

THE

# BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I.

CHRISTIAN ERNEST LUTHARDT'S REFUTATION OF FALSE  
VIEWS AS TO THE DESIGN OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

TRANSLATED BY CASPAR RENÉ GREGORY, PRINCETON, N. J.

THE aim and the occasion of a book are two very different things. In the Gospel of John they have been entirely too much mingled together. Baumgarten-Crusius<sup>1</sup> distinguishes them carefully, and looks for the first only in the book itself. But Lücke thinks that what is given in xx. 31 as the complete aim is not enough to explain the peculiarity of the Gospel. He therefore asks for the particular occasion, so as to learn from it the special aim. In doing this, he tries to find and prove the special aim outside of the book itself, and thus treads the same path that most men had gone in before, and against the consequences of which he, at least in part, contends. Baumgarten-Crusius certainly has not shown that the aim which is common to all the Gospels brings out the individuality of John's Gospel simply by being more distinctly marked.<sup>2</sup> In attempting to show this, he lays before us a history of the apostolic teaching concerning Jesus,<sup>3</sup> like that given by Lücke. On the whole, Brückner has struck the right path.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theologische Auslegung der Johanneischen Schriften. Von D. L. F. O. Baumgarten-Crusius. Jena, 1843, Vol. i. p. xli.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. xiv. sq.

<sup>4</sup> Kurze Erklärung des Evangeliums und der Briefe Johannis. Von Dr. W. M. L. deWette. By B. B. Brückner (4th ed., Leipzig, 1852), p. ix. sq.

### 1. *The Supplement Hypothesis.*

When we compare the fourth Gospel with the three earlier Gospels, we cannot help thinking that its author had them before him. The regard he pays to them can be taken in two ways. We may understand it of the historical matter, or of the whole character of the Gospel. Even in the earliest times they tried to explain the peculiarity of the fourth Gospel from this,<sup>1</sup> and this view has often been defended in later times.<sup>2</sup>

The evangelist certainly takes for granted much that is told in the synoptical Gospels, and that is necessary to make his account intelligible. The baptism of Jesus, as we have seen, is not excluded, but is rather required by the account of John. And some other things are only made clear by the help of the synoptical accounts (e.g. xi. 1, 2; xviii. 24, 28). At times, again, it fills up the synoptical accounts, or secures itself against false relations with them. Indeed, at ii. 12, and especially at iii. 24, we can scarcely avoid the impression that the evangelist paid a conscious and determined regard to those who went before him. It is too much, however, to say, as Ebrard seems to,<sup>3</sup> that it was the evangelist's set purpose to prevent every appearance of contradiction. Lücke, on the other hand,<sup>4</sup> denies that John has paid any regard to these books; and Baumgarten-Crusius<sup>5</sup> pronounces it altogether impossible, on account of the many gospels, which had spread far and wide by the end of the second century. But the introduction to Luke scarcely calls

<sup>1</sup> See Lampe, *Commentarius Analytico-Exegeticus tam literalis quam realis Evangelii secundum Joannem*, Amsterdam, 1724, vol. i. p. 174 sq., or Dr. F. Lücke, *Commentar über das Evangelium des Johannes* (2d ed. Bonn, 1840), Vol. i. p. 187 sq.; or the Introductions, as Dr. K. A. Credner, *Beiträge zur Einleitung in die biblischen Schriften* (Halle, 1832), Vol. i. p. 248 sq.

<sup>2</sup> By Schultze, *Schriftstellerische Charakter und Werth des Johannes* (Leipzig, 1801), p. 194, Hug, Ebrard, and others.

<sup>3</sup> *Wissenschaftliche Kritik der Evangelischen Geschichte*. Von J. H. A. Ebrard (2d ed. Erlangen, 1850), p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. i. p. xl.

for such a very great number at that time. Besides, an apostle's Gospel, like Matthew's,—its authenticity being taken for granted,—would have obtained general access and validity more easily than such separate private works as Luke seems to have had in mind. It can by no means be proved with mathematical certainty from John's Gospel that the other three must have been before him. And as little can it be proved that he assumed that his readers possessed them, or even one of them. However, it is clear that he takes for granted the existence of a knowledge of the gospel history; not only a knowledge going so far into particulars that it could not have sustained itself for any time without good gospel records, and that, too, in the possession of the community, but also a tradition by word of mouth, with this record and joined to it. All we can say is, that the fourth evangelist assumed the existence of one or more Gospels of such contents as our synoptical Gospels.

But it is another thing to say that he went to work to complete these Gospels. Lücke and Baumgarten were right in opposing such a notion. An aim so extraneous and fragmentary could never be made to agree with the internal and decided unity presented by the fourth Gospel. The evangelist has passed over much that we read in the synoptical Gospels that would have been very serviceable in carrying out his main idèa,<sup>1</sup> for example, the frequent confessions that Jesus is the Son of God, and the transfiguration. From this Hug tries to make out<sup>2</sup> that he not merely takes those books for granted, but also that he has only worked up such material as the earlier evangelists left untouched. This, however, is inferring too much, and contradicts the book itself. We see that the evangelist uses in his book not only unknown, but also known things (i. 23 sq.; iv. 44 sq.; vi. 1 sq.; vi. 16 sq.; xii. 1 sq., 12 sq.; xiii. 21 sq., 38; xviii. 12 sq., etc.). He did not set himself to make a gleanings. With all the mate-

<sup>1</sup> Einleitung in die Schriften des Neuen Testaments von Dr. J. L. Hug (4th ed. Stuttgart und Tübingen, 1847), Vol. ii. pp. 171-175.

<sup>2</sup> p. 174.

rial lying before him, he chose whatever proved to be directly fitted to carry out his special aim. Hug, thinking that these testimonies concerning Jesus could have served most directly the design of the evangelist, comes to the conclusion that he must have used matter that often had a significance by no means common with that actually employed. In this Hug certainly takes a false view of the synoptical Gospels, as if they must have fully depicted the kind of things of which they speak. And he considers the fourth evangelist too curiously, when he adopts the opinion that the writer could have made a better choice and collation of discourses and histories suited to carry out his fundamental thought, and that, just as he was able to make not a few of the synoptical accounts essential elements of his own book, so he could not but have brought others into essential correspondence with the rest, and so have won for them a new point of view. Thus the supplement hypothesis in this external form will in nowise comport with the book itself, or with the respect we owe to such an author.

