

V TH
389

THE WITNESSES TO THE PERSON OF CHRIST
AS
PRESENTED IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

by

Herbert S. Van Wyk

A. B., Central University of Iowa
1932

Th. B., Western Theological Seminary, (R.C.A.)
1935

A THESIS

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

New York City
April -- 1936

BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
HATFIELD, PA.

22264

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	
20827 Gift of the Author	PART ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT 2
	A. The Subject of the Thesis - - - 2
	1. A Statement of the Subject - - - 2
	2. The Limits of the Subject - - - 2
	3. A Statement of the Problem - - - 3
	B. The Method of Procedure - - - 3
	1. The Approach - - - 3
	2. The Plan - - - 4
	3. The Sources - - - 4
	C. The Justification for the Thesis - - 4
	PART TWO: INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD 6
	A. The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel - - 6
	B. The Author's Method - - - 7
May 22, 1936	CHAPTER II: THE PLACE OF WITNESS IN RELATION TO THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL
	A. The Prominence of Witness in the Gospel - 12
	B. The Validity of this Approach - - - 12
	C. The Rules of Evidence - - - 14
	1. Conditions of Proof - - - 14
	2. Credibility of Witnesses - - - 15
	3. Tests of Testimony - - - 15
	a. Honesty - - - 16
	b. Ability - - - 16
	c. Consistency - - - 16
	d. Conformity with Experience - - 17
	e. Coincidence with Collateral Circumstances - - - 17
	4. Testimony of Adversaries - - - 18
	5. Testimony Not Understood - - - 18
	6. Self-derogatory Testimony - - - 18

CHAPTER III: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, A PROPHET

A. The Person and Experience of John	-	-	21
1. John a Prophet	-	-	21
2. John a Subordinate	-	-	22
3. John a Relative	-	-	23
B. John a Witness	-	-	24
1. "The Lamb of God"	-	-	24
C. The Trustworthiness of John	-	-	27

CHAPTER IV: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF
ANDREW, A DISCIPLE OF THE BAPTIST

A. The Person and Experience of Andrew	-	-	30
1. Andrew a Disciple of the Baptist	-	-	30
2. Andrew a Guest of Jesus	-	-	31
B. Andrew a Witness	-	-	32
1. "The Messiah"	-	-	32
2. "Rabbi"	-	-	34
C. The Trustworthiness of Andrew	-	-	36

CHAPTER V: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF
PHILIP, A FISHERMAN

A. The Person and Experience of Philip	-	-	38
1. Philip a Fisherman	-	-	38
2. Philip an Acquaintance of Andrew and Peter	-	-	39
3. Philip a Follower of Jesus	-	-	40
B. Philip a Witness	-	-	41
C. The Trustworthiness of Philip	-	-	42

CHAPTER VI: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF
NATHANIEL, AN ISRAELITE

A. The Person and Experience of Nathaniel	-	-	44
1. Nathaniel an Israelite	-	-	44
2. Nathaniel a Student of Scripture	-	-	45
3. Nathaniel's Messianic Hope	-	-	46

	Page
B. Nathaniel a Witness - - - - -	46
1. "Son of God" - -- - - -	47
2. "King of Israel" - - - - -	49
C. The Trustworthiness of Nathaniel - -	51

CHAPTER VII: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF
NICODEMUS, A RULER OF THE JEWS

A. The Person and Experience of Nicodemus -	54
1. Nicodemus a Member of the Sanhedrin -	54
2. Nicodemus a Pharisee - - - - -	56
B. Nicodemus a Witness - - - - -	58
1. "A Teacher Come From God" - - - - -	58
2. Before the Sanhedrin - - - - -	58
3. At the Cross - - - - -	58
C. The Trustworthiness of Nathaniel - -	60

CHAPTER VIII: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF
THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA, A SINNER

A. The Person and Experience of This Women -	63
1. A Samaritan - - - - -	63
2. A Sinner - - - - -	64
3. A Worshipper - - - - -	65
B. The Samaritan Woman a Witness - - - - -	66
1. "I Know That Messiah Cometh." - - - - -	67
2. "Can This Be the Christ?" - - - - -	67
3. The Samaritan Messiah - - - - -	68
4. "The Saviour of the World" - - - - -	69
C. The Trustworthiness of This Woman - -	72

CHAPTER IX: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF
PETER, A DISCIPLE

A. The Person and Experience of Peter - -	74
1. Peter a Disciple - - - - -	74
2. Peter One of the Twelve - - - - -	75
3. Peter a Disappointed Disciple - -	76

	Page
B. Peter a Witness - - - - -	79
1. "Words of Eternal Life" - - - - -	79
2. "The Holy One of God" - - - - -	80
C. The Trustworthiness of Peter - - - - -	81

CHAPTER X: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF
THE BLIND MAN, AN OUT-CAST

A. The Person and Experience of the Blind Man	84
1. Blind from His Birth - - - - -	84
2. Cured from His Blindness - - - - -	85
3. Cast Out - - - - -	85
B. The Blind Man a Witness - - - - -	87
1. "He is a Prophet" - - - - -	87
2. "Lord, I Believe" - - - - -	88
C. The Trustworthiness of the Blind Man - - - - -	91

CHAPTER XI: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF
MARTHA, A MOURNER

A. The Person and Experience of Martha - - - - -	93
1. Martha, a Beloved Friend of Jesus - - - - -	93
2. Martha, a Mourner - - - - -	94
3. Martha, a Hopeful Mourner - - - - -	94
B. Martha, a Witness - - - - -	96
C. The Trustworthiness of Martha - - - - -	98

CHAPTER XII: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF
THOMAS, A DOUBTER

A. The Person and Experience of Thomas - - - - -	101
1. The Faith of Thomas - - - - -	101
2. The Despair of Thomas - - - - -	102
3. The Doubt of Thomas - - - - -	103
B. Thomas a Witness - - - - -	104
1. "My Lord" - - - - -	105
2. "My God" - - - - -	108
c. The Trustworthiness of Thomas - - - - -	108

CHAPTER XIII: THE CONCLUSION

A. The Climactic Arrangement of the Fourth Gospel - - - - -	111
B. The Climactic Arrangement of the Witnesses	112
1. The List of Witnesses - - - - -	112
2. The Significance of the Order - - - - -	113
3. The Progression of the Order - - - - -	116
C. The Climactic Content of the Testimony - - - - -	117
1. The List of Testimonies - - - - -	117
2. The Unity of the Testimonies - - - - -	118
3. The Progression of the Testimony - - - - -	120
D. The Trustworthiness of the Witnesses and Their Testimony as a Whole - - - - -	122
1. Coincidence with Collateral Circumstances	122
2. The Number and the Consistency of the Testimonies - - - - -	124
3. The Ability of the Witnesses - - - - -	125
4. The Honesty of the Witnesses - - - - -	127
5. Competent and Satisfactory Evidence - - - - -	128
E. The Accomplished Purpose - - - - -	130
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 133
A. Primary Sources - - - - -	134
B. Secondary Sources - - - - -	134

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

PART ONE - INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT

A. The Subject of the Thesis.

1. A Statement of the Subject.

The Fourth Gospel has been fitly described as, "love's memory of love incarnate."¹ The Gospel claims to have been written by the disciple whom Jesus loved.² The author was loveable, for Jesus, who was love made manifest, loved him.

The subject of the thesis, The Witnesses to the Person of Christ as Presented in the Fourth Gospel, indicates that attention is to be focused upon the Person of Christ, as presented in the testimony of witnesses, and that the study is limited to the witnesses who testify in the Fourth Gospel.

2. The Limits of the Subject.

The treatment of the subject is to be limited to a study of the witness of individuals who make definite statements concerning the Person of Jesus Christ. The indefinite statements of groups will not be treated except as they throw light upon the testimony of individuals.

.....

1. Raven, C. E.: Jesus and the Gospel of Love, p.227.
2. John 21:20, 24.

3. A Statement of the Problem.

The problem is this: To examine the Fourth Gospel in order to discover how the Person of Jesus Christ is there presented. How central a position does it occupy in the Gospel? and, What significance does the author attach to it?

B. The Method of Procedure.

1. The Approach.

During the centuries the Bible has proved to be a library of power which has illuminated and changed life. Preeminently among the books of the New Testament the Fourth Gospel has exercised a dynamic, transforming influence.

"As every pastor and evangelist knows, --- the (Fourth) Gospel verifies itself in spiritual experience: it is the source to which Christians inevitably turn, and never more so than in our time. For the aspiring or the distressed, for the worker or the worshipper it is still 'the most beautiful book in the world'!"¹

What is the source of this influence? One way to determine this is to let the book speak for itself and to study it in the form in which it has come down to us. Hence the present approach will be primarily literary and exegetical, rather than critical and apologetic.

.....

1. Raven, C. E., op. cit., p.197.

2. The Plan.

It will be necessary first of all to make a brief statement concerning the field for study, the purpose and the method of the Fourth Gospel. Then the plan is to study the person and experience, the testimony, and the trustworthiness of the witnesses who testify concerning the Person of Christ, together with any conclusions we may draw with regard to the significance of their testimony.

3. The Sources.

The Fourth Gospel in its various texts and translations will be the main object of attention. Since the thesis is to be largely the product of exegesis, the authority of recognized grammarians and commentators will have to be quoted. The Greek text will be included in the manuscript when necessary for clarity, and for the convenience of scholars who may read the treatise, and the English equivalent will be given for the sake of those who are not familiar with the Greek.

C. The Justification for the Thesis.

The Fourth Gospel has been at the very center of the controversies of the last two centuries. Every type of criticism has been applied to it from every angle. At the center of the Gospel is the Person of Christ. In many treatises of the Fourth Gospel the Person of Christ does not occupy the place assigned to Him in the Gospel itself.

One is led to conclude that the Gospel has been treated as though it were made up of a number of paper dresses which have been cut out and pinned upon preconceived figures of Jesus. The author has not been allowed to speak for himself and present his conception of the figure of Jesus and the garb of personality he wore. Therefore we are justified in considering this book as an organized whole, from the viewpoint of the witnesses, with the purpose of discovering the author's conception of the Person of Jesus Christ.

.....

PART TWO - INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD

A. The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel.

The author of this Gospel is perfectly frank in telling his readers why he has written his 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

As we scrutinize the author's stated purpose we see that he tells us definitely what it is not and what it is. In 20:30 he tells us that it has not been his purpose to write a complete biography. On the contrary he says that he might have narrated many similar events but that those he had recorded are sufficient for his purpose.

Next he proceeds to his avowed purpose, which is to induce belief in a person, the man Jesus, whose career he has portrayed in part. In defining his purpose he says that he wants men to believe that this Jesus is the Anointed One, the Hebrew Messiah, and the Son of God. His purpose has a third element in it: that those who read that which he has written may, by believing, have life in the name of Jesus.²

An interpretive paraphrase will make the meaning clear. "Many other signs of the same kind,³ therefore,

.....

1. John 20:30, 31.

2. Cf. Robertson, A. T.: The Divinity of Christ, p.21.

3. ἀλλὰ not ἕτερα; see Gal. 1:6.

did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, since it is not my purpose to write a complete biography: But these are written with the following purpose: That ye may believe that Jesus, the man about whom I have written, is the Christ, the Hebrew Messiah; and that ye may believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and that by believing ye may have life in his name."

B. The Author's Method.

We are told in the Gospel itself that the author has employed the principle of selection in writing his Gospel. He says that he has selected: "Many other signs therefore, did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book." The writer of the epilogue tells us the same thing,

"There were also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."¹

The "many others" in both these instances are of a similar kind since ἀλλὰ is used, not ἕτερα . The author has selected out of the mass of material at his disposal enough to serve his purpose. All that he has recorded points toward the one truth which he wants to press home.

It remains for us to consider what the author

.....

1. John 21:25.

has selected. It would seem on the basis of 20:31 that the "signs" have been the object of selection. However, the ταῦτα (these) of verse 31 may be translated, "These things" so as to denote the signs and all that has been written. In reality all those things which he has written are signs pointing toward this one goal.

In 21:24 we have the same ταῦτα and τούτων (these things) which cannot be pinned to anything more definite than the witness of "the disciple that beareth witness." This combined with the ἄλλα πολλά (many other things) of verse 25 indicates that the author has in mind more than miracles. While he regards the works of Jesus as "signs" which indicate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, there are other phenomena which indicate the same. Primary among these are the confessions of the people with whom Jesus came into contact, and the testimony of Christ's own consciousness.

One might use various figures of speech to indicate the artistry the author has employed in writing this Gospel. One might say that the author has taken various threads of testimony and woven them into a firm strand, a Life Rope, which he throws out to his readers, so that if they will trust themselves to it they shall find Life.

Or one might say that the author has selected various threads of the life history of Jesus, and woven them into a tapestry, which, when finished presents to us Jesus

Christ the Son of God.

Someone else¹ has suggested a musical figure. The prologue gives us the "motifs" "of all the interplay of forces evident in the scenes of history." We might call the oratorio "The Messiah," and listen with wrapt attention as the musician introduces and repeats now one motif and then another until finally all are joined in a grand "Hallelujah Chorus" -- "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and he shall reign forever and ever, Hallelujah!"²

Perhaps some of us are more interested in journalism than in art. Then let us choose a figure from journalism.² It seems as though the author has given us a newspaper account of a trial. As a true journalist he gives us the all-important headline: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" next, in journalistic fashion, the author gives us that important first paragraph with its summary of the story that is to follow. That task completed, he tells the story and tells it in a most fascinating manner. He tells about the deeds which this Jesus performed. He tells what his enemies said about him, and what his friends testified, as well as the words of Jesus himself. And why are these things thus presented? "These things are written that ye may believe

.....

1. Riggs, J. S.: The Messages of Jesus, p.75.
2. Mulder, Rev. J. R., D.D.; Holland, Michigan.

that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing
ye may have life in his name."

"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."¹

.....

1. Browning, R.: A Death in the Desert.

CHAPTER II

THE PLACE OF WITNESS
IN RELATION TO
THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

CHAPTER II

THE PLACE OF WITNESS IN RELATION TO THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

A. The Prominence of Witness in the Gospel.

The word witness has a prominent place in the Fourth Gospel, both as a noun - *μαρτορία*, and as a verb - *μαρτυρέω*. As a noun with the meaning witness or testimony, it occurs more than a dozen times. As a verb with the meaning to be a witness, or to bear testimony, or to testify, it occurs about thirty times. Altogether the word witness is found more than forty times in the American Revised Version. We find the use of these words concentrated in chapters one, three, five, and eight. We also find important uses ~~of these words~~ in chapters ten, fifteen, nineteen and twenty-one. However, the significance of this idea is not exhausted in the sections where this word is found, for the presentation of evidence and testimony by various witnesses is found in other chapters such as four, six, nine, eleven, and twenty.

B. The Validity of this Approach.

Since there is such a predominant emphasis in this Gospel upon the witnesses and the witness they bear, we shall do well to consider this testimony. Of special

significance is the fact that the burden of the testimony concerns itself with the person of the man Jesus of Nazareth, as we shall see in the later chapters. In considering this testimony, we must bear in mind its relation to the author's purpose. Since the testimony of witnesses occupies such a prominent place in the Gospel, and since it concerns itself with the person of Jesus, the presentation of this evidence is directly in line with the author's purpose: These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.

One of the figures suggested in the previous chapter was the figure of journalism, -- that the author, in journalistic fashion, is presenting us with a newspaper account of a trial. When we realize the significance of witness in the Gospel, perhaps we should modify the figure and say that as a lawyer the author is presenting evidence in a court; evidence concerning the man Jesus, presented with the purpose of bringing men to the conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; evidence presented with the further purpose that, believing in Christ, they may have life in his name.

Dr. W. W. White has said:

"John is about to introduce evidence as in court. Lawyer-like he is stating (as before a jury) at the

very outset what he proposes to prove."¹

C. The Rules of Evidence.

There are certain rules which govern the testimony of witnesses in tribunals of justice. If the author is presenting evidence as in court, then his witnesses and their testimony must be governed by the same rules which govern in tribunals of justice.

The author, in this Gospel is dealing with matters of fact, not matters of abstract mathematical truth. The former are proved by moral evidence alone; the latter are capable of demonstration.

"The proof of matters of fact rests upon moral evidence alone; by which is meant not merely that species of evidence which we do not obtain either from our senses, from intuition, or from demonstration."²

1. Rule Number One: Conditions of Proof.

There are certain conditions under which propositions of fact may be considered to be proved. The rule of municipal law is:

"A proposition of fact is proved, when its truth is established by competent and satisfactory evidence."²

"Competent evidence" is evidence such as the nature of the proposition to be proved requires. "Satisfactory evidence" is enough proof to satisfy an unprejudiced mind. Greenleaf

.....

