciples did not reach full conviction all at once, but that it came to them gradually, the critical point being Peter's confession. Perhaps we should regard the full assurance which John ascribes to Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael . . . as the expressions of an enthusiasm . . . which did not become a reasoned conviction until later.<sup>66</sup>

Thus a study of the Four Gospels reveals the following facts in connection with the development of the idea that Jesus was the Messiah: (1) Both the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel taught that when Jesus spoke of Himself, He used the title, "The Son of man," in the third person; (2) Both the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel recorded that when Jesus was asked by sincere inquirers, that He confessed that He was the Christ; (3) All four Gospels taught that Jesus was never clearly understood by the scribes and Pharisees, and even by the common people, in the matter as to Who He was, and there were many disputes as to Who He really was; (4) All four Gospels taught that Peter made his confession of faith in Christ shortly after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand; and (5) All four Gospels taught that some of the disciples were not fully convinced until after the resurrection appearances of Jesus had taken place (Matt. 28:17; Mark 16:11-14; Luke 24:11-45; and John 20:8-10, 24-29; 21:1-14).

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<sup>66</sup> Bernard, op. cit., p. 58.

The part assigned to Jesus in the work of salvation.

The teachings of Jesus that are found in the Synoptics are said to be simple, practical, moral, and ethical, while in the Fourth Gospel they are said to be abstract and theological. Many scholars have thus rejected the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel on this ground alone.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the part assigned to the Person of Jesus Christ in the work of salvation is said to be vastly different in the Fourth Gospel from what it is in the Synoptic Gospels. In the Synoptics, it is claimed that Jesus simply proclaimed the Kingdom of God, entrance to which was gained by repentance and good works, while in the Fourth Gospel salvation was taught as coming through faith in Jesus Christ as the Divine Logos and the eternal Son of God. But is this so? It should be remembered that the distance of time, between thirty and forty years, between the publication of the Marcan Gospel and that of the Fourth Gospel was all too short a period of time to account for the development of any such fundamental change in the picture of Christ as accepted by His disciples.<sup>68</sup> In the Marcan narrative, and the other Synoptic narratives, when Christ called His disciples, He said, "Come and follow me." Then one of the greatest of all invitations to come unto Christ is found in Matthew 11:28-29. The infallibly effectual prayer is that of two or three persons praying in the name of

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<sup>67</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>68</sup> Bernard, op. cit., p. cxxxv.

Christ (Matt. 18:20). Real watchfulness consisted in waiting for Him, and the condition of entrance into His Kingdom was being ready to receive Him at His coming, (Luke 12:36). Jesus also stated that to confess Him below was the means of being confessed by Him above (Matt. 10:32), and the means of saving one's soul was by following Christ (Mark 10:34). Jesus said that we must love Him more than anyone else in the world in order to be worthy of Him (Matt. 10:37). Then the Last Supper showed that Jesus made all real religious life to consist of personal union with Himself (Matt. 26:28), and the purpose of Jesus in coming "was to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).<sup>69</sup>

Then in the Gospel according to Mark, which was the earliest of the three Gospels, Jesus claimed the power of forgiving sins (Mark 2:10); while the Gospel of John does not mention this fact. Then Jesus claimed to be the final judge of mankind (Mark 14:62), and the Gospel of John does not go beyond this, "indeed, the only hint of any limitation of the powers of Jesus in Mark is in reference to His vision, when on earth, of the time of the last judgment; what such limitation involves may be asked of the exegete of John 10:28, as justly as in the case of Mark 13:32."<sup>70</sup> Also, the sacramental efficacy of Jesus' death is never more definitely stated in

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<sup>69</sup> Godet, op. cit., pp. 141 ff.

<sup>70</sup> Bernard, op. cit., p. cxxxv.

the Gospel of John, even in John 6:53, than in Mark 14:24. Then in the earliest document of all, the Q narrative, we find that Jesus said that the public acceptance or denial of Himself as Master would determine the judgment of the last Assize (Matt. 10:32 and Luke 12:8). So here in the oldest Christian document of all there is found a Christology which was as profound as that of John, and which was expressed in words and phrases that might readily be mistaken for those of the Fourth Gospel itself. That there is somewhat of a difference between the teachings relating to the Person of Christ in the Fourth Gospel, and those in the Synoptics, it is true; but as Bernard has pointed out:

There is a difference between the Christology of the Synoptist and of John; but it is not the difference between a merely human Jesus and a Divine Christ. What is implicit in the earlier Gospels has become explicit in John; the clearer statement has been evoked by the lapse of time, by the growth of false Gnosis, and by the intellectual needs of a Greek-speaking society which sought to justify its faith.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, it should be noticed that in the Fourth Gospel, the name Christ was seldom used as a personal name, and the full designation that is found in the Pauline Epistles, that is, Jesus Christ, only appeared twice in the Fourth Gospel. The habit of John instead was to use the personal designation Jesus, "a primitive touch which He shares with Mark, but which is seldom found in Paul."<sup>72</sup> Thus, the

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. cxxxvi.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. cxxxvii.

teaching of the Fourth Gospel was basically no different from that of the Synoptic Gospels, and it shared with them many of the primitive touches of the earliest Christian narratives.

The pre-existence of Jesus. The idea of the Divine pre-existence of Jesus is not explicitly mentioned in any of the Synoptic Gospels. In the Fourth Gospel, it is said to be one of the leading ideas. However, neither the statement relating to the fact that this idea was never mentioned by the Synoptics nor the fact that it is a ruling idea in the Fourth Gospel is true. In the Fourth Gospel, except for the first fourteen verses of the Prologue, the word Logos is not to be found. Furthermore, this idea was only hinted at in three other verses (6:62; 8:58; and 17:5) in the entire Gospel. How then can this idea or teaching be considered one of the ruling ideas of this Gospel? Then in regard to the Synoptic Gospels, they taught that Jesus was the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecy, and even applied many of the verses of the Old Testament to Jesus Christ, although in so doing they had to change its original meaning.<sup>73</sup> The Old Testament prophecies taught that the Messiah was "the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father" (Isaiah 9:5). Also, Jesus was called Lord, "Adonai," a name that was used only of God in Malachi 3:1. In addition to this, Mark called Jesus the

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<sup>73</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 147.



Son of God in Mark 1:1. Jesus also claimed to be the Lord of David in Matthew 22:45, a statement that clearly implied the pre-existence of Jesus, and in Matthew 21:37-38 Jesus claimed to be the Master of the vineyard, a claim to pre-existence as clear and as definite as any found in the Fourth Gospel. He also taught that He would come back at the end of the Age to be the supreme Judge of the world (Matt. 25:34). This clearly taught His eternal existence. Then, too, Jesus' claim to Divinity as found in the Synoptic Gospels was just as great as the claims He set forth in the Fourth Gospel. He spoke of angels as His angels (Matt. 13:41), of the greatness of His glory (Matt. 25:31), and of His Name under which the faithful are gathered together. Then, too, the demands which Jesus made of His disciples for supreme love, obedience, and devotion for His Person can only be understood in the light and knowledge that Jesus was the eternal and only begotten Son of God.<sup>74</sup>

The eschatological teachings of the Fourth Gospel.

The Synoptic Gospels taught a visible return of Jesus, a final judgment, a bodily resurrection of the faithful, and a reign of glory and triumph. But in the Fourth Gospel, it is claimed that all this is lacking, that in this Gospel there was taught no return of Jesus except into the heart in the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

form of the Holy Spirit, no resurrection except the spiritual resurrection of the believers, no other glory than the glory of the life that is in Jesus.<sup>75</sup> But all this is to spiritualize the Fourth Gospel. Jesus did promise to send the Spirit to all who believe, but that was not what Jesus meant when He said "I will come again." (John 14:3). Jesus was leaving His disciples then to go to the cross, but before leaving them He gave them this promise that He would return. That Jesus could not have referred to either His coming to them in the Spirit or His appearing to them after His resurrection is clear from the words that He spoke immediately afterwards when He said: "And receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." This was not true either after the resurrection or on the day of Pentecost. These words of Jesus could only refer to the second visible return of Jesus for His Own.

Then in John 21:23, after His resurrection Jesus said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" This could not possibly have referred to the coming of the Spirit, for this was written at least sixty-five years after the Spirit was given. This once again was a reference to the second visible return of Jesus. In John 5:28-29 Jesus spoke of resurrection and of judgment. He said that all judgment had been committed unto him, even as He claimed in the Synoptics

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

to be the supreme Judge of mankind. Furthermore, four times in chapter six Jesus spoke of the last judgment and the resurrection. "All which the Father hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (6:39). "And I will raise him up at the last day." (6:40). These very same words also appeared in John 6:44, and 6:54.

Now it is true that the Fourth Gospel spoke less of the details than the Synoptics did, but why should this not be so? It should be remembered that the author of the Fourth Gospel never recorded events that were recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, unless he had new details to add, as in his description of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and in the passion story. Now, all three Synoptic Gospels recorded the Olivet discourse of Jesus and gave in great detail the eschatological teachings of Jesus. John evidently had nothing new to add, so he remained silent on this subject, as he did upon many others. Then too, Jesus had spoken in great detail in the Synoptics regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, but by the time that the Fourth Gospel was written Jerusalem had been destroyed. There was therefore no need for the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel to record the Olivet discourse of Jesus because it was primarily a prophecy referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. And as Godet has pointed out:

But why do critics even make a point of this, for they allege that the great discourse of Jesus regarding the end of the Age was never uttered by Jesus, but that it was the composition of some Jewish-Christian author around 67 A.D., and then tried to disprove the trustworthiness of the Fourth Gospel because of the absence of this unauthentic discourse.<sup>76</sup>

Are there expressions in the Fourth Gospel that are foreign to the Synoptics? Finally, it has been alleged that there are several expressions peculiar to the Fourth Gospel and foreign to the Synoptics. For example, it is said that the terms "light" and "darkness" do not appear in the Synoptics and also that the author of the Fourth Gospel substituted the mystical term "eternal life" for the Jewish term "the kingdom of heaven."<sup>77</sup> But the contrast between light and darkness is also found in Matt. 6:23, where Jesus said: "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." Jesus also said in Matt. 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world," in which Jesus was teaching that those who kept His sayings and who followed Him would reflect His light. This contrast between light and darkness was also quite common in the Old Testament.<sup>78</sup>

As to the Johannine expression "eternal life," it is found that it was used in the Synoptics as equivalent to the

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>78</sup> Loc. cit.

kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven exactly as it was used by John. In fact, in both documents these terms were used interchangeably. Notice these comparisons in the same passages in the Synoptic Gospels:

Matt. 18:3: "Ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matt. 18:8: "It is better for thee to enter into life."

Matt. 19:17: "If thou wilt enter into life."

Matt. 19:23: "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Mark 9:45: "It is better for thee to enter into life."

Mark 9:47: "It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God."<sup>79</sup>

What then remains to be said? That there are some differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels it is true. But these differences are not basic. They are merely the result of John writing his Fourth Gospel for the express purpose of giving to Christendom certain facts about the life and teaching of Jesus Christ that had not yet been recorded. In other words, every difference that does exist is due to the fact that the Fourth Gospel sought to supplement the Synoptic narrative historically. There are, however, no other insoluble contrasts between the two. The internal evidence of the Fourth Gospel clearly shows that it was written by an intimate companion of Jesus, even the Apostle John, as it was clearly demonstrated in chapter four. No argument based on a comparison of the Fourth Gospel with the Synoptics can disprove this clearly indicated fact.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

### III. THE FOURTH GOSPEL--HISTORY OR A THEOLOGICAL TREATISE?

The argument stated. The Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel has been rejected by such men as Reuss, Keim, and Baur, on the ground that the Fourth Gospel was not a history of a life of Christ, but a theological treatise by an Alexandrian Christian in the first years of the second century. Reuss even claimed that the term Gospel could not be applied to this work in the sense of being a history of the life and work of Jesus.<sup>80</sup> The basis for this objection was the fact that the Prologue to this book contained the doctrine of the "Logos," that Jesus was the Logos of God.

The three-fold error of this viewpoint. This argument is based upon three fundamental errors. First, the doctrine of the "Logos" was not the ruling idea of the Fourth Gospel. This doctrine was a proposition that did not once appear in the body of the Gospel. And as Bernard has said: "Not only does Jesus never claim the title 'Logos' for Himself, but John never applies it to Him in the evangelical narrative."<sup>81</sup> The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel was a restatement of the Christian gospel from the philosophical viewpoint for the benefit of the philosophically-minded Greeks. This Prologue

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>81</sup> Bernard, op. cit., p. cxxxviii.

was probably written after the narrative portion of the Gospel had been completed as an expression that the writer's conviction was that Jesus was Himself the Divine Logos.<sup>82</sup>

The second error that this school of criticism has made is in thinking that the feature of the Fourth Gospel of having a theological idea formulated in the Prologue or Preface of the book was something that was peculiar to the Fourth Gospel. Matthew, for instance, opened his Gospel with these words: "The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). And as Godet has stated:

It is needless to show how this idea of the Messianic kingship of Jesus, and of the fulfilling by Him of all the promises made to Israel in David . . . penetrates the slightest details of Matthew's narrative.<sup>83</sup>

Mark likewise opened his Gospel with these words: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). This theme prevailed throughout the entire Gospel of Mark. In Mark 1:11, a voice from heaven testified that Jesus was God's Son. Demons called Jesus the Holy One of God and the Son of God (1:24, 5:7). Then Mark told of the centurion saying of Jesus in 15:39, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

Now it is true that Luke does not expressly state the prominent theme of his Gospel, but it is nevertheless not hard to find. To Luke, Jesus was the "Son of man, the perfect rep-

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. cxxxix.

<sup>83</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 84.

representative of human nature, freely bringing the salvation of God to all."<sup>84</sup> If then the Fourth Gospel stated a theological conclusion in its Prologue, this did not then and does not now constitute a major difference between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels. Each Gospel had its own theme, and each sought to bring into focus a different aspect of the Person and work of Jesus. "Each wrote to save its readers. Matthew wrote to save the Jews, Mark to save the Romans. Luke to save the Greeks, and John to save the world."<sup>85</sup>

A third error of Baur and his disciples that should be mentioned was the error of thinking that a theme placed at the beginning of a narrative destroys its historical value. But what history does not have its prevailing theme?<sup>86</sup> Is, for instance, the history of the life of Napoleon non-historical because the author had as his theme that he was the restorer of France, or have the histories of George Washington been non-historical because they have called him "the Father of his country?" Thus it is seen that the presence of a ruling idea does not necessarily exclude its historical character. The only question is this: "Does the idea conform to the facts of history?"<sup>87</sup> The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel was therefore not incompatible with the strictly historical character of the narrative which was to follow.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>87</sup> Loc. cit.



