THE PERSONALITY OF THE FOURTH EVANGELIST.

Professor Burkitt, in his recent book, The Gospel History and its Transmission, in speaking of the Dialogues between Jesus and the Jews in the Gospel of St. John, says of the form in which they are cast, that "the only possible explanation is that the work is not history, but something else cast in historical form." From this point of view, he goes on to say, "The question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel is a matter of secondary importance. It is of the highest importance to ascertain the authorship and date of a chronicle, of a narrative of facts, because there the value of the work depends upon the nature of the traditions or sources to which the writer had access. But for a work of philosophy or philosophical history the qualifications required in the writer are mental, rather than local or temporal. We do not need to ask how near he stands to the events, but whether he sees them in their true proportion" (pp. 288–9).

We need not at present question the words I have placed in italics, whether they are or are meant to be an adequate definition of the contents of the Gospel, or whether they are sufficient to include the important element of Christian experience so prominent in the writing. My object is rather to emphasize a note in these words, characteristic of much of the present-day criticism of the Fourth Gospel; that, after all, it does not much matter
who wrote it, or what are his credentials. It would seem to be enough to secure the abiding spiritual value of it, that it adequately expresses the mind of the early Church about Jesus, and above all that it is but a dramatic rendering of the ruling ideas in the theology of St. Paul. Let me take a sentence almost at random out of Mr. Scott's eminent work on the Fourth Gospel. "The principle which Paul had fought for is accepted by John in its widest compass, and determines his whole theology. Jesus is the Logos, the light that lighteth every man. His appeal throughout is to "the world," of which he is the Light, the Life, the Saviour, and the True Bread. He has come to break down the old limitations, and to inaugurate a spiritual worship in which all may join alike" (p. 112). It is rapidly becoming a commonplace of advanced criticism 1 to regard St. Paul's as the creative and ruling mind behind the thought of the Gospel, and Professor Bacon has even gone so far as to suggest that "the beloved disciple" is none other than an idealized expression for the great Apostle to the Gentiles himself (Hibbert Journal, art. "Defence of the Fourth Gospel," Oct. 1907). A Pauline influence in the Gospel may be at once conceded, but is this shelving of the question of the personality of the Evangelist to do real justice to the nature of the Gospel itself? Can we determine its internal character, without bringing in any considerations of date and authorship at all? Are there not plain suggestions as to authorship, inextricably bound up with the material? The object of this paper is to point out, without in the first place dogmatizing as to who wrote it, that the whole work is pervaded by a great and original

1 Similarly, Professor Bacon in the Hibbert Journal for October, p. 139: "The significance of the Fourth Gospel lies in its testimony to the growth and self-definition of the Gospel of Paul in the heart of the Church of the uncircumcision, before the harking back to Jerusalem."
personality, with a distinct consciousness of his own about Jesus Christ, and a living experience of the Risen Christ. That is, of course, sufficiently obvious, but it seems to me that we cannot adequately appreciate these lofty thoughts without having at the same time a conception and not merely a vague and shadowy notion of the thinker. The question of authorship is more than a merely academic one. It occupies a unique position. None of the other three claims to be written by the man whose name it bears, but the Fourth Gospel is issued with an explicit statement to that effect (xxi. 24). The statement is most significant, even although we must grant that the Appendix is by another hand. Moreover, its contents are vitally connected with the individuality of the author. As will be shown later, the very way in which his identity is studiously concealed shows that the writer is himself conscious that the Gospel contains a personal testimony, which he does not hesitate to present as objective, and, in the end, impersonal. A spirit of weariness has naturally crept over the minds of scholars with regard to the never-ending problem of authorship, but plain justice demands that we should not despair of taking up the writer's own challenge to be known and recognized. Here we have a narrative where individual experience is prominent. Why was it not possible for the author to incorporate his own testimony in the Gospel, without keeping himself in the background in such a way as really to attract attention? There must be some reason for this conduct other than a modesty which would, if it were genuine, really defeat its own end. We have strong reasons for wishing to know who it is that narrates events and discourses of Jesus so distinct in character from the Synoptics, and yet meant to occupy a place alongside these without contradiction; who it is that has so boldly mingled historic fact and ideal conceptions;
that has given to the Person of Christ a timeless, cosmic significance, and has represented our Lord in His acts and in His words as Himself justifying that impression and those claims. If, as is certain, the work is deeply influenced by developed theological conceptions and in part reflects the contemporary historical situation of the Christian Church at the time it was written, we desire to be assured that this writer was in a position not seriously to misrepresent the actual facts.

