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THE AUTHORSHIP AND CHARACTERISTICS  
of the  
FOURTH GOSPEL  
AND ITS INTERRELATION WITH THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

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THE AUTHORSHIP AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE  
FOURTH GOSPEL, AND ITS INTERRELATION WITH  
THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

In modern times there has been much discussion about the authorship and value of the Fourth Gospel as a source of knowledge of its time. Its historical value has been questioned because of the differences between it and the Synoptic Gospels as to the person, work and sayings of Jesus. History is of secondary interest in John. His Gospel is rich in artistic detail; it follows the principles of a great tragedy. It is divided into seven sections, and much is made of the numbers seven and three. The material is so arranged as best to bring out the fact that Jesus is the Christ. In contrast with the Synoptic picture of Jesus, this Gospel gives a portrait of the risen Christ as seen by the Church of the time it was written. It places Christ in the midst of human life. The Fourth Gospel lacks the psychological development of the Synoptic Gospels. From the very beginning Jesus is the Eternal One, the living Son of God.

The Fourth Gospel has been traditionally attributed to John. It seems clear that the author was a Jew, for he is familiar with Jewish affairs. He knows that the Jews had lost the legal right to put to death (18:31). He understands the function of the High Priest, the Jewish parties and customs, and that it was customary for Jews from all over Palestine, and those living outside its borders, to make frequent pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the purpose of attending the feasts. He is familiar with their conception of defilement and purification, marriage and burial customs, and with Jewish ideas and conceptions generally. He knows of the lack of friendship and intercourse between Jews and Samaritans (4:9), and of the Jewish national expectation of a political Messiah. He has a clear knowledge of Jewish doctrines current in the first century and of Rabbinical methods of argument (VIII). He has a general knowledge of Jewish life and was familiar with later Judaism (12:31) - God and His angels on one side, and the devil and demons on the other. He probably was a Palæstinian Jew who had a fairly correct knowledge of the topography of the country, and was especially familiar with the details of Jerusalem. He probably heard the preaching of the original disciples, and had even seen Jesus Himself (1:14).

His knowledge of the Old Testament was such as to enable him to correct the LXX in favour of the original Hebrew (19:37). On the other hand, there are passages nearer the LXX than the Hebrew. A study of his Old Testament quotations indicates at least that he was familiar with the

Hebrew as well as the LXX; that he quoted the Old Testament freely as if from memory; and that he aimed to reproduce the thought only and not the exact words of the original.

Burney argues that the Fourth Gospel was originally written in Aramaic, and that its Greek is only translation-Greek.<sup>(1)</sup> He based this conclusion on the preponderance of Aramaic constructions he finds in John. The most outstanding of these are:

(1) The frequency with which asyndeton, beginning a sentence without a connecting participle, is found in parts of the Gospel as well as in the prologue.

(2) Parataxia, joining parallel co-ordinate sentences by "and" (a Hebrew construction) is found almost to the exclusion of the subordinate clause expressed by the aorist participle and the genitive absolute.

(3) Casus Pédens, a Semitic structure which simplifies a sentence and makes it emphatic by reinforcing the subject or object by a personal pronoun, is very common in John (1:12; 1:33; 3:23). This colloquialism is not purely Semitic; it is as familiar in English as in Greek. Still its use is much more frequent in John than in the Synoptists.

There is undeniably a Semitic undertone in certain passages (3:16-21) (3:31-36; 12:36b-43). But all the constructions cited by Burney can be explained without positing his Aramaic theory. Many of his Aramaic passages (3:29; 8:56) are not incorrect Greek (though in the latter passage the accusative plus the infinitive would be preferable to hina plus the subjunctive). Classical parallels can be cited for 4:7, 14:23, 16:27, 19:5. This is not translation Greek but good classical Greek. If the author's mother-tongue was Aramaic, he would probably think in Aramaic and occasionally clothe his thoughts in Aramaic form of expression. His knowledge of Aramaic enabled him to interpret Aramaic names in his Gospel for the benefit of Greek readers. Another objection to the Aramaic theory is the identity of the Greek of the Gospel and 1 Epistle. Both are by the same author, and the 1 Epistle is an admittedly original Greek writing.

The Fourth Gospel is great literature. The author's Greek education with the background of his Aramaic mother-tongue resulted in a charming style which we may call Johannine. It is a sprinkling of Aramaic constructions with Greek idiomatic subtleties and classical style. (In 7:17 he uses the classical construction, poteron . . . e which is found only here in the New Testament.) He uses

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(1) The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel.

conditional sentences correctly, and has a preference for the condition contrary to fact (4:10, 5:46, 8:19, 8:42, 9:41, 11:21, 11:32, 14:7, 14:28, 18:30, 18:36. In 15:22 he omits an). His use of the genitive case is classical. First, genitive of price (6:6, 12:5); second, genitive of comparison (10/29, 14:12, 20:4, 21:15); third, genitive of time (3:2, 19:39).

There is a striking characteristic of John's style that seems to have escaped the notice of commentators - the frequency with which he used the perfect tense of the verb or participle. There are at least 210 perfects in this Gospel. This style is significant when it is clear that he is not simply referring to what happened in time, a perfect of completed action. He uses the perfect to denote a present resulting state without any thought of its past action (1:51, 2:17, 3:6, 3:24, 4:6, 5:45, 11:27-39-43-44, 19:22, 33, 20:7, 19, 23, 26). Such perfects are found in the Synoptic Gospels also (Mt. 27:43, Luke 24:46) but not nearly as frequently as in John. Gegrammenon estiw is John's usual form of citation of the Old Testament (cf. the Synoptic gegraptai). This does not simply mean that certain Scriptures were written in the past, but that it is a permanent record; it stands written (2:17, 6:31, 45, 10:34, 12:14) 3:6 refers to a spiritual or physical state. 3:34 indicates not only that John was cast into prison, but that he is still a prisoner. This would be more obvious if the statement had been put affirmatively. 4:6, Jesus is exhausted; He is in a state of collapse. Their hope is still in Moses (5:45). The deceased (11:39 and 19:33) is still bound (11:44). What I have written I have written (19:22). The act was permanent and enduring; it was an official document or legal decision. This permanence is brought out by the perfect as it could not have been by any other tense. The doors are shut (29:19, 26); they were probably bolted or barred. Sins are remitted or retained (20:23) for time and perhaps for eternity. Burton cites (6:69) as an illustration of an intensive or emphatic perfect. This is a use of the perfect very similar to the perfect of existing state. He would probably consider 11:27 an intensive perfect. I do not agree with Burton (6:69). (1) His is not the best translation, "we have believed". If his translation is accepted, his first perfect is intensive, but his second, we "know", is perfect of resulting state. We believe and are certain is a better translation. Both verbs then are the perfect of resulting state. I have cited only a few of the most obvious instances of this use in John. Enough has been said about John's literary style to indicate that the Aramaic theory does not commend itself. (2)

(1) N. T. Moods and Tenses, Burton, p. 38.

(2) It would be interesting to examine John's literary style in detail. The Greek student will find Burney suggestive, but will question many of his conclusions.

The earliest tradition assigned the Fourth Gospel to the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee. The earliest form of this tradition is John 21:24,25, which was not a part of the original Gospel, as even Bishop Westcott concedes. The Gospel was written in the third person but these verses are in the first person. In verse 24 the Ephesian elders vouch that the Apostle John was the author, or that his oral testimony and teaching are the source of Chapters I - XX. It was not customary at that time for an author to attach his name to his writing, and the verse that does so is an addition by some one who wishes to settle a point of controversy about the authorship. Apart from these two verses the Gospel does not claim to have been written by the Apostle John. The author would at least hesitate to speak of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved". He seems to distinguish himself from the "beloved disciple". Verse 24 is then a case of mistaken identity.

The Apostle John was not only one of the Twelve, but one of the most intimate disciples of Jesus. He was inclined to be intolerant (Mk 9:39). He and his brother James wanted to call down fire from Heaven upon the inhospitable villagers who refused to entertain their Master (Lk 9:54). The two brothers asked for the first places in the Master's Kingdom (Mk 10:37). Peter and John made preparations for the last supper (Lk 22:8). Paul called John a "pillar" in the Jerusalem church (Gal. 2:9). John presumably was not a man of Rabbinic learning or literary gifts. An early tradition, to which Irenaeus, Polycrates and Origen give their assent, was that the "beloved disciple" was John. He is idealized, a man of deep spiritual insight. It is a person and not a type that is meant. That is what his readers would understand, and so also would the members of the church where this Gospel was written. He is placed in a position of equality with Peter, and in a sense is made superior to him. While the author could not speak of himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved", a younger follower of Jesus, who had been in close touch with the Twelve and had direct personal acquaintance with Jesus, could speak of one of Jesus' most intimate disciples as the "disciple whom Jesus loved". The Apostle John is the beloved disciple.

