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THE PLACE OF THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST
IN RELATION TO
THE PURPOSE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

by

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1929

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
The Degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York City
April -- 1932

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INTRODUCTION

"The Fourth Gospel is the Heart of Christ"
- Ernesti

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A. The Field for Study

The Fourth Gospel

Someone has said, "We need a frequent course of John's Gospel, so that we may better realize how Christ conceived of his relation to men."(1) The Fourth Gospel has been called "the profoundest book in all the world."(2) It brings us into the immediate presence of our Lord, and seeing Him we see God.(3)

"It breathes the air of peace, and yet sounds at times like a peal of thunder from the other world; it soars boldly and majestically like the eagle towards the uncreated source of light, and yet hovers as gently as a dove over the earth; it is sublime as a seraph and simple as a child; high and serene as the heaven, deep and unfathomable as the sea."(4)

Because of its irresistible charm it has won the love and admiration of great and good men in each succeeding century. It has also provoked the assaults of anti-Christians who are well aware that it is the stronghold of the Divine character of our Lord.

The Authenticity of the Fourth Gospel

The question of the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel was not raised until the end of the seventeenth century.(5) But since then literature on this Gospel has increased by

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- (1) Henry W. Clark, The Christ from Without and Within, p.124.
- (2) Ibid., p.222.
- (3) John, xiv, 9.
- (4) Philip Schaff, Special Intro., p.vi, in J.P.Lange's Comm. on John.
- (5) F. Godet, Comm. on the Gospel of John, p.8.

scores of volumes.

"But the time has nearly come for something like a direct verdict on the character of the Fourth Gospel. Here is a single and complete phenomenon, challenging decision. It stands absolutely alone: its claims and its significance are without a parallel. It is intensely personal, distinct, separate. It has a style of its own; a temper, an atmosphere that are unmistakable. In spite of every effort to break it up into a variety of component parts, it remains stamped with an identity, and an individuality which possesses it from end to end. It is so unique and entire an effect, a unique and single cause must be found."(1)

Dr. Buttrick, in a recent conference with students, said that Canon Raven's book, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, has in it the strongest argument for the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel that has been presented in our time.

"As has been made plain, the vivid and accurate account of scenes and places seems psychologically irreconcilable with the belief that the teaching is solely the product of creative imagination, or with the supposition of an eye-witness' memory as the groundwork of a later mystic's visions. Such a theory is bad psychology; and its result if true, would be bad morals; whereas the book is homogeneous and a work of high artistic, intellectual, and spiritual worth. Of all the Gospels this most evidently has a single personality as its author. The man who described from first-hand knowledge the details of time and place and incident was the same who set down the record of sign and discourse. The difficulties of any other view are insuperable."(2)

On the strength of the splendid work done by Scott Holland and Canon Raven we shall in this thesis assume that John the Apostle is the author of the Fourth Gospel, and we shall likewise assume that the record is trustworthy.

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(1) Henry Scott Holland, The Philosophy of Faith and the Fourth Gospel, p.135.

(2) Charles E. Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, p.217.

B. The Subject of the Thesis

A Statement of the Subject

The subject of the thesis, The Place of the Death of Jesus Christ in Relation to the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel, indicates at once that the Death of Jesus is to be the focus of attention, and the field for study, already warranted, is the Fourth Gospel.

A Statement of the Problem

Our problem is this: To determine by an examination of the Fourth Gospel what significance is put upon the Death of Christ in that Gospel. This involves the answer of two questions: Does the death of Jesus dominate His career? and Does the death of Jesus have an essential place in our reception of eternal life?

C. Justification for the Thesis

The Importance of the Problem

It is admitted that there is a sad lack of knowledge⁽¹⁾ concerning the death of Jesus, even among students for the Ministry and among men already actively engaged. The death of Christ does not have the place assigned to it in modern thought that it had in the New Testament.⁽²⁾ If we accept these statements as true we are driven to the New Testament for that knowledge which we should possess and do not.

* * * * *

- (1) George A. Buttrick, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, pp.195-7.
(2) James Denney, The Death of Christ, preface, p.v.

A representative of the ultra-modern school of theology says,

"In John's conception of Jesus His death was a mere hyphen, a short gap between His first stay with men in the flesh and his second stay with them in the power of the Spirit."(1)

If this be true of John, the bosom friend of the Lord, one is minded to ask whether somebody was not mistaken in putting such strong emphasis on the death of Jesus.

Deissmann suggests that the one new thing that Jesus brought was Himself.(2) It may rightly be said that in the Fourth Gospel "the Person of the Saviour is of supreme importance."(3) Furthermore we are told that "the Cross of Christ is the one key to His Person."(4) If the opinions of these men are accorded any value they indicate the real need for an understanding of the death of Jesus Christ.

The Importance of Related Problems

The questions that arise in connection with this problem seem to exceed in importance the problem itself. To most people the death of Christ is a mystery. One wonders whether He himself understood it. But if He did not, how came the apostolic circle to have the view they had?

"It is inconceivable that the apostles should have taught that the death of Christ is the objec-

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- (1) Benj.W.Robinson, The Gospel of John, p.250.
- (2) G.Adolf Deissmann, The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul, p.149.
- (3) J.P.Lange, Comm.on John, p.32.
- (4) Peter T.Forsyth, The Cruciality of the Cross, p.4.

tive ground on which God forgives human sin, unless they had learned it from Christ himself."(1)

This thesis is not to be a theory of the Atonement, and yet it can not be very different, for when one is dealing with the death of Christ one is dealing with one phase of the Atonement. Apart from any precise definitions of it, the Atonement is everything in the Christian religion. "It is the inspiration of all thought, the impulse and law of all action, the key, in the last resort, to all suffering."(2) And thus we are at the root of religion as we consider the death of the Lord.

D. The Method of Procedure

The Plan

It will be necessary first of all to satisfy ourselves as to the purpose of the Fourth Gospel. If we are to comprehend the significance of Jesus' death for John we must be sympathetic with his design. This is only fair to John, and it will give us a proper perspective in the drama.

Having satisfied ourselves as to the purpose of the writing we can turn our attention to the death of the leading character. We must consider it from three points of view: that of Jesus, that of contemporaries, and that of the Evangelist himself. In doing this we will have answered some of our questions, and we will have prepared for the last chapter

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(1) R.W.Dale, The Atonement, p.22.

(2) James Denney, The Atonement and the Modern Mind, p.13.

which will be an effort to understand the place John gave to Jesus' death in the development of the Gospel.

The Sources

In following out the suggested plan we shall give the major attention to the primary material, the Fourth Gospel itself. Doubtful passages will be omitted rather than raise controversies, and the Greek text will be included in the manuscript only when necessary for clarity.

CHAPTER ONE

"..ye needs must apprehend what truth
I see, reduced to plain historic fact,
Diminished into clearness, proved a point
And far away: ye would withdraw your sense
From out eternity, strain it upon time,
Then stand before that fact, that Life and Death,
Stay there at gaze, till it dispart, dispread,
As though a star should open out, all sides,
Grow the world on you, as it is my world."

- Browning
A Death in the Desert

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It has been said that every book is a mystery of which the author alone has the secret. This secret is the design or purpose in the author's mind which prompted him to write and which guided him in his efforts. To discover this secret is to open the way to an appreciation and an understanding of the book. Some authors keep the purpose behind the scenes, but it is no less there giving unity and significance to the recorded facts. Others are so definitely desirous of having their writing thoroughly understood that they take special care to reveal the secret to the reader. Of this latter group is John.

With great care he painted a portrait in words, and then, as if to explain his procedure and indicate his object, he says simply,

"Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."(1)

A reading of the Gospel with these verses in mind will answer our question as to whether or not these verses can be accepted as the purpose of the writing. Then we can proceed to consider the place of the death of Jesus in the development of the purpose of the book. Before centering attention, however, on this passage it will be well to take cognizance of the existence of several divergent opinions regarding the aim which John had.

* * * * *

(1) John, xx, 30,31.

A. Existing Opinions

The Concept of the Fathers

The Church Fathers were of the opinion that John's friends had prevailed on him to write.(1) That is, those who heard his voice proclaim the gospel were impressed with its appeal, and also with the fact that the narratives that he told were not all included in the synoptic Gospels which had come to their hands. So they induced John to write his account of the story. Eusebius writes:

"Nevertheless, of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity.

And when Mark and Luke had already published their gospels, they say that John, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the Gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason. The three gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all, and into his own, too, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there was lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry. And this indeed is true. For it is evident that the three evangelists recorded only the deeds done by the Saviour for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and indicated this in the beginning of their account. they say, therefore, that the apostle John, being asked to do it for this reason, gave in his gospel an account of the period which had been omitted by the earlier evangelists"(2)

Not too much repute is accorded Eusebius' opinion that the

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(1) F. Godet, Comm. on John, vol. i, p. 209.

(2) Eusebius, "Church History", Book iii, chapter 24, The Order of the Gospels, pp. 152, 153; Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. I.

Fourth Gospel was written to supplement the Synoptics. His sources, "they say", are admittedly indefinite. But it was easier for him to believe that it was written to complete the other three than to believe that it was written just as another relation of the story, as the author of the Muratorian Fragment suggests.(1)

Without a doubt the Fourth Gospel does supplement the other three, but a subsequent study will reveal to us that this could not have been the primary aim. There is too much unity and symmetry to permit this idea. Clement's suggestion may in like manner be admitted, but also rejected as a primary aim. To quote again from Eusebius:

"But, last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospels, being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel. This is the account of Clement."(2)

The View of Later Scholars

Early in the life of the Church the tragedy of error appeared. Heresy concerning the Person of our Lord made a path of destruction through the little Christian groups before the century was over. This caused the leaders no little concern, and in John's first Epistle it is evident(3) that he is attempting to combat some threatening heresies. There is a group of scholars who suggest that the Fourth

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(1) F. Godet, Comm. on John, vol. i, p. 210.

(2) Eusebius, Church History, Book vi, chap. 14, p. 261.

(3) I John, i, 8.

Gospel was written with a polemic aim. One says:

"...there can be little doubt that the Gospel is largely controversial in its character. Whole chapters consist of elaborate dialectic, in which the objections and misunderstandings of various opponents are carefully answered."(1)

Grounds for this position are not difficult to find. The Jews are constantly pictured through the Gospel as adversaries of Jesus. There is a John the Baptist party that is apparently a hindrance to the growth of the Church. But the great polemic is in the assertion of "truth of first importance." For then in the presence of errors "the full exhibition of the Truth was necessarily their refutation."(2) One is rather inclined to think that this polemic aim must be termed secondary. It is probable that if this were his grand aim he would make a direct statement about it. He would attempt to place it before our eyes as it was before his.

The Tenet of the Modern School

The modern school considers the afore mentioned aims as most improbable and ascribes to the Fourth Gospel a purely speculative aim.(3) That is, John decided that the faith of the Church, a comparatively simple faith, should be raised in its standard to a higher knowledge. This in effect leads to the inference that John was conciliatory to the Gnosticism

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- (1) Ernest F.Scott, The Fourth Gospel, Its Purpose and Theology, p.68.
- (2) Brooke Foss Westcott, Comm.on John, p.xli.
- (3) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.i,p.211.

of the day. Dr. Baur is convinced that the material of the Fourth Gospel is fictitious and that "the Johannine Gospel was the result of a deliberate second-century purpose." (1) Moreover this Gospel is not history at all, but theology.

Little can be said in favor of the attitude taken by the modern school, for the Gospel record itself is wretchedly handled by them. It does not do to say that John furnished an interpretation of the Gospel rather than a historical record. For faith is the desired end of all of the Gospels, and faith in this Gospel "is never anything else than the assimilation of the testimony (1:7); and the testimony relates to an historical fact and not to an idea." (2) The previously suggested aims have been admitted to be possible as secondary, but this last one we reject.

The Possibility of a Personal Purpose

One wonders if it is not possible that John had a purpose apart from all these others, a personal reason for writing. And Robert Browning, the much-loved preacher poet, offers a suggestion just in accord with that idea.

"If I live yet, it is for good, more love
Through me to men: be naught but ashes here
That keep awhile my semblance, who was John, -
Still, when they scatter, there is left on earth
No one alive who knew (consider this!)
- Saw with his eyes and handled with his hands
That which was from the first, the Word of Life.
How will it be when none more saith 'I saw'?" (3)

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- (1) Henry W. Watkins, Modern Criticism & the Fourth Gospel, p. 234.
- (2) F. Godet, Comm. on John, vol. i, p. 215.
- (3) Robert Browning, A Death in the Desert, Complete Wks, p. 386.

Dr. White says that the Fourth Gospel is in a real sense(1) the record of the experience of the man who wrote it. What a retrospect must have been his whom Jesus loved. Surely the years with Jesus had stamped themselves on John with indelible impression. Events occurred that could not be forgotten, and as they were remembered and relived in John's mind they took on meaning. The miracle of the Gospel was too wonderful to keep hidden in his own self. John could not suppress the light that glowed in his own heart.

