

torture us, but in order that more and more we may understand the length and breadth and greatness of His mercy who knows what is in man.

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NOTES ON THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

XIV. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS AND ITS RESULT

(John xi.).

(1) THE raising of Lazarus from the dead raises the problem of miracle in a very acute form. For the naturalistic explanation of the acts of healing as *moral therapeutics* it must appear as an absolute impossibility, and so the record must be rejected as entirely unhistorical. Whether a rationalistic explanation as restoration from a prolonged trance has any probability from the standpoint of modern medical science is a question the writer claims no competence to decide.

(i) This is not the only instance of the raising of the dead by Jesus. The case of the daughter of Jairus is recorded by the three Synoptists (Matt. ix. 18-26; Mark v. 35-43; Luke viii. 49-56). The words of Jesus, "She is not dead, but sleepeth," are interpreted in two ways. "Either Jesus, confident of His power to recall from death, speaks of death as a sleep from which He will awaken (cf. John xi. 11), or He declares that the girl is not dead, but in a trance. Wonderful insight, if the latter is the case, takes the place of wonderful power, if the former. The words are ambiguous, but the evangelists convey the impression that they are recording a restoration to life, not a recovery from a trance" (*St. Luke*, in *Westminster New Testament*, p. 169). The case of the widow's son of Nain is recorded by Luke alone (vii. 11-17); and in this record there is no ambiguity of language. Although the circumstances do not exclude the possibility

of a trance, yet it would be a marvellous coincidence that the revival should take place at the moment when Jesus spoke the words of recall. The record in no way suggests such an explanation.

(ii) The case of Lazarus as recorded in the Fourth Gospel is held by many scholars to be an attempt to outbid the marvellousness of the case of the widow's son of Nain, inasmuch as Lazarus had lain in the grave four days (John xi. 17, 39), and the widow's son was being borne to it (Luke vii. 12). Luke too is charged with outbidding in the miracle he records, the common Synoptic record, as the daughter of Jairus had just died (Mark v. 35). One may ask whether the difference in point of time in the first two cases would be as significant for the evangelists as it may appear for the modern scholar who is casting about for a naturalistic explanation. If the reality of the death is conceded is restoration any more marvellous after a lapse of a number of hours than after the lapse of an hour? Do we know enough about the relation of soul and body to be able to declare confidently at what moment an irrevocable separation takes place? We need not speculate, as do Weiss and Beyschlag, regarding this insoluble problem. (See Bruce's *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*, p. 200.)

(iii) The case of Lazarus is more difficult, and it is impossible to escape the impression that the evangelist in verse 39 desires to magnify the marvellousness of the miracle. If normally the process of putrefaction would have set in in the interval, we must suppose either an arrest or a reversal of the process by the miraculous power of Jesus. "Beyschlag," according to Bruce, "remarks that the ἡδὴ δέξει of Martha cannot have been intended by the writer to exaggerate the miracle by making it consist in restoring life to an already putrefying corpse. One bent on magnifying the miracle would have represented the interval that had elapsed

from death, not as few days, but rather as four years or centuries and would not have put the ἡδὴ ὄζει in the form of a mere inference, a mistaken one, as the author thinks. *Leben Jesu*, I., 300." "That may be so," continues Bruce, "but it is difficult to think of a body out of which life has fled four days as still having within it 'echoes of life' as if the soul had not yet quite left it" (ibid.). But does not the evangelist quote Martha's words expressly to indicate the probability in the known conditions that the process of dissolution had begun? The evangelist has increased our difficulty by his manner of telling the miracle, unless, as Mr. Strachan suggests in the *March EXPOSITOR*, we may here suspect the editor's hand. The writer desires to guard his own mind against all credulity, and with hesitation he accepts the reality of the miracle on the grounds that on the one hand he cannot bring his mind to believe that the evangelist was capable of sheer invention when he seems most desirous of conveying the assurance of truth, and that, on the other, he cannot fix the limits of the possibility of the miraculous action of the supernatural person of the Word become flesh, the Conqueror of death as Risen Lord.

