

CHAPTER XIV.

ST JOHN.—I.

SINCE rationalistic criticism marshalled its forces early in the nineteenth century for the assault upon the sacred books of our Christian faith, St John's Gospel has had to bear the brunt of the fiercest attacks. No naturalistic theory of Christianity could possibly succeed so long as the Fourth Gospel, with its representation of the Word made flesh, held its ground as the work of the disciple who stood closest to the Divine Master. We have noticed¹ the ascription of the Fourth Gospel to Cerinthus by the Alogi in the second century,—a view which found but scant acceptance at the time, and was ignored by writers like Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria, not to speak of Eusebius afterwards. Irenæus² even supposed that St John wrote his Gospel to combat the Docetic teaching of Cerinthus regarding the Person of Christ.

¹ P. 6.² *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 11. 1.

From the second century to the end of the eighteenth the Gospel was accepted without challenge as the work of St John the Apostle. Its authenticity was first questioned by English Deism, in the person of Edward Evanson, in 1792, and again by a German scholar, Bretschneider, in 1820. Then came Strauss with his 'Life of Jesus' in 1835, and Baur in 1844 with a still more formidable assault, both rejecting the Johannine authorship and the historical character of the Gospel. According to Baur, the Gospel was written after the middle of the second century in Asia Minor, or perhaps in Alexandria. For a time Baur's extreme views seemed to have triumphed, and the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel ceased to be a tenet of scientific criticism.

It was impossible for Christian faith to acquiesce in such a disastrous conclusion. Believing scholarship was roused to do battle for that which had been received as truth for seventeen hundred years. The New Testament books and the Christian literature of the first and second centuries were investigated afresh, and discoveries of long-lost works of early Christian literature contributed opportunely to the thoroughness of the examination. The result of the critical labours of the last half-century and more has been to bring the Fourth Gospel again within the Apostolic age.

“Generally between 95 A.D. and 115 A.D.,” says Dr Moffatt,¹ “nearer the latter year in all probability than the former, the Gospel may be conjectured to have been written. Sanday, after Godet, limits the date to 83-89 A.D., but it is much safer to take the closing decade of the century as the earliest limit.” Even some who deny the genuineness admit the credibility. Wendt² asserts that the Fourth Evangelist is a post-Apostolic writer who has preserved notes of the Apostle John’s recollections, has given them a historical framework suitable to the requirements of the post-Apostolic Church, and has arranged them in a form which secured their acceptance in post-Apostolic Christendom. He by no means classes the Fourth Gospel with works of fiction. He attributes to it a considerable measure of historical worth as a record of the life and discourses of Jesus. Professor Harnack,³ who ascribes the Fourth Gospel to John the Presbyter, admits that in some way John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, stands behind the Gospel, and that it cannot have been written later than 110 A.D. Schmiedel,⁴ on the other hand, contends that it is not the work of the son of Zebedee, nor of an eyewitness or con-

¹ Historical New Testament, p. 495.

² Gospel according to St John, p. 254.

³ Chronologie, p. 659 ff.

⁴ Encyclopædia Biblica, art. “John.”

temporary, but of a later writer (probably after 132 A.D.), who was "easily accessible to Alexandrine and Gnostic ideas." Professor Julius Grill of Tübingen, whose work on the Fourth Gospel¹ is very able and scholarly, declares that the Fourth Gospel comes from the period of Gnostic speculation in the second century, and that the author never intended to be known, and never will be known. There are other negative critics who do not admit the Gospel to be so close to the time of the Apostles, but whose positions are an immense advance upon Baur. We shall see what the earliest Christian literature has to say in opposition to those more negative views, and what it has to say in favour of the traditional view after all that has been written of recent years.

Eusebius, in a chapter² on "The order of the Gospels," says that "of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity. . . . The three Gospels, . . . having come into the hands of all, and into his own also, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness,³ but that there was lacking in them an

¹ Untersuchungen über die Entstehung des vierten Evangeliums, p. vi and p. 384.

² H. E., III. 24.

³ Compare what the Presbyter, quoted by Papias, says of Mark, p. 189; also Muratorian Fragment, p. 84.

account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of His ministry. . . . One who understands this can no longer think that the Gospels are at variance with one another, inasmuch as the Gospel according to John contains the first acts of Christ, while the others give an account of the latter part of His life. And the genealogy of our Saviour according to the flesh John quite naturally omitted, because it had been already given by Matthew and Luke, and began with the doctrine of His divinity, which had, as it were, been reserved for him, as their superior, by the Divine Spirit." This account of the motive of St John in the composition of his Gospel reminds us of the notable saying of Clement of Alexandria, already quoted:¹ "Last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts (*τὰ σωματικά*) had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel (*πνευματικὸν εὐαγγέλιον*)."

