

which may even prepare us for it if it rest upon other sufficient grounds. In the meantime he only dispels the idea that our resurrection bodies either need or will be the same as our present bodies; that they cannot be bodies at all if they are adapted to a heavenly, not an earthly, world; and that the changes we are to undergo must forbid our being hereafter essentially the same personalities that we are now.

Having accomplished this, St. Paul is free—free from having to deal with doubts or to answer difficulties. He is free to spring exultant from the earth, and to expatiate in that glorious realm of hope which is associated with the thought of his risen and exalted Lord.

W. MILLIGAN.

*INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE AUTHENTICITY
AND GENUINENESS OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.*

III.

NOR, when we travel beyond the city and its suburbs, does the writer's knowledge desert him. One instance must suffice; but it is, if I mistake not, so convincing, that it may well serve in place of many.

The country of the Samaritans lay between Judæa and Galilee, so that a person journeying from the one region to the other, unless he were prepared to make a detour, must necessarily pass through it. This was the case with our Lord and His apostles, as related in the fourth chapter. The high-road from Jerusalem passes through some very remarkable scenery. The mountain ridges of Ebal and Gerizim run parallel to each other from east to west, not many hundred feet apart, thus inclosing a narrow valley between them. Eastward this valley opens out into a

plain, a rare phenomenon in this country—"one mass of corn unbroken by a boundary or hedge," as it is described by one who has seen it. Up the valley westward, shut in between these mountain barriers, lies the modern town of Nablûs, the ancient Shechem. The road does not enter the valley, but traverses the plain, running at right angles to the gorge, and thus touching the eastern bases of the mountain ridges as they fall down into the level ground. Here at the mouth of the valley is a deep well, even now descending "to a depth of seventy feet or more," and formerly, before it had been partially filled with accumulated rubbish, we may well believe deeper still. In the words of Dean Stanley :

"Of all the *special* localities of our Lord's life in Palestine, this is almost the only one absolutely undisputed. By the edge of this well, in the touching language of the ancient hymn, 'quærens me sedisti lassus. Here on the great road through which 'He must needs go' when 'He left Judæa, and departed into Galilee,' He halted, as travellers still halt, in the noon or evening of the spring day, by the side of the well. Up that passage through the valley His disciples 'went away into the city,' which He did not enter. Down the same gorge came the woman to draw water, according to the unchanged custom of the East. . . . Above them, as they talked, rose 'this mountain' of Gerizim, crowned by the temple, of which vestiges still remain, where the fathers of the Samaritan sect 'said men ought to worship.' . . . And round about them, as He and she thus sate or stood by the well, spread far and wide the noble plain of waving corn. It was still winter, or early spring, 'four months yet to the harvest,' and the bright golden ears of those fields had not yet 'whitened' their unbroken expanse of verdure. But as He gazed upon them, they served to suggest the glorious vision of the distant harvest of the Gentile world, which with each successive turn of the conversation unfolded itself more and more distinctly before Him, as He sate (so we gather from the narrative) absorbed in the opening prospect, silent amidst His silent and astonished disciples."

The scrupulous accuracy of the geographical and archæological details in St. John's account of the conversation with the Samaritan woman will have appeared already from this quotation. I will only ask you to consider for a moment

how naturally they occur in the course of the narrative, so naturally and so incidentally that without the researches of modern travellers the allusions would be entirely lost to us. I think that this consideration will leave but one alternative. Either you have here written, as we are constantly reminded, in an uncritical age and among an uncritical people, the most masterly piece of romance-writing which the genius and learning of man ever penned in any age; or you have (what universal tradition represents it to be) a genuine work of an eye-witness and companion of our Lord. Which of these two suppositions does less violence to historical probability I will leave to yourselves to determine.

Follow then the narrative in detail. An unknown Traveller is sitting at the well. His garb, or His features, or His destination show Him to be a Jew. A woman of the country comes to draw water from the well, and He asks her to give Him to drink. She is surprised that He, a Jew, is willing to talk so freely to her, a Samaritan. And here I would remark that the explanation which follows, "For the Jews have no dealings with" (or rather, "do not associate with") "the Samaritans," is the evangelist's own, a fact obscured by the ordinary mode of printing in our English Bibles. Hitherto, though the scene is very natural and very real, there is nothing which a fairly clever artist might not have invented. But from this point onwards follow in rapid succession various historical and geographical allusions, various hints of individual character in the woman, various aspects of Divine teaching on our Lord's part, all closely interwoven together, each suggesting and suggested by another, in such a manner as to preclude any hypothesis of romance or forgery. "Thou wouldest have asked, and I would have given thee living water." "Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is *deep*. . . . Art Thou greater than our father Jacob?" And so the

conversation proceeds, one point suggesting the next in the most natural way. Take, for instance, the reference to Gerizim. "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain." Observe that there is no mention in the context of any mountain in the neighbourhood; that even here, where it is mentioned, its name is not given: but suddenly the woman, partly to divert the inconvenient tenour of the conversation, partly to satisfy herself on one important point of difference between the Samaritans and the Jews, avails herself of the newly found prophet's presence, and, pointing to the overhanging heights of Gerizim, puts the question to Him. The mention of the sacred mountain, like the mention of the depth of the well, draws forth a new spiritual lesson. "Not in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem. . . . God is a spirit." The woman saith, "When Messias cometh, He will tell us all things." Jesus saith, "I that speak unto thee am He."