(2) It must be frankly conceded that apart from the wider problem of miracle, the narrative in John xi. raises many difficulties. It has been urged as an objection to the historicity of this event, that *the silence of the other Gospels is inexplicable*. "It is just conceivable," says Dr. Moffatt, "that the incident failed for some reason to be included by the synoptic gospels; their silence would not by itself be absolutely conclusive against the historicity. The difficulty is to give any adequate psychological reason why so stupendous and critical an episode (witnessed *ex hypothesi* by all the disciples) should have failed to win a place in the synoptic tradition, even when that tradition is admitted to be incomplete at certain points, and this difficulty is height-

ened by the obvious motives of the writer, who makes this miracle the pivot of the final Jewish attack on Jesus, instead of the purging of the temple, which he transfers to the beginning of the ministry." (*Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, p. 539.) In spite of the concession at the beginning, this passage sets forth clearly the difficulty the silence of the Synoptists involves, and so deserves close scrutiny.

(i) The incompleteness of the Synoptic tradition needs to be asserted more unreservedly. If the record in the Fourth Gospel of a Judæan ministry prior to the Galilæan, and renewed from time to time in visits at the great feasts, is at all trustworthy, and in a previous article reasons are given for its historical probability, then the incompleteness of the Synoptics is at far more than "certain points," and one whole side of Jesus' ministry, and in some respects the most important, is ignored in the Synoptic tradition. If the Logia or "Q" source contained mainly sayings, and Mark (ultimately Peter) was the source of the Synoptic record in its main outlines, we can explain its incompleteness by the limitation of Peter's interest or knowledge. As a Galilæan disciple he was concerned solely about the Galilæan ministry apart from the final tragedy, and an event, however significant, and crucial for the Judæan ministry, about which the Fourth Gospel is concerned, might quite probably be passed over by him. If such limitation of interest be held incredible, there remains the possibility of the limitation of his knowledge.

(ii) The parenthesis in Dr. Moffatt's statement "witnessed *ex hypothesi* by all the disciples," appears a conclusion going beyond the data. As has already been indicated, the record in the Fourth Gospel affords ground for believing that the twelve, who were the constant companions of Jesus in Galilee, did not accompany Him on all His visits to Jeru-

salem ; and that there was a circle of disciples in Judæa, regarding whom because of the extreme hostility of the Jewish rulers secrecy had to be maintained. When disciples are mentioned in the Fourth Gospel we are not entitled straightway to assume that the twelve are meant. If the mission of the seventy in Luke x. 1-20 is a historical reality, a wider circle of disciples accompanied Jesus in the wanderings of the last stage of His ministry. Even if the disciples mentioned in verses 7, 8, 12 and 16 included some of the twelve, it is not at all improbable that Peter was not one of the number. Would the disciple, who was always ready to speak for, and take the lead of the others, have left it to Thomas, had he been present, to propose that they should go, if necessary, even to death ? These conjectures are offered as no more than conjectures ; but as at least forbidding the confident assertion that the twelve must all have been present on this occasion.

(iii) Even if the episode appeared so critical to the evangelist with his dominant interest in the Judæan ministry, and the influence of that ministry on the Jewish authorities, as bringing to a head the purpose of the rulers to rid themselves of Jesus once for all, the event need not have had the same significance for Peter, even if he knew of it, or any other witnesses to the Galilæan ministry, as probably they were entirely ignorant of the course of hostile action against Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem. Verses 47-53 appear to come from one who was somehow in touch with the inner circles of Jewish politics, as none of the Galilæan disciples could be.

(3) It has been suggested that as the Synoptic tradition comes from a much earlier date than the Fourth Gospel, regard for the safety of the family in Bethany at a time of violent Jewish hostility to the followers of Jesus may have been the motive of silence. But this seems an improbable

reason. If the Jewish rulers were influenced in their action by this event, as the Fourth Gospel asserts, the family in Bethany would already be known to them, and a record of the event would not at a later date in any way increase their peril. This suggestion does get some support, however, from the fact that in Luke's reference to Martha and Mary, Bethany is not mentioned, but only "a certain village" (x. 38), and that in Mark's (xiv. 3) and Matthew's (xxvi. 6) account of the anointing at the supper, while Bethany is mentioned, the house is described as "of Simon the leper," and the name of the woman is not given. Is it likely that the company of disciples would know nothing about the family in Bethany? Some reason which we cannot now even conjecture there may have been for silence. In the preceding paragraphs, however, an adequate reason for the absence of any record of this event from the Synoptic Gospels has been given apart from this possible reason.