A somewhat different turn has been given to this hypothesis by referring the supplementation to the dogmatic character of the synoptists. It is well known that Clement of Alexandria suggested this long ago, in designating the fourth Gospel as the spiritual one. Even Lampe, after waging war upon the supplement hypothesis, comes back to it;<sup>1</sup> he implies, however, that we must not hold this up as the chief aim of the book. It is well known, too, how wittily Lessing has interwoven this thought with his theory of the Gospels.<sup>2</sup> When he implies that true believers first got the idea of the divine person of Christ and of his mediation from the Gospel of John, it is as much as saying that it was by this Gospel that Christianity first became a doctrine. On this supposition, it becomes purely a book of doctrine, and ceases to be historical. This gospel teaches nothing about Christ that was not part of the self-witness of Jesus. Christ himself laid the foundation of the knowledge of Christ as the Son of

<sup>1</sup> Lampe, Vol. i. p. 178 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Lachm. Aug. XL pp. 495-514, § 42-44. (?)

God. Such knowledge is, therefore, older than the account of this self-witness, unless the self-witness is just a form invented for the teaching of this newly-gained knowledge. The last thought offers a view which we think is excluded by all that precedes.

Baumgarten-Crusius and Lücke have given another form to the answer of the question concerning the relation of the fourth Gospel to the first three. For my part, it seems to amount to the same thing. Lücke is of the opinion that at first they needed simply the most complete possible collection, prepared in writing, of the gospel tradition contained in the oral accounts. Matthew and Mark belong to this class of the Gospels. Then, after a time, they needed one that handled the gospel history critically and in a more chronological and pragmatistical connection. Here came Luke. And at last, the advance of *πίστις* to *γνώσις* converted the history of Jesus to dogmatical matter of doctrine. This demanded a Gospel that set forth the life of Jesus under certain points of view in reference to then present questions, doubts, and divergent conceptions, and in which history and doctrine, fact and dogma, practical meditations and dogmatical vindications reciprocally interpenetrate each other.<sup>1</sup>

To my mind, this view of the generic history of the Gospels contains a multitude of errors of wide and pernicious consequences. It has been shown above that the first and fourth Gospels resemble each other exactly in the fact that they both turn the history to doctrine. Matthew, again and again, always at the end of the separate divisions, points out the fulfilment of the Old Testament scriptures in the events of the life of Jesus. It is clearly his design to teach the appearing of Jesus Christ by the history of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount, with its whole character and situation at the beginning of the Gospel, and the woes, parables, and prophecies at the end of the Gospel, teach that Jesus had to form for himself a new church in unbelieving Israel. He had to establish in the apostles a new authority for his

<sup>1</sup> Lücke, Vol. i. p. 202 sq.

church in opposition to the hostile authority of Israel (compare Matt. xix. 28). The New Testament church of God was not to fall to ruin with the Old.<sup>1</sup> All this presents the life of Jesus clearly in a definite point of view. Others, however, apprehend in these words a false representation of the interest which the first Christians had in the gospel accounts. They did not preach the gospel, and then write the Gospels because of the interest in the history as such, and to satisfy this interest. They wished to prove the saving decree of God in its historical fulfilment in Christ Jesus. When Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius (Acts x. 36 sq.), he did it after the method of our Gospels.<sup>2</sup> He told the single events, not for their own sake, but in order to make known to the heathen by the historical account the saving decree of God which he had revealed in Israel in the person of Jesus Christ. We see that Peter went over the life of Jesus, from the beginning to the end, in all its essential points. A searching examination of this cannot fail to perceive a great likeness to the Gospel of Mark. The essential contents of both are, the proclamation of salvation as it passed from Jesus forth to the apostles, and the manifold activity of Jesus in wonderful proof of the preparation by the power of the Spirit. This analogy can be carried further. This gospel message was meant to satisfy not curiosity, but desires for salvation, and so were the Gospels, which were only the fixing of this *κατήχησις* (Luke i. 4) in writing. Hence they are far from being mere collections of all that people knew of Jesus; as if they would have had nothing else to tell, if they had wished to recount simply the things worthy of note; and as if this was about all that could be told of Jesus's Galilean work. We have already spoken of this at the occasion of the raising of the dead. Another proof of our point is that Matthew presents two days to teach the Galilean work

<sup>1</sup> J. C. K. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis* (Nördlingen, 1852), Vol. i. p. 122. *Weissagung*, II. p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Compare H. W. J. Thiersch, *Kritik der neutestamentliche Schriften* (Erlangen, 1845), pp. 90, 110 sq.

of Christ (viii. 18-ix. 34). This is just as an example to give a picture of his most busy life. Both the other Gospels leave this out.<sup>1</sup> It is another thing when a Papias gathers all the words of Jesus that had been preserved up to his day by oral tradition outside of the canonical Gospels. Here it is not desire for salvation, but curiosity, that wants to be satisfied. About this time the zeal for collecting arose in the Christian church. Lücke judges incorrectly of the Gospel of Luke. He thinks that what was wanted and what was aimed at in it was a critically viewed historical exhibition for cultured Christians—an exhibition made by a man fitted for literary work. He thinks that Luke's is especially a chronological account. Then comes the well-known strife whether *καθεξῆς* (i. 3) refers to a chronological or topical order.<sup>2</sup> And even if it means a chronological order, we need to know whether it goes upon the succession of the single events, or only of the whole in general. His collection really is determined not so much by the outward order of time merely, and by a respect to the greatest possible completeness, but rather by a topical point of view. We can easily see this, if we compare the beginning of the Gospel with the end of the Acts of the Apostles. We are fairly entitled to make such a comparison, because the Acts presents itself simply as the second book of the message of salvation begun in the Gospel. The whole work begins with the annunciation by the angel in the midst of the sanctuary of Israel, and ends with the public preaching by the apostle to the Gentiles in the chief city of the world. Hence it is easy to discover the leading thoughts.<sup>3</sup> Later researches have shown that the second book was not only written to give the most complete possible historical account, but also that it was planned with great premeditation, and that the plan was carried out with great freedom. And so it may

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Zeitschrift für Protestant. und Kirche* (1851, Decbr.), p. 331 sq. especially 334.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Ebrard, p. 115 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Compare M. Baumgarten, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Halle, 1859).

well agree closely with the Gospel. Lücke says too much of this book as a historical work. He says too little of it as a Gospel. As to its relation to the rest he is mistaken.