"Since much that at the first, in deed and word,
Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,
Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
Fed through such years, familiar with such light,
Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
Of new significance and fresh result;
What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars,
And named them in the Gospel I have writ."(2)

If the Fourth Gospel is not to be regarded as mechanical, that is, if it is vitally connected with the life of the man who wrote it, then it appears as,

"the mature expression of apostolic experience
perfected by the teaching of the Holy Spirit
in the writer's own life and in the life of the
Church."(3)

And the sense of obligation that accompanies the possession of valuable knowledge must have compelled with Divine compulsion the writing of the Fourth Gospel. John had learned to know and come to possess true life. What finer purpose

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- (1) Addresses on the Gospel of St. John, Delivered at St. John Conference, 1903-4, p.13.
- (2) Robert Browning, A Death in the Desert, C.Wks.p387.
- (3) Westcott, Comm.on John, p.xli.

could he indicate to himself than to record the way of life so that all who read, "believing may have life."

B. John's Stated Purpose

And now to consider the passage that is John's simple expression of why he wrote the book.

"Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."(1)

The first assertion here is that the present writing is not a complete work on the activities of Jesus, not a life story. The inference is that the author had a mass of material at his fingertips and that he selected from the mass such material as served his purpose. One writer says that the intimation of the Apostle himself serves at least to show that out of the mass of material which lay before him, he had made a selection with distinct objects in view - what they were he does not tell us.(2) It is possible that this student overlooked the second verse of the passage. John could not have made his purpose more concise. Verse 30 is of little point without verse 31 which gives the reason for the selection of material.

The second assertion is that the present writing is to produce a certain belief. The object of this belief is a Person.

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(1) John, xx, 30,31.

(2) Friedrich A.Tholuck, Comm.on John, p.16

The third assertion is that the present writing is to direct people to life through belief in this Person.

John in effect says 'I have recorded a series of events taken from a period of years full of meaning. And each of these events is significant in that it is an index toward the truth that I want to press home. I started out to prove that Jesus is the Christ, in whom all prophecies are fulfilled; and the Son of God, through whom all men may become children of God. And who believes the identity of this Person may have life in his name.' Such being the purpose of the writing, the problem of Jesus' death becomes of more and more importance.

A Brief Analysis of Johannine Ideas
Present in this Passage

One of the greatest words in John's vocabulary is the word "life". The Fourth Gospel throbs with it. If someone had asked John the secret of life, it is probable that he would have started his explanation with the words we find in the Prologue: "In him was life".(1) To read the Gospel of John is to have the answer to the problem of life.

"In him was life".(1)

"The Son also giveth life to whom he will."(2)

"For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he the Son also to have life in himself."(3)

"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."(4)

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(1) John, i, 4.

(2) Ibid., v, 21.

(3) Ibid., v, 26.

(4) Ibid., x, 10.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life:
no one cometh unto the Father but by me."(1)

Jesus Christ is the key to "life". The Father has given it to him and he will give it to us. He is really very eager to give it to us. But how is this life to be ours? What must we do to possess the gift of life? There is only one way, and that is by believing. As the two words are connected in the "purpose passage"(2) so are the ideas connected through the Gospel. Life apart from belief is impossible. Believing results in eternal life.

In the very first chapter of John we discover this characteristic word of John's vocabulary, "that all might believe."(3) In the first minute spent in reading John's work one is introduced to the Word in whom is "life"; one is told that the life is the light of men; and one is informed that the work of a chosen man was to testify to this light that all might believe. Exactly what to believe is the content of the book. John lets us hear conversations between an individual and various other people. We hear this One say:

"I am the bread of life."(4)
"I am the light of the world."(5)
"I am the resurrection and the life."(6)

And then we hear Him say:

* * * * *

- (1) John, xiv, 6.
- (2) Ibid., xx, 30,31.
- (3) Ibid., i, 7.
- (4) Ibid., vi, 48.
- (5) Ibid., viii, 12.
- (6) Ibid., xi, 25.

"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."(1)
"For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life."(2)

Belief is not only in the Son, but in the Father also.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hear-eth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."(3)

Believing is directed toward and founded in God in Christ. The book is like a mosaic with life as the center and believing as the setting. It is a fabric woven by believing, a fabric that is called "life".

One more word needs some attention before we attempt to draw our conclusion regarding the purpose of the Fourth Gospel. The word "signs" in verse 30 of chapter xx is the antecedent of "these things" in verse 31. What things were written that were calculated to produce faith? What evidence was set forth to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? Some interpreters, including most of those of the modern school, are of the opinion that the signs referred to here are "only those appearances related in this chapter, as signs or proofs of the resurrection."(4) This would mean that the verses 30,31 refer only to the narrative of the resurrection and not to the entire gospel story. The Greek

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- (1) John, vi, 29.
- (2) Ibid., vi, 40.
- (3) Ibid., v, 24.
- (4) F. Godet, Comm. on John, vol. ii, p. 435.

text will help here(1) to show that such an opinion has ear-marks of careless exegesis or wilful mis-use of the text. For it can hardly be said that Jesus would ποιεῖν appearances. Nor is there any evidence for "many others" that are not recorded. On the contrary there is evidence that there were only a few appearances.(2) ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ implies that the whole book is referred to, and also infers that there were other books with other events recorded in them.

The term σημεῖον has a most interesting use in John. Lange in taking issue with Chrysostom suggests(3) that rather than miracles proving the resurrection the σημεῖα are miracles attesting the Messiahship of Jesus. This is the prevailing opinion. The word is used seventeen times in the Gospel, with all the uses coming before chapter xiii, except the instance in the "purpose passage"

The first instance of its use will suffice to indicate the import John attached to σημεῖα . At Cana, when the water blushed to see its Lord, John says,

"this beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him."(4)

In the mind of the Fourth Evangelist the miracles of Jesus are not designed to arouse the imagination, but they are "visible emblems of what He is and of what He comes to do,

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- (1) Greek New Testament, Nestle's Text, John, xx, 30,31.
- (2) Cf. I Cor. 15.
- (3) J.P.Lange, Comm.on John, p.625.
- (4) John, ii, 11.

and, as Reuss says, 'Radiant images of the permanent miracle of the manifestation of Christ.'"(1) The purpose of that "sign" was to manifest His glory. And the result was that His disciples believed on Him. The reality and depth of the disciples' belief at this point is questioned(2) but it can scarcely be doubted that faith was strengthened by the "sign". In the measure that they discerned His glory they believed.

"The sequence of these "signs", these living parables of Christ's action, these embodiments of truth in deed, can hardly be mistaken,"(3)

as one reads the Gospel record. The Fourth Gospel is a record of "signs" which were full of meaning to the Evangelist, and which will set the Word before us that we may be brought to a deeper knowledge of what He is.

C. Conclusion

John wrote the Fourth Gospel "to display the earthly glory of the Son of God to the view of faith."(4) He retraced the path which his own faith, and that of the other disciples, had gone over in the company of Jesus. He desired above all that the readers of his gospel should reach "a profounder appreciation of the true character of Jesus,"(5) and thus have life in his name.

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- (1) F. Godet, Comm. on John, vol. i, p. 352.
- (2) Edwin A. Abbott, Johannine Vocabulary, p. 39.
- (3) Westcott, Comm. on John, p. lxxvii.
- (4) F. Godet, op. cit., p. 212.
- (5) William Milligan and William Moulton, Comm. on John, p. xxv.

The purpose of the Fourth Gospel is that men may believe, and believing have eternal life. With this in mind let us turn our attention to a consideration of Jesus' death with a view to discovering what part it has in the persuasion to belief that results in life.

CHAPTER TWO

"The other's face, like marble-carved Grief,
Had placid brows laid whitely o'er with pain,
With lips that never knew a smile's relief,
And eyes like violets long drenched in rain."

- L.S.Porter

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A. The Need for this Study

In recent years there has been among religious thinkers an effort to rediscover the Jesus of history. Concomitant with this effort has been an eager desire to determine the self-consciousness of this lowly Galilean who has commanded the centuries. The results of the work done in this direction have been colored strongly by the attitude of the workers toward the material available. And too, preconceived ideas of long-standing found their way into the conclusions. To study the mind of the Master is a difficult work. Yet, to one aspect of this task the present chapter addresses itself.

What place, if any, did the death of Jesus occupy in his own mind? Was Calvary always present with him? What did he expect his death to accomplish? Did he tell his followers what was going to happen and why it should be so? The answers to the questions with which we are besieged can come only from an objective study. The material in this case is the Gospel of John.

There are some very decided opinion held regarding the subject of this discussion. One is this:

"Jesus, however, gave no teaching regarding his death. He forecast it and tried to prepare his disciples' minds for the tragedy, but did not do more. Only by reading back into the gospel records the thoughts of later centuries can any teaching of an atonement by the death of Jesus be found. That Jesus regarded his death as inevitable in his work of preparing men for the coming kingdom of God is evident. That he may have felt himself the Suffering Servant may be possible. But to find in his references anything in the nature of substitution or vicarious bearing of punishment is to misinterpret his sayings."(1)

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(1) Shailer Mathews, The Atonement and the Social Process, p.42.

In direct antithesis to the above opinion is this:

"To our Lord's own mind His death was something more than the inevitable consequence of His fidelity to truth, and of His antagonism to the corrupt ambition, the hypocrisy, and the evil passions of the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jewish people. It was His intention to die for men.."(1)

To agree with one of these opinions is to reject the other. It is strange that there should be variant ideas after a thorough investigation. Which suggests to us that our consideration of the passages must be positively without prejudice. It is not fair to read into the record the thoughts of later times, nor to disregard evidence in attempting to uphold some possible position. If we can let Jesus speak for himself it will be possible to discern the truth.

B. Jesus' Knowledge of His Death

He Knew His "Hour"

In accordance with John's purpose(2) the incident of the wedding at Cana of Galilee appears in the record. We are at the outset of the ministry.

"This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him."(3)

Jesus and his mother were engaged in conversation concerning the predicament in which the ruler of the feast found himself. Mary explained the situation very simply, trusting to her son

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(1) R.W.Dale, The Atonement, p.lv.

(2) See above, chap.I.

(3) John, ii,11.

to offer some assistance. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee?" thus expressing his relationship to her in a very different way than she had known before.(1)

"The fundamental mistake in what she attempted is just this, that she spake as his mother, and placed that maternal relationship in connection with his work."(2)

The striking announcement that came from the lips of Jesus, as if to explain his attitude, is what attracts our attention: "Mine hour is not yet come."(3) What did he mean? In this context it seems to have the simple sense that the moment had not come for Jesus to intervene, that he understood the circumstances and would act if necessary. And Mary may have taken it thus, for she told the servants to do anything he suggested. So, satisfied with this simple explanation of the announcement one can go on reading the gospel.

The beginning of the seventh chapter reminds us somewhat of chapter two. There was to be a public event, the feast of tabernacles, and Jesus' brothers voiced their desire that he should take advantage of the obvious opportunity to advertise his miraculous power. John says aside, "For even his brothers did not believe on him."(4) They wanted action. And with startling force comes Jesus' answer, "My time is not yet come."(5) What did he mean? Is this a parallel state-

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(1) John, ii, 4.

(2) Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol.I, p.361.

(3) John, ii, 4.

(4) Ibid., vii, 5.

(5) Ibid., vii, 6.

ment to ii,4? Further reading may lead to a solution.

Jesus and his disciples were informed one day that Lazarus was sick. Jesus tarried a few days and then announced his intention of going to Judaea again. The disciples were conscious of the opposition that was striving to harm the Master, and they objected strenuously to the proposed trip. Whereupon the Master asked them this question: "Are there not twelve hours in the day?"(1) There was only one answer possible. This was Jesus' way of telling the disciples that "every man has a definitely limited period in which to work,"(2) and until that time is up no harm can come to him. He was telling his disciples that his "hour" was not yet come. From this conversation the least we can infer is that there is danger lurking in Judaea, and that to go there is to meet the "hour".

The drama is getting more tense; the Passover is near; the city of Jerusalem is crowded with people, among whom are some Greeks; and Jesus is coming. He makes His triumphal entry, openly offering himself to the people; and some of the Greeks seek Him; the multitude is around Him. What will He say?

"And Jesus answereth them, saying, the hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified."(3)

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?"(4)

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(1) John, xi, 9.

(2) G.H.C.Macgregor, The Gospel of John, p.246.(Moffatt Comm.)

(3) John, xii, 23.

(4) Ibid., xii, 27.

His humanity cried out, 'Father, save me from this hour.'
His indomitable Spirit answered, 'And yet, for this cause
came I unto this hour.'

There is here suggested a close connection between "the
hour" and glorification. And there are two passages that need
to be noted in this regard before we can go on. At the conclu-
sion of the account of the last supper, when Judas had gone
on his way to betray his Lord, Jesus said,

"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is
glorified in him; and God shall glorify him in
himself, and straightway shall he glorify him."(1)

And at the beginning of Jesus' great intercessory prayer he
said,

"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that
the Son may glorify thee."(2)

Between the first announcement, "The hour is come", in xii,23
and the last one in xvii,1 only four days have elapsed. It
is only reasonable to believe that the same hour is referred
to in both passages cited. And in both cases it is evident
that if we can determine what Jesus means by glorification
we can answer our original query on the meaning of the "hour".