1. White, W. W.: Studies in the Gospel by John, p.10.
2. Greenleaf: The Testimony of the Evangelists, pp.24-5.

suggests that the only test that can be applied is that such evidence

"satisfy the mind and conscience of ~~a~~ man of common prudence and discretion, and so convince him, that he would venture to act upon that conviction in matters of the highest concern and importance to his own interest."¹

Since the Fourth Gospel deals not with problems in mathematics, but with human affairs, they require moral evidence alone, and may be considered to be proved when they meet the conditions of evidence prescribed above.

2. Rule Number Two: Credibility of Witnesses.

Concerning the matter of establishing the credibility of witnesses, the rule which applies in all trials is:

"In the absence of circumstances which generate suspicion, every witness is to be presumed credible, until the contrary is shown; the burden of impeaching his credibility lying on the objector."²

3. Rule Number Three: Tests of Testimony.

There are certain essential marks by which we can distinguish between true and false testimony. The rule of municipal law is stated as follows:

"The credit due to the testimony of witnesses depends upon, firstly, their honesty; secondly, their ability; thirdly, their number and the consistency of their testimony; fourthly, the conformity of their testimony with experience; and fifthly, the coincidence of their testimony with collateral circumstances."²

.....

1. Greenleaf: The Testimony of the Evangelists, pp.24-5.
2. Ibid., pp.25, 28.

a. Honesty:

Honesty must, of course, characterize a witness. In courts of justice it is assumed that men ordinarily speak the truth unless they have a motive for falsifying.

b. Ability:

A witness must have the ability to testify truthfully. Therefore a witness must have opportunities for observing the facts; the power of accurate discernment; and a reliable memory for retaining the facts. It is always assumed in law that a witness is of sound mind and average intelligence.

c. Consistency:

The testimony of several witnesses must be consistent. Consistency does not necessarily exclude all discrepancy. In fact a certain amount of discrepancy among witnesses is proof that there has been no previous collusion. At the same time there must be substantial agreement on essentials to prove that the witnesses are presenting independent testimony to the same fact. Lange suggests that "Confessions differing in outward form or expression may agree internally and in substance."¹ It is obvious that the more witnesses there are that testify to the essential facts in a certain matter, the more credit we can give to their individual and collective testimony. This is the

.....

1. Lange, Commentary on John, p.352.

law of repetition, or, when given a wider scope and applied in the realm of literature, it is called the Law of Proportion:

"An author reveals his point of view by his comparative stress or neglect (emphasis or omission) in what is written in time, place, person, event, idea, et cetera."¹

d. Conformity with Experience:

Testimony must conform with experience in the sense that each isolated fact must have been capable of being accurately observed and certainly known, so that,

"If they were separately testified to, by different witnesses of ordinary intelligence and integrity, in any court of justice, the jury would be bound to believe them; and a verdict, rendered contrary to the uncontradicted testimony of credible witnesses to any of these plain facts, separately taken, would be liable to be set aside as a verdict against evidence."²

e. Coincidence with Collateral Circumstances:

Greenleaf also has a very pertinent remark about the coincidence of testimony with collateral circumstances:

"Every event which actually transpires, has its appropriate relation and place in the vast complication of circumstances, of which the affairs of men consist; it owes its origin to the events which have preceded it, is intimately connected with others which occur at the same time and place, and often with those of remote regions, and it in turn gives birth to numberless others which succeed."²

This is a principle which is not only applicable to the testimony of individuals, but the author has sensed it and applied it in presenting the sum-total of testimony in this

.....

1. Kuist, Dr. H. T.: in class in the Biblical Seminary in N.Y., New York City.
2. Greenleaf, op. cit., pp. 42, 43.

Gospel as an organized unit. He has demonstrated a keen sense of relationships in analyzing the testimony of the various witnesses. He has employed what Dr. H. T. Kuist calls the Law of Relationships:

"Everything written or spoken stands in some precise relation to something else in contrast, comparison, cause and effect, or means to end, et cetera."¹

4. Rule Number Four: Testimony of Adversaries:

Jurisprudence attaches special value to the testimony of an adversary and it is self-evident why this should be so. The rule is:

"The testimony of an adversary in one's favor is stronger than that of a friend."²

5. Rule Number Five: Testimony Not Understood.

Sometimes it happens that a witness presents evidence or testimony which he does not fully understand.

The rule with regard to such testimony is:

"Testimony to facts not understood by the witness is not likely to be forged."²

6. Rule Number Six: Self-derogatory Testimony.

There are times when witnesses present testimony which works to their disadvantage. When such testimony is given under certain conditions it is regarded as true.

.....

1. Kuist, Dr. H. T.: in class in ^{The} Biblical Seminary, New York City.

2. White, W. W.: op. cit., p. 29.

"Admissions and confessions given by any person of that which would injure himself may generally be received. He must be of a sound mind, serious, and without hope of temporal advantage or fear of temporal hurt."¹

.....

1. White, W. W., op. cit., p.129.

CHAPTER III

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
JOHN THE BAPTIST, A PROPHET

CHAPTER III
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
JOHN THE BAPTIST, A PROPHET

The first witness the author puts forth is none other than John the Baptist, the last of the prophets.

A. The Person and Position of John.

1. John a Prophet.

"This is the witness of John."¹ The author begins immediately to give testimony. John the Baptist was a prophet with a mission to perform. This is the first truth we learn. The priests and Levites asked him, "Who art thou?" With absolute honesty he declared that he was neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet. What then is his commission? "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as said Isaiah the prophet."² As a prophet, John's mission was to prepare the way of the Lord and point Him out as the Messiah. John was fully aware of his mission and applied himself to the task with diligence. As a prophet, John had been given a sign by which he was to recognize the One whom he was to

.....

1. John 1:19.
2. John 1:23.

introduce, " --- he that sent me to baptize in water he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is He that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit."¹

2. John a Subordinate.

Besides being a prophet with a mission to perform, John was a subordinate with prestige to lose. " --- in the midst of you standeth one --- the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose."² John knew that he would be superceded by One who would far excel him. He knew that he was only a forerunner who had been sent to baptize with water, but that the One who would come after him would baptize with the Holy Spirit.³ He knew that he was only the friend of the bridegroom, the "best man", who would never be the one to carry away the bride, but rather that it was his duty to introduce the bride to the One who was the Bridegroom and see Him carry the bride away,⁴ for "he that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom --- standeth and heareth him, --- He must increase but I must decrease."⁵

.....

1. John 1:33.
2. John 1:26-27.
3. John 1:26, 33.
4. John 1:35-37. 3:26.
5. John 3:29, 30.

3. John a Relative.

We know that John was a relative of Jesus, and we have reasons to believe that the two were intimately acquainted. According to the Jewish custom every able bodied male over twelve years of age was supposed to go to Jerusalem to the annual feasts. This was especially true of the Feast of Tabernacles¹ and of the Feast of the Passover² and of the Feast of Weeks.³ Thus three times a year for eighteen years these two boys of the same age went up to the same feasts, in the same city. Add to that, the fact that they were related⁴ and that their mothers were intimately acquainted,⁵ and it becomes extremely likely that John and Jesus may have known one another before the time of the baptism of Jesus.⁶ On the basis of such circumstances it seems probable that the two may have developed an intimate personal acquaintance, and that Edersheim might have been more positive on this matter.

"Although there seems not to have been any personal acquaintance between Jesus and John -- and how could there be when their spheres lay so widely apart? -- each must have heard and known of the other."⁷

.....

1. Cf. Schürer, : A History of the Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. II, p.51.
2. Cf. Edersheim, : The Life and Times of Jesus, Vol. I, pp.235-6.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, p.229.
4. Luke 1:36.
5. Luke 1:39, 40,56.
6. Cf. Macgregor, : The Gospel of John, p.278, in the Moffatt New Testament Commentary series.
7. Edersheim, op. cit., Vol. I, p.278.

B. John a Witness

When we think of John as a prophet with a mission to perform and a sign given to him, and bear in mind that he is a relative and probably a personal acquaintance of Jesus, then 1:29-34 takes on added significance. John saw Jesus coming ^{to} him and said,

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. This Jesus is the man concerning whom I said, After me (in point of time) cometh a man who is come to be before me (in dignity), because he existed before me. And I knew not the personal identity of this man concerning whom I spoke, but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. --- He that sent me to baptize in water gave me a sign and said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And, I have beheld (the sign) the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven and it abode upon him, who in one person is Jesus and the Lamb of God concerning whom I spoke. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."¹

1. "The Lamb of God."

We now concern ourselves with the essence of the testimony of John as it is summarized in the two phrases "The Lamb of God" and "The Son of God." In doing so we must remember that John is a prophet, a student of the Old Testament, and the son of a priest.

It seems to me to be beside the point to use an antithesis here: that the Baptist refers either to the Paschal Lamb or the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. "He

.....

1. Cf. John 1:29, 30, 31, 33, 32, 34.

could see the sacrificial side of the servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 53 and he knew the meaning of the Paschal Lamb."¹ MacGregor is of the same opinion.

"It (the title) seems to be jointly derived from the sacrificial ritual and from the 'Servant' passage of Isaiah 53, and therefore includes the three-fold idea of patient submission, vicarious suffering and redemption from sin."²

When we consider Isaiah 53 as a background for this passage, certain phrases are especially significant. Verse 10 speaks of making "his soul an offering for sin." Verse 4 says, "He hath borne our griefs." Verse 11 says, "By the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many." It must be noted that the LXX uses "pherein," Isaiah 53:4, which means "to bear," while John 1:29 has "airein" "to take away." However the thought is the same for a lamb can only remove or take away sin by bearing it vicariously. On the other hand,

"the bearing in connection with the idea of the offering for sin and the vicarious expiation involves the idea of taking away, carrying off; it is therefore of no account that the Baptist says $\alpha \lambda \rho \epsilon \nu \iota$, and the Septuagint $\phi \epsilon \rho \epsilon \nu \iota$ "----".³

It is apparent that Isaiah had a conception of the atoning virtue of holy suffering and this same idea is present in the Baptists' testimony. Moreover, just as Isaiah went back to the expiatory sacrifice of the lamb for

.....

1. Robertson, A. T.: The Divinity of Jesus, p. 47.
2. MacGregor, op. cit., pp. 27-28.
3. Lange: Commentary on John, p. 86.

a sin offering,¹ and the atoning sacrifice of the Paschal lamb whose blood was sprinkled upon the door posts,² so, too, these ideas must have been in the mind of the Baptist.

We must note that a burden is assigned to the Lamb of God to take away *τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου* - the sin of the world. Sin is here named in the singular, and it is the sin of the world."

"This forcibly presents the sins of the race as one fact. Christ bore the whole. 'Sin and the world' says Bengel, 'are equally wide. In Isaiah 53:6, 8, 12 the same singular number is used in the midst of plurals.'"³

Dods calls attention to a quotation by Wetstein from Philo that some sacrifices were *ὑπερ πάντων ἀνθρώπων γένους* 4.

From the repetition of the Baptist's description of Jesus as the Lamb of God in verse 36 it is apparent that this constituted the burden of his message. It was not his only message. He also says, "I have seen, and I have borne witness that this is the Son of God."⁵ In as much as this will be repeated later, we shall deal with it where it constitutes the major emphasis of the testimony.

.....

1. Lev. 5:6.
2. Ex. 12:1-13.
3. Lange, op. cit., p.87 -- note.
4. Dods: Expositor's Greek Testament Vol. I, p.695.
5. John 1:34.

C. The Trustworthiness of John.

The author has given us the information upon the basis of which the Baptist has reached this judgment. We have noted that the Baptist was a prophet, with a mission to perform, and a sign given; that he was a relative and probably an acquaintance. Since he had the assigned mission of pointing out the Messiah, it behooved him to know thoroughly the character of him he was seeking. And certainly after the sign had been given and Jesus had been shown to him to be the man, he must have had a heart to heart talk with this One concerning their relationships one to the other. Even Strauss admits that

"a penetrating mind like that of the Baptist might, even before the death of Jesus, gather from the Old Testament phrases and types the notion of a suffering Messiah, and ~~that~~ his obscure hints on the subject might not be comprehended by his disciples and contemporaries."¹

Dods has a more positive suggestion:

"The solution is probably to be found in the intercourse of John with Jesus, and especially after His return from the Temptation. These men must have talked long and earnestly on the work of the Messiah, ---."²

When we evaluate the testimony of John we note that there are no circumstances which generate suspicion, (rule 2), there is no motive for falsifying (rule 3a), he is eminently qualified (rule 3b), there is a remarkable coincidence of his testimony with collateral circumstances:

.....

1. Quoted by MacGregor, op. cit., p.29.
2. Dods, op. cit., p.696.

"it owes its origin to the events which have preceded it, is intimately connected with others which occur at the same time and place, and --- it in turn gives birth to numberless others which succeed."¹

If we are to believe that John did not understand the full significance of his statements then according to rule five their significance remains the same. In view of the fact that, as a result of his testimony, John "must decrease," we are confirmed in the belief that his testimony is trustworthy (rule 6).

Let us summarize the Baptist's testimony in the words of another:

"The Baptist's testimony was of supreme value because of
 (1) his appointment to the function of identifying the Messiah,
 (2) his knowledge of Jesus,
 (3) his own holiness,
 (4) his disinterestedness."²

.....

1. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.43.
2. Dods, op. cit., p.692.

CHAPTER IV
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
ANDREW, A DISCIPLE OF THE BAPTIST

20827

CHAPTER IV
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
ANDREW, A DISCIPLE OF THE BAPTIST

Following almost immediately the testimony of John the Baptist, the author presents us with the testimony of one of his disciples -- Andrew.

A. The Person and Experience of Andrew.

1. Andrew, a Disciple of the Baptist.

We are told that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist, and that he was one of the two who heard his testimony.¹ Now we may be sure that the testimony of the Baptist to these two disciples was not limited to the simple statement, "Behold the Lamb of God!" for John was a prophet with a mission to perform, and a man with his sense of obligation, and his thorough study of the One he was called to point out, and his experience in the confirmation by the sign, would make his testimony as thorough as his commission, investigation, and confirmation had been. He who had seen and had borne witness that Jesus was the Son of God, now testified when he saw Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"² We have further proof that John's testimony was thorough,

.....

1. John 1:35, 40.
2. John 1:34-36.

for the author says that "the two disciples heard him speak."¹ The verb for heard is ἤκουσαν, used with the genitive αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος . According to the characteristic usage of ἀκούω with the genitive in John it means not only to hear, but to understand and appreciate. Concerning this usage and this passage, Bernard says:

"The construction of ἀκούειν in John is remarkable. When --- it takes the genitive it generally means 'to harken to' i.e., to hear and appreciate (cf. 1:37; 5:25, 28; 6:60; 9:31; 10:3, 16, 20; 18:37).^{2,3}

"The two disciples heard John's words, and heard them with understanding, and appreciation, for such is the force in John of ἀκούειν followed by a genitive."⁴

2. Andrew, a Guest of Jesus.

Upon hearing and understanding the testimony which identified Jesus as the Lamb of God, Andrew and the other disciple followed Jesus, and were invited to his home and became his guests. We are not told what the subject of conversation was, yet there is only one conclusion we can draw. They must have spoken about the personal identity of Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Son of God, and the Messiah; for, John the Baptist's witness had been, "This is the Son of God;" his most recent testimony, immediately preceding the interview, had been, "Behold the Lamb of God;"

.....

1. John 1:37.

2. Bernard: Gospel According to St. John, Vol. I, p.108, in the International Critical Commentary Series.

3. Cf. Abbott: Johannine Vocabulary, pp.116-7.

4. Bernard, Ibid., p.54.

and the immediate result was that Andrew found his own brother and testified, "We have found the Messiah." Since the conversation followed such testimony and resulted in such testimony, the conversation itself must have concerned that testimony.

B. Andrew a Witness

The disciples of John the Baptist had been waiting with anxious anticipation for "the hope of Israel." Now he had not only been pointed out to these two, but they had enjoyed his companionship and listened to his words. They are certain that their hopes are to be realized in the one they have found. When they first met him they called him "Rabbi", now Andrew calls him "Messiah".

1. "The Messiah."

The testimony of Andrew to Peter was, "We have found the Messiah." The term is used in the New Testament only here and in John 4:25. It is a Hebrew word corresponding to the Greek word $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ -- Christ, and means anointed. The term is found repeatedly in the Old Testament where it is applied to kings and priests who were consecrated to office by the ceremony of anointing. The term is applied to the priest only as an adjective. Leviticus 4:3, 5, 16; and 6:22 speak of "the anointed priest".