The unity of the historical structure of this Gospel.

The historical structure of the Fourth Gospel is a real unified whole. The Evangelist of this Gospel related the history of the development of faith and unbelief. His history began with the testimony which John the Baptist gave of Jesus, which marked the first dawn of faith in Jesus, and his history ended at the moment when faith in Jesus reached its climax with the resurrection appearances of Jesus. Between these two events the fourth Evangelist related event after event which produced increasing faith on the part of some and increasing hostility on the part of others.

Yet some have claimed that there is no progress to the Fourth Gospel, and have asserted that the Crucifixion could have been placed on the first page as well as on the last.<sup>88</sup> A look at the Fourth Gospel completely disproves this assertion. This Gospel has real historical progress. Notice how it traced the growth of unbelief in Jesus. In John 2:18-19, the Jewish leaders refused to join in with Jesus in religious and social reform. In John 5:16-18 occurred the first explosion of hatred against Jesus and the first expression of a desire to kill Him. In John 7:32, the first active measure against Jesus was taken in the order that the Sanhedrin gave to the officers to arrest Him. Then in 8:59, the first actual attempt to stone Jesus took place, and in 9:22 the ex-communication of anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah was ordered by the authorities

of Jerusalem. In 10:11 a new attempt to stone Jesus took place; and in 11:53, there occurred a sitting of the Sanhedrin at which time the death of Jesus was decided in principle. In 11:57 the public summoning of witnesses to testify against Jesus was ordered; and in 13:27, Judas decided to betray Jesus. In 18:3, Judas was given a band of soldiers to carry out the arrest of Jesus; and in 18:28, the Sanhedrin brought Jesus to Pilate to be condemned to death. In 19:12, the final means of intimidation was brought to bear upon Pilate in order to gain his consent to the death of Jesus, and in 19:16, the execution of Jesus actually took place. Is there, therefore, no historical progress to this? In this connection it was Godet who said: "Is it not rather against the Synoptic narrative that this charge might be brought? For in it, Jesus passes from Galilee to Jerusalem, and perishes after only five days of conflict."<sup>89</sup>

The strong historical unity of the Fourth Gospel is also seen in its exact and complete historical data, so that by this Gospel alone the ministry of Jesus Christ can be accurately reconstructed. Chapter two of the Fourth Gospel contained a first Passover, at which time Jesus inaugurated His public ministry by the cleansing of the temple. It is said that the Evangelist of this Gospel misplaced the time at which this event actually occurred. The Synoptic Gospels recorded that the cleansing of the temple took place at the end of His public

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

ministry instead of at the beginning. But as many scholars have pointed out, such as Andrews. W. Smith, Salmon, and others; it was most appropriate for this event to have taken place at the beginning of His ministry, at which time He presented Himself to the rulers of Jerusalem for their acceptance or rejection. And it should be remembered that the rulers of Jerusalem were well aware of the Old Testament prophecy found in Malachi 3:1, which said: "And the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." It was only appropriate, therefore, that at the very beginning of His ministry Jesus should have gone to the Temple at Jerusalem and there made public His claims to being their Messiah. And what way could Jesus have found to have presented Himself to them other than by demonstrating His authority through the cleansing of the Temple.

This cleansing of the Temple was followed by a considerable time in Judea after which He returned to Galilee through Samaria in that same year. In chapter five, Jesus returned to Jerusalem for an unidentified feast, either the feast of the Purim or the feast of the Passover. This feast was, however, probably that of the Purim, for another Passover was mentioned in 6:4 as being nigh at hand, to which Jesus did not go because of the opposition to Him at that time in Jerusalem. In John 7:2 Jesus went to Jerusalem for the feast of the Tabernacles in the autumn of that same year, and two months later He visited

Jerusalem again at the time of the feast of the Dedication (10:22). Then finally in 12:1 Jesus returned for another Passover, at which He was crucified.

The dispute over John's doctrine of the Logos. The nineteenth century school of Baur, and such twentieth century critics as Moffatt, Bacon, and others, have asserted that the Logos doctrine proves that the Fourth Gospel was of Judeo-Alexandrian origin and not of Apostolic origin. This is proved by: (1) The term Logos inscribed over this Gospel was the same term by which Philo expressed the primary concept of his philosophy; (2) The idea of an intermediate being between God and man, whereby the Absolute being communicated itself with finite beings, was a doctrine of Alexandrian origin. But actually, the question narrows down to this: "Did the writer of the Fourth Gospel draw his concept of the Logos from Philo, or did they both draw from a common source, or were their conceptions different and thus independent of each other?"<sup>90</sup>

A comparison of John and Philo. An investigation of the Logos concept of Philo and that which is found in the Fourth Gospel reveals such vital differences that John's concept could not have been derived from Philo, except the mere usage of the word Logos itself. In Philo the doctrine of the

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

personality of the Logos was most vague, and especially was this true when he attempted to associate the Logos with creation.<sup>91</sup> With John, however, the Logos was a personal Divine Agent, even Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal Father. The Apostle Paul did not use the term Logos, but when speaking about the work of Christ in creation, his language was almost identical with that of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. And as Bernard has pointed out: "Paul and John did not borrow from Philo; but they and Philo represent two different streams of thought, the common origin of which was the Jewish doctrine of the 'Memra' or Divine Word."<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, the notion of the Logos in Philo's view was a metaphysical theory, while in the Fourth Gospel it was a fact of Divine love. With Philo, the doctrine of the Logos was that of philosophical speculation, but with John it was that of Divine love manifested to provide salvation for all. And as Godet has said: "John, in fact, refuses to make his Logos doctrine philosophical at all. He uses the term because it was the best term he could find to describe a historical personage who had come into this world."<sup>93</sup> Then the word Logos itself had a different meaning for Philo than it had for John. For Philo, it meant reason; for John it meant the personal revelation of God and His will in the Person of Jesus Christ. Then the pre-existence of the Logos was not

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91 Bernard, op. cit., cxi.

92 Loc. cit.

93 Godet, op. cit., p. 232.

explicit with Philo, but it certainly was explicit with John.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, the part played by the Logos in Philo was that of a universal principle which had no relation to a Messiah, while in John the Logos was the Messiah Himself, the Word of God incarnate, given by God to the world in order that all might come to know the only true God.<sup>95</sup>

Then too, "The Johannine doctrine of the connexion between Life and Light, which appears in the Logos teaching of the Prologue (John 1:4f), does not appear in Philo."<sup>96</sup> It should also be remembered that Philo taught that sin arises from matter, and to represent the Logos as becoming incarnate in human flesh would have been considered as blasphemy by Philo. Besides, Philo's Messiah, as was declared in his De Consecrationibus (Par. 9) was "nothing but a mere man, who will bring back the Jews from their dispersion, and restore them to the glorious state to which they are entitled."<sup>97</sup> Most significant of all the differences that existed between Philo and John according to Bernard was:

John's philosophy rests avowedly on the doctrine of the Incarnation (John 1:14), while this is absolutely precluded by the principles of Philo. "There are," he says, "three kinds of life: one which is with God, another with matter, and a third which is a mixture of both. But the life with God has not descended to us, nor has it come as far as the necessities of the body."<sup>98</sup>

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94 Bernard, op. cit., p. cxl.

95 Godet, op. cit., p. 233.

96 Bernard, op. cit., p. cxli.

97 Godet, op. cit., p. 233.

98 Bernard, op. cit., p. cxli.

Then also it should be pointed out that the purpose of the Logos in Philo was "to preserve God from all contact with the material world."<sup>99</sup> But with the Fourth Gospel, the Logos was God incarnate, who had come into full contact with human flesh and the material world to redeem mankind from its sin. Thus, the difference between Philo and the Fourth Gospel was so profound that Gess, as quoted by Godet, could write: "The man who thinks he can unite the thought of John and of Philo understands nothing either in John or Philo."<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, as Salmon has well pointed out in his refutation of this objection to the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, this objection was nothing more than an "a priori" assumption which was due to a false conception of church history.<sup>101</sup>

The explanation of this difference. What then is the explanation of this difference in the Logos doctrine existing between Philo and John? The fact is that both Philo and John were trained in the Old Testament. The Logos idea probably came from their study of the Old Testament, for the Hebrew Scriptures had much about the creative Word of God. In the Targums (Jewish paraphrases of the Old Testament), the action of God was constantly described as "His Word," with this Word often being personalized. "Thus the Targum of Onkelos on Genesis 28:21 says that Jacob's covenant was that 'the Word of Yahweh should be his God.'<sup>102</sup> This personification of the

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>101</sup> Salmon, op. cit., pp. 194 ff.

                    , op. cit., p. cxxxix.

Word of God extended to the book of Psalms and the book of Proverbs. Thus there was in the Old Testament a considerable basis for the development of the Logos doctrine.<sup>103</sup> Philo's development of this doctrine was due to the Alexandrian School's love of speculation, while John's development was due to his immediate contact with Jesus Christ and his conviction that Jesus was God incarnate. Philo was thus the Old Testament explained by Greek philosophy, while John was the Old Testament completed and explained by Jesus Christ.<sup>104</sup>

One further fact should be noted. This title of Logos appeared as a designation of Christ in all three of the major Johannine writings (John 1:1; I John 1:1-3; Rev. 19:13), and in them only. It was a name that evidently appealed to John, and thus it is an indissoluble bond which has united all of these writings together. Furthermore, having resided at Ephesus, a city of Greek culture, John might have often heard the term Logos applied to God and in using it to describe Jesus Christ he might have said to the Greeks of Ephesus: "That Logos, about which you speculate without really knowing, we Christians have seen and heard, and it is His history which I proceed to relate."<sup>105</sup> It should also be remembered that the term Logos was a term familiar to all the mystery religions of Asia Minor, and thus it was a term that would be most

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103 Loc. cit.

104 Godet, op. cit., p. 239.

105 Ibid., p. 240.



familiar to those to whom he was writing and who would probably read his Gospel. As Bernard has well pointed out:

It is now apparent that the doctrine of Divine Logos was widely distributed in the first century. The Hebrew Targums or paraphrases of the ancient Scriptures; the wisdom literature of Judaism, both in Palestine and Alexandria; the speculation of Philo; the philosophy of Heraclitus, and that of the later Stoics, all use the idea of the Logos to explain the mysterious relation of God to man. We may be sure that the Logos of God was as familiar a topic in the educated circles of Asia Minor as the doctrine of evolution is in Europe or America at the present day, and was discussed not only by the learned but by half-instructed votaries of many religions.<sup>106</sup>

The omission of certain events from the Fourth Gospel.

The assertion that the Fourth Gospel was purely a theological treatise is said to be substantiated by the fact that the author of the Fourth Gospel omitted certain events from his narrative to make his Gospel conform to the Logos doctrine that he set forth in the Prologue of his Gospel. This was especially true of the omission of the temptation experience of Jesus, the institution by Jesus of the sacrament of Holy Communion, and Jesus' agony in the Garden. But actually, the temptation experience as described by the Synoptics would have attested to the fact that Jesus was the Divine Logos. In them Jesus was tempted to change stones into bread, to cast Himself down from the top of a pinnacle of the temple, and to be made the King of the world if He would worship Satan. Such extraordinary temptations could have come only to a Divine being.

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<sup>106</sup> Bernard, op. cit., p. cxlii.

Furthermore, after these temptations were over, it was said that "angels came and ministered unto Him" (Matt. 4:11). Then too, the continual conflict recorded in the Fourth Gospel from beginning to end between Jesus and Satan was very reminiscent of the first conflict between them as recorded by the Synoptic Gospels. Furthermore, let it be remembered that all three Synoptic Gospels recorded the temptation of Jesus; and John, having nothing new to add, as in many other instances did not record it because it was something already well known to Christendom.

It has already been pointed out that John did not record the institution of the Eucharist because it, too, was a well-established and well-known fact. Furthermore, the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel used pure Eucharistic language in both the discourse on the Bread of Life (John 6) and the discourse on the True Vine (John 15).<sup>107</sup> As to the Agony in the Garden not being recorded in the Fourth Gospel, these facts should be noted. (1) John recorded Jesus as undergoing great suffering and punishment in His Passion; He was struck by an officer (18:22), He was scourged (19:1), He had a crown of thorns placed on His head (19:2), He had to bear His own cross (19:17), and He was pierced by a spear (19:34). (2) John agreed with the Synoptic narrative that after the last supper was over He went with His disciples across the brook Cedron into the Garden. (3) John recorded the fact that Jesus often

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. clxxiii.

retired to this Garden (18:2). (4) John agreed with the Synoptic narrative that Jesus was betrayed in the Garden by Judas (18:3). (5) John, while not referring to the prayer of agony has Jesus referring to the bitter cup that He was to drink when He told Peter to put up his sword, saying, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (18:11). If John told only those facts that would prove his Logos doctrine, and omitted all others, why did he not record the transfiguration of Christ?

Then it should be observed that the author of the Fourth Gospel recorded many facts that emphasized the human side of the Person of Jesus even more than the Synoptic Gospels. John recorded that Jesus became wearied after a long day's journey (4:6), that He was thirsty and asked for a drink (4:7), he recorded Jesus as saying, "The Son can do nothing of himself" (5:19), that He loved Mary and Martha (11:5), that He wept at the tomb of Lazarus (11:35), that He had normal appetites (12:2), and He suffered on the cross (19:28).

The historicity of the Johannine miracles. The historicity of the Johannine miracles has been rejected by many of those who have rejected the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel for three reasons. (1) The miracles of the Fourth Gospel were more extraordinary than the miracles of the Synoptics. (2) The miracles in John were performed for the

purpose of revealing Jesus' power and glory, while in the Synoptics Jesus' miracles were the result of His mercy and compassion. (3) Five of the seven miracles recorded by John are omitted in the Synoptic Gospels. The question now is: Are these valid reasons for rejecting the historicity of the Johannine miracles?

A comparison of the miracles of the four Gospels. It has been claimed that the miracles in the Gospel of John are more extraordinary than the miracles in the Synoptic Gospels. But was it more extraordinary for Jesus to transform water into wine than it was for Him to multiply five loaves of bread and two fishes into enough food to feed a multitude of five thousand men besides women and children? Then was the healing of the impotent man in John 5 any more miraculous than the healing of the man sick of palsy in Mark 2? The miracle of the healing of the nobleman's son in John 4 is very similar to the miracle of the healing of the centurion's servant in Matthew 8. In both miracles Jesus but spoke a word, and they were healed, although both were far from the physical presence of Jesus. The miracle of Jesus walking upon the sea was identical with the same miracle as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. John recorded this miracle merely to serve as a connecting historical link between the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus' great discourse on the Bread

of Life. There are thus only two miracles in the Fourth Gospel which seem to have taken on an exceptional character. But even the healing of the man who was born blind was not an extraordinary miracle, for the Synoptics recorded the healing of a number of blind men. There is, after all, not too much difference in healing a blind man and a man born blind. Thus, the miracle of the raising of Lazarus is the only miracle of the Fourth Gospel that provides any real difficulty.