Glory (δόξα) means essentially an opinion or an esti-
mate.(3) In sacred writings it always refers to a good esti-
mate concerning someone, and therefore is translated as praise,
honor, or glory. It has a further meaning not common to

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(1) John, xiii, 31.

(2) Ibid., xvii, 1.

(3) Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of N.T., ad locum.

Greek writing but rather as a translation of the Hebrew word for splendor, and in this sense is translated "a most exalted state."

To glorify (δoφαίω) means to make glorious, to clothe with splendor, to make renowned, i.e., to cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged.(1) To glorify a person is to show him for what he is.

With these meanings in mind, the utterances of Jesus begin to take intelligent form. At xiii,31 Jesus says, 'Now (with Judas on his way to trade the life of his Lord for a few pieces of silver) has the Son of man been shown for what he is, and by this same giving up of life has God been made known as a God of love; and God shall take up into the Godhead the humanity of Christ,(2) after the Passion, and the moment for this transaction is soon.' In the mind of Christ the truth about himself, that would be demonstrated at the crucifixion, was plainly apprehended when Judas went out. And He was so confident in God that He knew of the exaltation that was sure to follow. Verse 31 refers to the glorification of Christ in His Passion, but verse 32 goes beyond the Passion. However, the glory in both is one glory, one marvelous reality, whether it be revealed by the betrayal, death, resurrection, or ascension. "Each fact contemplated in its true character reveals all."(3)

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(1) Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, ad locum.

(2) J.H.Bernard, Comm.on John, p.525. (Inter.Critical Series)

(3) Westcott, Comm.on John, p.197.

In the intercessory prayer of chapter xvii is another major emphasis on glorification. "Father, glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee." Jesus prayed that the Father would withdraw the veil that had hitherto obscured to some the true relationship that existed between the Son and the Father;(1) that in the death and resurrection of the Son they would see the full manifestation of God. Verse 2 just following this personal plea goes far to explain the significance of what it is for the Son to glorify the Father. Obviously it is the giving of eternal life by the Son to all flesh. This work of Christ, which may be termed redemption, is somehow accomplished by the help of God through the glorification of the Son. And now that this work has been accomplished,

"Father, glorify thou me with thine own self
with the glory which I had with thee before
the world was."(2)

That is, 'Father, clothe me with the splendor of thine own self with the exalted state that was mine before I became incarnate.' This glorification transcends the one of verse 1. This second glorification goes beyond the Passion, as was suggested in xiii,31,32; and not only will it occur, but it will be manifest. How truly this came to pass is only comprehensible in the light of the centuries.

The conception of glorification which John introduces

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- (1) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.303.
(2) John, xvii, 5.

explicitly in vii,39 is an idea that relates Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation as one event.(1) It is the means that was used to put into the hearts of men an adequate estimate of Jesus. To see the glorified Christ is to see Him as He is.

In the twelfth chapter we have noted(2) that Christ identified the hour of his glorification with the hour of his death. It is recorded that after illustrating the paradox of gaining life by losing it He shrank from his "hour". Surely it was not from his exaltation that He shrank. What then was it that struck horror to his soul? Could it have been aught else but death? That death which was awaiting him was the only thing that stood between him and his exaltation. But it was everything. Uninviting yet unmistakable must have been the thought of death. That was Jesus' "hour".

In the phrase, "the hour is come", (ἐλπίλυθα ἡ ὥρα) there is a powerful note of finality. The idea that the whole course of His ministry with the inevitable Passion concluding it was known to Jesus from the beginning of His ministry runs through the gospel. And to substantiate this statement let it be remembered that at Cana of Galilee Jesus spoke of his "hour". This word has the same solemn meaning in every instance that it is used by Jesus, when it is accompanied by the article. Indefinite references to time are made by the use of ὥρα but never of ἡ ὥρα . The presence of the article

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(1) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.188.
(2) See above, chap.II,p.29.

pins the meaning very definitely down to a view of the issue to which it leads. In John's gospel "the hour" for Jesus was the Passion. The approach of "the hour" is the indication that the plans have been carried out and the preparation for new development has been made. The only use of *ἡ ὥρα* in the gospel aside from reference to the Passion is in an illustration of a universal law. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come"(1) It is interesting that her hour was one of pain; but out of the ordeal came new life. So without exception *ἡ ὥρα* in John is a time of suffering that is in accord with the plan in operation and which issues in life.

We can conclude then, that when Jesus refers to his "hour" he is speaking "sub specie aeternitatis."(2)

"He is represented as knowing from the beginning the time, manner, and sequel of the end of His public Ministry in the flesh."(3)

The expression "yet a little while" occurs in chapter seven.(4) He knew that scarcely six months were left to him for his earthly work. Four more times this phrase is found in John's gospel, all in the last week of his life.(5) The nearness of His Passion was on his mind. So much had to be accomplished to prepare the disciples for that tremendous experience of seeing their Lord crucified. It must not be

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(1) John, xvi, 21.

(2) (in the light of eternity)(without respect to time)

(3) J.H.Bernard, Comm.on John, p.432.

(4) John, vii, 33.

(5) Ibid., xii, 35; xiii, 33; xiv, 19; xvi, 16.

overlooked that he spoke in such a way. For if his death was of little import he would not have been so moved by it. Was He not trying to tell in a gentle way the nearing of a crisis that was costing Him His very heart?

These allusions to His Passion were made, with one exception(1), in the presence of those who were very near to him. It is not without some significance that the first one he spoke to was his mother. Then his brothers were informed, though doubtless they did not understand. The disciples were taught patiently about the "hour" and were assured that Jesus knew what was going to happen.

He Knew His Enemies

To the Jews, however, Jesus spoke in very different terms and in a much modified tone. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, and this breach of the law caused an uproar among the Rabbis. Jesus accused them of transgressing the law themselves, and added the penetrating question, "Why seek ye to kill me?"(2) The multitude promptly accused Jesus of being crazy for imagining that any group was in league against him. This indicates from which direction the opposition could be expected. The Jews, that is, the Rabbis, were not deceiving Him. He knew their thoughts. Once again the Great Teacher accused the seed of Abraham of seeking to kill Him.(3) And this time he offered a reason for their action: "...because

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(1) John, xii, 35.

(2) Ibid., vii, 19.

(3) Ibid., viii, 37,40.

my word hath not free course in you." The fact of the matter is that they were seeking His life because He was telling the truth. As in the previous case the conclusion the Jews came to was that he had a demon. Before His claims they were embittered and they took up stones to cast at him.

The Man of Galilee knew the hearts of the Jews.

He Knew His Destiny

Just as He knew the minds of men He knew the plan of God regarding the end of His earthly career. To the Pharisees He said,

"I know whence I came and whither I go....."(1)

".....whither I go ye cannot come."(2)

and He repeated it to His disciples. In the farewell discourse on the last night He showed to them the whole plan. He was going back to the One who had sent Him. It was expedient that He should do this. He said,

"I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father."(3)

In those words He told the disciples His whole history: self-renunciation, incarnation, death, and ascension.(4) His knowledge of Himself and of God and of the program was based on a relationship, about which we shall think later on in the chapter.

The Son of God knew the plan of God

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(1) John, viii, 14.

(2) Ibid., viii, 21.

(3) Ibid., xvi, 28.

(4) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.ii,p.320.

An Early Veiled Reference

To return again to the beginning of Jesus' ministry, let us see if there is any other indication that He saw His death awaiting Him. It was only fitting that He should make a visit to the holy city in order to offer Himself to the people. John tells us of the first move on the part of Jesus, the cleansing of the temple.(1) The Jews were concerned far more with the authority for the action than with the action itself. They demanded a sign. His answer came like a flash of lightning: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."(2) What did the Jews understand from this? John tells us the significance of the statement, to which we shall refer later on. To stay with Jesus' statement alone, unaided by John's remarks, what was Jesus talking about here? It is reasonable to believe that the Jews did not understand it properly, for the succeeding verse has in it the suggestion that they thought His remarks were rather absurd. They dismissed them with scorn. It will be seen on different occasions that Jesus, in dealing with people who do not have spiritual discernment, threw out enigmas.(3) The parables in the Synoptics are in some respects parallel in method to this answer of Jesus. The truth is revealed, yet veiled.

Perhaps the best clues to this problem are the words, "destroy" and "temple". $\lambda\upsilon\sigma\alpha\tau\epsilon$ is remarkable in its sense

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(1) John, ii, 13-22.

(2) Ibid., ii, 19.

(3) Ibid., iii, 4; vi, 42.

of "destroy", for it means to bring about a destruction by means of dissolution, by the breaking of that which binds the parts into a whole.(1) It is taken for granted that no Israelite would have thought of raising a hand against the sacred edifice. But Jesus is well aware that they need only to continue to misuse God's house, and more especially reject Him as they have done here, and they will have destroyed their sanctuary.

In this passage there are two Greek words used where the English rendering has merely "temple". *ἱερόν* has to do with the whole area within the walls. But *ναόν* is the sanctuary, the true temple. The essence of the temple is that it is the home of God(2). Hitherto the material temple had been the place in which God manifested Himself to men. But with the coming of the living temple the old one was no longer needed. In the words "Destroy this temple"(3), "we have a prophetic imperative, whereby Jesus' foes are challenged to do their worst."(4)

"It is the final crisis for the Jew and for the temple, the passing of the old and the coming of the new. The coming kingdom is to be absolutely new."(5)

On the strength of the second clause in the sentence, "I will raise it up in three days"(3), it must be admitted that there was more in the mind of the Master than the material temple

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- (1) Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, ad locum.
- (2) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.50.
- (3) John, 11, 19.
- (4) G.H.C.Macgregor, Gospel of John, p.59.
- (5) H.Scott Holland, The Fourth Gospel, p.57.

in which He stood. He must have known that

"it will be in His own person that the destruction, so far as it depends on the Jews, will be consummated."(1)

Jesus' act of cleansing the temple brought no faith. The Jews demanded a sign. "He had then as afterwards, only one sign to give."(2) The end was already visible for Jesus - the Cross.

C. Jesus' Interpretation of His Death

It might be argued that thus far the evidence adduced has been of a secondary nature. That is, Jesus' words have not been directed explicitly to the purpose of teaching about his death; although, on the other hand, it is recognized that casual remarks are of extraordinary value in laying open the sub-conscious mind.

Next we are to consider the first of three great passages in the Fourth Gospel that are said to treat of Jesus' death. The omission of iii,14,15 from the argument at this point is because it is linked with a later passage. We turn our attention now to the sixth chapter of John, with verse 51 as the point of discussion.

He Spoke of It as a Gift

The setting is produced by the feeding of the five thousand. This led to the discourses on the bread of life. The multitude was advised thus:

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(1) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.i,p.366.

(2) Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus, vol.i,p.375.

"Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you:"(1)

This work does not consist in creating the life-giving food, but in preparing to receive it by believing on the One sent from God who brings it. Jesus reminded them that even Moses did not give them bread in the wilderness, but God gave it and is ever giving the true bread - the nourishment that sustains life. To complete the argument Jesus identified Himself as the bread of life, who came down out of heaven to do the will of God.

The Jews murmured at this and Jesus answered them with further teaching. Again He appealed to their knowledge of the Old Testament and contrasted Himself with the manna. The fathers ate the manna but they died a physical death. Those who eat the bread that came down out of heaven shall live spiritually forever. He reiterated His identification with the bread of life, adding weight to the meaning of this by saying, "I am the living bread."(2) This whole teaching was rather difficult for the Jews to accept, and it called forth disagreement. Jesus proceeded to develop a new idea:

"Yea, and to tell you all, the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."(2)
"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life;"(3)

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- (1) John, vi, 27.
- (2) Ibid., vi, 51.
- (3) Ibid., vi, 53,54.

The figure of the bread is dropped in favor of the flesh and blood, for which there must be a reason. Inasmuch as verse 51 forms the transition it is there that an explanation is to be sought.

"The bread which I give", with its emphatic personal pronoun in the Greek text (ἐγώ) brings out the contrast between Moses and Christ. It also reminds us that God has given bread too. The bread that Moses was instrumental in procuring issued in death. The bread that God gives issues in life, as does the bread that the Son gives. The bread of God is His Son. But what is the bread that the Son will give? The tense of the verb, "will give", indicates a future event, the result of which will be "life" made available for the world. Obviously the crux of the verse is in the use of "my flesh". Prof. Denney suggests that "in all probability"(1) Jesus' death is referred to in vi,51 and following. Jesus is telling the Jews that He can be the bread of life for the world only on condition of dying. This accounts for the use of "my flesh" rather than "my self".