The term is used substantively of the king who is

called "Jehovah's anointed".¹ This is based on the anointing ceremony.² The title took on a special significance when God told David that he would "establish the throne of his kingdom forever".³ Hence we find in the Psalms that the title denotes the representative of the royal line of David.⁴ In the Psalms the references are to "mine", "thine", and "His" anointed. The prophets added to the conception although they did not use the term.

Isaiah spoke of a king of the line of Jesse who would be endowed with the Spirit of Jehovah,⁵ and of one who would establish and uphold the kingdom of David forever.⁶ Jeremiah spoke of a king who would appear in the line of David and be a deliverer.⁷ Micah spoke of a "ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting".⁸ In due time the term Messiah began to be applied in a technical sense to this coming king.

There was a prevalent Messianic hope in New Testament times. We find indications of it in the Gospels. We are told that " --- the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply

.....

1. I Sam. 24:6, 10; II Sam. 19:21.
2. I Sam. 10:1; 16:13.
3. II Sam. 7:13.
4. Ps. 2:2; 18:50; 84:9; 89:38; 51; 132:10, 17.
5. Is. 11:1-5.
6. Is. 9:6, 7.
7. Jer. 23:5, 6.
8. Micah 5:25.

he were the Christ."¹ One of the questions uppermost in the mind of John himself was, "Art thou he that cometh or look we for another?"²

Various elements entered into this conception, especially the national or political, the apocalyptic, and the spiritual. The most pronounced factor in the conception was the national, i.e., that this

"royal son of David would bring victory and prosperity to the Jewish nation and set up his throne in Jerusalem. --- It would seem that apocalyptic elements mingled with the national expectation, for it was supposed that the Messiah would come forth suddenly from concealment and attest himself by miracles. (John 7:27, 31).

"But there were spiritual minds who interpreted the nation's hope, not in any conventional sense, but according to their own devout aspirations. Looking for 'the consolation of Israel', 'the redemption of Jerusalem', they seized upon the spiritual features of the Messianic king and recognized in Jesus the promised Savior who would deliver the nation from its sins. (Luke 2:25, 30, 38; cf. 1:68-79)³

2. "Rabbi."

Since this is the first occurrence of this term, let us consider not only the progression from "Rabbi" to "Messiah", but also the significance of the progression from Rabbi and Sir (*Κύριε*) to Lord (*Κύριε*) elsewhere.

In the early part of the Gospel those who are outside the disciple circle address Jesus as "Sir" --

.....

1. Luke 3:15.

2. Matt. 11:3.

3. Chrichton, J., article: Messiah, in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

Among these we find the woman of Samaria (4:11), the noble man of Capernaum (4:49), and the sick man at Bethesda (5:7). Later in the Gospel we find that believers address him as "Lord", as the American Revised Version correctly translates, *Κύριε*. The blind man whom Jesus has cured (9:36), and Mary and Martha (11:3, 21, 27, 32) address him thus. This change from Sir to Lord is similar to the change from Rabbi to Lord in chapter six. At first the multitude who have been fed say, Rabbi (6:25), but after Christ has told them of the "true bread out of heaven" they call him Lord. (6:34). Likewise the disciples call Jesus Rabbi until the conclusion of the discourse on the bread of life when Peter is the first of the disciples to call him Lord. (6:68). In 11:8 the disciples call Jesus Rabbi for the last time. From then on they consistently call him Lord. (11:12; 13:6, 25; 14:5, 8, 22; 21:15). With regard to this usage Bernard says:

"--- Rabbi disappears from their speech, and they say Lord, the change in address indicating a growing reverence. --- Thus John's report as to the use of these titles by the disciples is not only consistent, but is probably historical."¹

Thus we conclude that early in his ministry disciples called Jesus Rabbi, at the end they called him Lord. Those who had not yet come to believe in him as the Lord of Life, called him Rabbi or *Κύριε* Sir, those who believed called

.....

1. Bernard, op. cit., p.55.

him *Κόρκε* Lord.

C. The Trustworthiness of Andrew.

Andrew gave his testimony, but can we rely on it? The rules of testimony must determine. According to the first rule his testimony stands. Andrew, as a result of his conversation, had reached the conclusion that Jesus was more than a Rabbi, -- that he was the Messiah. Not only was he convinced but he was ready "to act upon that conviction in matters of the highest concern and importance to his own interest",¹ namely, in sharing his conviction with his brother, and in giving weeks and eventually years of companionship to Jesus.

Andrew also meets the requirements of the third rule. No one questions his honesty. Who will question his ability in view of the fact that he has had the opportunity of hearing John the Baptist and abiding a day with Jesus? When measured by the norm of consistency, we find that there is substantial agreement in essentials between his witness and the witness of John the Baptist, yet, while their underlying thought is the same, the phraseology is different. Again Andrew's witness as an outgrowth of his experience is an illustration of the law that "Everything spoken stands in some precise relation to something else in contrast, comparison, cause and effect, or means to an end, ---."2

.....

1. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.25.
2. Kuist, op. cit.

CHAPTER V
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
PHILIP, A FISHERMAN

CHAPTER V
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
PHILIP, A FISHERMAN

The experience and the testimony of Philip are very similar to the experience and testimony of Andrew. Both are from Bethsaida, both make personal contacts with Jesus, the results of the contact are the same in that both of them tell an intimate acquaintance that they have found the Messiah.

A. The Person and Experience of Philip.

1. Philip, a Fisherman.

"Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter."¹ Bethsaida means "Fishertown". This name and the incident in the twenty-first chapter are practically the only indications we have in the Fourth Gospel that the early disciples were fishermen. The other Gospels state this fact more clearly.² Philip is again referred to in this Gospel as the one who calculated the amount of bread needed to feed the five thousand; as one of those who told Jesus that the Greeks would see him; and as the one who

.....

1. John 1:44.
2. Mark 1:16-20.

requested, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."¹

Lange says that according to these passages in John,

"His characteristic, --- seems to have been a striving after ocular evidence in the nobler sense, a buoyant and resolute advance to the object in view."²

2. Philip, an Acquaintance of Andrew and Peter.

The mention of the home town of Philip as the home town of Andrew and Peter gives us the explanation of how it was that Philip was prepared to follow Christ. Just as the author could pass over the account of the conversation between the two disciples and Jesus because of what precedes and follows, so here he can omit the conversation between Philip and Jesus by simply stating that Philip and Andrew and Peter are from the same city, and by giving Philip's testimony, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, --- "³ In this clever way, the author links Philip up with a group who have been expecting and who have found the Messiah.

"The notice of the home of Philip explains how he was prepared to welcome Christ. He knew and was in sympathy with Andrew and Peter; and probably he, too, with them had followed the Baptist.

"This form of sentence (in 1:45 the verb 'we have found' stands last) seems to imply that Philip had often dwelt on the Old Testament portraiture of Messiah. By the use of the plural, Philip unites himself to the little group

.....

1. John 6:5; 12:21; 14:8.
2. Lange, op. cit., p.94.
3. John 1:45.

of disciples, and his words show that he had been before in communication with them."^{1,2}

3. Philip, a Follower of Jesus.

The only part of the interview between Jesus and Philip which is recorded is the summons "Follow me". In the Synoptics this is the formula for the call to discipleship. To a would-be disciple Jesus says: "Follow me; and leave the dead to bury their own dead."³ He uses this summons in calling Matthew,⁴ and in speaking to the rich young ruler.⁵

There is no reason for considering this "Follow me" to be anything less than a summons to discipleship. MacGregor,⁶ Lange,⁷ and Trench⁸ are of this opinion.

"This cannot merely mean: Join the journeying company; yet neither is it the call to the Apostolic office. It is the invitation to discipleship, in the form of a travelling companionship."⁷

Trench suggests that it may have involved more than Philip at that time realized.

.....

1. Westcott: Commentary on John, p.26.
2. Cf. Godet; Commentary on the New Testament, John, Vol.I, p.331-2.
3. Matt. 8:22; Luke 9:59.
4. Matt. 9:9.
5. Matt. 19:21.
6. MacGregor, op. cit., p.40.
7. Lange, op. cit., p.94.
8. Quoted by Lange, ibid., p.94.

B. Philip a Witness.

"The Light is beginning to shine."¹ "One lighted torch serves to light another."² As Andrew went in search for Peter publishing his glad eureka, so Philip went in search for Nathanael publishing his eureka, but in different words. Philip's confession is a circumlocution for Messiah. "Him, of whom Moses in the law, ---, wrote", is certainly a reference to Deut. 18:15, "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me; ---". "Him, of whom ---, the prophets wrote," is a reference to the various prophecies of the Messiah. (See Andrew a Witness p.33). These two, the prophet like unto Moses and the Messiah, came to be identified. Jesus himself identifies the two: "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."³ Peter in his sermon in Solomon's Porch also identified the two: "Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up --- like unto me; ---. Yea and all the prophets ---, they also told of these days."⁴ Thus in his own way Philip joins Andrew in declaring that Jesus is the Messiah.

.....

1. Robertson; The Divinity of Christ, p.49.
2. Godet, op. cit., p.332.
3. Luke 24:27.
4. ~~John 1:44, 45.~~ *act 3:226.*

C. The Trustworthiness of Philip.

Practically the same considerations which make the witness of Andrew trustworthy, make the witness of Philip trustworthy. In matters of the highest concern to his own interests, namely the disposition of weeks and years of his own life and the life of his friend, he was ready to act upon this new born and newly confirmed conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. These same considerations remove suspicion from him, and establish his honesty. The evidence which has been advanced in support of the contention that Philip had probably been a disciple of the Baptist, and a student of the Old Testament, indicate that Philip had had the opportunity for accurate observation and correct discernment. His testimony is consistent with the preceding and the succeeding witnesses in the sense that the essential thought is the same, while the words are his own. The words, "Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter," and "We have found him, ---", show that his testimony was intimately related to collateral circumstances, and that Philip is another illustration of the law that,

"Every event which actually transpires, has its appropriate relation and place in the vast complication of circumstances, of which the affairs of men consist."¹

.....

1. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.43.

CHAPTER VI

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
NATHANAEL, AN ISRAELITE

CHAPTER VI
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
NATHANAEL, AN ISRAELITE

Having finished with the testimony of John the Baptist, the author presents us with the testimony of Andrew, one of John's disciples, to his own brother Simon. He follows that with the testimony of one of the disciples Jesus has called himself, Philip, and Philip's testimony is followed by that of Nathanael.

A. The Person and Experience of Nathanael.

1. Nathanael, an Israelite.

The little that we know about Nathanael is that he is probably listed among the disciples as Bartholomew¹ and what the Fourth Gospel tells us of him.² All that we know of him shows that he was a man with a keen, sensible mind. He was not weak or fickle, swayed by every new impulse and crying "Rabbi" to every new teacher who startled his intellect with a sensational presentation of the truth. Quite the contrary. He was a calm, thoughtful man who weighed evidence carefully before he pronounced judgment.

.....

1. Mark 3:18, Matt. 10:3, Luke 6:14, and Acts 1:13.
2. John 1:45-51, 21:2.

Moreover he demanded the evidence; he would not accept mere testimony even though it came from a friend. He was too well informed for that. However, he was open-minded and fair; he was willing to face the evidence. He was willing to "come and see." One more thing we know about him and that is that he was steadfast, a fact which is proved by the mention of his name among the list of those who were disciples after the crucifixion¹ as well as after the resurrection and ascension.²

2. Nathanael, A Student of Scripture.

Because Nathanael was a man with a keen rational mind we must find a rational explanation for this startling confession. It becomes immediately apparent that Nathanael was a devout Israelite. Philip comes to him with the news that he has found in Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, him of whom Moses and the prophets had written, the Messiah. This sounded preposterous to Nathanael. It was proverbial that "out of Galilee ariseth no prophet,"³ but Nathanael had even better evidence. He knew that Nazareth was not even mentioned in the Old Testament, hence the Messiah could not come from Nazareth.

Nathanael was a student of the Scriptures and we are reminded that he had spent some time under the fig

.....

1. John 21:2.
2. Acts 1:13.
3. John 7:41, 52.

tree. As we reconstruct the situation, we have an Israelite, a student of the Scriptures in a favorite place for secret communion -- the dense shade and overhanging branches of a fig tree which seclude him from the whole world.

3. Nathanael's Messianic Hope.

What are we to suppose Nathanael is thinking about? The confession, "Thou art the king of Israel," indicates immediately that he was thinking of the Messiah the Old Testament promised, the Messiah the Jewish nation expected, the Messiah John the Baptist heralded. The answer of Jesus, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," indicates that Nathanael was thinking of his personal relationship to that Messiah who was to be the Redeemer of Israel, for Jesus who knew the Psalms pronounced him guileless:

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven
Whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile."¹

B. Nathanael A Witness.

The seclusion of the fig tree gave Nathanael the assurance that no one knew of his meditation there. Yet when he came into the presence of Jesus, whom he had come to see, Jesus said, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom

.....

1. Ps. 32:1, 2.

is no guile." And when Nathanael in astonishment asked, "Whence knowest thou me?", Jesus answered, "When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee."

Now Nathanael was a devout student of Scripture and no doubt he had often heard these words:

"O Jehovah, thou hast searched me and known me.
Thou knowest my down sitting and my uprising;
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue,
But, lo, O Jehovah, Thou knowest it altogether."¹

1. "Son of God."

When Jesus spoke to him there was something in the look of Jesus and there was something in the words of Jesus which convinced Nathanael that Jesus had "searched" him and "known" him, that Jesus knew his "down sitting and uprising" under the fig tree, yes that Jesus understood his "thoughts afar off."

"Jesus' words seem to imply a miraculous power of vision at a distance; yet the extraordinary impression they make on Nathanael shows that he regards them as a proof of something still more wonderful, of the divine intuition already illustrated at 42. He is amazed not at a mere feat of physical longsightedness, but at the divine clairvoyance which is able to read at a glance both the scene and the subject of his secret meditation, ---. Nathanael may be supposed to have been meditating on the coming of the Messiah, and Jesus' mention of the fig-tree in conjunction with his expression 'a genuine Israelite' would call Messianic associations to his mind, and thus convince him that Jesus has read his secret

.....

1. Psalm 139:1-4.

thoughts. Can one who enters thus mysteriously into the Messianic dreamings of a complete stranger be any other than the Messiah himself?"¹

When Nathanael realized that his place of retirement was a place of exposure, and the very thoughts of his innermost being were in the possession of this man to whom Philip had brought him, his rational mind was convinced of the deity of Jesus and he cried out "Thou art the Son of God."

It is ~~is~~probable that Nathanael had heard the testimony of the Baptist. If so, then we have here an echo of the Baptist's words of 1:34. The history of the phrase "Son of God" is significant and the outline of its history may be represented by the following passages. Nathan, in speaking the words of God to David concerning his seed says, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." Here the title is applied to the king to designate the relationship existing between God, the Divine Sovereign, and the king, his human representative. Yet all the conditions described were not fulfilled in David's family, so there arose the expectation of an ideal fulfillment in the Messiah. In the second Psalm Jehovah's "anointed" is addressed: "Thou art my son." Here it has a definitely Messianic sense. It is quite natural that the Baptist and Nathanael after him should give the title to Jesus as the Messiah and thereby set him apart from all other men. In doing so they expanded the

.....

1. MacGregor, op. cit., pp.42-43.

meaning of the term, for they were speaking in a thoroughly monotheistic community, and applying the term to one who had not a political kingdom. Godet well summarizes the meaning and derivation of this term:

"The term Son of God characterizes a being as a representative of the divinity in a particular function. It is applied in the Old Testament to angels, to judges, to kings, and, finally, to the Messiah: 'Thou art my Son; to-day have I begotten thee' (Ps. ii.7, 12); but there is a difference in the mode of representation in each case. An ambassador represents his sovereign, but otherwise than does the son of the latter, for the son, while representing his sovereign, represents in him also his father. Verse 30 (1:30) proves that John the Baptist takes the word Son here in the loftiest sense which can be attached to it; the being whose existence is united to that of God by an incomparable bond, and who comes to fulfill here on earth the function of the Saviour."¹

Hence the two qualities which the term Son of God ascribes to Jesus are that he bears an intimate and personal relation to God and that he manifests God as no other person could.

2. "King of Israel."