(4) The writer must confess that for him the greatest difficulties arise from the way in which the evangelist has presented the event in his narrative, affording not a little justification for such an explanation as that quoted from Forbes by Dr. Moffatt. "The whole evidence points strongly to the conclusion that the evangelist, using some tradition to us unknown and the synoptic material mentioned, elaborated them freely into a narrative designed to be at once : (a) an astonishing manifestation of the Logos—Christ, (b) a pictorial setting forth of the spiritual truth of Christ as Life, (c) a prophetic prefiguration of the death and resurrection of Jesus, as shown by the facts that the name Jesus and Lazarus have the same meaning, and that the narrative forms a transition to the final struggle and to death" (p. 273). While it seems incredible that the evangelist was capable of so freely and boldly inventing history in the interests of theology as the above quotation suggests, yet it

must be admitted that at several points doctrinal pragmatism appears to do violence to historical accuracy.

(i) Few statements have touched the human heart as the simple words "Jesus wept" (v. 35; cf. 33 and 38), revealing the depth of His compassion and the breadth of His sympathy for man in the presence of death. But it is not easy to reconcile with "this touch of nature that makes the whole world kin" His declaration in v. 4, in which His interest in the glory which is to be won by the performance of the miracle obscures His regard for His friends in their anxiety and need; or His further explanation in v. 15 that He is glad of His friend's death because of the opportunity it gives of strengthening the disciples' faith. Wendt (*St. John's Gospel*, pp. 153-158), in accordance with his partition hypothesis, derives from the source *vv.* 23-26, and also probably *v.* 27, and then as introductory to this utterance in *vv.* 1-22 he assigns the greater part to the same except *vv.* 1*b*, 2, 4, 11-15, taking similar exception to the representation there given of Jesus' attitude. Dr. Bruce seeks to weaken the strength of the objection by the following considerations: "The glory which is represented as the aim of the miracles is not of the vulgar, worldly kind. Glorification and humiliation are close of kin, or virtually identical, in John's Gospel." After quoting verse 4 he asks, "How does the sickness contribute to Christ's glorification? As the exit of the traitor did (xiii. 31)—by causing His crucifixion" (*The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*, pp. 151-2). This does not altogether relieve the difficulty. We must seek further explanation. Probably the evangelist understood the utterance in verse 4 as showing the supernatural foresight of Jesus into what He was about to do in raising Lazarus from the dead; but we can interpret the saying otherwise. Jesus may simply be expressing the absolute confidence in His Father that the issue would further God's purpose in Him,

while at the time not knowing exactly how. His delay in going to Bethany may be another instance of His constant habit of waiting upon God for direction. He did not and could not act till assured of God's will. We may accept verse 4 as an authentic utterance, although we may doubt whether Jesus did call Himself the Son of God. Verse 15 presents more difficulty. After learning that Lazarus was dead, and realizing as He must have done by His intense sympathy the desolation which the sisters were experiencing, could He, however confident of a happy issue out of this affliction by the Father's answer to His prayer, have said that He was glad He was not there? Did the disciples' faith need such confirmation? Was not the price of suffering paid by the sisters too high for even such an end? Would not restoration from sickness have served the purpose? This utterance breathes the theological pragmatism of the evangelist rather than the divine humanity of Jesus. If, as has been already suggested, the evangelist remained in Jerusalem, and did not accompany Jesus in His wanderings, the account from *vv.* 4 to 16 may be at second-hand; and so verse 15 may be the evangelist's modification of an utterance of different import imperfectly communicated to him.