Lücke refers to another circumstance in connection with the progress of *πίστις* to *γνώσις*. And here, too, we may mention Baumgarten-Crusius's view, which accounts for the fourth Gospel, not from the increased historical or literary need, but by the progress of knowledge or instruction. His opinion is this: At first they learned of the person and work of Christ only after the Palestine view and in a Messianic conception, and other teaching was limited to the most simple pious discourses. Paul made that view broader, and the story of Christ became part of the world's history. Inspiration and belief in the person of Christ were offered for consideration. In the midst of these movements and of the disturbances and party-battles which arose from them, a new doctrine and a new view stepped in. This was the theology of John. From the original simple belief on the ideal or on the superhuman essence in Christ, and from the Pauline view of Christ as a personality divine in powers and effects, they rose to speculation upon the God in the man Jesus, to whom they now gave the mysterious name of the Logos. Christ himself, from being something external came to be something internal. From this time they began to take up his work rather spiritually than historically, and in a broader manner.<sup>1</sup> If Baumgarten-Crusius means that the Gospel of John neglects the history of Jesus's life, and devotes itself to his word, he has overlooked two facts; namely, that Matthew and Luke contain much of the words of Jesus, and in return, that in John the history of Jesus's life, and especially the facts of his death and resurrection, have as facts a great deal of importance. At the same time, he has not explained how, upon this supposition, the difference between the two instructions is to be understood. His explanation<sup>2</sup> of the conception and presentation as arising from the spirit of the gospel which had become free

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten-Crusius, pp. xiv. xv.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. xxxiv.

and strong, does not agree well with his assurance that Christ certainly spoke exactly as the fourth Gospel represents him as speaking.<sup>1</sup> In the next place, he has overlooked the fact that, far from permitting the history of the life of Jesus to fall out of view behind his word, our evangelist wishes only to lead us on by the word to understand the life rightly. He is dealing with the essential meaning of the person and history, and not with some speculation or new doctrine which he has started. Besides, the notion that the fourth Gospel is an account of a new doctrine concerning Christ that was only put in the mouth of John is opposed by the fact that Baumgarten-Crusius holds to the decidedly historical character of the said Gospel. Scarcely any weight can be laid on "his theologizing about the Logos," for this "does not come up anywhere in the discourses of Jesus." As for the rest about "the speculative flight of the prologue," to which "even the most outspoken passages in Christ's own discourses about his person do not reach,"<sup>2</sup> we shall show, after a while, that the prologue contains nothing that did not appear in the discourses of Jesus, and that was not taken from them.

The New Testament doctrine — or perhaps we had better say, the word of God in the new covenant — has certainly had a history. Its history, however, is far different from that which Baumgarten-Crusius and most men along with him are accustomed to present or assume. The ruling view among these men is this: Each apostle or New Testament writer has at heart had his special system, separate from, and often, in essential or subordinate parts, opposed to that of every other. They emphasize the views of the person and work of Christ, and declare that these views developed and raised themselves from the lowest grade of Jewish knowledge clear up to the freest and most spiritual conception in Paulinism. Little by little the separate points in the doctrine concerning Christ shaped themselves out. At the end of the dogmatic movements appeared the highest, as pre-

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten-Crusius, p. xxxv.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

existence, likeness of essence with the Father, etc. It is but a step from this the easiest view to the view of the Tubingen school. They observe that the writings of the second century appear to stand on a lower stage of dogmatical knowledge than our Gospel, and hence they stretch out that first dogmatic movement even beyond that time. The common view makes the same fundamental mistake as this hypothesis, in supposing that Christianity is essentially speculation concerning Christ. Wrong as this is, it was just as incorrect to bring in the idea of a history of doctrine into the scriptures. Suppose that Christianity is really a present, essential union with Christ, and that the teaching of the scriptures is nothing but a doctrinal statement and explanation of that; then, there can be no development of the doctrine within the latter, except in so far as the former contains a historical progress. In the apostolic church new conceptions arose only in union with the scriptures. The historical conclusions at the different periods can, from this point of view, be told separately and progressively. But that is only continual statement of present knowledge, and a certain individual conception and turn of the same. It is not setting up new doctrines.

Just after the day of Pentecost the apostolic church did not need new doctrines concerning the person of Christ. With the outpouring of the Spirit the history of Jesus Christ came to a preliminary conclusion. The apostolic preachers of Christ, by mouth and pen, only stated and explained, in manifold changes and applications, the then present matters of fact. There was a history of the doctrine concerning Christ before this, because there was a history of Christ himself and of his self-witness. The knowledge of Christ was a very different thing after his resurrection from what it was when he first spoke openly of his death and resurrection. It was a very different thing when he began these prophecies from what it was when he stood at the beginning of his active ministry. It was a far different thing, too, when, at the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the apostles learned that Jesus had become the Lord, and had brought to a pre-

liminary conclusion all the Old Testament prophecies concerning him, from what it was while he tarried forty days upon the earth. At Pentecost they came to a full understanding of Christ. They understood the word of the Old Testament and the word of the self-witnessing Christ. Both of these joined in his history, and therefore their knowledge of his person lacked nothing (compare John ii. 22, and other passages). There was neither chance nor room given for the rising of a new doctrine or a new theology concerning Christ. There could be nothing but a manifold witnessing to one and the same known fact of Christ. Finally, when we see that the doctrine is only the interpretation of the history, we are not at all in a position to think or to say that some other then existing doctrine, as perhaps the doctrine of a Logos, was brought forward with the person of Christ, and bound up with the doctrine concerning it. But another thing had a history then, namely, the church of Jesus Christ. This had a progress. The church started in Israel. Then the gospel passed over to the heathen, and, consequently, purely Gentile Christian churches appeared. The church out of the two parts grew up as one. Israel lost its hold more and more, and the church had to draw back especially to Gentile Christian grounds. The perversity of Israel and the erring spirit of heathendom wished to seize a place in the church, and had to be cut off. The Jewish commonwealth fell, and the former separation of Jewish and Gentile Christians in the church lost its importance. Now, in view of all this progress, and in so far, also, as the apostolic church had a history, the apostles gained new perceptions. If they wish to speak of such things with Paul, they can only do it in so far as these things with their divinely-ordered historical office within the church stand in essential union. How, then, can it be said that John has brought out and laid down in his book some peculiar speculation on theology?

