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DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. AN EXAMINATION OF THE
EVIDENCE FOR THEIR EXISTENCE, AND AN ESTIMATE
OF THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE STUDY OF
THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Abstract

This study begins by examining the evidence for the claim that alongside the early Christian communities there existed a movement committed completely to the view that John the Baptist was the Messiah. References to John, and to his disciples, in various non-canonical works fail to substantiate absolutely this claim, but they do indicate that extreme views about John were circulating long after his death. On the basis of the New Testament evidence it seems clear that John created at least the nucleus of a Johannite sect, that he saw himself as the precursor of Yahweh and failed to appreciate the significance of Jesus, and that after his death some of his followers held for a time the belief that he had been the eschatological Prophet or Messiah.

Eventually, and probably well before the end of the first century, the great majority of Johannites entered the Christian Church and re-interpreted John's role in the light of their new commitment. They came to recognize that John was indeed the forerunner of Jesus and the herald of the Kingdom of God. This recognition was entirely

in accordance with the way Jesus himself had sought to explain John's mission and to link it with his own.

The Fourth Gospel's account of John's ministry reflects indirectly his failure, and the temporary failure of many of his followers, to recognize the importance of Jesus. It seems that the Jewish opposition to the Church attempted to make its own malicious use of the traditions of this early period of Johannite history; and it was the need to combat this phenomenon, and not any Johannites who had remained independent of the Church and perhaps also adopted gnostic views, that explains the obvious polemic in the Fourth Gospel against exaggerated views of John's status.

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M.A., 1969

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJT	American Journal of Theology
ATR	Anglican Theological Review
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
CQR	Church Quarterly Review
ET	Expository Times
HDB	Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
NT	Novum Testamentum
NTS	New Testament Studies
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZThK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

CHAPTER ONE

I N T R O D U C T I O N

It is a matter of fact that much of the comment on the New Testament references to John the Baptist has as its basis the claim that there was in existence during the first Christian century a sect of John the Baptist's disciples which claimed an excessive importance for its master. In 1898 W. Baldensperger presented a thesis which claimed that the Fourth Gospel is primarily a "polemic-apologetic" work directed against a party of followers of John the Baptist which set up its master as a Messianic rival to Jesus.¹ Most critics found Baldensperger's argument extreme, but the idea became current that there existed during the first centuries of the Christian era a party of Johannites² which, to some extent at least, influenced the Fourth Evangelist as he presented his portrait of John the Baptist and stated the relationship between him and Jesus. In his famous commentary on the Fourth Gospel, R. Bultmann takes up many of Baldensperger's suggestions, and he argues further that the Fourth Evangelist was probably a one-time member of the Baptist sect who took over to his new faith, not only most of the Prologue, but also certain other gnostic ideas which Bultmann supposes to have been current in this Baptist sect.³ The three most important biographies of John the Baptist this century all maintain that the Johannite sect posed serious problems

for the earliest Christian communities.⁴ O. Cullmann confidently asserts that it can be demonstrated how the whole of the Fourth Gospel, and especially the Prologue, carries on a polemic against the sect of the Baptist.⁵ Some scholars also find traces of anti-Johannite polemic in the Synoptic Gospels, and much of the Lukan infancy narratives is often claimed to have been derived from a Johannite source.

However, in recent years the general hypothesis of the existence of an unorthodox Johannite sect, and of its influence on the writing of the Gospels, has been seriously questioned. In his two books on the Fourth Gospel,⁶ C. H. Dodd shows that he is evidently unimpressed by the evidence commonly adduced as proving the existence of a Johannite sect, and in his second work he strongly urges that the information about John the Baptist given by the Fourth Evangelist should be considered historic fact rather than polemic fantasy. W. L. Knox believes that the "prevailing view of the existence of a large, coherent and influential Baptist sect" rests on extremely slender evidence⁷; and J. L. Teicher rejects as untenable the claim that there was ever a sect or community of followers of John the Baptist which believed in him as the Messiah.⁸

J. A. T. Robinson's judgement on this question is that "the whole question of the existence of this Baptist sect deserves a thorough re-examination since it is regularly taken for granted and a great deal of what passes for New Testament criticism is

built upon it".⁹ Robinson goes on to say that theories of anti-Johannite polemic in the New Testament should not be considered plausible unless a prior case can be made out for the existence of an unorthodox Baptist sect against which a New Testament writer could have directed his polemic shafts; and he argues that the type of circular argument which seeks to deduce the existence of a rival Johannite sect from supposed traces of polemic in the Gospels themselves, is of limited value unless this hypothesis of the existence of a Johannite sect is given credibility on other, independent, grounds. With this in mind the present enquiry seeks first to establish reasonable grounds for the claim that a Johannite sect did exist, and then to see what significance this claim has for the interpretation of the Johannine account of John the Baptist.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE FOR THE
EXISTENCE OF A JOHANNITE SECT

One possible approach would be to begin with a challenge to Robinson's claim that those arguments are valueless which seek to prove the existence of an independent Johannite sect from alleged traces of anti-Johannite polemic in the Gospels themselves. What Robinson rejects as circular argument is simply an attempt to formulate an hypothesis which best explains the available evidence, and it cannot be said that this is an improper procedure in historical research.¹ There is, however, no need to dwell here on the proper attitude to be taken to the arguments which seek to prove the existence of a Johannite sect from supposed polemic in the New Testament record. Predominant as this type of argument is, it must not be allowed to obscure the fact that there are to be found in the New Testament other indications which make it reasonable to claim that a distinctly Johannite movement was active during the first century A.D.