Irenæus, himself of Asia Minor, the disciple of Polycarp, the scholar of St John, expressly calls John the Apostle the author, and does so as if he had never heard of any other view. Theophilus of Antioch, who is credited with a Harmony of the Gospels, and was a commentator of note in the early Church, has left a treatise in three books addressed to Autolycus. He wrote about 180 A.D.,

¹ See pp. 45, 46.

and is the first to name St John as the author of the Fourth Gospel. "Whence the holy Scriptures teach us, and all the inspired writers, of whom John says: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,' showing that at first God existed alone, and in Him the Word. Then he says, 'And the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made' (John i. 1, 2)."¹ This is the oldest Gospel quotation in which the Evangelist is quoted by name, and Theophilus expressly places him on a level with the inspired writers of the Old and the New Testament.

We have already dealt with the Diatessaron of TATIAN and its testimony to the Fourfold Gospel. His 'Address to the Greeks' has references which show beyond doubt acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel. "Renouncing the demons," he says,² "follow ye God alone. 'All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any one thing made'" (John i. 3). This is clearly a quotation from St John, and the form of the quotation (not including *ὁ γέγονεν*, attached to it in the text underlying the Authorised Version) is that of the oldest manuscripts, of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Irenæus, and Theophilus, and other early writers, both

¹ Ad Autolyicum, ii. 22.

² Address to Greeks, p. 158 D.

orthodox and heretical. "And this," he says again,¹ "is accordingly what has been said: 'The darkness does not overtake the light' (John i. 5); the light of God is the Word." In another passage of some length² expounding the Christian view of the creation, there are phrases and expressions which betray unmistakable familiarity with the prologue of St John's Gospel by the easy and natural manner in which they are woven into the exposition. Outside of the prologue there is at least one reference³—"God is a Spirit (John iv. 24), but not even the God without a name is to be bribed with gifts." Tatian's *'Address to the Greeks,'* says Professor Stanton,⁴ "shows admirably how the substance and purpose of a work by a Christian writer might naturally affect the number and character of the Scriptural quotations in it. This discourse contains clear evidence of the knowledge and use of the Fourth Gospel, but none, or scarcely any, of acquaintance with the other Gospels. Moreover, in regard to the Fourth, it is almost exclusively the language and thoughts of the prologue that we meet with. We have, besides, only the words, 'God is a Spirit.' The explanation is, however, obvious when we notice that, apart from his attacks on Paganism, the themes of which Tatian

¹ *u.s.*, p. 152.

² *u.s.*, p. 145.

³ *u.s.*, p. 144.

⁴ *Gospels as Historical Documents*, p. 149.

here treats are the creation of the world and the nature of man. If the work concerning the Christian system, which he promises in the present treatise, had come down to us, we should in all probability have found quite a different class of evangelical quotations and parallels there." The testimonies now advanced, when taken along with the witness of the Diatessaron, furnish indisputable proof that the Fourth Gospel was already familiarly known and invested with high authority.

We have the CLEMENTINE HOMILIES¹ somewhere about the middle of the second century, and this notable treatise contains evidence of the use of St John's Gospel, which is now scarcely questioned. It was largely on the 'Clementine Homilies' that Baur founded his reconstruction of the history of early Christianity. Here, he said, is primitive Christianity, the Petrine teaching, the genuine doctrine of the first followers of Jesus. This view has been shown to be baseless, but not a little of the interest of the treatise remains. The eminent scholar de Lagarde, who published an edition of the 'Clementines,' and who had no theological end to serve, gives in his Prolegomena fifteen instances of quotations from the Fourth Gospel or reference to it. Here is an unmistakable example:² "Therefore He Himself being a

¹ See *Canonicity*, pp. lxiii-lxviii; pp. 184, 185; pp. 438-444.

