

Sunday Reading.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

How It Is Known It Was Written by John, the Son of Zebedee.

How do we ascertain that the gospel was written by John, the son of Zebedee? I answer first of all that it is traditionally ascribed to him, as the "Prophet" to Socrates; and secondly, that from a careful examination of indirect and casual notices, from a comparison of things said and things unsaid, we arrive at the same result by a process independent of external tradition. In the opening chapter of the gospel there is mention of a certain disciple whose name is not given (1: 35-40). This anonymous person reappears in the closing scene before and after the Passion, where he is distinguished as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." At length, but not till the concluding verses of the gospel, we are told that this anonymous disciple is the writer: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things." In accordance with this statement we find that those particular scenes in which this anonymous disciple is recorded as taking a part are related with peculiar minuteness and vividness of detail; such is the case, for instance, with the notices of the Baptist and of the call of the earliest disciples. Such again is the case with the conversation at the Last Supper, with the scene over the fire in the hall of Caiaphas' house, with certain other incidents connected with the crucifixion and with the scene on the Lake of Galilee after the resurrection. Who then is this anonymous disciple? On this point the gospel furnishes no information. We arrive at the identification partly by a process of exclusion, partly by attention to some casual incidents and expressions.

Comparing the accounts in the other Gospels, it is safe to assume that he was one of the inner circle of disciples. This inner circle comprised the two pairs of brothers Peter and Andrew, James and John—indeed Andrew deserves a place here. Now he cannot have been Andrew, because Andrew appears in company with him in the opening chapter; nor can he have been Peter, because we find him repeatedly associated with Peter in the closing scenes. Again, James seems to have been excluded; for James tells an early martyr, and exterior and internal evidences alike point to a later date for this Gospel. Thus by a process of exclusion we are brought to identify him with John the son of Zebedee. With this identification all the particulars agree.

First: He is called among the earliest disciples, and from his connection with Andrew (1: 40, 41) it may be inferred that he was a native of Bethsaida in the neighborhood. Secondly: At the close of his Master's life and after his Master's resurrection, we find him especially associated with Peter. This position exactly fits with John who in the earliest days of the Church takes his place by the side of Peter in the championship of faith. Thirdly: Unless "the beloved disciple" be John the son of Zebedee, this man who occupies so prominent a place in the accounts of the other Evangelists, and who stood in the foremost rank in the estimation of the early Church, does not once appear in the fourth Gospel, except in the one passage where the sons of Zebedee are mentioned and summarily dismissed in a mere enumeration of names. Such a result is hardly credible. Lastly: Whereas in the other Evangelists, John the Baptist is very frequently distinguished by the addition of his surname, and always so distinguished when there is any possibility of confusing him with John, the son of Zebedee, in this Gospel alone the Fore-runner is never once called John the Baptist. To others some distinguishing epithet seemed needed. To the son of Zebedee there was only one famous John, and therefore when he has occasion to mention him he naturally spoke of him as John, without any addition.—From "Biblical Essays," by J. B. Lightfoot, D. D.

HEALTHFUL STIMULANTS.

Best Thoughts Fit Us to Be Capable of the Best Deeds.

As a man thinks so he is, says Scripture. Perhaps very few of us fully realize the power of thought to mould the thinker. But that power is a mighty one. Find out what a person continually thinks about, and you have the secret of his moroseness and pessimism or his light-heartedness and optimism.

Let our wives and mothers, sisters and daughters take note of this fact. "Now then," said Abby Morton Diaz "since the best thoughts are to rule, let woman think the best ones—best for the race. But in order to do this she must keep herself informed of what is going on in the world about her. She must feel that it is in all respects just as much her world as man's world, and that equally with him she is concerned in the management of its affairs."

Good books, good pictures, good newspapers (there are some good, clean newspapers) are the best possible stimulants to good, healthy, elevating thoughts. Don't read the paper for the accounts of murders, scandal and impurity it chronicles, but to bring yourself in touch with the world around you as it actually is, with the great throbbing heart of humanity, and then you will be fitted for larger usefulness than it you knew only the what is happening next door or across the street.

To become capable of the best deeds, we must think the best thoughts. "Whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Such is the panacea of the optimist, the touchstone for the trial of a noble, forceful spirit.—The housekeeper.

