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THE APOSTOLIC ORIGIN
OF THE
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THE EVIDENCE

FROM TRADITION AND FROM THE FATHERS

APPLIED IN SUPPORT OF

THE APOSTOLIC ORIGIN

OF

THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

BY

DAVID ROWLAND,

AUTHOR OF 'THE SECOND TABLE OF THE COMMANDMENTS, A PERFECT CODE OF NATURAL MORAL LAW, AND OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN LAW, AND THE CRITERION OF JUSTICE.'

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THE APOSTOLIC ORIGIN
OF THE
FOURTH GOSPEL.

I. THE PURPOSE of this Essay is to submit the important question raised by the critics of the Tübingen school, which disputes the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel, to an examination of the kind which courts of law employ in investigating rights or titles to property dependent on ancient traditional and documentary evidence. In a long course of experience, principles have been developed which have been found to aid the attainment of truth by giving to each kind of testimony its just evidential value, by tracing facts to their sources, and thus obtaining exactitude of fact, as well as its original purpose, or relation to other facts; and afterwards drawing just inferences from their comparison. It is true that courts of law, authorized by legislation, restrict, in certain cases, the full force of the evidence submitted to them, preferring,
after remote periods, to confirm doubtful rights against ancient evidence, as more beneficial to society than the disturbance of long-enjoyed possessions. In that particular we depart from the practice of the Courts. For us truth is the supreme object; and for its attainment all the testimony that can be found should be presented for examination, without suppression or limitation.

To direct the course of the inquiry, and to obtain the evidence against the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel, it was necessary to select a treatise written to support that side of the question; and a treatise of which the title is—'An Attempt to Ascertaing the Character of the Fourth Gospel, especially in its Relation to the Three First,' naturally presented itself; for by it the attention of the present writer was first attracted to the subject, and by the study of it his views were called forth. Its learned author informs us in his preface that 'the literature of the controversy has already become voluminous, especially in Germany.' He does not profess to have made himself master of the whole of it; though it would be seen that he is not unacquainted with what has been contributed by some of the most eminent scholars to its elucidation. But what he wished (he observes), without attempting to compare and combine the divergent theories of others, was to

1 By John James Tayler, B.A., Member of the Historico-Theological Society of Leipsic, and Principal of Manchester New College, London. Williams and Norgate, London, 1867. In the coming pages called 'The Treatise.'
examine anew for himself the ancient testimonies on which they have founded them; in order to arrive, if possible, from personal investigation, at an independent conclusion.¹ A treatise professed to have resulted from the study of the literature of the controversy, by an author so eminent, is entitled to be regarded as an able support of one side of the question, and as a mark worthy of any one desirous, by argumentation, to uphold the other.

The treatise gives proof 'of an extensive acquaintance with the literature of the controversy,' for a comparison of it with a summary of that literature has made it manifest that the various hypotheses and grounds of objection of the Tubingen school against the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel, are introduced into the treatise, and supported there, by arguments very similar to theirs, however enlarged and fortified by the author's own learning and modes of reasoning. The defence of the Fourth Gospel, which I am about to attempt, is not, therefore, addressed only to the treatise, but, through it, to the Tubingen school; whilst, also, it is based upon facts not introduced into the treatise, and, as far as I know, not considered by the critics of that school. I must, however, confess that I have not had the advantage of studying the Tubingen authors in their original works; but I have found in the great work of Baron Bunsen,² and in the other work mentioned

¹ The Treatise, preface viii.
² Christianity and Mankind, their Beginnings and Prospects. By C. J. J. Bunsen. 1854.
below, all that seemed to be required as authority for my statements.¹

I give another purpose to my essay, that of attempting to set forth an outline of the external evidence we possess of the origin of the Four Gospels. Protestants who treat with scorn what Bunsen calls the 'novels' of the Tübingen school, have still to contend against what he also calls 'the trite sophism of the Romanists, that we know, only through the Church, that is through their priesthood, that the Gospels are genuine.'² Such evidence will be called forth by the contention against the Tübingen hypothesis, when the slight differences of evidence applicable to the respective Gospels will appear; and I do not conceal that to set forth such evidence, and to apply it to the support of the Four Gospels, but especially of the Fourth Gospel, is the higher purpose of my essay.

The Tübingen Hypothesis.

'The character of the Fourth Gospel,' which it is stated to be the object of the treatise of Mr. Tayler to attempt to ascertain, does not mean, when expanded there, its doctrinal, or religious, or literary character, but its claim to be considered a genuine work of the Apostle John. That question is presented as mainly dependent for

¹ Revue de Théologie, deuxième volume. Paris, 1864. An article there, entitled, 'Étude historique et critique sur Le Quatrième Evangile,' par le Dr. Scholten, Professeur à Leyde. Traduction du Hollandais, par A. Réville. The latter introduces the work with the remark, 'Sans souscrire absolument à toutes les conclusions de ce livre, je le considère comme l'ouvrage le plus approfondi qui ait paru sur cette matière depuis bien longtemps.'

² Bunsen, vol. i. p. 64.
its solution on the existence of citations of the Gospel in the works of the Fathers, 'the ancient testimonies' referred to. The reader's indulgence is asked, for a frequent citation of original authorities, which may be felt wearisome, and even look pedantic. 'But the question (it is added) is one which can only be settled by a direct appeal to the statements of ancient writers.' Apologies are offered for having appended to a partly critical disquisition, the practical and spiritual bearings of the question which have been considered at some length, and traced to their probable consequences, in the concluding section of the essay. But when subsequently justifying himself for the views he has ventured to maintain as the consequences of his investigation, the author has in his treatise stated the true principles of historical criticism. 'That what the historical critic has alone to consider, when he embarks in an inquiry of this description, is the evidence of facts... The proper answer to any theory to which we may feel ourselves strongly averse, is to show that the facts on which it is based are incorrectly stated, and the inferences from them illogically drawn.' If, therefore, in the course of the inquiry I find it necessary to dispute the facts or the deductions of the treatise, I shall rely on the authority and on the candour of its author.

The works of the Fathers originate with the epistle of Saint Barnabas, placed by Lardner about

1 Treatise, p. ix. 2 Idem, pp. 157, 158. 3 Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History, edit. 1748.
A.D. 71; but in the treatise the examination of the patristic works is not carried farther back than to those of Papias and Polycarp, who are there described as 'the earliest witnesses that we are able to cite,' and are represented to have suffered martyrdom, Papias in 164 A.D., and Polycarp probably as late as 166 or 167, certainly some time after the middle of the second century.\(^1\) The examination of the patristic works terminates with the work of Theophilus of Antioch, which (according to the treatise) must have been written in the reign of Commodus, and therefore subsequent to the year 180 A.D.; and after a review of these ancient testimonies of Papias and Polycarp, and of the works of the Fathers intermediate between Papias and Theophilus of Antioch, the conclusion is arrived at, that 'in the work of Theophilus addressed to Autolycus, we have for the first time, a citation from the Fourth Gospel with the name of its author—John;'\(^2\) and that conclusion is only disputable because a similar citation (to be presently considered) is contained in the works of Irenæus, which, although of the same period with, are by some represented as a few years prior to those of Theophilus.\(^3\)

The evidence from the Fathers in support of the treatise will be presently examined in detail; but the arguments and conclusions will be better understood, if we first give the results of the evidence from the concluding section in Mr. Tayler's words:

\(^1\) Treatise, p. 54.
\(^2\) Treatise, 66.
\(^3\) Lardner, Tit. Irenæus.
In any critical inquiry of this kind, it is more easy to obtain a negative than a positive result. The evidence of which I have just exhibited a summary, will not allow me to regard the Fourth Gospel as of apostolic origin, in the strict historical sense. But if I am asked who was its author, and when it was written, I confess I am unable to give a categorical answer. If Papias, as Eusebius informs us, cited testimonies from the First Epistle of John—as I can have little doubt that the author of the Epistle and of the Gospel were one and the same person—the author must have been living, and both works probably written, before the end of the second century. The death of Papias is usually assigned to 163 A.D. We find thus, a probable terminus ad quem. Can we suggest a terminus a quo? It has occurred to me, in studying the internal indications of the Fourth Gospel, and comparing them with the known course of historical events, that they point to a time when the Church had fully emancipated itself from Jewish bondage, and Jerusalem had ceased to be its centre of religious interest and reverence. Such a time I find most clearly indicated in the results of the suppression of the Jewish revolt under Bar Cochba, subsequent to 135 A.D. This is, of course, nothing more than conjecture supported by no direct evidence. Nevertheless, between these two events—the substitution of Ælia Capitolina for Jerusalem by Hadrian, and the death of Papias [between 135 and 163]—I seem to find a period within which the origin of the Fourth Gospel might, without improbability, be placed.  