In examining the New Testament evidence, it is important not to confine discussion to the question whether a Johannite sect existed after the deaths of John and Jesus, when it could have been in a position to embarrass the early Christian communities. The answer to this question is dependent to a great extent on

whether or not the followers of John the Baptist constituted some sort of formal group during his lifetime.

With regard to this latter issue, there are one or two general considerations which appear to rule out the possibility that John the Baptist was the living leader of a clearly defined movement. C. H. H. Scobie introduces his discussion about the disciples of John with the assertion that the Baptist was so convinced of the imminent end of days, that he could have had no intention of founding a sect.² Rejecting those arguments in favour of interpreting John's baptism in a strictly initiatory sense, Scobie goes on to emphasize that the great majority of those baptized must have returned home to their daily tasks.³

The inconsistency between these points and the proposition that under John's leadership a formal movement of Johannites took shape, is more apparent than real. The thought of the fast-approaching end of days would not necessarily have prevented John from gathering around him a group of followers sharing a common discipline and mode of life; indeed, his emphasis on the decisiveness of the coming events might well have made secondary those usual practical difficulties which tend to thwart any attempt at community building. As for those who did return to their homes after baptism, it may confidently be surmised that they would have continued to keep in touch with John. The care which he is reported to have taken lest an unworthy person be the recipient of his baptism (Matt. 3. 7-9; Luke 3. 7-8) must have helped forge a close bond between

Baptizer and baptized.

But these points have the significance only of overruling certain a priori objections to the hypothesis of an intimate circle of Johannites existing during the lifetime of the Baptist. Further evidence is obviously needed before this hypothesis can be accepted.

This evidence is provided by the fact that all four Gospels make reference to John having disciples (*μαθηταί*) during his lifetime. The same word, *μαθηταί* , is used by the Gospel writers of the disciples of Jesus, and from this it may be deduced that the type of relationship existing between John and his disciples was similar to that existing between Jesus and his disciples. In this respect the disciples of both Jesus and John can be compared with the disciples of a Jewish doctor who were so attached to their master as to have a role not unlike that of a slave. A Rabbinic saying of the third century reads, "Every work which a slave performs for his lord, a disciple must do for his teacher, except loosing his shoe."⁴ Just as the disciples of Jesus differed from the many who had heard his message in that they forsook their ordinary occupations to be with him always, so must we see in the disciples of John a group of men who had chosen to bind themselves to the wilderness prophet and to remain in constant attendance upon him. K. H. Rengstorf emphasizes that "the *μαθηταί* of the Baptist are not presented as a loose throng constantly coming and going. They are a solid group, closed both inwardly and outwardly, and closely related to the Baptist."⁵ That this band of disciples

lived in such intimate fellowship with John creates a strong presumption that this same devotion would have seen them through the tragedy of their master's death, and encouraged them to champion still their allegiance to the Baptist and his ideals.

Confirmation of this inference may well be provided by the Synoptic reference to the practice of fasting by John's disciples (Mark 2. 18; Matt. 9. 14; Luke 5. 33). Some exegetes link this practice of fasting to the ascetic habits of John himself and conclude that the reference should be dated at a time during his ministry. This itself is of no small significance for it indicates that it was more than just a common personal loyalty to their master which bound the Johannites together. Fasting and fellowship were frequently related. Although fasting was obligatory only on the Day of Atonement, the Pharisees appear to have fasted twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays. Ascetic activities were common also in other sectarian groups active at this time. We should therefore see in this Johannite practice of fasting something more than a "revival of old Israelite ideals of the bareness and austerity of the desert life".⁶ It may be an exaggeration to see the practice as part of a set of "spiritual exercises",⁷ but, whatever its precise intention, the regular practice of fasting must have served to provide an element of cohesion between the disciples of John.⁸ This common discipline would have probably helped these disciples to retain their identity after the death of their master.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the disciples' practice

of prayer, reported in Luke 5. 33, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers", and in Luke 11. 1, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples". The fact that the disciples of Jesus should consider the prayers of the Johannites worthy of imitation shows that the reference in Luke 11. 1 is not to those prayers used generally by the Jews, but to special prayers composed by John himself for use by his close followers. We know that the Rabbis sometimes drew up such prayers for their disciples... That John should have given his disciples a special prayer or prayers,⁹ for use probably at fixed times of the day according to rule, certainly confirms the suggestion that a distinct community was beginning to take shape around the Baptist during his lifetime. Such a select group, equipped with a unifying discipline of prayer and fasting, might well have had enough spiritual stamina to survive the shock of their master's imprisonment and death.

It is also possible that the Synoptic references to these Johannite practices of fasting and prayer constitute direct evidence for the survival of a Johannite sect after John's death. If, as Mark and Matthew suggest, Jesus began his public ministry after the imprisonment of John, the references in question must indicate that "during the ministry of Jesus there still existed a group of disciples of John".¹⁰ There is too the point made by M. Goguel about Mark 2. 18. "Le fait qu'il est parlé des disciples de Jean et non pas de Jean et des disciples montre que l'épisode se place après la mort ou, au moins, après l'emprisonnement de Jean-

Baptiste et c'est l'indice de la persistance du groupement des disciples de Jean après la disparition de leur maître."¹¹ Despite the death of their master, it would appear that the disciples were in no mood to give up their allegiance to him, and that for a time at least, they continued their regular practice of fasting and prayer.