There is a tradition preserved by Philip of Side in the De Boor Fragment containing an alleged quotation of Papias to the effect that John and James his brother were put to death by the Jews. George Hamartolus also speaks of John's death. The Syriac Martyrology, a careless translation from Greek, states that John was martyred in Jerusalem. If this is true, his death occurred before A. D. 70, or about 25 years before the Gospel

was written. But Church Calendars contained the names of other outstanding witnesses besides those who gave their lives. There are two weighty objections to the theory that John suffered martyrdom; first, the Acts of the Apostles is silent about it; second, Paul (Gal. 2:9) refers to John as a "pillar" of the Jerusalem church. There is another tradition to the effect that John at some time settled in Ephesus, and from that center carried on his work in the surrounding country until his death in the reign of Trajan. This latter tradition is probably true.

There may have been two or more Johns among the early disciples of Jesus. Papias refers to "John the Presbyter, the disciple of the Lord". Presbyter and apostle were not interchangeable terms. A presbyter was either a disciple of the apostles or of their disciples. Still, the title apostle was applied to others besides the Twelve and St. Paul, but the Twelve were never called Presbyters. One of the Johns may have been a mere youth when he joined Jesus' disciples; he had direct contact with the apostles and became personally acquainted with Jesus, but did not become an apostle. He, speaking for the group, could say, "we beheld His glory." (1:14). At some time he settled in Ephesus and was known as the "elder, the disciple of the Lord". He is called the "disciple of Jesus". Polycrates says, "he leaned upon the bosom of the Lord, and became a priest wearing the priestly breastplate - he died in Ephesus". Polycrates in his letter to Victor of Rome must have identified the two Johns. He puts John after Philip and his two daughters as if of a lower station. He calls Philip an apostle, but does not regard John as entitled to that dignity. Irenaeus also probably confused the apostle and the elder. He indicates in his letter to Florinus that there was a connection between Polycarp and "John the disciple of the Lord." As a boy he heard Polycarp preach, but was not a personal disciple of his. He always calls John the "disciple of the Lord", and never calls him an apostle except by implication. There was a tendency to bring together the apostles and early bishops. Papias was a hearer of the elder, not of the apostle. He used proof texts from I Epistle of John and quoted the Gospel as "Memoirs of the elder". Irenaeus says that the disciple of the Lord wrote the Gospel. It seems clear then that while one of the two Johns among Jesus' disciples was chosen an apostle, the other is the man whom Papias calls the "Presbyter", who continued to be known as a disciple. There was no difficulty distinguishing them as long as the Christian community knew them; but after the lapse of two generations, the two were blended into one outstanding personality.



Irenaeus and Polycrates identify the elder and the apostle. The former claims to quote Polycarp; the latter follows a tradition that had crystallized under the influence of the Ephesian elders who wanted apostolic authority to support their practice of observing Easter differently than the Roman Christians.

At the end of the second century the Fourth Gospel was generally accepted as of apostolic authority. Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen, agree that the Apostle John is the author. Still this view was not universal. Some doubted it; others, at a later time, assigned it to Cerinthus, the arch-heretic of the end of the first century. Hippolytus, shortly after A. D. 200, wrote a defence of this Gospel. This defence implies that its authority and apostolic authorship were questioned, for inspiration and apostolic authorship were regarded as identical. The Alogi, a group in the church, rejected John's Gospel. The conservative element of the Roman Church was suspicious of the Logos-doctrine of the Prologue, and of the doctrine of the Paraclete in the Gospel; but under the influence of Justin Martyr, who was converted in Ephesus, the Roman Church accepted the Gospel by the end of the second century. From the end of the fourth century the tradition of the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel was unchallenged until the beginning of the modern critical era. It has been on the defensive ever since. The probabilities are against the traditional theory that the apostle John wrote it.

Internal considerations lead to the same conclusion. It is difficult to believe that this Galilean fisherman was transformed into a Rabbinic scholar and philosophical thinker, acquainted with the Alexandrian doctrine of the Logos as indicated in the Logos-doctrine of the Prologue in the interpretation of Christ.<sup>(1)</sup> The author of the Fourth Gospel is not the "disciple whom Jesus loved". He is a man of higher social standing, having connections in Jerusalem, and is even related to the High Priest's family, and is able to vouch for Peter and secure his admission into the High Priest's court during the trial of Jesus. He was probably a "Jerusalemite of priestly family", as Burney says.

Investigation has made it clear, on the other hand, that this Gospel must have been written before A.D. 130. The author does not belong to a time late in the second century cut off entirely from the disciples of Jesus, writing without direct knowledge of Him in order to magnify the supernatural element in His Life. The author was either

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(1) Zenos, p. 223 f.

an eye-witness or stood in as close relation to the original disciples as Mark stood to Peter. Bernard says, "the Gospel was not written by John's own hand, but that it was dictated to a disciple . . . the disciple had a share in writing it out." (2) Bernard does not regard John as its sole author, but he gives the Apostle more credit than the facts warrant.

I argue (2) with the overwhelming support of scholars, that John is the source of part of the Fourth Gospel, while the main source is the Synoptic Gospels. I do not accept the view that this Gospel was "dictated to a disciple". The man who wrote the Fourth Gospel was not an amanuensis, writing at the dictation of a master mind. His was a master mind capable of doing independent, creative work. This Gospel has every sign of originality. (3) Neither can I accept Bernard's view that this author "follows his authorities verbally, for such was the literary habit of the time." John used his sources with the utmost independence, and freely altered or corrected them. When he uses Mark as a source he re-casts the whole story in his own language and uses less than twenty per cent of Mark's words. It seems to me that Bernard takes the impossible middle position of trying to hold the traditional view of apostolic authorship and at the same time the more generally accepted modern view that John the Presbyter actually wrote the Gospel.

There is a striking similarity between the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John, in style and content of thought. The resemblances in ideas and literary style indicate that the authors were from the same Christian circle, and that one was familiar with and used the other's work, or that both are from the same hand. But each contain evidence of a master mind that does creative work rather than that of an imitator or disciple. The most satisfactory explanation of the facts is that both were written by the same author. This is the position generally held to-day by critical scholars. The Epistle is probably the later work, for the problems facing the Church are somewhat modified. The Anti-Christ has come; Gnosticism has become a more dangerous foe; the Pharisaic controversies of the Gospel have disappeared. The Epistle is Theocentric; the Gospel is Christocentric. Both are the fruit of a ripe age. I. John was written by a man in advanced years who addresses his readers as "brethren" and immediately afterwards as "my little children". The Gospel reads like the summary of a lifetime of thought and mystic communion.

II and III John cannot be a forgery; they

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(1) St. John, Bernard - Introduction, p. LIX ff.

(2) pp 18-20.

(3) p. LXX

contain no special teaching or doctrinal development. They are private letters written to meet a particular crisis and are closely connected in literary style and general outlook, and are undoubtedly by the same author. The writer calls himself the "elder". He is the outstanding personality in his church and an author of individual character. These Epistles are either by the author of the Gospel or by his pupil. The cumulative evidence seems to warrant the conclusion that the Gospel and three Epistles were written by the same author.

Considerations of literary style indicate that the Presbyter, was not the author of the Apocalypse. It is an original Greek production, but its literary style is awkward and lacks those idiomatic constructions found in the Gospel. It was written about the same time as the Gospel, and may be the work of the Apostle John, as Bernard suggests.

The Gospel may have been written any time during the last decade of the first century. I do not see any reason for placing it much later than A.D. 90 which critical scholars consider the earliest possible date at which it could have been written. This conclusion is reached from internal evidence, and agrees with the statement of Papias that "John the elder had seen the Lord". Burney held that the Gospel was written in Aramaic about A. D. 75-80. I have given reasons for not accepting the Aramaic theory.<sup>(1)</sup> He assumes that the author was about twenty at the time of the crucifixion, and that he was 65 or 70 when he wrote his Gospel. I am not disposed to accept either of these assumptions. He may not have been over fourteen at the time of the crucifixion, and at the age of 75 or more he might have had all the mental vigor presupposed in the author of such a Gospel. Burney does not pretend to have studied the Synoptic problem. Those who have done so find that a later date than this best accounts for some of the phenomena in Luke and Matthew. Streeter gives A. D. 80 and 85 as their respective dates.

I argue elsewhere that John uses Luke as a source<sup>(2)</sup>. This, of course, requires that John be assigned to a later date. John represents the latest development of New Testament theology. The Gospel and I. Epistle show the influence of incipient Gnosticism against which the Elder wishes to safeguard his little children. I do not see that the acceptance of the Aramaic origin of the Fourth Gospel should materially alter the date at which it must have been written. The Aramaic Gospel - if it ever existed - would show the same

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(1) pp. 2-3

(2) pp. 19-20

theological development as the Greek Gospel would. Hence if our Greek Gospel is an uncolored translation of an Aramaic Gospel (which would be inevitable), the arguments from internal evidence would be the same as in the case of a Greek Gospel. Of course, if the date is determined by external evidence, an earlier date would be permissible for the Aramaic Gospel than for the Greek translation. I think Burney's date is purely arbitrary and altogether indefensible. If the Gospel was written about A. D. 90 or later, this is another, but not conclusive reason why the Apostle John is probably not the author. The main source of the Fourth Gospel is the Synoptic Gospels which were not written by eye-witnesses. If the author of the Fourth Gospel was an Apostle, he would not accept, as a source, writings of those who were not Apostles. Hence it is probable that the author was not an Apostle.