(ii) A similar difficulty presents itself in verse 42. While it is altogether probable that Jesus uttered the words, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me" (*v.* 41), and they afford a most significant indication that He exercised His supernatural power in dependence on God through constant prayer, is it credible that addressing His Father He would add the explanation that He thanked God for answered prayer, not because He Himself had any doubt of an answer, but that His mission might be divinely confirmed for the multitude? The writer cannot bring himself to believe that the saying in its present form is authentic. Possibly the evangelist had added to the prayer his own

explanation of its purpose, and gradually the third person was changed to the first, and a reflexion assumed the form of a reminiscence. At least this seems much more probable than that Jesus could have used the words just as reported.

(5) The account in *vv.* 47–53 has the marks of historical probability. The connexion of the evangelist with the high priest will be afterwards discussed in the more appropriate context (xviii. 15). Whatever it was it placed him in a position to know the plans of the enemies of Jesus. The phrase “high priest that year” cannot be regarded as a proof of his ignorance of Jewish affairs in view of all the other evidence the Gospel contains of intimate acquaintance with the national conditions. It is adequately explained by many scholars as referring, not to the length of Caiaphas’ tenure of office, but to the significance of the year of the crucifixion of Jesus in human history. Probably the counsel of expediency given by Caiaphas has without any deliberate intention been so modified as to make it appear more obviously a prophecy. Verse 51 belongs to the evangelist’s theology rather than to history. So uncertain is the Synoptic account of the last stage of the ministry, that it affords no good reason for challenging the substantial accuracy at the evangelist’s representation of the historical situation at the moment when the Synoptic and Johannine streams of narrative begin to flow in one channel.

XV. THE WEEK BEFORE THE PASSION (John xii.).

(1) Mark (xiv. 3–9) places the anointing in Bethany in immediate connexion with the treachery of Judas (10–11), and, if the note of time in verse 1, “after two days,” applies to this incident also, on Wednesday evening. Matthew (xxvi. 6–16) gives the incident a similar position. Both may have intended to throw into bold relief the contrast

between Mary's devotion and Judas' treachery. And it is not at all improbable that the chronology of the fourth evangelist is to be preferred, and that it was on the Sabbath evening that the feast was given. There is no serious difficulty about harmonising the Johannine and the Synoptic accounts. The murmuring that is ascribed by Matthew (*v.* 8) to the disciples is by the fourth evangelist limited to Judas (*vv.* 4-5). The charge against Judas in verse 6 may be justified; but it may also be due to the evangelist's detestation, elsewhere shown in the Gospel, for the traitor, of whom he would on very slight evidence be ready to believe the very worst. The explanation of Mary's action by Jesus, according to the Synoptists, is much more intelligible than the saying reported in the Fourth Gospel (*v.* 7), although the import is similar. While the Synoptists pass at once to record the treachery of Judas, the fourth evangelist, with his interest in every detail of the growing hatred of the Jewish rulers which at last resulted in the condemnation of Jesus, turns aside to deal again with their machinations (*vv.* 9-11).

(2) The account of the triumphal entry (*vv.* 12-19) is told with less detail than by the Synoptists. How the young ass was found (*v.* 14) the evangelist does not tell us. Either he did not know, not being one of the twelve, or he himself was the citizen of Jerusalem who rendered the Master this service. Characteristic of the evangelist is the reference to the lack of understanding of the disciples till after the resurrection (*v.* 16). But did not the twelve and the multitude alike intend a Messianic demonstration, even although the prophecy was not in their mind? Characteristic too is the connexion indicated between the demonstration and the raising of Lazarus from the dead (*vv.* 17, 18). If some of the crowd from Jerusalem were so influenced, the multitude from Galilee were moved to their enthusiasm by

their knowledge of the Galilæan ministry. Here again is the evangelist's one-sided Judæan interest. A familiar trait in the Gospel meets us in the account of the effect of the demonstration on the Pharisees (*v.* 19). The cleansing of the Temple, recorded by the Synoptists, is not mentioned here, as the evangelist had already recorded a similar action at the beginning of the ministry. We need not assume that he has violently transferred an event at the close to the beginning of the ministry, and reason has been shown in a previous article why the act may have been repeated. Knowing as he did the grounds of the hostility to Jesus, he probably did not assign to this single event the importance given to it by the Synoptists.