Another possible implication of the references to Johannite prayer and fasting is that they indicate the survival of Johannite groups long after John's death. Commenting on Mark 2. 18, C. R. Bowen argues that the author expects his readers "to be familiar with the concept *μαθηταί Ἰωάννου*, though the Gospel has not previously described or even named such a group".¹² From this Bowen deduces that Mark "knows a definite and limited group and something of their characteristic practices. His comment throws less light on the year 30 than on the year 70. It is the latter time when answer is most imperatively demanded to the question: Why do Baptists and Pharisees (Jews together) fast, and Christians do not?"¹³ Similarly, it has been claimed that the Lukan references to Johannite prayer reflect either a source used by Luke which knew of a definite circle of disciples of the Baptist or Luke's own knowledge of such circles in his own time. Bowen also stresses the general point that "had John's movement been merely preliminary, had it declined and disappeared after the death of its founder, and the more notable mission of Jesus, it would not have had much more than an antiquarian interest for our

evangelists; in other words, practically no interest at all."¹⁴ The argument is appealing, although it would probably be wrong to rule out the possibility that the references to Johannite fasting and prayer do go back to traditions of the ministry of the Baptist or Jesus, and that these traditions were recorded by the Evangelists without thought of any contemporary situation.

However, Bowen's argument aside, the other evidence considered is sufficient to establish the claim that John gathered around him a select group of disciples who may well have continued a common discipline of prayer and fasting after their master's execution. There is the further consideration that, according to Matthew, some at least of John's disciples remained loyal to him during his imprisonment, and were on hand to run his errands (Matt. 11. 2). According to Mark this same devotion is maintained after the Baptist's death. "When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb" (Mark 6. 29). Clearly the death of John is no cue for the dissolution of his movement.

Mention may conveniently be made here to the possible derivation of the Markan account of the Baptist's death (Mark 6. 17-29). The story is told so vividly as to make credible the suggestion that the account reflected originally the story of John's passion as it was cherished in the Johannite sect.¹⁵ The closing note, which tells how John's disciples carried away their master's corpse, might be thought to provide the clearest clue to the circles in which the story arose. Certainly the story has little

Christian colouring or import, and it is easy to understand the account as being originally told and retold in the oral tradition by disciples of John.¹⁶ This judgement receives some support from an interesting suggestion made by W. R. Farmer. He submits that the picture of Herod being disinclined to execute the Baptist, stems from a reluctance among the disciples of John to acknowledge the fact that their teacher had been executed because he was regarded by the authorities as a potential leader of insurrection.¹⁷

The suggestion that the story of John's death originated in Johannite circles, recalls the popular argument that behind much of Luke's first chapter there lies a tradition or document emanating from a Johannite sect. This argument can be said to take two forms. There is the argument which begins with the premiss of a continuing Baptist sect and seeks to interpret the Lukan account of John's antecedents against such a background. There is also the argument which begins with the character of Luke's opening chapter, and insists that this indicates or proves the survival of the Johannite sect after the death of John. It is this second avenue of approach which is relevant here.

In his discussion of the subject, P. Benoit concludes after an examination of the style, language, and presentation of the Baptist infancy narratives, that there is no need to see in Luke's first chapter a distinctly Johannite document and tradition.¹⁸ He vigorously attacks those who take the material dealing with John to represent a Greek translation of a Semitic (Johannite)

original, and maintains that the evidence for this is outweighed by other indications that Luke himself composed these narratives in Biblical style with reminiscences of the LXX.¹⁹ Benoit also maintains that there is nothing in the portrait of the Baptist which could not have come from the hand of Luke as he worked on, and exploited, the available Synoptic data.²⁰ Finally, Benoit argues against the specific claim that the Benedictus originated in Johannite circles, though he does concede that Luke 1. 76-79 may be of Baptist origin.²¹

With regard to Benoit's attack on the alleged Semitic background of the Lukan infancy narratives, it must be said that he and N. Turner have shown how many scholars have overemphasized the proportion of Semitisms in these chapters as compared with the remainder of Luke-Acts.²² On the other hand, evidence is not lacking that some portions at least of the infancy narratives must go back to a Semitic source. Benoit himself is aware that the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls has shown how Hebrew was far from being a dead language at the beginning of the Christian era,²³ and there is good reason to suppose that its use is reflected in the story of John's birth.

