

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE JOHANNEAN QUESTION.

V. THE AUTHOR (*continued*).

MY contention is that the author of the Fourth Gospel not only shows his Jewish origin by his knowledge of Palestinian topography, by the cast of his style, by his interpretation of Jewish names (a topic on which I have not enlarged, but which will be found excellently treated by Bishop Lightfoot),¹ by the frequency of his quotations from the Old Testament, and by the probability that in some of them he has been influenced by his acquaintance either with the original text or with the current Aramaic paraphrases,—but that more than this, his mind is really steeped in the Old Testament, and that his leading ideas stand as much in a direct line with the Old Testament as those of St. Paul and St. Peter.

Here I am aware that I come to some extent into collision with Dr. Schürer, though he is clearly conscious of another side to the question besides that to which he seems himself to give the preference. He strikes a balance between the opposing arguments thus :—

“It cannot be questioned that the author of the Fourth Gospel has imbibed Greek culture (ein Mann von griechischer Bildung war). And we may add that this culture was that of Hellenistic Judaism in the form in which it is specially represented by Philo. Can we assume this for the Apostle John? The opponents of the genuineness lay great stress on this head, pointing more particularly to the marked coincidences between the sphere of thought in our Gospel and the Philonian, *e.g.* in regard to the doctrine of the Logos. The Evangelist, they think, was trained in the Alexandrian philosophy, which could not be expected of the Apostle. The defenders begin by seeking to reduce the measure of Hellenic culture in our Evangelist as much as possible. Many deny broadly that our Evangelist was influenced by specifically Philonian ideas at all. Such a degree of Greek culture as

¹ EXPOSITOR, 1890, i. 17-19.

the Evangelist really exhibits, they think that the Apostle John might have acquired in his later life among his Greek surroundings at Ephesus. The question therefore stands under this head pretty much as it does in regard to his anti-Jewish standpoint. Is it probable that the Apostle John in his later years should have undergone such a change? It is harder to answer this question in the affirmative in proportion to the degree of Hellenic culture which one is compelled to attribute to the Evangelist,"¹

My own position is one which Dr. Schürer would think a rather extreme one; it also marks what will be from his point of view a distinct retrogression. When I wrote on St. John twenty years ago, I went with the stream in conceding a decided influence of Philonian or at least Alexandrian philosophy. My present tendency is, if not absolutely to deny such influence, at least to reduce it within very narrow limits; to regard it as in any case extremely remote and indirect, and not comparable for a moment with the influence of the Old Testament.

I know that in forming this opinion some will think me actuated by an apologetic motive. I can only reply, that if that is so, I am not conscious of it; but that I have rather tried to exercise a certain watchfulness over myself; and that I have moved rather more slowly than I might otherwise have done. Since I wrote much of course has been published on this subject. Dr. Westcott's great commentary and the many solid works by Dr. B. Weiss (6th edition of Meyer's Commentary, 1880; *Biblische Theologie*, 4th edition, 1884; *Einleitung*, 1886), who has always consistently rejected the Philonian theory, as well as Franke's *Das alte Testament bei Johannes*, have not been without their effect upon me. I will not however appeal to these, but will take one or two writers on Dr. Schürer's own side of the question to show that there is at least a rather strong set of the tide in the direction I have taken.

It has not been my fortune so far to speak with very

¹ *Vortrag*, p. 69f.

great respect of Herr Thoma. The main body of his book I consider to be very wide of the mark. On the subject of topography, with which we were last dealing, he has notions which seem to me of a very airy texture indeed, and they come out in close juxtaposition to the passage I am going to quote : but that passage is so admirable, not merely for my present purpose, but as a real expression of the facts, that I have a peculiar pleasure in quoting it. It touches on some other points both before and behind that with which we are now dealing.

“This friendliness towards the Gentiles which the Evangelist shares with the Apostle [of the Gentiles] serves as little as his dislike of the Jews to prove his Gentile origin. On the contrary, his whole culture, the circle of ideas in which he is at home, the language which is familiar to him, point to a Jewish or Jewish-Christian origin.