Mr. Tayler must admit that he has here exemplified the greater facility of obtaining a negative than a positive result. It is in the strict historical sense, ‘that he is unable to regard the Fourth Gospel as of Apostolic origin,’ and to the questions, ‘who was its author, and when it was written,’ he confesses to be unable to give a categorical answer. It is by inference from premisses concerning which ‘he can have little doubt;’ therefore, not from ascertained facts, ‘that between 135

\[1\text{Treatise, p. 150.}\]
and 168 he seems to find a period when the origin of the Fourth Gospel may, without improbability, be placed. But the main question of the treatise is indirectly raised by these dates; for they exclude the Apostle John from the authorship of the Gospel, even if, as is said to be 'certain, he survived till Trajan, that is, till or beyond A.D. 100, or even to the time when some authorities place his death, so low as A.D. 120.'

III. I must now call attention to an element of the inquiry, that, as far as I know, has not been introduced into inquiries of this nature. No substantive importance is attached in the treatise of Mr. Tayler, or by the Tübingen school, to the Tradition of 1800 years, which declared, and still declares, the Apostle John to be the author of the Fourth Gospel. The antiquity and the universal adoption throughout Christendom, of that tradition, constitute it the guardian of the subject of the tradition, and its truth should be assumed until disproved by evidence based on fact, or the absence of evidence amounting circumstantially to disproof. For the tradition, if true, was constituted by facts that unquestionably occurred, although the record of them is lost, and irrecoverable. But there yet remains the subject of the tradition—the Gospel itself. It is not merely a tradition that the Apostle John wrote a Gospel, but it defines the Gospel that he wrote, which is again marked as his work, by language generally esteemed as equivalent with his name.

1 Wordsworth On the Apocalypse, p. 19.
The rise and progress of the tradition are also evidence of its verity, for it could neither have been formed nor transmitted, unless the facts were known to, and their truth believed by, the people and the communities where the Gospel originated. Tradition is not the work of a day. It is rather an operation of nature than a fabric of man. Its subject-matter must, as the first step, be impressed upon a living community, believing it to be genuine and true from personal knowledge of the facts on which it is founded, or from confidence in the oral accounts of them received from relatives and friends having personal knowledge of them. We may reasonably infer, from our own experience, as well as from our knowledge of human nature, that the subject of this tradition excited great attention and received great consideration. When it was known to the Christian communities and Churches that the Apostle John had either written, or was engaged in writing, a memorial of the Life of Christ, from his own knowledge and experience, the circumstance would excite the same interest as is now felt when a distinguished writer, with a special knowledge of his subject, is engaged in writing a history of it. The next stage of the proceeding was the appearance or publication of the Gospel itself, which would naturally call forth a desire to peruse it, or to hear it read, and if any questions of doubt arose concerning the authorship, they could not fail to be considered and discussed, and such doubts decided. A community so impressed cannot prevent the
creation of the tradition, if the impression be general amongst them, nor unless it be general can the tradition have a living power. A second generation receives the tradition from their parents, and others in whom they have natural or acquired confidence; and if it survive to a third generation, it has overcome the opposition which it encountered, and it has been tested and tried by the judgment and experience, apart from personal knowledge, of impartial men. Thus tradition is an examination of facts by contemporaries, confirmed by their successors, and carried on by posterity.

It may be possible to construct a fabulous tradition, but it can only be done by making its subject appear as truth to a succession of living communities; or the community may be so small, or so indifferent to the subject, as to submit to the spread of the fabulous tale without investigation, and so to have a fabulous tradition imposed upon it. But the difficulty is much increased when the tradition is connected with a book or work which is the subject of it. Let us contrast such a community with a community or communities, formed from the most civilized nations of Europe and Asia, all alike interested in, and more or less engaged in, the examination of a written work, conceived to be not only of temporal, but of eternal importance, by one side, and viewed as an interference with the religion of the Jews, or with the immortal gods of the heathens, by the other—and the tradition constituted by the conflict and by the ultimate balance of opinions of
its verity, of friends and foes; and we cannot but feel assured that the tradition concerning the Fourth Gospel is not an instance of a fabulous tradition.

Amongst the many difficulties that attend an hypothesis that the Fourth Gospel is the product of a later period than the life of the Apostle John—even so late as the latter part of the second century—there is none greater than to show how the existing tradition arose upon the facts of the hypothesis; for *ex hypothesi* the Apostle John died without leaving a Gospel, and his contemporaries and their descendants, including the Fathers in succession, up to the time when the hypothetical Gospel appeared, must have lived and died in the belief that the Apostle died without writing a Gospel, and that belief must have gone forth as a true fact and become traditionary. In the face of that universal belief, we are required by the hypothesis to imagine some such course of events as that late in the second century it was in some way announced or communicated to the Christian churches and communities that a Gospel had been discovered—the work of the Apostle John, but yet known to those who presented it, not to be the Apostle's work, but that of a Platonizing Jew—and further that that fraud was successful, the Gospel was adopted as the work of the Apostle, and became the traditionary Fourth Gospel of Christendom. And yet of these events, or of the means employed to procure the acceptance of this Gospel by the Christian churches and communities, there is no record or trace in the works of the Fathers, or of any contemporary or
later writer, nor any suggestion of the fraudulent imposition of the Gospel on the Christian people, until the present century.

Is it possible to believe that events such as these, unnoticed by contemporary writers, and having not the remotest testimony from facts, could have had a real existence?

IV. The testimony sought by 'a direct appeal to the statements of ancient writers,' for or against the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel, is considered in the treatise as depending upon the recognition of the Gospel in the works of the Fathers, and from the period of that recognition the earlier or later existence of the Gospel is to be inferred. That test of its origin is adopted by the Tubingen school, but we shall submit it to a criticism which it has not received (as we believe) before; and which it is necessary should precede the examination of the patristic works, for it is founded on the omission of a fact which materially affects the deduction which refers the time of the origin of the Gospel to its first recognition in the works of the Fathers.

Citation, in its proper sense, appears to require that the title of the book cited, with the name of its author, should be included in the citation. Although in the treatise the word 'citation' is generally used in that sense, it is sometimes superseded by the words 'quotation,' or 'reference,' words which diminish the certainty of the author's meaning. But there is no uncertainty in the position advanced that 'in the work of Theophilus of Antioch, A.D. 180, we have
for the first time a citation from the Fourth Gospel, with the name of its author—John, and it is that citation which is maintained to be the first expression of the Gospel in the works of the Fathers.

The inference from the alleged absence of citation of the Fourth Gospel until late in the second century is, of course, in its first aspect, prejudicial to the Apostolic origin of the Gospel. But the evidential value of non-citation of the Fourth Gospel depends upon the fact, whether the works of the Fathers contain citations of the other three Gospels, with the names of their respective authors prior to Theophilus. An examination of the works of the Apostolic Fathers, from Barnabas to Polycarp inclusive, has disclosed that there is not in the works of the Apostolic Fathers any citation of the Fourth Gospel, with the name of its author; that is, citing portions of or a passage from it, with its name as the Fourth Gospel, or the Gospel of St. John, or with any other distinctive name or title. But the absence or omission is not peculiar to the Fourth Gospel; it extends to each of the other three Gospels. That the result is the same in the works of the Post-Apostolic Fathers between Papias and Theophilus, will be clearly seen when we review the evidence given in the treatise from the works of these fathers.

1 *Treatise*, p. 66.

2 Clear proof of this may be found in Lardner, under the titles of the several Apostolic Fathers—

- St. Barnabas A.D. 71.
- St. Ignatius A.D. 100.
- St. Clement A.D. 96.
- St. Polycarp A.D. 100.
The absence of citation being general to the Four Gospels, and not special to the Fourth, it follows that no inference can be drawn from non-citation, which is not applicable to each of, and all the Gospels; and if one of the Gospels was in existence in the first century, then the deduction is clear that the Fourth Gospel was or might have been in existence also, unaffected by any inference from the absence of citation.

The effect of this disclosure is to change the relation of the assailant and the defender of the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel. By the former it is presented as unrecognised and unacknowledged by the Fathers until late in the second century. It must now assume its place as, prima facie, a work of the first century, and of the Apostle whose work it purports to be; and the evidence against its Apostolic origin must be weighed against its position thus presumptively existing.

It may assist our conception of the causes that produced the omission of citation of the Gospels by the Fathers, if we offer some reasons that may probably account for such omission, premising, however, that although there are no express citations, the patristic works contain words, phrases, and expressions sometimes identical, but more frequently only similar in thought and expression with the Gospels; or, as they are called by Lardner, 'allusions,' and it is by a comparison of these with the texts of the Gospels, that the evidence is produced.

It cannot be assumed that the Gospels were pub-
lished, in a modern sense, as soon as they were written. Besides the time requisite for multiplying manuscripts, there would probably be, at first, little demand for them; for in the interval of thirty or more years from the death of Christ to the writing of the Gospels, there must have been many persons living who had actually heard the words and teachings of our Lord, and subsequently the words and teachings of his Apostles and disciples engaged in orally preaching to and teaching the people. These persons would have thought written gospels, however authentic and accurate, of inferior weight, and they would have had greatly inferior influence on their minds than Christ’s spoken words, or even those of his Apostles and disciples. Thus the written Gospels might only have acquired their full power and influence when the authors of them had ceased to live.