A most impressive indication of the distinctly Hebraic background to this story is found in Luke 1. 13. There we find John's name, *Ἰωάννης*, which translates the Hebrew *יְהוָה יְחִי*, or *יְהוָה יְחִי*, the meaning of which is "Yahweh is gracious". P. Winter links this with the Hebrew custom of connecting the meaning of the name

with the situation in which the name is given, and argues that whereas "in Greek the connexion of thought between the form of the name *Ἰωάννης* and the annunciation *εἰσηκούσθη ἡ δέησίς σου* is completely lost in Hebrew it is apparent at first sight".²⁴

Elizabeth is aged and barren, Zechariah prays for a son, and God graciously grants his request: hence the boy's name, "Yahweh is gracious". Winter goes on to point out that since the Greek readers of Luke's Gospel would have been unable to detect this connection from the Greek, the account of John's antecedents was very likely transmitted originally in Hebrew.²⁵

Another important consideration is the character of the Old Testament quotations in the infancy narratives. Despite the difficulty of not having available the Greek and Hebrew Old Testaments as they were in Luke's time, the indications are that the Old Testament quotations in the Lukan infancy narratives are dependent on the Hebrew original, rather than on the LXX. This judgement is especially applicable to Luke 1. 17, where it is said of John that he is " ... to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children". There is here an unmistakable reminiscence of Mal. 4. 6, the words of which are differently represented by the Massoretic text and by the LXX. The Hebrew, *לְבָבוֹת אֲבוֹתָיִם* , is plural; the LXX, on the other hand, makes the phrase singular, *καρδίαν πατρὸς πρὸς υἱὸν* . Luke 1. 17 retains the plural, *κατέρων ἐπὶ τέκνα* , thus indicating its independence from the LXX and its contact with the Hebrew text.²⁶

These two points do not of course prove that the story of John's antecedents was first cherished in independent Johannite circles, and it must be said that the Semitic flavour in the story of John's infancy is probably no stronger than in the remainder of Luke 1-2.²⁷ On the other hand, the indications of a Hebrew record behind Luke's opening chapters do remove one of Benoit's objections to the claim that the information about John's infancy was derived from a Johannite source. As for the remainder of Benoit's objections, these lose most of their force when set against the ease with which the story of John's antecedents can be detached from the remainder of chapter 1 to stand alone, the large amount of information here about John, more in fact than in the remainder of Luke's Gospel, and also the distinctive portrait of John which can be traced in these verses.

Apart from the legitimacy of adopting a form-critical approach to the Lukan infancy narratives, and examining each section independently of its context, there is justification for detaching the Baptist infancy material from the remainder on the grounds that the story of the birth of Jesus in this first chapter of Luke has clearly been integrated into that of John, and not vice versa. The connection between the account of John's birth (Luke 1. 5-25), and the annunciation to Mary (Luke 1. 26-38), is of a superficial nature. The introductory cross-reference in v. 26 to the pregnancy of Elizabeth is so pointed as to suggest that, together with the mention in v. 24 of Elizabeth hiding herself for only five months, it represents a rather clumsy attempt at integrating two originally

separate narratives.²⁸ Further, though Mary is introduced for the first time in v. 27, not until v. 36 is anything said of her relationship with Elizabeth, and this is difficult to understand if the stories of John's birth and the annunciation to Mary were originally composed as one. It could also be suggested that since the meeting of the two women is meant to reflect a close relationship between them, the fact that the news of Elizabeth's five month pregnancy is given to Mary by Gabriel, and not by Elizabeth herself, offers further support for the contention that the account of John's antecedents in Luke 1. 5-25 was once transmitted independently of the story of the birth of Jesus.

P. Vielhauer concludes that the same may be said of Luke 1. 56-66,²⁹ and in support it can be argued that these verses are free from the confusion and difficulties so noticeable in the remainder of Luke's first chapter. Together with vv. 5-25, they read so smoothly as to make natural the assumption that they come from the same source. In this connection it is significant that for all his emphasis upon Luke's use of Old Testament parallels in drawing the picture of John's antecedents, Benoit has to admit that the many details of time, place and persons, demand the existence of an oral tradition upon which Luke must have based this account of John's infancy.³⁰ Others prefer to think of a written source.

What is really important, however, is not the form in which this information about the Baptist's antecedents came to Luke, but the problem of its fons et origo. There is, of course, no reason

why it should automatically be thought that the disciples of John were the original transmitters of this material concerning their master. The possibility must be allowed that these, and other references to the Baptist in the New Testament, could reflect simply a natural Christian desire to preserve information about the man believed to be the forerunner of Jesus. But in the case of these two passages under discussion it is difficult to accept that they originated in anything but distinctly Johannite circles. C. R. Bowen comments, "The birth-story of the Baptist is told with so much circumstantial detail, with so much loving reverence, with such full claim of divine participation in its events, that it must originally have been written by one who valued the Baptist for his own sake, as one sent from God to be the guide of men."³¹ This verdict is particularly relevant if the story of John's antecedents is examined independently of the larger setting. When this is done "its essentially Baptist character becomes thoroughly clear".³² Several considerations support this judgement.

E. W. Parsons points out that "the emphasis upon the extraordinary elements in connection with the birth of John makes that event as much of a divine intervention as that of Jesus with the exception of the Divine Spirit taking the place of a male parent".³³ An element of pious wonder pervades the whole. It is an incredible thing to Zechariah that his aged wife should give birth to a child. The angel Gabriel declares that this is divinely ordained and that the child's name is to be chosen by God. There is much amazement

at the time of his birth:

And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him. (Luke 1. 65-66)

Kraeling's comment here is appropriate. "Only as a man about whom the faithful wondered, could John be described in his birth and infancy as a wonder-child."³⁴