I. If we take the Gospel as it stands, we are met from time to time with references to an unknown disciple, an individual who is always mentioned periphrastically. In i. 35 it is said that “John stood and two of his disciples,” and in v. 40, one of the two is named as Andrew, leaving the other still nameless. Similarly, reference is made in xiii. 23 to a disciple who was “leaning on Jesus’ bosom,” and “whom Jesus loved.” In xviii. 15, in connexion with the story of Peter’s denial, mention is made of “another disciple,” who followed Jesus along with Peter, and was the means of his admission to the palace. We are further told that he was “known to the High Priest.”

Again at the Cross, xix. 26, 27, 35, he is mentioned first as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” and again as “that disciple.” In xx. 2, 3, 4, 8, we have “the other disciple whom Jesus loved,” “that other disciple,” “the other disciple,” “that other disciple,” all referring to the same individual. In the Appendix, xxi. 7, 20, 23, the expression is again used, and in v. 24 the nameless disciple is identified with the author of the Gospel. Even

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1 It is a question whether γνωστός here means a friendly intimacy, or a blood relationship. Cf. Luke ii. 44, and xxiii. 49. It would be somewhat easier to explain the presence of the nameless disciple in the palace at such a juncture on the latter supposition. Blood is thicker than water, but there is no evidence that the lives of the disciples themselves were at the moment in real danger.
if we grant, as I think we must do, that the Appendix is by another hand, still the opinion of the writer must necessarily carry great weight, especially as it seems to be the obvious deduction from the language of the Gospel itself. It is therefore a striking fact, for our thesis, that it is impossible to estimate the value of the writing apart from the writer, when we find that his personality is thus obtruded both by himself and by another who feels himself gratified to speak as he does in xxi. 24. On the other hand, the way in which the author sedulously veils his identity, suppresses it throughout the greater part of the Gospel, and refers to himself only under circumstances where a reference cannot be escaped, is itself an indication that he was only too deeply aware of the personal and subjective element in his work.

We are met, however, at this point with the view of those critics who see in the figure of the Beloved Disciple an ideal figure, a type of the highest Christian faith.¹ How do they interpret xxi. 24? According to Professor Bacon Chapter xxi. is the work of a Redactor, who has also edited the Gospel, and he says categorically, “We refuse to accept the Redactor’s opinion as to the authorship of the Gospel” (Hibbert Journal, Oct. 1907). He firmly believes in the “sincerity of both the anonymous evangelist, and of his Editor in the appendix, however slight the qualifications of either for historical or literary criticism” (ibid.). Has then the Redactor made a grave and egregious mistake in regarding “the beloved disciple” not only as a real person, but also as the author, and the Apostle John himself? Let that leading question impress itself on our minds, in view of the fact that “Redactor” is held responsible for a very extensive working up of genuine Johannine material. It would appear that, in Professor Bacon’s view, so sincere

¹ Professor Bacon’s interpretation of the Ideal Figure will be found in the Expositor, Oct. 1907.
was he in his belief, which he shared with the Church of the second century, that he deliberately inserted, amongst his other extensive editorial work, all the more or less indirect references to the nameless disciple, including even xix. 35; i.e., all except "the three unequivocal entries of this figure upon the stage," viz., John xiii. 1–30, John xix. 25–27, and the references to the "disciple whom Jesus loved" in chapter xx.