The history of the word of God in the New Testament takes altogether a different shape for us. We find neither room nor right here to speak of a history of doctrine. Both are

found in the church only after the apostles' time. To carry back this notion to the time of the founding would be laying aside the essential distinction of the two periods. As little can we agree with Baumgarten-Crusius's conception. We cannot even agree with Lücke, when he explains the difference between the Gospel of John and the synoptical Gospels by the progress of *πίστις* to *γνώσις*. The less dangerous this view appears, the more undecided it is. And the more decided it becomes, the more it leads us out of the pure doctrinal movements of the apostolic spirit within the church to the region of the false knowledge of the day. It would present John merely as giving a form to the contents of that knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Now, it is hard to conceive how an apostle could have accommodated<sup>2</sup> himself to the *gnosis* which was upturning the very foundations. How John, especially, to whom Lücke attributes the Gospel, and who is described to us in tradition as certainly not the most friendly in his relations to Cerinthus, could do this, is to me utterly inconceivable. This whole hypothesis falls to the ground when we observe that no special doctrine of a Logos is given in the Gospel, and that it tends not to *γνώσις*, but to *πίστις*. The fact that *πιστεύειν* is used for *γινώσκειν*,<sup>3</sup> as in other places for *ἀκούειν*, *ἀκουλουθεῖν*, etc., is not a proof for, but against, this theory. The last word of Christ (xx. 29), like the last word of the evangelist (xx. 31), speaks not of *γινώσκειν*, but of *πιστεύειν*. According to that, not the former, but the latter is the aim of the Gospel. And, if we compare the conclusion with the separate parts, we find throughout that *πίστις* in opposition to Jewish unbelief, and not *γνώσις* in its relation to belief,<sup>4</sup> is the essential and designed substance of the Gospel. If all comes to *πίστις*, we need not stop to prove that it has the same meaning in the Gospel of John as in the Epistles of Paul. Closer observation could easily show that its idea is the same. Notice

<sup>1</sup> Lücke, Vol. i. p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Compare Lücke, p. 215: "Thus John leads the Christian *gnosis* back to its true ground and purport in living belief."

just one fact. It is opposed to sight (xx. 29; compare Heb. xi.). Its object throughout is the essential purport and meaning of Christ and of his life. Its effect is *σωτηρια* in its fullest extent, as well as a salvation from the wrath of God (iii. 15 sq. 36).<sup>1</sup>

We have the gospel proclamation of Christ before us in a fourfold form. The different books do not offer different doctrines. They teach historically and preach for instruction one and the same Christ; only each has his own method. These various methods of preaching and teaching Christ are founded not in different conceptions, in progressive knowledge, and the like. They are determined by the form of the scope and of the historical stage within which and in relation to which Christ is made known. For the first church of Christ, within the bounds of Israel, the method of the first Gospel was the right form for preaching Christ. Hence Matthew used a definite material exactly fitted for this design. The next two Gospels show us what shape the same material takes when it is made known to Gentile Christian churches. These Gospels confine themselves to the same material, because they are neither apostolical, nor yet original, but of a secondary origin. Then something else came to be needed. The commonwealth of Israel fell to ruin, and the distinction between the Gentile and Jewish Christians within the Christian church lost its earlier meaning, so that it was no longer to be considered in the evangelical teaching concerning Christ. At this time, in opposition to the general enmity against belief in Christ, they needed the general proof of the necessity, possibility, and nature of belief. And against the reviling of Christ they needed the most general declaration of him. The fourth Gospel supplies this want. It presents the person and life of Christ in its most essential and most comprehensive significance for a church which by this time was simply the church of Christ united in one. As the separate divisions of the church were

<sup>1</sup> Compare, too, what Brückner, *ut supra*, says of the "prevailing practical interest and aim" of the fourth Gospel.

no longer of any importance as divisions, instead of presenting separate sides of the appearance of Christ in evangelical writings, they had but to tell plainly the whole of it. If any one chooses to call this a supplementing of the synoptists, seeing that, although not done out of respect to them, yet that it was not done without respect to them, we have no objections. It is unnecessary to show how hard it is to distinguish this from the common opinion, which speaks of John's Gospel as an addition to or a development of the apostolic theology.

We have remarked that there was need of an evangelical proclamation of Christ in opposition to a certain form or to certain appearances of the period. This leads directly to the next view of the polemical or apologetical purpose of our Gospel.

## 2. *The Polemical or Apologetical Purpose.*

There is scarcely a heresy that the ancients did not think our Gospel was directed against. Irenaeus names Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans; Jerome adds the Ebionites; Epiphanius continues *καὶ ἄλλας πολλὰς αἵρέσεις*; Victorinus Petavienensis, however, strays off to Valentinus. The same paths have been used ever since in searching for an answer to the question about the purpose of the Gospel and the explanation of its peculiarity. Hugo Grotius thinks that the Gnostics, the Judaizers, and the disciples of John are the ones aimed at by the evangelist. The Gnostics reckoned among their Eons, *λόγος, ζωή, μονογενής*, and *σωτήρ*, the Creator, Christ, and Jesus separate from each other. The evangelist proves that all these mean one and the same Jesus Christ. In like manner, he was against Cerinthus and Ebion, because they Judaized under the Christian name. And he also strikes at such as wished to be called disciples of John the Baptist, rather than of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Some, as Vitringa, confine the opposition to the Gnostics to the prologue. Others, as Hug, think

<sup>1</sup> Compare Grotius, *Annotationes in Evangelium κατὰ Ἰωάννην*. Works (London, 1679), tom. ii. Vol. i. p. 473.

that this contains the controversy against Cerinthus and the disciples of John the Baptist. They have made a great ado about the latter, since the last century. They believe that these disciples of John are the Sabæans that have been discovered.<sup>1</sup> Chapter i. 8, however, is the only passage in the Gospel that gives any support to this theory concerning the disciples of the Baptist. Yet such a view even of this passage is wrong. Olshausen misunderstands it. Striving against an exaggerated view of the Baptist, he makes the importance of this much more prominent. The meaning is, that, though he was not the Light himself, yet that it was his charge to bring about belief upon the Light. Hence the importance of his testimony, and hence the importance of a contempt for it.<sup>2</sup> It certainly is not easy to see why this book should contain a controversy against the disciples of John. It is much more likely that we should find the opposite in it. (Luther: "The evangelist praises John the Baptist, and says they could not do without his office.") In fact, as Baumgarten-Crusius<sup>3</sup> grants, there is no reference to such a controversy in either the general thought or compass. As to the polemical direction against the Gnostics, Lampe has already reminded us<sup>4</sup> that in itself it would be a very strange thing to make a historical polemical book at the same time with an evangelical book, and then not to show a trace of such polemical writing. He is right, though his demonstrations are not valid in all their details. Beyond dispute, the fourth Gospel does not bear the stamp of a polemical writing. These writers bring this notion with them to the study of the Gospel. They would never reach it by simply considering the book itself. They have tried in all sorts of ways to give these views a form that seems to fit.

Schneckenburger thinks that he finds a negative opposition to the Docetic gnosis.<sup>5</sup> He says that the evangelist has left

<sup>1</sup> Compare Lücke, Vol. i. pp. 222-227.