At this point the disciples approach from the valley, with the provisions which they had purchased in the city, and rejoin their Master. They are surprised to find Him so engaged. Here again an error in the English version obscures the sense. Their marvel was, not that He talked with *the* woman, but that He talked with *a* woman. It was a rabbinical maxim, "Let no man talk with a woman in the street (in public), no, not with his own wife." The narrowness of His disciples was shocked that He, their own rabbi, should be so wanting to Himself as to disregard this recognised precept of morality. The narrator assumes the knowledge with which he himself was so familiar.

So the conversation with the woman closes. With natural eagerness she leaves her pitcher, and hurries back to the city with her news. With natural exaggeration she reports there that the stranger has told her all things that ever she did.

A conversation with the disciples follows, which is hardly less remarkable, but from which I must be content to select one illustration only. I think that it must be allowed, that the reference to the harvest is wholly free from suspicion, as regards the manner of its introduction. It is unpremeditated, for it cannot be severed from the previous part of the conversation, out of which it arises. It is unobtrusive, for the passage itself makes no attempt to explain the local allusion (which, without the experience of modern travellers would escape notice): "There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest. Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." And yet, when we once realize the scene, when in imagination our eye ranges over that vast expanse of growing corn—so unusual in Palestine, however familiar in corn-growing England—we are at once struck with the truthfulness and the significance of this allusive parable.

I have thus endeavoured to show, by taking a few instances, the accuracy of the writer's knowledge in all that relates to the history, the geography, the institutions, the thoughts and feelings of the Jews. If however we had found accuracy, and nothing more, we might indeed have reasonably inferred that the narrative was written by a Jew of the mother-country, who lived in a very early age, before time and circumstance had obliterated the traces of Palestine, as it existed in the first century; but we could not safely have gone beyond this. But unless I have entirely deceived myself, the manner in which this accurate knowledge betrays itself justifies the further conclusion that we have before us the genuine narrative of an eye-witness, who records the events just as they occurred in natural sequence.

I have discussed the accuracy of the external allusions. Let me now apply another test. The representation of

character is perhaps the most satisfactory criterion of a true narrative, as applied to an age before romance-writing had been studied as an art.

We are all familiar with the principal characters in the gospel history: Peter, John, Philip, Thomas, Pilate, the sisters Mary and Martha, and several others which I might mention; each standing before us with an individuality, which seems to place him or her within the range of our own personal knowledge. Have we ever asked ourselves to which evangelist above the rest we owe this personal acquaintance with the actors in this great drama?

When the question is once asked, the answer cannot be doubtful. It is true indeed that we should have known St. Peter without the narrative of the Fourth Evangelist, though he adds several minute points, which give additional life to the portrait. It is true that Pilate is introduced to us in the other gospels, though without St. John we should not have been able to read his heart and character, his proud Roman indifference and his cynical scorn. But, on the other hand, take the case of Thomas. Of this apostle nothing is recorded in the other evangelists, and yet he stands out before us, not as a mere lay figure, on whose stiff, mechanical form the artist may hang a moral precept or a doctrinal lesson by way of drapery, but as a real, living, speaking man, at once doubtful and eager, at once hesitating and devoted—sceptical, not because his nature is cold and unsympathetic, but because his intellect moves more cautiously than his heart, because the momentous issues which belief involves bid him pause before he closes with it; at one moment endeavouring to divert his Master's purpose of going up to Jerusalem, where certain destruction awaits Him: at the next, ready to share the perils with Him, "Let us also go with Him"; at one moment resisting the testimony of direct eye-witnesses and faithful friends to his Master's resurrection: at the next, overwhelmed

by the evidence of his senses, and expressing the depth of his conviction in the earnest confession, "My Lord and my God."