Significant too is the manner in which the narrative enhances the figure of John by its clear analogy with familiar Old Testament narratives of great figures. The aged and childless Zechariah and Elizabeth are no doubt intended to recall the story of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 17-18), and possibly also the story of Manoah and his wife (Jud. 13). The divine assigning of a name is reminiscent of the cases of Ishmael (Gen. 16. 11), Isaac (Gen. 17. 19), and Solomon (I Chron. 22. 9). There are also similarities with the birth story of Samuel (I Sam. 1. 1-23), and there may even be intended an implicit parallel between Samuel's priestly associations and courage in criticizing a monarch, and John's priestly background, piety, and zealous clash with Herod over the latter's adulterous marriage. For Kraeling, the motive behind all this is the desire "to supply John with antecedents suited to the unusual impression which he made upon people as God's agent in the consummation of his purposes for his people".³⁵

Further evidence that the Baptist infancy story bears witness

to the continued existence of Johannite circles, concerns the nature of Gabriel's prophecy concerning John (Luke 1. 14-17). The exclamation that "many will rejoice at his birth" may be taken as an indication of the high honour later given to him.³⁶ Equally, if not more significant, is the promise that John is to be endowed from birth "with the Holy Spirit" (1. 15). This endowment of John with the Spirit may have had distinct Messianic implications for those who first cherished this prophecy. Certainly, as F. W. Young points out, "the expectation that in the future the Messiah would come, and that his messianic office was to be understood largely in terms of his bearing the spirit of God (or the prophetic spirit), is found in all our sources in one form or another".³⁷ Gabriel's reference to the endowment of John with the Spirit could thus be understood as indicating that John was to be the Messiah.

The suspicion that John is presented as a Messianic figure in this prophecy of Gabriel becomes more acute with the description of the infant's future work.

And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

(Luke 1. 16-17)

Essential for the correct understanding of the passage is an appreciation of what the concept of "prophet" would have meant for

a Jew in the first century A.D. Young begins his discussion of this question by pointing out that though by the time of Jesus the Jews had long believed prophecy to be dead, its return was definitely and keenly anticipated.³⁸ Two points must be emphasized about this expectation. The first is that the revival of prophecy was no mere academic matter for it was believed that this would mark the end of days. In this connection Joel 2. 28 is frequently quoted.

And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and daughters shall prophesy ...

The second, and more important point, is that alongside this general expectation there is evidence for the belief in one prophet who would appear at the end of days. The most important "proof-text" for this particular expectation goes back to Deut. 18. 15-19, with its promise that Yahweh will raise up a prophet like Moses. Although this was not the original meaning of the prophecy,³⁹ there can be little if any doubt that it did come to be applied to the expectation of the eschatological Prophet. W. A. Meeks points out that in the Qumran "Testimonia" document, a collection of Old Testament prophecies believed by the sect to be eschatological or Messianic, Deut. 18. 15 ff. is cited in such a way as to make all but certain that a definite eschatological Prophet was expected, and that this expectation was based on Deut. 18. 18.⁴⁰

Important references to this prophet of the new age are to be found in the first book of Maccabees. In the account of the puri-

fication and re-dedication of the Temple we read, "They tore down the altar, and stored the stones on a convenient place on the temple hill until there should come a prophet to tell them what to do with them" (I Macc. 4. 45-46). The importance attached to the coming of the prophet is further indicated in another passage where the priests and people are said to have "decided that Simon should be their leader and high priest for ever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise" (I Macc. 14. 41). In both these instances the coming prophet is to have the role of arbiter and revealer of God's will.⁴¹

The work of this prophet is spoken of in more exalted terms in the Testament of Benjamin. "And the twelve tribes shall be gathered together there (at the Temple), and all the Gentiles, until the Most High shall send forth his salvation in the visitation of an only-begotten prophet" (Test. Benj. 9. 2). Here the coming prophet is described as the bringer of salvation.⁴²

Special attention must be paid also to the view which identified the coming or eschatological Prophet with Elijah. This expectation is clearly stated in the book of Malachi.

Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. (Mal. 4. 5-6)

This passage is in fact an editorial comment on Mal. 3. 1-3, where the same conception of the eschatological Prophet as the precursor of the Lord is found, but in a less definite form.

Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me,
 and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple;
 the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold,
 he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure
 the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?
 For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap;
 he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he
 will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and
 silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord.
 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing
 to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Robinson identifies the "messenger" of 3. 1a with the "messenger of the covenant" in 3. 1b, and he argues that the purpose of Mal. 4. 5f. is to identify Elijah as the one who will be like a refiner's fire, purging and purifying the sons of Levi.⁴³ In this Robinson is mistaken. The purpose of Mal. 4. 5f. is to identify Elijah with the "messenger" who will prepare the way for Yahweh, and not with "the messenger of the covenant" who will purge the priestly service of corruption so that pure sacrifices may again be offered.⁴⁴ This "messenger of the covenant" is not the "messenger" or precursor of Yahweh mentioned in Mal. 3. 1a since his arrival at the Temple is simultaneous with that of Yahweh. The probability is that the "messenger of the covenant" is thus an enigmatic designation of Yahweh himself, derived from Ex. 3. 2 and Ex. 23. 20.⁴⁵

The important thing to note about these two passages from

Malachi is that the messenger, or Elijah, is presented as the fore-runner, not of the Messiah, but of God himself. This same conception is found in Eccclus. 48, 9-10, where Elijah is described as the fore-runner of Yahweh before he comes on the day of judgement.

You who were taken up by a whirlwind of fire, in a chariot with horses of fire; you who are ready at the appointed time, it is written, to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury, to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob.