Citation, and even allusions to the Gospels, would also have different degrees of probability proportioned to the length of time the Gospels had been in existence when each Father wrote. The Epistles of St. Paul, as the most ancient publications, would have the highest chance of citation, and accordingly a few express citations of St. Paul’s Epistles are found in the works of the Apostolic Fathers. But the first instance does not occur earlier than in the work of Clement, A.D. 96, where the 1 Corinthians, c. i, v. 12, is cited. The next is in the smaller epistle of Ignatius (A.D. 107), where the Epistle to the Ephesians is named. Polycarp (A.D. 108), cites a text
from the 1 Corinthians with the terminal words, 'as Paul teaches,' and he introduces a text from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, with the words, 'I trust that ye are well exercised in the Holy Scriptures.' Thus all the citations in the first century and even at the commencement of the second century, are confined to some of the Epistles of St. Paul, although no doubt exists that when these citations were made, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were in existence also. This observation should be borne in mind when we are considering the earliest allusions of the Fathers to the Fourth Gospel.

There would also be doubts whether these 'allusions,' identical or of similar import with the Gospels, but having no reference to them, had their source in the spoken words of Christ, in the preachings of the Apostles, or in the published Gospels.

And the nature of the writings of the Fathers must be considered—that they were not written as testimonies to the Gospels. The writers seem rather to have striven to become independent teachers; in that way imitating St. Paul, writing in their own names, and addressing their works as epistles to those churches or people with which they were connected, for their instruction; and, in so doing, phrases and words of the Gospels are introduced and incorporated into the text of their epistles, without citation or any acknowledgment of the source from which they were taken. The epistle of St. Barnabas, the first of the Apostolic Fathers, is constructed on the same plan as
some of St. Paul's Epistles. It consists of two parts. The first is an exhortation and argument to constancy in the belief and profession of the Christian doctrine, particularly the simplicity of it, without the rites of the Jewish Law. The second part contains moral instructions.

The application of this absence of citation, in the works of the Fathers, to the evidence sought from their works, will be found to produce a remarkable effect on the question under consideration.

The Fourth V. The principles quoted from the treatise, which insist on the evidence of facts as essential to historical criticism, are not unexceptionally maintained; and before we enter upon the consideration of the testimonies of the Fathers, we must encounter an assault on the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel, which stands isolated and apart from the general argument, as in itself effecting an overthrow of the authorship of the Apostle John. It is designated 'The Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse.'

'The exceptionally genuine Pliny of the School of Baur (says Bunsen) is the Apocalypse.' A large portion of the treatise is occupied in a discussion 'On the possibility of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse having the same author;' and in tracing and examining the testimonies of ancient writers, showing the fluctuation of opinion about the authorship of the Apocalypse. It results in a very strong expression of opinion, taking the form of a theorem, to the

1 Bunsen, Idem, p. 68.
effect 'that the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse cannot have proceeded from the same hand.' Baur assigned the Apocalypse to St. John, and (it is alleged by his admirers) demonstrated that the proofs of the Johannine authenticity of the Apocalypse were conclusive, and such as the Gospel could not pretend to.' Mr. Tayler is not less confident. After a long review and comparison of the style and manner, and of the underlying tone of thought, and of the Greek, of the two works, and especially considering the argument against his theorem that the Apocalypse may have been written in the early life, and the Gospel in the old age, of the Apostle John, he gives his readers his conclusion, not as a logical deduction from reasoned premisses, but as his own opinion. 'I do not hesitate to say (he observes) that so complete a transformation of the whole genius of a writer between mature life and old age, as is implied in the supposition that John could be the author of the Apocalypse and the Gospel, is without a precedent in the history of the human mind, and seems to me to involve a psychological impossibility.' He illustrates that opinion by a comparison of the earliest and latest works of Milton, and of Dryden, and of Mr. Carlyle; in the latter of which, 'notwithstanding the great disparity of form, every reader of ordinary discernment will recognize the same fundamental characteristics of his peculiar genius, in his earlier and his later works. Apply, then, this standard (he says) to the two books under consideration, and the conclusion

1 Revue de Théologie, p. 212. 2 Treatise, p. 12.
will be irresistible that if the Apostle John be the author of the Apocalypse, he cannot have written the Gospel; if he wrote the Gospel, he cannot be the author of the Apocalypse.'

That conclusion is only irresistible if the postulate on which the dilemma is based is true and incontestable. As it stands, the postulate is merely an opinion that the production of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, by the same author, was beyond the powers of the human mind. A postulate resting on an opinion, is not entitled to influence the judgment of those who do not adopt that opinion. The necessity of proving the postulate by direct testimony continues as before. The tradition of the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel is unaffected by this postulate and dilemma, and by any attempt to associate the authenticity of the Gospel, with the various and variable opinions of the authorship of the Apocalypse which existed prior to its adoption in the Canon as the work of St. John. Many learned men are of opinion that the Apocalypse is not by the Apostle John, who hold the most confident belief that the Apostle is the author of the Fourth Gospel. The attribution of these works to the same author does not deprive the Gospel, or those who maintain its authenticity, of their right to require that the Gospel should stand on its own traditional history, until it is displaced by reasoned proof; and to place it in such a dilemma as shall deprive it and its defenders of that inherent right, would be to curtail the free range of inquiry and argument employed in the pursuit of truth.
VI. Mr. Tayler opens his evidence from the Fathers with Papias and Polycarp, described 'as the earliest witnesses we are able to cite,' but compared with the testimonies they have given of the First Epistle of St. John; and from these testimonies he has deduced 'that the First Epistle was read and quoted as a book of authority in the Christian Church some time in the first half of the second century.' As we shall attempt to connect the existence of the Fourth Gospel with the First Epistle as known to the Fathers in the early part of the second century, we shall give a full quotation from the treatise of Mr. Tayler's facts and reasoning.

'We are told by Eusebius that Papias, whose martyrdom occurred 164 A.D., "made use of witnesses from the First Epistle of John." Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom not earlier than 160 A.D., probably as late as 166 or 167, certainly some time after the middle of the second century, and who, in his youth, according to tradition, had conversed with the apostles, has a passage in his epistle to the Philippians (vii.) which bears a close resemblance, both in sentiment and language, to 1 John iv. 3. It applies the epithet ἀντιχριστός, which is found only in the Epistle of John, to every one that denies that Christ is come in the flesh. Whoever compares the two passages can have little doubt left on his mind, that the author of this epistle to the Philippians was acquainted with the first Epistle of John. These are the earliest witnesses that we are able to cite; and as there is the highest probability that the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle were written by the same hand, they prove, so far as we can rely on them, that the author of the Gospel must have been in existence when Papias and Polycarp cited the Epistle. But the language of Eusebius furnishes no certain proof that Papias knew the Apostle John to be the author of the Epistle. With regard to Polycarp, many learned men have expressed their doubts of the genuineness, at least throughout, of the (Polycarp's) epistle
to the Philippians. But without pressing these doubts, and taking the two witnesses as they come to us, what they establish is this: that some time in the first half of the second century, and before the death of Antoninus Pius,\footnote{March 7, 161.} the First Epistle of John was read and quoted as a book of authority in the Christian Church; but how soon in that century we have now no means of determining.\footnote{Treatise, p. 54.}

We readily concede that the First Epistle was read in the Church 'some time in the first half of the second century'—our objection is to the remoteness in the second century of the date assigned—attained by taking the dates of the martyrdom of Papias and Polycarp as the time when they wrote, whereas Lardner gives to their works the dates at which they flourished—Polycarp, 108; Papias, 116.

It must be observed that the quotations from the First Epistle by Papias and Polycarp are not citations, and therefore are no departures from the Patristic custom of non-citation. All that Eusebius says, in a general description of the works of Papias, is—'Papias brought testimonies out of the First Epistle of John, and the First of Peter likewise.' The passage from Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians is a close approximation to 1 John iv. 3, and is thus translated by Lardner, who also gives the Greek text: 'For whoever confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is Antichrist.'\footnote{Lardner, Tit. St. Polycarp.}

The circumstances here detailed suggest a very high probability that both the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle were in existence when Papias...
made use of witnesses from the First Epistle, and Polycarp wrote his epistle to the Philippians; and although it may be that 'the language of Eusebius furnishes no certain proof that Papias knew the Apostle John to be the author of the Epistle,' yet that knowledge is implied in the account of Eusebius, who, after quoting from Irenæus that Papias was John's hearer, and the associate of Polycarp, corrects that statement so far as it extended to Papias having been a hearer of the Apostle, and eye-witness of the Apostles, and confines it to what Papias had himself informed us, 'that he received the doctrines of faith from their intimate friends,' or, in his own words, 'from the elders.' Of these Polycarp was a distinguished Apostolic Father. Of him Irenæus has recorded that he was not only taught by the Apostles, and had conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also by the Apostles appointed Bishop of the Church of Smyrna, in Asia. It must therefore be supposed that Papias knew, by communication from the elders, all important events that had occurred during the lives of the Apostles, and that he knew the weight and authority of the book from which he used witnesses. But whether or not he knew that the work he quoted was the First Epistle is not important, for Eusebius asserts that it was the First Epistle.