Nathan~~a~~el also cried out: "Thou art the King of Israel." Like the former title, this one has its roots in the second Psalm, "I have set my kings upon my holy hill of Zion." It is a distinctly messianic title. To us this is a lesser title than "thou art the Son of God," but it was not for Nathan~~a~~el. If anything it meant more to him because of the relationship involved in the expression:

.....

1. Godet, op. cit., Vol. I, p.321.

the mutual relationship between king and subject --
Jesus, the King of Israel; Nathanael, an Israelite, his
subject.

These words indicate that the experience of Na-
thanael was more than an intellectual confession. They give
evidence that Jesus not only demonstrated a more-than-human
knowledge of Nathanael's innermost being, but that there
was something in his speech and something in his voice which
demonstrated that his knowledge was accompanied by a more-
than-human love. For, as these two men met for the first
time, there was no malicious gleam of triumph in Jesus'
eye, and there was no chuckle in his voice, at the thought
that before him, as an open book, lay the life of a sinful
human being whom he might expose to the whole world. All
that Nathanael could detect was compelling, forgiving love.
When Nathanael realized not only that he was being searched
by a supernatural knowledge, but that he was being drawn
by an irresistible love, his heart was won, and with the
loyalty of a spirit without guile, he said, "Thou art the
King of Israel." It is as though he reasoned thus: "Thou
who hast demonstrated to me by thy wonderful knowledge that
thou art the Son of God, doest call me an Israelite. I
who am an Israelite call thee the King of Israel. Thou art
the King of Israel, and my personal King and Savior."

" οὐ βασιλευς εἶ τοῦ
ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλεως τῆς ἰερουσαλῆμ, - This, to us, is a lesser title
than οὐ θεοῦ τοῦ ἑσθλοῦ, but not so
to Nathanael; Nathanael has been hailed by Jesus as an

'Israelite,' a worthy and representative son of Israel, and he replies out of the fullness of his heart, 'Thou are the King of Israel,' and therefore Nathanael's King."¹

This conviction is aptly embodied in the sentiments expressed in the following lines:

"I was a fisher by the Sacred Sea:
It was at sunset: the tranquil tide
Bathed dreamily the pebbles: the light
Crept up the distant hills, and in its wake
Soft purple shadows wrapped the dewy fields.
Then Philip came and called me.
In doubt I followed; but soon
I gazed with joy on that sweet face --
Those eyes from out of which as from a window shone
Divinity, looked on by inmost soul
And lighted it forever: Then His words
Broke on the silence of my heart, and made
The whole world musical. Incarnate love
Took hold of me and claimed me for its own."²

C. Trustworthiness of Nathanael.

We must now judge whether or not Nathanael is a competent witness. In general Nathanael falls into the same class with Andrew and Philip. But let us consider points in which he differs from them. If it is true that Nathanael started out with an original prejudice against the thought that the one about whom the prophets and Moses had written could hail from Nazareth, ~~a~~ prejudice based on his knowledge of Scripture, then his final confession is the more noteworthy on the ground that, "The testimony

.....

1. Bernard, J. H., op. cit., p.64.
2. Anonymous to the best of my knowledge. It contains alterations of my own which are hard to distinguish since it is quoted from memory.

of an adversary in one's favor is stronger than that of a friend."¹

.....

1. White, W. W., op. cit., p.129.

CHAPTER VII
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
NICODEMUS, A RULER OF THE JEWS

CHAPTER VII
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
NICODEMUS, A RULER OF THE JEWS

The next witness the author introduces is Nicodemus, a representative of an entirely different class. John the Baptist was a prophet, Andrew and Philip were fishermen, Nathaniel was an Israelite, but Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews and a member of the Sanhedrin.

A. The Person and Experience of Nicodemus.

1. Nicodemus a Member of the Sanhedrin.

Nicodemus is referred to by various titles in the Fourth Gospel. He is referred to as a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, and as a teacher of Israel;¹ not only the title, "a ruler of the Jews," but also his presence in the council² indicate that he was a member of the Sanhedrin.

The Sanhedrin had been occupied with certain problems. John the Baptist constituted one of these problems. The people had heard him preach the gospel of the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins: "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The people were

.....

1. John 3:1, 10.
2. John 7:45-52.

on the tiptoe of excitement, and they were discussing whether or not John was the Christ.¹ It was the official duty of the Sanhedrin to decide such matters, therefore they sent a deputation to John to inquire who he was. The Pharisees were primarily responsible for, or made up the major portion of, the deputation, depending on our translation of 1:24. John frankly denied that he was the Christ and told the deputation that the Christ was in the midst of them.

Jesus presented the second problem to the Sanhedrin. He was one of those who had been baptized by John and it was commonly reported that strange signs had accompanied his baptism: The Spirit had descended as a dove upon him,² and a voice had declared, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Having received the sign, John declared that Jesus was the Lamb of God. This declaration was followed shortly by the turning of the water into wine.³

Needless to say the Sanhedrin had followed all of these events with the keenest interest and had drawn up an informal, and probably unofficial, conclusion as to the man Jesus. This conclusion Nicodemus uses in addressing Jesus: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from

.....

1. Luke 3:15.
2. Mark 1:11, John 1:33.
3. John 2:1-11.

God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him."¹

2. Nicodemus a Pharisee.

The problems of the Sanhedrin became the personal problems of Nicodemus. Since he was a member of the Sanhedrin he was acquainted with the message of John the Baptist. John's message of repentance must have created quite a stir in the Sanhedrin. Here was a man who preached something they did not have in their theology books. Here was a man who said that all men must repent if they were to enter the kingdom of heaven. The Sanhedrin agreed that the publicans would have to repent if they were to enter the kingdom of heaven, but they claimed that they were members of the kingdom of heaven by virtue of the fact that they were children of Abraham. Consequently they were startled when John directed his message of repentance to them:

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."²

The message did not appeal to them and they rejected it, therefore we read,

.....

1. John 3:2.

2. Matt. 3:7-9.

"And the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him."¹

However, Nicodemus was an exception. He took the message of John to heart. As a true Jew his supreme desire was to be a member of the kingdom of heaven. The question was how was that desired end to be reached? John said one thing, the Sanhedrin said another. The Sanhedrin's decision concerning Jesus only complicated matters. At the same time that they considered Jesus a teacher sent from God, they rejected the teaching of John, although John and Jesus taught the same thing. Both preached, "Repent ye."² In this dilemma Nicodemus came to Jesus.

"Nicodemus came to the fountain head, dissatisfied with the way in which his colleagues were dealing with Jesus, and resolved to judge for himself."³

Think of the contrast between the two men as they engage in earnest conversation. The one represents an old covenant; the other represents a new covenant. The one is seeking spiritual light; the other is the true Light. The supreme desire in the heart of one is to be a member of the kingdom of heaven; the supreme desire in the heart of the other is to make men members of the kingdom of heaven.

.....

1. Luke 7:29, 30.
2. Mark 1:4, 15; Matt. 3:2.
3. Dods: Expositor's Greek Testament, p.711.

B. Nicodemus a Witness.

1. "A Teacher Come From God."

When he said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him," Nicodemus was expressing his own opinion as well as that of the Sanhedrin. He considered that Jesus was a divinely commissioned teacher, and judged that his teaching was divinely authenticated by the miracles which he performed. While this is a significant testimony, it is eclipsed by Nicodemus' later testimony.

2. Before the Sanhedrin.

Nicodemus' most significant testimony is the testimony of his later actions. The author gives us two brief but meaningful insights into Nicodemus' subsequent experience. In the first of these,¹ he exhibits a pronounced attitude in favor of Jesus. At a time when the Jews are seeking to kill Jesus, in the very presence of the plotters -- the officers, chief priests and Pharisees -- he is bold enough to suggest that Jesus be given a fair trial.

3. At the Cross.

The last picture of Nicodemus is taken against the background of the cross.² In their night conversation

.....

1. John 7:45-52.
2. John 19:38-42.

Jesus had said,

"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."¹

This was a reference to Jewish history with which Nicodemus was familiar. Nicodemus knew that scene in the wilderness. The people had been bitten by serpents and God told Moses to make a serpent of brass and lift it up in the midst of the camp and tell the people that whoever would look at the brazen serpent would be healed. Throughout the camp dying men and women and children looked at the serpent and were healed. They were healed not because of magic or superstition, but because they believed that the means which God had provided would heal them.

When Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?", Jesus answered, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that whosoever should look to it in faith should be healed; even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever shall look to him in faith, shall not perish but have everlasting life. Nicodemus, it is my part to heal, it is your part to look."

Almost three years passed. During that time Nicodemus had an opportunity to behold the actions and words and character of Christ. Then one day Nicodemus saw Christ again. It was at Golgatha, and lo and behold! the prophecy

.....

1. John 3:14, 15.

which Christ had uttered in his hearing that night was fulfilled in his very presence. For, as Moses had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so Christ was lifted up upon the cross, that whosoever should believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Suddenly Nicodemus realized that he had been "born of water and the Spirit";¹ he realized that he was a member of the kingdom of God; and he gave his most eloquent testimony by joining Joseph of Arimathea in placing Christ in the tomb, and thereby making himself a tardy disciple.

C. The Trustworthiness of Nicodemus.

When subjected to the laws of evidence the testimony of Nicodemus stands. In view of his experience we cannot question his honesty. In view of his position we cannot question his ability. He was a Pharisee versed in the Scriptures. He was a ruler of the Jews with first hand information concerning the person of Jesus. His testimony fits remarkably with the collateral circumstances.

Two considerations carry special weight in this case. Nicodemus is a member of an opposing party and therefore his testimony has added value. Moreover he gave his most eloquent testimony at a time when there was nothing

.....

1. John 3:5.

to be gained by his behavior, and in such a way as to incur the disfavor of his associates. "Admissions and confessions given by any person of that which would injure himself may generally be received."¹

.....

1. White, W. W., op. cit., p.129.

CHAPTER VIII
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA, A SINNER

CHAPTER VIII
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA, A SINNER

The Woman of Samaria presents to us quite a different type of person from any we have considered. John the Baptist was a holy prophet of God, the disciples were honest fishermen, Nicodemus was a truly righteous Pharisee, but now we are dealing with a woman who was a guilty sinner.

A. The Person and Experience of this Woman.

1. A Samaritan.

By repetition the author impresses upon us the fact that this woman was a Samaritan.

"And he must needs pass through Samaria. So he cometh to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, ---. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her Give me to drink. --- The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)¹

In these brief verses the author has succeeded in emphatically informing us that Jesus was dealing with a Samaritan woman and that there existed a hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans. This hostility was one of long

.....

1. John 4:4, 5, 7, 9.

standing going back to the colonization of Israel by the Assyrians from which resulted the opposition of the Samaritans when the Jews returned from Babylon to rebuild the wall, and the erection of a rival temple of Mount Gerizim.¹

2. A Sinner.

Upon meeting this woman, ~~she and~~ Jesus became involved ^{with her} in a conversation concerning living water. The well of Jacob at which they were standing had certain disadvantages: it could quench thirst for only short periods, and was not conveniently situated for immediate access.² Jesus offers the woman water which will quench thirst permanently and is immediately accessible, in fact "in" the person who drinks. These two advantages appeal to this woman and she requests, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw."³

The next thing Jesus does is to begin to fulfill the desire she has expressed.

"The natural interpretation is that in response to her request Jesus gives her now the first draught of the living water by causing her to face her guilty life and bring it to Him. He cannot give the water before thirst for it is awakened. The sure method of awakening the thirst is to make her acknowledge herself a sinful woman."⁴

Jesus proceeds to fulfill this desire by saying, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither."⁵ Alford suggests:

.....

1. II Kings 17:24 ff., Ezra 4, Neh. 6.
2. Cf. Dods, Ex. Gr. T., 726.
3. John 4:15.
4. Dods, *ibid.*, p.727.
5. John 4:16.

"The 'give me this water' was not so simple a matter as she supposed. The heart must first be laid bare before the Wisdom of God: the secret sins in the light of His countenance; and this our Lord here does."¹

Let us imagine that as Christ said, "Go, call thy husband," he gazed into her eyes with a look that pierced the very depths of her soul. It was a different look from any she had ever experienced before. Other men had looked into her eyes, but when they looked, they always looked with a passion for what her body had to offer. Here was a man who looked into her eyes with a passion for what her soul had to offer: in order that he might create and satisfy a thirst for living water. It was a new experience for her. She frankly replied, "I have no husband." Christ continued his search of and for that soul by saying, "You have spoken the truth. You have had five husbands, and the man you are living with now is not your husband."

3. A Worshipper.

She stood exposed. In some way this man had been able to search her soul and discover the record of her past life. She knew that only a man of God would be able to do such a thing so her first conclusion was that Jesus was a prophet. From this decision she turns back to her problem. If this man is a prophet then he can help her take care of her sin problem. The sin problem must be

.....

1. Alford, op. cit., p.729.

solved through worship. Therefore she asks Jesus a question concerning worship.¹

Up until this time both Samaritan and Jewish worship had been local -- either in Gerizim or in Jerusalem -- and it had been symbolic -- either according to the symbol of the Jew or the Samaritan. In solving her problem Jesus tells her that the ideal worshipper will worship not in this or that place, but *ἐν πνεύματι* -- in spirit, "the seat of contemplation, the place of the soul's meeting with God, the sanctuary where the true worship is celebrated."² He also tells her that the true worshipper will worship not in symbol, but in *ἀληθεία* -- in truth, "The opposite of a merely symbolic, formal, ritualistic worship; ---, in a true interaction between the personal worshipper and the personal God."³

This makes her sin problem even worse. If this man knows her life so thoroughly, the only solution for her to follow is his prescription.

B. The Samaritan Woman a Witness.

At the conclusion of this revolutionary statement on worship the woman becomes a witness.

.....

1. John 4:20.
2. Godet, op. cit., p.430.
3. Lange, op. cit., p.162.

1. "I know that Messiah cometh."

As this woman reflected on her sin problem she realized that this man had done more than even a prophet could. He had laid bare her past life. He had told her all things that ever she had done. This was one of the characteristics of the Messiah. She began to wonder whether this was the Messiah. The more she wondered the more positive she became. She decided to find out immediately. It seems that she was planning to state her conclusions and ask her question in a form similar to this: "'I know that Messiah cometh: when he is come, he will declare unto us all things'¹: you have 'told me all things that ever I did'²: are you the Christ?" However Christ anticipated her question and says, "I that speak unto thee am he."³

2. "Can This be the Christ?"

At this point the conversation is interrupted by the disciples who have returned from the city.

"So the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the people, Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?"⁴

The woman left her waterpot because her spiritual thirst had been satisfied. More important things demanded her attention. It was more important that she carry the living

.....

1. John 4:25.
2. John 4:29.
3. John 4:26.
4. John 4:28, 29.

water to Samaria than all the water her waterpot would hold.

Her witness is in the form of a question,

" μὴτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός ?"

The understanding of her testimony depends on the interpretation of μὴτι . It is an interrogative particle and has two uses. According to the first use a negative answer is expected: μὴτι συλλέγουσιν - "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"¹ According to the second use it is used in hesitant questions: μὴτι οὗτός ἐστιν - - "Can this be the son of David?"², μὴτι ἄρα - "When I therefore was thus minded, did I show fickleness?"^{3,4} These are hesitant questions with an element of doubt in them, yet the questioner seems to expect an affirmative answer. "Here and in Mt. xii. 23 mere doubt expresses itself, doubt with rather a leaning to an affirmative answer ---."⁵ "She believes more than she says, ---."⁶

3. The Samaritan Messiah.

The Samaritans cherished Messianic hopes. This

.....

1. Matt. 7:16.

2. Matt. 12:23.

3. II Cor. 1:17.

4. Cf. Abbott-Smith: A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, p.292.

5. Dods, op. cit., p.729.

6. Godet, op. cit., p.433 of Vol. I.

we know not only from the passage under consideration, but from other sources. In the Acts we have the record of the religious fanaticism of the Samaritans with regard to the sorceries ~~of Simon~~ of Simon Magus. This fanaticism was later sublimated and turned into an eager acceptance of Jesus as the Christ as a result of the preaching of Philip.¹ Josephus records an earlier manifestation of their Messianic hope.² At the instigation of a false religious schemer they gathered in arms at Mount Gerizim, during the procuratorship of Pilate who put down the uprising.

The Samaritan Messianic hope was based upon Deuteronomy 18:18 and other allusions in the Pentateuch, and their knowledge of Jewish ideas. They referred to the Messiah as Hashab or Hastab, the Converter, or as El Muhdy, the Guide.³ They expected that he would reveal new truths about God and man.

4. "The Savior of the World."

