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Ghéon, which was produced at the Vieux-Colombier last January. It tells the story of St. Alexis, the fourth-century saint, but the writer evidently intends us also to picture it in a modern setting. "Fourth-century Rome," he says, "was very like modern Paris; and though the scene is set at Rome, it is also *plus généralement en temps de chrétienté*." M. Ghéon is interested in religion; he became a convert during the war, and described his experience in *Témoignage d'un converti*. Naturally, his religion shows itself in his art. To understand the development of French religious thought one has not only to know the work of philosophers, critics, and theologians; one finds much also in the modern novel and play. There are theologians in England who would scorn to pay any attention to the works of, say, Mr. Bernard Shaw or Mr. H. G. Wells, but they are not really of such little account. Even more in France this kind of work counts for much. M. Ghéon's play is evidently intended as a challenge to think out the Christian point of view as exemplified in this story of the man who lived for many years as an unknown hermit in a small chamber beneath the staircase in his father's house.

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THE MIND OF ST. JOHN

WHEN Clement of Alexandria said that, after the other Evangelists had narrated the "bodily facts" of our Lord's life, St. John composed a "spiritual Gospel," what did he mean? The phrase denotes a contrast instinctively felt, and felt as fundamental; and yet it is surprising how little attempt has been made to elucidate it. The purpose of this article is to suggest certain considerations which seem germane to it, and to indicate their bearing upon the present position of Johannine study.

The first point to note is that within a century of its composition, the Fourth Gospel was felt to contain history of a different kind from that of the Synoptic Gospels. They present the "bodily facts"—or, as we should say, "bare facts"—of the Sacred Ministry. St. John also presents facts or historical narrative, but so transfigured as to constitute a distinct type of composition. Further, the Evangelist himself states that his purpose was, not (like St. Luke's) that we might "know the certainty," but that we might believe a dogma—viz., that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and that, so believing, we might have life through His name. History, therefore, is for

St. John subordinate to the interests of faith. He never tells us that his aim includes what is now called historical accuracy with regard to past facts; exact chronology, *verbatim* reports of things said, exhaustiveness, even the observance of distinctness between events which, in the order of time, occurred distinctly and separately—these things which modern historical science sets such store by do not fall of necessity within the purview of St. John's mind. The truth, for him, lies less in the happening of facts than in their significance for Christianity. Of primary importance, therefore, for the study of the Fourth Gospel is the Evangelist's conception of religion.

It would be easy to embark on an endless treatise on such a topic; but Clement's phrase again comes to keep us to the point. For St. John's Gospel is the only one of the four which contains in any real sense a doctrine of the Spirit. It is a doctrine, too, which we can fortunately supplement and illustrate from at least one other writing of his own—the First Epistle.* In general, its importance for the thought of our own age would be hard to over-estimate, since it is the Spirit who is the immediate object of religious experience. But for our present purpose it is the relation of the Spirit in these writings to doctrine and to sacraments which is of principal importance. In three crucial passages† the teaching is emphasized that the facts of the Christian Gospel are apprehended and its sacraments effectual only in the sphere and by the action of the Spirit. Spirit, Water, and Blood, form the threefold, concordant testimony on which Christianity rests. And if in their first mention Water and Blood in 1 John v. 6 refer to the Water of Baptism, in which Christ confessed the reality of His Incarnation, and to the Blood of His sacrifice upon the Cross, they bear also for St. John direct allusion—as the change of preposition and the addition of the article in the second clause of that verse would seem to indicate—to the Water and the Blood familiar to the Christians in their sacraments. It is the Spirit alone who can illuminate historical fact and sacrament, so as to make the latter explain and mediate the former; while equally and conversely it is the dogma (1 John iv. 1-6) which authenticates the Spirit and certifies Christian experience as being the experience of Him. This doctrine of Spirit, Water, and Blood, or, to look at religion in vertical section, of experience, sacrament, history, forms the central core of St. John's conception of Christianity. It expresses the main *bloc, nodus*, or complex (to use a modern term) of faith and feeling in the mind

* The hypothesis of different authorship is effectually discussed and dismissed by Dr. Brooke in his Commentary on *The Johannine Epistles*. Cf. also Peake's *Commentary on the Bible* in loc.