<sup>2</sup> Compare W. F. Besser, *Das Evangelium St. Johannis* (Halle, 1857), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ut supra*, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. p. 181.

<sup>5</sup> *Beitr. zur Einleit. VI.* (Stuttgart, 1842), *das Evang. Johannis und die Gnostiker*, pp. 60-68.

out everything which seemed to sanction the error of these Gnostics. The transfiguration, the agony in Gethsemane, and the cry of Jesus on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" are wanting. But Luke leaves the last out, too, and Matthew and Mark omit the strengthening of Christ by an angel. And if this were the case, why did John dare to mention the walking on the sea (vi. 16 sq.)? And so for other points. Lücke has already said enough to disprove that hypothesis.<sup>1</sup> If the anti-Docetic aim is so clear, how does Baur come to find plain Docetism in it? It is arbitrary to try to prove this by comparing *ὡς ἐν κρυπτῷ* with verses 15, 20, and 25, claiming that the failure to recognize Jesus indicates some change in his appearance. Lay aside the anti-Docetic purpose, and Baur could hardly have got this strange idea into his head. At all events, to assume fear of Gnostic misinterpretations as a motive for composition, is altogether unworthy of a New Testament writer, and, moreover, of an apostle. If the interpretation of the book does not compel recourse to a polemical reference to the Gnostic errors, — and the commentaries of De Wette, Lücke, and Baumgarten are sufficient vouchers for that, — and if there is no need of the supposition of this purpose, to explain the peculiarity of the book, then there is no room at all for such a supposition.

If the supposition of a polemical purpose is as wrong as that of supplementation, it will not mend the matter to join the two together, as Hug<sup>2</sup> and Ebrard do.

We read, thus, in the last: "The aim with which John wrote his Gospel lay, first, in an external and internal completion of the apostolic proclamation of Christ — to recall the events passed over by the synoptists, the journeys to the feasts, and the history from the baptism of Jesus to his open appearance, to bring to light those words and features of Jesus in which the speculative, mystical side of his work and character reveals itself; and secondly, in the warring, not only against Gnosticism and Ebionism, but also against the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. pp. 219–222.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. ii. pp. 166–171.

want of love and life.”<sup>1</sup> Again: “The polemical aim is directed, in the clearest manner,”<sup>2</sup> chiefly against Docetism, as i. 4 shows. And again: The plan of John was “to present Jesus in so far as the glory of the Father appeared in him,” so that he brings to perfection “the idea and the conception of the real, eternal *δόξα*, made manifest in the historical Jesus,” and the “*δόξα* as an object of speculation.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, outside of the condemnation of false estimates of John,<sup>4</sup> Ebrard has combined nearly all the different opinions which have been suggested for the design of the Gospel. No explanation is given, nor can any be given, to show how such a variety of purposes should form such a unity — how from such a multiplicity of points of view and aim a book of such unity as our Gospel certainly is could have arisen.

Schott<sup>5</sup> has replied to the whole hypothesis of a polemical purpose that there is nothing polemical in the whole Gospel. He prefers to speak of an apologetical purpose. Seyffarth<sup>6</sup> had, before that, named our Gospel “an apology for the sublime words of Jesus.”

I cannot see that this makes much difference. It comes to pretty much the same thing that we had to reject in the polemical purpose. Thus Schott<sup>7</sup> yields to those who think that the evangelist refers at one time to the disciples of John, who did not sufficiently recognize the Messianic worth of Jesus (i. 7, 8, 15, 19–34; iii. 26 sq.; v. 33 sq.; x. 41 sq.); at another time to the error of Cerinthus, who separated Christ from Jesus (i. generally, and especially i. 18); and then, again, to the opinions of the Docetae (i. 44; xix. 34; xx. 20, 27); and, lastly, to all doubts and scruples about the worth of the Saviour and the truth of his history (ix. 13 sq.; xi., especially 47 sq.), and about his death and his

<sup>1</sup> Ebrard, p. 831.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 142 nota.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 144.

<sup>5</sup> Schott, *Isagoge*, p. 144.

<sup>6</sup> *Ein Beitrag zur Special Characteristik der Johanneischen Schriften* (Leipzig, 1823), p. 39 sq.

<sup>7</sup> § 40, p. 144.

resurrection (xix. 34 sq.; xx. 24 sq.). Here, as before, arises the same dividedness of the thoughts and of the view of the evangelist, which is irreconcilable with the finished unity and internal necessity of the whole composition. In the discussion of the text we shall see that the passages to which Schott appeals do not support his view. Credner's attack<sup>1</sup> upon such attempts will ever stand to uphold the right view. De Wette<sup>2</sup> thinks as Schott does. He gives the Gospel an anti-Judaistic and an anti-Gnostic aim. But is the strife against Jewish particularism essentially stronger and more designed in John, especially when we think of iv. 22, than it is in the synoptists? Do not the latter teach the rejection of Israel and the calling of the Gentiles? And with regard to the second point, its purpose to combat the errors which "would not own the mutual agreement of the old and new revelation" cannot be so very clear, for Fishor and Schweizer have found exactly the opposite purpose.<sup>3</sup> Thus this is in the same situation as the above-mentioned contest against Docetism, which De Wette takes up too. The idea that the evangelist throughout wars against gnosis especially, — that he sought to give the true direction to the awakening Christian speculation upon the relation of Christ to God — leads us to Lücke. He has by preference given the polemical view this turn and form.

This scholar likewise calls our Gospel anti-Gnostic and anti-Ebionistic in its purpose.<sup>4</sup> But if the evangelist wished to show the essence and the fulness of Christ by the most comprehensive and most general declaration of him, how could his book have helped standing in opposition to Ebionism? It certainly could not well do otherwise. From the beginning to the end, therefore, it is in contradiction to the Ebionistic view. The contradiction is one that lies

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. pp. 243, 251 sq.