² *Clem. Hom.*, iii. 52.

prophet, said, 'I am the gate of life: he that entereth in by me entereth into life' (John x. 9); . . . and again, 'My sheep hear my voice' (John x. 27)." A reference,¹ which appears also in Justin (Apol., i. 61), has been the subject of much discussion: "For thus the Prophet swore unto us, saying, 'Verily I say unto you, Except ye be born again of living water, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven' (John iii. 5)." It has been contended that both Justin and the Clementine writer quote here from an apocryphal book, but as the quotations of the passage by the two writers differ from one another, that view seems improbable. The quotation is much more likely a free combination of St Matthew (xxviii. 19) with St John (iii. 3-5), a kind of combination which is common when, as may be the case here, the quotations are made from memory. Although some of Lagarde's references are unimportant, and some of the quotations vary from the language of the Gospel, they served to convince scholars that the Clementine writer was acquainted with our Fourth Gospel. The denial of such references was, however, essential to the theory of Baur, and he and Schwegler and Hilgenfeld maintained it strenuously, regarding the references as too doubtful to be admitted.

¹ Clem. Hom., xi. 26.

But when Dressel published his edition of 'Twenty Homilies of Clement of Rome' in 1853, with the long-lost concluding portions of the work derived from a manuscript he had discovered in the Vatican, denial of the use of St John's Gospel was no longer possible. The evidence available before was supplemented by a direct and striking allusion to the man blind from his birth (John ix. 1). "Wherefore," so runs the reference,¹ "also our Master, inquiring about the man blind from his birth, who recovered his sight through Him, made answer to those who asked whether this man sinned or his parents that he should be born blind: Neither this man sinned nor his parents, but that through him the power of God might be manifested curing sins of ignorance." Not only is the reference direct and detailed, but the very words of the Gospel narrative appear in the quotation (*ἐκ γενετῆς, ἀνέβλεψα*), and the Clementine writer notes the sins of ignorance alluded to in the context. The only weak link in this evidence is the uncertainty as to the date of the Clementines. Stanton² thinks the date too uncertain to found any conclusion upon them. Professor Sanday gave the date as somewhere about the middle of the second century, and although certainty is not attainable, the phenomena of quotation, when

¹ Clem. Hom., xix. 22.

² Gospels, p. 159, n. 2.

compared with Justin Martyr, tend to support this view.

THE GOSPEL OF PETER, already referred to, has what appear to be distinct references to our Fourth Gospel. The following seem to be clear references to the crucifixion and burial as narrated in St John's Gospel (chap. xix.): "They clad Him with purple, and they placed Him on a seat of judgment,¹ saying, Judge righteously, O King of Israel; and one of them brought a crown of thorns and set it upon the head of the Lord" (vv. 2, 13). "And they were scourging Him, and saying, This is the honour wherewith we will honour the Son of God" (v. 1). "And they brought two malefactors and crucified the Lord between them. But He was silent, as if in no wise feeling pain; and when they set up the cross they inscribed upon it the words, This is the King of Israel. And having laid down His garments before them, they divided them and cast lots for them" (vv. 18, 24). "And the Jews being provoked at Him, commanded that His legs should not be broken, in order that He might die in torment" (v. 31). "And Joseph . . . wrapped Him in a linen cloth and brought Him into his own tomb, which was called Joseph's garden" (v. 41). The account of the

¹ It is possible that in John xix. 3 ἐκάθισε, used of Pilate, is transitive. But this is not St John's usage. See Westcott, *ad loc.*

resurrection follows St John's narrative in the twentieth chapter: "And they came there and found the sepulchre opened, and drawing nigh thither they stooped down" (xx. 5). "He is risen and gone" (v. 15). "But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, wept and grieved, and each of us in grief at what had happened, withdrew to his house. But I, Simon Peter, and Andrew, my brother, took our nets and departed to the sea, and there was with us also Levi, the son of Alphæus, whom the Lord . . ." (xx. 10, xxi. 3).¹ However we may account for the variations from the evangelical narrative and the additional particulars, the narrative undoubtedly presupposes a knowledge of the Fourth Gospel, embodying as it does so many particulars peculiar to it. "We consider it certain," says Rendel Harris, "that our false Peter had a good acquaintance with St John's Gospel." "Of all the discoveries of the last century in the domain of early Christian literature," says Professor Harnack,² "this is the most notable, for it is the only relic of any size of genuine, even if already of secondary or tertiary, Gospel literature which has been preserved to us alongside of the Four Gospels." Harnack

¹ The fragment from which these passages are taken can be conveniently consulted in Rendel Harris, 'The Newly Recovered Gospel of Peter,' chap. iv.