† John iii., vi. (esp. v. 63), 1 John v. 6-12.

of the Ephesian Church and its great teacher at the turn of the first century. Difficult as it is of definition, it is none the less solid ground, so far as we can get at it. It is therefore the true starting-point of Johannine theology. Exegesis must turn on it as on a *fulcrum*, as it seeks to illuminate the dimness of St. John's meanings; and, so turning, exegesis will reveal its own task as one to which historical and literary criticism are both essentially ancillary and subsequent.

This perspective being granted, it is plain that we have a touchstone by which much recent literature, and the pre-suppositions which underlie it, may be judged. The book in which the tendencies of the age lately past finds clearest expression is probably Professor E. F. Scott's *The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology* (1904). As a book it is efficient, readable, persuasive; but it is founded on fallacy. When he says of St. John's doctrine of the Spirit that "it serves to obscure the main intention of the Gospel," and that "there is no real place for it in the theology as a whole," he shows that he has not found the first clue to the Evangelist's thought. True, if the doctrine of the Spirit be regarded as an "epiphenomenon" of the Gospel, the criticism stands; and it is noteworthy that it is the tradition of many modern academies to regard it in that light. But with the attention now being given to spiritual experience as the basis of religion, it is not possible for this tradition to maintain itself any longer; and the Nominalism which underlies it is already shaken to its foundations. We may be certain that the key to St. John's mind lies with those whose conception of religion rests on the same experience as his and his hearers'; and that no attempts to understand it *ab extra*—least of all from the standpoint of modern individualism—will meet with success. And already the swing of the pendulum is visible. Characteristically enough, it is in the pen of a Roman Catholic writer that it shows itself most clearly. Fr. Martindale's little volume* forms one of a series bearing the general title, *The Household of God*; it is less than 150 pages long, and is published with authority. He groups, or rather masses, its main contents with telling power under three or four "Mysteries" or directive ideas—the Supernatural Life, belonging to the Spirit-Creation; the union of the faithful with Christ; Christ's identity with the Father. There are naturally points to which exception may be taken. In discussing "the Word," no allusion is made to the rôle this concept had played in Hebrew thought and religion; while the concluding passage on "The Witness" would be im-

* *Princes of His People*. I. St. John the Evangelist. By the Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J. Burns, Oates, and Washbourne. 1920. 4s. net.

mensely stronger if it did justice to the testimony of the Holy Spirit. But these defects do not prevent the book from being a most valuable contribution to theology. Fr. Martindale is obviously at home with the work of technical scholars; but he has achieved the rare feat of weaving his knowledge into the interpretation without ever obscuring the wood for the trees, or letting the freshness and spontaneity of his message be impaired. The book will be helpful to any who wish to read the Bible with understanding.

One source of strength in Fr. Martindale's book is that it ignores the historical problem. It neither assumes the historical accuracy of the Gospel (as Westcott did) nor (like Bacon and many others) assails it. Indeed, we see how much there is to be said about St. John before that problem or the kindred literary problem becomes urgent. But, of course, no exegesis of the Fourth Gospel can be regarded as complete which does not account sooner or later for its palpable historical form. This is a task to which Anglican theology, which loves to be well planted in earth while it soars to heaven, is perhaps especially called. And there is still earth to be rooted in, though it is not the same earth as a generation ago. Psychology and comparative religion have lightened and rarefied the soil in the interval. Professor Macdougall and others have shown the group-mind to be a reality, and told us much of its workings; and their work is being related with the phenomena of religion. In Biblical study at the same time the background of beliefs and rites characteristic of the Christian community (and others) in the first century has more and more been emphasized as vital to the understanding of the New Testament writings. All the Apostolic documents are seen to be *tendencieux*; not, indeed, in the Tübingen sense, but in the sense that the living process of spiritual experience in the Church underlies them all. And that is an historical process, of which the main stages can be traced. For it is a process which, while stimulated and fostered by men of genius, was constantly operative in an historical community called by St. Paul "the Israel of God." And nowhere in the New Testament is the genius of the individual more completely integrated with the atmosphere of the Christian fellowship* than in St. John.