The dates of the martyrdoms of Papias and Polycarp are not the governing dates of their citation of the Epistle; nor is there any logical necessity that the author of the Gospel must have been in exist-
ence—if by that is meant living—when Papias and Polycarp cited the Epistle. The governing date is that when Papias and Polycarp wrote—and the most distinct of those is the time when Polycarp wrote his epistle, and imported into it the peculiar language of the First Epistle. It amounts to proof that the First Epistle was extant at that time. Of the date of Polycarp’s epistle, Lardner says: ‘It is certain this epistle was writ after the death of Ignatius, and is generally supposed soon after it. Basnage, indeed, denies that there is any proof of this. However, I shall place it in the year next after the death of Ignatius, A.D. 108.’ But how long previously the First Epistle had been written is not certain. Learned men have considered the Destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, the centre on which the date of the First Epistle turns, and have made it the question whether the Epistle was written before or after that event. But opinions range so widely as between A.D. 68 and 99.

It is conceded in the treatise that ‘there is the highest probability that the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle were written by the same hand;’ and, independently of the Canon, the opinion of learned men that they have the same author may be said to be general. That concession requires that the Tübingen school, to complete their proof against the Fourth Gospel, should prove that the Apostle John

1 Lardner, Tit. Polycarp.
2 Idem, Supplement, vol. iii. p. 269, where the opinions of Grotius, Whiston, and other eminent persons are given.
was not the author of the Epistle. But setting that aside, there is in this association of the Fourth Gospel with the Epistle external evidence of the genuineness of the Gospel that is peculiar to it. We have been considering the dilemma of the Tübingen school—that if the Apostle wrote the Apocalypse, he could not have written the Gospel and vice versa; but we have here not a dilemma repulsive of the associated writings, but a union of origin declared to be genuine by proof of either.

Upon these facts and admissions the argument in the treatise fails, which seeks to ascribe the Fourth Gospel to an author between the conjectured dates 185–183. Quotation of the Epistle by Polycarp in 108 excludes the possibility. It also proves its Christian source and its Apostolic origin. The Epistle (and therefore the Gospel) passed into the knowledge of Polycarp as one of the Christian works which were familiar to him, and his record is a link in the chain of its descent, by tradition, to the present day. Learned men are of opinion that the Apostle wrote the Epistle near the end of the first century, when he was advanced in age, and that may account for the lateness of its quotation by Polycarp. But it will strengthen the argument derived from internal evidence, that the Gospel, admitted to be by the same author, preceded the Epistle.

VII. The rise and progress of the Ancient Tradition through natural causes, may be rendered more obvious and intelligible if we are able, historically, to make out a chain of eminent
persons connected with the Christian Church, who lived or flourished in the time of the Apostles, and from thence to the time when the Four Gospels were openly cited and proclaimed. Such a chain would perform the duties of custodians of the Gospels, and would preserve the fidelity of the tradition. The Fathers Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, and Irenæus, make up such a chain or succession. Ignatius and Polycarp connect the chain with the Apostles, and even with the Apostle John. Ignatius died bishop of the metropolis of the East. The records are full and complete which show that Polycarp had conversed with many who had seen Christ.¹

Papias, the next in the chain (Eusebius records), was well known as bishop of the Church of Hierapolis, a man well skilled in all manner of learning, and well acquainted with the Scriptures.² Besides the testimony of Papias respecting the First Epistle given in the treatise, and on which we have commented, there proceeds from him much general evidence that is important, collected by intercourse with distinguished persons with whom he was contemporary. The position occupied by Papias, as bishop of Hierapolis, gave him peculiar advantages for indulging the propensity, which he declares he had, for oral information. It was the early seat of Christianity mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians, when he transferred the salutations of Epaphras to them that are in Laodicea, and them

² Eusebius, Idem; but the latter is not undisputed.
in Hierapolis. From its situation on the Meander, near Miletus, communication was easy with Ephesus. Eusebius preserved the writings of Papias, and he has in his 'Ecclesiastical History,' given an account of the works and actions of Papias.

Irenæus carries on the evidence from the time of Papias, of whom he was a biographer, and through Polycarp, whom he tells us he saw in his early age, to about A.D. 176, when he wrote his books against heresies, in which (as will presently appear) he broke through the reticence of the Fathers, and cited the Four Gospels by their names.¹

Papias, in these works preserved by Eusebius, introduces to us the historic characters of the early Church. He gives us some account of St. John and his disciples at Ephesus, which carries us back to the actual time when the Apostle may be supposed to have been employed in producing his Gospel. Eusebius says there are five books of Papias, entitled, 'An Explication of the Oracles of Our Lord.' On the authority of Irenæus, Eusebius gives a statement, which we have before quoted, that Papias was a hearer of St. John, doubted by Eusebius; but who adds, there is no doubt of the truth of what he himself alleges, 'that he had received the things concerning the faith from those who were well acquainted with them, which Papias shews in these words:—

"I shall not think much to set down, together with my interpretations, what I had learned from the elders, and do well remember confirming the truth by them."

¹ Lardner, Tit. Irenæus.
Papias represents what we have supposed may account for the absence of citation of the Gospels in the works of the Fathers, and have been a prevailing feeling when the Gospels first appeared, and before they had taken root in the public mind, that oral and hearsay representations of the doctrines and preachings of Christ and His Apostles were preferred to the written books; for, he says, 'I took no delight, as most men do, in those that talk a great deal, but in those that teach the truth; not in those that relate strange precepts, but in them that relate the precepts which the Lord has entrusted us with, and which proceed from the truth itself. . . . For I was of opinion that I could not profit so much by books as by the living.'

In illustration of that preference, Papias says:—

'If, at any time, I met with one who had conversed with the elders, I enquired after the sayings of the elders; what Andrew or what Peter said; or what Philip, what Thomas, or James had said; what John or Matthew, or what any other of the disciples of the Lord were wont to say; and what Aristion or John the Presbyter, disciples of the Lord, say.'

Eusebius, commenting on this quotation, points out that 'Papias twice mentions the name of John; the former of which he reckons with Peter, James, Matthew, and the rest of the Apostles, manifestly intending the Evangelist. Then, making a distinction in his discourse, he places the other John with the others, who are not of the number of the Apostles,'

1 Lardner, book i., c. ix., Papias.  2 Idem.
putting Aristion before him—and he expressly calls him Presbyter; by which, too (Eusebius adds), is shewn the truth of their account who have said, that there were two in Asia of that name, and that there were two sepulchres at Ephesus, and that each of them is still said to be the sepulchre of John. This is worthy of our remark; for it is likely that the Revelation, which goes under the name of John, was seen by the second, if not by the first. Papias then confesseth that he received the Apostle's sayings from those who conversed with them, and says that he was a hearer of Aristion and John the Presbyter; and, indeed, he often mentions them by name, and puts down in his writings the traditions he had received from them.¹

We pass over certain traditions recorded by Papias, which Eusebius calls of a fabulous kind; but he thinks it requisite to subjoin traditions concerning Mark and Matthew, who wrote the Gospels known by their names, which Papias received from John the Presbyter, and recorded in these words:—

¹ And this the Presbyter said: Mark being the interpreter of Peter, wrote exactly whatever he remembered. But not in the order in which things were spoken or done by Christ. For he was neither a hearer nor a follower of the Lord. But, as I said, afterwards followed Peter; who made his discourses for the profit of those that heard him, but not in the way of a history of our Lord's words. Mark, however, committed no mistake in writing some things, as they occurred in his memory. For this one thing he made his care, to omit nothing which he had heard, and to say nothing false in what he related.

¹ Lardner, book i., c. ix., Papias.
Concerning Matthew he says:

—Matthew wrote the [divine oracles] in the Hebrew tongue, and everybody interpreted them as he was able. He also brings testimonies out of the first Epistle of John and of Peter in like manner.¹

Because the Gospels of Luke and John are not also mentioned by Papias, it has been inferred, and it is construed by supporters of the Tubingen hypothesis as an admission, that they are proofs of the existence of the former Gospels alone. But we must look to the purpose of these traditions, and to the reasons for recording them. It was not to tell Papias what Gospels were then existing, but in what respect the authorship of certain of the Gospels—those of Mark and Matthew, which traditionally passed by their names,—was affected by certain circumstances probably not generally known, because, in a sense, depreciatory of them as Evangelists: Mark wrote from facts communicated to him by Peter—Matthew wrote his Gospel originally in the Hebrew tongue.