The original Gospel ended at John 20:31, which is an effective climax. Chapter XXI was added later, either by the author of Chapters 1 - XX, or by another hand. There are two chief reasons why this chapter was added. The first reason is that the author of I - XX had died or was a very oldman, and yet Christ had not returned. For many years the presence of the Paraclete had been accepted by the majority in the church as a spiritual interpretation of Jesus' teaching about His second coming. But during the persecution under Domitian there was a great revival of apocalyptic expectation. John the seer had written his passionate prophecy, the Apocalypse. Persecution had died down after the assassination of Domitian, A.D. 96. The 1296 days had elapsed, but the Lord had not returned. The Elder knew that if he, probably the last survivor of those who had seen Jesus, died before the visible return of Christ, it would be a severe shock to the misguided fervor of his people. To safeguard them from this, he writes a post-script to show that there was no foundation in Jesus' words for belief in His visible return during the lifetime of those who had seen Him.

The second reason for adding Chapter XXI is that there were discrepancies between the account given in the Fourth Gospel and the last ending of Mark, if Matthew is a true development of Mark's lost ending, as to the scene of the resurrection appearances. Both Mark and John were at that time read in the Ephesian Church. Mark made Galilee the scene of the appearances of the risen Lord; while, according to the Fourth Gospel, He had appeared in Jerusalem. John adds Chapter XXI, and shows that the risen Christ had appeared in Galilee as well as in Jerusalem. "This is the third time Jesus appeared to His disciples, after He had risen from the dead" (21:14). The commission to Peter was not meant to humor the Roman Church and commend this Gospel to it; but was meant to deepen the repentance of Peter and reassure him.

I have taken the position that the appendix was written by the author of the Gospel. If this is not correct, another hand added this chapter after the author's death to remove a misunderstanding about Jesus' teaching.

The Logos-Doctrine of the Prologue is one of the characteristics of the Fourth Gospel. It is a philosophical exposition of the life of Jesus as the Revealer of God, a solution of a problem that had perplexed the world. God revealed Himself through His Incarnate Logos. It is an introduction to the Gospel - a summary from the philosophical side - even if written from a different point of view, and was meant to express to the educated Greek the conviction at which the author had arrived, that Jesus was the Divine Logos. This is a bold re-statement of the Christian Faith in thought forms acceptable to the cultured Greek. It was also a needed and satisfactory answer to the Jewish taunt that the Christians, in worshipping Christ, were setting up a second God. There has been, and still is, much difference of opinion among scholars as to the influences under which John arrived at the Christian Doctrine of the Logos.

The thought of the Logos is deeply rooted in the Old Testament Wisdom Literature and the Apocryphal Books, so that the Logos is the culmination of Divine revelation. John and Philo used these sources; the former developed the ideas historically, the latter philosophically. Sometimes the memra are personal. Wisdom is an expression of God, eternal and creative (Prov. 8). Old Testament preparation was along different lines,-

(a) The word of God was the instrument of His power and eternity. In the Targums the Rabbis frequently focussed the memra in the Divine name.

(b) Wisdom is personified in Proverbs and Job, and to it are ascribed eternity, illumination, creation and redemption.

(c) The incarnation of the Word is prefigured in the mysterious being called the Angel of Jehovah who appears occasionally in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The underlying truth in all these is that God reveals Himself through the Word who is the medium of all natural and spiritual revelation.

Philo in his eagerness to reconcile Hewraism and Hellenism developed Old Testament statements along philosophical lines and identified the creative Wisdom and the Divine Logos which he looks upon as a creative force that is only semi-personal.

While there is general resemblance between the Logos-Doctrine of John and that of Philo, there are also striking differences between them. It is not clear whether Philo's Logos in creation is personal or an impersonal force. In John, the Logos is the person through whom the world was created.

Paul, too, represents Jesus as the medium in creation. There is undoubtedly a literary resemblance between John and Philo, and John was probably influenced by Philo in the development of his thought, but he does not directly borrow from him. In John the pre-existence of the Logos is explicit; in Philo it is not. Philo lacks the Johannine connection between light and life (1:4, 8:2), John's whole doctrine is based on the incarnation, but Philo's conception of nature as evil makes this view impossible. The parallels are only verbal. John brings God and man together by setting forth Jesus as the Revealer of God. The Logos was a historical person; he became flesh; He took human nature. This doctrine is explicitly stated in the Prologue only.

Rendel Harris shows (1) that the Logos of John takes over all that is said of Wisdom in Proverbs and the Apocryphal books. John may have been well advanced in his Christian beliefs before he came into contact with the Logos Philosophy, and adopted only its suitable features along with some features from Wisdom. With this background he was able to define to his own mind as well as for others, the meaning of the person of Christ. He prefixed this modified Logos-Doctrine to his Gospel without altering his old theological conceptions.

Most scholars find the Logos-Doctrine in modified form in the body of the Gospel. Stanton, following Harnack, confines it to the Prologue, after which it is dismissed for that of the Divine Son. This view can hardly be correct. It is the underlying thought of this Gospel. John has verbal affinity to Philo in certain passages (5:17), but it is not so close as to necessitate the theory that John borrowed from him. In the story of the Good Shepherd (10:11) there is literary affinity to a similar picture in Philo. It is just the kind of literary coincidence to be expected when two writers are picturing the same scene, but it is not a case of literary connection. John's distinction between slaves and friends (15:15) is similar to the same distinction in Philo.

These instances of literary affinity and parallelism would suggest that John was acquainted with Philo's writings, but do not necessarily imply literary dependence. All we can say with certainty is that the

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(1) The Origin of the Prologue of St. John's Gospel.

Prologue of John indicates that its author must have been acquainted with Philo's Philosophy of the Logos, either directly or indirectly. The Logos-Doctrine was familiar in current speculations of the time. John borrowed it from philosophy and gave it a religious use to designate the incarnation of Jesus. He was also familiar with the Wisdom literature, and attributed to the Logos all that was said of Wisdom in Proverbs and the Apocryphal Books. Thus by the aid of the past, both Jewish and Greek, he is able to explain better the mysterious relation of God to man in the person of the Logos. It is at least clear that John "gave the Church an expression of its belief acceptable to the Greek mind, yet true to Jewish thought of God as personal and one." (1)

Another characteristic of the Fourth Gospel is the peculiar kind of its discourses. John translates the Synoptic story in terms of the experience of the church of his day. The Synoptics converge in their picture of Jesus. Mark is the original Gospel whose outline is followed by Matthew and Luke. They all aim to narrate Jesus' exact words and to give a detailed account of some of His works. They contain much parabolic teaching. John had a vivid experience of the transforming power of Christ, and had first hand knowledge of the facts he described. He was either an eye-witness and hearer of what he related or had received it from those who had direct, personal knowledge. His aim was not historical but didactic (20:31). He did not pretend to give the ipsissima verba of Jesus. The whole Gospel was written in John's style, but he believed that what he wrote was given to him by the spiritual Christ or by the living Jesus. He interpreted Jesus' sayings in the light of the experience of the church of his day, putting into Jesus' mouth what he thought He would have said under the circumstances of the time. Hence he gives long discourses, sometimes in allegorical form, centering round Jesus Himself, instead of the synoptic parables. There are, first, conferences or conversations of individuals (III and IV), and, second, more formal addresses in the synagogue and temple, and others to the Twelve before His passion. The teaching thus gains in interest and power from the dramatic form in which it is cast. John could have conveyed the thought of Chapters III and IV in a continuous narrative, but it would have been a great sacrifice of dramatic interest and power.

The teaching of Jesus in these discourses centres round two thoughts; first, the self-revelation of Jesus to the Jews and more fully to the Twelve, the mystery of His person, mission and work; second, the revelation of the mystery of spiritual life which is characteristic of the subjects of the Kingdom of God. These two great truths are

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(1) The Four Gospels, Streeter - p. 467

found in the Synoptics also, but they receive larger and fuller treatment in the Fourth Gospel, and are there presented in a more striking and impressive way.

The Synoptics picture a gradual development of the Messianic consciousness on the part of the disciples; there is a development of spiritual insight until, at length, they are fully persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Their Messianic consciousness developed slowly and culminated in Peter's confession "Thou art the Christ" (Lk. 9:20). In the Fourth Gospel there is no unfolding of their Messianic consciousness. He is the Messiah from the very first. Peter's confession (Jn. 6:69), which is an interpretative paraphrase of Peter's original confession, marks a turning point. Nathaniel when called to discipleship proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God, the King of Israel. That was a declaration of His Messiahship in a political sense. Andrew and Philip recognized Jesus as the Christ at the first. Jesus' teaching about His Messiahship (IV) is to be contrasted with the synoptic silence. This statement seems to be put too early by John, who takes incidents from his source and puts them where they best bring out the Divinity of Christ.

Jesus was silent about His Messiahship in Galilee lest He might incite an insurrection. There is less danger of doing so in Samaria. The Baptist's declaration of Jesus as the Lamb of God represents a later development of the Baptist's faith. That the Baptist recognized Jesus as the Messiah is clear from John (2:1:33) and Matthew (3:14). The Baptist proclaimed Jesus to be the expected One, and Jesus appealed to his testimony (Mk. 11:30, Lk. 20:5). The Synoptists are implicit witnesses that the Baptist recognized Jesus as the Christ. Jesus dissuades the crowds from publishing His miraculous deeds (Mk. 3:12). Still Jesus referred to His wonderful works as His credentials (Lk. 7:22) and advised the Baptist's messengers to take back this report to their Master. Here Jesus departs from His usual reserve, but His claim is explicit (Mk. 14:62).