(3) The next section (*vv.* 20–36) presents considerable difficulty; the request of the Greeks is reported, and the response of Jesus; but there is no record of the interview if it did take place. Instead we have a discourse in which distinctively Johannine ideas and phrases are blended with what seem to be indistinct reproductions of Synoptic material. Probably the evangelist was not here an eye-witness, but heard from Philip or Andrew about the incident; and having a less distinct memory of what he had heard from others than of what he himself witnessed there gathered around it in his memory other sayings of Jesus which also had come to him second-hand. Is it not probable that he would in old age better remember what he had himself seen and heard than what had been reported to him by others? Verse 23 is characteristically Johannine in form, but may be a genuine saying; while verse 24 sounds an authentic utterance of Jesus, suitable to the occasion. The possibility of the wider ministry among the Gentiles suggested by the request of the Greeks is set aside in view of the necessity of His death. He must die as Jewish Messiah before He can become the world's Saviour. Do not *vv.* 25 and 26 recall

Mark viii. 34-38 with such modifications as the words might undergo in the evangelist's mind? We cannot but think of Gethsemane, of the agony in which the Fourth Gospel has no record, as we read *vv.* 27 and 28a. The voice from heaven 28b recalls the experiences of the Baptism and the Transfiguration, although the possibility of some unusual manifestation during Passion week cannot be excluded. But verse 30 must make us hesitate. It was not the method of Jesus to give signs from heaven; and does not the verse, as recorded in verse 28, give the response to the prayer? In his pragmatism the evangelist contradicts himself. If we compare these verses with the Synoptic record of Gethsemane, when Jesus left all but three chosen disciples behind, and even withdrew a little from them (Mark xiv. 32-35) when He prayed, it will seem incredible that He should have laid bare His soul before the multitude. Surely the sacred intimacies of Father and Son were not for profane ears to hear. The theologian's ardour in the evangelist overcomes love's insight here. Verse 32 links itself to verse 24 as part of the reply to the Greeks' request, and is suited to the occasion. Probably Jesus Himself intended a wider reference here as in iii. 14 than the evangelist discovers (*v.* 33), and is it not probable that iii. 14, which, as has been indicated already, is out of its proper context, belongs here? The verses that follow (34-37) are a probable sequel to these utterances. The evangelist's confirmation from prophecy of the necessity of the people's unbelief (*vv.* 37-40) is entirely in accord with the common interpretation of the Old Testament in the early church. The following statement (*vv.* 41-42) again indicates one who was in close contact with the ruling classes in Jerusalem and not a Galilæan fisherman. The next paragraph (*vv.* 44-50) is manifestly displaced, as this final appeal of Jesus to the Jewish multitude must have preceded the evangelist's summing up of the results of the ministry as regards

the Jewish people ; and Dr. Moffatt, in his *New Translation*, seems entirely justified in placing these verses between the two sentences in verse 36. It is perplexing to find at how few points the Synoptic and the Johannine tradition of Passion week coincide. Different interests in the witnesses afford only partial relief to the mind. We must add that probably the fourth evangelist, whose home was in Jerusalem, went to and fro as the service of the Master required, and that his influential position, of which more must be said afterwards, gave him access where the twelve were excluded.

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A PLEA FOR THE FOUR TRUMPETS.

IN a recent work, *Studies in the Apocalypse*, Dr. Charles has given an earnest of the long-promised volume on the Book of Revelation to be published in the International Critical Commentary. The present book is only a fragment, but in it the writer sets forth some conclusions which, though novel, he contends are in the main valid, and will only be confirmed by further investigation. Perhaps in the case of no book of the New Testament is the hope of finality in interpretation less warranted than with regard to the Apocalypse. The first two chapters of Dr. Charles's work show how successive interpreters have come to the Book, confident that at last they held the key that was to open its seals, and how their interpretations have been superseded by others, not less confident and not less transitory ; and it may be wise not to hail any conclusions, even though they come from an acknowledged master of interpretation, as final. Time will try them and sift them ; and it will be something if out of a good deal of chaff some good grain survives.