In the first place, it may be pointed out that those who are still content to regard the beloved disciple as "a real person of flesh and blood" will find a very great deal in Professor Bacon's theory to comfort them. It is of very great value to have such an authority as he affirm that the author of the Appendix to the Gospel is sincerely and firmly convinced that not only is the Beloved Disciple a real person, but that he wrote the Gospel, at least in the form in which it came to Redactor's hands, and that he is no other than St. John himself; and also to have it so clearly indicated that he disagrees wth Redactor's opinion. When however two such authorities differ so widely in their interpretations of the same set of facts, who is to decide? It is a great advantage to have the field of action so clearly delimited. I imagine that, from one or two expressions that Professor Bacon lets fall in the course of the two articles I have mentioned, he has no very great opinion, at least, of the historical and critical abilities of this Redactor. He speaks in one place of "his all too frequent maltreatment of his material." Apart from that, it is extremely helpful clearly to understand that the "type" theory, for which Scholten is ultimately responsible, involves a clear issue, uncomplicated as so many other Johannine questions are by matters of conjectural interpretation. The issue lies between a certain school of modern critics, and the most ancient piece of external evidence in connexion with the Gospel that we
possess, viz. xxi. 24. Between these two widely different interpretations of the same statement, have we any valid means of deciding?

Certain general considerations may be adduced that are clearly unfavourable to the modern hypothesis. Prominent amongst these is the instinctive recoil we make from any critical theory that is largely based on a hypothesis of interpolation. To say that in all the instances where there occurs a reference to the nameless disciple except three,—those at the Supper, at the Cross, and at the Tomb,—the Redactor has interpolated, is merely a twisting of the facts as given us, to suit a previous hypothesis, and it is quite open for any one seriously to question whether such procedure satisfies the logical conditions of a valid argument. It is indeed startling to see the way in which this assumption of interpolation can be brought into agreement with most of the real facts, but it is also eminently desirable that the agency of interpolation in this case should be proved to exist at such an early stage; in other words, is what Newton called a *vera causa*. Is it so easy to divide the seamless robe? Nay, more, in one at least of the three "unequivocal entries" the interpretation of the text does not tally with the conception that the beloved disciple represents the highest type of Christian belief. In xx. 8 we read, "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed," and the succeeding verse, introduced by γὰρ, in its natural sense would imply that, just as the faith of the nameless disciple transcends the faith of Simon Peter, so there is a still higher type of faith, indicated in v. 9, that is independent of an actual vision of the empty Tomb and founded on prophetic Scriptures, that "has not seen, and yet has believed."

"For as yet, they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead."
Again, if this is "no disciple of flesh and blood," why does Simon Peter "beckon to him," and why is his place at the table so clearly defined? Grave doubt is expressed that, if this is meant to indicate a real person, John should ever allow the traitor to walk forth before his eyes. Does not this objection apply also to any theory that the Beloved Disciple is an ideal Christian? Is there no ethical significance in an ideal type? Would any writer dare to attribute what seems to be either indifference or cowardice even to an ideal figure? If any explanation is needed, surely it is that "that disciple," with his insight into the mind of Jesus so clearly expressed afterwards in the terrible words, "That thou doest, do quickly," saw and knew that Jesus wished Judas to go out unobserved.

II. We have said that a distinct Personality lies behind the writing, and I believe that according to xxi. 4, it is the personality of the writer himself. Let us test this hypothesis in two definite instances. Can we bring any other facts, gathered from the rest of the Gospel, to show (1) that "disciple whom Jesus loved" is an appropriate title for him; or that (2), when the supposed Redactor described him in one passage as "known to the High Priest"—even granting that this is an interpolation, which is very precarious reasoning—he has any grounds in the Gospel for these words.

1. To avoid any confusion of thought, let it be said at once that I am now proceeding on the supposition that the words "disciple whom Jesus loved" is a term applied by the Evangelist to himself. We may leave out of account at this stage the question whether the phrase implies an undue consciousness of superiority. Rather, it seems to

1 The expression, "leaning on Jesus' bosom, or "lying on Jesus' breast," need not be interpreted in a sentimental and symbolical sense. It would naturally describe the position of one who lay at the meal beside the Lord.
me, that any evangelist who so confidently all through the Gospel claims to interpret the inmost thoughts of Jesus (cf. xi. 33, 13, 21, etc., and the whole form of discourse and dialogue into which the words of the Lord are thrown) must of necessity produce his credentials. If, for other reasons, he desires to remain anonymous, it is difficult to see what nobler apology he could have devised for himself than just this phrase, "disciple whom Jesus loved." Moreover, it must be carefully noted that the expression is almost never used except where some such tacit explanation is needed. Why do they all refer to him at the supper? Why does he occupy a place next to Jesus? Why does Jesus entrust to him the care of His mother? Moreover, it is a singularly appropriate title for one who is so clearly allowing his personal point of view to pervade his narrative, and to interpret events and sayings of the earthly ministry in the light of the contemporary situation of the Church of Christ. For example, the valedictory discourses have no doubt taken the continuous form that they now bear, through the welding, together in the consciousness of the writer of recollections of the closing days with the burning desire to make plain to the early Church that her present condition of anxiety and distress was anticipated with solicitous forethought in the prophetic words of the Saviour.