The history, therefore, in St. John's Gospel is history which has passed through the mind of two or three generations of

* Professor Scott is nowhere more at fault than in his chapter on St. John's "ecclesiastical aims," where he seems unable to rid himself of the mentality produced by "denominational" Christianity. St. John's churchmanship is simply Catholic—*i.e.*, it takes the Christian ministry for granted, and ignores controversy as to its form or history. The inwardness of his teaching is well brought out in the Abbé Nouvelle's *Meditations on Our Lord's Last Discourses* (Burns, Oates, and Washbourne. 1921. 6s. net).

Christians. It is primarily an element in spirit—in the group-mind of a believing and worshipping community, interpreted by a master-mind among them. And it is the fruits, not the roots, of this process, as of all others, which matter most. It is they which explain the roots, not *vice versa*. In other words, for the proper appreciation of the historical element in the Fourth Gospel we need not only the sciences of literary and historical criticism, which have been with us for a century and a half, but also the nascent science of psychology. Theology has too long been endeavouring to make a rope with two strands—History and Metaphysics; it needs Psychology as a third to hold them together. We must get at the facts as they cohere in the mind of the Evangelist and his fellow-Christians before we can get at them in the order of time and space, and that is a task which has barely yet been attempted.

All the more reason, therefore, have we to be grateful to those scholars of late years who have refused the shibboleths of Modernism, and kept the way open for the future. Two pieces of work especially stand out in the last few months. One is the two lectures of Introduction which form the latter part of Canon Scott Holland's posthumous work, *The Philosophy of Faith and the Fourth Gospel*.^{*} All his imaginative sympathy and insight are here turned to wonderful effect in maintaining the thesis of authorship by an eyewitness. These lectures should not be missed. They read like a prophetic fragment, illuminating all the niches and crannies of the Evangelic record. They do not definitely claim to be a study in St. John's psychology; but that, in fact, is what they are. The operations of memory, association, faith—all these are portrayed with lightning strokes of the brush. If we feel that some of the *crucis* of the narrative are too stubborn for this treatment, at least we are convinced that the Modernist attitude, as revealed, for instance, in Dr. Latimer Jackson's *The Problem of the Fourth Gospel*,[†] has ceased to be formidable. Indeed, the two books might well be read together, to point the contrast. Dr. Latimer Jackson's *catena* of critical views during the last century or so shows the quagmire of irremediable doubt, extending even to a failure to appreciate either the Evangelist or his Lord, to which Liberal Protestantism has drifted. *Facilis descensus Averni*. The attempt to reconstruct Christianity on the basis of a study of documents in severance from the faith of the community which gave rise to them is found bankrupt. It is something that the failure should be duly registered in court.

Canon Holland's lectures form a fragment. Dr. Stanton's

^{*} John Murray. 1920. 12s. net.

[†] Cambridge University Press. 1918. 6s. net.

work on the Fourth Gospel is something of a monument.* On the main problems commonly discussed his conclusions may be summarized very briefly. The Gospel is not directly by the Apostle John, but by a disciple of his. At the same time, the dominant mind behind the author was none other than that of the son of Zebedee himself, who is "the beloved disciple." We have, therefore, though mediated through another, the evidence of an eyewitness. In addition to this source of information, the Evangelist made use of the Gospel according to St. Mark. Further, the Synoptic narratives imply teaching of a kind represented by the Johannine discourses, though this and all his other material has been freely treated and arranged by the actual author of the Gospel.