"This expression 'my flesh', especially in connection, as it is here, with the future 'I will give', which points to a fact yet to occur, can only refer to the sacrifice of the Cross."(2)

"However, the central thought of the chapter is undoubtedly that of a meal, a feast, an experimental reception of a living Christ,

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(1) James Denney, The Death of Christ, p.257.

Cf. J.H.Bernard, Comm.on John, p.209.

(2) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.ii,p35.

which is symbolized by 'eating' and 'drinking', and to that the whole interpretation must be subordinated."(1)

Even in suggesting Jesus' death as the climax of the chapter it must be thought of as a "pervading element" of his life, and not as separate from it. For the object of faith is to be not only the death but also the triumphant life of the Risen Christ.

To eat the flesh and drink the blood is to "possess Christ". It is to receive the nourishment of spiritual life. Verse 54 may well be interpreted in the light of verse 47.

"He that believeth hath eternal life."(2)

"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life."(3)

To eat is to believe. The whole chapter finds justification for its appearance if we call to mind the purpose of the book. This chapter is written to say that "believing ye may have life." And here the content of the belief must include the death of Jesus as significant in some way or other in behalf of the life of mankind.

He Spoke of It as a "laying down"

In passing to the second of the great passages it will be necessary to omit for the time viii,28, reserving it with iii,14,15 for the third passage. We come now to chapter x and the story of the Good Shepherd.

Jesus announced again the great reason for his coming:

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(1) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.163.

(2) John, vi, 47.

(3) Ibid., vi, 54.

"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."(1)
(The Fourth Gospel was written that believers may thus have
life in His Name). "I am the good shepherd."(2) "good"(καλός)
"denotes that kind of goodness which is at once seen to be
good."(3) It is used to describe a man pursuing a particular
business, who is fulfilling his calling well. Here the good
shepherd is,
".....one who tends his flock perfectly without
any failure of foresight or tenderness, of cour-
age or unselfishness."(4)

A characteristic of the good shepherd is that he lays down
his life for the sheep.(2) Standing alone, the last clause
of verse 11 could be postulated of any good shepherd as a
noble characteristic. But considered as it is with the pre-
ceding clause, Jesus in effect is announcing that He does
this very thing. The words "lay down life" form a sort of
refrain(5) in the verses 11, 15, 17, 18, indicating the depth
of feeling in the heart of the speaker. The expression "to
lay down one's life" (ψυχὴν τίθεμι)(ponere animam) is not
found in the Greek Bible outside of John. As he uses it, it
means "to divest oneself of life." Other ideas have been
accorded this expression, including the idea of ransom, but
the one indicated here is generally accepted. The preposition
ὑπὲρ that follows is a favorite one in John, especially

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- (1) John, x, 10.
- (2) Ibid., x, 11.
- (3) F.J.A.Hort, Comm.on I Peter, note on ii, 12.
- (4) J.H.Bernard, Comm.on John, p.357.
- (5) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.ii, 152.

in connection with the death of Jesus. It means "in behalf of".

In illustration of His claim to be the Good Shepherd Jesus emphasized his "readiness and intention" to die for the flock.

"He does not say that He will lead His sheep to the greenest and most abundant pastures; but He declares again and again that He will die for them."(1)

Many shepherds have died rather than betray their trust. Many have died in defence of the flock, in mortal combat. Is this the death Jesus is to die, just as any faithful shepherd would? The following verses add considerable toward understanding:

".....I lay down my life.....No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."(2)

"His devotion to men is as great as that of the shepherd who imperils and actually loses his life in protecting his flock against the wolf; He, too, dies for the sheep; but He lays down His life deliberately and of set purpose: 'No man taketh it from him.' Our Lord's death is unique."(3)

It has been suggested that this is an ideal set up by Jesus that would only be real of the situation demanded it. But this is to miss the point of the passage.

"The need has emerged, and the laying down of his life with a view to its resumption is made the sum and substance of the vocation of Jesus.Christ's death is not an incident of His life, it is the aim of it."(4)

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- (1) R.W.Dale, The Atonement, p.72.
- (2) John, x, 17,18.
- (3) R.W.Dale, op. cit., p.73.
- (4) James Denney, The Death of Christ, p.259.

There is one other instance of the phrase, "lay down life":

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."(1)

He gave them his commandment, that they were to love one another as He loved, and then by this verse(1) showed them again the measure of His love for them, for they were His friends, and it was for them that He was going to lay down his life. The laying down of life is a declaration of the spirit and purpose of the love which He had toward them.(2)

He Spoke of It as a "lifting up"

The passage xii, 23-32 is a record of the most consummate self-surrender of all history. The occasion that gave rise to the words Jesus uttered was emblazoned in the recesses of John's memory. The world appeared to be going after the "King" who had come in perfect humility. The wild Hosannas were still ringing in the ears of the members of the inner circle. The Greeks were holding open the door to the catholicity of Christianity. But the words, even more than was the occasion, were graven on John's heart, never to be erased. All the events of a crowded life, all the opportunities of the moment and the possibilities of the future, are brought together, - fused into the solemn announcement, "The hour is come." Every word that follows pulses with the shed blood of the Crucified Christ. The time of Redemption is heralded with the very thunder of

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(1) John, xv, 13.

(2) Westcott, Comm.on John, p.220.

heaven, the voice of the living God, in acceptance of the Sacrifice of the Son.

The glorification of the Son of man is the strangest paradox ever apprehended by the mind of man. That there be no mistake about it Jesus illustrated it in two ways, that is, that Life comes through Death. First he adduced a principle that admittedly operates in nature:

"Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."(1)

"This is a similitude in which the influence of Jesus is made to depend directly on His death."(2) Jesus' life, like a seed, has in it the life-principle that can only be released by His death. What is true in the physical world is true also in the moral realm.

"He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."(3)

The man who lives for himself loses that in himself that is worth preservation. For "everything that is not surrendered to God by a free act of sacrifice, contains the germ of death."(4) This illustration seems particularly appropriate for the Greeks who were wont to devote all their energy to the enjoyment of life. Jesus says that selfishness is always the death of the true life of man, and conversely, self-sacrifice is the

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(1) John, xii, 24.

(2) James Denney, The Death of Christ, p.260.

(3) John, xii, 25.

(4) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.ii,p.221.

way to eternal life. The most important truth to be noted here is that Jesus subjected himself to this fundamental law of life. The context demands this inference.

The movement of this passage is very revealing. It lays open the mind of the Master as we have not seen it before. Having declared the law that requires for Him the Cross, there came the reaction of His humanity. The way of the Cross was not an easy way, but it was the only way for Him, and in a burst of triumph He said: "Father, glorify thy Name,"(1) 'Thy will be done.' The Father answered, witnessing to the eternal purpose, and said as only a Father could, 'It is well', "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."(2)

The time of the Passion was enveloping the Son in its cloud. But He was aware that He would triumph in his hour, as He said, "Now".(3) The moment was a decisive one for humanity.

"His death, not his birth, was to be the great crisis in the history of mankind. His death, not His living ministry, was to reverse the evil fortunes of the human race."(4)

"Now is the judgment of this world."(5) Its moral state is about to be revealed. Jesus said, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."(6) Judgment is not the motive for Christ's coming but rather the inevitable consequence of it. For in Christ is God made manifest, and this measurement

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- (1) John, xii, 28a.
- (2) Ibid., xii, 28b.
- (3) Ibid., xii, 31.
- (4) R.W.Dale, The Atonement, p.80.
- (5) John, xii, 31.
- (6) Ibid., xii, 47.

of the world in terms of God is the touchstone of judgment.

Christ comes to pass judgment on the world,

".....as little as the sun comes to throw a shadow, but judgment like the shadow is the natural consequence of the world's constitution and circumstances."(1)

"Now is the judgment of this world"(2), that is, at the death of Jesus. If He came not to judge but to save, then it follows that 'Now is the salvation of this world', at His Death.

"Now shall the prince of this world be cast out."(2)

The Cross exhausts "the measure of toleration" accorded to the prince of this world.

"The Crucifixion of the Son of God is the most odious, the most unpardonable crime of Satan: this crime puts an end to the longsuffering of God towards him, and consequently, to his dominion over mankind. 'With the consummation of the redemptive work,' says Weiss, 'the expulsion of the devil begins.'"(3)

The devil is to be cast out, not only out of his office as the prince, but exiled from his domain. The death of Jesus here deals most definitely with sin, for it pronounces doom upon the very incarnation of sin.

The dethroning of the former ruler makes way for the new sovereign, the Prince of peace. In the sharpest antithesis that the Greek language allows Jesus is set over against the prince of this world:

"Now shall the prince of this world be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto myself."(4)

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(1) G.H.C.Macgregor, Gospel of John, p.82.(quoted from Holtzman)

(2) John, xii, 31.

(3) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.ii, p.227.

(4) John, xii, 31,32.

On three recorded occasions Jesus spoke of his "lifting up". The word used to express this idea is ὑψόω , and its primary meaning is "to lift up on high", "to exalt".(1) Thayer, the eminent lexicographer, suggests that John uses this word to describe the elevation of Jesus on the Cross. The Commentators are divided on the matter, disagreeing on whether to ascribe to ὑψόω the Crucifixion or the Ascension. Westcott makes the happy suggestion that it includes both,(2) which may be true. However, if it refers to the crucifixion we are interested in what is said on each occasion.

Nicodemus was the first to hear Jesus speak of his "lifting up".

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life."(3)

Apparently the "lifting up" is the centre of this passage. Nicodemus was well acquainted with the reference that Jesus made to Moses, and we too know the story recorded in Numbers.(4) The situation there is constituted by the presence of sin. Extraordinary measures were necessary for the people were dying. God provided deliverance from the consequences of sin. Surely the brazen serpent was not exalted in any sense. It was set up so that men could see it, and it was not a pleasant sight. But it was necessary for life. In like manner must the

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- (1) Thayer, Greek-English lexicon, ad locum.
- (2) Westcott, Comm.on John, p.53.
- (3) John, iii, 14,15.
- (4) Numbers, xxi.

Son of man be lifted up so men can see and live. The purpose of the Gospel is that men "believing may have life". The reason why the Son of man must be lifted up is indicated in the following verse: "that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life."(1) This "lifting up" then is clearly woven into the very fabric of the Gospel, and is used to direct the belief that will bring life.

This interpretation is perfectly consonant with the whole passage.(2) The conversation opens with the declaration of the necessity of the new birth, necessary because of the very nature of life. Nicodemus is impressed by the inevitability of the consequences of the past. He cannot see a solution, and truly there is no way out but the one God has provided. Jesus is revealing to Nicodemus the divine compulsion that is leading to the Cross. The Son of man must die. And this death has to do first and last with the eternal life of those who believe. There is announced here the decree of revelation(3); and to some minds also the decree of redemption.(4) To this latter group salvation is wrought in this way:

"Sin will be exposed publicly as vanquished. It will not be in the person of a real sinner, but in the person of a holy man, capable of representing, as a living image the condemnation and defeat of sin, as such; This will save each sinner only by an act on his part, the look of faith upon his spiritual enemy condemned and vanquished. Here is the salvation upon which the

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- (1) John, iii, 15.
- (2) Ibid., iii, 1-21.
- (3) Ibid., iii, 11-13.
- (4) Ibid., iii, 14,15.

establishment of the Kingdom will be founded."(1)

Incredulous Jews were the next to hear something of His lifting up. As in the case of Nicodemus the important matter was life. "Except ye believe that I am, ye shall die in your sins."(2) Jesus presented himself, the I AM, the Divine Deliverer, as the one object of faith. And like a sword of Damocles was hung over them the awful consequence of unbelief. The Jews asked, "Who art thou?"(3), desiring fuller information. This was not possible at the moment, but a time was approaching when they were to know.

"Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am, and I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things."(4)

They shall know the significance of "I AM", the utter dependence of the Son on the Father, and the constant harmony that exists between the Father and the Son.(5) When shall they know? When they have lifted him up. The crucifixion is the act of the Jews, and the ascension is not, so primarily the "lifting up" refers to the crucifixion.

Finally, the Jews and Greeks together heard Jesus, as He spoke of replacing the ruler of this world, say,

"And I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all men unto myself."(6)

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(1) F. Godet, Comm. on John, vol. 1, p. 392.

(2) John, viii, 24.

(3) Ibid., viii, 25.

(4) Ibid., viii, 28.

(5) Milligan and Moulton, Comm. on John, p. 200.

(6) John, xii, 32.

The drawing power that will reach all men is the lifting up of the Son of man. This is an unequivocal reference to the crucifixion, for the passage is stamped with death.

"The preposition ἐκ is much more applicable to the crucifixion than to the Ascension, and its use seems to imply that simple separation from the earth satisfies the conditions that are in the mind of Jesus."(1)

This is the final offer of Himself and the announcement of the glorious fulfillment, the drawing of all men. The Jews turned aside saying "Who is this Son of man?"(2) With deep sorrow in his heart for them Jesus answered pleadingly, "Yet a little while is the light with you."(3) And He went away rejected, away to die.