² *Chronologie*, p. 625.

was at first in doubt as to the use of St John's Gospel here, but now he is certain that it is referred to, and it is really because of the proved use of St John's Gospel, which he puts not later than 110 A.D., that he does not ascribe to the Gospel of Peter a higher antiquity. Without, however, putting this apocryphal Gospel fragment so early, we have in it by general consent a witness to the use of St John's Gospel about 150 A.D.

The relation of JUSTIN MARTYR to the Fourth Gospel has already been discussed.¹ In Dr Charteris's 'Canonicity' there are nineteen express references to the Fourth Gospel collected from the Apologies and the Dialogue, and sixteen references which cannot be counted as more than echoes. We have already mentioned Justin's reference to Christian baptism. His teaching on the subject may be considered in its bearing upon his acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel. In Justin's exposition of baptism for the instruction of the Roman Emperor, he says:² "As many as have been convinced and believe the truth of what is taught and told by us, and promise to endeavour so to live, are taught to pray and to seek from God, with fasting, forgiveness of the sins committed before, while we pray and fast along with them. Then they are led to a place where there is water, and are born again in the

¹ P. 102.

² Apol., i. 61.

same manner in which also we ourselves were born again, for they receive the washing with water on the spot in the name of the Father of all and God the Lord, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ said, Except ye be born again, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven. But that it is impossible for men who have once been born to enter into the womb of the mothers that bare them, is manifest to all. . . . Now the doctrine with respect to this we learned from the Apostles." Justin evidently refers to the words of institution in St Matthew (xxviii. 19), and passes on to the spiritual significance of the ordinance, blending St John's "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (iii. 3) with St Matthew's "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (xviii. 3). If it should be held that the baptismal reference is to St Matthew alone, we can still adduce the purely Johannine words: "Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (John iii. 4). It is impossible to resist the conviction that we have here a reference to St John's account of the interview of Nicodemus with Jesus recorded in this familiar chapter.

Similarly in his account of the Lord's Supper, Justin has what must be regarded as a reminiscence of our Lord's great discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum (John vi. 52-56), setting forth the spiritual significance of the ordinance. "For it is not common bread nor common drink that we take," says Justin,¹ ". . . but we were taught that the bread and wine were the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh,"—a reference corresponding in particular to the words in St John's Gospel, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life" (John vi. 52). It is of importance to notice here that Justin adds: "For the Apostles, in the Memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have handed down that so it was commanded to them." Once more, in the Dialogue,² we read how Jesus "healed those who from birth and in the flesh were blind and deaf and lame, making one to leap, another to hear, and a third to see by His word." The expression "from birth" (*ἐκ γενετῆς*) is peculiar to St John, who is the only evangelist mentioning the cure of any congenital infirmity, and it points clearly to the Fourth Gospel as the source of Justin's knowledge.

There are clear indications that Justin was acquainted with the narrative of the Passion as

¹ *Apol.*, i. 66.

² *Dial.*, c. 69.

it is given in the Fourth Gospel. "For when they had crucified Him they pierced His hands and His feet, fixing the nails into them; and they that crucified Him divided His garments among them, and by casting lots determined what each should take by the throw of the dice" (compare John xx. 25 and Matt. xxvii. 35).¹ One quotation which Justin² reproduces regularly in the same form is that in fulfilment of prophecy regarding the piercing of the Saviour's side—"They shall look on Him whom they pierced" (John xix. 37).

There are several passages in Justin which presuppose acquaintance with the Prologue of the Gospel, and show that his doctrine of the Person of Christ is that of St John. Principal Drummond, who has made the subject a life-long study, examines the subject anew in his very able volume on 'The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel.' He finds that the words of the Prologue—"the Word was God"—are paralleled again and again in Justin, only with greater emphasis and fulness. "In this point," he says,³ "the Justinian doctrine is not only more copious than the Johannine, but presents

¹ Dial., c. 97. Cf. Apol., i. 35. ² Apol., i. 52; Dial., c. 32.

³ Character and Authorship, p. 114. Dr Drummond's second chapter, and especially his exposition of Justin's doctrine of the Person of Christ, is masterly and convincing.

the appearance of a true development, an unfolding of the implicit contents of the brief and pregnant statement of the Gospel. And if it be said that thus far Justin is indebted to Philo, still the incorporation of the Alexandrine theology with Christianity must itself have required time, and its more abundant mixture in the writings of the Apologist than in that of the Evangelist betrays, if not a later date, at least a more advanced post on the march of dogmatic formulation." This doctrine, and the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, Justin declares also that he and his fellow-believers "have been taught" (*ἐδιδάχθημεν*), "have understood" (*νενοήκαμεν*) from the Memoirs of His Apostles, "have learned" (*ἔμαθομεν*) from the Memoirs.