The absence of special traditions respecting the Gospels of Luke and John left those Gospels unchanged in their original relations to their respective authors; and no traditions being in existence, it was superfluous to record that no change in the traditional names had occurred. If any traditions had existed, the Presbyter would assuredly have men-

¹ Lardner says that some very learned men have disputed that the Gospel was first written in Hebrew. He adds, 'I think it must be allowed there are not in our Greek Gospel of St. Matthew any marks of a translation.'
tioned them to Papias, and he would surely have recorded them; and, in that view, the silence of Papias amounts to a confirmation of the general and accepted tradition of the Gospels as it then existed and now exists. Taking the record of Papias at its lowest evidential value, its recognition of the existence of St. John's Gospel, at the time he wrote, is equal to his recognition of the existence of St. Luke's Gospel at the time he wrote; and if St. Luke's Gospel were then existing, St. John's might have been in existence also.

What would be really remarkable, if we could suppose the events of the hypothesis to have had a real existence, is that Papias, in his desire to acquire information about the Christian affairs from the persons most competent to give it, and considering the large range he had for acquiring information, if not from the Apostles themselves, from those who had been acquainted with them; and recollecting, also, that Papias is the *terminus ad quem* of the treatise, within whose life, and under whose observation as a Christian bishop, the wonderful events which *ex hypothesi* preceded and accompanied the introduction of the Fourth Gospel, must have occurred, if they did occur, yet made no record of them in his works, and on that ground alone we are assuredly justified in the conviction that they never did occur.

VIII. Under this title the treatise contains an examination of the works of the Fathers, commencing with Ignatius, the Apostolic Father who preceded Polycarp, and thence...
passing to the works of Post-Apostolic Fathers, intermediate between Polycarp and Theophilus. This examination is directed to deprive the Fourth Gospel of the support of the Fathers, by showing that their works 'contain no clear and certain reference to the Fourth Gospel before Theophilus.' But here the general absence of citation from the works of the Fathers comes into operation, and is remarkably displayed. References to the Gospel, clear and certain, although not marked by express citation, are gradually developed, and every such instance is a recognition of the ancient tradition.

Ignatius. Ignatius is introduced in the treatise with the remark that such extreme uncertainty attaches to the origin and authorship of the so-called Epistles of Ignatius, that no reliable use can be made of them in the present inquiry. They exist, it is well known, in three distinct forms, the mutual relations of which are still very obscure. Were they genuine, they would carry us back to the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98–117. But any one at all acquainted with the Ignatian controversy, would be inclined to infer from allusions in these Epistles to the Fourth Gospel, rather the lateness of the Epistles than the early origin of the Gospel.'

The 'Ignatian Controversy' existed in the time of Lardner, who above a century ago examined the evidence for and against the Ignatian epistles, and concluded that of the seven epistles mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome, of which there are two edi-

Treatise, p. 56.
tions, one called the larger, or interpolated, and another called the smaller, the smaller have by far the best title to the name of Ignatius. He concluded that the smaller are for the main the genuine epistles of Ignatius. In the smaller epistles he says 'there are plain allusions to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John. The larger epistles would have supplied one with many more and express citations of the Gospels and Epistles, if we could allow them to be genuine.'

Baron Bunsen has set the question of the original epistles of Ignatius at rest, through the recovery of an ancient Syriac manuscript of the epistles, purchased for the British Museum from an Egyptian convent, and published by Dr. Cureton. It was examined by Bunsen, who published a corrected text, having found only a part of the seven epistles attributed to Ignatius to be genuine—the rest interpolated, or absolutely forged. These he styles 'the Immortal Epistles of Ignatius.' Against this decision of Baron Bunsen, it is objected by Mr. Tayler, that 'there is no clear and certain reference to the Fourth Gospel. The style far more resembles that of Paul than of John. The Epistles of the former seem evidently to have been the model; in the same way as the author of the Martyrdom of Ignatius had clearly in his eye the account of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, contained in Acts xx., xxi.'

1 Lardner, book i., Tit. Ignatius.
3 Christianity and Mankind, vol. i. p. 108.
Peter and Paul are mentioned by name (Romans c. 48), but John not once—not even in the epistle to the Ephesians. The style and sentiment of these three epistles found in the Syriac MS., which Cureton and Bunsen regarded as so great a discovery, seem to me very weak and puerile.¹

The concession in the treatise, that if the epistles of Ignatius are genuine they would carry us back to the reign of Trajan, 98–117 A.D., is a concession of the existence of the Fourth Gospel, possibly, in the first century. It is no drawback ‘that there is no clear and certain reference to the Fourth Gospel.’ The style or the model of the epistles is of no importance in the question. It coincides with the practice of the Fathers concerning citation, that ‘Peter and Paul are mentioned by name, but John not once.’ Mr. Tayler has not by argument controverted this evidence for the Gospel; he has relied upon the absence of citation, and that has failed him.

The next work referred to in the treatise is that ‘Against Heresies,’ from a MS. discovered in Greece some years ago, and now deposited in the Imperial Library in Paris. It was first published under the name of Origen, but its last editors, Duncker and Schneidewen, in accordance with the judgment of the late Baron Bunsen, have unhesitatingly ascribed it to Hippolytus.²

‘Bunsen thought it furnished conclusive evidence of the authenticity of St. John’s Gospel, as showing

¹ Treatise, p. 56. ² Treatise, p. 34.
that Basilides, who flourished in Alexandria in the reign of Hadrian, 117–138, wrote a commentary on it. In answer to those who argued that the references in Hippolytus did not apply to Basilides himself, but to his followers, and did not therefore establish so early a date, he insisted that the constant use in the citations of the singular verb ‘says’ (φησι) was a clear indication that Basilides and nobody else could have been meant.\(^1\)

Mr. Tayler makes a feeble objection to this argument, but yields the point, saying, ‘Should we admit this reasoning, it would prove, no doubt, that the Fourth Gospel existed between 117–138 A.D., but we shall still be left without any witness from Hippolytus as to its author. For it is a curious fact that, throughout his work, notwithstanding numerous and unquestionable references to the Fourth Gospel, the name of John is never mentioned but once, and then as the author of the Apocalypse (vii. 36).’

The absence of the name of John, does not diminish the evidential value of the numerous and unquestionable references to the Fourth Gospel, early in the second century.

\(^{1}\) *Apostolic Origin of the Fourth Gospel.*

Justin Martyr. The treatise introduces ‘the testimony of Justin Martyr as very important.’ In the pieces that are undoubtedly his—the two Apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho, which must be dated from the year 138 A.D. and subsequently—forms of thought and expression frequently occur which bear a considerable affinity to those we meet

\(^{1}\) *Treatise,* p. 57, citing *Christianity and Mankind,* vol. i. p. 114.
with in the Fourth Gospel. ‘I must be allowed therefore (says Mr. Tayler) to make a full citation of them.’

A learned examination of several pages points out ‘favourite adjectives of John,’ ‘resemblances of John, but not a citation,’ ‘an epithet peculiar to John,’ ‘very like John,’ ‘a description by Justin, to the Jew Trypho, of the usages of the early Christian Church, which closely resembles the doctrine contained in John vi. 47-58,’ and ‘words in the dialogue by which we are reminded of the beautiful imagery in John x. 5.’

Mr. Tayler, as the result of this examination of the undoubted writings of Justyn Martyr, allows that ‘if there be reason to believe, on independent grounds, that the Fourth Gospel was generally received as an authoritative and Apostolic work before 188 A.D., it would not be an unfair inference, that familiar acquaintance with the Gospel, had occasioned the similarity of thought and expression, which he has pointed out between the Martyr and the Evangelist.’ But he guards that admission, feeling safe in the year 188 as within his conjectured dates 135–163, by remarking, that ‘the similarity in no one instance amounts to a quotation; and the conformity to the presumed original is much less close than what it is in innumerable passages in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, which are cited everywhere so copiously and so verbally,’ that it has been often remarked, a

1 Treatise, p. 62.
2 But always without expressly mentioning the names of the Evangelists.—Lardner, Tif., vol. i., p. 254.
Apostolic Origin of the Fourth Gospel.

very complete history of the life and teachings of Jesus might be made up, in the language of the Synoptists, from the writings of Justyn alone.' It is here that he seems to have conceived, for the first time, the effect of the general absence of express citation by the Fathers. 'I do not here lay much stress on the entire omission of the name of John in all those passages which are supposed to refer to the Fourth Gospel; because that is a peculiarity common to John, with Matthew and Luke, though it is certainly remarkable, that on the only occasion in Justyn, where the name of the Apostle John is mentioned, it should be where he is expressly quoted as the author of the Apocalypse.'

Athenagoras is introduced with a remark pointing out the result of the examination of his works, which it might have been supposed would by this time have ceased to be considered a peculiarity. 'In the two treatises of Athenagoras, his "Plea for the Christians," and that on "The Resurrection of the Dead," which belong to the second century, and are assigned by the best critics to the year 177 A.D., there is not a trace of any quotation from the Fourth Gospel. The citations, as in Justyn Martyr, are from Matthew and Luke.'