The testimony of the Woman of Samaria bore fruit. Many of the Samaritans believed because of her testimony,⁴ while others accepted her invitation to come and see Jesus and believed "because of his word" and they said, "Now we

.....

1. Acts 8.

2. Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews, XVIII, IV, 1.

3. Westcott: Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, Chapter II, Note II, p. 172.

4. John 4:39.

believe, ---, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."¹

This is the testimony not of the Woman of Samaria, but of the Samaritans after Jesus had spent two days with them. During those two days Jesus disclosed himself to them as the Savior of the World, and the Samaritans received the disclosure as the truth.

As the author presents the experience of Jesus in Samaria, Jesus speaks more plainly concerning himself and his mission than is his custom. Why has Jesus spoken thus and has the author himself given us the key? We noted in the beginning that the author was very much concerned that we should note that this incident took place in Samaria. In concluding the story he again reminds us twice that it is the Samaritans who believe on him, and that it is the Samaritans who say, "This is indeed the Saviour of the world."² We also noted that Jesus was not only trying to create, but also to satisfy a thirst in this woman for living water.

With these two keys in our hands let us try to unlock the situation. The fact that Jesus was among the Samaritans gave him the liberty to make disclosures concerning his Messiahship which he could not make among the

.....

1. John 4:41, 42.
2. John 4:39-42.

Jews, since the Samaritans were not expecting the Messiah to set up a political kingdom, and hence they would not use Jesus to attain their political ends.¹

"The only consideration which might have induced Jesus thus early to break through a reserve, which elsewhere he maintains to all save the innermost circle of his disciples, and openly to declare himself Messiah, is as Stanton (p.227) suggests, that 'there was not indeed among the Samaritan population, cut off as it was from the life of the Jewish people, the same danger that mischief would arise from false expectations as there was in other districts where he preached.' But this weighs little against the inherent improbability that Jesus would reveal to a flippant woman a secret which he withheld for long even from his closest friends."²

Does this objection hold in the light of what the author has told us? If he is trying to create and to satisfy a thirst in this woman for living water, will he withhold the living water from her when she is ready to receive it? This woman is a sinner. Will Jesus refuse to cleanse her just because she needs cleansing? This woman knows that the Messiah can solve her sin problem. Jesus came to solve the sin problem. Will he refuse to tell this woman that he is the Messiah when he is aware that she knows that the Messiah can solve her sin problem?

"I think, too, there will be felt to be something not only very beautiful, but very characteristic of our Lord, in His declaring Himself with greater plainness of speech than He had Himself hitherto done even to the Twelve, to this dark-minded and sin-stained woman, whose

.....

1. Cf. MacGregor, op. cit., p.106; Dods, op. cit., p.729.
2. MacGregor, op. cit., p.115, and quoting Stanley: Jewish and Christian Messiah, p.227.

spiritual nature was just awakening to life under His presence and His words."¹

C. The Trustworthiness of This Woman.

When we subject this testimony to the laws of evidence the wisdom of the author in selecting the Woman of Samaria as a witness becomes apparent.

In the foregoing section we have dealt with the credibility of this woman as a witness. In the absence of proof to the contrary, we may consider that her credibility is unimpeached, as well as that of the many other Samaritans. We have here testimony which is consistent not only with collateral circumstances, but also with itself: as a result of a two day conference with Jesus, the conviction that he is the Messiah is confirmed and grows to the conviction that he is the Saviour of the world. This testimony is especially valuable because it is the testimony of adversaries: the Samaritans who ordinarily have no dealings with the Jews, come to believe in Jesus. This woman gave her testimony in spite of the fact that it exposed her shame when she said, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did."¹ On these considerations we can accept the testimony of the Woman of Samaria.

.....

1. Stanton: Jewish and Christian Messiah, p.275, quoted by Dods, op. cit., p.729

CHAPTER IX
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
PETER, A DISCIPLE

CHAPTER IX
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
PETER, A DISCIPLE

We have already studied the testimony of three disciples in the very earliest days of the ministry of Jesus. Now the author presents us with the testimony of a fourth disciple at a turning point in Christ's ministry.

A. The Person and Experience of Peter.

Just as Mark places the testimony of Peter at the turning point of his Gospel¹ when in answer to the oft repeated question, "Who is he?", Peter answers, "Thou art the Christ;" so the author of the Fourth Gospel, at the watershed of the ministry of Jesus, presents the witness of Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God," at a time when many disciples are deserting Jesus and the Jews are seeking to kill him.²

1. Peter, a Disciple.

If we take the ministry of Jesus to be a three year public ministry, then Peter had been with Jesus as a

.....

1. Mark 8:29.
2. John 6:66-7:1.

disciple for two years. The author is not clear on this matter. He mentions three Passovers explicitly,¹ and an indefinite "feast of the Jews".² Since this confession comes shortly after the second Passover which is mentioned explicitly, Peter had certainly been with Jesus for one year.

During that period he had had some definite experiences. The first time he met Jesus, Jesus promptly announced, "You are Simon, the son of John. Your name is to be Peter, or Rock."³ It was Peter's mother-in-law whom Jesus healed of a fever.⁴ Matthew tells us of Peter's experience in trying to walk to Jesus upon the water⁵ an event which according to Robertson immediately preceded the discourse on the bread of life, and the confession of Peter.^{6,7}

2. Peter, One of the Twelve.

It is significant to note that the question of Jesus, "Would ye also go away?" is addressed to the Twelve and that although it is Peter who speaks he is voicing the conviction of the Twelve.⁸ He says, "to whom shall we go? --- we have believed and know ---!" Since this is the

.....

1. John 2:13; 6:4; 12:1.

2. John 5:1.

3. John 1:42.

4. Mark 1:30-31.

5. Matt. 14:28-33.

6. Robertson, A. T.: A Harmony of the Gospels, pp.89-90.

7. John 6:

8. John 6:67-69.

conviction of the Twelve, we must take into consideration the experience of the Twelve.

After a night of prayer, Jesus selected the Twelve to be his companions and to send them out to preach.¹ They heard his great discourses;² they saw him perform miracles;³ they were given the interpretation of the parables privately;⁴ and at one time they were "making and baptizing more disciples than John."⁵

3. Peter, a Disappointed Disciple.

The author starts the events of the chapter on the west shore of the sea of Galilee, probably Capernaum, from where Jesus, with his disciples, crosses over to the other side, to the northeast coast of the lake, near Bethsaida.⁶

Jesus' purpose in crossing the lake was to obtain rest and solitude, but he was disappointed. While he was crossing by boat, a great multitude followed him by land. They followed with mixed motives: some followed because they wanted to hear Jesus preach, some desired to have their

.....

1. Luke 6:12-16, Mark 3:13-19.

2. Matt. 5, 6, 7; John 6.

3. John 6:1-21, Mark 4:35-5:43.

4. Mark 4:10-11, 34.

5. John 4:1, 2.

6. To avoid multiplicity of footnotes, the Biblical references are found in John 6:1-15; Mark 6:30-34; Luke 9:10-17; Matt. 14:13-21. Cf. also Robertson, A. T.: Harmony of the Gospels; MacGregor, op. cit., p.126 ff; and Bernard, op. cit., Vol.I, p.172 ff.

sick cured, and others followed because of the signs they had seen him perform on sick people. It was to this multitude that Jesus preached; and it is this multitude which Jesus fed; and it is this multitude which desired to proclaim Jesus king.

This miracle produced a remarkable effect on the multitude. They had been following Jesus because of the signs which they saw him perform on the sick people, but they became greatly aroused over this particular sign and they began to say "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world." By concluding that Jesus was "the prophet," they were identifying him with the prophet of Deuteronomy 18. It may be that the $\delta \epsilon \rho \chi \acute{o} \mu \epsilon \nu \circ \varsigma$ (he who cometh) is a reference to Psalm 118:26, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah." In that case the distinction between "the prophet," and the Messiah was not strictly observed, (as was common), and the multitude are identifying Christ with the Messiah himself.

We have noted in considering the testimony of Andrew, that the national element was particularly strong in the Jewish Messianic hope. This element now burst into manifestation. Jesus perceived that this multitude was about to seize him and make him their king. Apparently the disciples were in hearty agreement, for Mark tells us that Jesus had to constrain his disciples to enter into the boat, and instead of having them assist in dispersing

the multitude he has to do it himself.¹ Having dismissed the multitude, Jesus saw that they still persisted in making him king, so he withdrew into the mountain to be alone.

When evening came the disciples started to cross the sea, and during the night he came to them walking on the sea. However the multitude had stayed on the northeast shore, probably considering that Jesus' refusal was due to modesty, and hoping that he would concede to their wishes in the morning.² In the morning they found that Jesus had escaped, so they went in search for him and found him at Capernaum.³ There Jesus delivered to them the discourse on the bread of life. At the conclusion of the discourse those who had been following him said, "This saying is hard to accept (σ κ λ ~ ρ ο ς), who can hear it?"⁴ The following verses indicate that this question refers particularly to verse 58; however, in a broader sense it refers to the whole discourse, for one puzzling sentence would not cause them to reject both the speech and the speaker. Moreover this verse is really a summary of the discourse.

The final outcome was that "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."⁵ Jesus' refusal to be made a political king, followed by the discourse on

.....

1. Mark 6:45.
2. John 6:15.
3. John 6:22 ff.
4. John 6:60.
5. John 6:66.

the bread of life, changed the multitude from a group which was eager to proclaim him as their Messiah, to a group who retreated from association with Jesus. In the eyes of the Twelve he has let success slip from his grasp. Imagine their disappointment, and especially Peter's.

B. Peter, a Witness.

In spite of his disappointment, Peter gives his testimony: "Lord, to whom else shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."¹

1. "Words of Eternal Life."

Peter tells us that Jesus has "words which come forth from, possess, and lead to eternal life."² He is referring to the words of the preceding discourse.

"The *ῥήματα* of Christ are words of God (8:47;17:8), and as such belong to the sphere of spiritual realities, for God is Spirit (4:24), and of essential being, that is, of true life. They are spirit and they are life."³

These words Christ has in his spiritual treasury and he has produced them and continues to produce them according to the spiritual needs of the disciples, a fact which they have experienced.⁴ All other words have left a deep void

.....

1. John 6:68, 69.

2. Lange, op. cit., p.234.

4. Cf. Westcott: Commentary on John, p.111.

3. Bernard, op. cit., Vol. I, p.218.

in their souls; Christ's words have issued in life-giving richness.¹

The eternal life of which Peter speaks - $\xi\omega\tau\iota\varsigma$ $\alpha\iota\omega\upsilon\lambda\acute{o}\nu$ - has a two fold significance. In the usual New Testament usage it refers to the future life after death. In the Fourth Gospel it has this meaning in some passages, i.e. 12:25. In others it refers to eternal life as a present possession of the believer, i.e. 6:47. In the passage under consideration the primary meaning seems to be the former, but the latter meaning is not excluded. Peter is thinking of the quality of life involved, as well as of its duration. "To have eternal life is to share in the life of God (5:26) and of Christ (1:4), which is unfettered by the conditions of time."²

2. "The Holy One of God."

Peter says for the Twelve, " $\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\pi\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\epsilon\gamma\omega\sigma\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu$ " - "We have believed and know." These verbs are in the perfect which expresses completed action with the effect still continuing. In this case it is confirmed faith and certain knowledge. The disciples for their part, irrespective of what others say or do, believe and are certain.

Certain of what? That Jesus is the Holy One of

.....

1. Cf. Godet, op. cit., Vol. II, p.49.
2. Bernard, op. cit., Vol. I, p.116.

God, i.e. "The One consecrated by and for God."¹ This is another title for the Messiah. The unclean spirit addressed him in these words.² In other passages a similar idea is expressed. In 10:36 Christ speaks of himself as the one "Whom the Father consecrated" (margin). This title emphasizes particularly the ethical quality of holiness in the Messiah, as can be noted in I John 2:20, and Revelation 3:7, and in Acts 3:14; 4:27, 30. Thus Peter in his own way testifies that Christ is the Messiah by saying that he is the Holy One set apart by God.

C. The Trustworthiness of Peter.

The laws of evidence bear directly on the testimony of Peter. If a witness is to be judged credible "in the absence of circumstances which generate suspicion",³ then we must consider Peter a credible witness, for in these circumstances, with the crowds deserting Jesus, and Peter himself disappointed in Christ's refusal to accept the political Messiahship, we might expect a less positive testimony from one who for public opinion denied his master just a year later.

Peter meets the demand for honesty since there is an entire absence of motive for falsifying. On the

.....

1. Lange, op. cit., p.235.
2. Mark 1:24.
3. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.25.

contrary, he might have had motives for presenting testimony just the opposite of that which he gave.

Certainly Peter had the ability required of a witness. He had had the opportunities to observe the facts in his companionship with Jesus, and in the Scriptures had the standard of judgment.

Peter's testimony contains just the proper amount of agreement with and variation from the other witnesses, to give it the stamp of genuineness.

Inasmuch as Peter's words and deeds stand in contrast to the words and deeds of the deserting disciples, we realize that something else must account for the firm conviction with which he speaks. We can account for it on the basis of his past discipleship and experience with Jesus. How true it is that his testimony "owes its origin to the events which have preceded it and is intimately connected with others which occur at the same time and place."¹ How aptly it illustrates the Law of Relationships in the aspects of contrast, and cause and effect.

.....

1. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.43.

CHAPTER X

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
THE BLIND MAN, AN OUTCAST

CHAPTER X
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
THE BLIND MAN, AN OUTCAST

From the testimony of a representative of a group of disciples who had been in the most intimate contact with Jesus for months, we are transferred to the testimony of a man who had been in contact with Jesus for probably an hour, or at most a day. But that day was the most momentous day in his life, for not only did he receive his sight but he also worshipped Jesus as the Son of God.

A. The Person and Experience of the Blind Man.

1. Blind from His Birth.

That this man was blind from his birth is a fact which the author emphasizes by repetition. The incident begins with a statement of the fact. The disciples observe the fact and ask a question about the relation of sin to physical malformation, using this man as an illustration. Then Jesus performs the cure, and the people discuss the man's identity. Next the Pharisees examine first the man himself and then his parents and then the man once more. During the cross-examination both the parents and the son assert that he was born blind. Thus the author, the disciples, the parents, and the man himself assert that he

was born blind.¹

2. Cured from His Blindness.

Another fact which the author emphasizes through repetition is that this man who was blind from his birth was cured. First he simply informs us that he was cured and how. Then when his neighbors question his identity he asserts the fact and explains the method of his cure. He repeats the same to the Pharisees who are reluctant to believe his story and who call in the parents. The parents reaffirm the facts, so the Pharisees call in the son again and he repeats the same story: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."² Thus the author, the parents and the man himself declare that the man who was blind from his birth was cured, and neither the neighbors nor the Pharisees can disprove the facts. "The reality of the fact is the point against which the contradiction of the adversaries is broken."³

3. Cast Out.

After the crisis at Capernaum which the author relates in the sixth chapter, Jesus purposely avoided Judaea because the Jews were seeking his life.⁴ When he did go

.....

1. John 9:1, 2, 20, 32.

2. John 9:25. Cf. verses 6-7, 8-12, 15, 21, 30.

3. Baur, quoted by Godet, op. cit., Vol. II, p.135.

4. John 7:1.

to the feast of tabernacles he spoke openly to the Jews, and "The chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to take him"¹ but the officers failed.

This opposition continued and when the Pharisees discovered that Jesus had healed a man who had been blind from his birth they knew that they must do something either to disprove, discredit, or silence the testimony of this man whose cure was bringing so much popular acclaim to Jesus.

In order to silence all popular acclaim of Jesus as the Messiah the Jews had agreed, "that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."² This threat hung over both the parents and the son as they were being examined.

When the Pharisees examined the son and found that he substantiated the report of his cure, they tried to discredit the evidence on the ground that Jesus had not kept the Sabbath and must therefore be a sinner."³ They also found that the parents testified to the fact of the cure. So they returned to the son and attempted to make him declare that Jesus was a sinner. Failing to do that they proceeded to discredit him with the religious authorities by classifying him as a disciple of Christ, rather than

.....

1. John 7:32.
2. John 9:22.
3. John 9:16.

as a disciple of Moses.

In reply the healed man declares that he himself is a living proof that Jesus is from God. At this they become angry, and in their anger they become inconsistent:

"They forget that the two charges, one that he had never been born blind, and was an imposter -- the other, that he bore the mark of God's anger in a blindness that reached back to his birth -- will not agree together."¹

Then "they cast him out."² Whether this refers to a formal excommunication or to expulsion from the chamber is not certain. Perhaps Godet is nearest the truth when he says, "They expelled him violently from the hall, perhaps with the intention of having the excommunication pronounced afterwards by the Sanhedrin in pursuance of a formal deliberation."³

B. The Blind Man a Witness.

In the course of his examination and after his expulsion from the synagogue the Blind Man expressed his opinion about Jesus.