The Synoptics give a gradual disclosure of Jesus' Messiahship, but the Fourth Gospel gives an immediate declaration of His Messianic character. John (1:29) sets forth the Messiah as Redeemer. The disciples attach themselves to Jesus because they recognize Him as the Messiah. In Luke (II) the angels announce the birth of the Saviour which is Christ. Matthew (3:11), Mark (1:7,8) and Luke (3:16,17) make the Baptist predict the coming of One mightier than himself who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. They assert that the Holy Spirit rested upon Him. John adds nothing as to the Messiahship of Jesus that goes beyond what is implicit in the Synoptists.

As to His self-revelation, the Fourth Gospel (10:24) sometimes represents Jesus as showing the same re-



serve as the Synoptics represent Him to have done. He does not seem to have claimed the Messianic title at Jerusalem, even if His words imply that it belongs to Him (10:24). "How long dost Thou hold us in suspense? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly". But He explicitly affirmed His Messiahship (4:26). John does not tell of the training of the Twelve, but he gives the effect which Jesus left on their lives at the last, viz., that they believed that He was the Christ, the Son of God. It seems clear that his Gospel reflects the belief of the church at the time he wrote. This belief had been reached through experience and reflection. Messiah may have become a proper name by the time the Fourth Gospel was written.

The Synoptics give a picture of Jesus as His followers saw Him while He lived, and do not admit a claim to His Messiahship so early in His ministry. They give a number of crises in His life by which He came to the full consciousness of His divine mission in the baptism, temptation, confession of Peter, transfiguration, etc. These crises are not brought out by John who proclaims His God-consciousness from the first. Jesus' conception of Messiahship contrasted with that of the Jews, and so it was necessary for Him to avoid its use because of its political implications, and until they recognized its spiritual significance.

Jesus called Himself "the Son of Man", but this title is not given Him as frequently in John as in the Synoptists - (seven times in John of about eighty in all). It is always used by Jews as a self-designation, but is never applied to Him by others. The title was used in the Old Testament (Ps. 8:4, Job 25:6, Dan. 7:13), where it simply meant man, and was not a Messianic designation. In the Similitudes of Enoch it approaches a Messianic title, and was used of the ideal king. This is the source of the New Testament designation - the conception was taken over from Judaism. By the application of this title to Himself, Jesus declared His consciousness of being the head of a new Kingdom which would be universal and everlasting, and in which brute force would not prevail, but which would be regulated by spiritual forces. The title is used by Jesus -

- (a) with the idea of humanity under suffering. The son of man is destitute. He must be betrayed to death.
- (b) It implies His sympathy with humanity - His mission is to "seek and to save . . . the lost".
- (c) Another group of passages expresses the glory and dignity of the son of man exalted to be the head of a redeemed human race. He speaks of His resurrection from the dead and ascension to Heaven where He will be the Judge of mankind.

The title is sometimes a substitute for the personal pronoun "I". At other times it means the ideal man. The representative man is lord of the Sabbath. The plasticity of the title made it "suitable to the process of transforming the Messianic idea from the political to an ethical and spiritual conception." Jesus gave the title a new content from His own self-consciousness.

(a) Messiahship implies service. The son of man came to minister.

(b) It is freed from the idea of Jewish nationalism and becomes a universally human office, and brings blessing to the whole world.

(c) It includes a spiritual dominion over all forces and powers. In this sense miracles are signs of Jesus' Messiahship. His mission was to redeem men from sin.

The language of the Fourth Gospel goes beyond the Messianic claim as the Jews understood it. The most remarkable of these declarations follows His healing the man who had been thirty-eight years in his infirmity (5:8-10). He claims special relation to God and calls God His Father, in a unique and special sense when He healed this impotent man on the Sabbath, when He said, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work", (5:17), thus placing Himself on an equality with God. The Jews called God, Father, and Jesus taught His disciples to say "Our Father", but He did not include Himself with them. He asserted His unique sonship and never said "our Father", but, "my Father and your Father" "My God and your God". God was His Father in so real a sense that what God did on the Sabbath He Himself might do. "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." (5:21).

Jesus taught the equality of the Father and the Son in the statement, "the Son can do nothing of Himself, but whatsoever He seeth the Father do, that doeth the Son likewise." He made Himself equal with God. In that equality there is an ethical and spiritual relationship, and, as John thought, an equality in essence and nature. Inherent life is not the attribute of the creature. Paul says, "In Him we live and move and have our being." But Jesus claimed to have life in Himself. (5:26) He bids all men honour the Son as they honour the Father. It is the Son of the highest that is equal to the Father in power and glory. There is an analogy between the Sonship of Christ and the sonship of believers (17:16). But the most saintly could not be said to have life in himself even as the Father has life in Himself, or that I and the Father are one. There is something inapplicable to the disciples in almost every saying of Jesus.

John rightly concludes, "He is the only begotten of the Father". There was a unique oneness of Jesus with the Father. In His inner consciousness Jesus was one with God. The relation of the son and Father is an ethical relation, a unity of will and purpose. Jesus had a consciousness of eternal life with the Father because of His pre-existence; His ascent to Heaven was because He came down from Heaven. After the resurrection the disciples believed in the pre-existence of Christ.

We discover life and ultimate reality by living as Jesus did. We see God in the life of Jesus, but we cannot see God until He is focussed in the person of Jesus Christ. It is an ethical conception. The character of God shines through the face of Jesus Christ. Jesus' human life is the focussing of the finite and the eternal. Jesus is filled without measure with the divine. The ultimate evidence of the Divinity of Christ is the consciousness of Jesus Himself, Jesus was conscious of His sinlessness, but the greatest saints are conscious of sin. "I am" (8:24) is not simply Messianic but something higher, which He does not define. It is His reality and not merely Jewish Messiahship. He claims to be the light of the world. The sheep know Him who is the good shepherd. He has one flock to which He is known (10:11). But He has other sheep whom He loves also, and whom He will bring into the fold (10:16). He came that they might have life. No one can pluck them out of His hands, because no one can pluck them out of His Father's hands.

There is a oneness of reality and redemptive power between Him and the Father. The action of the Father's eternal love did not end when He gave the sheep to the Son but the power of the Father is given to the Son so that no one could pluck them out of His hands. All these assertions reveal His consciousness of unity with the Father. He bestows eternal life on those who stand in living relation to Him, and between whom and Himself there is an interchange of love. There is an intimate union of the Father's personality and His personality.

There is a striking difference in the usage of the phrase, "Son of God" in the Synoptic and Fourth Gospel. The phrase has undergone a radical enlargement and deepening of meaning. The Synoptics use it of the Messiah peculiarly related to God in His official work and position. When the Synoptics speak of the Fatherhood of God they are thinking of the relation of mankind to God, and the unique relation referred to by Matthew alone is exceptional (11:25). In the Fourth Gospel God is the Father of believers, of those who respond to His love, and He is the Father of Jesus in a transcendental and unique sense (3:16, 18). When the Son is referred to it is always the unique sonship of Jesus that is meant. When Jesus called Himself the Son of God, He had a different and real Sonship in mind. "I and the Father are one", meant a transcendent and unique sonship (10:30 Ch. 17).

"The conclusion seems inevitable, then, that the phrase indicates divine nature coming from out of the divine sphere into the world of mankind and placing itself under all the limitations of time and space." (1)

Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews had prepared the way for this advanced meaning of Sonship in John. Jesus was the pre-existent one (Phil. 2:5f, Heb. 1:2). The resurrection of Jesus confirmed His spiritual transcendence (Ro. 1:4). By the sameness of nature John does not mean an impersonal relation; nor does the distinction between Father and Son conflict with the Jewish idea of monotheism.

John passed over the Gethsemene scene, and gives the farewell speeches of Jesus to His disciples. He was perfectly well acquainted with the scene in Gethsemene - the other Gospels were certainly known to him - but the scene was not congenial to his scheme. He therefore left it out as not fitting into his picture. From his point of view all momentary vacillations and human shrinkings and other natural limits, such as we find in the highest degree precious and indispensable, the touches of realism that bring Jesus so near our human nature; all these fall away from him as alien to his scheme. He paints the Christ rather than Jesus, the eternal divine energies rather than the human medium through whose transparent image they shine.

#### Farewell Discourses.

Chapters 14 - 16 and the prayer of 17 are the crown of the self-manifestation of the only begotten Son of God. This is a serener atmosphere where all controversy is set aside. We are admitted into the secret place of the most High where the Master reveals Himself to us. This is the culmination of His self revelation. He links belief in God with belief in Himself. Those who love Him the Father will love. When believers ask anything in His name, He will do it. He will send the Comforter from the Father (15:26). His people will be with Him Where He is that they may behold His glory. After the resurrection He said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." (20:22).