It is admitted, however, that 'some expressions which marked the common belief of those who held the doctrine of the Logos, occur in his writings as in the Fourth Gospel;' that, in another instance, 'he speaks of the One God, with still closer approximation to what we find in John.' Another quotation
is the same doctrine that we have in John 1–3 and xvii. 21–28. Yet no one who reads the context can feel any confidence that there is even a reference here to the Fourth Gospel.'

The next in order is the epistle to Diognetus, which is thus introduced by Mr. Tayler: 'The first and probably the original portion of this beautiful epistle, which there is reason to think was written about the time, or soon after the time, of Justyn Martyr, is deeply imbued with Johannine thought; but only in two passages have I been able to discover anything like a citation or reference. These references (for citations they are not) are thus translated: "He sent His Son in love, not to judge." The sentiment is the same as in John iii. 17. Again: "Christians dwell in the world, but are not of the world," which closely agrees with John xvii. 16. "They are not of the world as I am not of the world." But (it is added) the author does not indicate any particular source from which the statement in either case is taken.'

Tatian is introduced in the treatise with the remark that 'we are now approaching the time, towards the end of the second century, when the citations from the Fourth Gospel, as a recognized portion of the authoritative Scripture, become distinct and unquestionable. Tatian, a pupil of Justyn Martyr, in his "Address to the Greeks," written after the death of his master, and therefore

1 *Tatian*. p. 65.
subsequent to 165 A.D., has these words: 'All things were made by him, and without him not a thing was made.' 'They are,' it is observed, 'almost literally those of John i. 3,' but we might, from some critical doubts stated, 'have felt uncertain of their origin, but for other passages in Tatian which leave no doubt of his acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel.'

We have at length arrived at the first express citation of the Fourth Gospel, which is thus introduced in the treatise: 'In the work of Theophilus of Antioch, which must have been written in the reign of Commodus, and therefore subsequent to 180 A.D., we have for the first time a citation from the Fourth Gospel with the name of its author—John. In explaining the doctrine of the Logos, Theophilus (ii. 22) adds: "As the Holy Scriptures teach us, and all the inspired, of whom John, being one, says: In the beginning was the Word, etc. (John i. 1)." The Fourth Gospel is here classed among the Holy Scriptures, and its author is described as moved by the Holy Spirit, which, of course, gives him a place among canonical or authoritative writers, though even here it is to be noticed, that he is not called an Apostle. ... No one can doubt that Theophilus was acquainted with the Fourth Gospel, and considered it a part of Holy Scripture; but there is only one passage in which he mentions its author by name.'

It is a curious result of this inquiry into the truth

1 Treatise, p. 66.
of this hypothesis concerning the origin of the Fourth Gospel, chiefly sustained by arguments derived from the absence of citation of the Gospel in the works of the Fathers, that it proves to be the first of the Four Gospels, of which a portion is cited with the name of its author. On the assumed effect of the absence of citation, the works of the Fathers, which we have just reviewed, are treated as unfavourable to the Apostolic origin of that Gospel, although the works themselves, in the passages that have been quoted, present to us historical evidence of the progress of the Gospel, gradually advancing from the Apostolic Father Ignatius—98-117—until Theophilus broke through the reticence of the Fathers, and gave to the Gospel its traditionary name. The last of the Gospels finds its place in the works of the Apostolic Father Ignatius as soon as the first of the New Testament scriptures, one of the Epistles of St. Paul. The stream of progress is gradual; but it flows from the Apostolic source, and increases as it flows. If we take 149 A.D. as the medium of the conjectural dates of the hypothetical Gospel—135-163, we have the stream of progression on both sides the hypothetic date, flowing from the Apostolic source; whereas the hypothesis requires that the years which precede that date should be wholly dark and unoccupied by any vestiges of the Gospel; for any record of its prior existence, however small, is fatal to the hypothesis. The critics of the Tübingen school have vied with each other in fixing the most distant date from the time of the Apostle John for
the appearance of the Gospel. Baur, passing beyond Mr. Tayler, held that the Gospel did not appear until after A.D. 150; whilst Zeller, his disciple, more confident, arrived at the conclusion that nothing absolutely proved its existence before the year 170. But the more distant from the death of the Apostle the hypothetical Gospel is placed, the more powerful the external evidence becomes against it; for the Apostolic flow continues until a period when its obstruction is impossible, from the predominance of the Gospel flow.

IX. Irenæus, the final link of the chain supposed, was placed in a remarkable position for knowing and recording the facts concerning the origin of the Gospels. The information flowed to him which Polycarp knew personally, or acquired by information, as a disciple of St. John, or as a companion of the other Apostles; and all that Papias knew or acquired, Irenæus was surely informed of by his communicative contemporary. As bishop of Lyons, in Gaul, the intercourse of Irenæus with the Christian Churches and their bishops must, at least, have been occasional, and in his book 'Against Heresies,' he shows that these affairs did not pass lightly through his mind, but were deliberated upon and recorded.

The force of the Tubingen school is employed to damage the intellectual capacity of Irenæus, and in the treatise the circumstance of his being bishop of Lyons, is considered as diminishing his claims to

1 Revue de Théologie, pp. 212, 213.
The Fourth Gospel and Irenæus.

intelligence. 'Years of absence in a remote part of the world,' being represented 'as weakening the critical faculty in a person of ordinary knowledge and intercourse with mankind.' Detraction is the only resource against the clear and plain declaration of the origin and existence of the Four Gospels, by a person so well informed. The 'critical faculty' is not employed where facts are the chief elements, and the testimony of Irenæus is not a speculative deduction, but a declaration of facts resulting from his personal knowledge and ecclesiastical position.

We have said that a citation of the Fourth Gospel, 'with the name of its author—John,' could have been taken from the works of Irenæus of as early, if not earlier date,\(^1\) than that from Theophilus, preferred by the Tubingen school. In his book 'Against Heresies' are express citations of the Four Gospels, with an historical description of their origin. But Irenæus has also added some reasons, that may be considered fanciful, for there being neither more nor fewer than Four Gospels; and on that account, the less complete announcement of Theophilus of the Fourth Gospel, is preferred to the more comprehensive announcement of Irenæus.

Irenæus departed from the custom of non-citation, and recorded the Four Gospels in the following passage of his book on 'Heresies':—

\(^1\) For we have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any other than those by whom the Gospel has been

\(^1\) Lardner ascribes to the works of Irenæus and Theophilus the respective dates of 178 and 181.
brought to us, which Gospel they first preached, and afterwards; by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be for time to come the foundation and pillar of our faith.... For after that the Lord rose from the dead, and they (the Apostles) were endowed from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one alike, the Gospel of God. Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language; while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, and founding a Church there. And after their exit, (death, or departure) Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us, in writing, the things that had been preached to Peter. And Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by him (Paul). Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon His breast, he likewise published a Gospel, while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia. And all these have delivered to us, that there is one God, the Maker of the heaven and the earth, declared by the Law and the Prophets, and one Christ, the Son of God.¹

The following are the reasons given by Irenæus for there being four Gospels:——

¹ Nor can there be more or fewer Gospels than these. For as there are four regions of the world in which we live, and four catholic spirits, and the Church is spread all over the earth, and the Gospel is the pillar and foundation of the Church, and the spirit of life; in like manner was it fit it should have four pillars, breathing on all sides incorruption, and refreshing mankind. Whence it is manifest that the Word, the former of all things, Who sits upon the Cherubim and upholds all things, having appeared to men, has given us a Gospel of a four-fold character, but joined in one spirit.... The Gospel according to John declares His primary and glorious generation from the Father; “In the beginning was the Word.”... But the Gospel according to Luke, being of a priestly character, begins with Zacharias the priest offering incense to God. Matthew relates his generation which

¹ Lardner, Tit. Irenæus.
The Fourth Gospel and Irenæus.

is according to man: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Mark begins from the prophetic spirit which came down from above to men, saying: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet.”

Mr. Tayler admits, ‘that the strange reasons assigned by Irenæus for there being neither more nor fewer than four Gospels, puerile as they are, do not at all invalidate his testimony to the fact, that the Gospel received by the Catholic Church as authoritative (a periphrasis which excludes an admission of the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel) were four, and that they bore the names which he gives them. And yet’ (it is added) ‘the very way in which he introduces the mention of the fact, proves to me that the limitation of number on which he insists as something final and conclusive, was of comparatively recent origin,’ which must be taken as his protest against the Gospels as four, otherwise than by the addition of an hypothetical Gospel as the Fourth Gospel.

An hypothesis so daring, if it could be sustained, would necessarily scatter calumnies on the distinguished men of the time, who had it in their power—or whose duty it was—but who neglected to prevent the fraudulent introduction of a fictitious Gospel, under the name of St. John, into the Christian Church. On Irenæus the imputation would fall with peculiar force; for when before his martyrdom he proclaimed the Fourth Gospel as the Gospel of St. John, if the Gospel was false, he must have

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1 Lardner, Tit. Irenæus.
2 Treatise, p. 78.
known it, for it could not have been produced without his privity and knowledge. This is itself a proof that the Gospel proclaimed by Irenaeus was a genuine Gospel of St. John, and the remark is chiefly intended, to illustrate the injustice which proceeds from an hypothesis, neither supported by evidence nor shown to be possible by fiction, and likewise inconsistent with the Ancient Tradition, with the Testimonies of the Works of the Fathers, and with the Testimony of Contemporaries. The name and character of Irenaeus will survive the implied hypothetical slanders of the Tübingen school.