1. "He is a Prophet."

The first opinion the man expressed about the one who had opened his eyes was that he was a prophet. This judgment is the same as the judgment of the Woman of

.....

1. Trench; Notes on the Miracles, p.241.
2. John 9:34.
3. Godet, op. cit., p.135.

Samaria and based on the same considerations.¹ It is an opinion similar to that held by Nicodemus,² but not as definite as that expressed by the multitude that had been fed.³ Nicodemus, the Woman of Samaria, and the Blind Man all concluded that Jesus must be an extraordinary man inasmuch as he had done extraordinary things: no man could do such things unless God were with him, and therefore he must be a prophet, not The Prophet as in 6:14. The Blind Man gives the reasons upon which he based his conclusions during his second examination.⁴

"This is wonderful; here is one evidently clothed with powers mightier than man's, able to accomplish a work like this; --- you have yourselves declared --- that God heareth not sinners; now this man He hath heard, and enabled him to do a work without a parallel; therefore I know whence He is; He is of God; for were he otherwise He could never have done the things which he hath done."⁵

2. "Lord, I Believe."

Even though we understand that verse 34 does not refer to a formal excommunication, we must understand that by the time Christ met the Blind Man again (verse 35) he had been formally excluded from the Jewish community. This act threw him upon the mercy of Jesus who sought him out and asked him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"⁶ In this

.....

1. John 4:19.

2. John 3:2.

3. John 6:14.

4. John 9:30-33.

5. Trench, op. cit., p.239.

6. John 9:35.

question Jesus places before him the criterion of discipleship. The question amounted to this, "Do you believe in the Messiah?" The form $\pi\lambda\epsilon\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ found so often in John always refers to God or Christ and means more than believing the words of God or Christ or being convinced about certain facts concerning them. Rather it emphasizes the person of God or Christ as the object on which faith rests."¹ Up until this time the Blind Man has believed certain things about the one who has healed him. Now he is asked whether he believes in the Messiah.

He answers that he is willing to believe in the Messiah if he can identify him, and inasmuch as he is convinced that Jesus is a prophet he is ready to rely upon the ability of Jesus to tell him who the Messiah is. Jesus promptly responded: "You have seen him, and he is talking to you." This dramatic announcement of his Messiahship finds a parallel in the case of the woman of Samaria.² Jesus can make such an announcement to this man because he is already on the way to becoming a disciple. He has already declared to the Pharisees that his healer is divinely commissioned; he is ready to believe in -- $\pi\lambda\epsilon\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ -- his healer as the Son of God.

The unhesitating response to this revelation is,

.....

1. Cf. Bernard, op. cit., Vol. I, p.17 and also Cf. Dods, op. cit., p.688.
2. John 4:26.

"I believe, Lord." The significant thing in this confession is the word *κύριε*. According to the consistent use of this word in the Fourth Gospel¹ we must distinguish between this man's use of *κύριε* in verses 36 and 38. In the first instance inasmuch as he has not yet come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, he addresses him with respect as *κύριε* -- Sir. In the second his faith has increased to a belief in Jesus as the Son of God, and respect has passed into reverence, so he addresses him as *κύριε* -- Lord.

The Blind Man gave expression to his faith in both word and deed. Confession was followed by an act of worship -- *καὶ πρὸς ἐκύβησεν αὐτῷ*. The significant thing about *πρὸς ἐκύβησεν* is that the author applies it only to divine worship.^{2,3} At this point we take issue with the translators of the American Revised Version who have stated in a footnote, "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature (as here) or to the Creator (see ch. 4:20)." The note is not only incorrect, or at least doubtful, but they have transgressed their office which is to translate, not to interpret.

.....

1. Cf. Andrew, a Witness, under Rabbi.
2. Cf. John 4:20 ff; 12:20.
3. Cf. Bernard, Godet, Lange, Dods, Meyer, Westcott, op. cit., in loco.

C. The Trustworthiness of the Blind Man.

Two facts stand out in the consideration of the credit we can give to this man as a witness. In the first place we can be absolutely assured of his honesty. The strongest motives existed for him to deny that Jesus was a prophet from God and the Pharisees did their utmost to try to disprove his story, but through it all he clung to his conviction and paid the penalty of excommunication for it.

The second rule which applies is that concerning self-derogatory testimony. Here was a man who had everything to lose and nothing to gain except a satisfied conscience if he spoke his convictions. There was no temporal advantage, only temporal hurt. In him the words,

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake,"¹

were eminently fulfilled. Although it is true that

"He is cast out from the meaner fellowship, to be received into the higher -- from that which was about to vanish away, to be admitted into a kingdom not to be moved,"

it was purely because of the spiritual values and not for any possible material advantage. In fact by becoming a disciple of Christ his cross became even heavier.

.....

1. Luke 6:22.

CHAPTER XI
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
MARTHA, A MOURNER

CHAPTER XI
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
MARTHA, A MOURNER

The last two witnesses we have examined gave their testimony in circumstances in which a miracle and one of the "I AM's" of Jesus played a prominent part. Peter's testimony followed the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus' statement, "I am the bread of life." The blind man's testimony followed the opening of his eyes and Jesus' statement, "I am the light of the world." Now Martha gives her testimony before her brother is raised from the dead and after Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

A. The Person and Experience of Martha.

1. Martha, a Beloved Friend of Jesus.

The first impression we get of Martha is that she is a member of a family beloved by Jesus. This family is on intimate terms with Jesus as we know from the Gospel according to Luke¹ and from the fact that they sent Jesus a message telling him of the illness of one of the family.² The author also informs us that Jesus loved the members of

.....

1. Luke 10:38 f.
2. John 11:3.

this family.¹

2. Martha, a Mourner.

Sorrow came into this home. Lazarus, the brother, died. Many mourners came to the sisters in their grief, and Jesus came after Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went out to meet him.

Apparently Martha and Mary in their grief had talked about their brother's death and they had agreed that if it had only been possible for Jesus to have been with them during their brother's illness he would not have died, for they both greet Jesus with the words, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."²

3. Martha, a Hopeful Mourner.

Martha not only expresses her regret for Jesus' absence but she also alludes to her present hope: "Even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee."³

"High thoughts and poor thoughts of Christ cross one another here; -- high thoughts, in that she sees in Him one whose effectual fervent prayers will greatly prevail; -- poor thoughts, in that she regards Him as obtaining by prayer that which indeed He has by the oneness of his nature with the Father."⁴

.....

1. John 11:5.
2. John 11:21, 32.
3. John 11:22.
4. Trench, op.cit., p.318.

Jesus' response to her hopefulness is ambiguous. "Thy brother shall rise again," is an assurance which can be interpreted in two ways. It can refer either to the general resurrection on the last day, or to some special miracle which is to be wrought. Martha has just expressed a hope for the latter, but now that the possibility of its being granted is extended to her she shrinks from it. Instead she accepts Jesus' words as reiterating the conventional consolation, -- the hope of an ultimate reunion, -- which she has already received from many condolers. The words so understood were poor consolation and did little to satisfy the longings of her heart. Martha replies that she knows and accepts the doctrine of the resurrection; but inasmuch as it is remote and not present, general and not personal, it is powerless in her present bereavement.

"Accordingly Jesus replies that 'the resurrection' and the 'life' which it guarantees, are not future but present, not doctrines but facts, not events in time but states conditional upon a personal relationship: --- The man who through faith identifies himself with the personal life-force of Christ will live in spite of death."¹

Jesus' own words are, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."²

To clarify this statement we can hardly do better than repeat the words of MacGregor:

"If, like Lazarus, he has suffered physical death, it

.....

1. MacGregor, op. cit., pp.248-9.
2. John 11:25, 26.

has only been in seeming, for he has carried with him into death that same vital relationship through which he 'lived' on earth. If he is still alive in the physical sense, then, in virtue of that same relationship, the physical death which one day he must face loses all reality."¹

The last words of Edward the Confessor offer a close parallel in thought to the words of Christ: "Weep not, I shall not die but live; and as I leave the land of the dying I trust to see the blessings of the Lord in the land of the living."²

B. Martha, a Witness.

After Jesus had claimed all this for himself, he asked Martha whether she believed it. Her answer is an emphatic affirmative: "Yea, Lord; I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world."³ Ἐγὼ πεπίστευκα is an emphatic perfect meaning, I have reached the conviction, it is my own belief.

Note that Martha frames her confession in her own words. She does not use the phraseology of Jesus. She confesses that Jesus is the Christ and thereby identifies him with the Messiah concerning whom the prophets had spoken, and declares that he fulfills that theocratic office. She confesses that he is the Son of God, "the personage in whom God manifests Himself as in no other, and who is in an intimate and mysterious relation with God."⁴ She confesses

.....

1. MacGregor, op. cit., pp.248-9.
2. Quoted by Westcott, op. cit., p.169.
3. John 11:27.
4. Godet, op. cit., Vol. II, p.181.

that Jesus is he that cometh into the world. δ $\epsilon\rho$ -
 $\chi\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ is a frequent designation given to the expected
Messiah. It is drawn from the prophecies in general and it
adds no new thought here.¹

Although she frames her confession in her own
words, they do not necessarily exclude the claims of Jesus.
"Confessions differing in outward form or expression may
agree internally and in substance."² The claims of Jesus
were implicitly involved in her confession, for "Resurrection
and life were both Messianic gifts."³

"One of the offices of Christ the Messiah was, according
to Jewish expectations, to raise the dead; and thus, con-
fessing Him to be the Christ, she implicitly confessed
Him also to be quickener of the dead."⁴

Even if we prefer to understand that Martha did not fully
comprehend all that was involved in the claims of Jesus,
the least that we can say is that she was ready to believe
all that they did involve because of her faith in the Per-
son of Jesus, the Christ.

It is also noteworthy that this confession of
of Martha embraces all that the author desires for his readers.

.....

1. Cf. Cremer: Biblio-Theological Lexicon of New Testa-
ment Greek, p.264.
Cf. also B. F. Westcott: The Epistles of St. John,
on I John 5:6, p.181.
2. Lange, op. cit., p.352.
3. Dods, op. cit., p.799.
4. Trench, op. cit., p.320.

She believes "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" and certainly she finds "life in his name."¹

C. The Trustworthiness of Martha.

Now we apply the laws of evidence to the testimony of Martha. We find in her case a remarkable absence of circumstances which generate suspicion. Out of their own sense of need she and Mary sent for Jesus. When Jesus came too late to meet their need, as they thought, in their disappointment they still affirmed their confidence in him and Martha goes so far as to say that even now, if Jesus will only pray, God will hear him in behalf of herself and her brother.

We must credit Martha with honesty. It would have been so easy to repeat in her confession the words of Jesus. But these expressions are new to her and she cannot spontaneously formulate her faith in those terms so she resorts to terms that are familiar to her in order to express her confirmed conviction that Jesus is the Messiah and that she is ready to accept any claims he may make concerning his Person.

Martha was a capable witness. Her ability as a witness is due to the fact that as an intimate acquaintance she has had ample opportunity to observe the facts and inasmuch

.....

1. John 20:31.

as she is of sound mind and average intelligence she possesses the power of accurate discernment.

The relation which the witness of Martha sustains to the preceding words of Jesus has already been indicated. Martha's confession is the outgrowth of her experience and is an illustration of the principle that "Every event which actually transpires, has its appropriate relation and place in the vast complication of circumstances, of which the affairs of men consist; ---."1

In municipal law when it is found that a witness is honest, qualified to testify, bears testimony that is consistent with the testimony of other witnesses and that coincides with collateral circumstances, then it is considered that the witness is trustworthy and that the testimony is true. Since Martha meets those qualifications the laws of evidence demand that we accept her as a faithful witness.

.....

1. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.43.

CHAPTER XII

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY
OF
THOMAS, A DOUBTER

CHAPTER XII

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF THOMAS, A DOUBTER

In one circumstance the testimony of Thomas differs from all the others. Thus far we have considered the witness of those who testified concerning Christ before his crucifixion. Thomas gave his testimony after the resurrection.

A. The Person and Experience of Thomas.

Thomas experienced a great fluctuation in the matter of his relation to and estimate of Jesus. The transitions through which he passed can only be compared with the variableness of Peter.

1. The Faith of Thomas.

There was a time when Thomas shared the faith of the Twelve. He had been with Jesus and the Twelve at Capernaum after the feeding of the five thousand. He had seen the multitude turn away and walk no more with Jesus. He had heard Jesus say to him and to the rest of the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?", and he had shared the conviction of Peter when he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and

know that thou art the Holy One of God."¹

He had also been with Jesus and the disciples at Caesarea Philippi when Jesus asked the Twelve, "But who say ye that I am?" and again he had shared the conviction of Peter when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."²

2. The Despair of Thomas.

The faith of Thomas was severely tested and shaken by later events. Shortly before the Passion Week when it seemed to him that Jesus was walking into the very jaws of death by deciding to go into Judaea again, Thomas said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him,"³ an utterance which reveals his devoted loyalty, his dogged courage and his despondent temperament. However Thomas did not keep his brave resolve. When Christ was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane "all the disciples left him and fled."⁴ Only Peter and "another disciple" had the courage to follow afar off,⁵ although it is apparent from his vivid description in 20:25 that Thomas was an eye witness of the crucifixion.

The events of the crucifixion did even more to

.....

1. John 6.
2. Matt. 16:16.
3. John 11:16.
4. Matt. 26:56.
5. Matt. 26:58, John 18:15.

dishearten the disciples. They had hoped that Jesus was to have been the Redeemer of Israel¹ but now he was crucified and in the tomb. It appears that Thomas in particular was discouraged. By disposition he was a pessimist,² a matter-of-fact person who lacked vision,³ described by Dods as,

"a man very liable to take a desponding view of the future, apt to see the darker side of everything, but at the same time not wanting in courage, and of a strong and affectionate loyalty to Jesus."⁴

Dark despair must have reigned in his gloomy heart after he saw that the master he had deserted had been crucified. He permitted his despair to carry him to the point of absenting himself from the disciple circle. He considered such meetings as described in 20:19 to be futile.

3. The Doubt of Thomas.

While Thomas was absent, the author tells us, Jesus appeared unto the disciples and showed them his hands and his side. The other disciples carried this message to Thomas evidently with the hope that it would shake him from his despair, but Thomas was obstinate. Jesus calls him "faithless." He refuses to believe. He does not so much doubt the testimony of his fellow-disciples as the fact of the resurrection. He insists that he will not believe unless he submits the resurrection to both the test of sight

.....

1. Luke 24:21.
2. John 11:16.
3. John 14:5.
4. Dods: Gospel of St. John, Vol. II, p.368.

and touch.

"Thomas ---, finds it difficult to replace his own mood of despair, born of the spectacle of the Crucifixion which is still printed indelibly in all its details upon his imagination, by his companions' mood of newly-awakened joy and faith. First he must have a vision of triumph as vivid as the former vision of defeat; he must be sure that this risen figure, which his fellows claim to have seen, is the same crucified Jesus bearing upon his body the very marks of his execution."¹

In this attitude of mind he rejoined the apostolic circle and Jesus reappeared and addressed Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."² Jesus offers to Thomas the exact test which he has proposed and which he has declared to be essential if he is to believe in the resurrection, and he makes the proposal in almost the identical words.

"He thus shows to Thomas that He knows what has been in his mind and how he expressed it. And His words, revealing that this was He who could read men's hearts (2:25), proved sufficient to sweep away all doubt from the mind of His incredulous disciple."³

B. Thomas, a Witness.

As far as we know Thomas did not apply the test which he had declared to be so essential. He saw and heard his Master. That was enough to cause him to break forth in a joyous confession: "My Lord and my God." In one bound

.....

1. MacGregor, op. cit., p.362.
2. John 20:27.
3. Bernard, op. cit., p.682.

he rises from the lowest depths of despair to the highest degree of faith. His faith had been mightily shaken by the realization of the awful reality of the crucifixion which revealed that after all his Lord was man. Now his faith was mightily elevated by the realization of the glorious resurrection which revealed that after all his Lord was God. He had lost his faith in Jesus as a possible king of the Jews; he had found his faith in Jesus as his Lord and his God.

1. "My Lord."

Just as the author has given us the key to Thomas' lack of faith, so he gives us the key to his renewal and increase of faith. While Thomas was not willing to accept the testimony of his fellow-disciples, he did rejoin them and thereby showed that he was willing to be convinced that their words were true. He was willing to be confronted with the evidence in this question which was of such tremendous importance to him.