The raising of Lazarus. The Synoptic Gospels recorded two other cases in which Jesus raised the dead. Now it is admitted that the raising of Lazarus was a stupendous miracle. Why then did not the Synoptics make mention of it? But as Bernard has argued:

It is asked, how could Mark be silent about so noble a miracle, if he knew that it had taken place? The argument from silence is always precarious, and in this particular instance it is especially so. None of the Synoptists mentioned the raising of Lazarus, but they pay little attention to the development of the ministry of Jesus at Jerusalem. On the other hand, from chapter 5 onward John devotes himself to describing the increasing hostility of the Pharisees to Jesus, and in His narrative the climax of their opposition was reached when the Lazarus miracle attracted the attention and inspired the enthusiasm of many people at Jerusalem and its neighborhood. The point in the story, as told by John, is not, primarily, that the miracle was a stupendous one, but that it did, in fact, hasten the final decision of the Jewish authorities to secure the death of Jesus (11:53). The Synoptists tell nothing of the words or works of Jesus which are reported in cc. 5, 7-12 of the Fourth Gospel. For some reason, the whole ministry and not merely the raising of Lazarus is omitted in the narrative of Mark, upon which Luke and Matthew primarily depend, and which is the framework of their Gospels. . . . Now Peter does not appear once in Part II

of the Fourth Gospel (cc. 5, 7-12). He is not represented as having been present in Jerusalem or Bethany until the Last Supper (13:6) . . . Peter is replaced by Thomas as the leader and chief spokesman in the story of Lazarus. . . . If he (Peter) were not an eyewitness of what happened, it is not surprising that he did not include the story among his reminiscences. . . . There was no special reason why a second miracle of revivification should be mentioned, if Peter did not see it; indeed, it would weaken the credibility of any man's reminiscences if he included in them an incident so extraordinary, of which he had not first-hand knowledge.

But more than this should be said about Mark's omission to note the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, in which he is followed by Matthew and Luke. The Synoptic account of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem provides no explanation of the extraordinary enthusiasm with which He was received on this His last visit. . . . The only evangelist who gives a sufficient reason for this is John, who says explicitly that it was the report of the raising of Lazarus at Bethany which so excited the people that even the Pharisees had to confess "the world is gone after Him." It is John's habit to correct Mark where he deems it necessary; and at this point, by rectifying a serious omission in Mark, he makes the story of the triumphal entry coherent for the first time.<sup>108</sup>

But there is another reason why the Synoptic Gospels omitted the story of the raising of Lazarus. They did so out of respect to Lazarus and his two sisters.<sup>109</sup> This family lived on the environs of Jerusalem and was thus exposed to the stroke of the Sanhedrin. In fact, John 12:10 stated that after the miracle had taken place, "the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death." Thus Christian tradition probably found it prudent not to record

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. clxxxii ff.

<sup>109</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 115.

this fact as long as Lazarus and his sisters were still living. Also, it should be noticed that the Synoptic account omitted the name of Mary in the account of the anointing of Jesus (Mark 14:3-9), and the name of the town of Bethany, the native town of Mary and Martha, when these two sisters were designated by their names (Luke 10:38). It was without a doubt for a similar reason that the Synoptics withheld the name of the disciple who cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest in the garden, while it was said without hesitation by the Fourth Gospel that the name of this disciple was Peter (John 18:10). Of course, the reason for this was that the Synoptics were written (at least the basic one, Mark) before the death of Peter, while the Fourth Gospel was not written until long after Peter had died. Furthermore, the tradition on which the Synoptics were based, and the Synoptic Gospels themselves, came into existence when the Sanhedrin and the enemies of Jesus still possessed great power. The Fourth Gospel was written, however, when there was no longer either a Sanhedrin or a temple, and when the power of the Jews was gone.<sup>110</sup> Thus the reasons are perfectly clear why the Synoptics did not record the raising of Lazarus, while John was not bound by tradition, but wrote from his almost endless store of recollections of the things that Jesus had said and done.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

The purpose of the Johannine miracles. One of the main arguments against the historicity of the Johannine miracles has been that Jesus performed them to show forth the glory of His Person instead of because of His great compassion, as the Synoptics clearly show. But is this so? A study of the Johannine miracles reveals that in each case the Evangelist has described the miracle as being brought forth by human need. In the first miracle, Christ performed it with reluctance only after His mother had persuaded Him to meet a definite need that had arisen on the occasion of the wedding feast at Cana. The second and third miracles were certainly due to the compassion of Jesus for the ill and diseased. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand was, as in the Synoptics, due to His compassion for the hungry multitude. Then, before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, it is said of Him that "He wept." And the Evangelist also recorded the comment that the Jews made about this: "Then said the Jews, Behold, how he loved him" (John 11:36). Only in the healing of the man born blind was there the least suggestion that the miracle was performed to bring glory, but if we read closely it will be observed that Jesus said that it was done that "the works of God might be made manifest in him." (John 9:3). Thus, this miracle was performed to glorify God, not Himself.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 113.



The absence of five miracles from the Synoptic record.

Five miracles recorded in the Fourth Gospel are not to be found in the Synoptic Gospels. This has often been used as an objection against the historicity of the Fourth Gospel. But the first miracle occurred even before Jesus had begun His Judean ministry, let alone His Galilean ministry, and the Synoptic record was based on His Galilean ministry and His passion alone. Besides, the mother of Jesus was the one who knew all the details of this miracle, and after the death of Jesus, she became a member of the family of John the Apostle, so that he, of all the disciples, would have had the best opportunity to know of this miracle. The second miracle occurred on His return journey to Galilee after His Judean ministry, before His Galilean ministry actually began and before the time that the Synoptic record began to record the ministry of Jesus. Besides, this miracle was very similar to the miracle of the healing of the centurion's servant.

The miracles of the impotent man and the healing of the man born blind were both performed by Jesus on earlier visits to Jerusalem, both visits being unrecorded by the Synoptics who had no first-hand knowledge of them, depending as they did upon Peter, who evidently did not accompany Jesus on these visits. Besides, similar miracles were also recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, so there was no reason for them to mention

these two miracles, inasmuch as they had no first-hand knowledge of them. As for the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, the reasons for the Synoptic Gospels not recording this miracle have already been set forth in detail.<sup>112</sup>

Furthermore, John never suggested that the faith that is produced by miracles is a high type of faith. In fact, he considered this type of faith an inferior type of faith (John 2:23; 4:48). This teaching was in complete accord with the Marcan tradition (Mark 8:12). There is therefore no valid reason for considering any of the Johannine miracles as either unhistorical or unauthentic.

#### IV. ARGUMENTS BASED ON INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES EXAMINED

The Polemical difficulties of the Fourth Gospel. A prominent feature of the Fourth Gospel, it is claimed, is that the author was more concerned with the controversies and heresies which were prevalent towards the close of the first century than with the actual discussions which took place during our Lord's ministry.<sup>113</sup> It has furthermore been claimed that this Polemic was addressed against three different sets of opponents. This objection will now be examined in detail.

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<sup>112</sup> Refer to pp. 156 ff. of this work.

<sup>113</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 412.

The supposed Polemic against the Jews. The opposition described in the Synoptic Gospels of the scribes and Pharisees to Jesus is said to have given way in the Fourth Gospel to the hostility of the Jewish nation as a whole to Jesus. Now this was a condition that may have been true around 100 A.D., when the Jews as a race were the active enemies of the Christian Church, but this was not true at the time that Christ lived on earth.

But has this been a true statement of the attitude of the Fourth Gospel to the Jews? In this connection, the following facts should be noted: (1) Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, was described by the Fourth Gospel as coming to Jesus by night and having a personal interview with Him (John 3:1-21), defending Jesus before the Sanhedrin (John 7:50-53), and as helping Joseph of Arimathaea in the burying of Jesus (John 19:39-42). (2) In John 7:45-49 the Pharisees said: "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? But the people who knoweth not the law are cursed." Here it was definitely said that it was the Elders and the Pharisees who opposed Him, and it was implied that many of the common people were believing in Christ. (3) The author of the Fourth Gospel reported that some of the Jews believed on Him, as in the following passages: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him" (John 8:31); "And many believed on Him there" (John 10:42); "Then many of the Jews which came to

Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him" (John 11:45); "But the chief priest consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus" (John 12:10-11); and "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (John 12:42). It is thus apparent that the author of the Fourth Gospel throughout was tracing not only the rise of hostility against Jesus but also the rise of faith in Jesus.

(4) The Evangelist's usage of the phrase "the Jews" when reporting the opposition against Jesus was such that it is certain that in almost every case he was referring to the opposition of the Pharisees and the rulers of Israel, that is the Sanhedrin. The following passages can be cited as evidence of this. "This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask Him, Who art thou?" (John 1:19); "Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building . . ." (John 2:20); "The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed" (It is evident here that the Jews were the Pharisees, as in the Synoptics, who opposed Jesus healing on the Sabbath) (John 5:10); "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, . . . What sayest thou of him that hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews did not

believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight" (John 9:16-18); and the clearest of all, "Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." (The incident referred to occurred in John 11:47-51 where at a meeting of the chief priests and Pharisees, Caiaphas gave that counsel. Thus the author of the Fourth Gospel used the phrase "the Jews" constantly to refer to the Pharisees and the rulers of Jerusalem). (John 18:14). (5) The author of the Fourth Gospel did frequently mention the Pharisees, and did keep the distinction between the Pharisees and common people most distinct; and, like the Synoptists, he recorded that the major opposition to Jesus came from the Pharisees and the chief priests. Examples of this are: "And they which were sent were of the Pharisees" (John 1:25); "The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him" (John 7:32); "Then came the officers to the chief priest and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought Him?" (John 7:45); "The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of thyself, and thy record is not true" (John 8:3); "And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also?" (John 9:40); "Then gathered the chief priests and the

Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles" (John 11:47); "Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where He were, he should shew it, that they might take Him" (John 11:57); and, "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the whole world is gone after Him" (John 12:19). Other examples of this are found in: John 3:1; 7:47; 7:48; 8:13; 9:13; 9:15, 16; 11:46; 12:42; and 18:3. It is therefore evident that the author of the Fourth Gospel faithfully depicted the attitude of the various groups of the Jews towards Jesus, and that the Fourth Gospel was in complete agreement in its treatment of the chief priests and Pharisees with the Synoptic narrative. The Fourth Gospel, therefore, contained no Polemic against the Jews.

The supposed Polemic against John the Baptist. The school of destructive criticism has also claimed that the account in the Fourth Gospel was greatly at variance with the Synoptic account of the ministry of John the Baptist, and that the Fourth Gospel placed John the Baptist in a much more subordinate role than did the Synoptic account. As Maurice Jones has said: "In the Synoptics, he (John the Baptist) is a champion of a religious reformation, the preacher of repentance and of good works. In St. John, his office is merely to be a

witness to the Light."<sup>114</sup> In the Fourth Gospel, because there was no mention made of the baptism of Christ, of the Baptist's preaching of repentance, or of the Baptist's embassy from prison, it is said that the author of the Fourth Gospel undoubtedly tried to subordinate the work of John the Baptist to that of Jesus Christ. But this is to put into the Fourth Gospel something that is not there, and to misunderstand it entirely.

In the first place, the author of the Fourth Gospel definitely knew when John was cast into prison (John 3:24). Furthermore, he mentioned in 3:23 that John baptized many people in Aenon near to Salim, and this was an indirect reference to John's ministry of repentance, for the Baptist's requirement for baptism of his followers was repentance. Furthermore, it was not until John 4:1 that the author of the Fourth Gospel indicated that Jesus through His disciples was baptizing more people than John the Baptist. This is at the same point of time that the Synoptic Gospels began to trace the ministry of Jesus and to disregard the ministry of John the Baptist. Then it should also be noted that Matthew told that one of the purposes of the ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare the way for Christ. Matthew, like the author of the Fourth Gospel, quoted the prophecy from Isaiah 40:3 referring to the forerunner of the Messiah: "For this is He

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 414.

that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight" (Matt. 3:3). Mark also quoted John the Baptist as quoting from Malachi 3:1, saying, "As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before my face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." Mark also quoted Isaiah 40:3 and indicated that one of the functions of John the Baptist was to prepare the way for Christ. Luke quoted this same prophecy, and in fact, he put it into the mouth of John the Baptist, and in much more detail than the other Synoptic Gospels. The Synoptic Gospels, therefore, like the Fourth Gospel, taught that one of the purposes of John the Baptist was to prepare the way for Christ. Furthermore, both Matthew and Luke recorded that John the Baptist taught that there was coming one after him who was far superior to him when he said as recorded by these two Evangelists: "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16). Furthermore, Matthew recorded the fact that John recognized that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, when he wrote: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John. to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest Thou to me" (Matt. 3:13-14). There was, therefore, nothing in



the account of the ministry of John the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel that contradicted the impression that the Christian Church has received of his ministry in the Synoptic narrative.

The supposed Polemic against Gnosticism. The third supposed Polemic in the Fourth Gospel is said to have been directed against the Gnostic heresy. But the argument for this Polemic is the weakest of all. Maurice Jones has summed up the critical argument in these words:

There is no direct mention of the heresy, but the constant emphasis of the Gospel upon Christ's humanity shows that he had it constantly in mind. Dominant Gnostic ideas are frequently mentioned, and some of the most characteristic Gnostic terms are constantly in evidence, such as "life," "light," "knowledge," and "love."<sup>115</sup>

However, the extremes to which the critics have gone in their efforts to deny that there was anything Divine at all is seen in this. At one moment they reject the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel on the grounds that he was constantly trying to prove that Jesus was the "Logos of God." Then they deny that John the Apostle wrote this Gospel the very next moment on the ground that he was trying to refute Gnosticism by his constant emphasis on the pure humanity of Jesus. The truth of the matter is that the author of the Fourth Gospel faithfully depicted the life, the Person, and the work of Jesus Christ upon the earth as He actually was, that the

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<sup>115</sup> Loc. cit.