In the discourses of the Fourth Gospel the nature of our Lord's mission is set forth in striking language: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." "The Father that sent Me has given me a commandment." "I came down from Heaven not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent Me." The purpose of His mission was to bear witness to the truth and to save the world. These two aspects of His mission are in reality one, since truth is the saving power in delivering men from sin and death. His mis-

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(1) Zenos, p. 242.

sion would not terminate when He returned to the Father, but would be carried on by the Spirit. These are daring assertions, overwhelming statements of authority.

Jesus reveals the character of life that marks the subjects of the Kingdom of God. In conversation with Nicodemus we see the contrast between the pharisaic thought of religion and that of Jesus. With the former, religion was external and consisted, for the most part, in conformity to rules; with Jesus, it is inward or spiritual. He says that the new birth of the soul is indispensable to christian citizenship. This regeneration is to be effected by the Holy Spirit who creates in men a likeness to God. The possession of eternal life is conditioned on faith in Jesus Christ whose mission was to give this fulness of life to those who believe on the Son of God. The discourses of the Synoptics emphasize certain qualities or dispositions necessary to the members of the Kingdom rather than indicate the source from which these qualities originate.

Eternal life is the key word in John's Gospel. It means the perfect life, the fulness of life, the highest kind of life, the pre-eminent life. This ideal life is the supreme blessing attainable to man. This real life is from God alone, and comes from Jesus Christ, and culminates in fruit (15:1 f.) which is more life. There is an ascending scale of life: relational, ethical and Godward. Eternal life is not only a future hope, but also a present possession (5:24). It is an active principle working within man; it is the life of God in the human soul, and begins at the very moment when the soul undergoes the new birth.<sup>(1)</sup>

Since eternal life is from God, it is everlasting. With Paul and the Synoptists eternal life is future, and will be realized in the Messianic age (Mt. 19:26, 25:46, Ro. 2:7, Tit. 1:2). Eternal life in John corresponds to the synoptic use of the phrase "Kingdom of God", and with what Paul means by the grace of God, or by being justified. When one is born again he receives eternal life and becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of God, (III). In the Synoptists the Kingdom of God is present in the sense of being within or among men, but its consummation is in the future. Thus John's doctrine of eternal life is implicit in the Synoptics. Many of Jesus' parables have to do with the Kingdom of God whose condition of citizenship is a spiritual change brought about by repentance or conversion. The essence of eternal life in John's thought consists of fellowship established between the believing soul and God. Knowledge is the dynamic, creative force which brings eternal life into being.

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(1) The Eternal Glory, Manson - p. 115-8.

This knowledge is intimate union of personality with personality, and issues in fellowship. "It is the life of mutual love, and confidence of God and man in perfect fellowship with one another." John's thought is an advance beyond the Synoptic teaching of the Kingdom of God.

Thus, the Kingdom-of-God idea disappears from John as no longer necessary since this inner harmony will insure that God's will requires no sovereign enforcement in this life of mutual confidence and love. The work of the Messiah is not only to judge but to ~~save~~ save. His is a redeeming ministry. Jesus holds the first place in the transformation of man. His is a widening, deepening ministry. John shows (III) Jesus' place in the transformation of individuals and of society.

The sacramental teaching of the Fourth Gospel stands out clearly in Chapter VI. A sacrament is a symbolic representative of spiritual reality. This sacramental concept of life runs through John's Gospel. In the sermon that follows the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus speaks of His flesh as the bread which He will give for the life of the world, and intimates that this life is to be appropriated by faith in Him. Even the Jewish rites and ceremonies were meant to be sacraments and not ends in themselves. John unfolds the sacramental teaching of Jesus in His teaching.

1. In eucharistic language he conveys the mystical doctrine of feeding on Christ. To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the thought of Paul and the Synoptists. The feeding of the multitude is full of symbolic meaning, and John regards it as a substitution for the institution of the Supper. This section (6:51b-58) applies to the symbolic eating of the Lord's Supper, and is probably placed too early by John. Material food is a symbol of the spiritual. This bread represents His flesh and lasts to life eternal, if received by faith. The Jews clamored for a sign. Jesus told them that Moses gave them the vehicle of physical, but not of eternal, life. The manna was only a symbol of the real Bread which is Himself. Food without work was not a sacrament. It was the apocalyptic conception of the Messiah that he would produce abundant food. Jesus is the Heavenly Bread and offers Himself to meet man's need. He will give His flesh for the life of the world and it will have universal efficacy (1:29). All who appropriate it will have eternal life. It is in a spiritual sense, by the assimilation of His humanity, that He is the life of the world. This whole Gospel is a sacrament of eternal life. "I am the Bread of life." Christ is the vehicle, the visible expression, of the ultimate reality of life. John uses "believe" in the sense of Paul's "faith" raised to its highest significance. Those who with the spiritual eye see the Son and believe on Him will be raised up at the last. That

is the true meaning of life; it is life triumphing over death. Through his incarnation, life and sacrifice on the cross, the sustenance of the spiritual man is supplied. In His last discourses we have a full revelation of the mystery of the spiritual life. On the eve of his death He takes the disciples into closer confidence, and gives a fuller insight into the things of the spiritual life. He mentioned two great laws of the spiritual life in His earlier discourses, viz., that this life is spiritual in nature and that it is His gift to the world. These two laws are presented in a new light in the later discourses. The Spirit is made known as the agent or author of spiritual life. The world cannot receive Him because it lacks receptivity, and is insensible to the beauty and value of spiritual things. Yet He will convict the world of sin, that it is in the wrong, in order that its attitude may be changed and its conversion follow. The Spirit is to carry on His work after He is gone (18:18) "When He, the spirit of truth, is come He will guide you into all truth." John draws no sharp distinctions between the Holy Spirit and the living presence of the risen Christ. The Holy Spirit is the personal presence of the eternal God manifested through the living Christ. He is not a person as we are; He is a spiritual presence. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all one God in three expressions or phases. Spirit is a great word in John. Like Paul, he felt that there must be a contact of spirit with spirit (IV).

A distinctive feature of the discourses of the Fourth Gospel is the frequency with which belief in Christ is spoken of as the condition of spiritual life. In this the teaching is differentiated from that of the Synoptics in which faith in Jesus as the Saviour is implicitly taught; but the condition of participation in the Christian life is repentance or conversion. In John, faith is the condition of salvation. But higher than to believe is to know. Knowledge is the intimate union of personality with personality; it is an inner response, an inner sensitiveness to truth. The real test of life is the inner response or sensitiveness to truth. Believe, has a variety of meanings in John, spreading all the way from favorable attitude up to complete surrender to Christ. To know is an ethical relationship (10), a relation of personality to personality. Believe is what Paul means by faith at its highest. Work is simply an expression of our faith in God.

There is a striking difference both in the form and content of the story as told by John and the Synoptists. The style of Jesus' teaching is entirely different. In the former, the sayings of Jesus bear such a striking resemblance to those of the author that it is difficult to tell where Jesus's words end and John's begin. John the Baptist,

Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, the Jews, Pilate: all speak the same language, and that is the language of the author. The whole Gospel sounds like a monologue. His way is to make all his characters express his thought of what each of them stood for in the belief of the church of his day. His thought of Jesus was that He was the herald of the Word, the Son of God. His manner of giving voice to that thought was to make John the Baptist proclaim Him "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world". It may be questioned if John the Baptist apprehended the full significance of his declaration that Jesus was the Messiah. John makes the Baptist express the belief of the church at the time the Gospel was written. The Baptist spoke under a prophetic flash, and when that subsided his view receded. His doubt while in prison makes it manifest that he did not fully apprehend that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus had not yet manifested His power in delivering the nation from the thralldom of the Gentiles. The outlook to John in prison was no better than at the baptism of Jesus. He was doing nothing to effect his forerunner's deliverance. Jesus' answer was reassuring, but not till then had he a full conviction that Jesus was the Lamb of God. Similarly, John makes Jesus say of Himself practically all that he himself puts down for Jesus. "I am the light of the world." "Before Abraham was I am."

In the speeches John does not mean that he is quoting Jesus' speeches verbatim, but that they contain the doctrine he believed Jesus would have propounded if He had lived under the conditions of the time when the Gospel was written. It is a systematic summary of His teaching, an interpretation of the essentials of Christianity; but the author was confident that he had received a revelation from the living Jesus or the risen Christ in doing so.

Miraculous accounts are interwoven into the narrative of all the Gospels. They all represent Jesus as a worker of miracles. Six wonderful works are attributed to Jesus by John. Each of the Synoptists records a greater number of miracles than John, but some of the works in John are more wonderful than any in the Synoptists. On the other hand, John's version of the Synoptic story of Jesus' walking on the water omits the miraculous element, and may simply mean that He made a rapid journey around the end of the lake.

#### Demoniacal Possession.

In later Judaism which is the mother soil of Christianity belief in demoniacal powers was universal. These evil spirits took up their abode in men in all manner of nervous diseases as well as in others. "Possession by demons was the theory of the time for the explanation of many morbid conditions of mind and body, but no science, either medical or psychological, has accepted it as a working hypothesis in modern times." (1)

(1) Standard Bible Dictionary, p. 412.