He Spoke of It as the Completion

The account of His death remains for our consideration. One word from the lips of Jesus while He was on the Cross is to be the end of this study. He said, "It is finished", in the Greek one word, τετέλεσται.(4) This is not a cry of relief because the sufferings are over. It is a shout of victory. The story of redemption is complete. Jesus prayed thus:

"I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work that thou hast given me to do."(5)

At this point in the prayer Jesus was projecting himself to the moment on the Cross when He could say, "It is finished."(4)

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- (1) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.279.
- (2) John, xii, 34.
- (3) Ibid., xii, 35.
- (4) Ibid., xix, 30.
- (5) Ibid., xvii, 4.

There is no way of proving what the subject of τετέλεσται is. Referring back to the "all things" of verse 28 does not give a definite answer. But in the light of the whole story this word can be comprehended in only one way. Jesus again and again announced His philosophy of life as the will of God. And He identified himself closely with the Father, especially in the Father's work. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."(1) When the work was done, as far as it could be done on earth, He spoke with triumph, "It is finished."(2)

D. Conclusion

The following summary is an effort to gather the results of the investigation into simple form. On the basis of the investigation it is evident that:

1. Jesus was not an enigma to himself. He knew who he was, where he came from, why he was here, and where he was going. He knew that a Cross was waiting for him.
2. He knew the minds of the men who plotted his death.
3. He was conscious of his unique relation to God, referring frequently to it. He assured the disciples that in laying down His life He was acting in obedience to the Divine Purpose.
4. The laying down of His life was a voluntary act.
5. His death is for the life of the world. It effected the extension of the spiritual horizon. No longer Jews only, but all men

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(1) John, v, 17.

(2) Ibid., xix, 30.

have access to the Kingdom of God.

6. His death had to do with deliverance from sin. He came to die as Saviour. Sin was taking men to death. He came that they may have life. He vanquished sin and Satan.
7. His death is the most complete revelation of the love of God, thus making judgment inevitable.
8. His death was necessary for the release of His own greater life.
9. His death is inseparably connected with His glorification.
10. His death, a foregone conclusion, was the dominating force in his career. It colored His thinking and formed a part of His teachings about himself in the instruction which the disciples received.

CHAPTER THREE

"There was another man in bonds, most kind
To me, of old, who suffer, being blind.
Surely they called for him? One Jesus? No?

The choice was made a little while ago.
Barabbas is set free, the man you name
Is not to be released."

- Masefield

III CONCOMITANT THOUGHTS ABOUT JESUS' DEATH

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The consequence of Jesus' references to his death was the provocation of thought in the minds of those who heard what He said. The interpretation put upon Jesus' death and the attitude exhibited toward it by those who were apprised of its actuality may not make any material contribution to an understanding of the significance of that death. For it may be argued that such interpretations are fallible. However, the value of this chapter will be in the determination of the place that the death of Jesus had in the minds of the people of His day. That will give us more insight as to the place John gave to Jesus' death in the development of his book.

The plan followed by the author of the Fourth Gospel is said to be, ".....the parallel development of faith and unbelief through the Historical Presence of Christ."(1) This is evident in the appearance of friends and enemies along the way. It is improbable that His friends and His foes should have like opinions regarding His death, when they were so differently affected by His teachings, which fact suggests a division for this chapter. First shall be considered the views held by His enemies, and then the impressions made upon His friends.

A. The Views of His Enemies

We know that Jesus died at the hands of those who

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(1) Westcott, Comm.on John, p.xlii.

opposed him from the beginning of His ministry. And we might reasonably expect them to be present at the finish of the conflict as it is recorded by John. Two chapters of the Fourth Gospel are given to the description of the trial and death of the Lord, the first of which contains allusions to every factor in the forces arrayed against Him.

A rapid reading of chapter xviii reveals the presence of four groups and four individuals who were directly involved in the proceedings which culminated at Calvary.(1) They are: the soldiers, the high priests, the Pharisees, and the Jews; Judas, Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate. Of these eight factors, three were prominent throughout the conflict. But each of the eight will be given brief consideration.

The Views of the Groups

The soldiers were the machine that carried out the orders of a well-regulated military regime. They were victims of a discipline which had destroyed their moral judgment. They served the warrant on "Jesus of Nazareth". They scourged a condemned man. They put a thorn-crown on the "King of the

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(1) John, xviii, 2, 3, 12, 13, 29.

"Now Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place:"

"Judas then, having received the band of soldiers, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither....."

"So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year."

"Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man?"

Jews". But this was a parody on Jewish royalty addressed to the Jewish nation rather than personally to Jesus. They crucified Him as one of three. To the soldiers the death of Jesus was not much unlike the execution of any ordinary provincial. If any did not know what they were doing when they crucified the Lord of glory, surely these soldiers were of the number.

The "Jews" are first mentioned in the first chapter.(1) This is one of the most characteristic terms of the Fourth Gospel, appearing in more than fifty passages. John had a full realization of the national apostasy and a full experience of Jewish malignity in opposing the Gospel,(2) and the "Jews" are to him not his fellow-countrymen, but the persecutors and murderers of the Messiah. The term almost always bears with it the impress of one thought - that of general unfaithfulness, of a national depravation which culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus.(3)

A survey of the passages in which the "Jews" speak of Jesus, or directly to Him, reveals the progress of opposition. Their utterances were usually interrogatory, never sympathetic, often sarcastic, and always prompted by the narrowness of their own hearts. The first of these was an answer to Jesus' act of purging the temple. He had appealed to their sense of religious values, and they chose to cavil, thus revealing(4)

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(1) John, 1, 19.

(2) A. Plummer, Comm. on John, p. 72.

(3) Milligan and Moulton, Comm. on John, p. 21.

(4) John, 11, 13-22.

the hurt that their dignity had received. They challenged Him thus: "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?"(1) His very act of cleansing ought to have been evidence enough of his mission, but it merely served to arouse their hostility.

They challenged his every action from that time on. They demanded explanations of his works and interpretations of his teachings. When He healed a man on the Sabbath day(2) they took it as a reason for persecuting Him. After He had made His claims at the feast of tabernacles(3) they informed Him that in their opinion He had a demon. After He healed the man born blind(4) they argued with Him; and when He said, "I and my Father are one."(5) they took up stones to stone him saying, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy."(6)

The last sinister question that they asked is a picture of the ferment in their minds. They were all on edge, waiting to take the life of the man they had grown to hate. It was the time of the Passover, and they said, "Will he come to the feast?"(7) The opposition had come to a head through a process that was characterized by the patient effort of Jesus to win them, and their stubborn refusal to hear him. Hostility grew into hatred, and their eagerness to persecute flowered

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- (1) John, ii, 18.
- (2) Ibid., v, 1-18.
- (3) Ibid., vii,viii.
- (4) Ibid., ix.
- (5) Ibid., x, 30.
- (6) Ibid., x, 33.
- (7) Ibid., xi, 56.

into desire to kill. There is only the final scene needed to perfect our picture of the "Jews". Pilate offered to free Jesus, and they said, "Not this man but Barabbas." (1) Pilate introduced Jesus as their King, and they said, "Away with him, crucify him." (2) The "Jews" appear as the representatives of the "narrow finality of Judaism". Always zealous for the letter of the law they were unable to understand the spirit of life in Christ. His death was in their eyes the accomplishment of their solemn duty.

It may well be said that the Pharisees were the true representatives of the "Jews". They were the recognized religious leaders. The object of their association was twofold:

"to observe in the strictest manner, and according to traditional law, all the ordinances concerning Levitical purity, and to be extremely punctilious in all connected with religious dues." (3)

Any religious disorder, therefore, would concern them, and we see them in several instances as a committee on investigation. In the midst of the religious conflict they indicate their attitude toward Christ by these questions:

"Are ye also led astray? Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees?" (4)

At the end of the conflict:

"The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him." (5)

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(1) John, xviii, 40.

(2) Ibid., xix, 15.

(3) Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus, vol. i, p. 311.

(4) John, vii, 47, 48.

(5) Ibid., xii, 19.

"They look with irresolute helplessness upon the apparent failure of their opposition."(1)

The co-operation between the Pharisees and the chief priests is another interesting feature of John. The chief priests of the Fourth Gospel are the Sadducees of the synoptic gospels. There were fundamental dogmatic differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, with many other divergences. To get the two sects into harmony of purpose required a tremendous force. John shows us that the desire to end the activities of Jesus was the necessary force.

The first mention of the chief priests is in chapter vii. The multitude was being swayed by Jesus' appeals and by his miracles, and their murmuring had come to the ears of the Pharisees. They brought the matter up at the meeting of the Sanhedrin with the result that officers were sent to take Jesus. The impulse without doubt came from the Pharisees but "the measures in the way of execution must have been started from the chief-priests."(2) For they formed the ruling part of the Sanhedrin. It is not necessary to suppose that formal action was here taken by the Sanhedrin; but there is grammatical evidence in the passage(3) which emphasizes the union of the two elements into one for the purpose in mind.(4)

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(1) Westcott, Comm.on John, p.x.

(2) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.ii,p.71.

(3) John, vii, 45.

(4) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.190.

After the raising of Lazarus it was evident to the opposition that action had to be taken. So the chief priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin(1) and said, "What do we?" It appears that the chief priests take the initiative here and it is likewise evident that they take charge of the final proceedings.

"Five times they are mentioned alone, and on each occasion as bent on carrying out a purpose of death and treason to the faith of Israel. They plotted the murder of Lazarus because many for his sake believed on Jesus(xii,11). Pilate sees in them the true persecutors of Christ: Thy nation and the chief-priests delivered Thee up to me(xviii,35). Their voices first raise the cry, Crucify, Crucify Him(xix,6). They make the unbelieving confession, We have no king but Caesar(xix,15), and utter a vain protest against the title in which their condemnation was written(xix,21, the chief-priests of the Jews)."(2)

The last three groups were the three factors that opposed Jesus throughout most of His ministry and that out of a perverted sense of loyalty to God and selfish pride in themselves brought about the crucifixion of the Christ.

The Views of the Individuals

John has dealt only summarily with the four individuals who were involved, and we shall emulate him in that respect. Judas is the most commonly thought of enemy of Jesus, the most infamous, the one who gave the vilest kiss ever given. He has been called a "disillusioned idealist".(3) John very

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(1) John, xi, 47.

(2) Westcott, Comm.on John, p.x.

(3) Henry Sloane Coffin, The Meaning of the Cross, p.22.

plainly tells us that Judas was a thief. He refers to him with somewhat of distasteful horror as "one of Jesus' disciples that should betray him".(1) It is very difficult to know just what Judas thought of the death of Jesus. He must have been under the same teaching as the other disciples, but there was a strange dissatisfaction with the way things were going that must have been gnawing at his soul. Judas may have thought of Jesus' death as a vindication for his own disappointment. Gamaliel Bradford has imagined Judas as saying:

"They called him King; and I would have no King:
Let all be equal, ay, let none be best.
Why should the weakling John be ever pressed
Against his bosom, Peter urged to fling
His clumsy zeal about, while I must bring,
Forsooth, the bag behind, and feed the rest,
Never be praised or flattered or caressed,
Although so watchful is my stewarding?
They called him Son of God. In rage I saw
This vain idolatry. Was I not wise,
Not honest, not in truth administering
The holy precepts of our sacred law? ----
Oh, God. Those pleading, tender, earnest eyes.
Oh, God. Oh, God. Why did I do this thing?"(2)

However, Judas had the least to do with Jesus' death, of the individuals named.

Of Annas we do not know much, and of the procedure that went on in his house when Jesus was taken there we know less. Annas is well known in contemporary Jewish history as a very successful and withal highly disreputable high priests(3) He

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(1) John, xii, 4.

(2) Quotable Poems, Vol.1, "Judas", G.Bradford, p.225.

(3) Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus, vol.ii, pp.547-8.

had been High Priest and retained all of his influence after being succeeded by his son-in-law. On the basis of his record we can infer that he was as desirous of having Jesus killed as was his son-in-law. And if he did nothing else when the soldiers brought the prisoner to him, certainly he approved of the procedure, for "he sent him bound unto Caiaphas."(1)

"Caiaphas had been the first to enunciate in plain words what seemed to him the political necessity for the judicial murder of Christ."(2)

"But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor do ye take account that it is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."(3)

His advice was cruel and selfish, but bold and resolute. He knew what course of action to pursue. He said, 'Sacrifice one for the good of the many.' The Pharisees were undecided, knowing that if Jesus prevailed they were ruined. Caiaphas said, 'Save yourselves and let Him perish.' It mattered little to him whether the procedure was right or wrong from a moral viewpoint. The nation must be protected.(4) The remarkable thing of his utterance is that it was an unconscious prophecy of the very truth of the Cross - that one man should die for the people.

The last of the quartet of unfortunates is Pilate, the

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(1) John, xviii, 24.

(2) Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus, vol.ii,p.546.

(3) John, xi, 49,50.

(4) Edwin W. Rice, Comm.on John, p.201.