At first sight, this view of the apologetic meaning of the phrase would seem to be contradicted by the fact that elsewhere he so studiously veils his identity. Why does he do so? It is, I think, quite permissible to see in xxi. 24 an indication that it was felt necessary, even at that early date at which the Appendix was written,¹ to authenticate the position that the Apostle John made himself responsible for the statements contained in the Gospel. This would not

¹ It must be borne in mind that we have no trace of a gospel without the appendix.
necessarily be because there was doubt as to the Johannine authorship, but, in accord with the whole tone of criticism adopted towards the Fourth Gospel in the second century, because the Gospel differs so much in character, subject and content from the Synoptics, which already held the ground as authorities for the Life and Teaching of our Lord. If that be a true description of the situation at the time that the Gospel was published, we may get a clue to this sedulous concealment of the name. The writer would labour under a deep sense of responsibility in thus presenting to the Church a view of Christ’s Person and Work so different from the Synoptics; and he would naturally take the wisest way of setting forth his Gospel as not merely an account that was dependent on the testimony of one individual. His object would really be to set it forth as a record of universal Christian experience, true to the mind and tradition of the Christian Church, to the needs of men, and to the facts of the Life and Sayings of Jesus. Perhaps this explains why he once or twice uses “we,” and so integral a part of this universal and yet personal Christian experience is the Risen Lord Himself, speaking through His Spirit, that once in the words of our Lord Himself the “we” occurs. “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness” (iii. 11). The purpose of the Gospel is to treat the facts of the Life and Teaching of Jesus in such a way as to produce faith in the hearts of those who had not been eyewitnesses, and were therefore all the more inclined to regard their position in relation to the bodily facts as a loss and a hindrance to faith. So far from this, the climax of faith is, not to have seen, and yet to believe (xx. 29). There would no doubt be men like Thomas in the early Church, easily cast down, and satisfied only by the bodily presence of Christ, to whom all else was unreal. No personal assurance was sufficient to convince
them. The Evangelist, therefore, veiled his identity, and emphasized the point of view of Universal Christian experience, and the tradition for which he is responsible. This also is no doubt the meaning of the impersonal reference in xx. 31: "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the "Christ."

A very interesting glimpse into the mind of the writer in this connexion is obtained in the case of the passage xix. 35-37. Here the Evangelist is compelled to isolate his own personality from the Church in whose name he speaks. He alone of that group is present at the Cross. In this case he has to find, in accordance with his principle, some means of authenticating his testimony. It is interesting to note how this is done, and the character of the Gospel, as not dependent on a single testimony alone, vindicated. A threefold corroboration is adduced. (a) His witness is true (ἀληθινός), i.e. confirmed by the Spirit of Truth, which according to the Evangelist must be an indispensable part of the equipment for writing such a Gospel ("Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you. . . . The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," xiv. 17-26). (b) Reference is made to One who "knoweth that He saith true." I take ἐκεῖνος to denote Christ Himself. (c) The Scriptures are adduced as a witness, i.e. the witness of God Himself (vv. 36, 37). "A bone of Him shall not be broken": "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." Here the emphasis is not laid on the fact of the flow of blood and water from the pierced side, but on the spiritual interpretation to be put on it. This interpretation he regarded as of peculiar value to his readers, and some form of the Doketic heresy is no doubt aimed at. At all events, the writer's corroboration of what is by a necessity
of the case an individual testimony affords some very suggestive thought as to his behaviour in so concealing his name throughout the rest of the Gospel. A deep significance attaches to this attitude of mind and heart, which all tends to confirm the idea, that in the consciousness of the Fourth Evangelist himself his own personality is inseparably bound up with his work.