At this point, reference must be made to Robinson's claim of there being no real evidence to suggest that before the time of Jesus Elijah was expected as the forerunner of the Messiah.⁴⁶ It is interesting to note the way in which Scobie attempts to meet Robinson's challenge and to defend the view that Elijah was expected before the appearance of the Messiah. "The question of the disciples in Mark 9. 11, 'Why do our teachers say that Elijah must be the first to come?' probably indicates such a belief, and Justin Martyr probably passes on an earlier Jewish tradition when he says that it was a common Jewish belief that Elijah would be the precursor of the Messiah."⁴⁷ It is, however, the Dead Sea Scrolls which have provided us with the first definite pre-Christian evidence of the prophet as the forerunner, in this case of the two Messiahs."⁴⁸

By way of reply to Scobie's argument, it may be said of his first two points that two probable claims do not make a conclusive one. Further, the question in Mark 9. 11 is not inconsistent with

an expectation of Elijah as the forerunner of God himself; and as for the comment of Justin Martyr, this dates from the second century and cannot be cited definitely as evidence for pre-Christian eschatological conceptions. Scobie's third point must refer to IQS 9. 11 which speaks of "the coming of the prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel".⁴⁹ There is, however, some doubt whether the prophet is presented here as the forerunner of the two Messiahs. According to K. G. Kuhn, the reference is to "three different heroes of redemption, who were to stand side by side in the Eschaton"⁵⁰; M. Black speaks of a "triumvirate of eschatological deliverers".⁵¹ W. H. Brownlee's treatment of the verse is even more strongly opposed to the claim that the eschatological Prophet was regarded by the Qumran sectaries as the forerunner of the Messiahs. Suggesting the translation, "until the coming of a Prophet and the anointed ones of Aaron and Israel", he comments, "The 'Prophet' is doubtless the Messiah whose followers ('anointed ones') will consist of two classes : priests (i.e., those of 'Aaron'), and laity (i.e., those of 'Israel'). Cf. Hab. 3. 13 where God's people are called His 'anointed'."⁵²

The implication of all this is that in pre-Christian times both the specific expectation of Elijah and the general anticipation of the eschatological Prophet were intimately related to that final intervention of God which was anxiously awaited by the Jewish people. Although there was some variety in the eschatological beliefs held by the Jews before and during the lifetime of Jesus, one strand of thought envisaged that God alone would make the intervention and

establish his Kingdom or sovereign rule. For example, in the Assumption of Moses 10, which was probably written during the lifetime of John and Jesus, a picture of the coming judgement and Kingdom is drawn without any reference to a Messiah; instead a "messenger will be commissioned" who will be followed by "the Eternal God alone".⁵³ Another strand of thought looked for the coming of the Messiah, a title which, as D. E. Nineham points out, "could be used quite generally for the one who was to be sent, or raised up, to introduce God's kingdom, by whatever means he was expected to accomplish his task".⁵⁴ The import of this is that the eschatological Prophet was in effect a Messianic figure, if not the Messiah, since both the eschatological Prophet and Messiah could be thought of as appearing at the end of days to directly prepare the way for God's Kingdom.⁵⁵

This point is clearly illustrated by what Josephus has to say about two men who claimed to be prophets. In both instances the claim to be a prophet was tantamount to a declaration of Messiahship, and was regarded as such by the civil authorities. In his work, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, we read:

Now it came to pass while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would by his command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many

were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to take advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them; who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem. (XX, 5, 1)

In The Jewish War Josephus relates another story:

A still worse blow was dealt at the Jews by the Egyptian false prophet. A charlatan, who gained for himself the reputation of a prophet, this man appeared in the country, collected a following of about thirty thousand dupes, and led them by a circuitous route from the desert to the mount of Olives. From there he proposed to force an entrance into Jerusalem and, after overpowering the Roman garrison, to set himself up as a tyrant. (II, 13, 5)⁵⁶

On these two episodes Strack-Billerbeck comment, "Both cases are concerned with an attempt to bring the people to a revolt against the Romans. The men who pretend to be prophets desire to play the role of liberators, deliverers of Israel. From this one recognizes how closely related in the thought of the people in the last century before the destruction of Jerusalem is the conception of 'a prophet who would come' and the redeemer Messiah."⁵⁷

Significantly, there are also indications in the New Testament that "the prophet" was thought of as a Messianic figure in the popular Palestinian expectation at the time of Jesus. The best example is

found in John 6. 14 where, after the great crowd has been miraculously fed, they say of Jesus, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world!" Their next reaction is that Jesus should therefore be proclaimed publicly as the Messianic king. This strongly suggests that the eschatological Prophet expected at the dawn of the new age was identified with the Messiah himself. S. Mowinckel suggests that on the basis of this Johannine account "the Prophet", simpliciter, was a title of the Messiah.⁵⁸ As other New Testament evidence for the popular connection of the eschatological Prophet with the Messiah, H. Riesenfeld cites Mark 13. 22 par., and the mocking before the crucifixion in which the Messiah crowned with thorns is told to "prophesy" (*προφητεύειν*).⁵⁹

Returning now to the prophecy of Gabriel in Luke 1. 16-17, it will be appreciated that we find there a different conception of John's role from the one which is immediately apparent in the Gospel tradition. The reference to God in v. 16, and the unmistakable echoes in v. 17 of Yahweh's pronouncements in Mal. 3. 1 and 4. 5-6, clearly show that originally the *κύριος* before whom John is to go is not the Messiah Jesus, although belief in Jesus as the Lord would have made it easy to understand the prophecy in this way, but Yahweh himself.⁶⁰ In other words, John can be seen here to have been cast in the role of the eschatological Prophet, the forerunner par excellence, the final agent in God's pre-apocalyptic dealings with Israel, with a role virtually equivalent to that of the Messiah.⁶¹ It is difficult to conceive of such views circulating in anything but distinctly

Johannite groups which had survived the shock of their hero's death.