Roman governor. The portrait of Pilate as John gives it(1) is most pathetic. He was "in the fell clutch of circumstance", and there was no escape. He tried to dissuade the Jews from their bloody purpose; He repeated as if in desperation, "I find no crime in him"; but to no avail. He knew that he was meting out gross injustice, but to preserve himself, "he delivered him unto them to be crucified."(2)

The death of Jesus, in the eyes of his enemies, was a thing very necessary to the good of religion and the peace of the community. It was misunderstood in the same proportion as was His life and ministry. It was thought to be the only solution to the problem of preserving a worthless ecclesiastical organization, an example of narrow selfish thinking. John has given a considerable portion of space(3) in his gospel to the enemies of Jesus, and they are identified closely with His death.

B. The Impressions Made on His Friends

Real loyal friends of Jesus constitute the minority group in John, but their presence is the leaven that leavens the lump. Interestingly enough there are, as in the case of the foes, four groups and four individuals who appear in the record. They are: the multitude, the Samaritans, the disciples, and the twelve; and Thomas, Peter, Nicodemus, and John the Baptist.

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(1) John, xviii, xix.

(2) Ibid., xix, 16.

(3) Ibid., v-xii.

The Impressions of the Groups

The multitude is the crowd of people that was attracted to Jesus by his works. They stand in contrast to the Jews, in that they reflect the spirit of Galilee. They are "easily swayed to and fro, with no settled policy, and no firm convictions." (1) The multitude was quite taken with Jesus' works and they followed him and would have made him King. (2) They continually talked about him, and on the whole were inclined to believe Him, (3) but they were not aware of the hostility of their rulers toward him. When Jesus demanded of the "Jews" "Why seek ye to kill me?", the crowd was much astonished. They thought that was a rather foolish thing to seek for - the life of a man who could do the signs he did, particularly feed them with bread. They paid Jesus all the homage they were capable of by welcoming Him with loud Hosannas, and so real was their admiration and appreciation that the Pharisees thought the Galilean had won the day. (4)

But the multitude did not understand the program.

When Jesus spoke of his "lifting up" they said:

"We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" (5)

They understood perfectly that by his "lifting up" Jesus

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(1) Westcott, Comm. on John, p. viii.

(2) John, vi, 15.

(3) Ibid., vii.

(4) Ibid., xii, 12-19.

(5) Ibid., xii, 34.

meant his crucifixion, but they could not reconcile that with the Scriptures which said Christ abides forever. They did not mistake his use of the term, Son of man, or they would not have answered as they did. "Who is this Son of man?" is hardly an honest inquiry. It is really a rejection of the claims of Jesus.(1) The multitude said, 'What kind of Christ is this? We will have no more to do with Him.'

"One moment the people are convinced by a miracle that Jesus is the Messiah, the next that it is impossible to reconcile his position with the received interpretations of Messianic prophecy. It did not occur to them to doubt the interpretations."(2)

The multitude is no more mentioned in the Fourth Gospel. They could not accept a crucified Christ.

The Samaritans are included in this study because of one expression which was their testimony to Jesus.

"And many more believed because of his word; and they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."(3)

The magnificent title, "The Saviour of the world", is found only twice in the Greek Bible, both times in writings of John. In the first epistle(4) it is used to define the mission of the Son. And in close connection with it the mission is otherwise defined as "the propitiation for our

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- (1) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.279.
- (2) A.Plummer, Comm.on John, p.256.
- (3) John, iv, 42.
- (4) I John, iv, 14.

sins."(1) It can scarcely be doubted that the expression, The Saviour of the world, carries great weight. John would not be likely to put into the mouths of the Samaritans such a testimony to Christ if it were only a reflection of his own; that is, he would not unconsciously give one of his expressions as theirs.(2) On admitting that the Samaritans rose to the acceptance of the truth about Jesus as the Messiah and to the confession of Jesus as the Saviour of the world, we are faced with this problem: What did Jesus say to them in the two days of his sojour with them that would prompt the use of the title, "Saviour of the world"?

We have no record of the ministry among the Samaritans except that "they believed because of his word". And any answer to the proposed question must be an inference. We do know that the Samaritans had the books of the law and that they entertained hopes of a Messiah of spiritual character.(3) We know that the reaction of the woman at the well was, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?"(4) The impression one gets is that such would be the general reaction. Why should he, a Jew, have anything to do with them? He must have had to answer such an attitude, and it is likely that he did it by claiming to be the Messiah. He had no other message about himself than

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(1) I John, iv, 10.

(2) A.Plummer, Comm: on John, p.117.

(3) Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus, vol.i,p.402.

(4) John, iv, 9.

that which he gave to the Jews. If his death formed an essential part of his teaching to the Jews, the Cross must have been presented to the Samaritans, too. Whatever Jesus said about his death was accepted, for they believed because of his word.

There was in the multitude a group who developed an admiration for Jesus to the extent that they attached themselves more closely to him than the others.

"They followed him habitually, and had even broken off from their ordinary occupation in order to accompany him."(1)

This circle of friends John calls disciples. They were present at the feeding of the five thousand, and heard the discourses which followed. At the end of the discourses,

"Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?"(2)

The hard saying was Jesus' assertion that in order to have life a man must eat His flesh and drink His blood.(3) The cause of stumbling was the mention of death; the scene that the disciples could not face was Calvary. The spiritual capacity of the disciples was not sufficient to receive this teaching, and therefore it seemed irrational to them. They murmured, and finally separated. They were still sympathetic but not committed to the way of sacrifice and devotion. They returned to their old ways, for they could not pay the price.

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(1) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.ii,p.43.

(2) John, vi, 60.

(3) Ibid., vi, 51-59.

"Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away?"(1) Within the group of disciples was the inner circle, the human assistance that Jesus had chosen for the carrying out of His work. The twelve remained with Him. They had come to know that He was the Holy One of God, and they accepted His program.

We see them in the Upper Room on the last night, and we find even then a profound lack of perception regarding the Lord's death. Jesus announced to them that one of them should deliver him up. "The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake."(2) They knew that Jerusalem was for their Master a pall, that death was imminent; but the possibility of a traitor in their midst was bewildering. Their consciousness of innocence was less trustworthy than the declaration of Christ.(3)

The Impressions of the Individuals

It is very difficult to determine the attitude toward the Lord's death exhibited by the eleven in the last hours. Several of them speak to Jesus, in most cases asking questions. Perhaps they will enlighten us.

"Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee."(4)

The idea of separation was most unbearable. Peter overlooked

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(1) John, vi, 67.

(2) Ibid., xiii, 22.

(3) Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus, vol.ii, p.505.

(4) John, xiii, 36,37.

entirely the commission that Jesus gave to them in his effort to tell Jesus that he was ready to go along. Peter was the spokesman for the group, who "dared everything and doubted nothing", and he wanted to know what the Lord meant by his going away. He seems to have got the idea properly that Jesus is referring to His death, for he says, "I will lay down my life for thee." At the arrest(1) he illustrated his impulsiveness by lifting his sword against the foe. The going away of the One who was to be King found opposition in the mind of Peter to the very end.

When Jesus would not be persuaded to remain away from the city of death, Thomas said, "Let us also go that we may die with him." (2) He was loyal even though the expected throne was become a waiting sepulchre. However, after the group had come to Jerusalem and were gathered in the Upper Room Thomas was not yet clear on two things, the goal and the way to it. Peter had been silenced, but Thomas pressed (3) the question by suggesting that the disciples could not be expected to know the way if they did not know the destination. Thomas was discouraged at the thought of Jesus' death.

The mind of the group was occupied with the thought that the departure of Jesus would be for them a tremendous loss. The future with Him gone was fraught with ominous clouds of suffering and misunderstanding. It had not occurred

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(1) John, xviii, 10, 11.

(2) Ibid., xi, 16.

(3) Ibid., xiv, 5.

to them to inquire of Jesus how he was affected by the approach of death.(1) They did not get the significance of his allusion to the resurrection(2) nor the consequence of his departure. They affirmed their faith in Him, but at the arrest they scattered and were enveloped in the gloom of their own despair.

After the Crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea came and took away the body of Jesus.

"And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds."(3)

Nicodemus, that dignified member of the Council, appears on several occasions in the Gospel. The germ of faith implanted on that eventful night(4) when Jesus taught him of the new birth grew, despite the difficulty of being a Pharisee, into a living sustaining force. He , together with Joseph, paid his tribute of humble reverence at the death of His Lord.

"There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness....."(5)

We must not overlook this great friend of Jesus who introduced Him to the world. It was only natural for Jesus to come to John after the temptation, to come to the place that had been prepared. At His arrival, John the Baptist who had been saying to the people, "There is One coming.", said,

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- (1) Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus, vol.ii, p.524.
Cf. John, xvi, 5.
- (2) John, xvi, 17,18.
- (3) Ibid., xix, 39.
- (4) Ibid., iii, 1-15.
- (5) Ibid., i, 6,7.

'Here He is.'

"He seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith,
Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away
the sin of the world."(1)

What is the significance of this designation coming from the mouth of John the Baptist? In answering this query we need to remind ourselves of several facts. First of all, the Baptist was familiar with the fortieth chapter of Isaiah,(2) and it is not improbable that he should link the Christ with the fifty-third of Isaiah.(3) Secondly, it seems that there was current in Jesus' time a teaching about the Lamb of daily sacrifice that implied, and in the case of the school of Hillel stated definitely, that the sacrifices were to "suppress our iniquities"before God.(4) And in the third place, we must not forget that the Passover was at hand when this incident occurred, and may well have prompted the title, "Lamb of God".

The last part of the verse removes any doubt as to the central idea of the phrase, "Lamb of God". He was to take away the sin of the world. How did he do it? One says:

"He removes the sin of the world as a gardner uproots and removes the weeds of his garden. The gardner acts as the Intermediary, and the barrow and hoe may be said to do the work. So also, Jesus is the Intermediary, and the Light and Life imparted by the Logos the active agency of removal."(5)

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- (1) John, i, 29.
- (2) Ibid., i, 23.
- (3) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.26.
- (4) Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus, vol.i, p.343.
- (5) Benjamin W.Robinson, The Gospel of John, p.72.

This is fanciful, to say the least, and there is nothing to warrant such an explanation other than the author's own attempt to discount the death of Jesus.

How then, is the sin taken away? John the Baptist made a real contribution by the use of "sin" in the singular number, which we must not miss. There is a note of universality here that may evidence the opinion that John the Baptist was especially inspired at this moment of his career. There is only one explanation defensible regarding the taking away of sin; there was only one way for removing sin known to the Israelites; and that is sacrifice. It does not necessarily follow that we must think that the Baptist had a perfect conception of redemption as Thomas had when he touched the prints of the nails.(1) It is difficult to reconcile the Baptist's subsequent action with this great expression.

But what are we to think of this great testimony? He had been preaching repentance and he had been baptizing in water. He was conscious of being unable to meet the need.(2) The sins of the people remained even though they did confess. His cry was, 'There cometh One mightier than I'. When he saw Jesus coming that day he spoke with all the passion of his soul, 'Behold, the One who can do the business.'(3) The Lamb of God was to act. He was to take away, to bear off, to(4)

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(1) Henry Scott Holland, The Fourth Gospel, p. 189.

(2) Ibid., p.112-114.

(3) Ibid., p.209.

(4) Thayer, Greek-English lexicon, ad locum.(αἴρω)

absolutely remove sin and its consequences, even the sin of the world. John knew that the Lamb would act, but did he know that the act which would take away the sin of the world would be death? We are inclined to believe on the basis of his testimony that he knew. This interpretation of "The Lamb of God" very adequately accounts for the author's use of it in relation to the purpose of the book.

C. Conclusion

We conclude from the above survey of views and impression that the death of Jesus had a very definite place in the minds of the people of the day. His enemies hailed His death as necessary to preserve the inviolability of tradition. His friends turned from the sight of the Cross as the greatest horror their minds could conceive of. Many saw in His death the end of all possible hope in a Messianic kingdom, a few saw in it salvation. It is evident that the death of Jesus was a very present idea throughout the Judaean ministry, and became increasingly a topic of conversation as the fatal hour came near.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Bird of God! with boundless flight
Soaring far beyond the height
Of the bard or prophet old;
Truth fulfilled, and truth to be, -
Never purer mystery
Did a purer tongue unfold!"

- Adam of St. Victor

IV JOHN'S INTERPRETATION OF JESUS' DEATH

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"That disciple whom Jesus loved"(1) was also a disciple that loved Jesus. The friendship that existed between the Master and his beloved disciple must have excelled in beauty and significance the closest bonds of love ever described by men. The disciple found in Christ an excellence on which his loving nature(2) could lavish all its affection, and a depth of character from which his own could be enriched. The Christ found in John a receptive spirit and such qualities of discernment and mystic depth as would lend themselves to high development. Continual contact with the Great Teacher, observing His actions in every conceivable situation, and partaking of all the rich intimacies of a close comradeship conspired to work in John a complete transformation. His zeal and ambition were turned into mighty agencies for good, and his every purpose was purified.(3)

This close relationship between Jesus and John is a clue to the understanding of the Gospel. John interprets.