I must satisfy myself with one other example. The character of the sisters Martha and Mary presents a striking contrast. They are mentioned once only in the other gospels, in the familiar passage of St. Luke, where they appear respectively as the practical, bustling housewife, who is busied about many things, and the devout, contemplative, absorbed disciple, who chooses the one thing needful. In St. John also this contrast reappears; but the characteristics of the two sisters are brought out in a very subtle way. In St. Luke the contrast is summed up, as it were, in one definite incident; in St. John it is developed gradually in the course of a continuous narrative. And there is also another difference. In St. Luke the contrast is direct and trenchant, a contrast (one might almost say) of light and darkness. But in St. John the characters are shaded off, as it were, into each other. Both alike are beloved by our Lord, both alike send to Him for help, both alike express their faith in His power, both alike show deep sorrow for their lost brother. And yet notwithstanding this the difference of character is perceptible throughout the narrative. It is Martha who, with her restless activity, goes out to meet Jesus, while Mary remains in the house weeping. It is Martha who holds a conversation with Jesus, argues with Him, remonstrates with Him, and in the very crisis of their grief shows her practical common sense in deprecating the removal of the stone. It is Mary who goes forth silently to meet Him, silently and tearfully, so that the bystanders suppose her to be going to weep at her brother's tomb; who, when she sees Jesus, falls down at His feet; who, uttering the same words of faith in His power as Martha, does not qualify them with the reservation; who infects all the bystanders with the intensity

of her sorrow, and crushes the human spirit of our Lord Himself with sympathetic grief.

And when we turn to the second occasion in which the two sisters are introduced by St. John, the contrast is still the same. Martha is busied in the homely duties of hospitality towards Jesus and her other guests; but Mary brings her choicest and most precious gift to bestow upon Him, at the same time showing the depth of her humility and the abandonment of her devotion by wiping His feet with her hair.

In all this narrative the evangelist does not once direct attention to the contrast between the two sisters. He simply relates the events of which he was an eye-witness without a comment. But the two were real, living persons, and therefore the difference of character between them develops itself in action.

I have shown hitherto that, whatever touchstone we apply, the Fourth Gospel vindicates itself as a trustworthy narrative, which could only have proceeded from a contemporary and an eye-witness. But nothing has hitherto been adduced which leads to the identification of the author as the Apostle St. John. Though sufficient has been said to vindicate the *authenticity*, the *genuineness* is yet untouched.

It is said by those who deny its apostolic origin, that the unknown author, living in the middle of the second century, and wishing to gain a hearing for a modified gospel suited to the wants of his age, dropped his own personality, and shielded himself under the name of St. John the son of Zebedee.

Is this a true representation of the fact? Is it not an entire though unconscious misrepresentation? John is not once mentioned by name throughout the twenty-one chapters of this Gospel. James and John, the sons of

Zebedee, occupy a prominent place in all the other evangelists. In this Fourth Gospel alone neither brother's name occurs. The writer does once, it is true, speak of the "sons of Zebedee"; but in this passage, which occurs in the last chapter (xxi. 2), there is not even the faintest hint of any connexion between the writer himself and this pair of brothers. He mentions them in the third person, as he might mention any character whom he had occasion to introduce.

Now is not this wholly unlike the proceeding of a forger who was simulating a false personality? Would it not be utterly irrational under these circumstances to make no provision for the identification of the author, but to leave everything to the chapter of accidents? No discredit, indeed, is thrown on the genuineness of a document by the fact that the author's name appears on the forefront. This is the case with the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides; it is the case also with the epistles of Paul and Peter and James, and with the Apocalypse of John. But, on the supposition of forgery, it was a matter of vital moment that the work should be accepted as the genuine production of its pretended author. The two instances of early Christian forgeries which I brought forward in an earlier part of this lecture will suffice as illustrations. The *Gospel of the Infancy* closes with a distinct declaration that it was written by James. The *Clementine Homilies* affirm the pretended authorship in the opening words, "I Clement, being a Roman citizen." Even if our supposed forger could have exercised this unusual self-restraint in suppressing the simulated author's name, would he not have made it clear by some allusion to his brother James, or to his father Zebedee, or to his mother Salome? The policy which he has adopted is as suicidal as it is unexpected.

How then do we ascertain that it was written by John the son of Zebedee? I answer, first of all, that it is tradi-

tionally ascribed to him, as the *Phædo* is ascribed to Plato, or the *Antigone* to Sophocles; and, secondly, that from a careful examination of indirect allusions and casual notices, from a comparison of things said and things unsaid, we arrive at the same result by a process independent of external tradition. But a forger could not have been satisfied with trusting to either of these. External tradition was quite beyond the reach of his control. In this particular case, as we shall see, the critical investigation requisite is so subtle, and its subject-matter lies so far below the surface, that a forger, even supposing him capable of constructing the narrative, would have defeated his own purpose by making such demands on his readers.

For let us follow out this investigation. In the opening chapter of the gospel there is mention of a certain disciple whose name is not given (i. 35, 37, 40). This anonymous person (for it is a natural, though not a certain inference, that the same is meant throughout) reappears again in the closing scene before and after the passion, where he is distinguished as the disciple whom Jesus loved? At length, but not till the concluding verses of the Gospel, we are told that this anonymous disciple is himself the writer: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things."