One word more may be added to this attempt to explain the meaning in the consciousness of this Evangelist of the phrase, "disciple whom Jesus loved." It will be a word laden with the gravest significance for the religious value of the Fourth Gospel, if we are disposed to acquiesce, as I think we must, in the position that the individuality of the writer colours deeply not only the narrative, but also the discourses of our Lord. If this Evangelist is so constantly aware as he seems to be, not only that the Risen Christ is speaking to his listening ear, but that the wonderful love He bore him on earth has only grown in wonder and magnificence in the Christian experience that pervades and impels his whole work, what but a most careful and accurate and reverential attitude would we expect him to take towards the Life and words of his Lord?

Since much that at the first, in deed and word,
Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,
Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
Fed through such years, familiar with such light,
Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
Of new significance and fresh result;
What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars
And named them in the Gospel I have writ.

If Browning's be a true account of his mental and spiritual process, and that mutual Love, from being a "point" has become a "star," can we conceive that one who could also say, like St. Paul, "Nevertheless, not I, but Christ that liveth in me," would take unwarrantable liberties with the
self-consciousness of Jesus as manifested in His life on earth? Would he import into His exposition of the Mind and Sayings of Jesus material derived from his own reflection, without the most careful and serious solicititude and the surest guarantee that he did not misrepresent the mind of the Master Himself? I am convinced that the words "the disciple whom Jesus loved" dare not be trifled with, but are pregnant with profoundest significance for the spiritual and abiding value of the Fourth Gospel.

2. We may now turn to another periphrastic form in which the Evangelist is referred to. I mean the words in xviii. 16, "that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest." Is there any sign in the Gospel itself that this description is an appropriate one? I think there are several. Professor Sanday, in his work The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel, has drawn attention to the knowledge of sects and parties displayed by the writer (pp. 123 ff.). Nothing is more striking in the Gospel than the intimate acquaintance that is displayed with the ecclesiastical situation and feeling of the time. In i. 19 ff. a deputation is sent to the Baptist from the ecclesiastical authorities in Jerusalem consisting of priests and their attendant Levites, and the Evangelist breaks the narrative of the deputation to insert the remark, evidently meant to explain the question that follows, that the deputation included some Pharisees. Their inquiry in i. 24 betrays an interest in ritual and in the orderly observance of the Law which is characteristic of that party, as distinct from the Sadducees. "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" (i. 25). The Sadducees seem to have applied rationalist and moderate principles to the old religion, and were distinguished by dogmatic differences not only regarding the rule of faith, but in connexion with such questions as the life after death, and the question of freewill
and predestination (Edersheim, *Life and Times*, i. pp. 310-324). It can scarcely be without meaning that the Evangelist, who knew that Caiaphas was a Sadducee, and that he might be supposed to share their beliefs about predestination, should represent him, with an ironical touch, as the unconscious prophet and instrument of the death of Christ. "This he spake not of himself" (xi. 51-52). Again, he does not speak of Pharisees and Sadducees, but of Chief Priests and Pharisees, showing that he is acquainted with the fact that the Sadducees held the offices in the time of Christ. The whole passage xi. 47-83 is full of ecclesiastical knowledge. The discussion there in the Sanhedrin is occasioned by the influence on the people of the raising of Lazarus, and we can clearly distinguish the attitude of the two parties. The Pharisees are represented as in touch with the people, and they are afraid lest a tumult should arise, and thereby both their ecclesiastical influence (τὸ ποιεῖ) and the national existence be destroyed by Rome. The attitude of the two parties towards the "popular" movement is very clearly marked. The reply of Caiaphas to the fears expressed by the Pharisaic party is quite characteristic of the haughty aristocrat. "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." The passage vii. 45-52 displays a similar knowledge of the close relationship existing between Pharisees and people. (Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* XIII. x. 6.) "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed" (vv. 47-49). Again, after the triumphal entry, it is the Pharisees who seem to have been filled with dismay at their loss of influence with the people and at the popularity of Jesus. "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail no-
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thing? Behold, the world is gone after Him” (xii. 19). It is the ruling Sadducean party who take the initiative in plotting the death of Lazarus. “The chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death” (xii. 10). Again, it is the Fourth Evangelist who tells us of the informal trial before Annas, who, though still wielding much power, had been deposed in favour of his son-in-law, Caiaphas (xviii. 12–24; cf. Schürer, *HJP*, II. 1. 195 ff.; art. “Annas” in Hastings’ DCG).