The Boy Could Outdo Them.

A lad in Boston, rather small for his years, says the *Ram's Horn*, works in an office as an errand boy for four gentlemen who do business there. One day the gentlemen were chaffing him a little about being so small, and said to him: "You never will amount to much; you never can do much business; you are too small." "Well," said he, "small as I am, I can do something which none of you four men can do." "Ah, what is that?" they asked.

"I don't know as I ought to tell you," he replied. But they were anxious to know, and urged him to tell them what he could do that none of them were able to do. "I can keep from swearing," said the little fellow. There were some blushes on four manly faces, and there seemed to be very little anxiety for further information on the point.

WHITTIER AS A MORAL FORCE.

The Effect of One of His Poems on a Very Callous Nature.

"The author of 'Personal Recollections of John G. Whittier,' speaking of the influence for good of his verse, says: 'One has said, I would rather give a man or a woman a marked copy of Whittier than any other book in our language.' Apropos of this, not long since a delicate, high-strung girl in college, over-wrought with the strain of examinations and the difficulties of her new life, went to the president and said: 'It is of no use, I cannot go on; my life is a failure. I must leave college and go home.'

"The tactful president replied: 'Go to the library and take Whittier's poems, sit down by your window and read 'The Grave by the Lake'; then come and I will talk with you.'

The young girl came back in an hour with a changed countenance. She said: 'I will overcome the obstacles, I will go on with my college course. I believe, after reading Whittier, that life is worth the effort.'

"In one of our prisons there was a woman who seemed utterly callous to every good influence. It seemed as if the very spirit of the evil world had taken possession of her, and that about her had apparently no influence over her. One day, after a paroxysm of temper, when she was more like a wild animal than a human being, the superintendent handed her a volume of Whittier's poems and asked her to sit quietly down and read 'The Eternal Goodness.' Returning after a half-hour, the superintendent found the poor, half-crazed creature still reading, her wild eyes softened with tears, and she said in subdued tones: 'That is beautiful reading, but is it true what it says? Does God love me? Often afterward she was found poring over the book, and her improvement dated from that hour.

"Still thy love, O Christ arisen, Yearns to reach these souls in prison Through all depths of sin and loss Drops the plummet of Thy cross! Ne'er yet abyss was found Deeper than that cross could sound."

"An eminent author once said, 'I would crawl on my hands and knees till I sank if I could write a book that the plain people would read and love.' This Whittier has done."

GETTING UNDERSTANDING.

We Must Scrutinize Our Motives to Arrive at the Right Point.

It is only by close study of our own motives and our own hearts that we grow to understand ourselves, remarks a writer in *Harper's Bazar*. If we begin by scrutinizing our motives in even the smallest action, and if we make the inquiry a searching and honest one, we will be amazed at the depths to which we delve in the process. But it is only by such investigation, long and continued and repeated, that each one arrives at some understanding of his own inward being, its true nature, desires and aims. "Some understanding," I say, for the deeper we go the more we find beyond inquiring further research.

It is only by such delving in ourselves that we get the best of life. There we learn our deepest lessons. There we discover the truths which are for our own spiritual aid and comfort. And there, perhaps, after long conflicts and toil, we get understanding, that key to unlock other hearts.

This self-preservation is the only way by which we learn to truly comprehend, judge or help other people. Unless we have first studied our inward self thoroughly we cannot adequately understand and speak to other people's inward selves.

Every human experience is unique, yet truth is in every heart the same. The problems of every human being, man or woman, are to be worked out by the same spiritual laws. Therefore, when we have discovered the truth in ourselves, and worked out our problems by the truth—which is the spiritual law—we have found the key by which we are able to give help to others in working out their problems.

The law we have found true in our own lives is a truth also in the life of our neighbor. The rules by which we got the right answer to our puzzles will surely give the right answer to his. The truth which, lived up to, brought peace, comfort and joy into our own lives will certainly bring peace, comfort and joy into his life.

By understanding ourselves first, we have learned also to understand him. And this because through the outward manifestations of truth are infinite, yet truth is forever the same.

How Londoners Keep Sunday.