"Moreover, in this case we are dealing not with a simple disciple retailing for us the oral teachings of St. Peter and the early Church, or with evangelists dependent upon sources, but with a man of original outlook and spiritual genius, a man who if he lacked the intellectual acuteness and practical capacity of the great missionary was his superior in religious insight and tempermental stability. This man had thought out the significance of what he had seen: he had fastened upon concepts at once simpler and more universal than those of St. Paul or of the

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(1) John, xx, 2; xxi, 7, 20.

(2) J. Stalker, The Two St. Johns of the N.T., p.16.

(3) Henry Van Dyke, The Open Door, p.113.

Alexandrians, concepts ideally suited to express religious experience; he has put on record in terms of them his interpretation of Jesus in the days of His flesh; he has declared that his witness is true."(1)

A. The True Witness

In recording the memorable picture of Calvary John says:

"And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe."(2)

Unfortunately the English renderings do not give an adequate translation to this very important verse.(3) The correct meaning hinges on the two words that appear in the American Revised version as having an equal sense, "true". The words are ἀληθινός and ἀληθής . His witness is ἀληθινός and he says ἀληθής . The Latin "verus" and "verax" would severally represent them, and in the main reproduce the distinctions existing between them.(4)

" ἀληθινός does not express the truth of the fact at all, but sets forth the fact as one in regard to which the witness was not, and cannot have been mistaken: his testimony is all that testimony can be. He could not thus have alleged of another that his witness was thoroughly true and perfect - that it was the exact expression of the incident that had taken place."(5)

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(1) Canon Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, p.218.

(2) John, xix, 35.

(3) Weymouth's Translation

"This statement is the testimony of an eyewitness, and is true. He knows that he is telling the truth in order that you also may believe."

Goodspeed's Translation

"The man who saw it testifies to it - his testimony is true; he knows that he is telling the truth - to lead you also to believe."

Moffat's Translation

"He who saw it has borne witness (his witness is true; God knows he is telling the truth), that you may believe."

This verse then is an attestation to the fact that the author was an eyewitness and what is more told the truth of what he saw.

Thus far in the thesis we have concerned ourselves with John's record more than with his own mind, although the record is the product of his reflection. But he has added remarks of his own throughout the book that offer real assistance in discovering what place the death of Jesus occupied in his mind while producing the record. These "evangelistic comments" may be divided roughly into three groups: an explanation of words, a commentary on affairs, and a testimony to Jesus' knowledge.

B. "Evangelistic Comments"

An Explanation of Words

In three instances John was of the opinion that some

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(4) Richard Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, p.25.

"We have almost entirely lost the use of "very" as an adjective, retaining it only as an adverb. We retain it in the Nicene Creed, where it does excellent service, 'very God of very God'. Thus God is ἀληθός and also ἀληθινός. He is ἀληθός in the sense that He cannot lie. But He is ἀληθινός as distinguished from idols and all other false gods. The adjectives in *ivos* express the material out of which anything is made. ἀληθινός signifies 'genuine', made up of that which is true (that which, in chemical language has truth for its stuff and base). This last adjective is particularly applied to express that which is all that it pretends to be."

(5) Milligan and Moulton, *Comm.on John*, xxii.

words of Jesus might have been misunderstood, and he proceeded to explain them. Later "he pauses to note the irony of Caiaphas' unconscious prophecy."(1)

At the cleansing of the temple the Jews missed the point of Jesus' words completely, and from John's interesting addition it appears that the disciples did not comprehend at the time. He added:

"But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."(2)

What better interpreter of the mind of the Master could be found?(3) At this particular point his suggestion satisfies the need quite completely. The temple was the dwelling-place of God, but Jesus, the true temple, appeared full of grace and truth, the very sanctuary of God. The connection between the temple and His body was such that he could thus speak of it. The "three days" are taken care of by the resurrection, at which time the foundation of the new temple was laid never to be destroyed.

The introduction of the "scripture" brings up a most interesting point in John. The word occurs a dozen times, and more than half of these occurrences concern the death of Jesus. John himself appeals to the "scripture" six times, and always in connection with the death of Jesus or

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(1) J.H.Bernard, Comm.on John, p.xxxiv.

(2) John, ii, 21,22.

(3) A.Plummer, Comm.on John, p.90.

the death and resurrection together. The references John makes to the Old Testament are not vague but can be traced to definite passages.(1) Chapter xix is an excellent indication of John's knowledge of the Scripture, especially as it concerned the death of his Lord.(2)

On the last day of the feast of tabernacles,

"Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water."(3)

This is another instance when John felt that some explanation was needed, so he subjoined:

"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified."(4)

Here John introduces a conception of the Passion of Jesus as His "glorification". We have already dealt with that idea as expressed by Jesus himself. A few passages(5) will serve to show that John's statement about the Spirit is consonant with what Jesus said, and therefore his interpretation of Jesus' words at this point is acceptable. On the last night Jesus said to his disciples:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away,

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(1) J.H.Bernard, Comm.on John, p.cli.

(2) John, xix, 24, 28, 36, 37.

(3) Ibid., vii, 37,38.

(4) Ibid., vii, 39.

(5) Ibid., xiv, 18.

"I will not leave you orphans: I come unto you."
Ibid., xv, 26.

"When the Paraclete is come, whom I will send unto you..."

the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I go, I will send him unto you."(1)

It is evident that Jesus knew that His death was essential to the descent of His Spirit. Calvary had to come before Pentecost. And thus it is that the death of the Incarnate Word was His "glorification". This passage then(2) is another powerful testimony to the fact that Jesus must have talked much with John about His death. For otherwise John could not have so acutely observed that the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

In chapter xii for the third time John offers an explanation to words of the Master. He had finished telling the multitude that He is to be lifted up, to which the Evangelist appended, "But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die."(3) This shows the interpretation which John gives to ὑψώω, and therein clarifies the passages in which it is used.

"In the Fourth Gospel ὑψώω always has reference to the lifting up of the Son of man on the Cross."(4)

This last comment is repeated during the trial, but this time to testify to the prophetic teaching of Jesus. The Jews had excused themselves from the execution of Jesus by introducing a legal point,

"that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which

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- (1) John, xvi, 7.
- (2) Ibid., vii, 39.
- (3) Ibid., xii, 33.
- (4) J.H.Bernard, Comm.on John, p.442.

he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die."(1)

Stoning was the regular Jewish form of execution, and crucifixion was the Roman method. The Crucifixion then was the inevitable issue of the circumstances when once the Jews turned Jesus over to Pilate. John saw in this a definite testimony that Jesus knew the details of his death, for He had spoken of His "lifting up".

"To John the words of His Master were possessed of authority and inspired by foreknowledge; the event necessarily corresponded to what Jesus had said."(2)

John was quite impressed with Caiaphas' prophecy.(3) He immediately explained it as it occurred to him, that like Saul Caiaphas had prophesied in spite of himself. Later when he had occasion to mention him again the Evangelist recalled the prophecy as a distinguishing feature of the man.(4) The Jews ascribed a measure of prophetic faculty to the high priest,(5) and by virtue of his office as high-priest Caiaphas uttered words "heartless and unscrupulous in meaning and intention", but used by the Spirit of God to express profound truth.

"The opinion of the high-priest was made especially remarkable by the contrast between the Divine truth which it expressed and the diabolical design which inspired it."(6)

It is to this that the Evangelist calls attention.

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(1) John, xviii, 32.

(2) J.H.Bernard, Comm.on John, p.xlv.

(3) John, xi, 51,52.

(4) Ibid., xviii, 14.

(5) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.261.

(6) F.Godet, Comm.on John, vol.ii, p.193.

A Commentary on Affairs

The accepted divisions of the Fourth Gospel make chapters v to xii constitute a section. This part of the book is a record of the Jerusalem ministry and extends over a second year. When the editorial remarks of this section are put down there is formed a journal of the rising tide of opposition, and an account of the formation of the plot to kill Jesus. To preclude any mistaken impression it is deemed best to set forth the comments as they appear.

"And for this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath."(1)

"For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God."(2)

"And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill him."(3)

"They sought therefore to take him: and no man laid his hand on him, because his hour was not yet come."(4)

"And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him."(5)

"These words spake he in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; and no man took him; because his hour was not yet come."(6)

"They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple."(7)

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- (1) John, v, 16.
- (2) Ibid., v, 18.
- (3) Ibid., vii, 1.
- (4) Ibid., vii, 30.
- (5) Ibid., vii, 44.
- (6) Ibid., viii, 20.
- (7) Ibid., viii, 59.

"These things said his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."(1)

"The Jews took up stones again to stone him"(2)

"They sought again to take him: and he went forth out of their hand."(3)

"So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death."(4)

"Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment that, if any man knew where he was, he should show it, that they might take him."(5)

"But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death."(6)

The reader of this section is not permitted to forget that Jesus was encountering furious opposition. Persecution quickly grew into desire to kill; desultory effort flowered into organized design; indecision became definite rejection. This knowledge on John's part of the reaction of the Jews toward Jesus is very revealing, and cannot be explained if Jesus did not allude often to his death at the hands of the adulterous children of God. The reader is constantly reminded of the causes and the ultimate end of the opposition.

On the final rejection of Jesus John offers a sombre comment,(7) informing the reader that the Scripture foretold

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- (1) John, ix, 22.
- (2) Ibid., x, 31.
- (3) Ibid., x, 39.
- (4) Ibid., xi, 53.
- (5) Ibid., xi, 57.
- (6) Ibid., xii, 10.
- (7) Ibid., xii, 36-40.

the unbelief of this people, even giving the principles involved in the rejection of the light. In the procession to the place of the skull John touches up the scene with a last reference to the heartlessness of the people:

"They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself....."(1)

It must be observed that John knew the significance of Jesus' "hour".(2) The Evangelist is careful to indicate that death was not a surprise to Jesus, nor was the traitorous act of Judas a surprise. Five times Judas is mentioned in this Gospel and always as the one destined to betray the Lord.(3)

This leads us into the third group of comments.

A Testimony to Jesus' Knowledge

"John speaks as one to whom the mind of the Lord was laid open."(4) He affirms that Jesus "knew" certain things. Whether that knowledge was His by Divine prerogative or not is a point of contention, but space does not permit a study of that, nor does the desired application of this affirmation rest on any particular view of that point. John's announcement is that Jesus "knew".

"Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said"(5)

The teaching on the bread of life was startling, to say the

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(1) John, xix, 17.

(2) Ibid., vii, 30; viii, 20.

(3) Ibid., vi, 64; vi, 71; xii, 4; xiii, 11; xviii, 2.

(4) Westcott, Comm.on John, p.xxi.

(5) John, vi, 61.

least, and was promptly used as food for discussion. Even the inner circle of disciples murmured, and Jesus knew it. And because He knew that they were perplexed and not inimical as were the Jews He sought to help them out of their difficulties. 'Furthermore', says John, eager to impress on his readers the penetrating discernment of all men's hearts by the Christ,

"Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him."(1)

The Teacher was not unaware that some of those who heard His teachings could not for various reasons appropriate them. It was truly a "hard saying" that He had presented to them, the sacrifice of His flesh for the life of the world. Men's power of comprehension was limited then just as it is now, and the Master Teacher understood.

Some scholars have difficulty with the latter part of that verse which concerns Jesus' knowledge of Judas.

"The words seem to imply that the germ of the traitor-spirit was alive already in the heart of Judas, who, like many others, loved rather the glory and honor which Jesus set aside than the spirit and life of His words."(2)

It is certain that He knew who the betrayer was when the group was having the last supper together.(3)

"Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should

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(1) John, vi, 64.

(2) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.167.

(3) John, xiii, 11.

depart out of this world unto the Father....."(1)
John calls attention particularly in this passage and following to the comprehension of circumstances, to the insight and foresight, on the part of Christ. The conversation is emphatic in contrasting His knowledge with the bewilderment of the disciples.

"Jesus, therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth....."(2)

Perfect perception was His and perfect control as He gave himself into the hands of His enemies. And as He gave himself to Death He knew full well that "all things are now finished."(3)

C. Conclusion

One cannot but be impressed that the Evangelist was conscious of having entered very deeply into the experiences of His Lord, and into the conditions of His Lord's life. And one cannot escape the conclusion that the mind of John along with the Mind of his Master was constantly wrapt in meditation of Calvary. John's comments that we have classified as explanatory are all concerning the death of Jesus. His commentary on affairs would have no content and no purpose apart from the death of Jesus. Finally, his testimony to Jesus' knowledge indicates that the Cross is the pattern of the Mind of Christ.

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- (1) John, xiii, 1.
- (2) Ibid., xviii, 4.
- (3) Ibid., xix, 28.

CHAPTER FIVE

"In the cross is salvation,
In the cross is life;
In the cross is strength of mind;
In the cross joy of spirit,
In the cross the height of virtue.