“True, the Samaritan Justin has also a very good knowledge of Scripture. But the way in which he applies it shows that this knowledge has been acquired for learned and literary use in polemics and apologetics ; it is rather an importation from without of foreign material which he has built into his walls. With the Evangelist, on the other hand, one sees that he has sucked in a Jewish way of thinking with his mother's milk, that from a child he has been fed upon the living bread of the Word of God, that from his youth up he has read the Holy Scriptures and steeped himself in their ideas, figures of speech, and words of expression, so that the reminiscences of them come out as if they were something of his own, rather an unconscious and spontaneous manner of thinking and speaking than as quotation and interpretation.

“Along with this he is acquainted with Jewish customs and usages, and that such as are not to be got from the Old Testament, or such as might impress themselves vividly and familiarly upon a spectator from observing the religious ceremonies of an alien society. He alludes impartially and with no great effort to such Jewish traditions and ideas as would only be possible to one who had himself been accustomed to move amongst Jews ; indeed this perhaps is the reason which makes him forget here and there to put in explanations which, to a non-Jewish reader, would be quite indispensable to make him understand what was said.¹ On the other hand his explanatory notes on the manners and customs of the Jews may be accounted for by

¹ vii. 37f., 22f., xviii. 32, xix. 31 ; contrasted with xix. 41.

reference to Gentile readers on whom the author had to reckon, and probably did immediately reckon.

“But what tells more especially for Jewish origin is the knowledge of Hebrew which the author displays. This knowledge is considerably greater than Justin’s, who undertakes to give the meaning of a name here and there, badly enough; it is better than Philo’s, who may perhaps have taken his interpretations from an *Onomasticon*.¹ Because from the current version, to which both the Jewish and the Christian philosopher keep as a rule, there are found in the Gospel considerable divergences which appear to rest not upon a special improved translation of the Old Testament Scriptures, but upon a knowledge of the Hebrew text. What most directly points to a knowledge of Hebrew is the fact that the author not only is able to give a meaning and interpretation to names which he finds to his hand, or else (as in the case of Nathaniel) to express them by synonyms, but he even forms Aramaic words of his own like Bethesda.”²

All this, except the last clause, seems to me first-rate in perception and appreciation; and I invite Dr. Schürer and those who agree with him to ask themselves if it is not strictly and emphatically true.

There is however another name which I have to quote, and to which I know that Dr. Schürer would listen with respect—that of his former colleague, Dr. Harnack. After saying that the origin of the Johannean writings is from the point of view of literature and doctrine the strangest enigma which the earliest history of Christianity has to offer, Dr. Harnack goes on:—

“To refer to Philo and Hellenism is by no means enough, inasmuch as they do not satisfactorily explain one external side of the problem. It is not Greek *theologoumena* which have been at work in the Johannean theology—even the Logos has in common with Philo’s little more than the name—but from the ancient faith of Prophets and Psalmists, under the impression made by the Person of Jesus, a new faith has arisen. For this very reason the author must undoubtedly and in spite of his emphatic anti-Judaism, be held to be a born Jew, and his theology Christiano-Palestinian.”³

¹ *Zeitschrift f. wiss. Theol.*, xxxii. 305ff.; Siegfried, *Philo*, p. 143f.

² *Die Genesis d. Johannes-Evangeliums*, pp., 786-788.

³ *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 66 (1st ed., 1886; p. 85, 2nd ed., 1888).

This is from the first edition of the *Dogmengeschichte*: there are some significant alterations in the second edition in the direction of a greater agreement with Schürer. The most important is in the last sentence but one, which now reads, "out of the ancient faith of Prophets and Psalmists *the testimony of the Apostles to Christ created a new faith in one who lived among Greeks with disciples of Jesus.*" In other words, it is no longer the direct impression of the Person of Jesus, but the same impression conveyed mediately through the apostolic preaching. Otherwise the points most directly bearing upon our subject—the dismissal of Greek *theologoumena*, the Philonian Logos like only in name, and the "ancient faith of Prophets and Psalmists"—remain intact, except that the Christiano-Palestinian theology has dropped out. An instructive passage, if one was attempting to analyse the position of this extremely able and energetic writer, in whose mind however I cannot help thinking that a number of disparate propositions lie collected, which his many occupations have not left him time thoroughly to correlate and harmonize. As a final opinion then upon the whole question, I confess that I do not think it important, but as reflecting the impression made upon a candid and highly competent critic, its value is considerable.

Schürer has expressed his views on the relation of the Gospel to the Old Testament and Alexandrianism more fully in a review of Franke's work on the *Old Testament in St. John*.¹ The article breathes all his usual moderation and care in judging. He rejects, I must needs think rightly, certain exaggerations into which Franke has been led.