X. The Paschal Controversy is the appellation of another weapon of the Tübingen school, by which objections to the Apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel are raised on internal evidence, and applied to some of the most interesting and important portions of the Gospel history. As connected with certain passages in the Fourth Gospel, it appears to many persons to present a substantial difficulty in the interpretation of that Gospel; and it is introduced by Mr. Tayler as 'the most formidable argument yet to be adduced, against the decision of the Church that the Fourth Gospel is the work of the Apostle John. I mean (he says) the precedent that was drawn from the Apostle's own practice, so contrary apparently to his reputed words in the celebrated Paschal Controversy.'

The controversy, however, it will soon appear, has no direct bearing on the question discussed in this

1 Treatise, p. 98.
section, which is the interpretation of the passages in the Fourth Gospel before referred to. It complicates the subject unnecessarily, and calls upon the reader to peruse, if not to study, two chapters or sections on the subject—one on the Paschal Controversy, the other on the Chronology of the Paschal Question. From the first of these we shall extract the statement of the Tubingen case, and the evidence and arguments in support of it. For the historical facts, a short account of them from Eusebius will suffice, which will also give us an interesting picture of the Apostle John and others at Ephesus.

The Apostle’s own practice here referred to, was the practice he observed when at Ephesus, in common with the Asiatic Churches, of keeping the Festival in commemoration of the Resurrection, on the fourteenth of the month Nisan, the same day on which the Jews observed their Passover. From that observance those who practised it were called Quarto-Decimans.

Eusebius’s account of the origin of this controversy is as follows:—

1 The Churches of all Asia, guided by a remoter tradition, supposed that they ought to keep the fourteenth day of the moon, for the festival of the Saviour’s passover, on which day the Jews were commanded to kill the Paschal lamb; and it was incumbent on them, at all times, to make an end of the fast on this day, on whatever day of the week it should happen to fall. But Eusebius proceeds, speaking for the Western Churches to which he


2 ‘That is, the fourteenth day after the appearance of the new moon.’
belonged) as it was not the custom to celebrate it in this manner in the Churches throughout the rest of the world, who observe the practice that has prevailed from Apostolic tradition until the present time, so it would not be proper to terminate our fast on any other day but the day of the Resurrection of our Saviour. Hence, there were synods and convocations of the bishops on this question, which decreed that the Resurrection should be celebrated on no other day than the Lord's Day.¹ To this account from Eusebius it need only be added that the controversy was determined at the Council of Nice, by the Emperor Constantine, who ordained that Easter should be kept upon the Lord's Day.²

The 'reputed words' to which the practice of the Apostle is alleged to be contrary, are no less than the words of the Fourth Gospel; the term 'reputed,' it is supposed, being applied to them by way of protest against an admission that the Apostle was the author of the Gospel.

After the Apostle's death, when the Paschal Controversy arose, the authority of the Apostle was used in favour of the Quarto-Decimans. That information is given by Eusebius, from an interesting letter addressed by Polycrates to Victor and the Church of Rome. 'We (said he) observe the genuine day, neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom. For in Asia great lights have fallen asleep, which will rise again in the day of the Lord's appearing—Philip, one of the twelve Apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters. Moreover, John, who rested upon the bosom of our Lord, who was also a priest, and bore the petalon, both a martyr and teacher. He is buried in Ephesus; also Polycarp of Smyrna, both bishop and martyr. All these ob-

¹ Eusebius, book v., c. 28. ² Nelson's Fasts and Festivals.
served the fourteenth day of the Passover, according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. Moreover, I, Polycrates, who am now sixty-five years in the Lord, having conferred with the brethren throughout the world, and having studied the whole of the Sacred Scriptures, am not at all alarmed at those things with which I am threatened, to intimidate me, for "We ought to obey God rather than men."¹

The facts and the arguments of the treatise in support of the alleged divergency are contained in the following extracts from the section on ‘The Paschal Controversy’:

¹By far the most extraordinary divergency between the Three First Gospels and the Fourth, relates to the time and circumstances of the Last Supper. It is necessary to understand distinctly wherein the divergency consists. Each of the Synoptists, in the most explicit terms, describes Jesus as partaking of the Jewish passover with his disciples in the usual manner, on the evening of the 14th of the month Nisan, and at the conclusion of the supper, in the breaking of bread and the distribution of wine, instituting a memorial of himself. Let the following passages be noticed:—Matthew xxvi. 17-29; Mark xiv. 12-26; Luke xxii. 7-20. Paul, (1 Cor. xi. 23-36) by recording the institution almost in the words of Luke, bears indirectly his testimony to the correctness of the synoptical account. According to this, Jesus was crucified on the 15th of Nisan, the first entire day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The memorial then instituted has continued, with widely-varying significance it is true, as a standing ordinance of the Christian Church to the present day.

¹Now let us turn to the Fourth Gospel, and see what account it gives of this matter. In the opening verse of chapter thirteen, we are told that the Supper was ‘before the Feast of the Passover’; and to exclude all possibility of mistake, we are further
told (xiii. 29) that at the conclusion of the Supper, some words spoken by Jesus to Judas were understood to be an instruction to him, to buy what was necessary for the celebration of the feast. In this narrative not a word is said of the commemorative institution of breaking bread and distributing wine, but in place of it a symbolic act is introduced—the washing of the disciples' feet by Christ—to which the Synoptists do not once refer, and for which, indeed, they leave no room. Had we only the Fourth Gospel, we could never have known that Christ had instituted any memorial of himself, like that described in the Synoptists; and how it became an usage in the Church, would have remained inexplicable. According to the Fourth Gospel, then, the Supper must have taken place, not on the fourteenth, but on the thirteenth of Nisan, and Christ himself have suffered on the fourteenth, the same day on the eve of which the Passover was celebrated. That this was the meaning of the writer is evident from two passages in the sequel of the narrative: first (xviii. 28) where we are told that the Jews, when they led Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate, would not enter the heathen judgment-hall, lest they should disqualify themselves by defilement for eating the Passover; and, secondly, (xix. 14.) where it is expressly stated, that at the time of the Crucifixion "it was the preparation for the Passover." The two narratives, therefore, are utterly incapable of reconciliation. If the account of the Fourth Gospel be the true one, it is impossible that Christ should have eaten the Passover with his disciples, as he was crucified before it could be legally celebrated: and we have thus the three Evangelists, with the Apostle Paul, convicted of gross mistake as to a matter of historical fact, which it is hardly conceivable how they could have made, depositories, as we know they were, of the earliest Palestinian tradition respecting Christ....In a dispute between the Churches of Asia Minor and that of Rome, respecting the time and mode of keeping Easter, the authority of the Apostle John was appealed to by the former on behalf of their own usage, in a way which seems altogether incompatible with his being the author of the Fourth Gospel, though conservative criticism has done its utmost to show that he still might be so. ¹


We now enter the regions of invention. The Paschal Controversy appears no more, and the only
conceivable purpose of introducing it is, that if the alleged divergency could be sustained, it was supposed the Apostle’s practice as a Quarto-Deciman would add some weight to the hypothesis that he was not the author of the Gospel. This auxiliary hypothesis makes great demands on the faith, or on the credibility of those who adopt it. The result of it is said to be that ‘according to the Fourth Gospel, the Last Supper must have taken place, not on the 14th, but on the 13th of Nisan, and Christ himself have suffered on the 14th, the same day, on the eve of which the Passover was celebrated.’ A result so important should be capable of being expressed in the very words of the Gospel itself; or if contained in the words, should be proved to be a just deduction from them by the proper logical method. Here it is neither express words nor a proved deduction, but an assumption from a few words of the Gospel detached from their context, that ‘in the opening verse of the 18th chapter we are told that the Supper was before the Feast of the Passover.’ The allegation not being demonstrable, it is declared by a bold assertion. But the first verse is complete in its structure, without the aid of any explanation. Its own terms supply the subject and the predicate of the proposition, and no transposition or amendment is required to make its language more clear.

It is a fallacy to impute divergence or inaccuracy to the Fourth Gospel, on an inference from a single verse, whilst the Gospel contains an express record
of the facts which are controverted by the inference. The humblest historian has a right to require that the exposition of his facts should be taken from that part of his work expressly devoted to their description, and that the time of action should not be displaced by a few detached words perverted to a sense which they will not logically bear. The Synoptists are by the hypothesis made the standard of the time of the record, and with their description the comparison must be made. The coincidence, however, must not be expected to go beyond those events which have a natural order in which time is an element; and the several Evangelists relate incidents which have occurred, the whole of which are not recorded in each of the Gospels.