<sup>2</sup> *Kurze Erklärung des Evangeliums und der Briefe Johannis.* Von Dr. W. M. L. DeWette (3d ed. Leipzig, 1846), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Compare also Brückner's contesting of DeWette's view (4th ed. of DeWette), p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. p. 217.

necessarily in the thing itself. It did not need to be specially aimed at Ebionism, nor do separate passages show such an aim. The opposition is common to the whole book. According to Lücke, however, the anti-Gnostic relation is the prevailing one. But if we ask for the place at which it appears, he does not name the whole Gospel, as before, but only the prologue. In the rest of the Gospel the purpose does not rule, except in so far as the doctrine of a Logos overmasters the historical recital.<sup>1</sup> Now, of course, as this is peculiar to the author, he cannot present it in the discourses of Jesus. Moreover, as far as the Gospel is historical, there is no doctrine of a Logos in it, and so far, too, it is not anti-Gnostic. As the whole anti-Gnostic purpose is thus reduced to the doctrine of a Logos and to the prologue, how can this be called the prevailing purpose? See how this supposed relation of the Gospel escapes us when we try to grasp it. Look at the prologue, too. The ideas *ζωή*, *φῶς*, *σκοτία* are not a whit more anti-Gnostic here than in other parts of the Gospel. *Μονογενής*, as well, is used, not to oppose a Gnostic Eon of like name, but upon the ground of a later-given self-declaration of Jesus, and includes nothing more than that did. All these ideas rest altogether upon the words of Jesus himself, and are all drawn from his own proclamation of the same. We should not dare to say of Jesus's evidence concerning himself that it "refers to the speculative opposition of light and darkness, life and death, and the like," and we must not dare to say that of the evangelist, and on that account to speak of a "speculative tendency, and therefore of a philosophical cultivation of mind," in him.<sup>2</sup> Still less do Jesus and the evangelist refer to the "contrasts of eternity and time, God and creature, heaven and hell," in a "speculative" sense.<sup>3</sup> Whether the latter or the former contrasts are spoken of, the discourse is meant to be saving, and at the same time ethical and practical. Indeed, this is a rich conception. Where everything aims at the practical religious relation between God and man, it

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 217.<sup>2</sup> Against Ebrard, pp. 832 and 834.<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

certainly is not advisable to suppose that this was meant speculatively, and then to talk of a speculative purpose, and moreover of a philosophical cultivation of mind. After all, we are here led back to the single word *λόγος*, and to this solitary idea. I call it solitary, because there is no unfolding of its contents which would be different from the doctrinal contents not only of the Gospel, but also of the prologue, which were then present and complete, entirely apart from the Gospel. We stand, again, at a point where we are compelled to ask how it is conceivable that the author should have brought over a word and an idea from an unchristian view and from its sphere of thought, and used it in a modified sense, without somewhere stating this sense. On this account, too, we can find no authority for the position<sup>1</sup> that the evangelist intended to overpower the false Gnostic speculation by opposing to it that Christian gnosis and speculation which externally was like it. Should we say, with Thiersch,<sup>2</sup> that this Gospel is meant to raise the Nazarite view of Christ to true and full knowledge? But it is altogether unlikely that it was written "with Israelitish Christians in view." The sphere in which it rose, and for which it was first of all meant, was almost exclusively Gentile Christian. If, indeed, the *διασπορά* in 1 Pet. i. 1 necessarily marks Jewish Christians, then this position might be untenable. But it has already been said, by others, that i. 14, ii. 9 (compare Acts xxvi. 18), iii. 6, and iv. 8 of necessity point to Gentile Christians.<sup>3</sup> Acts viii. 4; xi. 19 show and teach that *διασπορά* could be said of Gentile Christians. The New Testament church had to scatter itself outside of Jerusalem, and the Christians also are *διασπαρέντες*, hence they live in *διασπορά*. Nor can we think it a matter of indifference that 1 Pet. i. 1 wants the article which James i. 1 has. Besides, the word is rather a mark of a condition than a firmly-fixed boundary of a society. In this expression, Peter sets the

<sup>1</sup> Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in das Neue Testament. Von H. E. F. Guericke (Leipzig, 1843), pp. 289-295.

<sup>2</sup> Kritik, p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Steiger.

Christians who are without in the world in contrast with the earthly centre of the church, Jerusalem below, just as in *παρρηθίμοις* he contrasts them with their heavenly home, the Jerusalem above. What we already know, however, from Paul's epistles, makes it clear that these churches in Asia Minor were made up chiefly of Gentile Christians. The Jewish Christian element had wholly blended itself with the preponderating mass, and the distinction between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians had here lost all importance. Judaism here took only a hostile position, and that outside of the church. We neither can say, with Lange,<sup>1</sup> that the Gospel was written to testify against the Jewish Christianity of the time, nor can we agree with like assertions by Thiersch. The book itself gives us an utterly different impression. The Jews and Judaism appear in it as the most outspoken opponents of Jesus. The Gospel is directed not against incomplete belief, but against unbelief. We shall not dare to say, with Thiersch,<sup>2</sup> that the first three evangelists—especially Matthew—represent a lower stage of knowledge, and that John represents the true and full knowledge. We have found the same things in both. They only make use in different ways of the same facts and knowledge. If, however, the Gospel opposes not a lower belief, but unbelief and Judaism as the representative of it, then it is as incorrect for Ebrard<sup>3</sup> to talk of "opposition to Ebionism within the church," as for others to talk of opposition to Gnosticism within the church.<sup>4</sup> Both Ebrard and Thiersch<sup>5</sup> allow that it is aimed at the Gnosticism of Cerinthus, which was certainly outside of the church. For the rest, Thiersch, as I see, in his last book,<sup>6</sup> has so modified his view of the design of the Gospel of John that I agree with him with pleasure.

Suppose that we reject all these purposes. It does not

<sup>1</sup> Beitr. zur ältesten Kirchengesch. I. Die Ebioniten und Nicolaiten (Leipzig, 1828), p. 124 sq.

<sup>2</sup> p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> p. 831.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> p. 262.

<sup>6</sup> The Church in the Apostolic Age. By H. W. J. Thiersch. Translated by T. Carlyle (London, 1852), pp. 247-249.

follow that we must put this book out of all sympathy with its age, as Reuss does, and think that it is only the exposition of a speculative idea. Credner<sup>1</sup> had confidently thrown aside the "supposed subordinate aim, which, in fact, they had to treat as the chief aim," and said that they should take from the book itself and prove in it the unity of the recital conditioned on the aim. Reuss<sup>2</sup> agrees with him so closely that, like Baumgarten-Crusius,<sup>3</sup> he refers exclusively to xx. 31. Lücke asks how the peculiarity of the book is explained by this purpose, since it is common to all the evangelists? He tries to answer by saying that the fourth is distinguished from the others by being a dogmatic or speculative Gospel. Baumgarten-Crusius is certainly right in declaring against this. After all that we have presented above, there is no need of further proof that we cannot agree with the view that this book contains ideas which were begotten by speculation, and then joined in form to the discourses of Jesus, or much more were sought out and proved in them.<sup>4</sup> In the first place, as we have learned, the Gospel is too strictly historical for this. As to other things, the evangelist's knowledge has not that independence and individual originality which it must have had according to Reuss's opinion. It rests, to a great degree, on the fit self-communication of Jesus, as Reuss is inclined to allow from the new life of the evangelist.<sup>5</sup> Finally, however, we are not able to think of the evangelist as so much out of all relation to the state of the times and the essential need of the church when he wrote his Gospel about Jesus, that we can understand the supposition of a theological treatise of such a kind. Writing and publishing such a treatise would bear in a high degree the stamp of arbitrariness. The evangelist was too little a mere Christian philosopher and speculative theologian, and too much a preacher of the word, whose duty it was to witness of Christ. He could not write such a book.