"What Franke has proved, he says, is only this, that the Fourth Evangelist has held more firmly than Philo to the religious conceptions of the Old Testament; that he is far less influenced by Greek philosophy. But what reasonable person will deny this? For

¹ *Theol. Literatur-Zeitung*, 1886, col. i. ff.

Franke's thesis, which denies all Alexandrianism straight away, nothing is gained."

To this I assent. But then Schürer goes on to show that his own contention in favour of Alexandrian influence is practically concentrated upon the doctrine of the Logos. He criticises, again I think rightly, Franke's attempt to depreciate the points of contact between Philo and the Gospel, by reducing them to a single point, the tendency "to conceive of the creative Word hypostatically." I quite agree that that is a large matter and not a small one. But then I certainly think that in what follows Schürer in his turn has not done justice to the evidence which goes to show that this tendency to insert a personal or quasi-personal Being between God and the world was by no means confined to Philo or to Alexandria. We ought to allow in thought more than I suspect we do for the difference between the real distribution of facts and their apparent distribution on such evidence as happens to have come down to us. The writings of Philo are voluminous, and they have been preserved, possibly with some that are not his; and we do not know how much has been lost, especially in the fifty years which separate him from the Fourth Gospel, which might have suggested to the Evangelist similar ideas. Schürer, I feel convinced, is wrong in making light of the Targums. It may have been proved or rendered probable that the oldest extant Targum, the Targum (so called) of Onkelos, is not as we have it older than the third century. But within that there are I believe traces of an older substratum; and behind the written tradition there was an oral tradition which, from what we know of the Jews at this date, must have been conservative in its character. But apart altogether from the Targums we know that the tendency to which they gave expression by the introduction of the "Memra," was at work long before them. Traces of it

are found in the oldest parts of the Septuagint. But it was no monopoly of Alexandria, but extended more or less all over the East. For the proof that St. John might have arrived at his conception of the Logos without any save the remotest influence from Philo, we need not go outside the New Testament. Harnack says that the Philonian Logos and the Johannean have nothing in common but the name. We may go a step farther and add that St. Paul's doctrine and St. John's have everything in common but the name. If St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Colossians, as I truly believe he did,¹ then St. John had a doctrine of the Logos ready made to his hand, and wanting only the name to make it complete. The Epistle to the Hebrews is another strong link in the chain. The substantial elements of the conception were all there. And we can well understand how almost any stray wind might blow in the direction of the Apostle, the one luminous word for which we may suppose him seeking.

The literary questions connected with the Apocalypse are of extreme difficulty, and in their present wholly unsettled state afford no argument either one way or the other bearing upon the genuineness of the Gospel. But in any case it is certain that the two works had their origin near each other; and the impressive revelation of the Word of God in Apoc. xix. 13 shows that the author of the Gospel must have had the conception very close to his hand.

It is difficult to believe that the Evangelist, whoever he was, had read a line of Philo. The difference between them is too fundamental. Philo is essentially a philosopher. His dominant interest is intellectual. It is true that he works in with this intellectual interest something of a moral and religious interest as well; but we can see

¹ It is interesting to note that in the recently published *Hand-Commentar* (Freiburg i. B., 1891) von Soden, who had previously maintained the existence of some not lengthy but rather important interpolations in the Epistle to the Colossians, now accepts the whole as genuine.

that his attention is engaged chiefly by the processes of thought, and his tendency is to express facts which might naturally have received a moral or religious interpretation in terms derived from those processes. His style and mode of treatment is florid and diffuse. All this is as different as possible from the Fourth Gospel. Here there is one absorbing interest, but its object is personal. It is the record of the Life of Jesus professedly (and does not the statement of the case almost constrain us to say, really?) by the disciple "whom Jesus loved." That fact is the centre round which all revolves. It carries with it no doubt far-reaching consequences—consequences for every individual who calls upon the same beloved name; consequences for the society which those individuals combine to form. And besides the external facts of the biography, there is a sense of something deeply mysterious in the Person of Him with whom it is concerned. The way in which He had spoken of Himself and of His Mission had linked both inseparably with the "ancient faith of Prophets and of Psalmists," and with their highest aspirations. When these were considered, when the new force which had been brought into society and the revolution it was effecting were considered, there seemed to emerge something not merely of local but of cosmical significance. An expression had to be found for that significance, and the Evangelist St. John, as we believe, hit upon the pregnant term Logos. It was already in the air; stray spores were flying about, and one of them was blown, as it were, across his path. It gave him just what he wanted. The keystone was dropped into the arch. There arose a system of thought, grandiose yet severely simple in its outlines. It would hardly be right to call it a philosophy. "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." That is not philosophical language.