Dr. John Clifford, the well-known baptist minister, has been trying to find out how Londoners keep Sunday, and this is the result: The Great Western railway station at Paddington was thronged with the crowds who spend it on the river; the streets in the early morning gave evidence that numbers were off to cricket and tennis; the cyclists formed a continuous stream; all the roads leading out of London were alive with bustle. He also visited the parks, and listened to debates in which all the "isms" were well represented. In the churches and chapels, with few exceptions, he found the congregations sparse.

Coddling Suicides.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, at a church convocation on Thursday, entered a strong protest against the growing tendency to what is called "coddling suicides." He protested against the conventional verdict of temporary insanity in order to grant a Christian burial. In spite of the repugnance to speak ill of the dead, suicide is becoming too prevalent, and a healthier public sentiment against it should be encouraged. He urged that newspaper headings, instead of being "Romantic," "Pathetic," "Interesting," should be "Revolting Self-murder."

HUMAN SACRIFICES.

They Are to be Found in Russia and the Victims Are Volunteers.

Very few persons in Europe, or elsewhere, are aware that human sacrifices still exist in a part of the Russian Empire. The fact is, nevertheless, certain, says a writer in the *Yakutsk Gazette*, (a Siberian journal). Among the *Tchukchis* such sacrifices still take place, and seem likely to be practised for a long time to come. At the same time, no blame therefore can be attached to the Russian Government or the Orthodox Church, for efforts by both to stop the custom have proved ineffectual. The sacrifices alluded to, are those of old people and the sick, who, finding no pleasure in life, resolve to have done with earthly existence and rejoin their dead relations. The *Tchukchis*, who has made up his mind to die, immediately notifies his neighbors and nearest friends. The news spreads in the circle of his friends, and all of them soon visit the unhappy person, to influence him to change his mind. Prayers, reproaches, complaints and tears have no effect on the man, who explains his reasons, speaks of the future life, of the dead who appear to him in his sleep, and even when he is awake, calling him to them. His friends, seeing him thus resolved, go away to make the customary preparations. At the end of from ten to fifteen days, they return to the hut of the *Tchukchis*, with white mortuary garments and some weapons which will be used by the man in the other world to fight evil spirits and hunt the reindeer. After making his toilette, the *Tchukchis* withdraws into a corner of the hut. His nearest relative stands by his side, holding in his hand the instrument of sacrifice, a knife, a pike, or a rope. If the *Tchukchis* has chosen the knife, two of his friends hold him under the arms and by the wrists, and, at a given signal, the sacrificer thrusts the knife into his breast. If the pike has been chosen, two of his friends hold that weapon, and two others throw the victim on its point. For strangulation, the rope is put around his neck and the sacrificers draw it until death ensues. Then the assistants go to the corpse, reddening their hands and face with his blood, and place it on a sledge drawn by reindeer, which draws it to the place of the funeral. Arrived at their destination, the *Tchukchis* cut the throat of the reindeer, take from the dead body its clothing which is torn in pieces, and place the corpse on a lighted funeral pile. During the incineration, the assistants offer up prayer to the happy in the other world, and supplicate these to watch over them and theirs. These horrible practices are followed to-day with the same exactness as in ancient times. The *Lukatchis*, the *Lamouts* and the *Russians*, invited to these sacrifices, often take part in them, although there is no example of them having taken the same road to reach the other world.

The Pope on "Higher Criticism."

The Pope's encyclical on the Scriptures contains this notable passage on the "higher criticism": "It follows that those who maintain that an error is possible in any genuine passage of the sacred writings, either pervert the Catholic notion of inspiration or make God the author of such error. And so emphatically were all the fathers and doctors agreed that the divine writings, as left by the hagiographers, are free from all error, that they labored earnestly, with no less skill than reverence, to reconcile with each other those numerous passages which seem at variance—the very passages which in great measure have been taken up by the 'higher criticism'; for they were unanimous in laying it down that those writings in their entirety and in all their parts were equally from the afflatus of Almighty God, and that God, speaking by the sacred writers, could not set down anything but what was true. The words of St. Augustine to St. Jerome may sum up what they taught: On my own part I confess to your charity that it is only to those Books of Scripture which are now called canonical that I have learned to pay such honor and reverence as to believe most firmly that none of their writers has fallen into any error. And it in these Books I meet anything which seems contrary to truth, I shall not hesitate to conclude either that the text is faulty, or that the translator has not expressed the meaning of the passage, or that I myself do not understand."