The author also calls our attention to the fact that it was eight days before Jesus reappeared to the group in the presence of Thomas. Other factors besides the sight of the risen Lord prompted the confession of Thomas. The hour of revelation was preceded by a week of reflection. He had an opportunity to view the resurrection of his Lord, as his fellow-disciples believed in it, in relation to the

life of his Lord as he knew he had lived it. He had an opportunity to consider the inherent possibilities, whether Jesus, a man of exceptional character, who had performed wonderful works to the extent of even raising people from the dead, and who had made astonishing claims concerning his relation to God, could be the object of such an exceptional work of God which would be at once the proof of all that he had ever claimed for himself and all that others had ever thought him to be.

It was after a week of such reflection that Thomas saw the Lord and said, "My Lord and my God."

"The sight of Him risen came as the keystone of the arch, which being wanting all had fallen to the ground, but being inserted clenched the whole, and could now bear any weight."¹

The title *Κύριε* has varying meanings according to the amount of reverence with which the speaker addresses Jesus. For the Woman of Samaria² *Κύριε* meant only Sir, at the time she spoke. For Peter at Capernaum it meant more. Peter was addressing him reverently as Master; speaking with the reverence which was due to the Holy One of God.³ So, too, Martha and the Blind Man addressed him with the reverence due to the Christ, the Son of God.⁴

.....

1. Dods: Gospel of Saint John, Vol. II, p.376.
2. John 4:19.
3. John 6:68.
4. John 9:36; 11:27.

When we come to the twentieth chapter we find the same progressive increase of reverence. Mary Magdalene first speaks of Jesus with the reverence appropriate to the Master as she knew him in the days of his earthly ministry,¹ but after she has seen her Master risen from the dead,² $\delta \kappa \acute{\upsilon} \rho \iota \circ \varsigma$ means more because more reverence is due a risen Master than a crucified Master. This is also the significance of $\delta \kappa \acute{\upsilon} \rho \iota \circ \varsigma$ on the lips of the disciples and Thomas.

This significance was not a static significance, for, as the believers realized more fully the significance of the resurrection of the Master, to speak to him as

$\kappa \acute{\upsilon} \rho \iota \epsilon$ demanded more reverence. The result was that it came to be used as a title which ascribed deity to Jesus.

"Soon after the Resurrection, the title began to imply that larger and deeper meaning of $\delta \kappa \acute{\upsilon} \rho \iota \circ \varsigma$ as the representative of $\pi \acute{\iota} \pi \acute{\iota}$ which is frequent in Paul and is found in the Acts."^{3,4,5}

.....

1. John 20:2, 13.
 2. John 20:18.
 3. Bernard, op. cit., Vol. I, p.132.
 4. Cf. Acts 9:11; 10:36; I Cor. 12:3; Phil:11.
 5. Deissmann, in Light from the Ancient East, p.353 ff. refers to the prevalence of the title "Lord" as a divine predicate in the whole world at the time of Christ, and illustrates it from papyri. He also refers to the use of $\delta \kappa \acute{\upsilon} \rho \iota \circ \varsigma$ for Jehovah in the LXX.
- Dalman, in The Words of Jesus, p.330, refers to $\delta \kappa \acute{\upsilon} \rho \iota \circ \varsigma$ as a title for the Roman emperors.

2. "My God."

The combination "My Lord and my God" - ὁ Κύριος μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου - is interesting because of its parallels.

In the Septuagint version of Psalm 35:23 we have, "Awake, O Lord, and attend to my judgment, even to my cause, my God and my Lord." Here we have ὁ Θεός μου καὶ ὁ Κύριος μου .

Moulton and Milligan refer to an inscription from Socnopaei Nesus in the Fayum which is dated March 17, B.C. 24, on which mention is made of a building dedicated τῷ θεῷ καὶ κυρίῳ Σοκνοπαίου¹

We also have the well known letter of Pliny in which he informs Trajan that the Christians worship Christ as God.

"My God" means nothing less than that Thomas places Christ on an equality with God. It is the fullest testimony given in the Fourth Gospel. It is as full of meaning as the author's own statements in the prologue and the conclusion.²

"In Thomas' confession -- and it is specially significant as coming from one who had at first wavered -- the gradual victory of faith over unbelief, --- , reaches its climax. The equality of Christ with God --- is now explicitly asserted. The keynote with which the Gospel opened (1:1) is struck again at its close: to the Christian believer Christ is none other than God Himself."³

C. The Trustworthiness of Thomas.

Thomas has given his testimony. Let us test it

.....

1. Moulton and Milligan: The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p. 366, kurios (6).
2. John 1:1 f., 20:31.
3. MacGregor, op. cit., p.363.

by the laws of evidence. The unique thing about the witnesses which the author presents in the Fourth Gospel is that they each guarantee their own trustworthiness. One of the laws of evidence declares that a proposition is proved when it is established as true by satisfactory evidence. The test of the evidence is that it

"satisfy the mind and conscience of a man of common prudence and discretion, and so convince him, that he would venture to act upon that conviction in matters of the highest concern and importance to his own interest."¹

Thomas gave his testimony and then he proceeded to act upon it "in matters of the highest concern and importance to his own interest," namely, his life work. Such evidence bears the stamp of unquestionable genuineness.

The hesitancy of Thomas to accept anything except well-founded evidence indicates his honesty and relieves him of suspicion. His years of discipleship vouch for his ability. The fact that his testimony differs from any of the others and yet witnesses to the same basic truth satisfies the demand for consistency.

In the confession of Thomas we have, as has already been indicated, an event which "owes its origin to the events which preceded it, and is intimately connected with others which occur at the same time and place."² Thomas believes, doubts, and then rises to a greater confession of faith. His experience is as eloquent as his expression.

.....

1. Greenleaf, op.cit., p.25.
2. Ibid., p.43.

CHAPTER XIII
THE CONCLUSION

CHAPTER XIII

THE CONCLUSION

A. The Climactic Arrangement of the Fourth Gospel.

The author of the Fourth Gospel, probably by design, has arranged the materials of his Gospel in climactic order. This climactic arrangement is obvious in the way he narrates the miracles. The order is as follows:

- i. The turning of water into wine (2:1-11).
- ii. The healing of the nobleman's son (4:46-54).
- iii. The healing of the impotent man (5:2-9).
- iv. The feeding of the five thousand (6:5-14).
- v. The walking on the sea (6:19-21).¹
- vi. The healing of the blind man (9:1-7).
- vii. The raising of Lazarus (11:32-44).²

A glance at the list reveals that three miracles of healing are recorded -- the nobleman's son after a brief illness, the impotent man after a chronic illness, the blind man after a life long infirmity, and, if we include the raising of Lazarus as a fourth miracle of healing, then his case adds to the climax in that his illness had already resulted in death.

Another glance at the list reveals that several of them demonstrate Christ's power over nature. In turning the water into wine the quantity of the substance remained constant but the quality was changed. In feeding the five thou-

.....

1. Note that the author of the Fourth Gospel has greatly minimized the miraculous element in this event as compared with the Synoptists.
2. Some authorities omit the walking on the sea and change the order by transposing iii and iv. Cf. Bernard and Macgregor.

sand the quality remained constant but the quantity was greatly multiplied. But again the culminating demonstration of power is reserved for the last: although the body of Lazarus had already begun to disintegrate, when Jesus spoke the word "He that was dead came forth."

The climactic arrangement of the Fourth Gospel can also be illustrated by the theme of faith or belief. It begins with the statement of Jesus to Nathanael, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig tree believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these."¹, and concludes with the testimony of Thomas who had seen "greater things" and who is no longer "faithless but believing."

B. The Climactic Arrangement of the Witnesses.

While illustrations of climactic arrangement in the Fourth Gospel might be multiplied, our particular concern is the testimony of witnesses and we now turn to a consideration of the arrangement of their testimony.

1. The List of Witnesses.

The order is as follows:

- i. John the Baptist: A Prophet (1:19-36).
- ii. Andrew: A Disciple of the Baptist (1:35-42.)
- iii. Philip: A Fisherman (1:43-46).
- iv. Nathanael: An Israelite (1:46-49).
- v. Nicodemus: A Ruler of the Jews (3:1-15, 19:39).
- vi. The Woman of Samaria: A Sinner (4:1-42).
- vii. Peter: A Disciple (6:66-69).
- viii. The Blind Man: An Outcast (9:1-38).
- ix. Martha: A Mourner (11:1-27).
- x. Thomas: A Doubter (20:24, 29).

.....

1. John 1:50.

2. The Significance of the Order.

Even the order in which the witnesses speak is significant. First John the Baptist gives his witness. In Chapter Three we noted the reasons for considering that his words were of special value, prominent among which was the fact that he was a prophet. Inasmuch as he was a prophet he belonged to the prophetic order and the historical movement of which the prophetic order was a part. His particular function was to be the forerunner of the One who was to usher in the Kingdom of God. His historic position as the forerunner excluded him from a position in the Kingdom of God as an historical movement, although he was the greatest of the prophets, and even though his personal character made him preeminently worthy to be a member of that kingdom. That is the meaning of the words of Jesus: "Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John: yet he that is but little in the Kingdom of God is greater than he".(1). John's testimony then, is the testimony of one who belonged to the order of the prophets, and offered his testimony before Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God. This fact accounts for his position as the first witness and gives added significance to his testimony.

John's testimony is followed by that of three newly won disciples: Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael. Their testimony,

.....

(1) Luke 7:28.

unlike the testimony of John, does not derive its value from the fact that they are the last of the prophets, but from the fact that they are the first among those who are "little in the Kingdom of God". Hence it is entirely appropriate that their testimonies should come next in order.

The next testimony comes from outside of the disciple circle. It is the testimony of the Pharisees and particularly of Nicodemus. Like John the Baptist, Nicodemus and his group were outside of the Kingdom of God, but unlike him, they remained without because of their own personal choice. They preferred to belong to the order of law, and by clinging to legalism as an historical movement, they kept themselves outside of the Kingdom which Christ was introducing. Although they were in the midst of the Kingdom they were not in it. Nicodemus is the exception, who, by leaving the order of legalism, entered the Kingdom of God.

The Woman of Samaria and the Samaritans are also from outside the disciple circle. They represent a totally different group from any of the other witnesses. They were looking for the Messiah, but their Messianic expectation was bound up with a symbolism, a legalism, and a nationalism peculiarly their own, all of which were based on the historical movement which separated the Jews from the Samaritans. They were near, and yet not in, the Kingdom. How appropriate it is that the author should tell us of the testimony of members of this group.

The last four witnesses also stood in some relation with regard to the various orders and movements of the day. Peter was brought into the Kingdom through his own brother Andrew. Peter had a reason for deserting the Kingdom, but stayed. For the sake of his experience and in spite of disappointment, Peter gave his testimony. Peter had not doubted. On the basis of a year or two of discipleship with Jesus, he had come to believe and know that Jesus was the Holy One of God.

The experience of the Blind Man differed from that of Peter. He was brought into the Kingdom through Jesus himself. The Blind Man had a reason for speaking falsely, but spoke the truth. For the sake of truth, and in spite of persecution at the hands of those who belonged to the order of law, he gave his testimony, although he had not yet had a chance to know and believe in Jesus except as he had experienced the healing of Jesus and thereby knew him to be a prophet. On the basis of that experience, he was ready to accept a fuller revelation. On the basis of the fuller revelation he gave his final witness.

Martha had been a member of the Kingdom for some time before the sad experience came to her. Martha had a reason for keeping silent, but spoke eloquently. On the basis of what she knew Jesus to be, and in spite of her sorrow, she spoke her convictions. Martha had had the opportunity of knowing and believing, and even in the midst of sorrow she did not doubt.

Thomas is the last of the witnesses. Like Peter, he had been a member of the Kingdom for several years. But Thomas became a doubter who questioned the fact to which his fellow-disciples testified, but finally believed. On the basis of demonstrated fact and in spite of his previous doubts, he became the greatest of all witnesses.

3. The Progression of the Order.

The order of the witnesses demonstrates progression throughout. The author proceeds from John the Baptist, who belonged to the order of the prophets; to the early disciples who were the least in the Kingdom of God; to Nicodemus of the Pharisees, who entered the Kingdom from the order of the law; to the Woman of the Samaritans, who entered the Kingdom from the order of Mount Gerizim; and finally to four believers who were true to the Kingdom in spite of the most trying circumstances.

From an other point of view, we have the witness of the Baptist immediately following the baptism of Jesus, the witness of the early disciples and the Samaritans in the early ministry of Jesus, the witness of Peter following the crisis at Capernaum, the witness of the Blind Man and Martha when the opposition to Jesus was greatest, the witness of Nicodemus after the crucifixion, and the witness of Thomas after the resurrection.

C. The Climactic Content of the Testimony.

While it cannot be said that the testimony forms a perfect climax in the sense that each testimony surpasses the preceding testimony in what it reveals of the Person of Jesus, nevertheless, there is a progression in the confessions with a definite climax, in the confession of Thomas.

1. The List of Testimonies.

The declarations concerning the Person of Christ are:

- i. John the Baptist: "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" "And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (1:29, 34.) (See also John 3:28.)
- ii. Andrew: "We have found the Messiah." (1:41).
- iii. Philip: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (1:45).
- iv. Nathaniel: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel." (1:49).
- v. Nicodemus: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." "And there came also Nicodemus, ---". (3:2, 19:39).
- vi. The Woman of Samaria : "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?" Samaritans: "Now we believe, --- and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world." (4:29, 42).
- vii. Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." (6:68, 69).
- viii. The Blind Man: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." (9:35, 38).

ix. Martha: "Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world." (11:27).

x. Thomas: "My Lord and my God". (20:28).

2. The Unity of the Testimonies.

There is a certain unity in these declarations. They describe different aspects of the Person of Christ, either that He is Messiah, Son of God, Saviour, Lord, or God. Each of the witnesses refers to one or more of these aspects. In some cases the explicit statements concerning these aspects are supplemented by implicit testimony which is involved in subsequent action.

There are seven who explicitly declare that Jesus is the Messiah: John the Baptist, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, the Woman of Samaria, Peter and Martha. The testimony of John the Baptist is first. All that he says and does points to Jesus as the Christ. "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but, that I am sent before him". (1). We might also add Thomas to this list, not only because he was one of the Twelve for whom Peter was speaking at Capernaum, but also because in his final testimony he declared that Christ was the Messiah and much more.

Son of God is a title which four individuals, -
John the Baptist, Nathanael, the Blind Man, and Martha, -

.....

(1) John 3:28.

apply to Jesus in describing his Person.

The declaration that Jesus was the Saviour we find expressed explicitly twice. John the Baptist's testimony is in the form of a definition of the Saviour: Jesus is the Lamb of God who bears away the sin of the world. The Samaritans declare that they are confident that Jesus is the Saviour of the world. To this we must add the implicit testimony of Nicodemus, and the Apostles Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, Peter, and Thomas. We have already studied the significance of the action of Nicodemus in sharing in the work of taking Jesus' body from the cross and placing it in the tomb. It was a declaration of discipleship, a silent testimony that Jesus was his personal Saviour, a public recognition that Jesus was the Son of Man (1).

The testimony of the Apostles is no less eloquent. For them, Jesus Christ, was the Saviour of the world. Sacred history, ecclesiastical history, and the traditions of the early Church emphatically declare that the Apostles believed that Jesus was the Saviour and that they lived and died for that belief. The record in the Acts of the Apostles is sufficient to confirm the truth of that statement.

The Woman of Samaria called Jesus *Κύριε* - Sir. Peter, speaking for the Twelve, (the Twelve includes among others, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, and Thomas), called him *Κύριε* - Lord, as did the Blind Man and Martha, all of them

.....

1. Cf. John 3:14, 15.

because of their reverence for him. This reverence was increased after the resurrection and we hear Thomas saying ϵ *Kυριος*-Lord, as Mary Magdelene and the Ten had already said it. When we remember that the Ten includes of the special witnesses, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael and Peter, we have not only seven who declare that Jesus is Lord before the crucifixion, but also five who give him that title after the resurrection.

Finally we have the sole declaration of Thomas that Jesus is God. This is distinct climax. No other disciple had given expression to this profound truth. In that moment of spiritual exaltation, Thomas rose from the depths to the heights, eclipsed his fellow-disciples, and, although he was a thorough monotheist, declared that Jesus was God. ".the faith of the apostles attains at length, in the person of Thomas, to the whole height of the divine reality formulated in the first words of the Prologue". (1).