The terse, packed pages in which Dr. Stanton rolls up his cumulative argument cover the whole field of the Johannine problem up to date; and within the limits set and rigorously observed, the conclusions reached are such as carry conviction. Yet it is vital to remember how confined those limits are, and how much is still left to be done. Or rather, we would say, there is so much left unexplained and unaccounted for that fresh ventures of study are evoked. We feel that the mental processes underlying the Gospel are, in fact, more capable of relatively accurate classification than is suggested in this book. The points at which St. John varies from the Synoptic record, or seems to be inconsistent with himself, are just those at which we may get the clearest glimpses of what is in his mind. It is worth seeing whether the conception of the group-mind and its history, as we know it from the New Testament, will not help us here.

The side of psychology which seems to give most insight into our problem is that which is concerned with dreams. The dream-mind has been very deeply studied in recent years, and no more vivid account of it is to be found than in a book much noticed of late, Mrs. Arnold-Forster's *Studies in Dreams*. Over and over again, in reading this book, in which the authoress analyzes her own dream-processes, one is struck by the parallel to the mind of St. John. This is not to say that dreams underlie the Gospel; indeed, so good an authority as Dr. Morton Prince doubts whether "there is a single phenomenon observed in dreams, or peculiarity of the work of the dream-mind, that is not also to be found in other conditions than sleep."† Awake or asleep, it appears that the dissociated mind reconstructs for itself newly constellated mental systems out of a diversity of

* *The Gospels as Historical Documents*. Part III., The Fourth Gospel. Cambridge University Press. 1920. 20s. net.

† *Studies in Dreams*, p. 14. George Allen and Unwin. 1921. 8s. 6d. net.

materials—conscious experiences, repressed or forgotten memories, sentiments, imaginations, impulses—which it associates into a unity all its own. It would perhaps be too much to say that the possession of “the Spirit” always involves such dissociated mental states; but at least it is clear from the Corinthian Epistles (to take no later evidence) that dissociation is a common result of it. Certainly we have no reason to be surprised if the analysis of mental processes in dreams be one that is found, when applied to such a work of genius as “The Spiritual Gospel,” to throw light on passages otherwise unconquerably obscure.

One example must suffice. Dr. Stanton alludes* to three passages in the Fourth Gospel which he describes as “conglomerates.” One of these is the series of sayings in iv. 35-38, on which he says:

“The first of these sayings (that in v. 35) suits the time and occasion admirably. The second also (that in v. 36) may well have been spoken in the same connection. But, if so, ‘the reaper’ must be Jesus Himself, since there is no hint of His disciples having been given any share in the work in Samaria. . . . But difficulties arise when we take vv. 37, 38, with the preceding. There seems to be no point in the words, ‘Herein is the saying true, One soweth and another reapeth,’ if taken with what precedes.”

And, indeed, along these lines there does seem little to be made of the passage.

Regard it, however, in another light, as expressing a system of associated ideas in the mind of the Evangelist or of his apostolic teacher, and a number of convergent elements can be distinguished as they crystallize together.

1. The scene is Samaria. St. John is precisely one of those disciples who could recall how he had “been given a share in the work in Samaria,” though, indeed, at a later time (Acts viii. 5-25).

2. What is the “saying” in v. 37? It is called a *λόγος*, an authoritative word. 1 Cor. iii. 3-10 suggests that the authority who coined it may well have been St. Paul. But in what context? The keywords in this Johannine passage—*θερισμός*, *ἐργατάς*, *μισθὸν λαμβάνειν*—point to a combination of Matt. ix. 36-38 and Matt. xx. 1-16 (Parable of the Labourers).† These passages represent an embryonic philosophy of Church history. The true reward of pastoral work is in its result in spiritual harvest and the sharing of joy with Christ, the sower (v. 36; cf. Acts viii. 8). The Church has a succession of workers,

* *Op. cit.*, p. 64.

† This seems to me preferable to Dr. Stanton’s reference (p. 268) to the Parable of the Vineyard.

each carrying on the work of the last, with an equal token-reward here and a real reward hereafter.

3. It is tempting to see in vv. 39-42 reminiscence of the account which the Samaritans themselves gave of the beginnings of faith among them.

4. Westcott on v. 38 quotes Josh. xxiv. 13; and Josh. xxiv. 14 might be compared with John iv. 23. The possibility of an explanation of that passage current in the Church, or even given by our Lord Himself, must not be excluded.