There are further Johannine thoughts which frequently make their appearance in Justin—that Christ came forth from the Father, that the Father sent Him, that He fulfilled the Father's will. The keywords of the Fourth Gospel, *μονογενής*, *φῶς*, *ζωή*, recur frequently in Justin. Like St John, and no doubt following him, he uses the type of the Brazen Serpent,¹ saying, in the spirit of the Evangelist, "there is salvation to those who fly to Him who sent into the world His crucified Son" (John iii. 14-16).

It is difficult to see how the attestation of St

¹ Dial., c. 91.

John's Gospel by Justin could reasonably be made stronger. No doubt he quotes it less frequently than the Synoptics. But that does not prove that he set it upon a lower level. His treatment of it has been explained as follows: "Rather does he employ Johannine conceptions and lines of thought—as he does also Pauline—almost as one employs a dogmatic writer of similar tendency and position from whom, as one's standard, one has learned to think and to express one's self; whereas Justin cites after the Synoptics, he reflects after St John."¹ A good deal has been made, by opponents of the Johannine authorship, of the fact that while he knows the name of the author of the Apocalypse, and calls him John, he never mentions him as his authority for any fact or doctrine which he sets forth. But neither does he name the Synoptists, whom he quotes so frequently, nor St Paul, though he uses expressions (*πρωτότοκος* and others) peculiar to him, and must have known some, if not all, of his epistles. Even when he is following St Paul in citations from the Old Testament which differ from the Septuagint and are not literally translated from the Hebrew, he never mentions him by name. But though he

¹ Thoma, 'Genesis des Johannes-Evangelium,' p. 824, quoted by Stanton, 'Gospels,' p. 130. Cf. Drummond, 'Character and Authorship,' p. 158 ff.

does not call them by their names, and really has no occasion to do so, there can be no reasonable doubt that the 'Memoirs' of Justin are the Gospels of Irenæus, and that Justin knew the Fourth Gospel to be the work of the Apostle John.

Besides the testimony from the 'Clementine Homilies' and the 'Gospel of Peter,' which cannot be classed with orthodox writings, we have valuable testimony to St John's Gospel from a GROUP OF HERETICS in the first three-quarters of the second century. Among them is HERACLEON, who was, so far as we know, the earliest commentator on the New Testament. He wrote commentaries, possibly on St Matthew, and certainly on St Luke and St John. None of them have survived, but copious extracts are to be found in the works of Clement of Alexandria and in Origen. His commentary on St John is largely quoted by Origen in his commentary on the Fourth Gospel, and an index of passages of Scripture quoted, or explained, or referred to by Heracleon, shows frequent references to the first, second, fourth, fifth, and eighth chapters of St John. His comments on the story of the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well are largely quoted by Origen, who gives the quotations with such explicitness that we even have Heracleon's testimony to various readings. It is not necessary

to elaborate the witness of the extant fragments of Heracleon to St John's Gospel. Of his knowledge and use of it there is no doubt, and we can gather what sacredness and authority he, although a heretic, attributed to it from the fact that he deemed it worthy of a commentary, and bestowed such minute care upon the letter of its text. The only question is, again, as to his date, which is believed to lie between 140-160 A.D. Adopting the later date, we shall allow time for the Gospel to have won the esteem which occasioned a detailed and verbal commentary on it.

Heracleon was the intimate friend (*γνώριμος*) of VALENTINUS, and belonged to the school of that great Gnostic teacher. Clement of Alexandria calls Heracleon the most esteemed of the school of Valentinus.¹ This renowned head of the school accepted the whole New Testament—*integro instrumento*—as Tertullian² says, but perverted it by fanciful interpretations to support the theory of emanations, by which he sought to bridge over the gulf between a spiritual Supreme Being and the material world. He was a contemporary of Justin Martyr, and was in Rome during the episcopates of Hyginus, Pius, and Anicetus. The date 140-160 A.D. represents the closing period

¹ Origen, In Joan., ii. 66; Clem. Stromateis, iv. 9.