If the Tubingen interpretation of the first verse cannot be sustained, the question falls; for no other proof is offered that the Fourth Gospel records a Supper 'before' the Feast of the Passover. The basis for the divergency failing, the passages quoted to support it cannot apply to what has no existence. Another explanation of them must be sought, and that must necessarily be founded on the entire facts of the Gospel itself. I will now offer on that basis an explanation of those passages which appear to me to be the natural and obvious interpretation of them; and, doubtless, it has so appeared to many before. The explanation is not founded on antiquarian knowledge. All that is required is that the passages should be examined by the light of the
Gospel itself; and that the Jewish customs and ceremonies mentioned or referred to should be accepted as accurately described.

The opening verse of the 13th chapter of St. John's Gospel, without any strain of construction, appears to be the opening of the record in that Gospel of the Feast of the Passover. In language of dignity and pathos it expresses Our Lord's knowledge, at the approach of the Passover, that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, and the feelings with which, with that knowledge, he regarded his disciples. It seems to be a parallel description of the same knowledge and feelings which St. Luke records as existing in Our Lord at the opening of the Passover, when the Great Master sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him, and he said unto them, 'With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'

The subsequent events proceed in the same order in the Four Gospels. The identification of the last Passover as one and the same is complete in all the Gospels. The Synoptists record that on the first day of Unleavened Bread the Passover was prepared at the instance of Our Lord, and St. Luke tells us that Peter and John were sent 'To prepare us the Passover, that we may eat.' All the Gospels record the great event which characterizes the Last Supper, the treachery of Judas, and his betrayal of

Our Lord; and the words of Our Lord, 'One of you will betray me,' are expressed by all in language almost identical. St. John's presence there is declared when, lying on Jesus' breast, Simon Peter beckoned him that he should ask Our Lord who it was of whom he spoke. St. Matthew records the answer of Our Lord, 'He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me'; and St. John, in words of the same import, 'He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it.' The Synoptists record the betrayal by Judas as occurring at the same time and place as the Fourth Gospel, and in words almost alike, except that in the Fourth Gospel the kiss is not recorded. They all record the smiting of the servant of the high-priest with the sword, and the cutting off of his ear; the Fourth Gospel adding a little proof of minor accuracy, that Simon Peter was the smiter, and that the servant's name was Malchus.

The identification of the Crucifixion in the four Gospels, is as complete and incontrovertible as that of the Last Passover. The time, the hour, are fixed in all by the same imperishable events, to which attention will presently be called.

We may try to carry out the distinction imposed by the hypothesis, which refers the events recorded in the Synoptic Gospels to the 14th Nisan, and those in the Fourth Gospel to the 13th Nisan; but our minds, from their natural love of truth, resist attempts to assign different times of action to the same facts.
The words of Jesus at the Feast (xiii. 29), misunderstood by his Disciples, quoted as proof in the treatise that the Supper was before the Feast of the Passover, and said 'to exclude all possibility of mistake,' are in the treatise expanded (by words absent from the Greek) into 'for the celebration of the Feast.' But the events, if considered as having relation to a feast then in progress where the men are said (as in the previous verse) to be at table, are natural and simple. 'That thou doest do quickly'—words of which no man at the table knew the intent, followed by the departure of Judas, who had the bag, were supposed to be directions to buy that we have need of for (against) the feast, or that he should give something to the poor, which we must suppose were his ordinary duties, as having the purse or bag. The words ἐπὶ τῇ ἑορτῇ, translated in the authorized version against the feast, bear, even if they do not require, the translation 'for the feast'; so that the alleged divergency of the Fourth Gospel is made to depend on the circumstance whether the preposition ἐπὶ be translated 'against' or 'for,' the latter translation being adopted in other texts of the New Testament.  

The next passages are those (xviii. 28 and xix. 14) which it is said make it evident that, according to the Fourth Gospel, the Supper must have taken place, not on the 14th, but on the 18th Nisan, and

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1 See Luke ix. 13—'Buy meat for all this people.' Mr. Tayler has sanctioned this translation in his words, 'for the celebration of the feast.'
Christ himself have suffered on the 14th, the same day on the eve of which the Passover was celebrated.

In relation to these two passages, we are told in the treatise that, 'in the verse (xviii. 28) the Jews, when they led Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate, would not enter the heathen judgment-hall, lest they should disqualify themselves by defilement for eating the Passover'; and, secondly, that 'in verse xix. 14 it is expressly stated that at the time of the Crucifixion it was the preparation for the Passover.'

When Jesus left the Paschal chamber it is recorded by St. Mark that he took with him Peter and James and John; and by St. John that when Our Lord was led first to Annas, and from him to Caiaphas, the high-priest, Simon Peter and the Apostle John followed, who, being known to the high-priest, went in with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest, and thus had peculiar means of knowing the occurrences that followed. The Gospel record is: 'Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment, and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out unto them.'

It is proved by all the Gospels, including that of St. John, that Our Lord and his Apostles made their preparation and ate the Passover on the same day, or evening, during which He was delivered by Judas to the officers of the Chief Priests and Pharisees. It follows, therefore, that the reason and purpose
which prevented the Jews entering the hall of judgment, were not applicable to Our Lord and to those disciples that followed or accompanied him; and the terms of the passage do not describe the reason and purpose as extending beyond the Jews occupied in the prosecution of Our Lord. It is therefore a reasonable, if not a necessary, deduction from these premisses that the Jews knew that by abstaining from defiling themselves they should, after the completion of their design to procure the sentence of Our Lord to crucifixion, be able to eat the Passover within the legal time. There is an important omission in the paraphrase of the treatise—' and it was early.' Who can now tell what is the import of those words, or that their intended effect was not to give to the future readers of the Gospel, who were Jews, an intimation that the time for preserving to the Jews power to eat the Passover was sufficient. Pilate went out to them, to prevent their being defiled, and it must be supposed that he knew that by so doing he should preserve to the Jews the purpose that they had in view. On any other supposition we cannot understand why the Roman governor should have done that act of condescension. St. John, who was personally present, and, as we may suppose, anxiously watching the course of events, knowing also that he had eaten the Passover with Our Lord and the Apostles, makes this statement in his Gospel, without controverting or casting any doubt upon the accuracy of the Jews' conclusions.
The other testimony to the hypothesis, in which it is said, in the treatise, to be expressly stated that ‘at the time of the Crucifixion it was the preparation for the Passover,’ must be considered, first, in reference to the change of the word ‘for’ in the treatise for the word ‘of’ the Passover in the authorized version. I leave it to Greek scholars whether that translation of the genitive ῥοῤῥηχα is admissible. Its purpose appears to be to treat the Passover as a coming event, whilst in the authorized translation the words ‘it was the preparation of the Passover,’ asserts that when Pilate sat down in the judgment-seat and, in compliance with the demands of the Jews, delivered Our Lord to be crucified, the day of preparation of the Passover still existed, in continuation of that day or customary period of time, in some part of which Our Lord had made his preparation, and eaten the Passover with his disciples.

From that time the adjunct to the word ‘preparation’ is changed. A new period has arrived. It is no longer ‘the preparation of the Passover.’ After, but not until after, the Crucifixion, it becomes ‘the preparation for the Sabbath.’ When Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Our Lord, he so begged it ‘because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath.’

St. Luke records that Joseph ‘wrapped the body in fine linen and laid it in the sepulchre,’ and that day was the preparation day, and the Sabbath draws on.’ The Fourth Gospel coincides with the other

1 Luke xxiii. 54.
Fourth Gospel and the Paschal Controversy.

Gospels, terminating its description of the burial of Our Lord in a garden near the place where he was crucified, with the remark, 'There laid they Jesus, therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.'

But so precise is the distinction of periods, that St. Matthew, when he records that the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate to request his command that the sepulchre be made sure, states that it was on 'the next day that followed the day of the preparation.'

Knowledge of the solar or lunar time, which defined these Jewish ceremonial periods, is not necessary for the understanding of the distinctions between them. All that is necessary is to know that certain recurring religious times or periods, bearing ceremonial names, were part of the Jewish life, and were as familiar to the Jews as household words. We have seen them, as recorded in the Gospels, arrive and pass in a succession which marks that they were limited in time, but does not disclose the limits. But it is enough that we have the authority of the Fourth Gospel, that those ceremonial periods were observed, both in respect of the Passover and of the Crucifixion, and even in regard to those incidents which the Fourth Gospel exclusively records.

I will conclude this essay by taking the liberty to recommend to critics of the Tübingen school one of

1 John xx. 42. 2 Matthew xxvii. 62.
the *regula philosophandi* of a great philosopher, who was also a theologian—Newton.

"Conjectures and hypotheses are the creatures of men, and will always be found very unlike the creatures of God. If we would know the works of God, we must consult themselves with attention and humility, without daring to add anything of ours to what they declare. A just interpretation of nature is the only sound and orthodox philosophy: whatever we add of our own, is apocryphal, and of no authority."  