In accordance with this statement we find that those particular scenes in which this anonymous disciple is recorded as taking a part are related with peculiar minuteness and vividness of detail. Such is the case, for instance, with the notices of the Baptist and of the call of the earliest disciples. Such again is the case with the conversation at the last supper, with the scene over the fire in the hall of Caiaphas's house, with certain other incidents connected with the crucifixion, and with the scene on the Lake of Galilee after the resurrection.

Who then is this anonymous disciple? On this point

the Gospel furnishes no information. We arrive at the identification, partly by a process of exhaustion, partly by attention to some casual incidents and expressions.

Comparing the accounts in the other gospels, it seems safe to assume that he was one of the inner circle of disciples. This inner circle comprised the two pairs of brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John—if indeed Andrew deserves a place here. Now he cannot have been Andrew, because Andrew appears in company with him in the opening chapter; nor can he have been Peter, because we find him repeatedly associated with Peter in the closing scenes. Again, James seems to be excluded; for James fell an early martyr, and external and internal evidence alike point to a later date for this Gospel. Thus by a process of exhaustion we are brought to identify him with John the son of Zebedee.

With this identification all the particulars agree.

First. He is called among the earliest disciples; and from his connexion with Andrew (i. 40, 44) it may be inferred that he was a native of Bethsaida in the neighbourhood.

Secondly. At the close of his Master's life, and after his Master's resurrection, we find him especially associated with Simon Peter. This position exactly suits John, who in the earliest days of the Church takes his place by the side of Peter in the championship of faith.

Thirdly. Unless the beloved disciple be John the son of Zebedee, this person who occupies so prominent a place in the account of the other evangelists, and who stood in the foremost rank in the estimation of the early Church as a pillar apostle, does not once appear in the Fourth Gospel, except in the one passage where "the sons of Zebedee" are mentioned and summarily dismissed in a mere enumeration of names. Such a result is hardly credible.

Lastly. Whereas in the other evangelists John the

Baptist is very frequently distinguished by the addition of this surname, and always so distinguished where there is any possibility of confusing him with the son of Zebedee, in this gospel alone the forerunner is never once called John the Baptist. To others some distinguishing epithet seemed needed. To the son of Zebedee there was only one famous John; and therefore when he had occasion to mention him, he naturally spoke of him as John simply, without any addition. Is it conceivable, I would ask, that any forger would have lost sight of himself so completely, and used natural language of John the son of Zebedee with such success, as to observe this very minute and unobtrusive indication of personality?

I have addressed myself more directly to the theory of the Tübingen school, either as propounded by Baur, or as modified by later critics, which denies at once the historical character of this Gospel and its apostolic authorship, and places it in the middle or latter half of the second century. But there is an intermediate position between rejecting its worth as a historic record and accepting St. John as its author, and this position has been taken up by some. They suppose it to have been composed by some disciple or disciples of St. John from reminiscences of their master's teaching, and thus they are prepared to allow that it contains some historical matter which is valuable. You will have seen however that most of the arguments adduced, though not all, are equally fatal to this hypothesis as the other. The process by which, after establishing its authenticity, we succeeded in identifying its author is, if I mistake not, alone sufficient to overthrow this solution. Indeed this theory is exposed to a double set of objections, and it has nothing to recommend it.

I have already taken up more time than I had intended, and yet I feel that very much has been left unsaid. But I

venture to hope that certain lines of investigation have been indicated, which, if carefully and soberly followed out, can only lead to one result. Whatever consequences may follow from it, we are compelled on critical grounds to accept this Fourth Gospel as the genuine work of John the son of Zebedee.

Some among my hearers perhaps may be disappointed that I have not touched on some well-known difficulties, though these have been grossly exaggerated. Some have to be satisfactorily explained; of others probable, or at least possible, solutions have been given; while others still remain on which we are obliged to suspend judgment until some new light of history is vouchsafed. It is not from too much light, but from too little light, that the historical credibility of this Gospel has suffered. Each new discovery made, each old fact elucidated sets at rest some disputed question. If the main fact of the genuineness be established, the special difficulties can well afford to wait.

One word more, and I conclude. I have treated this as a purely critical question, carefully eschewing any appeal to Christian instincts. As a critical question, I wish to take a verdict upon it. But as I could not have you think that I am blind to the theological issues directly or indirectly connected with it, I will close with this brief confession of faith. I believe from my heart that the truth which this Gospel more especially enshrines—the truth that Jesus Christ is the very Word incarnate, the manifestation of the Father to mankind—is the one lesson which, duly apprehended, will do more than all our feeble efforts to purify and elevate human life here by imparting to it hope and light and strength, the one study which alone can fitly prepare us for a joyful immortality hereafter.

J. B. DUNELM.