There is no salvation of the soul,
Nor hope of everlasting life,
But in the cross."

- Thomas a Kempis

V THE RELATION OF JESUS' DEATH TO JOHN'S PURPOSE

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A. The Evangelist's Selection of Material

The Principle of Selection

As we have already noted(1) the writer governed himself by a selective principle. Scholars have looked upon this in various ways, some counting it a cause for rejecting the historicity of the work, and others seeing it as a natural occurrence in the production of an acceptable record of events. All history is essentially interpretation. To a degree every historian is bound to select those events which, ".....from whatever cause, strike him most or seem to bear most closely on his purpose."(2) There is a selection of incidents in the Synoptics as well as here, although perhaps to a lesser degree.

Some see in the Fourth Gospel "a deliberate artistic purpose" which governs the structure.(3) Others see a conscious and intentional selection.(4)

"The selection may in some cases be deliberate, but as happens always when the creative personality of a writer is at work, the selection may also be instinctive."(5)

The quality of the Fourth Gospel points to its author as an old man,(6) looking back upon One whom he loved in days long past but vividly remembered.(7)

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- (1) See above, chap.I, p.17.
- (2) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.xxvi.
- (3) Ernest F. Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p.18.
- (4) Milligan and Moulton, op.cit., p.xxvii.
- (5) Robert Harvey Strachan, The Fourth Evangelist, p.29.
- (6) Charles Fox Burney, Aramaic Origin, p.128.
- (7) Charles E. Raven, What Think Ye of Christ? pp.126,127.

"Memory does thus select certain scenes, of which every detail is vividly recalled, scenes that stand complete in themselves and perfectly revealing the essential character of the beloved. The whole is seen in the light of the full after-knowledge, the first impressions integrated and simplified, the essential features emphasised, the concept of personality timeless."(1)

The Fourth Gospel is a very human book. It is only natural for one to forget events that had no ultimate significance, and to remember always those which had great meaning.

"When a great man knows and loves and records, knowledge is given that is otherwise unattainable, knowledge that admits us also to intimacy, knowledge of reality such as we may surely hope is known to God."(2)

It appears that we must respect very highly John's selection of material and put a high estimate on its value.

Emphasis on "Eternal Life"

We also noted above(3) that the very essence of the Fourth Gospel is "life". John makes "life" an inherent characteristic of the Word: "In him was life;".(4) Jesus affirms:

"For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself."(5)

That is, the Father made "life" the essential nature of the Son.

It is the work of the Son to impart this life to men, and Jesus was conscious of His work: "I know that this commandment is life eternal."(6) The phrase, "eternal life",

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(1) Charles E. Raven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, p.225.

(2) Ibid., p.227.

(3) See above, chap.I, pp.18,19.

(4) John, i, 4.

(5) Ibid., v, 26.

(6) Ibid., xii, 50.

occurs in no less than seventeen passages."It is the blessing of which John, echoing his Master's words, is ever speaking."(1) It may be a present possession, as is indicated by the frequent use of the present tense, ἔχειν ζωὴν (to have life). And its essence is union with God in Christ.(2)

Eternal life is a gift according to the will of God, and yet is conditioned by believing on the part of men:

"For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth into him should have eternal life."(3)

Thus the apparent emphasis put upon "life" is in perfect harmony with the evangelist's expressed purpose:

"but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."(4)

Prominence of the Death of Jesus

A brief summary of the chapters(5) devoted to a consideration of the death of Jesus will be sufficient to show that even though the life of men is the desired end, it is the death of Jesus that takes precedence in the mind of the Evangelist.

The death of Jesus is mentioned or alluded to in every chapter of the Gospel, with the exception of the last two which are a record of the conquering of death. The

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- (1) Milligan and Moulton, Comm.on John, p.69.
- (2) John, xv.
- (3) Ibid., vi, 40.
- (4) Ibid., xx, 31.
- (5) See above, chapters II, III, IV.

shadow of the Cross forms a constant background upon which the white light of the love of Jesus is vividly played. The place called Calvary, that altar of the world upon which the life blood of the Son of God was poured, is the one scene that John could use in which to place the portrait of his Lord.

Jesus' death was the dominating force in His career. He understood it as a voluntary surrender of His life in behalf of the world. He realized the magnitude of the problem of sin and discerned the need of a tremendous force to release men from its power. He met this need on the Cross that was at once the judgment of the world and the salvation of them that believed. His death was of Divine origin and became the ground for His Father's love for Him. Because His thoughts were continually tinged with crimson His disciples learned the significance of the noblest and most beautiful life, for He taught them of His death.

Jesus' enemies thought of Him only in a vindictive and hateful manner. His calmness made their blood boil, and His claims sent their hands seeking stones. They cared not in what way, but they were determined that in some way Jesus should meet death. They were blinded by the true light, blinded because they refused to see in Him the Messiah, and being blind to His beauty they sought to destroy the only Life they could ever know. .

The outside circle of Jesus' friends were not able to comprehend the meaning of His death. They loved Him and

could not bear the thought of His going away. Even His close friends were slow to understand. But there was one who knew, just as they all came to know, that the death of the Lord was of utmost importance.

If we look at Jesus through the eyes of the beloved disciple we see "the very dying form of One who suffered there." The book is the product of a long life, in which the thought of the death of Jesus was an ever-welling stream of revealed love. The more John meditated on the death of His Lord the more he loved Him.

B. The Communication of Life

If "life" is the purpose of the Fourth Gospel, and the death of Jesus is given so much prominence, there must be some connection between the two. Is it possible that "life" is communicated to men through His death? Many answer this question negatively. Of these is Ernest F. Scott who, affirming that life is the gift of Christ, goes on to say:

"The act of belief is so all-important that John repeatedly speaks of it as the one immediate condition of life. In a sense it is so. It brings the disciple into such a relation to Christ that His power as Life-giver becomes real and effectual. But the gift itself is imparted, not so much through the act of belief as through the fellowship with Christ of which it marks the commencement. We have now to consider the nature of that fellowship which follows inevitably on true belief, and which carries with it the communication of life."(1)

There is a very interesting suggestion here, the importance

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(1) Ernest F. Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p.283.
Cf. Benj. Robinson, The Gospel of John, pp.30-44.

of belief in receiving the gift of life. And while we do not think Scott has used all the available materials in his discussion on the communication of life,(1) we can take his suggestion and look at the record. We must not deal here in generalities but in careful examination of some passages in which life is offered. There are four major ideas involved in four different references. In each of these four believing is essential, and the death of Jesus is indispensable.

The Serpent Passage(1)

For the second time this commands our attention.(2) Dr. Abbott's excellent discussion is well worth quotation here as an interesting interpretation by a recognized scholar.

"As the first Serpent and the first Adam brought sin, so a second Serpent and a second Adam must take away sin. The first Serpent was the passion for pleasure and self; the second Serpent is to be the passion for kindness and the love of others. Thus interpreted, these difficult words teach one of the deepest of all truths, that men will never be really reformed on the lines of mere law or on the lines of mere asceticism. Never will a human being be reshaped from without, as by a sculptor's hand. He must grow from a germ of life within, his heart going up, and his desires going up with it, out of himself, into a new Man, a second Adam, the Man from heaven."(3)

Our Lord does not define "belief". Neither does the Evangelist although at this point he makes a comment that is

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(1) John, iii, 14-17.

(2) See above, chap. II, pp.49-50.

(3) Edwin A.Abbott, Johannine Vocabulary, p.43.

somewhat of a suggestion: "whosoever believeth εἰς αὐτόν should not perish, but have eternal life."(1)

"We are to trust -- not in a dead person or thing, nor that a person or thing can make us alive, but -- to (εἰς) an 'only begotten Son', who will make us alive not in spite of the fact that He has died, but because He has died."(2)

Here then we have life depending on the "lifting up" of the Son, and the believing of men.

The Spirit Verses(3)

Jesus offered the Samaritan woman the water of life:

"but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life."(4)

We take the water here to be a symbol of the Spirit, on the basis of the use of ἄλλομαι, and the existence of a parallel passage on water where the Spirit is expressly mentioned.(5)

"The Greeks have an abundant vocabulary to express a bubbling fountain - but(so far as is known)they never use ἄλλομαι thus."(6)

And the Evangelist always links "water of heaven" with the Spirit. "Unto eternal life" then expresses the purpose of this spiritual torrent of grace.(7)

At the feast of the tabernacles Jesus said,

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and

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- (1) John, iii, 16.
- (2) Edwin A. Abbott, Johannine Vocabulary, p.44.
- (3) John, iv, 14; vii, 37-39.
- (4) Ibid., iv, 14.
- (5) Ibid., vii, 37-39
- (6) Edwin A. Abbott, Johannine Grammar, p.243.
- (7) J.H. Bernard, Comm. on John, p.141.

drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water."(1)

The Evangelist explicates this by saying that the living water is the Spirit.

In both of these passages the future tense is important, for it points to some requisite besides belief for the reception of life. Here again it is the death of Jesus that must occur, "for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."(2)

The Bread Chapter(3)

Jesus offered to the multitude physical bread which they received gladly. Then He offered Himself, and only eleven received Him. The teaching here on communication of life is perhaps more plain than any where else. A brief survey of a few verses will suffice to show that the death of Jesus Christ was essential to the life of men.

"Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you:"(4)

"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."(5)

"Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life."(6)

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(1) John, vii, 37,38.

(2) Ibid., vii, 39.

(3) Ibid., vi.

(4) Ibid., vi, 27.

(5) Ibid., vi, 29.

(6) Ibid., vi, 47.

"Yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."(1)

"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life."(2)

There is no mistake possible here about what to believe. To eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man is to believe in the sacrifice He made as effectually providing eternal life.

The Shepherd Song(3)

"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."(4) That is the Shepherd Psalm of the New Testament. Christ is here protecting life at the cost of His own. And men branded Him as possessed of a demon. To those Jews He said,

"But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand."(5)

The sheep that are His believe, and He gives them eternal life. He does it by the "laying down" of His own life, thus making them secure against every outside foe.

C. Conclusion

Not only is it possible that Life is communicated to

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- (1) John, vi, 51.
- (2) Ibid., vi, 54.
- (3) Ibid., x, 7-18, 26-28.
- (4) Ibid., x, 10.
- (5) Ibid., x, 26-28.

men through the death of Jesus Christ, but it is true according to the Fourth Gospel. The death of Jesus is John's answer to the problem of "life".

According to the four passages that were briefly but thoughtfully examined, (and the tenor of the Gospel is consonant with these) the death of Jesus Christ is universal in its effect. All men who believe may have life. Furthermore, the death of Jesus Christ settled once for all the problem of sin; it prepared the way for the release of the Spirit; it provided for the sustaining of life; and it insured life against all harm.

CONCLUSION

"Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than thy blest name,
O Saviour of mankind."

- Bernard of Clairvaux

Augustine, the greatest of all the fathers, says, "John did but pour forth the water of life which he himself had drunk in."(1) He did it that all men might slake their thirst with the living water. He purposed and executed a record designed to bring men to a belief in Christ, a belief that issued in Life.

"These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."(2)

The death of his Lord gripped him as a real event, and more particularly as a Divinely appointed event. To him it meant that God has done something for men that they could not do for themselves. It was an act of love on the part of God and on the part of His Son, without which men could not have had Life.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."(3)

This verse, the best-known and most-loved in the entire Bible, along with his interpretation of Caiaphas' prophecy may be said to constitute John's idea of the Atonement. The moment that Caiaphas uttered his prophecy John knew that "This he said not of himself."(4) And at the same time he

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- (1) Augustine, 36th Tractate on St. John's Gospel, vol.iii of the Bened. edition, folio 543,544, as quoted by Philip Schaff in Special Intro. to Lange's Comm.on John.
- (2) John, xx, 31.
- (3) Ibid., iii, 16.
- (4) Ibid., xi, 51.

found himself admitting, perhaps asserting,

"That Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad."(1)

The Atonement has been called,

"the chief part of our Salvation, the anchor of Faith, the refuge of Hope, the rule of Charity, the true foundation of the Christian religion, and the richest treasure of the Christian Church."(2)

The beloved disciple is a trustworthy witness to what Christ taught of the purpose of His sufferings and death. To John it was of the foremost importance that Christ died in behalf of the world, that whosoever believeth shall not perish but have eternal life, and that there shall be one flock, and one Shepherd.

John is the one who has recorded Jesus' triumphant word from the cross, "It is finished". The Fourth Gospel proclaims to the world the finished work, thus being in the highest sense good news. For John the Cross was ever present, and it must be so for us. For John Christ and the Cross were inseparable, and they still are.

He closely agrees with John, who is willing to say:

"In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."(3)

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(1) John, xi, 51,52.

(2) Francisci Turretini, De Satisfactione Christi Disputationes, Opera, vol.iv,p.1; as quoted in translation by R.W.Dale in The Atonement,p.3.

(3) John Bowring, In the Cross of Christ I glory, taken from Hymns for the Living Age, p.155.

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And much study is a weariness of the flesh."
- Ecclesiastes

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