Fourth Gospel was a true historical portrait of Jesus, and that because of this, Jesus was pictured as being truly man and yet truly God.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that Gnosticism leaned heavily upon Christian ideas, so that the author of the Fourth Gospel did not draw from Gnosticism, but that Gnosticism drew from the Fourth Gospel. This is shown definitely in the Gnostic commentaries upon the Fourth Gospel, in which they constantly resorted to the most strained type of allegorical interpretation of the Fourth Gospel to support their heretical teachings.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, it has already been pointed out that such terms as "life," "light," and "love" did not originate with Gnosticism, neither were they of Hellenic origin, but they were of pure Hebraic origin and are found rooted in the ideas of the Old Testament. And the document, "The Odes of Solomon," as such scholars as Harnack, Salmon, and Bernard have demonstrated, clearly proved this fact.<sup>117</sup>

The intertwining of the words of Jesus and John. The manner in which the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel seemed to mingle his own words and thoughts with those of Jesus Christ and John the Baptist has been considered by many as a most serious obstacle towards considering this Gospel a faithful

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<sup>116</sup> Refer to pp. 48 ff. of this work.

<sup>117</sup> Bernard, op. cit., pp. cxlvi f.

historical record. It is further stated that the sayings of Christ have been so molded by the Evangelist that at times it is difficult to distinguish between his words and the words of Jesus; and also that the words which were supposed to have been spoken by John the Baptist had much in common with the style of the Johannine writings.<sup>118</sup> But as Marcus Dods has said:

It was inevitable that in reporting in Greek what had been spoken in Aramaic, the style of the translator should be visible. But there is no ground whatever for affirming that the discourses are ideal compositions of the Evangelist without basis in any utterances of Jesus.<sup>119</sup>

It should also be remembered that John the Apostle was both a disciple of John the Baptist before the baptism of Jesus, and an almost constant companion of Jesus afterwards for over three years. So it would have been strange indeed if the style of the disciple did not bear something of the stamp of the style of the Master. Then too, it should also be pointed out that the author of the Fourth Gospel was most careful in distinguishing between his comments and the actual words of Jesus. Thus in chapter two, after Jesus had said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19), the Evangelist added his comment in these words, "But He spake of the temple of His body" (2:21). Then in chapter seven, after Jesus had said: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath

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<sup>118</sup> Dods, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Then the author of the Fourth Gospel inserted his own comment in verse thirty-nine, saying: "(But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)." Then in chapter twelve, after Jesus had said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (12:32), the Evangelist inserted his own comment in verse thirty-three in these words: "This he said, signifying what death he should die." Furthermore, that the Evangelist was very careful to distinguish who was actually speaking is seen in the fact that he used such phrases as: "He said," "She said," "they said," "Jesus said," "I say unto you," and "they answered saying," no less than 398 times in the writing of the Fourth Gospel. There was no discourse given, or any words spoken, outside the third chapter, where there could be any doubt as to who spoke them. And as the Evangelist was so careful to distinguish the speaker in every other chapter, and in every instance to indicate clearly his own comments, there is therefore no real reason for assuming that John 3:16-21 was not a faithful reproduction of the words of Jesus, or that John 3:31-36 was not actually spoken by John the Baptist.

How could this Gospel have been written by John? It has often been questioned that a Galilean could have risen to

a wisdom so profound as that which is conspicuous in many parts of the Fourth Gospel. It has seemed impossible to some critics for a man who had no training, who was a Jew and Judaistic in outlook, to have been the author of so spiritual a Gospel.<sup>120</sup> But the history of the Christian Church has clearly shown that it is impossible to limit the impact that Jesus Christ can have on a consecrated human personality. Hase, as quoted by Godet, has said:

If the highest human wisdom has gone forth from Christianity, must it not be granted that in the proximity of such a being as Jesus, a young man of rich and profound soul might have greatly developed, and, as it were, been set on fire? . . . Most certainly, if John, when he taught in Asia, had possessed only the Apostolic simplicity and culture of the Galilean fisherman, he would not have produced in that country the durable impression of admiration and veneration which he left there.<sup>121</sup>

The supposed subordinate position of Peter in the Fourth Gospel. The Apostle John has been objected to by some as the author of the Fourth Gospel on the ground that this Gospel tended to exalt him at the expense of Peter, while in the Synoptics Peter was the major disciple. But this is just the opposite viewpoint from that which most scholars have gained from the Fourth Gospel, for it did not mention either John or James by name, neither did it mention their mother by name, and the phrase "the sons of Zebedee" occurred only once.

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<sup>120</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 227.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

Besides this, the following facts should be noticed. (1) It was not John, but Andrew, that brought Simon Peter to Christ (1:41). (2) Jesus upon meeting Peter gave him a name of high honor, an honor that Jesus did not bestow on anyone else (1:42). (3) It was Peter who was recorded by the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel as being the one to confess his faith in Christ when many of His disciples were leaving Him (6:69). (4) It was Peter alone of all the disciples who did not show cowardice in the Garden when Jesus was betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinners (18:10). (5) It was Peter to whom Jesus said: "Feed my sheep" (21:17).

There is thus but one evidence that this objection is valid, and that is that the designation John recorded was given to him, that is, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23). But to recall so sweet a memory was not pride, but humble gratitude. This description that the Evangelist recorded Jesus as giving to him was not therefore to exalt himself but to glorify the tenderness of Him who had deigned to stoop so low as to love such a one as he. "He knew himself to be, just as any grace-saved believer knows himself to be, the object of the most amazing love. And what disciple could not say that of his relation to Jesus?"<sup>122</sup>

The Hebraism of the Fourth Gospel. It is a common objection of the critics who have rejected the Johannine author-

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

ship of the Fourth Gospel to claim that its style was Hellenic and not Hebraistic. It has been pointed out already that there are many features of this Gospel that bear the Hebraistic stamp.<sup>123</sup> In addition to them, the following facts should be noted as compiled by Godet in a most extensive study:

(1) The Greek vocabulary in its sum total, is poor. In general, the same words and expressions are reproduced from the beginning to the end. "Light" is used 23 times, "glory" or to be "glorified," 42 times; "life," 52 times: "to testify," 47 times; "to know," 55 times; "world," 78 times; "to believe," 98 times; "work," 23 times: "name," 25 times: "truth," 35 times: and "sign," 17 times. Now this feature is in keeping with the Eastern mind, as would be the case of John. A Palestinian Jew, reared in the Old Testament. It would also be the case of one who was not a thoroughly educated Greek, having fewer Greek words at his ready command, and thus would use his favorite ones over time and time again. Furthermore, remember that the Hebrew loved to lose himself in the infinite and that such rich expressions as light, darkness, truth, glory, name, life, and death are common to the Old Testament.

(2) The construction is simple (contrast with it the complex writings of Paul). The ideas are placed in juxtaposition instead of organically fitted in according to the arts of Greek construction, as in: 1:10; 2:9; 3:19; 6:22-24; 8:32 and 17:25. Then frequently the author places the dominant idea first, then repeats it afterwards by the use of a pronoun regularly construed.

(3) Despite the great number of particles characteristic of the Greek language, the author makes use of only a few.

(4) The author repeats proper names in those places where a Greek writer would have employed a pronoun. . . . In the first chapter, John the Baptist is mentioned by name nine times, while a pronoun is used as a subject instead of the name John only two times. A more striking example of this is found in John 3:23-27, in which the name John appears 5 times, appearing once in every sentence. The shortness and brevity of the sentences is another indication that the author's style was not Hellenic, but Hebraistic instead.

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<sup>123</sup> Refer to pp. 62 f. of this work.

(5) The author frequently uses short propositions, which breaks up the sentence as by an abrupt interruption. Examples of this are found in 18:40: "Now Barabbas was a robber"; in 13:30, "And it was night"; in 1:40, "It was the tenth hour." Now this is characteristic of a Semite, whose exciting recollections are sufficient to draw him all at once from the calm majesty with which he usually thinks fit to surround himself.

(6) The ideas are connected in a way that is repugnant to the Greek mind. The author either gives a whole series of propositions without external connection as in 15:1-20: or else he connects the ideas by repeating in the following proposition one of the principal words of the preceding, for instance as he does in: 1:1-5; 10:11; 13:20; and 17:2,3,9,11,15,16.

(7) The author also uses parallelisms of propositions and refrains, two more distinctive characteristics of the poetical style of the Hebraic mind. These two forms appear often in the Old Testament. . . . It is thus with the author of the Fourth Gospel; parallelisms appear in such passages as 3:11; 5:37; 6:35,55,56; 12:44,45; 13:16; 15:20; and 16:28; while refrains are used in 3:15-16; 6:39; and 6:44.

What is to be our conclusion then? Is the style Greek or Hebraic? It is Greek, if by style we mean only the external forms of the language, for the Fourth Gospel does not use as does Luke, Hebraisms properly so-called, or Hebrew expressions clumsily Hellenized. On the other hand, as Ewald has expressed himself: "No language can be, in respect of the spirit and breath which animate it, more purely Hebraic than that of our author." In John's language, the clothing alone is Greek, the body is Hebrew. The style is thus that which you would expect from one who was reared as and who lived as a Hebrew.<sup>124</sup>

The objection to Johannine authorship based on

John 19:35. The final argument against the Johannine authorship of this Gospel, based on internal evidence contained within the Gospel itself, is the one that has been brought forth by such critics as Weiss, Schweizer, Keim, Reuss, Bernard, and others; and they have stated that John 19:35 makes a dis-

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<sup>124</sup> Godet, op. cit., pp. 177 ff.



inction between the author or editor of the Gospel and the Apostle John, who furnished the editor with the authentic material of his narrative.<sup>125</sup> Now this verse is composed of three propositions: (1) "And he that saw it bare record"; (2) "And his record is true"; and (3) "He knoweth that he saith true." Now the general opinion of the Church has always been that the writer of this verse was the witness himself, that is, John the Apostle. But the above-mentioned critics have claimed that as the writer used the pronoun in the third person in referring to the witness, the author was speaking of the witness as distinct from himself. But actually, it is found that many times in the Holy Scriptures the sacred writer spoke of himself in the third person. Thus, in II Cor. 12:2-5 the Apostle Paul used the third person in referring to himself. Then Jesus did it habitually as He referred to Himself no less than eighty times as the "Son of man," using the pronoun of the third person in all of its forms.<sup>126</sup>

Furthermore, the pronoun that the Evangelist used in John 19:35 had a particular and constant meaning in the Fourth Gospel. It was used to denote a being "who possessed a certain character or a certain function exclusively, one single person, in contrast to every other."<sup>127</sup> So in 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time, . . . the only begotten Son, He (that One) hath declared Him." Also 5:39; 16:14; and

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<sup>125</sup> Bernard, op. cit., p. lxix.

<sup>126</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 257.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

especially 9:37, which stated: "Thou hast seen Him (the Son of God), and He that speaketh to thee is He (that One)." The same usage is found in John 19:35, so that there is not a single logical or grammatical reason for not accepting the most generally received meaning of this passage.<sup>128</sup>

Then too, the two verbs in the present tense in the third proposition should be noticed at this point: "He knoweth" and "He saith true." What they prove was simply this, that at the time these lines were written the witness of the fact was still living. So what would be gained by saying that the editor of this Gospel was a disciple of Jesus if he was still living and witnessing. As Godet has said: "The Gospel none the less remains a narrative composed under the eye and with the approbation of John himself."<sup>129</sup>

And finally, the critical objection is completely disproved by the declaration in John 21:24, which declared that the Evangelist-editor and the Apostle-witness was one and the same person. As for the phrase, "And we know that his testimony is true" (John 21:24b), although this was inserted after the Gospel was written, those who inserted it could not have been mistaken about the identity of the person for whom they were vouching, for this postscript is to be found in every one of the ancient documents. It is not missing in a single one.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>130</sup> Refer to p. 81 of this work.

Those who inserted this must have been, consequently, among the Gospel's first depositaries, if not the very first. How then could they have been mistaken about the testimony of the author who said just prior to that insertion: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and who wrote these things" (John 21:24a). No error is therefore possible.

Then when John 21:24 and 19:35 are compared, it should not be forgotten that the attestors to John 21:24 said, "we know," and not, "he knoweth," as was done by the writer of 19:35. Thus, "By the use of the plural pronoun in the first person, the attestors distinguish themselves as precisely from the witness-apostle as the writer of 19:35 by the use of the singular pronoun in the third person identifies himself with this witness."<sup>131</sup> The author of the Fourth Gospel, and especially of John 19:35, was the Apostle-witness, that is the Apostle John. The only part of the Gospel that he did not write was the insertion occurring in 21:24 and a few passages such as 8:1-11 which external evidences show to be later interpolations.

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<sup>131</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 260.

## CHAPTER VI

### OBJECTIONS TO JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP BASED ON EXTERNAL EVIDENCES EVALUATED

Having shown that the Fourth Gospel, based on external evidences, could have been written no later than 100 A.D., and in fact, having shown that its most probable date of composition was 95 A.D., and after having demonstrated from the Gospel itself that the author was clearly the Apostle John, (and having shown that there is no internal evidence to the contrary), the investigator will next examine the alleged external evidences from which it is asserted that the Apostle John never lived in Asia, that he suffered early martyrdom, and that the Fourth Gospel was actually written by another John whom Church tradition had erroneously identified as the Apostle John.<sup>1</sup>

These evidences fall naturally into four divisions which shall make up the four divisions of this chapter. These evidences will be classified as follows: (1) Those evidences accruing from the second century controversies; (2) The evidences relating to the Ephesian residence of John the Apostle; (3) The evidences relating to the early martyrdom of John; and (4) The evidences that purport to identify another John in Asia Minor distinct from the Apostle John.

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Jones, The New Testament in the Twentieth Century (London: Macmillan and Company, 1934), p. 375.

## 1. THE SECOND CENTURY CONTROVERSIES

The legalism of the Christianity of Asia Minor. The objection has been alleged by many scholars that the Christianity of Asia Minor had a legal character which was completely opposed to the teaching of the Fourth Gospel. Thus either John could not have resided in Asia Minor or he could not have written the Fourth Gospel. But this objection has been based on two fundamental errors. First, the presence of an Apostle on other occasions and elsewhere did not prevent false teachings from coming into existence. After all, did not the Apostle Paul have to combat all kinds of errors that arose in the very churches that he had established? And secondly, as Godet has pointed out, the Church of Asia Minor in the second century "was not attached to legalism, but to millenarianism."<sup>2</sup>

The Paschal controversy. The argument, which used to be stronger than it is now, is the argument that the Quartodecimans, who dominated the Church of Asia Minor in the second century, "did not recognize the authority of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>3</sup> This objection was actually founded on a real difficulty, that of an apparent discrepancy between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels as to the date of the Last

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<sup>2</sup> F. Godet, Commentary on the Gospel of St. John (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1884), p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> George Salmon, An Historical Introduction to the New Testament (London: John Murray, 1904), p. 245.