Philo used, and used first, the same expression *Logos*, but its content was wholly different. With him the leading idea was Reason. The *Logos* of God was the active, creative Reason or Thought of God. With St. John the leading idea is Character and Will. The *Logos* of God is that agency through which, or the agent through whom, the Will of God expressed itself in the act of creation and in the conservation and energizing of things created. It is the agency by which, or the agent by whom, He has made known His will and character to men both in previous ages and conspicuously in the coming of the Messiah.

When once the idea was grasped that Jesus of Nazareth was the Word or personal manifestation of the Godhead, it was natural that round this central idea other subordinate ideas should group themselves, especially those connected with manifestations of Divine energy in contact with men. Such foundation texts as these were taken: "With Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light we shall see light" (Ps. xxxvi. 9); "O send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me" (Ps. xliii. 3); in both of which there is an idea of emission or procession which when a personal organ had been found for the revelation readily attached them to it. Such I believe to be the Old Testament roots of the conception, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men"; "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Parallels are found in Philo;¹ but the metaphors are too obvious and elementary for any stress to be laid upon them. In any case, I do not think there can be any doubt as to the origin in the Old Testament and in essentially Jewish soil of a number of other leading Johannian conceptions: the "tabernacling" of the *Logos* among men; the Divine glory

¹ For instance, this is quoted from *Leg. Alleg.*, iii. 59, *τι γὰρ ἂν εἴη λαμπρότερον ἢ τηλαυγέστερον θείου λόγου, οὐ κατὰ μετουσίαν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τὴν ἀχλὺς καὶ τὸν ζῶφον ἀπελαύνει, φωτὸς κοινωθήσεται ψυχικοῦ γλιχομενα* (Siegfried, *Philo*, p. 318).

or Shekinah ; the Divine Name in its significant Jewish sense which occurs so often ; the idea of " witness " ; the idea of " signs " ; the " water of life " ; and, we may add, the " bread of life," with all that profound symbolism associated with it in chapter vi. The more closely the Gospel is studied, verse by verse from beginning to end, the more I feel sure will the reader rise up with the conviction that the base on which it primarily rests is the Old Testament. Many connections will come out on a closer study which do not lie upon the surface. One was pointed out to me lately¹ which I do not think I should have noticed, but which is very attractive when attention is called to it. It is well known what a leading idea with St. John is that of " lifting up " (*ὑψωθῆναι*) in connection with the Passion. The great mine of Christian thought in reference to the Passion is Isaiah liii. ; but how is that passage introduced ? " Behold My Servant . . . shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. As many were astonished at Thee," etc. (Isa. lii. 13 ff.). This " exalting " of the suffering Servant I believe to have given the hint to the stress which is laid on the exaltation of the crucified Saviour in the Gospel.

Just one passage might give us pause in disclaiming a dependence of the Fourth Gospel on Philo, the strongest in my opinion of all those that are adduced to prove the point. Not only do we find in Philo the term Logos, but also another leading term with St. John, Paraclete. The word occurs in a curious passage, *Vit. Mos.*, iii. 14. The high priest's dress is symbolical of the *cosmos*, his breastplate (*λόγιον*) naturally symbolical of the Logos ; it was necessary that he should take this with him as a " paraclete " into the holy place. There is no real affinity between this and St. John xiv., xvi., but the coincidence in the word is at first sight striking. The word " paraclete " was however far more common than we might suppose. It is a legal term

¹ By Dr. C. A. Briggs, of New York.

apparently dating back to the Greek period. With its counterpart *κατήγορος* it is naturalized in the Talmud, and found even in the earliest treatise, the *Pirke Aboth*: the form *κατήγορ* comes back from Hebrew to Greek in the corrected text of Revelation xii. 10.¹ There was therefore clearly no need to travel to Alexandria in order to have this word suggested.