Demons could be driven out by pronouncing the name of Jesus over the persons. After returning from a missionary journey, the disciples declared, "Even the demons are subject unto us in Thy name" (Lk. 10:17). They complain of the name being used in exorcism by outsiders. Jesus, in reproving their narrow-mindedness, seems to take for granted the reality of such claims, and to share the belief of His time concerning demoniacal agencies among His people. He spoke of His own mission, conscious that His messiahship enabled Him boldly to assume such prerogatives as forgiveness of sins and dominion over all hostile forces so close is the union between God and Himself. So entirely does He identify Himself with the Father that, as God's will is His will, so also God's power is His power. There is even such direct efficaciousness in His person that a direct appeal to it, by one who does not belong to Him, is not impossible. Still when others failed to cast out the demon, Jesus at once brought relief (Mt. 17:14, Mk. 9:25). There are a number of cases in which Jesus dealt with the demon - possessed (Mk. 1:23, 5:2f, 7:25, 9:17). It may seem strange that the first confession of Jesus' Divinity should be by a demoniac. A cure was wrought by Jesus' psychological power. There is nothing in the Fourth Gospel to imply that Jesus believed that mental disorders were caused by demoniacal possession. Neither does John record that Jesus performed any such cures.

Other miracles of healing in John are similar to those in the Synoptics, viz. the healing of the nobleman's son (4:46-54) is similar to the healing of the centurion's servant (Mt. 8:5f) who was also healed at a distance. In both are revealed Jesus' compassion and commendation of the man's faith and an exhibition of His power. Each may be an instance of telepathic healing by Jesus' spiritual power. On the other hand, there is nothing clearly miraculous in either narrative, but only an assurance by Jesus, on hearing the symptoms, that the boy would recover.

The impotent man (5:2-9) was a chronic case. He was cured by the beneficent power of Jesus. John believed that this healing had been effected by Jesus' exercise of Divine power. But it may have been wrought by Jesus' extraordinary spiritual power over a nervous infirmity. This incident is similar to the one of the sick of the palsy borne by four (Mk. 2:2f). The hostility of the scribes and pharisees was aroused against Jesus by the popularity of His discourse, by His gracious attitude towards outcasts, and by His violation of what they regarded as the sanctity of the Sabbath law. There was a large crowd of listeners; (Lk. 5:17) tells whence they were gathered together. Jesus saw the faith of the paralytic and his friends. The subjects of healing or their friends have faith in the power of Christ, or of God in Christ, to heal. The efficacy of Christ's power is dependent

upon the faith of those upon whom His power is to be exercised. In response to their faith, Jesus said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." These words of absolution kindled the anger of the scribes, and after debate, they accuse Him of blasphemy which meant to express any derogatory or contemptuous opinion about God. Only God can forgive sins, and so they regard Jesus as guilty of blasphemy because He had assumed a prerogative belonging to God only.

Some think that Jesus had just given the paralytic the assurance that God was waiting to forgive him, or that He had expressed His knowledge that in this particular case God had actually forgiven. If Jesus had stated that God had forgiven the man's sins, He would have averted the charge of blasphemy. But, instead, He cured the man to prove that He had the power to forgive sin. It is easier, says Jesus in effect, to say "thy sins are forgiven" than to say "arise and walk"; for no one can prove whether sins are forgiven are not, but any one can tell whether paralysis is cured or not.

There are two difficulties about this miracle of healing. First, the miraculous power was exercised to prove a point, viz. Jesus' divine prerogative to forgive sins. Ordinarily, His mighty works were called forth by His compassion for suffering people, and then He usually enjoined silence about His cures. This one was performed with a view to publicity. If a new way of forgiveness is opened up, it must be made known, and the cure wrought to make real the forgiveness must be made known also. At the same time, it assured the sufferer that he was forgiven. There is a second difficulty. If Jesus is here using the title "Son of Man" in a messianic sense, it conflicts with His former habit of commanding the demons to be silent about it. Later, at Cassarea Philippi, He will not allow Himself to be proclaimed publicly as the Messiah. Only at Jericho and the entrance to Jerusalem does He permit the title.

This story is either idealized or belongs to a later period of His ministry. This cure may have been miraculous, or it may have been wrought by Jesus' extraordinary spiritual power to quicken faith and effect a cure. The assurance that the man's sins had been forgiven would make it easier for him to exercise that faith that would make the cure possible.

In healing the man who was blind from birth (Jn. 9:1-7), Jesus seems to use means to help effect a cure, or to help to quicken the man's faith. His sight was restored gradually. John calls it a sign of Jesus' divine power. This cure led to a discussion about Sabbath observance, and Jesus teaches that He is the Light of the World. The cure of blind Bartimaeus of Jericho (Mk. 10:46f) is most certainly

historic. His sight was restored "immediately" without Jesus touching him or using any means but his faith responding in Jesus' wonderful spiritual power.

There are two nature miracles in John, viz. the turning of water into wine (2:1-11), and the feeding of the five thousand. There is nothing to correspond to the former in the Synoptics, but the latter is recorded by all four Gospels, in minute detail and with slight discrepancy. Matthew (15:32-39) and Mark (8:1-9) tell of the feeding of the four thousand. It is probable that these two narratives are varying traditions of the same incident. In several points, John combined the details of the two accounts and for this reason makes the scene of the incident on the East of the sea of Galilee while Mark places it on the West. The miracle of the five thousand was wrought on the afternoon of the day the people left home. Jesus used the occasion to test and teach the people. In John it supplied the text for the sermon that followed, and a touchstone to test those who followed Him. What this bread was to their bodies Jesus was to their souls. Jesus's motive for feeding the four thousand was that they were three days without food, and they might have suffered from hunger if He had sent them away, for they were in a desert place, and had no opportunity to procure food.

The two incidents seem to belong to different times of the year. In the story of the five thousand, the people sat down on the green grass (Mt. and Mk. - John says much grass). The four thousand (Mt. and Mk.) sat on the ground. The former was at passover time when the grass was green, the latter may have been later in summer when the grass was parched (weak point). There may have been two feedings, but probably they are two traditions of the same incident.

There have been many attempts to explain away the miraculous element of this story. Keim held that this was a parable spoken by Jesus, and that it was later mistaken for a miracle. Paulus and Beyschlag agreed with Keim that the disciples did not intend to narrate a miracle, but held that when the pilgrims saw Jesus and His disciples distributing all the provisions they had amongst the multitude, those present who had food were so filled with admiration for this act of generosity and stirred to a spirit of philanthropy that they opened up their quantities of provisions and laid them at the feet of Jesus for distribution to the multitude, and that there was sufficient food to give everyone in the crowd all he could eat. D. F. Strauss would dismiss the whole story as a myth based on Old Testament parallels. But he attributes far too much significance to the mythical imagination which has much more to do with the adorning of facts than in forming them. If you give mankind a very little start, their imagination will go a long way in adorning it. There may be a mythical element in the Gospel story of the feeding of the five thousand, but the origin of this narrative is not sufficiently accounted for by a mere reference to the manna in the desert.

It is much too definite and particular in its details for that. Jesus taking refuge in the wilderness from the crowds when the sun was setting, His voyage across the lake, the crowds following Him in their enthusiasm, His teaching them, the way they sit down on the grass in companies that look like flower-beds; all this was seen by some one. It goes back to a living recollection of an actual scene. It stands in organic connection with an irreducible content of historical sequence. This was a turning point in Jesus' career. John says they wanted to make Him a king (6:15). Jesus seems to have done something which produced a tremendous effect on their minds and made them think that He could be their Messiah, - if He chose. But He could not be the kind of a Messiah they wanted. Therefore He turns His back on them and flees from Galilee.

There was some fact here. The fact may very well be decorated as it passed from mouth to mouth, until it reached its present form, and Old Testament reminiscences may have helped in the process; but it is impossible to accept the whole scene as simply the product of the popular imagination. It does not seem possible that the Evangelists did not intend to narrate a miracle. In Mark the miraculous element stands out quite as much as in John, who calls it a sign. The loaves were literally multiplied by Jesus so that the multitude was fed, and the left-overs were more than they had to start with.

#### The Resurrection of Lazarus (Jn. 11:1-44)

There are two great difficulties attached to this story. First, it is surprising that the Synoptics pass over in silence such a stupendous fact as is here narrated, for it was supposed to have been wrought in the presence of a considerable crowd (11:19,21). Peter may not have been with Jesus on His return to Judea at this time. Ordinarily, Peter was spokesman for the Twelve, but on this occasion Thomas takes the lead, and tries to dissuade Jesus from going back to Judea. Failing in this, he challenged his fellow disciples to return with Him, even at the risk of death. The whole Twelve may not have been present, and Peter may have been one of the absent ones. Even that would not be sufficient to account for Peter's ignorance of such an extraordinary fact. Mark's account contains a pretty full and detailed account of the events of each day of Jesus' last sojourn in Jerusalem, but it seems to leave no place for the insertion of the account of the raising of Lazarus. But the triple tradition (Mk. 5:22f and parallels) has an account of the raising of Jairus' daughter, but there is no convincing proof in the narrative that she was dead. On the contrary, Jesus said, "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth" (5:39). Luke alone (7:11f) tells of the restoration to life of a widow's son at Nain. This may be a lesser miracle of the

same kind, or it may have been a case of resuscitation from a deathlike swoon at the call of Jesus. The boy was supposed to be dead, but Jesus does not say that he was. In the great commission to the Twelve Matthew along (10:8) has, "raise the dead", and (11:5) "the dead are raised." John makes the resurrection of Lazarus the occasion of the beginning of faith in Jesus on the part of many of the Jews, and says that from them the Sanhedrin plots against Jesus' life (11:45f) and the life of Lazarus (12:10). But Jesus' death had been predetermined (7:1,25,44, 8:59, 10:31 etc.) This event simply brought matters to a crisis.