² De Præscriptione Hereticorum, c. 38.

of his activity. We have from Irenæus¹ an account of the treatment of the Prologue of St John's Gospel by Valentinus and his school. "This is what he says: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God' (John i. 1, 2). Having first distinguished these three—God, the Beginning, and the Word—he unites them again in order that he may show the projection of the two of them, of the Son and of the Word, and the union of the two to one another and to the Father. . . . 'All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made' (John i. 3), for the Word was the author of form and beginning to all the Æons that came into existence after Him. But 'What was made in Him,' says John, 'is life.' Here again he indicated conjunction; for all things, he said, were made by Him, but *in* Him was life. . . . He styles Him 'A light which shineth in darkness, and was not comprehended by it' (John i. 5), inasmuch as when He imparted form to all those things which had their origin from passion, He was not known by it. He also styles Him Son and Truth and Life and 'the Word made flesh, Whose glory,' he says, 'we beheld, and His glory was that of the Only-begotten, given to Him by the Father, full of grace and

¹ Adversus Hæreses, i. 8. 5.

truth' (John i. 14). But what John really says is this: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' Accurately therefore does he set forth the first Tetrad, speaking of the Father and Grace, and the Only-begotten and Truth. In this way does John speak of the first Ogdoad and that which is the Mother of all the Æons. For he mentions the Father and Grace, the Only-begotten and Truth, the Word and Life, and Man and the Church." We see here how Irenæus attributes these quotations to John, the son of Zebedee, for he knows no other; and how he takes pains to show the misquotation of the words of the Evangelist by these heretics. Hippolytus, whose great work on the 'Refutation of Heresies' is a storehouse of information on this subject, has references to the use of St John by Valentinus. He represents him¹ as quoting words of Jesus recorded only by St John. "Therefore, he says, says the Saviour, 'All that came before me are thieves and robbers' (John x. 8)." In another place² Hippolytus represents him quoting the words of the Fourth Gospel cited by Justin: "This, he says (*φησὶ*), is what the Saviour saith (*λέγει*), 'Except a man be born of water and Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of

¹ Ref. Hær., vi. 35.

² viii. 10.

heaven, because that which is born of the flesh is flesh' (John iii. 5, 6)." When Baur contends that so far from Valentinus founding upon the Fourth Gospel for his elaborate system of Æons and emanations, the Evangelist has adopted his characteristic key-words from him, we feel that he is putting the cart before the horse. Any such view is quite out of keeping with the whole tone and style of St John's Gospel. The simple use of terms by the Evangelist approves itself as fundamental and original; the distortion by the philosophers and system-builders is clearly a subsequent stage.

BASILIDES is a witness who brings St John's Gospel considerably nearer to the Apostolic age. It is from Hippolytus also that we obtain information regarding this eminent Gnostic teacher. By means of the fresh light thrown upon the history of Gnosticism by the discovery of the 'Refutation of all Heresies' about the middle of last century, and the certain recognition of Hippolytus as the author, we become acquainted with a Gnostic theory not of dualism but of pantheistic monism, not of emanation from the higher to the lower but of evolution from the lower to the higher. The author of this system is Basilides, and we have an exposition of it in Hippolytus. Investigation has shown that in the pages of Hippolytus there is

a faithful representation of the original work. This is important, because when appeal is made to the authority for the doctrine of this Gnostic sect we believe that we have the views and opinions of Basilides himself, and not of his philosophical descendants a generation or two later. Hippolytus¹ states expressly that the Basilidian account of all things “concerning the Saviour” subsequent to the birth of Jesus agreed with that given “in the Gospels.” It was not any particular Gospel, such as that of St Luke,² but the Gospels collectively, which were expounded by Basilides. The expression τὸ εὐαγγέλιον would not of itself necessarily denote our Four Gospels, although their use by Justin so soon after Basilides’s day, and the fact that St Luke and St John at any rate are commented upon separately, make it probable that our Four Gospels made up the εὐαγγέλιον of Basilides.

What, then, are the references we find to St John’s Gospel? Here is one of them: “That each man has his own appointed time, he says (φησὶ), the Saviour sufficiently indicates when He says, ‘My hour is not yet come’ (John ii. 4).” And here is another: “The word spoken—Let there be light,—he says, has become the seed of the world from non-existent things, and this, he says, is what is mentioned in the Gospels, ‘He was

¹ Ref. Hær., vii. 27.