With this the last mainstay of the Alexandrianizing theory seems to go, and the crowd of arguments² from geography, style, manners and customs, relation to the Old Testament modes of thought, is left in all its full force, proving that the author of the Gospel was a Jew of Palestine, no mere "bird of passage," but one who was there born and bred, and who drew in from Palestine his habits of thought and speech as from his native soil.

But is it so clear that the author was a contemporary and eye-witness? No doubt this is a point which involves more delicate argumentation. Schürer does not deal directly with this; he seems to think that enough is said when it is shown that the Evangelist had access to a good tradition. Mr. Cross comes to closer quarters, and he disputes at each step the validity of the inference.

Let us first consider what the argument is.

There was one moment in the history of the Church which when once it had passed did not return—the moment when the new faith was in the act of forming and bursting through the husk of the old. John the Baptist was a prophet like those of the old dispensation; he was looked upon askance by the ruling authorities of Jewish religion; they did not encourage his preaching; they suspected danger to themselves in the movement to which he gave the impulse; but there was nothing tangible which they could

¹ See especially the excellent *Excursus* on the word "Paraclete," by Archdeacon Watkins, in Bishop Ellicott's *Commentary for English Readers*.

² I do not repeat these arguments, which will be found in abundance in Westcott, Salmon, Watkins, Reynolds, Plummer, or any other commentary.

take hold of either to lay an interdict upon it or to threaten his person. The Prophet of Nazareth began in the same manner as His forerunner. He too preached repentance and the approach of the kingdom of heaven. Again there is evidence that from an early period the Pharisaic and hierarchical party had their suspicions aroused. But again there was nothing tangible for them to take hold of, and they were obliged to let the preaching take its course. Only by degrees did they attempt to check the freedom shown in the interpretation of the Law and in the treatment of Jewish institutions. Only by degrees did they become conscious that this new Teacher was not merely a liberal-minded candidate for the office and consideration of a Rabbi, but that He claimed to possess an authority different in kind from their own. Long before St. Peter's great confession there were floating about whispers and rumours that the Galilean Prophet was something more than a Prophet. He had reminded them of what had been said to them of old time, and then like a second Moses He had taken upon Him to pronounce, "But I say unto you," etc. He had had the presumption to declare the forgiveness of sins. On one occasion, contrasting the behaviour of previous generations with that of His own generation, He had said, "A greater than Solomon, a greater than Jonah, is here." In the meantime there were reports of wonderful works wrought by Him, not so much as signs of extraordinary power,—for when He was challenged to show such signs He repeatedly refused,—but as acts of mercy to the weak and suffering. All this generated a feeling of eager, if baffled, interest and expectation. Men were going about saying that the Messiah was among them. When they said "the Messiah," of course they meant what the Jews of that day understood by the Messiah, a leader armed with preternatural power, who would expel the Roman oppressor and inaugurate an age of supreme prosperity and glory for Israel. Starting

with such ideas, we can imagine that there would be almost as much to disappoint their hopes as to rouse them. Many signs had pointed to the immediate coming of the Messiah ; men said that Jesus of Nazareth was this Messiah ; and yet there was something so strangely pacific, quiet and unobtrusive about His whole character and mode of working, that it was hard to believe that He could be the Messiah indeed. The atmosphere was highly charged and sensitive ; a single spark would set the combustible materials all around in flame. Constantly that spark seemed to be on the point of falling, and still it was in some mysterious way held back. On one occasion in particular it was very near. Something strange had happened on the waste land to the east of the Sea of Galilee. Great crowds had collected, and their wants had been wonderfully supplied. A sudden enthusiasm seized them, and they tried to take their benefactor by force and make Him king.

From which of the Gospels is it that we get this trait so exactly true to the situation—a trait so true to the situation then, but by no means true permanently and at all times ? It was not at once that even the disciples were weaned of their expectation of temporal sovereignty. Yet they were weaned of it. The decisive and final lesson was taught by the fall of Jerusalem. From that time onwards we cannot but feel not only that such temporal expectations were impossible, but that it must very soon have come to be forgotten that they had ever existed. By that time the Christian idea of the Messiah was, if not wholly, yet so largely purged and clarified that the very memory of a state of things in which all the dross of the Jewish expectation still clung to it must have perished. We ask what Gospel it is which has so caught the flying moment, and we find that it is the Fourth.

But a touch like this is very far from standing alone. Let me recall a few more scenes from the same Gospel.