Supper. The Fourth Gospel told us that the Last Supper was "before the feast of the Passover."<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the Synoptics made the Last Supper to occur on the night that the feast of the Passover was celebrated. A close examination of the Gospels reveals, however, that this contradiction is only apparent. It should be remembered that the Jewish day began at sundown and ended with the succeeding sundown, so that the Synoptic Gospels made both the Last Supper and the death of Christ to occur on the Preparation of the Passover. Then, it should also be pointed out that the Fourth Gospel does not say that Jesus celebrated the Last Supper before the feast of the Passover, contrary to the opinion of most critics. This is true, for John 13:1 is vitally connected with the entire passage preceding (John 12:12-50) and has little relationship to the events recorded in the thirteenth chapter of John. The Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptists record the same events as happening on the occasion of the Last Supper.

John 18:28 clearly indicates that the priests, elders, and Pharisees had to delay their eating of the Passover because of the arrest and betrayal of Jesus. The phrase in that verse clearly indicates this: "And it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover." If the eating of the Passover did not occur until the following evening, there would

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<sup>4</sup> John 13:1.

have been no need of hesitation on their part. Furthermore, all four Gospels taught that Jesus was crucified on the Passover and was thus the real Paschal Lamb. The following passages are conclusive of this:

Matt. 27:15: "Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would."

Matt. 27:62: "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came unto Pilate."

Mark 15:6: "Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired."

Mark 15:42: "And now when even was come, because it was the preparation . . ."

Luke 23:16-17: "I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast)."

Luke 23:54: "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on."

John 19:14: "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!"

John 18:39: "But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"

John 19:31: "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."

Thus the Fourth Gospel did not contradict the teaching of the Synoptic Gospels as to the date of the Last Supper and the date of the death of Jesus.

The weakness of this argument. But even supposing that there were a real discrepancy here between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels--which there is not--still that would be no valid argument against the historicity of the Fourth Gospel. As Salmon has declared:

Now, to my mind, the conclusion is quite the reverse - this and other seeming contradictions between St. John and the earlier Evangelists being, as I think, inconsistent with the ascription of a late date to the Gospel. The Fourth Gospel was not written until the Synoptics had gained wide circulation and recognition. It is thus inconceivable that a forger, wishing to pass off his performance as the work of an Apostle, would have set himself in flagrant opposition to the general belief of Christians. A forger would either have made a Gospel which he might hope to pass off, as an independent complete account of the Saviour's life, or else he would profess to take the existing histories as his basis, and to supply what was wanting in them. And certainly the forger of a supplemental history would be cautious to dovetail his work properly into the accepted story. He would not venture, without a word of explanation, to make statements seemingly in direct contradiction to what the Church had received as the true Apostolic tradition.<sup>5</sup>

What the Eastern Church commemorated. The Eastern Church commemorated the Paschal Feast on the fourteenth of Nisan, no matter what day of the week that was. The Tubingen school said that it was the Last Supper of the Lord that it celebrated on the fourteenth of Nisan, and was thus based on the Synoptic tradition, which meant that the Eastern Church had rejected the authority of the Fourth Gospel. Salmon has, however, rightly refuted this objection when he said: "The

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<sup>5</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 248.



whole argument, you will perceive, rests on the assumption that the Asiatic Paschal Feast was intended to commemorate the Last Supper; but where is the proof of that assumption? There is absolutely none."<sup>6</sup> In fact, it has become clear that the assumption of Baur and his disciples was a very bad one. For what could be less probable than that the Asiatic churches should have made the Last Supper the one object of their annual commemoration, leaving the Crucifixion unnoticed. Then too, did not the Fourth Gospel constantly emphasize the body of Jesus being pierced, with His blood having been shed for the remission of sins, of which the Last Supper was but prophetic and symbolic. As Salmon has added:

It would then be most in keeping with the Johannine spirit for the churches that followed Him to keep the Paschal Feast on the actual day on which the Lord was crucified. This is just what we find. So instead of disproving the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel as claimed, the genuineness of the Gospel is proved instead.<sup>7</sup>

The acceptance of the Fourth Gospel by the Asiatics.

As to the argument that the Quartodecimans (the name applied to the leaders of the Asiatic Church of the second century) did not recognize the Fourth Gospel as the work of the Apostle John, there are only three extant works of theirs upon which the question can be decided, and all three prove just the exact

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 250.

opposite. Thus, Apollinarius of Hierapolis, of whose writings there remain but two short fragments, in one of them argued that the fourteenth of Nisan was the day on which our Lord suffered, and he appealed to the Fourth Gospel as proof. Then Melito wrote that our Lord's ministry was of three years' duration, a direct testimony to the great authority which the Fourth Gospel possessed in Asia Minor in the second century. Furthermore, Polycrates, who resisted Bishop Victor of Rome in the Paschal controversy, appealed to "'John, who leaned on the Lord's breast at supper.'"<sup>8</sup> This description can only be found in the Fourth Gospel so that in the words of Salmon: "It seems to me that the appeal which has been made to the Quartodeciman controversy, instead of being unfavorable to the authority of the Fourth Gospel, really establishes its great antiquity."<sup>9</sup>

## II. THE EPHESIAN RESIDENCE OF THE APOSTLE JOHN

The tradition of the Church. The tradition of the Church has been that John the Apostle resided in Asia Minor, particularly in Ephesus after 70 A.D., until the time of Trajan. This tradition (that John spent the later years of his life in Ephesus) was the accepted tradition of all Christendom down to the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Vogel in 1801

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>9</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> C. E. Luthardt, The Apostle, Saint John (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1875), p. 115.

was the first to deny this tradition, while in 1840 Lutzberger contested it sharply. He argued that this tradition was non-historical because:

(1) The Christological heresies in Asia Minor are inconceivable if John had lived there to oppose them.

(2) The tradition springs from Irenaeus and had no existence before him.

(3) Irenaeus has recorded much about John that is clearly erroneous.

(4) Irenaeus was with Polycarp in his earliest youth and so in his old age might easily make a mistake as to what he had heard.

(5) Had John been alive when Luke wrote his Gospel, he would have appealed to John, and not to lesser authorities.

(6) When Paul in Gal. 2:6 writes of the three pillars of the Church in the preterite sense, at least one must have been dead; and as Peter and James still lived, it must have been John.<sup>11</sup>

The answer to Lutzberger. It should be noticed in the first place, however, that many heresies arose in the churches that the Apostle Paul established, and that these errors sprang up while Paul was still on his missionary journeys. Thus the fact that heresies arose at about the same time as tradition stated that John resided in Asia Minor does not invalidate the tradition at all. In the second place, let it be noticed that the tradition did not originate with Irenaeus. This is proved by the following facts: (1) In a letter addressed to Irenaeus by Victor, Bishop of Rome, on the occasion of Polycarp's coming to Rome, he said in substance that he could not persuade Polycarp from observing the fourteenth of Nisan as the day of the Passover because Polycarp

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

"'had always observed it with John, the disciple of the Lord, and other apostles with whom he had lived.'"<sup>12</sup> Thus, as Godet has remarked: "At Rome and in Gaul, not less than in Asia Minor, Polycarp was certainly regarded as the disciple of John the Apostle."<sup>13</sup> (2) Apollonius about 180 A.D. told us that John raised a man from the dead in Ephesus. A tradition such as this could hardly have grown up if the Apostle John had never resided there, for a tradition is always rooted in fact. Furthermore, why did this tradition not record other Apostles residing in Ephesus and performing miracles? The answer is simple. They never resided in Ephesus, but John did. (3) Then the Church possesses an official document from the Bishops of Asia which dates from about 190 A.D., written by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, and addressed to Victor, Bishop of Rome, in which he said as recorded by Eusebius:

For some great lights are extinguished in Asia, and will rise again there on the return of the Lord. . . . Philip, one of the twelve apostles, and John who rested on the bosom of the Lord, who was high priest, and wore the plate of gold, and who was witness and teacher, and who is buried at Ephesus.<sup>14</sup>

(4) Then there are other second century testimonies from out-

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<sup>12</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup> L. Kirsopp, Eusebius, the Ecclesiastical History, Vol. II (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949), Book 5, 24:3.

side Asia Minor. Clement of Alexandria, about 190 A.D., wrote: "After the tyrant was dead, John returned from the isle of Patmos to Ephesus, and there he visited the surrounding countries in order to establish bishops and to organize the churches."<sup>15</sup> Tertullian, Origen, Jerome, and Eusebius all witnessed to the residence of John in Ephesus. All of these could not have been mistaken about so important and vital a fact.

As to the third argument of Lutzberger, the research of the past century has shown that most of the instances in the writings of Irenaeus that were thought to contain erroneous statements have been shown to be historically accurate.<sup>16</sup> Irenaeus himself has refuted the fourth argument of Lutzberger by the very vividness of his recollections, and by the fact that he could clearly and accurately recall even minor events, thus showing that he would not be likely to be mistaken about so great and so vital a fact as to the residence of John whom Polycarp, the teacher of Irenaeus, loved so much.<sup>17</sup> The fifth argument is refuted by the fact that Luke did not live in Asia Minor when he was gathering the material for his Gospel. Furthermore, Luke gathered only written documents, and John had not written any of his writings as yet, so Luke would have had no possible reason for referring to John. The sixth argument is refuted by Scripture itself, for Acts 12:2 proves

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<sup>15</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>16</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>17</sup> p. 118 ff.

that James had been killed before Paul began his missionary journeys, and a considerable length of time before Paul began his missionary journeys, and a considerable length of time before Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians.<sup>18</sup>

The argument from silence. The most recent attack of modern destructive criticism has been the claim that there is no evidence that John lived to an old age in Asia Minor. This argument is almost in its entirety an argument from silence. Thus it has been pointed out that the New Testament documents are silent upon this subject. Thus it is said by such critics as Bacon that inasmuch as Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles, I Peter, and the Synoptic Gospels, all of which were composed in the last two decades of the first century, contained no reference to the Johannine residence in Ephesus, that John could not have lived there during that period, and, for that matter, have lived there at all. But there is no reason for accepting the late date of most of these documents, and most scholars have now recognized the earlier dates of these books.<sup>19</sup> The argument from the New Testament documents, except for the Revelation, which establishes the Johannine residence in Asia Minor, has therefore no bearing on the subject at all. However, it is a different matter with the writings of the Sub-Apostolic Fathers. For instance, as

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>19</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 376.

Maurice Jones has said:

Why did Rome, with Clement as its agent, intervene in the affairs of the Church of Corinth when Ephesus was so much nearer with a living Apostle residing there? Why should Clement not so much as mention St. John, while he explicitly refers to St. Peter and St. Paul, both of whom had long been dead?

Why in writing to the Ephesians did Ignatius express the desire "that he may be found in the company of those Christians who were ever of one mind with the Apostles." Then, why, as in writing to the Romans he names both Peter and Paul, does he not name both Paul the founder of the Church of Ephesus, and also of that venerable Apostle, who, according to the belief we have under consideration, had lived and taught there more recently and for a longer period. But in the immediate sequel, he mentions Paul only.

Why does Polycarp in his Epistle to the Philippians look back not to St. John, who had died only recently, but to St. Paul, who had been dead for more than fifty years and whom he had never known, as the source of his apostolic teaching?

Papias mentions the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark by name. He also mentions St. John in his list of apostles, but curiously enough he only comes last but one on his list. He has not a word to say of him in connection with the Fourth Gospel, which he knew and from which he quoted. Yet he was Bishop of Hierapolis, on the very confines of the region where St. John is supposed to have taught.<sup>20</sup>

The reply of Hase. In reply to this argument from silence Hase as quoted by Godet has written:

Nothing is more uncertain than the assertion: a writer must have spoken of a certain thing or a certain person. Besides, the Synoptic Gospels had been in circulation for at least 30 years or more. Also, no book of the New Testament can be shown to be widely attested to until at least 50 years after its composition, for in those days it took a great deal of time for a book to become widely circulated and to gain universal recognition. Why should one book be expected to do it in ten or twenty years, so that every writer would quote from it and name it by name. The Fourth Gospel, like every other book of the New Testament, needed time to take its place as an inspired writing, which never happened overnight, but was the result of the test of time.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. n. 377.

<sup>21</sup> op. cit., p. 227.

The testimony of Eusebius. It is a generally recognized fact that Eusebius was the great authority of the fourth century on the New Testament Scriptures. But the critics make a big mistake when they claim that Eusebius made it his special business to adduce testimonies to all the New Testament, for Eusebius clearly said, as quoted by Salmon, that "He gave particular attention to adduce testimonies to 'those books of the Canon which were disputed in his time.'"<sup>22</sup> Thus Eusebius recorded that Theophilus of Antioch used the Revelation of John, but Eusebius never mentioned the fact that he used the Fourth Gospel although Theophilus is the earliest writer now extant who mentioned John by name as the author of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>23</sup> Why did Eusebius then not mention this? Because in his time Revelation was a disputed book and the Fourth Gospel was not. Another fact that should be noticed is that Eusebius in referring to Irenaeus never mentioned that Irenaeus ever used Acts or the Epistles of St. Paul. But did they not then exist? Actually, though, from the writings of Irenaeus that are preserved it is known that he referred to or quoted from the Epistles of Paul and the book of Acts over two hundred times.<sup>24</sup>

The silence of Ignatius and Polycarp. It is true that Ignatius in writing to the Ephesians did not mention the Apostle John. But in this letter, Ignatius did not refer to

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<sup>22</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>23</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup> ibid. p. 81.



the residence of Paul in Ephesus, but quite specially to his passage through Asia Minor when intending to go to Rome.<sup>25</sup> However, in this same letter, Ignatius stated that "the Christians of Ephesus have always lived in perfect harmony with the Apostles."<sup>26</sup> This was an indirect reference to the residence of the Apostle John, for outside of St. Paul and St. John there never was a hint in all of tradition that any other Apostle had ever lived in Ephesus.<sup>27</sup> Then Polycarp, when writing to the Christians of Macedonia had no reason for referring to the ministry of John in Ephesus. It was Paul that had founded the churches there, and there is no evidence that John ever visited them.