At this point it is convenient to consider the question whether or not the Benedictus (Luke 1. 67-79) also originated in Johannite circles. The question is a complex one, although it does seem clear that at least vv. 76-77 must have always referred to the role of John. Once again we meet the conception of John as the one who will go *ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἐτοιμάσαι ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ*, and many critics have concluded that here too John is presented as the forerunner of God, the announcer and preparer of the imminent coming of Yahweh in apocalyptic fulfilment.⁶² This is certainly the implication of Winter's assertion that except for 1. 43, and possibly 2. 11, the term *κύριος* as used in the Lukan infancy narratives clearly refers to Yahweh,⁶³ a point unshaken by Benoit's claim that the distinction between the coming of God and that of the Messiah is not justified by the Old Testament.⁶⁴

Of particular interest in this small section is v. 76a, which speaks of John as *προφήτης ὑψίστου κληθήσῃ*. Since *ὑψιστος* is obviously a designation of God, it may be that the reference under discussion was originally a description of John as the precursor of God himself, i.e., as the eschatological Prophet.⁶⁵ Alternatively, there is something to be said for the claim that this description, *προφήτης ὑψίστου*, has a specifically Messianic connotation. The only other place where the phrase occurs is in Test. Levi 8. 15, and there it is used of the expected Messiah of Levi. On the basis of this alone, it would be perilous to claim

that John was once believed to be the Messiah of Levi, although it must be noted that such a belief would not necessarily contradict the indications, both elsewhere in the Benedictus and in Gabriel's prophecy, that John was regarded by some as the eschatological Prophet. It is not impossible that an individual could be described as both Messiah and eschatological Prophet in one and the same context. Reference has already been made to the evidence intimating that the role of the eschatological Prophet was not unlike that of the Messiah. Another relevant consideration may be Brownlee's claim that in some Essene (or Covenanter) circles "there was a tendency toward a unified messianic expectation", i.e. a narrowing of the expectation of the two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel to one, a priest-king.⁶⁶ A similar process is to be found in the New Testament, particularly in the Fourth Gospel where "all the functions of all those sent from God are united in the Johannine Jesus".⁶⁷ Against this background, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the conceptions of John as eschatological Prophet and as Messiah of Levi which can be traced in Luke 1. 76-77, represented originally a drawing together of two basically similar eschatological concepts. Once John had been viewed as the eschatological Prophet, or, more definitely, as Elijah redivivus, some of his followers may have had no difficulty in thinking of him also as priestly Messiah. There is some Rabbinic evidence for equating Elijah with the Messiah of the priestly line.⁶⁸ More importantly, John's antecedents well qualified him for the role of priestly Messiah, and we

know from Luke 3. 15 that some people speculated during John's lifetime whether he was the Messiah.

There are indications also that the last two verses of the Benedictus were originally applied to John in circles which regarded him as the final envoy from God before the end time. One possible interpretation of v. 78 is that John is being described as *ἀνατολή ἐξ ὕψους*, and that this phrase is best understood as a Messianic ascription.⁶⁹ Taking the aorist *ἐπεσκέψατο* as the correct reading for the main verb, this verse could then be regarded as a continuation of the sense of Luke 1. 76-77, for as the final agent in God's pre-apocalyptic dealings with his people the eschatological Prophet would have had Messianic status. The interpretation receives some support from the suspicion that the reference to *ἀναδείξεως αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν Ἰσραὴλ* in v. 80 may have been intended originally as a periphrasis for John's revelation as Messiah.⁷⁰ Alternatively, if the future *ἐπισκέψεται* is preferred to *ἐπεσκέψατο*, and John said to be the forerunner of *ἀνατολή ἐξ ὕψους*, this too could be thought consistent with the claim that underlying the last part of the Benedictus is a conception of John as the eschatological Prophet. According to Winter, the metaphor *ἀνατολή ἐξ ὕψους* "cannot possibly be applied to anyone but to God .. whose visitation will be accomplished by the words and deeds of the prophet John".⁷¹

The probability that Luke 1. 76-79 is of a piece with Gabriel's prophecy in 1. 16-17, and originated amongst followers of John, raises the interesting possibility that the remainder of the

Benedictus should be assigned to this same Johannite source. The one major objection to this is the indication in v. 69a that the psalm of praise is in honour of one from the house of David. Since John's parents were "a daughter of Aaron" and a priest this phrase does have the effect of contradicting the claim that the whole of the Benedictus came from an independent Johannite source. But against this point must be set the claim that "in the house of his servant David" is a late addition to the text. There is, as Parson admits, "no textual evidence bearing on the matter", although he considers it "within the possibilities that the phrase may be an addition or an alteration in the interests of Davidic messiahship with an intent that it should be carried over to the one whom John was to foretell".⁷² Note can also be made of Scobie's assertion that "when the original Hebrew of the psalm is reconstructed the phrase in question spoils the metre",⁷³ and certainly R. A. Aytoun's translation of the Benedictus into Hebrew metre does exclude this phrase as a later gloss.⁷⁴