A deputation from the priestly members of the Sanhedrin, or rather—as we are expressly and precisely told—from the Pharisaic party in that body, comes down to John the Baptist at Bethany beyond Jordan to make a formal report upon his baptism for the guidance of their colleagues. They ask, Who is he?

“And he confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? (cf Deut. xviii.) And he answered, No. They said therefore unto him, Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? . . . And they asked him, and said unto him, Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?”¹

The Jews well understood that this baptism of John's was no mere form, but that it symbolized a thorough moral reformation such as they connected with certain prophetic figures who were associated in their minds with the Messianic time. But how long can we suppose that this vivid recollection of John's baptism, and of the attitude of leaders and people towards it would remain after the generation to which it had been preached had perished?

A more advanced stage in the public ministry of Christ has been reached. There is a mingled state of almost feverish uncertainty and expectation about Him. It is the feast of tabernacles.

“The Jews therefore sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the multitudes concerning him: some said, He is a good man; others said, Not so, but he leadeth the multitudes astray. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews. But when it was now the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught. The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?”³

The threatening temper of the Sanhedrin is known, so

¹ St. John i. 20-22, 25.

² I hope it will not be thought a want of reverence if I print this not in such a way as to express Christian feelings now, but in such a way as to show that it is really history reflecting the feelings actually entertained at the period to which it refers.

³ vii, 11-15.

that people speak under their breath. Is this really an impostor or not? Does He satisfy the conditions laid down for the Messiah? It is wonderful that He should have such insight, having never passed through any of the regular Rabbinical schools.

“Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is of a truth the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was? So there arose division in the multitude because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said unto them, Why do ye not bring him? The officers answered, Never man so spake. The Pharisees therefore answered them, Are ye also led astray? Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, Doth our law judge a man except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.”¹

Not only Judaism, but Palestinian Judaism, not only Palestinian Judaism, but contemporary Palestinian Judaism—not the shattered and broken school of Jamnia, but the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem in all its pride and power—is here.

Just one picture of another kind.

“Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth we know not, or who opened his eyes we know not: ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself. These things said his parents because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already that if any man should confess him to be Christ he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. So they called a second time the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner.”²

¹ vii. 40-52. On the small esteem in which Galilee was held at Jerusalem see Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud*, p. 75 f.; *Stud. Bibl.*, i. 51.

² ix. 19-24.

The whole of this narrative is redolent of Jewish ideas: at the outset the notion that the man's blindness must be a punishment for sin, his own or his parents; the interpretation given to the name Siloam (which really means "sending forth," "jet," or "discharge" of waters); and then the whole controversy, the idea that only wise and good men could work wonders (on which see the Talmudic parallels in Wünsche),¹ excommunication and the final advice, "Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner."

But what is to be observed is not only that the ideas are Jewish, but that they relate to, and fit in exactly with, a particular state of things. It is exactly the sort of controversy which would inevitably arise when such works as Jesus did and such claims as Jesus made came into collision with the fixed ideas of the Pharisees.

But one more example of a page taken straight from the life.

"Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness into a city called Ephraim; and there he tarried with his disciples. Now the passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover to purify themselves. They sought therefore for Jesus, and spake one with another as they stood in the temple, What think ye? That he will not come to the feast? Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment that if any man knew where he was, he should show it that they might take him."²

Be it remembered that with the Fall of Jerusalem the Jewish ritual system came to an end. There seems to have survived a practice of going up at festival times to the Rabbinical centre at Jamnia and consulting the doctors there.³ But this can only have been the merest shadow of the former pilgrimages to the feasts at Jerusalem. What experience of these could suggest to a writer of the second

¹ *Erläuterungen d. Evangelien* (Göttingen, 1878) *ad loc.*

² xi. 54-57.

³ See Renan, *Les Évangiles*, p. 21, and authorities there quoted.

century that graphic picture of the stream beginning to flow towards the city (not from the Dispersion but) from the surrounding country, with a detail which would never have occurred but to one with special knowledge, "to purify themselves" for the passover?