Then, that the argument from silence carries very little weight is seen from the following facts: (1) Ignatius quoted from the Epistles of Paul, and the Gospel of Matthew, but he did not quote from Mark, Luke, James, Hebrews, I Peter, and others. Is it to be inferred from this that they did not then exist?<sup>28</sup> (2) Papias did not quote from the Epistles of St. Paul, St. Luke, Acts, James and Hebrews. (3) Melito, Bishop of Sardis (second century), quoted from all the books of the New Testament except James, Jude, II John and III John.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>27</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>28</sup> Henry C. Thiessen, Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1943) p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

Is it to be inferred from this that the Epistle of James was not yet in existence? (4) Justin Martyr (d. 165) did not quote from St. Mark, Galatians, and James. And (5) Clement of Rome, in 96 A.D. referred to Matthew, Romans, I Corinthians, and Hebrews, but he did not quote from any other New Testament writing. Is it to be inferred from this that these were the only New Testament books then in existence?<sup>30</sup>

Besides this, when Polycarp went to Rome just before his martyrdom, he appealed to the authority of the Apostle John to support the date of Easter as held by Asia Minor. But, as Godet has noticed:

Even had the testimony of Irenaeus been founded on a mistake, it could never have had the decisive influence on tradition which is attributed to it. For there exist other statements contemporaneous with his own, and which are necessarily independent of it, like those of Clement of Egypt, and of Polycrates in Asia Minor . . . And consequently, it is to attempt an impossibility to make all tradition on this point to proceed from Irenaeus. Could Irenaeus, writing in Gaul, about 185, have drawn after him all those writers who form a chain from 150 to 190, and that in all parts of the world?<sup>31</sup>

The bearing of the Apocalypse on this matter. Scholten argued that the mistaken tradition arose from the Apocalypse, which was attributed to the Apostle John, and which seemed to have been composed in Asia Minor. But this is to confuse cause and effect. It was the certainty of John's residence in Asia Minor which alone could have induced the Churches of that country to attribute to him the composition of the Apocalypse.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> Godet. op. cit., p. 56.

It has also been alleged that the Apocalypse assumed the death of all the Apostles as past history, and as most scholars have placed the date for the composition of this book in the year 68 A.D., the Apostle John could not have lived in Asia Minor after 70 A.D. The passage that is said to prove this is Rev. 18:20, which states: "Rejoice thou heaven, and ye saints and apostles and prophets, for God hath taken upon the earth the vengeance due to you." But all that this passage can prove is that at the time of its composition there were in heaven some saints, some apostles, and some prophets who had suffered martyrdom. "But some apostles are not all the apostles any more than some saints are all the saints."<sup>33</sup>

In fact, either way you look at the Apocalypse, it proves the Ephesian residence of the Apostle John. If this book was fictitiously ascribed to the Apostle John, he nevertheless must have resided in Asia Minor, for it would never have been ascribed to him and accepted as his if he had never lived in the region that produced it. If the John the Revelation spoke of was really the Apostle John, then he resided there. Or if it was written by another John who was distinct from the Apostle John, which subject shall be shortly presented, this presupposes the Johannine residence in Asia Minor, for there could have been no confusion if the Apostle

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

John had never resided there. This holds good as early as Justin (150), who rightly or wrongly, ascribed the Apocalypse to the Apostle John.<sup>35</sup> So, even he believed in the residence of the Apostle John in Asia Minor. Thus this tradition of the Ephesian residence was well established long before Irenaeus.

The reasonableness of the Johannine residence in Ephesus. Ephesus was also the most fitting place for the last of the Apostles to spend his last days. As Hayes has remarked:

It was the chief vantage point for apostolic direction and supervision. Jerusalem had fallen. Rome had not yet become the center of Christendom. Asia Minor was the most vital portion of the Christian commonwealth at this period, and Ephesus was the greatest city in Asia Minor. . . . It was from this center that he went out upon his apostolic visitations, and it was from this center that he sent out his Gospel and his Epistles, and it was in this center that he composed the Apocalypse and preached and lived the Gospel possibilities revealed in Christ.<sup>36</sup>

Thus the argument from silence is far from sufficient to invalidate the universal tradition of the Church and the testimony of the leaders of the Church from Asia Minor, Gaul, Syria, Africa, and Italy. Only positive evidence of the strongest kind could possibly disprove the accepted tradition of the Church that John lived his old age in Asia Minor until the time of Trajan. But none is forthcoming, and all the positive evidence that scholarship possesses clearly substantiates the Johannine residence of John in Asia Minor in the

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<sup>35</sup> Luthardt, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>36</sup> D. A. Hayes, John and His Writings (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), p. 36.

latter years of the first century. This is clearly proven by the combined testimony of Irenaeus, Apollonius, Polycrates, Eusebius, Jerome, and many others.

### III. THE EARLY MARTYRDOM OF THE APOSTLE JOHN

The tradition of the Church. All of the Church Fathers agreed that the Apostle John lived until an extreme old age, dying in Ephesus. There are many traditions that have come down to us from the second and third centuries, which when combined give a clear picture of the calm and serene impression which the Apostle John had made on the Church of Ephesus and the entire region of Asia Minor.<sup>37</sup> Jerome, for instance, has written in clear language that John lived until the time of Trajan, and that he lived after 70 A.D. in Asia Minor.<sup>38</sup> There were also in Ephesus two tombs, each of which claimed to be the tomb of the Apostle John. Such a strong tradition could not have arisen without a real historical basis.

The tradition questioned. This tradition has, however, been challenged in modern time by a number of critics, including Schwartz, Wellhausen, Schmiedel, Moffatt, and Bacon among others. These scholars have brought forward the four following bits of evidence to support their views. (1) It is maintained that the prophecy in Mark 10:39 is only intelligible on the

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<sup>37</sup> Godet, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

supposition that St. John was dead when the Gospel of Mark was written. In fact, Moffatt, when referring to this prophecy, said:

Unless it is assumed that this anticipation of Jesus was not fulfilled, we must admit that he foretold a martyrdom of death for the two men, and that this had come to pass by the time that Mark's Gospel was published.<sup>39</sup>

(2) This is said to be borne out by an alleged statement of Papias in his second book of the Expositions, that John was killed by the Jews. This statement is found in a seventh or eighth century document called the "DeBoor fragment," which reads at one place as follows: "'Papias in his second book says that John the divine and James his brother were killed by the Jews.'"<sup>40</sup> It should be noted here, however, that such scholars as Stanton, Zahn, Robinson, and Harnack have denied that this is a genuine quotation from Papias. (3) The third piece of evidence that supports this viewpoint is said to be the testimony of the Church Calendars of Syria dating from the year 410 A.D., which commemorated the martyrdom of both James and John on the same day, December 27.<sup>41</sup> (4) The final piece of evidence adduced by these critics is found in a statement of Heracleon, a second century Gnostic, who in connection with St. Luke 12:11-12 mentioned those Apostles who had escaped martyrdom. He mentioned Matthew, Philip,

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<sup>39</sup> James Moffatt. An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 602.

<sup>40</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 378.

op. cit., p. 158.

Thomas, and Levi. But it is claimed, inasmuch as he did not include the Apostle John in his list, the Apostle John must have suffered martyrdom.<sup>42</sup> But do these evidences prove that John died the death of the martyr at an early age? A careful examination of these evidences should give us a definite answer to this question.

The statement in Mark's Gospel. The claim that the statement in Mark 10:29 in which Jesus said to James and John, "The cup that I drink ye shall drink," clearly implied that they were already dead rests upon a very insecure foundation. In the first place, it rests upon the critical assumption that there can be no such thing as a real prophecy, but that what appears to be prophecy is merely history written when it had not yet occurred. But beyond this, it is clear from the context that Jesus did not refer to a literal death by martyrdom. The Church Fathers clearly taught this. For instance, Origen "considered the sufferings which John endured a sufficient martyrdom to prove his participation in the cup that Jesus drank."<sup>43</sup> Jerome likewise declared as quoted by Hayes: "'John in spirit failed not of martyrdom and drank the cup of confession.'<sup>44</sup> Archbishop Bernard has completely disproved the critics' contention at this point when he wrote:

The idea that Mark 10:39 contains a prediction of John's death by violence rests upon a forgetfulness of the context and a misunderstanding of the words employed. (1) None of the apostles believed at the time that Jesus was going to die. . . . (2) The

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<sup>42</sup> Jones, op. cit., p. 379.

<sup>43</sup> op. cit., p. 130.

<sup>44</sup>

present tenses do not point to what was still in the future for Jesus, but to that ministry of sorrow which had already begun for Him. (3) To "drink the cup" is a familiar O.T. metaphor, often descriptive of accepting tribulation appointed by God (Ps. 11:6; 75:8; Isa. 51:17; Jer. 25:15). It always involved pain, but not necessarily a violent death. (4) "To be baptized" means here "to be overwhelmed" as it were with a flood of calamity, the verb being used thus in Isa. 21:4; Ps. 69:2; and Ps. 9:15. (5) "To be baptized with the baptism" is a literal Greek rendering of an Aramaic expression meaning "I am being overwhelmed," i.e., by the deep waters of God's appointment. (6) To suppose that "To be baptized with the baptism" carries allusion to a "baptism of blood" is an anachronism suggested by the patristic notion that death by martyrdom was like baptism, in that it too brought remission of sins. This idea is found nowhere in the N.T. (7) Origen, . . . regarded John's banishment to Patmos and James' execution by Herod as equally fulfillments of Christ's saying that they would drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism. (8) The plain meaning of Mark 10:39 is that they should both endure tribulation and pain even as He was enduring it; and so it came to pass.<sup>45</sup>

The Epitomiser of Philip of Side. In this document it should be kept in mind that Georgius Hamartolus, the Epitomiser of Philip of Side, did not profess to quote Papias at first hand. Instead, he only gave a summary of what he had found in Philip of Side, who may or may not have had direct access to the writings of Papias.<sup>46</sup> It should also be kept in mind that this was a ninth century manuscript and therefore not an early document. Bernard has also pointed out after a very lengthy and scholarly study of this document that everything it states as coming from Papias is to be found in

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<sup>45</sup> J. H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John, Vol. I (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1948), p. xlv.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. xl.



the writings of Eusebius; in short, Bernard said that "it is doubtful that Philip of Side knew anything about Papias except what he found in Eusebius."<sup>47</sup> But even at that, this document has been quoted by critics in such a way as to make it say something that it did not actually say. The entire context of this passage apparently quoting Papias in regard to the Apostle John stated as quoted by Hayes:

After Domitian, Nerva reigned one year, and he, having recalled John from the island dismissed him to live in Ephesus. Then, being the only survivor of the twelve disciples and having composed the Gospel according to him, he has been deemed worthy of martyrdom. For Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis, having become an eye-witness of this one, in the second book of the Oracles of the Lord, declared that he (John) was slain by the Jews.<sup>48</sup>

This document is, therefore, beyond all doubt no testimony to the early martyrdom of John. Nerva reigned from 96-98 A.D. so that this document would place the death of John at a date no earlier than 97 A.D. George Hamartolus had no thought, therefore, of testifying to the early death of John. Notice also the facts that this document testified to. (1) It said that John was the last Apostle to die. (2) It claimed that John was the author of the Fourth Gospel (and yet the critics resort to this document to prove the early martyrdom of John). (3) It taught that John did not die at the same time as James, and (4) It claimed that the Apostle John lived until at least the year 97 A.D.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, George, the Sinful quoted

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<sup>47</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>48</sup> Hayes, op. cit., p. 131.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

another authority, even Origen, to prove the fact that the Apostle John died a martyr's death late in life. But why have not the critics referred to this? Because this passage of Origen is still extant, and it is obvious that George, the Sinful misquoted him, for Origen said that "'John's exile to Patmos and his sufferings there were a sufficient martyrdom in themselves to fulfill the Lord's prophecy concerning the cup he should drink.'"<sup>50</sup> Now, if George, the Sinful misquoted Origen, could he not have misquoted the much older writings of Papias? That this is a corrupted quotation is also seen in the fact that all scholars are agreed on the fact that John was not called "the Divine" before the close of the fourth century.<sup>51</sup> It is further shown that James, the brother of John, was not killed by the Jews, but by Herod.<sup>52</sup> Thus, as Bernard has written:

Philip's contemporary, Socrates, says of him that he was a laborious student who had amassed many books, but that his history was useless, being both loose and inexact, especially in regard to chronology (Socrates, *Ecccl. History*, vii. 27). This agrees well with the mistakes and omissions that are to be observed in the fragments of the Epitome (including those of Papias) which have been printed by DeBoor. Either Philip or his epitomiser was a blunderer.<sup>53</sup>

Besides, it should be remembered that the early Church Fathers (Irenaeus, Jerome, Origen, Tertullian, Eusebius, and

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>51</sup> Bernard, op. cit., p. xl.

<sup>52</sup> Acts 12:2.

<sup>53</sup> Bernard- op. cit., p. xl.

the rest) had immediate access to the writings of Papias, which the scholarship of today does not; yet these early leaders of the Christian Church never hinted that Papias or anyone else ever said anything that would have contradicted the harmonious tradition that John died at an old age in Ephesus. As Hayes has said:

Is it conceivable that all of them would have been silent concerning any contradictory statement of Papias, and utterly ignoring it, would have united in the propagation of what they knew to be an untruthful tale? Is it not altogether more probable that they knew that Papias agreed with all other ancient authorities in this matter?<sup>54</sup>

Or as Bernard has written:

All that can, however, be said with confidence is that the sentence as found in the "Epitome" is corrupt, and that no historical inference can be drawn from a corrupt sentence in a late epitome of the work of a careless and blundering historian. To base upon DeBoor's fragment an argument for the early martyrdom of John the son of Zebedee is, as Harnack has said, "an uncritical caprice."<sup>55</sup>

The early Church Calendars. It is said that the early Calendars commemorated the death of James and John on the same day, the twenty-seventh of December, and that this fact proves the early martyrdom of the Apostle John. But these Calendars were never intended as authorities for historical facts, but only for convenience in church anniversary celebrations.<sup>56</sup> In fact, even Moffatt, who has feebly attempted to prove the

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<sup>54</sup> Hayes, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>55</sup> Bernard, op. cit., p. xlii.

<sup>56</sup> Hayes, op. cit., p. 135.

early martyrdom of John, conceded that "the evidence of the Church Calendars is not even as good as that from the Papias-tradition."<sup>57</sup> Dr. Ramsay, as quoted by Hayes, has pointedly said:

That James and John, who were not slain at the same time should be commemorated together, is the flimsiest conceivable evidence that John was killed early in Jerusalem. The bracketing together of the memory of Apostles who had some historical connection in life, but none in death, must be regarded as the worst side, historically speaking, of the martyrologies.<sup>58</sup>

And as Bernard has pointed out:

Now the selection of Stephen, Peter, James, John, Paul, as the great leaders whose memory was celebrated after Christmas, is specially mentioned by Gregory of Nyssa (385) as customary. He explains that they were commemorated as "leaders of the apostolic chorus"; and adds that they endured the combat with different kinds of martyrdom, Peter being crucified, James beheaded, and "John's witness being fulfilled, first in his trial when flung into the cauldron of burning oil, and secondly in his continual willingness to die for Christ" (De Persecutione, p. 23). . . . The insertion of names in the Church Calendars did not depend on their title of martyr in the restricted meaning of one who had suffered death for his Christian witness. And the same principle is enunciated by Gregory of Nazianzus about the same time in his panegyric on St. Basil the great. He compares Basil to the great men of the O.T. and N.T., mentioning in order John the Baptist, "the zeal of Peter, the intensity of Paul . . . the lofty utterance of the sons of Zebedee . . ." adding that he (John) did not suffer Stephen's fate, although willing to face it. . . . Thus the evidence for John's death by martyrdom, which is derived from the evidence of Church Calendars, must be dismissed, for Calendars included the names of great leaders, whether they were "red" martyrs or no.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, there is no explanation, as to why, if John was killed at the same time as his brother James, the book of Acts did not record his death also. This, taken

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<sup>57</sup> Moffatt, *op. cit.*, p. 606.