² See before, p. 231.

the true Light, which lighteth every man coming into the world' (John i. 9)." These seem to be express quotations, and have convinced scholars that Basilides used St John's Gospel. The only drawback is that *φησί* (he says), which is the formula of quotation, cannot be held for certain to imply Basilides himself as apart from his philosophical school. Yet the probability lies this way. "In general," says Matthew Arnold,¹ "Hippolytus uses the formula 'according to them' (*κατ' αὐτούς*) when he quotes from the school, and the formula 'he says' (*φησί*) when he gives the dicta of the master. And in this particular case he manifestly quotes the dicta of Basilides, and no one who had not a theory to serve would ever dream of doubting it. Basilides therefore, about the year 125 A.D., had before him the Fourth Gospel." This clear and definite adherence of Matthew Arnold is supported by all moderate scholars. The evidential value of this Gnostic testimony may be summed up in the words of the late Dr Ezra Abbot of America:² "The use of the Gospel of John by the Gnostic sects in the second century affords a strong, it may seem a decisive, argument for its genuineness. However ingeniously they might pervert its meaning, it is obvious to every intelligent

¹ God and the Bible, p. 269.

² Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, pp. 84, 85.

reader that this Gospel is in reality diametrically opposed to the essential principles of Gnosticism. Such being the case, let us suppose it to have been forged about the middle of the second century in the heat of the Gnostic controversy. It was a book which the Gnostic sects which flourished ten, twenty, or thirty years before had never heard of. How is it possible then to explain the fact that their followers should not only have received it, but received it, so far as appears, without question or discussion? It must have been received by the founders of those sects from the beginning; and we have no reason to distrust the testimony of Hippolytus to what is under these circumstances so probable and is attested by evidence. But if received by the founders of these sects, it must have been received at the same time by the Catholic Christians. They would not at a later period have taken the spurious work from the heretics with whom they were in controversy. It was, then, generally received both by Gnostics and their opponents between 120 and 130 A.D. What follows? It follows that the Gnostics of that day received it because they could not help it. They would not have admitted the authority of a book which could be reconciled with their doctrines only by the most forced interpretations if they could have destroyed its authority by destroying its genuine-

ness. . . . The fact of the reception of the Fourth Gospel as the work of St John at so early a date by parties so violently opposed to each other proves that the genuineness was decisive. The argument is further confirmed by the use of the Gospel by the opposing parties in the later Montanistic controversy and in the disputes about the time of celebrating Easter.”

We shall not dwell upon evidence for St John's Gospel which comes from other heretical sects, such as the Peratæ and the Ophites, from Cerinthus and Simon Magus.¹ We need only mention the one exception from the universal consent of early Christian antiquity to the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. The exception, to which reference has already been made, is that of the Alogi. It is doubtful whether the sect thus named was anything but a few eccentric individuals, whom Epiphanius mentions in the fourth century under a nickname having the double meaning of “deniers of the doctrine of the Logos” and “unreasoning mules.”² There is nothing to show that they were ever formally dealt with as heretics, and this again makes it doubtful whether they really opposed the doctrine of the Logos set forth in the Fourth Gospel. They were, however, op-

¹ See *Canonicity*, p. 383 ff.

² ἄλογον is the name given by the modern Greek to the beast on which he rides.

ponents of the Montanist movement, and it is in all probability they whom Irenæus¹ mentions as not admitting St John's Gospel, and who by frustrating the gift of the Spirit, therein promised and set forth, "sin against the Spirit of God and fall into the unpardonable sin." They are the same people who, according to Dionysius of Alexandria,² attribute the Apocalypse to Cerinthus; and Epiphanius,³ who alone calls them by their name, says they receive neither the Gospel nor the Apocalypse as St John's, but attribute both to Cerinthus. That St John's Gospel was written by Cerinthus is so far from being the case that Irenæus⁴ supposed the Apostle to have written it to controvert the docetic teaching of that heretic. Even the Alogi, however, did not dispute that the Fourth Gospel came down from the Apostolic age, seeing that they attributed it to one who was at least a contemporary of the disciple whom Jesus loved. The opposition of the Alogi has been used by Professor Harnack⁵ as an argument against the universal acceptance claimed for the Fourfold Gospel in the last decades of the second century by Irenæus. The subject has been discussed at length by Zahn⁶

¹ *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 11. 6-9.

² *Euseb. H. E.*, vii. 25.

³ *Epiph.*, li. 35.

⁴ *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 11. 1.