The Walls of Jerusalem.

As we leave this ill-famed ravine, writes Charles A. Dana, in *McClure's Magazine*, and turn toward the east, the lofty wall of Jerusalem and the massive towers of the citadel are immediately before us. We are on the outer slope of Mount Zion, the sanctuary and the abode of David! The ponderous blocks which form the lower strata of the wall might have been shaped and put in place by some prehistoric race of giants. More than almost anything else to be found around Jerusalem, or within, this wall bears an appearance of great antiquity. We can easily believe that its foundations were laid in the time of David, though its upper portions are unquestionably modern. The books vary. One says it was the work of Sultan Suleiman in the sixteenth century; another, that it was erected much earlier; and my guide, a most intelligent and well-informed Jew of Hungarian origin, told me that it was built by the Crusaders after they had got possession, for the purpose of protecting the inhabitants against the rascally Arabs, who would ride up in small parties, rob some rich family, and be off with their plunder before anything could be done to stop them. But, however this may be, the wall, from sixteen to twenty feet in height, fully encloses the town; and although it could soon be knocked to pieces by a ten-pounder cannon, it stands in good order, solid enough for all peaceful purposes, and perfectly separates the city from the country.

Contentment Because of Duty.

"The dream of three score years and ten has come true," said Dr. Robert Collyer, at the celebration of his seventieth birthday, "and during all that time I have never been absent from my pulpit on a single Sunday from sickness, and I have never been sick in bed one day in my life. I would not exchange my lot with any human creature I know. Nor would I have chosen any other seventy years for my life. None of the great eras of the past would I have exchanged for this present one. There is none so beautiful in the way of great accomplishment. I am glad to look back on all these years; glad that

I was born in the good motherland—England; and glad that I was born again in this beautiful America."

Messages of Help for the Week.

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together, Paul preached unto them." Acts 20: 7.

"Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour." Zech. 8: 16.

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Romans 12: 15.

"Provide things honest in the sight of all men." Rom. 12: 17.

"The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth." Rom. 1: 16.

"I have gone astray like a lost sheep: Seek thy servant." Psalm 119: 176.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139: 23, 24.

Buddhism in Paris.

A fresh propaganda of Buddhism is being undertaken in Paris. It is asserted that 30,000 Parisians now profess the ancient religion. Many well-known women describe themselves as eclectic Buddhists. A little volume gives a summary of the doctrine of the new creed. It has just been printed, and large numbers have been bought by wealthy neophytes, and will be distributed next week among all classes. The converts are not expected to desert the church of which they are members. The copies of the book have been bound in black morocco, gilded to resemble prayer books.

There is no higher, more enviable state of mind and conscience than that of a man who can say to himself at each day's close: "Today I have planted a new idea, have awakened a noble sentiment, have corrected a defect, have sown a seed for good, in the heart of a child."

Teach children that it is useless to expect immediate results, that they must do right whether it pays or not, that honesty is the correct principle.

The man who says, "Our Father," in honest prayer, will not be found standing with his foot on his brother's neck.

Money cannot give any man peace of mind who does not respect himself.



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M. Hammerly, a well-known business man of Hillsboro, Va., sends this testimony to the merits of Ayer's Sarsaparilla: "Several years ago, I hurt my leg, the injury leaving a sore which led to erysipelas. My sufferings were extreme, my leg from the knee to the ankle, being a solid sore, which began to extend to other parts of the body. After trying various remedies, I began taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and, before I had finished the first bottle, I experienced great relief; the second bottle effected a complete cure."

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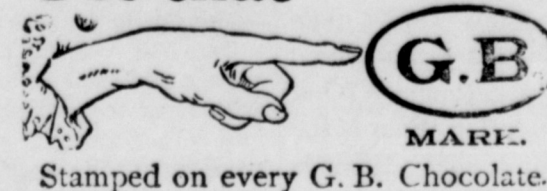
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