<sup>1</sup> & 109. Vol. i. p. 243 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Die Geschichte der heiligen Schriften neuen Testaments entworfen von Edward Reuss (Braunschweig, 1853), § 222, p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> p. xli

<sup>4</sup> Reuss, § 214, p. 203, 204.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. § 219, p. 208.

To get rid of this uncertainty, the school of Baur tried to bring back the point of the ideal purpose into more living contact with temporal relations.

### 3. *The View of the School of Baur.*

Baur combines the hypotheses of Strauss and Br. Bauer. He supposes that the Gospels were built up both out of fabulous tradition, and at the same time out of the Christian consciousness. Thus he lays down for the fourth Gospel a traditional basis, but one which is in many ways modified by the ruling idea, and is joined to discovered facts. The external historical connection is in his eyes simply the reflection of the idea. This idea, he thinks, could not have been drawn from the circumstances of the appearance of Christ himself. In the first place, it was brought into union with the history of Jesus. Hence it must have been essentially modified throughout. This *petitio principii* he has not found it easy to make good. The idea is naturally that of the Logos which was found in the whole period. The writer of the fourth Gospel took it up with keen insight and great skill, developed it fully, and settled it. The Gospel is nothing but the self-development of this idea, and the objective history is a mere dialectic process. This agrees with his view of the early church. To him the early church presents different parties or schools striving with one another about all sorts of ideas. At last they determined to establish a reconciliation of the various views, and so out of the schools of the early Christians to make the Catholic church. Reuss made the idea live in solitude. This view removes it from solitude to the movements of time, and gives it manifold temporal relations. But then we are referred at once to the second century. So much is settled.<sup>1</sup> The essence of this book rests in the completion of doctrine. Now, the invariable law of development is that intellectual movements progress from incomplete to complete. Manifold kindred appearances of the second cen-

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Das Evangelium und die Briefe Johannis nach ihrem Lehrbegriff dargestellt* von Dr. A. Hilgenfeld (Halle 1849), p. iv.

tury stand on a lower stage than the fourth Gospel. Therefore the Gospel must come after those. They might; on this principle, have put it too early; though, in fact, they thrust it away as far as possible. There must, however, be some limit, beyond which opposing facts become too numerous and too undeniable. This limit lies somewhere about the year 170, or, according to Hilgenfeld, 150. Schwegler was the first to publish this discovery in regard to our Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Montanism and the fourth Gospel agree in relation to the clear dogmatic separation of *λόγος* and *πνεῦμα*,<sup>2</sup> which before that were always used interchangeably by the Fathers. The question arises, Which of the two is the later? If Montanism nowhere refers to the Gospel<sup>3</sup> of John, as it might have been expected to, the open controversy against the Asia Minor passover carries it still later.<sup>4</sup> It could not have been written until after the middle of the second century.<sup>5</sup> At that point, however, the Jewish Christianity and the Gentile Christianity would be represented by Montanism and Gnosticism. The fourth Gospel, therefore, holds an offensive, as much as an accommodating<sup>6</sup> position towards both the movements of the period. The former it opposes by its doctrine about the Trinity; the latter by its gnosis.<sup>7</sup> And as against gnosis, it is hostile also to Ebionism.<sup>8</sup> The same attempts to explain the peculiarity of the Gospel which we had to reject above come back here. The difference is that the second century is put in the place of the first. That makes the matter only so much the worse. Against all this comes the fact which Thiersch has so forcibly called attention to.<sup>9</sup> The gnostic system of the second century was much more developed, and the strife against it was much more special, than they were in the end of the century of the apostles, and than they appear to be in the Gospel of John. How should two

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Montanismus und chr. Kirche des 2. Jahrh.* By Dr. F. C. A. Schwegler (Tübingen, 1841), pp. 183-215.

<sup>2</sup> *Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit Gottes*, I. 1. 2 (Tübingen, 1841), Vol. i. p. 164

<sup>3</sup> Schwegler, p. 189.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 195-198.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 200, 203 sq.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 204 sq.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 211 sq.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 205-210.

<sup>9</sup> *Kriuk*, p. 241 sq. 251 sq.

passing remarks (xiii. 1, 29; xviii. 28), whose interpretation, moreover, is by no means settled, be able to, or intend to decide the passover controversy? Such a decision would have been much more clear and much more emphatic. Dietlein, in his book upon the early Christianity, has sufficiently refuted the idea which lies at the bottom of this. It is that Christianity is a doctrine, an idea, a new philosophy of the divine humanity whose consciousness came forth first in Jesus of Nazareth, and the idea of which then, like all truths, came into validity only after a struggle of one-sided views.

Baur's view does not differ much from this. He shows that the essential contents consist in the movements of the supposed relations of the Logos to the world. The former put on the things allied to the latter, and put away the things contradictory to it. Belief is presented as the synthesis of the two. The question is asked how this Gospel by the great unknown obtained so speedy an entrance and such a great, positive importance in the church. He replies that, though it holds itself above all strife, yet that it touches all the disputed questions and interests of the time. Now, we shall not recall how Hug and Thiersch have directed attention to the use of the Gospel by the heretics of the middle of the second century, and that this necessitates the already generally recognized validity of the book. Nor shall we repeat the often-made reference to the infinite difference between this book and all the productions of the second century. How could a work of such original intellectual greatness as our Gospel have arisen in an age of such literature as that of the second century is? Or how could the author of such a book have remained unknown, while we seem to know pretty much all the authors of so many stupid, dull books of this period? Nor can we delay to show that he who wishes to oppose, as has been done, to these two propositions the example of the Clementine Epistle, which is so often insipid, betrays a complete unfitness to judge of intellectual productions, as well as ignorance of the fact that that was and still is an isolated book, while the fourth

Gospel became at once the property of the whole Christian church.