These indications of a somewhat intimate acquaintance with the trend of opinion in ecclesiastical circles are in complete correspondence with the statement in xviii. 15 about the disciple “who was known to the high priest.” They also give additional corroboration to the view that the phrase is an indirect reference by the Evangelist to himself.

III. Another term by which the writer may be regarded as referring to himself is “witness.” This is the description of his work that is employed by the unknown Author of chapter xxi.: “This is the disciple which witnesseth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true” (v. 24). It will be noted that if the order of the words has any significance, “testimony” or “witnessing” is regarded as the more prominent feature in the book, and one that determines the character of the “writing” and its interpretation. What is the precise signification of this word “witness” as applied to the Evangelist? In what sense does he apply the name to himself?

The word is of extreme importance in connexion with the question of the historicity of the Gospel, which will be dealt with in a subsequent article. In the meantime, for our present purpose of determining the extent to which the personality of the writer pervades and colours his writing, we may take the definition of the term that is
contained in the First Epistle. Surely even those critics who to-day are disposed to deny common authorship between the Epistles and the Gospel will not feel that I am going beyond the facts regarded even by them as legitimate, when I quote the passages in the First Epistle that speak of witnessing, and seek to apply their meaning to the word used in the Gospel.

"That which was from the beginning, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write that your joy may be fulfilled" (1 John i. 1-4).

"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. . . . If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that He hath borne witness concerning His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar: because he hath not believed. . . . And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not the life" (v. 6b, 9-12).

It is obvious that in these passages the term "witness." is applied to one who has received the Holy Spirit. Making use of a certain paucity of terms which is characteristic both in the Epistle and in the Gospel, the writer speaks in the same sentence of "the witness of men" and of "the witness of God," and again of "the Spirit that beareth witness." For the purpose of the writer's exposition, these
three are distinguished, but the unity that will contain them all is just the total experience of one who is himself filled with the Spirit, and feels himself in touch with the living Christ, the Son of God, and possesses therefore all the qualifications for a "witness." It is true that it is the witness of "a man" or of "men," but it is not therefore invalid; for the witness of God is behind the experience. The witness of God is greater; for the witness of God is this, that "He hath borne witness concerning His Son." Once again, as in the Gospel, the consciousness is betrayed that the message comes by the prophetic testimony of an individual, and once again there is the very evident desire to claim for it that it is nevertheless objective, and not the mere product of a single unaided human understanding and experience. Does not the personality of the writer here obtrude itself in the same conscious fashion as in the Gospel?

Turning now to the Gospel, we find a clearly expressed conviction that the gift of the Spirit of Truth must be part of the equipment of one who pens such a narrative as this. It is represented as part of the apostolic equipment. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth; which the world cannot receive, for the world neither sees Him nor knows Him; but ye know Him, because He remains with you and is in you" (xiv. 17). "When the Advocate is come . . . He shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (xv. 26, 27). In the latter words, the correspondence is obvious with the thought of ocular testimony in the opening verse of the Epistle.

At this point, I would beg leave to make what is undoubtedly a large assumption in view of present-day criticism of the Gospel, that the writer desires to be regarded as an eyewitness. Personally, I would have no hesitation,
in spite of all that has been written and said, in believing that he is an eyewitness. At the same time, this conservative position must not be regarded as prejudicing the position I would seek still further to establish, that the Evangelist, sometimes sub-consciously, lays bare for us and impresses on his narrative his own particular type of personality and caste of mind in many of his utterances. Does he afford us any indication here and there of such a psychological condition induced by the work of the Spirit in his heart, as might be described in modern philosophical language? I think he does. Apart from the much larger question of the symbolism of the Gospel, he displays what might be called the "symbolic" mind, a mind that is especially open to any suggestion of spiritual truth conveyed by the actual facts (e.g. ii. 11, 17). The miracles are not only "actualities" (ἐργα), but they are also signs (σήμεια). Siloam is "sent," the sending forth of the waters being typical, perhaps, of the Christ sent from God (ix. 7). Judas goes out of the light of the upper room, to do his dark deed, "into the night" (xiii. 30). "It was winter" at the feast of the Dedication (x. 22), symbolizing the storm of hatred and the chill of indifference that met the warmth of love in the breast of that infinitely lonely Figure, walking in Solomon's Porch. The use made of the sign in xix. 35 is also typical of this attitude of mind. These instances indicate one less recognized direction in which the Evangelist himself displays how the "witness" of the Spirit of Truth made itself felt in the attitude that he regarded it as legitimate to take with regard to the actual facts. He feels himself quite justified in narrating, as part of the Truth, not only the bare facts, but the spiritual suggestions they awakened in his mind, sometimes after a long lapse of years.