3. The Progression of the Testimony.

There are distinct evidences of climax. After the description of Jesus by the Baptist as Messiah, six more witnesses verify that testimony before the crucifixion. This indicates that it was a prominent pre-crucifixion appellation.

Starting again with the declaration of John the

.....

(1) Godet, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 424.

Baptist that Jesus is the Son of God, we have a total of four who bear the same testimony before Jesus' death. This too was a prominent pre-crucifixion title.

John the Baptist and the Samaritans speak of Jesus as Saviour before the crucifixion, Nicodemus at the cross, and the Apostles after the resurrection. From this we conclude that the description of Jesus as Saviour was more prominent after the crucifixion and resurrection than before.

We have already noted the relative significance and prominence of the title Lord. It is most prominent at the end of his ministry and gathers meaning progressively. In general we can say that the lesser titles are more frequent in Jesus' early ministry, and the titles of greater significance are more frequent in his later ministry, and that the climax comes after the resurrection.

That climax is the testimony of Thomas which expresses the deepest of Christian truths: that Jesus, the Christ, is God.

"Thus John, in the very close of his Gospel (see vv. 30,31) iterates the testimony with which he began it-- to the Godhead of the Word who became flesh: and by this closing confession, shews how the testimony of Jesus to Himself had gradually deepened and exalted the Apostles' conviction, from the time when they knew Him only as $\delta \nu \tau \theta \varsigma \tau \omega \nu \text{ 'Ιωαννης}$ (ch.1. 46), till now when He is acknowledged as their LORD and GOD." (1)

.....

(1). Alford, op.cit., p. 912.

D. The Trustworthiness of the Witnesses and Their Testimony as a Whole.

We are now about to judge the witnesses and their testimony as a whole by applying to them the same rules which judges instruct juries to apply in evaluating the testimony of witnesses in courts of justice.

1. Coincidence with Collateral Circumstances.

The rule as explained by Greenleaf is,

"Every event which actually transpires, has its appropriate relation and place in the vast complication of circumstances, of which the affairs of men consist; it owes its origin to the events which have preceded it, is intimately connected with all others which occur at the same time and place, and often with those of remote regions, and in turn gives birth to numberless others which succeed."¹

Surely the Baptist's testimony was the outgrowth of his experience. One can hardly think of a testimony such as his coming from anyone at that particular time unless that one had been a prophet with a mission to perform, one who had made a thorough study of the subject of Messiahship and who had had the divinely appointed sign given to him. However, granted such an experience as the author says the Baptist had, the Baptist's confession is just what we might expect.

In like manner the testimonies of the others are rooted in their experience. Andrew's discipleship with the Baptist and his visit with Jesus lead up naturally to his

.....

1. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.43.

eureka. Philip's call to discipleship with Jesus induced him to share him whom he had found with his brother. Nathanael's confession was merely a declaration in words of that which he had found to be true in his brief experience with Jesus, during which Jesus had proved himself to be the incarnation of One whom Nathanael had previously known only in the Scripture.

The action of Nicodemus on the day of the crucifixion is intelligible only in view of his conversation with Jesus at night, which in turn goes back to the days he spent in the Sanhedrin as a Pharisee. A definite chain of cause and effect runs through the incident in Samaria: a thirst, a well, and living water; spiritual thirst quenched, a forgotten water pot, and a testimony.

Peter's confession can only be understood in the light of preceding events. First he was called, then for many months he was a disciple who heard the words which Jesus spoke and saw the deeds which he performed, and finally, although others were deserting, he knew and believed.

The fact that Jesus had demonstrated his power in healing him was absolute proof to the Blind Man that Jesus derived his power from God. Persecution could not make him deny it. Further revelation caused him to believe even more about the one who had healed him.

Reciprocal love between Jesus and Martha, and an acquaintance of some duration, are the keys to Martha's declaration concerning the Person of Christ. On the basis

of these, she sends for Jesus, expresses a hope that he is still able to help, receives a revelation from Jesus concerning his Person, and makes her declaration of faith in his Person.

Imagine the confession of Thomas apart from the circumstances in which he gave it and it loses much of its significance. The despair and the doubt of Thomas after the crucifixion give way to the faith of his unparalleled announcement only after he has seen his Lord risen from the tomb.

The testimony of each witness coincides with contemporaneous and collateral circumstances. When they are judged on this ground, we consider the witnesses of the Fourth Gospel to be credible, and their witness true.

2. The Number and the Consistency of the Testimonies.

This is an item which we have already considered at some length under the heading: The Unity of the Testimonies (p.118). Let us be reminded of some of the facts. Seven of the witnesses declare that Jesus is the Messiah, but note that no two declarations are identical. Four witnesses declare that Jesus is the Son of God and there is no pronounced variation in their form of announcement. Of the two explicit affirmations that Jesus is the Saviour, one is a definition and the other is a statement of belief, while the six (or more) implicit affirmations varied as their experiences varied, but agreed in that all of them trusted their soul's salvation to Jesus as Saviour. The title Lord does

not vary greatly in the form in which it is used as a description of the Person of Jesus, the Christ, but its inner meaning varies, and the significant thing is that the same members of the Twelve who address Jesus as Lord, through Peter, during his ministry, address him as Lord following his post-resurrection appearances.

No one can discredit this testimony on the ground that there are not enough witnesses. Not even the courts of justice demand more than the author has presented. Nor can their testimony be discredited on the basis of inconsistency. There is the necessary degree of variation among the witnesses "to show that there could have been no previous concert among them; and at the same time, such substantial agreement as to show that they all were independent narrators."¹ We have here "substantial truth, under circumstantial variety."¹ Although the outward form of the various descriptions of Jesus as Messiah, Son of God, Saviour or Lord may differ, the inner meaning is essentially the same: "Confessions differing in outward form or expression may agree internally and in substance."²

3. The Ability of the Witnesses.

According to Greenleaf we judge the ability of a witness by the following principle:

.....

1. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.32.
2. Lange, op. cit., p.352.

"--- the ability of a witness to speak the truth, depends on the opportunities which he has had for observing the fact, the accuracy of his powers of discerning, and the faithfulness of his memory in retaining the facts, once observed and known."¹

Memory constitutes no obstacle for these witnesses for almost all of them speak their convictions almost immediately after they have made their observations and drawn their conclusions. If they have entertained their convictions for a considerable time, as in the case of Peter, the convictions are freshly confirmed before the testimony is given, in Peter's case by the feeding of the five thousand and the discourse on the bread of life.

Since it is the uniform presumption of law "that men are honest, and of sound mind, and of the average and ordinary degree of intelligence"¹ unless the contrary is proved, we must credit these witnesses with the powers of accurate discernment.

As we considered each individual witness in the foregoing chapters we observed particularly the opportunities which each one had for observing the facts. To illustrate, John the Baptist had the assurance of the divinely appointed sign, Nicodemus witnessed the fulfillment of Jesus' words when he saw the Son of Man lifted up upon the cross, the Blind Man had felt in his body the God-given power of his healer, and Thomas saw before him his risen

.....

1. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.31.

Lord. Moreover their testimony was often preceded by a long period of association or acquaintance with Jesus as in the cases of the Baptist, Nicodemus, Peter, Martha, and Thomas, or were followed by a period of discipleship in which they never revoked their previous judgment, as in the cases of Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael. Certainly, the facts compel us to declare that these witnesses were qualified.

4. The Honesty of the Witnesses.

A fair criterion of the honesty of a witness is the relation which his testimony sustains to his worldly interests. It is presumed that a witness speaks the truth unless he has a motive or an inducement to the contrary. In the case of the witnesses of the Fourth Gospel, no one has been charged with dishonesty on that score. In each case their witness and their discipleship worked against their worldly interests.

For John the Baptist it was a matter of: "He must increase, but I must decrease."¹ For the disciples it meant leaving their occupation and becoming followers of Christ without any hope of material gain and only the prospect of opposition from their family, the religious authorities and the government. For Nicodemus as well as for the Blind Man it meant ostracism and excommunication. The only motive which impelled them was that they were exchanging

.....

1. John 3:30.

temporal and material values for values that were eternal and spiritual, a fact which increases rather than decreases the worth of their testimony since those spiritual values all depended on whether Christ actually was what they claimed him to be.

5. Competent and Satisfactory Evidence.

In the beginning we stated the rule of municipal law which determines the conditions under which propositions of fact may be considered to be proved: "A proposition of fact is proved, when its truth is established by competent and satisfactory evidence."¹ Since the question we have been considering concerns matters of fact in human affairs, the most competent evidence obtainable is moral evidence. Such evidence to be satisfactory must be of the kind and degree that would satisfy the mind and conscience of a common man in the ordinary affairs of life.

The only legal test to which such evidence can be subjected is,

"their sufficiency to satisfy the mind and conscience of a man of common prudence and discretion, and so to convince him, that he would venture to act upon that conviction in matters of the highest concern and importance to his own interest."²

When tested by this principle the testimony of the witnesses stands as firmly as the Rock of Gibraltar, for

.....

1. Greenleaf, op. cit., p.24.
2. Ibid., p.24-25.

not only were the witnesses successful in getting others to act upon their convictions, but they lived by them themselves. John the Baptist devoted his whole life to ascertaining the truth of his testimony, and succeeded in getting his disciples to act according to it.¹ Andrew convinced his brother, and Philip tried to persuade his friend that his testimony was true, and together with Nathaniel they devoted their life to proclaiming this gospel. The Woman of Samaria invited her fellow countrymen to share her convictions, and Martha invited her sister Mary to speak to Jesus. Peter and Thomas were two of the disciples who not only made it their practice to tell others of the Christ who was ushering in the Kingdom, and preached this gospel with success,² but also devoted their lives and in some cases gave their life blood because they believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. What Greenleaf says about the evangelists applies equally well to those of the witnesses who were Apostles.

"The laws of every country were against the teachings of his (Jesus') disciples. The interests and passions of all the rulers and great men in the world were against them. The fashion of the world was against them. Propagating this new faith, even in the most inoffensive and peaceful manner, they could expect nothing but contempt, opposition, revilings, bitter persecutions, stripes, imprisonments, torments and cruel deaths. Yet their faith they zealously did propagate; and all these miseries they endured undismayed, nay, rejoicing. As one after another was put to a miserable death, the survivors only

.....

1. John 3:28, 1:35, 36.
2. Luke 9:1 ff.

prosecuted their work with increased vigor and resolution. The annals of military warfare afford scarcely an example of the like heroic constancy, patience and unblenching courage.¹

Every possible motive existed for them to review or repudiate their testimony. Frequently they were faced with the alternative to either repudiate their testimony and be exempt from persecution, or confirm their testimony and suffer for it.² In each case they stoutly affirmed it. It would have been morally impossible for them to do this unless they had been thoroughly convinced that what they said was true. Certainly we have here an illustration of individuals who not only have a conviction but also act upon that conviction in matters of the greatest concern and importance to their own interest.

There is only one conclusion to draw concerning these witnesses and their testimony if we are to be governed by the rules which apply in courts of justice and law. SINCE THE PROPOSITION IS SUPPORTED BY COMPETENT AND SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE THE PROPOSITION IS PROVED.

E. The Accomplished Purpose.

That this is the opinion of the author himself is evident from the form in which the Fourth Gospel is written. Having started his narrative with the birth of

.....

1. Greenleaf, op.cit., p.29.
2. John 9; Acts 4, 5, 12.

faith in and the beginning of the testimony concerning the Person of Christ, in the testimony of the Baptist, and having presented the culmination of faith in and the consummation of testimony concerning the Person of Christ in the confession of Thomas, the author promptly concludes by giving his statement of purpose and an account of the manner in which he has proceeded:

"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

In this conclusion the author characterizes Jesus as the object of faith and mentions two aspects of his Person concerning which he wants his readers to have convictions. He wants them to believe that Jesus is the Christ who fulfilled prophecies and was in himself a realization of their theocratic hopes. This had been the starting point of the faith and testimony of the witnesses.² However the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah had only been the first step in the faith of the witnesses. They had reached a higher conception of the dignity of the Person of him in whom they believed and concerning whom they testified. In Jesus, the Christ, they recognized the Son of God; "the being whose existence is united to that of God by an

.....

1. John 20:30, 31.
2. John 3:28, 1:42, 46.

incomparable bond, and who comes to fulfill here on earth the function of Saviour."¹ This aspect of the faith of the witnesses reached its climax in the words of Thomas.

The witnesses have declared that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. There they rest their case, there the author rests his case, and there we rest ours.

.....

1. Godet, op. cit., Vol. I, p.32.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

- The Holy Bible, containing the : Thomas Nelson & Sons
Old and New Testaments: New York, 1901
American Revised Version
- The Holy Bible, containing the : A. J. Holman Company
Old and New Testaments: Philadelphia, 1902
King James Version
- The Greek New Testament : British and Foreign
(Text prepared by Bible Society
Prof. E. Nestle) London, 1904
- The Septuagint Version of the : S. Bagster and Sons
Old Testament London
- The Hebrew Bible : E. van der Hooght
(Text prepared by 1839
August Hahn)
- A Harmony of the Gospels : G. H. Doran Company
A. T. Robertson New York, 1922

B. SECONDARY SOURCES

- Abbott, Edwin A. : Johannine Vocabulary
A. and C. Black, London, 1905
- Abbott, Edwin A. : Johannine Grammar
A. and C. Black, London, 1906
- Abbott-Smith, G. : A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament
Scribner's, New York, 1922
- Alford, Henry : The Greek Testament, Sixth Edition
Deighton, Bell, and Co., Cambridge, 1868.
- Bernard, John H. : A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on
the Gospel according to St. John, Interna-
tional Critical Commentary
Scribner's, New York, 1929

- Browning, Robert : Complete Works
Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., Boston, 1895.
- ✓ Calvin, John : Commentary on the Gospel According to John
Edinburgh Printing Co., Edinburgh
- Clark, Henry W. : The Christ from Without and Within
Revell, New York, 1907
- Cremer, H. : Biblio-Theological Lexicon of New Testa-
ment Greek, Fourth English Edition
Scribners, New York, 1895
- Crosby, H. L. : An Introduction to Greek
and
Norwood Press, Norwood, Mass., 1928
Schaeffer, J. N.
- Dalman, Gustaf : The Words of Jesus, English Edition
T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1902
- ✓ Deissmann, Adolf : Light from the Ancient East
Hodder and Stoughton, N.Y. and London, 1909
- Dods, Marcus : The Gospel of St. John, in
The Expositor's Greek Testament
G. H. Doran, New York
- Dods, Marcus : The Gospel of St. John, in
The Expositor's Bible
A. C. Armstrong and Son, New York, 1891
- Edersheim, A. : The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah
E. R. Herrick & Co., New York, 1886
- ✓ Godet, F. : Commentary on the Gospel of John
Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1886
- Greenleaf, Simon : The Testimony of the Evangelists
Examined by the Rules of Evidence
Administered in Courts of Justice
J. Cockcroft & Co., New York, 1874
- Josephus, F. : Antiquities of the Jews
Ward, Lock, & Co., London
- ✓ Lange, J. P. : The Gospel According to John
Scribner's, New York, 1871
- Liddell, G. H. : A Greek-English Lexicon
and
Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1901
Scott, R.

Macgregor, G.H.C.: The Gospel of John, in
The Moffatt New Testament Commentary
Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York, 1929

✓ Meyer, H. A. W. : Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to
The Gospel of John
Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1884

Moulton, W. F. & : The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament
Milligan, W. Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1914-1929

Raven, C. E. : Jesus and the Gospel of Love
Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1931

Riggs, J. S. : The Messages of Jesus
Scribner's, New York, 1907

✓ Robertson, A. T. : The Divinity of Christ
Revell, New York, 1916

Sanday, W. : The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel
Scribner's, New York, 1921

Schürer : A History of the Jewish People
Scribner's, New York

Scott, E. F. : The Fourth Gospel, Its Purpose and Theology
T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1908

Thayer, J. H. : A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament
Harper & Brothers, 1886

Tholuck, F. : Commentary on the Gospel of John
Sheldon & Co., 1859

Trench, R. C. : Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord
Revell, New York

Waser, J. R. : The Place of the Death of Jesus Christ in
Relation to the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel
A Thesis, Biblical Seminary Library, 1932

Westcott, B. F. : Commentary on the Gospel of John
Scribner's, New York, 1900

Westcott, B. F. : Introduction to the Study of the Gospels
Macmillan and Co., 1896

Westcott, B. F. : The Epistles of St. John
Macmillan Co., New York, 1892

White, W. W. : Studies in the Gospel by John
Revell, New York, 1895