We let all this pass. The question of criticism is not before us now. We may refer to the circumstance that Baur presents the fourth Gospel as free from the color of party position, entering into no mooted questions, but only grazing their borders. Such a book is not suited to decide an active strife, or to end a great period of vehement intellectual battles. In the best case, it would be ignored by the different parties, and only become important at a later time, after the war was at an end. On the contrary, we see that our Gospel is in possession of the greatest validity and importance by the middle of the second century. It may be remarked that Baur finds an opponent partly in himself, and partly in his scholar, Hilgenfeld. Baur names gnosis, the idea of the Logos, Montanism, and the passover controversy as the appearances of the period to which the Gospel pays conscious and designed respect. He tries to explain the character and significance, as well as the unity, of the fourth Gospel out of a regard to these and a purpose to decide such disputed questions. Here he falls, in a moment, into the very mistake for which he blames Lücke so sharply. He explains the Gospel not out of itself and its fundamental idea, but out of the external circumstances of the period. And thus he destroys again, in part, the good he had done by his energetic attempt to explain the whole book and its unity out of the fundamental thoughts. Hilgenfeld opposes him, as far as I can see, with perfect right; because he too is not once satisfied with the idea, but refers also to the circumstances of the time, so that only one half of the task is occupied with the explanation of the Gospel out of itself.<sup>1</sup> We must seek from the histories of doctrine what was the period and what was the form of the dogmatic consciousness which correspond to this book. Now, Hilgenfeld thinks he has found these historical-doctrinal positions by a comparison with the Valentinian gnosis. The likeness of

<sup>1</sup> Hilgenfeld, pp. 17-19.

the two, especially in the prologue, is evident. There were, namely, three periods of gnosis:<sup>1</sup> First, the Jewish; then, that free from the Jewish form, though still recognizing Judaism and Jewish Christianity; and, at the last, that which was hostile to both Judaism and Jewish Christianity. The Gospel of John stands between the second and third periods,<sup>2</sup> between Valentinus's and Marcion's doctrine.<sup>3</sup> The fact that it makes the transition from the former to the latter appears especially in one point. Like Marcion, it unites the multitude of Valentinus's Eons into one. That has its foundation in the practical purpose. It puts practical piety above speculation.<sup>4</sup> It was fit that this practical character should lift up the Logos from the subordinate position which was assigned to it in Gnosticism, to give it the high place of the Only-begotten, and to gather in it the whole world of eons.<sup>5</sup> It is no trouble to answer this, the parallel is so quickly and so easily drawn. The whole way in which the school of Valentinus uses this book speaks unanswerably against the hypothesis, especially as Hilgenfeld puts the Gospel in the year 150.<sup>6</sup> The sure knowledge of the church authors who make mention of this Gospel is fatal to the view in question. Everywhere high simplicity is the first, and arbitrary wantonness the second. The order is never reversed. It is to be regretted that so much knowledge and honest industry has been wasted, and come at last to such miserable foolishness. The critic of Baur's school has reached such an extremity that he cannot possibly stay there long. The supposition is the same as before. The Christian religion is a knowledge. The fourth Gospel contains the completed knowledge, as it is borne in the thought and in the self-consciousness.<sup>7</sup> A great doctrinal movement must have preceded this form of religion.<sup>8</sup> Therefore the Gospel belongs to the middle of the second century.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hilgenfeld, p. 66. <sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 67. <sup>3</sup> p. 123. <sup>4</sup> p. 123 sq. <sup>5</sup> p. 132 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Compare Thiersch, Kritik, pp. 323 sq. 391 sq. Ebrard, p. 903 sq. and F. Bleek, Beiträge zur Evangelien Kritik (Berlin, 1846), p. 214 sq.

<sup>7</sup> Hilgenfeld, p. 819.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 321. For the rest compare Brückner (4th ed. of DeWette), p. xxxi sq.

Thus we are brought back to the fundamental idea, and Lücke's question meets us again. How is the peculiarity of the book to be explained out of this? Lücke recalls the general purpose of all the Gospels. Baur thinks to explain the peculiarity of the Gospel by the peculiarity of the fundamental idea. There is nothing said about the Logos after the prologue, and yet he sees the idea of the Logos developed in the Gospel. He has thus in an arbitrary manner given the fundamental thoughts of the book itself as the purport of it. We saw, however, that these thoughts were not essentially different from the doctrinal contents of the synoptical Gospels? Could it be the same with the idea of the Logos? Is this entirely peculiar?

How would Köstlin's view do?<sup>1</sup> He says that the distinction of this book consists in its presenting Christianity as absolute religion, in opposition to Judaism and heathenism. It gives a doctrinal declaration which is at the same time apologetical and polemical. The book intends to teach not only religion, but also a history of religion. It presents Christianity as it became and was and was to continue to be, in opposition to Mosaic teaching and to polytheism.<sup>2</sup> We shall not answer, with Hilgenfeld,<sup>3</sup> that those whom the Gospel opposes are to be sought inside, and not outside of the church, and that who they were must be learned from the history of doctrine, and not from the New Testament. The last is arbitrary, and the first is wrong. There is an opposition in the Gospel, not to Judaism, however, but to the Jews. No opposition to heathenism can be found in it. Where heathen come into view, they appear as inclined to believe. The heathen world is mentioned as called to believe. Nor can they say that it gives a history of religion. It does not speak of the mutual relations of the religious powers in the world. It treats of the personal relation to Christ. It does not deal with religion as such, but only in so far as it existed in the person of Jesus Christ and in the personal

<sup>1</sup> Lehrbegr. d. Ev. und d. Br. Joh. (Berlin, 1843).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 40 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Hilgenfeld, p. 14 sq.

relation to him. Therefore it is not apologetical and polemical; but it is a testimony and an instruction. It is testimony concerning Christ and the society united with him by faith. And it contains instruction to the latter.

This brings us to our own answer to the question as to the final design of the Gospel. We shall scarcely need to do more than gather the results of the previous inquiries.

[To be continued].

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## ARTICLE II.

### THE DIACONATE.

BY REV. G. ANDERSON, PROFESSOR IN NEWTON THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION.

THE question has recently been raised, whether the diaconate was an office in the apostolic church. Some have contended that it was not; but rather an ecclesiastical growth of a later date, and that if we would return to apostolic simplicity the office, as it now generally exists in our churches, must be discarded. If this be so, we ought to know it, and act accordingly. Our fundamental principle is, that the Scriptures alone are our guide in all matters of faith and practice. To this principle we should unhesitatingly conform, whatever may be the result. We should not shrink from its application, even if it should overturn customs which have been most venerated by us, and should lead us to act contrary to all the teachings of our fathers. In this there will be universal agreement.

Let us then examine the Scriptures on the question at issue. In this examination we must bear in mind that the polity of the New Testament churches grew up gradually. Christ laid its foundations when he gave to his disciples the ordinances, — baptism and the Lord's supper, — and the great law of discipline found in Matt. xviii. On these foundations the apostles built, as the necessities of the churches,