IV. Any consideration of this great question would not be complete without some clear indication of the way in
which it bears on the question of the apostolic authorship. I am well aware of the apparent rashness of such a proceeding as to deal with the question of the apostolic authorship in a few sentences at the end of an article. Yet one may be allowed boldly to ask the question whether all that has been said and written against the apostolic authorship has really rendered it so impossible, or even unlikely, that the Gospel was written by the son of Zebedee. The internal evidence has long been regarded as decisive for or against the apostolic authorship, but now, one of the most serious difficulties in the way is, strangely enough, a matter that is really part of the external evidence, viz., the statement attributed to Papias, on the authority of the Chronicle of Philip of Side, that St. John died early as a martyr. At present however we are only concerned with the evidence of the Gospel itself. Perhaps enough has been said to show that the matter of authorship cannot be lightly dismissed, if we are to be true to the manner of the Gospel itself, and to the consciousness of the Evangelist. If that be so, did St. John write it? It seems to me that there is no question of New Testament criticism where the need is more imperative to rid ourselves of prejudice than the question of the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. Can it have been written by a fisherman of Galilee? The retort to that is, "What do you mean by a fisherman of Galilee? Do you mean a man so uneducated that he could not possibly have written a work that contains such depth of thought and such evident skill in the massing of the material?" One would think that in the minds of certain critics there still lurks a completely mistaken conception of the connexion be-

1 For a fuller consideration of the question of Authorship see the article on the Gospel of John (Part I.) in Hastings’ Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels. Vol. I.

2 The most recent discussion of this question will be found in Professor Burkitt’s Gospel History and its Transmission, pp. 252 ff.
tween letters and handicraft in the apostolic days. Peter and John are described in Acts iv. 13 as unlearned and ignorant men (ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιώται). ἰδιώτης marks a caste distinction, in opposition to the learned or academic classes. The use of the vernacular tongue by the apostles would be sufficient to suggest the expression. The Pharisaic objection is, as Delitzsch reminds us, a decline from the traditional honourable connexion between the Rabbi and the hand-worker (Jewish Artisan Life, p. 54). On the other hand, is it not also possible that in their estimate of the philosophic character of the Gospel, critics may have been too much prepossessed by the indications that are given in the Gospel of acquaintance with philosophic systems, and the influence of a Greek atmosphere? Could a Greek atmosphere of thought not be influential outside academic circles? That is matter for much wider discussion than is possible here. It may, however, be added that a similar difficulty arises, in a somewhat accentuated form, when it is sought to ascribe the main form and composition of the Gospel to a Redactor as Professor Bacon does, who was stupid enough and unimaginative enough to regard the "disciple whom Jesus loved" as a real person, and that individual the Apostle John. Is this not a libel at least on the intellectual ability of the dead?

In conclusion, it may be said that if the apostolic authorship is denied on such grounds as those mentioned above, or on the ground that the Gospel is too able a production to proceed from one of the twelve, it may fairly be asked whether our Lord, in making choice of His immediate followers, would leave out of account altogether the element of the natural ability they might display, or the question of social position. Zebedee owned his own fishing-vessel, and the presumptuous request of the mother of Zebedee's sons betrays a very strong sense of their capabilities, and a "some-
what overweening sense” of social position. Moreover, we too must take knowledge that the Apostle had been with Jesus, and it would not be easy to estimate, in addition to the spiritual training, the purely educative influence of companionship with Jesus of Nazareth. He who, with such insight and, as I think, emotion,\(^1\) leads us into the spiritual incapacity of Nicodemus must have been himself “born again” into a new world, and there have gained a new outlook.

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\(^1\) Not stupidity, nor wilful obtuseness, but a profound emotion, seems to breathe in the question of Nicodemus, “How can a man be born when he is old?” (iii. 4).