⁵ *Das neue Testament um das Jahr 200 A.D.*, pp. 58-70, and *Chronologie*, i. 670, 671.

⁶ *GK.* i. 220-262 and ii. 967-973.

and Stanton,¹ the latter of whom concludes a careful and detailed examination with the verdict that the existence of this opposition "does not show that the beliefs to which they were opposed were not commonly held or had been quite recently adopted, still less that they were only then spreading; it does, however, show that the conception of the Fourfold Gospel had not as yet acquired that firm hold on the mind of every professing Christian which only clear and positive definitions and a prescription of some generations could give." This is a very cautious verdict to pronounce, and Irenæus was well entitled to hold that opposition from a party who do not seem to have ever reached the dignity of a sect, who were of no influence in the Church, who were destined to disappear in the course of a generation, and whose criticism rested solely on internal grounds, was not sufficient to break the unanimity of acceptance experienced by the Four Gospels within the Church.

The position of PAPIAS has already been under consideration. His testimony to St John's Gospel is largely inferential, but it is affirmative and not, as opponents would have it, negative. Eusebius, who gives his references to St Matthew and St Mark, gives none to the Gospel according to St John. It has been in consequence inferred that

¹ Gospels, pp. 198-212.

Papias never quoted and did not know the Fourth Gospel. This objection has been conclusively disposed of by the essay of Bishop Lightfoot¹ on 'The Silence of Eusebius.' Eusebius did not undertake to collect references to the "acknowledged" books of the New Testament, among which he placed the Four Gospels, and Papias might have quoted St John's Gospel with the greatest frequency without Eusebius ever noticing any instance. Lightfoot has, however, made it probable that when Papias makes the Elder attribute a lack of order (*οὐ μέντοι τάξει*) to St Mark, he is contrasting it with another order, that of the Fourth Gospel. Papias, according to Eusebius,² "used testimonies from the First Epistle of John," and as the Gospel and the First Epistle are from the same hand, the testimony to the Apostolic authorship of the Epistle is indirect testimony to the Gospel. When he speaks of preferring testimonies proceeding from "the Truth itself,"³ we may have an echo of St John's Gospel (John xiv. 6); and there is reason to believe that an anonymous quotation in Irenæus⁴ is to be referred to him, "For this reason (they taught) the Lord said, There are

¹ Essays on Supernatural Religion, pp. 32-58.

² H. E., III. 39. 16. ³ III. 39. 4.

⁴ Adversus Hæreses, v. 36. 1. 2.

many mansions in My Father's house" (John xiv. 2).¹

The testimony of POLYCARP is inferential too. It is notable that, while he knows St Paul's writings, and frequently quotes the First Epistle of St Peter, and shows some acquaintance with the Synoptic Gospels, he not only has no quotation from St John's Gospel, but is apparently uninfluenced by St John's characteristic conception of Christ. We may be fairly certain, however, that he knew the Fourth Gospel and admitted it to be a true witness to the Person and work of Christ. Assume that St John's Gospel had been written about 130 A.D., Irenæus might have been a hearer of Polycarp by that time; he may have heard him as late as 150, but the more probable date is 130-140. If a Gospel had already appeared, attributed to St John, but containing a representation of our Lord and His ministry different from that which the Apostle himself was accustomed to give in his oral teaching, Polycarp would have known and commented upon the fact. If Polycarp had pronounced such a Gospel a forgery, Irenæus would

¹ Much stress cannot be laid upon the "Argumentum" to St John's Gospel in a manuscript of the ninth century, where we read: "The Gospel of John was revealed and given to the Churches, . . . even as Papias of Hierapolis, a dear disciple of John, has related in his Five Books."

have heard it. Irenæus accepted the Fourth Gospel unhesitatingly as the work of St John, and this he could not have done if Polycarp had expressed doubts regarding the correctness of its representation of the Lord. Irenæus, when he vouched for the existence and credibility of the Fourfold Gospel and attributed the Fourth of the series to John the Apostle, was speaking of what he learned from Polycarp, who related his reminiscences "altogether in accordance with the Scriptures,"¹ among which Irenæus reckoned the Fourth Gospel. John, Polycarp, Irenæus, are the links of an indestructible chain of proof in favour of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel and its credibility as a historical work.²

¹ See above, p. 63.

² See a cogent argument by the late Dr R. W. Dale in 'The Living Christ and the Four Gospels,' p. 260 ff.