But then, argues Mr. Cross, there are parallels to some of the allusions in the controversy with the Jews in Justin. True, there are such parallels: the instance is aptly chosen because Justin is, I think, the only, or almost the only, writer in which parallels with any point in them could be found. We may perhaps let pass the appellation "Gentile Christian," which Mr. Cross gives to Justin,¹ because though he calls himself a Samaritan, and though he was born at Neapolis (Sichem) in the heart of the Holy Land, he was brought up as a heathen. Still with him the controversy of the Jews was a real controversy: he had been engaged in it much and often: and the *Dialogue with Trypho* contains the literary harvest of actual living experience.² In this it differs from most subsequent treatises against the Jews which are as a rule artificial and rhetorical, in which the writers do not aim so much at the conversion of the Jews as at commending the argument from prophecy to their own co-religionists.³

But Justin deals with the Jewish controversy in one manner, the author of the Fourth Gospel deals with it in another. We have seen how consistently, how pointedly, with how many minute side-touches of subsidiary detail, the latter always places himself at the true standpoint of the situation with which he is dealing. If I am asked whether it was impossible for a writer well acquainted with his subject to throw himself imaginatively into these posi-

¹ *Crit. Rev.*, Feb., 1891, p. 157 n.

² Trypho says that ἐκ πολλῆς προστριψέως τῆς πρὸς πολλοῦς, he had an answer ready for every objection (c. 50).

³ Harnack in *Texte u. Untersuch.*, i. 2, 63 ff.

tions and describe them as the Evangelist does, I would not say that it is absolutely impossible. I may have used the word before this, but in deference to Mr. Cross' arguments I withdraw it and modify the opinion to that extent. But if I am asked whether it is probable, and the solution thus suggested of the phenomena of the Gospel a satisfactory solution, I should answer unhesitatingly in the negative.

What has just been said may be taken to cover the further question as to whether the author of the Gospel was an eye-witness. If he was a contemporary, he was in all probability an eye-witness as well. I will concede a little more to Mr. Cross under this head. The narrative is studded with features which receive a natural explanation if it is the work of an eye-witness; but it would be too much to say that, taken by themselves, they *prove* it to be the work of an eye-witness. Conceivably they may be a "counterfeit presentment" drawn from the imagination and not from life. Mr. Cross has made something of a point when he maintains that it is not probable that St. John was present at all the scenes which he relates with such graphic detail. It would be rather too much to assume that he was not: he may have been present at Jacob's well, or in the chamber during the visit of Nicodemus, and on several other occasions to which Mr. Cross takes exception, still the chances are against his having been present at all of them. I am quite satisfied with the way in which Mr. Cross states the case for me, viz., "that the writer, having witnessed most of the scenes which he describes, naturally carries into other scenes which did not come within his own observation the habit of presenting the well-known figures as if he was still looking at them with his bodily eyes."¹ I will not say that the proof is stringent, that it is the kind of proof on which we should hang a man; but I do say that taken along with

¹ *Westminster Review*, Aug., 1890, p. 173.

the other considerations already stated it is the best account of the facts within our reach.¹

If we frankly accept the Johannean authorship of the Gospel, then it seems to me that all the characteristics of it which we have noted fall easily and duly into their places. Even those which are adverse to its complete historical accuracy seem to me to find a better explanation on this hypothesis than on any other. A second-century romance-writer, even supposing that he had the learning and the imagination, would not have had the weight and depth and force and sublimity to produce a Gospel such as this. It is equally difficult to believe that one possessed of these commanding qualities, in near proximity to an age of great literary productiveness, should have passed away entirely without a name. On the other hand, if the discourses in particular have been unconsciously shaped and moulded by the writer, it is just because he had too powerful and creative a mind for them to come out of it exactly as they were taken in. A mind like St. John's was not a sheet of white paper, on which impressions once made remained just as they were; it must needs impart to them some infusion of its own substance; and if there is something of masterfulness in the process, who had a better right, or who was more likely to exercise this freedom, than the last surviving Apostle, who had himself lain upon the bosom of the Lord?

W. SANDAY.

¹ Of the detailed criticisms which Mr. Cross directs against my youthful essay (*W.R.*, pp. 177-181) I will only say that the majority of them relate rather to what might be called "picturesque accessories" than arguments. I set no great store by the order in the expulsion from the Temple (St. Mark is relatively the most graphic of the Synoptics and comes I should say next to St. John); I have no wish to press ἀναπεσών, or "and it was night," if my view of them is questioned; but I still hold stoutly to μετὰ γυναικός, and I think that most Greek scholars will agree with me; in this instance I do not think the argument unimportant.