The elements here constellated, therefore, would be as follows: (a) A real visit of our Lord to Samaria (*cf.* Luke ix. 52 ff.); (b) St. John's own contact with Samaria (*cf.* Acts viii.); (c) a *λόγος* about sowing and reaping, running back to Matt. ix. 36-38, and to the Parable of the Labourers; (d) an interpretation of Josh. xxiv. 13, 14.

We must remember that St. John's deep-seated conviction that Christ and Christians were "one thing," effected as it was primarily by Christ's word, made easy the association of the first three of these elements. And it is a hypothesis which will be found to account for a number of facts. The mention, for instance, of *ἡ σπεῖρα καὶ ὁ χιλιάρχος* in John xviii. 12 presents, as Dr. Stanton points out (p. 258), great historical difficulties; but the collocation of these words in Acts xxi. 31 indicates how large such officials loomed in the experience of the Early Church. The parallels, indeed, between Acts and the Fourth Gospel are so numerous as to deserve an attention which they have not yet received, with a view to the elucidation, not of literary, but of psychological interdependence. Once more, there is a series of allusions to "remembering," "understanding," "knowing," or their converse (*cf.* ii. 17, 22; x. 6; xii. 16; xx. 9), which suggest that we have in them almost a Johannine formula for those occasions in the life of the Christian community when parts of our Lord's teaching, hitherto obscure, became clear. And the allusion to the office of the Spirit in bringing things to mind (xiv. 26) is obviously germane to this point.

What is here urged, then, is that the historical element in the Fourth Gospel must be studied first as it existed in the Evangelist's mind; and that in that setting the "bodily facts" of Christ's life and the experience of the early Church cannot be separated. The Gospel is a record as much of historic Christianity as of the historic Christ; and it is in that that its great value consists. That is a doctrine which will not commend itself to those who regard all Christianity as a great declension from the standard of the Master. But it is at least a tenable

position that He who promised His Spirit to the Church kept His promise; and, if He did not, there seems little reason why we should believe in Christianity at all.*

The "spiritual Gospel" is, then, a presentment of history as contained in the mind of the spiritual community, and thus integrated with religious experience. But it is also more. For there is another function of the Holy Spirit on which St. John insists, and with brief mention of this we must close. He is to guide Christ's disciples into all truth. Is not the Evangelist here giving us his title for the declaration of those great dogmatic truths which are the peculiar glory of His Gospel? The Word, the Only-begotten, the Lamb of God, the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the Vine, "My Lord and my God"—these dominant ideas and others, expressive of Christianity as the new Spirit-Creation, with its new race of men, new worship, new sacrifice, new fellowship, pervade the whole record. Their exposition, indeed, is the highest task of Johannine theology. But this study, too, like that of historical criticism, must take more account than hitherto of that psychological process operating in the Apostolic community to which we have alluded. Nothing is more characteristic of modern psychology than the emphasis it lays upon the importance of words as centres of association; and it is a point which the history of Christian thought abundantly exemplifies. They, like the facts recorded, are part of a living tradition of faith and life; and only when we have duly appraised their place in that tradition can we proceed to evaluate their permanent and universal truth. In this final stage neither historical or literary criticism nor psychology have much to say, for their voice has already been heard. It is the stage of pure *θεωρία*, or intellectual contemplation of the Divine, which Aristotle claims as the most "self-sufficient" of all activities.† Only rarely is there that happy conjunction between the condition of the Church and the emergence of individual genius which enables great forward steps in Christian thought to be taken in this sphere. The Johannine writings represent one example of such a conjunction, and it is what makes them to all time "words of eternal life."

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* One of the great needs in Johannine study is a thorough *apparatus* covering those passages in the Synoptic Gospels which are paralleled in the Fourth. This does not yet seem to have been attempted. But the relevant material can be arranged synoptically in a way which is most illuminating. We owe it to the psychologists to do this.

† *Eth. Nicom.*, x. 7.