The second difficulty is the stupendous character of the miracle. From one point of view, this seems to be a transcendental miracle, but all miracles require a supernatural cause and are equal from the divine point of view; and one is practically as possible and as easy as another. Lazarus was dead four days. He was really dead. At the grave, Jesus prayed aloud to God, intimating the source of His power to recall to life His departed friend. This prayer is hardly what we would expect. There have been several attempts to explain this narrative. First, the swoon theory, according to which Lazarus had just recovered from a trance when Jesus reached the tomb. Second, Renan's fraud theory to which Jesus, as well as His friends, was a party. To win greater popularity for Jesus in Jerusalem, His friends wrapped Lazarus, still pale from his recent illness, in grave clothes and buried him. Jesus went to the grave to see His apparently dead friend, and, at first, had no knowledge of the deception, but He later allowed the miracle to be attributed to Him. Even if Jesus had never before performed miracles, these two theories are entirely out of harmony with the narrative, and the latter is quite inconsistent with His whole life.

Third, some consider this story an acted parable based on the parable of Lazarus, the beggar in Luke (16:19f). But we have shown that the Fourth Gospel contains a more trustworthy tradition, and John thinks, rightly or wrongly, that it is based on fact even if he interprets the facts. Fourth, it cannot be an allegorical interpretation of the words: "I am the resurrection and the life." It is psychologically impossible that the narrative has merely spiritual significance. Fifth, Strauss thought that the whole story was a myth based on the Old Testament narrative of Elijah raising up the widow's son.

It seems clear that John meant to narrate a miracle. Those who regard the miraculous as impossible may accept some of the other explanations offered. Those who believe that Jesus performed other miracles will see the miraculous here.

Eschatology.

In the Synoptics, Jesus regarded the Kingdom of God as both present and future. Apocalyptic and ethical elements are interwoven in His discourses and parables, and neither can be eliminated. The apocalyptic teaching is not limited to His early teaching, but is found in His late addresses also. "Jesus did resort to apocalyptic modes of thought and expression current in His day. This was inevitable if He was to establish contact with the mind of the day. But His own world view far transcended the apocalyptic system." (1)

He was interested in men's spiritual relation to God, and not in the manner in which it was brought about. He may use apocalyptic thought forms about the way in which the Kingdom is to be initiated, but its development would be by natural growth. While His teaching was sometimes apocalyptic in form, it was always ethical in import. His death would cause only a brief interruption in His relation to the world, for He would soon re-appear. Jesus placed the emphasis on His presence in the Kingdom and not on the manner of His coming. The apocryphal conception is clear in that He will be the Judge. But His judgment will be universal, including Gentiles and Jews also. The decisive test will be men's attitude to their fellowmen. His judgment is on an ethical basis in that he will deal with men as they deal with others. The results will be surprising and final.

Matthew alters or adds details to Mark in the direction of catastrophic eschatology. Mark, Luke and John are a progressive series in which Christianity becomes more universal and less and less apocalyptic. Matthew is a development in the opposite direction. He makes Christianity more Judaistic and apocalyptic.

John transformed the apocalyptic eschatology of the synoptics into a conception of Christ's spiritual presence in the person of the Paraclete. Instead of His second coming in bodily form, John speaks of Jesus' parousia or presence. There is one reference to His second coming in John's Gospel (21:22), but he does not speak of the manner of His coming. He seems to have in mind a spiritual coming to His disciples. The emphasis is on His presence with His people and not on the manner of His coming. There are indications that it was not a bodily, but a spiritual presence He had in mind. Jesus promised to send the Paraclete (14:16, 15:26, 16:7) to be with His people in power. John links the end of the existing order with the second coming of Christ. Jesus will raise up His followers at the last day (6:39,40,44). The spiritual life is the risen life, and so He called Himself the Resurrection (11:25). His spiritual quickening makes death an insignificant incident

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(1) Zenos, p. 104.

in life (5:24). One's acceptance or rejection of the truth determines whether he will be approved or rejected. The light will either draw or repel men (3:12, 9:29). Judgment is thus a moral process that goes on in this life; it is also associated with the 'last day'. Men's conduct determines their relation to Him.

John wrote with full knowledge of the Synoptic tradition, and treated his sources with the utmost independence. He wrote from a different point of view from that of the Synoptists. He was not simply a historian whose aim was to narrate the words and deeds of Jesus. His aim was to interpret the facts of history, and, in doing so, he meant to present a narrative of facts. His Gospel is supplementary to the Synoptics. He corrects them; omits most of the incidents which they narrate; and adds what they omit, especially at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He frequently follows a more primitive tradition of the life of Jesus than the Synoptists reveal. He had access, at least, to Mark's Gospel. Their verbal coincidences, even in unusual phrases, are best explained on the assumption that John knew Mark well. There are slight agreements of John and Mark against Matthew and Luke, when the four are parallel. John supports Mark against Matthew and Luke when they differ from him, but seldom agrees with them against him. John knew Mark better and valued it more highly than he valued Matthew or Luke. On the other hand, John corrected Mark in favor of Luke's version in the prediction of Peter's denial and the cock-crowing. He agreed with Luke that the tomb in which Jesus was buried had never been used before and also in the scene of the resurrection appearances.

There is a point of contact between John and Luke in regard to Martha and Mary, and John identified a certain unnamed village as Bethany their home town, and an unnamed woman in Mark as Mary. He merged details derived from Luke with other's derived from Mark's version, and assigned incidents to definite persons and places which were known to his readers.

There are signs of the use of more or less identical language and additions to and modifications of the minor details of a story where, for example, the betrayal was a suggestion of the devil (Lk 22:3, Jn. 13:2), and in the repetition of, "I find no fault in Him." He notes that it was the right ear that was cut-off and that the servant's name was Malous. In several places there is a conflation of the Marcan and Lucan versions.

All this indicates that John was using a document which his readers regarded as a standard and not a floating tradition. Streeter concludes (1) that John probably knew Luke or Proto-Luke, but that any points of

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(1) Streeter, p. 403 ff.

contact between John and Matthew are more easily explained on the assumption that their sources were parallel traditions or that the similarity is accidental. He finds no conclusive evidence that John used Matthew. His conclusion may be warranted, but it seems to me that John must have known Matthew even if it is difficult to find verbal coincidences in them. If Mark was written twenty or twenty-five years before Matthew, as Streeter suggests (p. 130) ten to twenty years would suffice - John, in his work as a Christian minister with Mark as his only Gospel, must have known that Gospel almost by heart before Matthew's Gospel was written. And since John was an old man when he wrote his Gospel he would inevitably and unconsciously have a closer literary affinity to Mark, which he knew well, than to Matthew with which he was very much less familiar, and which may not have been written more than five to ten years before his own Gospel.

I am inclined to agree with E. F. Scott's conclusion that John must have known the three Synoptic Gospels. As already indicated, John had another source besides the Synoptic Gospels, or used another tradition. This may help to account for some of the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospel. Some of the differences are:

1. The scene of the ministry of Jesus.

In the Fourth Gospel, the scene of Jesus' ministry is Jerusalem and Judaea. Visits of Jesus to Jerusalem, conversations with the Jews, and miracles which He performed there; these constitute the chief events in this Gospel. "The Galilean ministry is in fact only an episode in an activity which has Jerusalem for its source and base." (1)

In John, Judea seems to be the chief scene in Jesus' ministry; in the Synoptists, it is Galilee, and one hardly knows from them that Jesus had ever been in Jerusalem except at the time of His crucifixion. Yet the Judaic ministry is implied in the Synoptics. We learn (Lk. 5:17) that scribes and pharisees from Jerusalem had frequently attended our Lord's ministry. His lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often . . . but ye would not" (Mt. 23:37, Lk. 13:34) indicates that He had often preached the Gospel in Jerusalem, but they would not accept Him. Jesus' family attended the feast every year (Lk. 2:41). Jesus knew people near Jerusalem (Lk. 19:30f, 22:8f), who called Him Lord and Teacher. His visit to Martha and Mary suggests that He may have visited Judea frequently. The circumstances connected with the preparation for the last visit to Jerusalem imply that He was not unknown there.

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(1) Manson, p. 21 f.



If a prophet could not perish out of Jerusalem, can we suppose that He had not preached there? Was not Jerusalem the home of the prophets? Should he go only to the outlying parts of Palestine and not to the capital of the nation? It is not surprising that the Synoptists who follow Mark's thread of history should emphasize the Galilean ministry since Mark's source was Galilean, viz. Peter. Even without the Fourth Gospel we would conclude that Jesus must surely have visited Jerusalem before.