<sup>58</sup> ~~Hayes~~, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>59</sup> ~~Hayes~~, *op. cit.*, p. xliii f.

together with the above cited evidence, and the uniform tradition of the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Fathers certainly shows that the Apostle John did not suffer an early martyrdom, but that he lived at least until the time of Trajan (97 A.D.).

#### IV. THE PROBLEM OF THE TWO JOHNS

The supreme effort of recent criticism. Recent criticism has made much of the statement of Eusebius that there were two Johns at Ephesus in Papias' day, one being John the Apostle, the other, John the Presbyter. Thus Thiessen has said that "nearly all modern writers hold that John the Presbyter, not John the Apostle, wrote the Fourth Gospel."<sup>60</sup> Salmon likewise has written:

A whole school of critics speak of him (John the Presbyter) with as assured a confidence as if he were a person concerning whose acts we had as much information as those of Julius Caesar; but in truth his very existence seems to have been first discovered by Eusebius, and it is still a disputed matter whether the discovery be a real one.<sup>61</sup>

The question has been well asked: "Who was John the elder, and what reason have we to think that such a man as being distinct from the Apostle John ever existed?"<sup>62</sup> The critics have brought forth three alleged evidences that they say prove that John the Apostle and John the Elder, or Presbyter, were two distinct individuals.

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<sup>60</sup> Henry Thiessen, Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1951), p. 165.

<sup>61</sup> Salmon, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>62</sup> Hayes, op. cit., p. 136.

The salutations of the second and third Epistles of John.

It is said that the salutations of II John 1. "The elder unto the elect lady and her children," and III John 1, "The elder unto Gaius the beloved" prove that these were not written by John the Apostle, but by John the Elder, and as the First Epistle and the Fourth Gospel were written by the same hand, that they cannot be ascribed to the Apostle John. But the question is whether or not John the Elder was a person distinct from John the Apostle. A careful examination of the evidence in this connection reveals the following facts: (1) John the Apostle lived to an old age, and tradition has recorded the fact that he did his writing when quite aged, so that there would be no reason why he would not, when writing these epistles, refer to himself as John the Elder. (2) It was never the custom of John the Apostle to refer to himself as an "Apostle." Indeed, the word Apostle is to be found only once in the Fourth Gospel and three times in the Apocalypse. (3) The word "Apostle" was not a favorite term with either Matthew or Mark, both of them using it only once in their Gospels. (4) It should be remembered that the Apostle Peter in his First Epistle called himself an Elder, instead of an Apostle when he wrote in I Peter 5:1: "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder." (5) John preferred the humble title of "disciple" or "elder" which he could share with the other officials and members of the Church.<sup>63</sup> John,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

the Apostle, it must be remembered, was very unassuming, as is proved by the fact that in his Gospel he did not mention himself by name, nor for that matter, James, his brother, or Salome, his mother. So the fact that he called himself "the Elder" in the salutations of his last two epistles is poor proof for the existence of another John who was distinct from the Apostle John.

The disputed quotation by Eusebius of Papias. The main basis for this claim for the existence of two Johns in Asia Minor around the end of the first century is found in a statement by Papias which has been quoted by Eusebius. A careful examination of this entire statement is thus in order. Papias wrote, as quoted by Eusebius:

But I shall not hesitate also to put down for you along with my interpretations whatsoever things I have at any time remembered, guaranteeing their truth. For I do not, like a multitude, take pleasure in those that speak much, but in those that teach the truth. If, then, anyone came, who had been a follower of the elders, I questioned him in regard to the words of the elders, - what Andrew or what Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what things Aristion and the elder (or presbyter) John, the disciple of the Lord, say. For I do not think that what was gotten from the books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice.<sup>64</sup>

But there are several things that should be noticed. First of all, if Papias meant to distinguish John the Elder from the Apostle John, then he (Papias) is the lone authority

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<sup>64</sup> Kirsopp, op. cit., H. E., Book 3, Chapter 39:1-7.

for the existence of such a man.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, Papias appealed to him as one "of exceptional authority, yet no other of the early Church Fathers ever mentions him (John the Presbyter), or seems to know anything at all about him."<sup>66</sup> Is it possible that such a distinguished Christian could have lived in Ephesus, then the capital of Christendom, and have left no other trace behind? It is in this same connection that the great German scholar, Zahn, has remarked:

It was not until way after the end of the second century that any attempt was made, on the basis of one accepted work of the Apostle John, to deny his authorship of another bearing his name, and to assign it to another John. This was impossible in the year 170, because at that time only one John who belonged to the Apostolic Age was known. And even as late as 210 A.D., when Gaius of Rome accepted the negative conclusions of the Alogi with reference to Revelation, but rejected them in the case of the Gospel, he did not distinguish between an Apostle John who wrote the Gospel and another John who was the author of Revelation, but maintained the opinion that it was not John, but Cerinthus who wrote Revelation.<sup>67</sup>

Secondly, it should be pointed out that Irenaeus in the latter part of the second century understood this statement of Papias to refer to the Apostle John in both occurrences of the name.<sup>68</sup> Then in the third place, observe that Papias explicitly called Peter, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, James, and John, both Elders or Presbyters, and disciples. Papias did not call a one of them an Apostle. Papias applies these same two names to the John mentioned in the second part of

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<sup>65</sup> Hayes, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>67</sup> Zahn, op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>68</sup> Hayes, op. cit., p. 139.



the statement to clearly show that he was identifying this John as the same John mentioned in the first part of his statement; in other words, in both places he was clearly referring to John the Apostle. Furthermore, if Papias in referring to "Aristion and the Elder John, the disciple of the Lord" meant to imply that this John was not one of the Apostles, but a follower of the Apostles, or one of the outer circles of the disciples of Jesus, why did he take pains not to ascribe either the name Elder, or the name "Disciple of the Lord" to Aristion? It is clear that although Aristion had heard the Lord, he was not in the same class with John. Papias thus, instead of proving the existence of two Johns, is an authority for the fact that John the Elder and John the Apostle was one and the same person. As D. A. Hayes has said: "This quotation from Papias, then, is far from establishing the existence of another John. It rather confirms us in our opinion that John the Apostle and John the Elder are one and the same man."<sup>69</sup> The question has been asked by some as to why Papias then mentioned the same person twice in the same context. Thiessen has answered this question when he wrote:

Because, presumably, although he had heard from all persons in this list in the past, they were all dead at the time to which he refers, save the Apostle John, and he still heard from him on occasion. That is why he changes from the past tense, "had said," to the present tense, "say." And does not Papias take pains to identify the John of the second statement with the John of the first statement by designating him both "presbyter" and "disciple" in both statements?<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

~~Thiessen~~ n, op. cit., p. 167.

The statement of Dionysius. The only other evidence in existence to support the contention that John the Presbyter was a distinct person from John the Apostle was a statement made by Dionysius of Alexandria, who said: "They say that there are two monuments in Ephesus, each bearing the name of John."<sup>71</sup> But is this a statement of historical fact? It certainly is not, for Dionysius was only noting mere hearsay, and he possessed no facts upon which to base his statement. He said that "they say" without giving the slightest intimation who "they" were. Furthermore, Jerome has given us a different version of this hearsay evidence when he said that "'some thought that the two memorials at Ephesus were both in honor of John the Apostle."<sup>72</sup> Then Zahn has succeeded in showing that these two memorials were in all probability two churches, one on the site of the house where John lived, and one on the site of John's tomb outside the walls of the city.<sup>73</sup>

A summary of the evidence for the existence of the Johns. The evidence supporting the existence of two Johns in Asia Minor around 100 A.D. is so scant that this thesis cannot be maintained. Dionysius, who lived 150 years after John the Apostle had died, heard that there were two memorials in Ephesus to John, and therefore concluded that there may have been two

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<sup>71</sup> Kirsopp, op. cit., H. E., Book 7, Chapter 25.

<sup>72</sup> Hayes, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>73</sup> Loc. cit.

Johns. Then Eusebius, who lived nearly a century later, found a passage from Papias which mentioned the name of John twice; and he concluded that Papias must have been referring to two different men. But it is evident that the assumption of Eusebius was based on an erroneous interpretation of Papias; and as he appealed to no other authority to substantiate his assumption, this statement of Eusebius has no weight, for it is certain that Papias was not referring to two different Johns. The testimony of Dionysius is only hearsay and without value. Furthermore, as Hayes has said:

If John the Elder was prominent enough to have a memorial erected to him, and great enough to write such a masterpiece as the Fourth Gospel, how is it that his name has been all but lost to history, and that men like Polycarp, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus never knew anything about him?<sup>74</sup>

Furthermore, if there was such a man as John the Presbyter who had the religious qualities sufficient to write the Fourth Gospel, how can it be imagined that he would try to pass it off as the work of the Apostle John? Why is it that he did not mention the Apostle John who resided in Asia Minor at about the same time? Remember, the confusion of the two Johns could never have arisen if the Apostle John had not actually been a resident of Asia Minor at the turn of the first century. And why would John the Presbyter knowingly create the confusion by not referring to the Apostle John and failing to distinguish himself from John the Apostle? The only answer to

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<sup>74</sup> Loc. cit.

these questions is that there never was another John distinct from the Apostle, and no one would advance this thesis who did not have some viewpoint to defend regardless of the evidences.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TWO-FOLD PURPOSE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The final question of great importance in this investigation is this: For what purpose (or purposes) was the Fourth Gospel written? The investigator will attempt to show in this chapter that the purpose of the Apostle John in writing the Fourth Gospel was two-fold, first to prove the Deity of Jesus Christ, and second, to give to Christendom an historical supplement to the Synoptic record. In order to do this, it is necessary to make a careful examination of the Fourth Gospel itself.

#### I. THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

This purpose was explicitly stated by the author himself. John himself stated that one of his aims in writing his Gospel was to prove the Deity of Christ. Thus he said in John 20:30-31: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." Thus John records only those miracles which clearly prove the Deity of Christ, and which are not told in complete detail in the Synoptics. It must be remembered that the two purposes mentioned above determined practically everything that is found in the Fourth Gospel. The words and

teachings of Christ which the Apostle John recorded were those not recorded in the Synoptics, or those essential to prove the Deity of Christ. Likewise, this is true of everything recorded in the Fourth Gospel. These two purposes were the guiding principles of the Apostle John in determining what he would record and what he would omit in his Gospel.

The testimony of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. Tradition also bears out the fact that one of the two purposes of the Apostle John in writing the Fourth Gospel was to prove the Deity of Christ, that is, that he wrote for spiritual ends. Thus Jerome, in the Preface of his Commentary on Matthew, as quoted by Hayes, said:

The last (of the Gospel writers) is John, the Apostle and Evangelist, whom Jesus loved most, who reclining upon the Lord's bosom, drank the purest streams of doctrine. . . . When he was in Asia, at the time when the seeds of heresy were springing up . . . he was urged by almost all the bishops of Asia then living, and by deputations from many churches, to write more profoundly concerning the divinity of the Saviour, and to break through all obstacles so as to present the very Word of God with a boldness as successful as it appears audacious.<sup>1</sup>

Or to use the words of a modern scholar:

The motive of the Evangelist was assuredly not the writing of a history, but the interpreting of the life and teaching of Christ in such a way as to impress the mind of his own age. . . . He reads the life and teaching of Christ in the light of a long Christian experience, and it is the idea based upon the fact, and not the simple fact, that is of supreme importance in his mind.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Hayes, John and His Writings (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Jones, The New Testament in the Twentieth Century (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1934), p. 418.

Thus, that John wrote his Gospel for a spiritual purpose is recognized by all. It will not be necessary to labor and to bring forth evidences to prove this point. However, it has been the failure to recognize the second purpose of the Fourth Gospel that has caused most of the difficulty connected with the problem of authorship.

## II. THE FOURTH GOSPEL AS AN HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT

The testimony of Eusebius. That the Fourth Gospel was intended to be an historical supplement to the Synoptic record was first suggested by Eusebius, who wrote in his Ecclesiastical History:

The three Gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all and into his (John's) too, they say that John accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there were lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry. . . . They say therefore, that the Apostle John, being asked to do it for this reason, gave in his Gospel an account of the period which had been omitted by the earlier evangelists, and of the deeds done by the Saviour during that period.<sup>3</sup>

There have been four scholars at least who have called attention to this fact, i.e., Salmon, Westcott, Michaelis, and Beyschlag, but none of them attempted to prove this in detail.

The assumption of the Evangelist. Our Evangelist in the writing of the Fourth Gospel assumed that the Synoptics were well known, so he did not record facts already well

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<sup>3</sup> L. Kirsopp, The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, Vol. I, Book 3 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 24.

known because of the Synoptic record. Thus this Gospel began at the middle of the ministry of John the Baptist without describing the first part. But, inasmuch as the Evangelist was at first a disciple of John the Baptist, is it conceivable that he knew nothing of it? Besides, the Synoptic Gospels were well known by this time--and are we to suppose that the Evangelist of the Fourth Gospel knew nothing of them? In John 6:70, Jesus said to the disciples: "Have not I chosen you twelve," and not a single word had yet been said of Jesus' selecting the twelve Apostles. In 6:71, Judas Iscariot was named as a perfectly well-known person, and yet it was the first time that he was mentioned in the Fourth Gospel. Likewise, in 14:22 the presence of another Judas among the twelve was assumed as known even though he had not been mentioned before by the author of the Fourth Gospel. In 11:2 Mary of Bethany was designated as the one "who had anointed the Lord with ointment," thus assuming that his readers knew of that event. In 11:1, Bethany was called the "town of Mary and her sister, Martha," although this was the first mention of them.

The omissions of the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel did not mention any facts or events well described in the Synoptics, except those in which some important detail or details were lacking, and those, such as the Passion of Christ,



which were essential to proving the Deity of Jesus Christ. Thus John omitted the whole record of the first thirty years of the life of Christ. In this Gospel there is no genealogy, no Annunciation, no Virgin Birth. There was nothing about His infancy, His childhood, His youth, His early environment and His training. But this phase of the life of Christ was told by both Matthew and Luke, with their accounts supplementing each other.

Then John told us nothing about the early life or ministry of John the Baptist, as well as nothing about his later imprisonment and death. That John knew of these latter events is shown from John 3:24, when he wrote: "For John was not yet cast into prison." However, all three of these phases of the life of John the Baptist were told in complete detail by the three Synoptic writers (Matt. 14:1-14; Mark 6:14-29; and Luke 9:7-9).

Furthermore, the author of the Fourth Gospel did not mention either the Baptism, the Temptation, or the Transfiguration experience of Jesus. But once again it is a known fact that all three of these events were recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels. That John was an eye-witness of at least two of these events (the Baptism and the Transfiguration of Jesus) is a well-established fact.<sup>4</sup>

John did not specifically mention the choosing of the twelve apostles; yet, as noted above, he assumed that this

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<sup>4</sup> D. A. Hayes, The Writings of John (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), p. 82.

fact was known by all. And is not this event described by all three of the Synoptic writers?

John recorded none of the Galilean teaching of Jesus that was recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7 and Luke 6:26-49), the Kingdom Parables (Matt. 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8), and the other familiar parables of the Synoptic record.

All of the Synoptic miracles were omitted with but two or possibly three exceptions. The only Synoptic miracles that are found in the Fourth Gospel are the feeding of the five thousand, which was inserted to provide an historical setting and background for His discourse on the Bread of Life, and the miracle of Jesus walking on the sea, which was necessary to show the amount of time separating those two events, that is, the feeding of the five thousand and the discourse on the Bread of Life. The miracle of Jesus walking on the sea is a necessary time-placing link. The other possible miracle was the miracle of the wonderful draught of fishes recorded in John 21, which some think is the same as recorded in Luke 6. There are, however, too many dissimilar details to warrant this conclusion.

There is also no mention of the institution of the Lord's Supper in John, despite the fact that five chapters of the Fourth Gospel (Chapters 13-17) are devoted to describing the things that occurred there. Also, John did not mention

the terrible struggle of agony and prayer that Jesus had in Gethsemane, and he also omitted that "supreme declaration of His Messiahship in His trial before the Sanhedrin."<sup>5</sup>

Other significant omissions of the Fourth Gospel were:

(1) There were no demons mentioned in this Gospel, nor the healing of any who were possessed by demons. (2) There were no lepers mentioned by the author of the Fourth Gospel, although the cleansing of the leper was a wonderful miracle that was described in detail by the Synoptics. (3) There were no scribes mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, neither was there any mention made of the Sadducees or the Publicans, both of which played an important part in the Synoptic Gospels.

(4) The Fourth Gospel did not refer to the Lord's Prayer, nor did it mention repentance as a condition of entrance into the Kingdom, although this was understood in the reference to the baptism of John. John also did not say a word about hell in his entire Gospel, and as Hayes has pointed out: "Neither Hades nor Gehenna, or Tartarus finds any place in his pages."<sup>6</sup>

(5) There were no detailed eschatologies recorded by the author of the Fourth Gospel, neither were there any proverbs such as those found in the Synoptics, and few parables. Here, then, is an amazing thing. John wrote a Gospel and left out of it much that stands out in the Synoptic account of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

life of Christ. Yet this Gospel has become one of the chief treasures of all Christian literature.

The new features of the Fourth Gospel. It has been estimated by such men as Hayes, Thiessen, Salmon, and others, that ninety-two percent of the contents of the Fourth Gospel are peculiar to itself. As Hayes has remarked:

John has omitted much of great worth, but in its stead he has brought us a new treasure of such inestimable value that, like the ruler of the feast at Cana, we are constrained to say that the best has come last.<sup>7</sup>

The Fourth Gospel had new metaphors, which had as their object the describing of the Person of Jesus Christ. Examples of this are: "the bread of life"; "the vine"; "the door"; "the good shepherd"; "the light"; and "the way, the truth, and the life." Then the discourses of Jesus that are found in this Gospel, instead of dealing with the Kingdom of God, dealt with great spiritual and eternal truths. And while the Synoptic Gospels recorded in the main the public utterances of Jesus, the Fourth Gospel recorded a number of the private conversations of the Master. It was also the Fourth Gospel that recorded the true Lord's Prayer.<sup>8</sup>

It has already been pointed out that six of the eight miracles recorded in the Fourth Gospel are peculiar to this Gospel. In addition, a number of new persons made their

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

appearances in this Gospel: Nicodemus (chapter 3), the woman of Samaria (chapter 4), the impotent man (chapter 5), the blind man (chapter 9), and Lazarus (chapter 11). At the same time, such men as Thomas, Philip, and Judas, not Iscariot, assumed a more prominent place in this Gospel.

Then there are a considerable number of whole sections in the Fourth Gospel that are entirely new and peculiar to it. These new sections are:

- (1) The Prologue (1:1-14).
- (2) The first meeting of Christ and six of His disciples (1:35-51).
- (3) The first Cana miracle, and the first cleansing of the Temple (chapter 2).
- (4) Jesus' interview with Nicodemus and the last testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus (chapter 3).
- (5) The conversation with the woman of Samaria (4:1-45).
- (6) The second Cana miracle (4:46-54).
- (7) The healing of the impotent man and the subsequent discourse (chapter 5).
- (8) The discourse on the bread of Life (6:22-71).
- (9) The discourse at the Feast of the Tabernacles (chapter 7).
- (10) The discourse on the Light of the World (chapter 8).
- (11) The healing of the man born blind (chapter 9).
- (12) The discourse on the Good Shepherd (chapter 10).
- (13) The raising of Lazarus (chapter 11).
- (14) The visit of certain Greeks and Jesus' subsequent discourse (12:20-50).

(15) Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet (13:1-20).

(16) The discourse of Jesus to His disciples at the Last Supper (chapters 14-17).

(17) Entirely new incidents in the Passion Story, such as:

(a) John alone recorded the fact that those who came to arrest Jesus fell to the ground when Jesus addressed them (18:2-8);

(b) John alone recorded the fact that it was Peter who smote off Malchus' ear (18:9-11); (c) John alone recorded Pilate's

statements about the Kingdom of truth (18:34-38), and his statement, "Behold the man" (19:5); (d) John alone has told

us of the thoughtfulness of Jesus in providing a home for the mother of Jesus while dying on the cross (19:26-27); John

alone recorded the piercing of Jesus, and the pouring forth of water and blood from the pierced side of Jesus (19:34-37);

and (f) John alone has told us how Nicodemus assisted in the burial of Jesus (19:38-42).

(18) John alone has recorded the conversation between Jesus and Mary Magdalene at the tomb (20:11-18).

(19) John alone has recorded the two appearances of Jesus to His assembled disciples in Jerusalem and the doubting of Thomas (20:19-31).

(20) John alone has recorded the appearance of Jesus at the sea of Tiberias and the Epilogue (chapter 21).

Thus, as Henry Fowler has said: "It must have required courage and a strong sense of personal authority for the writer of the Fourth Gospel to have completely abandoned the Petrine-Marcon outline, already followed by the authors of

Matthew and Luke."<sup>9</sup>

The coincidences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. Having already pointed out the new material that is found in the Fourth Gospel, it simply remains to explain the coincidences if the assumption is true that the Fourth Gospel was intended to supplement the Synoptic narrative historically. There are, in fact, twelve points of contact between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels.

(1) The testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus (1:15-34). This account was necessary to tell how the disciples of Jesus first met their Lord, for it was John who pointed out Jesus to two of them, who up until that time had been actual disciples of John the Baptist (1:34-37).

(2) The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (6:1-14). But the recording of this miracle was necessary to the purpose of John in that it formed the real historical background for Jesus' discourse on the bread of Life.

(3) The miracle of Jesus walking on the sea. (6:15-21). This miracle was inserted by John to provide the proper chronological setting for the discourse on the bread of Life. It is, from an historical point of view, a necessary connecting link between the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus' discourse on the bread of Life.

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<sup>9</sup> Henry Fowler, History and Literature of the New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), p. 40.

(4) The anointing of Jesus at the supper in Bethany (12:1-11). This event was probably recorded for two purposes: (a) To show the gratitude of Mary and Martha to Jesus for raising their brother from the dead; and (b) To show the close historical tie-up between the raising of Lazarus and the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It has been pointed out before that only the raising of Lazarus can explain the great acclaim given Him by the populace of Jerusalem, and this incident was needed to show the historical connection between the two.

(5) The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (12:12-19). As has been noticed already, one of the purposes of the Fourth Gospel was to prove the Deity of Christ, the fact that He was the Divine Saviour of the world. The supreme demonstration of this was His death on the cross, and it was necessary to tell how He came to Jerusalem, before the author of this Gospel could describe how He died there. Then, too, the description of the triumphal entry of Jesus was necessary to provide the occasion for Jesus' reply to the Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the express purpose of seeing Jesus.

(6) The announcement of His betrayal and His prophecy that Peter would deny Him thrice (13:21-38). His last discourse to His disciples began with Jesus' attempt to comfort His disciples. Thus, the announcement by Jesus of His betrayal and death was necessary to the author of this Gospel



in explaining the things that Jesus said in this discourse found in chapters fourteen through seventeen of this Gospel. Then the denial of Jesus by Peter was inserted by John to explain why it was Peter to whom the Lord three times addressed the inquiry, "Lovest thou Me?" in the twenty-first chapter of this Gospel.

(7) The arrest in the Garden (18:2-11) was recorded because of the new material that John inserted that had not been recorded by the Synoptics in connection with this event.

(8) The same is true of the trial of Jesus (18:12 - 19:15). Then also, the trial was recorded to show the sufferings of Jesus which proved Him to be the Divine Saviour of the world.

(9) The crucifixion was recorded because it was one of the two great events in the earthly life of Jesus (19:16-37). It was essential to proving the Deity of Jesus Christ, and in addition there were a number of details, as has already been pointed out, that the Apostle John inserted. So this was recorded also to provide the historical setting for such details as the soldiers casting lots for Jesus' garments, Jesus committing His mother to the care of John, and the piercing of the side of Jesus by one of the soldiers with a spear.

(10) The resurrection was, of course, recorded (20:1-10) because it was the greatest and the climactic proof of the Deity of Christ. In addition, its recording by the Apostle

John was necessary to provide the historical background for the resurrection appearances of Jesus to Mary Magdalene and to His disciples.

The only possible explanation. What, then, is the explanation for the fact that almost everything in the Fourth Gospel is new (although this is not to say that it is contradictory, for it has been shown in great detail that there is no real disagreement of any kind between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics), and that what is not new was definitely needed by the Apostle John in order either to provide historical settings or backgrounds for his new material, or to prove that Jesus was the Christ. It cannot be that he did not know the Synoptic Gospels, for as Salmon has pointed out:

If the author of the Fourth Gospel had written an account of the life of Jesus without any knowledge that other accounts had been written, it is impossible to conceive that he could have so completely avoided telling what is related in these other gospels.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the true explanation is the fact that the Apostle John knew what was related by the Synoptic Gospels, and that he wrote his Gospel for the express purpose of supplementing the account of the life of Jesus that had been given by them. Thus the Apostle John had two purposes in writing the Fourth Gospel: (1) To prove the Deity of Christ; and (2) To supplement the Synoptic account of the life of Jesus. Thus, in any

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<sup>10</sup> George Salmon, An Historical Introduction to the New Testament (London: John Murray, 1904), p. 283.

study of the Fourth Gospel, it should be constantly kept in mind, as Salmon has said:

When he (John) omits what his predecessors had related, he is not to be supposed to discredit them, or to wish to contradict them; but it is part of his plan not to bear testimony to what had been sufficiently related already.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 284.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### I. SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

The external evidence. From the time of Irenaeus, the Fourth Gospel was recognized as the work of the Apostle John. This conclusion was never disputed by anyone in the Christian Church. Even the heretics were forced to admit this. The Fourth Gospel has been clearly shown to have been used by Ignatius in 115 A.D. The Rylands fragment showed that by 130 A.D. the Gospel had reached even the outlying regions in Egypt, so that it is impossible to date it later than 100 A.D. Yet this Gospel received this universal acceptance despite its great differences with the Synoptic Gospels. The early Church must therefore have had clear and positive evidence of its Apostolic origin. It was included in the earliest lists of canonical books of the early Church, so that the external evidence clearly indicates that the Apostle John was the author of the Fourth Gospel.

The internal evidence. The testimony of the Gospel itself clearly substantiates the external evidence. It claims to have been written by the Apostle John, at least indirectly. From its internal character, only James or John could have written it. But as James died at an early date,

he could not have written it. As John lived until the time of Trajan, as all the evidence clearly indicates, and as Irenaeus (the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of John) has clearly told us, there is no reason to doubt the Johannine authorship of this Gospel. The attempt to attribute the authorship of this Gospel to a second John rests upon evidence of a most scanty nature, and there is no real reason to suppose that such an individual ever lived, except the presupposition that an eye-witness and an Apostle could not have described Jesus in such lofty language as did the author of the Fourth Gospel. This assumption has demanded the creation of another John, and without this assumption there is no reason for trying to support the thesis of the existence of another John who lived in Asia near the end of the first century. As to the character of the Gospel itself, while in the main it presented new facts about Jesus, yet it presented the same Jesus as the Synoptics, and there was no real disagreement between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels on any point of real importance.

## II. CONCLUSION

The affirmation of recent scholarship. Recent scholarship has been coming more and more to recognize the real authority of the Fourth Gospel. Thus Olshausen, as quoted by Kerr, has affirmed that "the Gospel of John possesses stronger testimony with respect to its genuineness than perhaps any

other writing in the New Testament, or, we may say, of the whole of antiquity."<sup>1</sup> Other scholars such as Salmon, Jones, Headlam, Thiessen, Kerr, Hayes, Zahn, Cartledge, Dods, and Vedder have come to a similar opinion. It does seem as if the prophecy of Lightfoot has come almost to fulfillment, that is, that "We may look forward to the time when it will be held discreditable to the reputation of any critic . . . to assign this Gospel to any later date than the end of the first century or the very beginning of the second."<sup>2</sup>

The conclusion. The investigation of all the evidences, when fairly considered, leads to the almost certain conclusion that the Fourth Gospel was written either directly or indirectly by the Apostle John, that it was written between 90 and 100 A.D., with the most probable date being 96 A.D., and that it was written for the express purposes of proving the Deity of Jesus Christ, and of supplementing the historical record of the account of Jesus Christ as it is found in the Synoptic narrative. This was the author's purpose, and the author was none other than the Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciple who leaned on the bosom of Jesus upon the occasion of the Last Supper, the disciple who outlived all the rest, the disciple who has given us the clearest and the most exact picture of the life of Jesus Christ, and who has through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

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<sup>2</sup> William Sanday, The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 260.

produced the true interpretation of the life and meaning of  
Jesus Christ for all ages and for all time.





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