## 2. Duration and chronology of our Lord's ministry.

The Synoptic Gospels leave on our mind the impression that His ministry began after John the Baptist was imprisoned. The Fourth Gospel gives an important part of his ministry before John's imprisonment. The Synoptists mention only one Passover; John speaks of three Passovers which implies that His ministry extended over the greater part of three years. From the Synoptics we might infer that it was limited to one year.

To shorten Jesus' ministry is to increase the historic difficulty of the Synoptic narrative, for it is improbable that all the work could be crowded into one year; missionary journeys, discourses and miracles, the mission of the Twelve and the Seventy, and the education and training of the Twelve. The record of the Fourth Gospel greatly strengthens the historic character of the narrative of the life of Jesus. Although John does not attempt to give the full life story of Jesus (20:25) he attempts to give a chronology of His ministry. There is no Synoptic chronology. Mark is a collection of detached stories and incidents, and Matthew and Luke follow his plan. Hence the Synoptic narrative has no historic sequence. This does not mean that, when John and Mark differ in placing incidents, that John is always to be preferred. Mark's placing the cleansing of the temple during the last Passover week is to be preferred to John, who puts it in the first Pass-over week. It is very improbable that it belongs so early. John puts it early to bring out the pre-eminence of Christ.

John gives an authentic story of the foot-washing after the Last Supper (13:4f). It was customary for the disciples to take turns at washing each other's feet. But to-day is a time of dissension and nobody wants to wash. Jesus taught that he who considers himself the least is the greatest, and that greatness is measured by service. Conscious of His Divinity as never before, Jesus washed the disciples' feet, and showed them that it is not position that makes greatness, but that the spirit is the significant thing. The spirit of love ennobles the humblest task. Mark has a similar story (10:24f) which shows that the disciples should have the same spirit of condescending service.

### 3. Discourses.

I have already referred to the difference in the substance, form and tone of the conversations and discourses of Jesus, and the content of the story in John and the Synoptists. The central point in the Synoptics is the tidings of the Kingdom of God and the conditions on which men enter it. But the theme of the speeches of the Fourth Gospel is the person of Christ, His mission, His work, and the call of the Gentiles. These differences in the form and content of Jesus' teaching in the Synoptics and John have been urged as proof of the unhistorical character of the latter. There are subtle differences between the dialogues of Plato and the memorabilia of Xenophon, and yet we regard both as the disciples of Socrates. If we believe that Jesus was the incarnate Son, we can believe that John represents the substance of His teaching if not the exact words He used. John is selective, and not only relates facts and incidents, but he also interprets them in the light of subsequent events. A subjective element characterizes this Gospel, and the order, symmetry, and dramatic grandeur in which it is cast; but it is impossible that the subjectivity went so far as to create the form and substance of the Gospel. The Synoptists more nearly represent the *ipsisima verba* of Jesus than the Fourth Gospel in which the theme is from Jesus, but the form is John's. John supplements the Synoptics in such a necessary way that it cannot be set aside without fair consideration.

### 4. The day of our Lord's death.

John corrects misconceptions. The most certain case is that which concerns the day of the crucifixion. According to John, the arrest and trial took place before the feast of the Passover. He states that Jewish officials who brought Jesus to Pilate entered not into the judgment hall lest they be defiled (18:28). A writer must interpret consistently with himself. Hence the Supper could not have been a Jewish Passover. The Synoptic Gospels are agreed that the Last Supper was eaten Thursday evening and that the crucifixion was on Friday, the fifteenth of Nisan. After the Supper, the arrest, trial, condemnation and crucifixion took place - all on the same day - between sunset Thursday and sunset Friday. According to John, Jesus and His disciples partook of the Last Supper before the feast of the Passover (13:1), that is on Wednesday evening the thirteenth of Nisan and the beginning of the fourteenth. The Synoptics put the Passover on the fifteenth of Nisan; John puts it on the fourteenth of Nisan. According to John the crucifixion took place at the time the Pascal Lamb was usually offered. Paul agrees with John (I Cor. 5:7). There does not seem to be any presumption against the accuracy of the Fourth Gospel here.

The Sanhedrin arrested Jesus (Mk. and Mt. 5) but not during the feast lest a popular tumult should be excited. According to the Synoptic account, it was Friday evening, the most sacred day of the Feast, that they arrested Jesus. They describe the Supper as a Passover, but there is no hint of the Pascal Lamb. If their date were correct, the events of the night would be sacrilegious in the eyes of devout Jews. It was not lawful to bear arms or hold a meeting of the Sanhedrin on that day. Jesus is said to have been taken to the Roman Praetorium which would cause defilement. Simon the Cyrenaeen was said to have come in from the country. More important than any of these is the fact that the haste with which the body was taken down from the cross is accounted for by the sacredness of the day about to begin and not the day ending. Otherwise, Joseph would have had no opportunity to buy spices and embalm the body of Jesus. There is a discrepancy between the accounts of John and the Synoptists, and it is the latter who will have to be brought into harmony.

#### 5. Picture of Christ.

I have pointed out Jesus' reserve and the gradual disclosure of His Messianic consciousness in the Synoptists, and that in John His Messiahship was prominent throughout. The Fourth Gospel sets forth a Divine Christ. Jesus came forth from the Father, He is one with the Father; all He says and does is a revelation of the Father. Salvation depends on His acceptance or rejection. Matthew is the one great parallel to all this. "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." (11:27,28).

It is true that the Synoptic picture is of the life of Jesus as He went out and in among the humble peasants and fishermen of Galilee, but it contains the same underlying idea as John's Gospel. The Son of Man forgives sin; He legislates for the church, and claims the devotion of His disciples. The Son of Man is Lord and promises and dwells among His people; He gives them help after He is gone; He seals the new covenant with His blood, and promises to dwell among His people, and will come again as Judge. In the Synoptics, the Divine is not set forth in the foreground; the picture has more of the human aspect. John places emphasis on the Divinity of Christ, but he also emphasizes His humanity. He makes it clear that He was a man. "The Word became flesh".

John, to an extent unparalleled in the Synoptists, emphasized the susceptibility of Christ to purely physical and simple human experiences. John alone records that Jesus was weary with a journey (4:6). He wept over a friend (11:35), and in the agony of death could say, "I thirst." (1)

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(1) Streeter, p. 387.

He pictures Jesus pouring out the fullness of His love on His disciples. In the Synoptics, Jesus is in the world; He lives a sinless life, and moves about among men. It is probable that only a small portion of the acts and sayings are recorded. The Synoptics are almost as fragmentary as the Fourth Gospel, as is seen from the fact that they give with such fullness the facts of that portion of His life which they portray, viz. His Galilean ministry.

The idea of the pre-existence of Jesus is implicit in the Synoptics. The birth stories of Matthew and Luke presuppose it, and so do Peter's confession and the statement that He will come again as Judge, and be with His people to the end of the world. Believers were baptized in His name. The pre-existence is explicit in Paul (II Cor. 8:9, Ro. 8:3, I Cor. 8:6). He appealed to it when urging the moral duty of charity, humility and consideration for others. It is also clearly set forth in the Logos-doctrine of the Prologue of John, and implicitly set forth in several declarations of Jesus. "I came down from Heaven". "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day". (8:56). "The glory which I had with Thee before the foundation of the world."

After the resurrection, the disciples believed in His pre-existence. He is Lord. The idea of the pre-existing Christ helps to explain the historic Jesus. John paints the Christ rather than Jesus. He paints the eternal divine energies more than the human medium through whose transparent image they shine. On the one hand, he gives the portrait of the risen Lord. On the other, he gives the innermost secret and meaning of Jesus' work stripped clear of all obscuring details as He could only be seen by the eye of longing insight from some distance. John made the first effort, and by far the greatest, to reconcile the Christ according to the flesh, as pictured by the early disciples, and the Christ according to St. Paul. That the latter preponderated in his picture, and that we will have to go to the Synoptics and even behind them, for a realistic picture of Jesus, does not diminish the splendor of his achievement and its exhaustless inspiration for us.

While we see that, in the main, the historic value of John's Gospel is not equal to that of the Synoptics, it is impossible to deny all historical value to it. John, in spite of his ideal treatment, represents in some respects, - and above all what he has to say about the events in Judea and Jerusalem both at the beginning and end of Jesus' ministry - a fuller and more trustworthy tradition than at first the Synoptics betray. There are certain difficulties in detail, but that does not justify us in dismissing everything in John where he happens to differ from the Synoptists.

When we try to form a clear, consistent picture of Jesus' life, the chronological framework supplied by John - though somewhat faulty - is indispensable. Again, the one-sided Galilean localization of the Synoptics is supplemented by John in a necessary manner. The familiar discourses with the disciples, the incomparable power of Jesus, seen only in glimpses in the Synoptics, is brought out by John in a way we could not afford to lose. The general impression, in this respect, is undoubtedly true to the historic reality whatever may be thought of the actual words by which it is conveyed. Jesus exerted an intimate and transforming influence upon His followers, as John in his Gospel portrayed.

This Gospel has behind it, in some sense or other, a man who knew Jesus well and loved Him well. He is anxious to give a report of Jesus' person and work that will convince the world of His divine nature and mission (20:31).

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