A different counter to the objection that the reference to the Davidic line in v. 69 is inconsistent with the whole of the Benedictus having originated in Johannite circles is made by Bowen. His argument is that all of the Benedictus comes from a Johannite source and that the phrase "in the house of his servant David", far from being a gloss, is an integral part of the whole. According to Bowen, the words in question reflect a theory that a priestly Messiah could spring from the Davidic family, and he maintains that

in the Old Testament there is a hint of David being the progenitor of a priestly as well as of a kingly line. The American scholar draws attention to II Sam. 8. 18 where it is reported that "David's sons were priests". Reference is also made to the fact that in Solomon's court one of Nathan's sons was a "priest", and the other "over the officers" (I Kgs. 4. 5). Bowen argues that the father referred to is Nathan, the son of David, not only because it would be unlikely for the prophet Nathan to be mentioned in such a list without his title, but also because these court functionaries would be more likely to be the nephews of the King.⁷⁵ If Bowen's thesis is accepted - and Robinson is able to bring forward no evidence against it⁷⁶ - it would clearly not have been impossible for one of the Baptist's followers to connect the son of the priest Zechariah with the house of David, possibly with the intention of further heightening Levitical prestige. Bowen believes his analysis to be confirmed by the fact that if the people mentioned in Luke 3. 15 wondered whether John was Messiah "they must have connected him with David's line, according to the Messianic dogmatic, despite their tradition of his priestly birth".⁷⁷

It may be said of Bowen's argument that it constitutes a better defence of the claim that the whole of the Benedictus was used as a distinctly Johannite psalm than does the proposed rejection of v. 69a as a late addition to the whole. But it must be recognized that there does appear to be a natural break in the psalm at v. 75, and perhaps the best explanation of the character of the Benedictus

is that a Jewish traditional hymn, represented in vv. 68-75, has been rather carelessly adapted for use in Johannite circles by the addition of vv. 76-79, and then the whole equally carelessly integrated into a Christian context. The important point for the present study is that vv. 76-79 have been seen to concur with the portrait of John presented in Luke 1. 16-17. This description of the Baptist's role as the eschatological Prophet is at variance with what Parsons describes as "the traditional and conventional view that John was the conscious forerunner of Jesus",⁷⁹ and it must therefore be regarded as a strong indication that in some circles John was remembered and honoured as a Messianic figure.⁸⁰

Many critics have held that the indications in the Lukan writings for the survival of a Johannite sect are not confined to the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. Special emphasis is laid upon Acts 18. 24-28 and 19. 1-7, the latter passage often forming a locus classicus in the display of evidence for the continued existence of a Baptist party.

It will be convenient to examine first the verses dealing with Apollos.

Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in

the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and expounded to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully confuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. (Acts 18. 24-28)

The passage is perplexing in that it gives no explicit definition of the character of Apollos' belief before his encounter with Priscilla and Aquila. It is a puzzle which can be conveniently investigated by testing the claim that Apollos may be cited legitimately as evidence for the continued existence of a Johannite movement after the death of John. Apart from any connection which Apollos may be said to have had with the twelve disciples of Acts 19. 1-7, the case for regarding him as a devotee of John the Baptist might be indicated thus. Apollos, a Jewish missionary, arrived at Ephesus well-equipped to present the teaching of John the Baptist which had by this time already reached Alexandria.⁸¹ Of fiery temperament, and "instructed in the way of the Lord" which John the Baptist had been sent to prepare, he was led by Priscilla and Aquila to see the shortcomings of his faith and to begin a new career as a Christian missionary.

However, closer examination of the text reveals that although there are points which imply that the case of Apollos is indicative

of the continuation of an independent Johannite movement alongside the growing Christian communities, all the evidence does not point in the same direction. For example, the fact that before his meeting with Priscilla and Aquila Apollos was **κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου** does not constitute conclusive support for the claim that at this time he was committed solely to the cause of John the Baptist. It is true that these words echo Mal. 3. 1 and Is. 40. 3, two passages associated in the Gospels with the mission of John the Baptist, and in the Old Testament with the coming of Yahweh; and it is tempting to argue that the greater the probability of John's historical role being that of the eschatological Prophet, the final emissary before the coming of Yahweh, the greater the likelihood that the description of Apollos as **κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου** indicates his commitment to this conception of John's mission.⁸² On the other hand, the possibility must be allowed that the word **κύριος** in this context refers to Christ and not to God. This clearly is the implication of the following reference to Apollos teaching accurately the facts about Jesus. It may be too that the phrase in question concerns an echo of the absolute use in Acts of **ἡ ὁδός** to denote the Christian movement,⁸³ and that Luke clearly intends the reference to the instruction of Apollos in the way of the Lord to be understood as indicating his commitment to the Christian way.⁸⁴

The claim that the case of Apollos constitutes strong evidence for the survival of the Johannite movement is also somewhat weakened

by the description of him as *ζέων τῷ πνεύματι*. There has been a claim that a comparison with Acts 17. 16, where it is said of Paul that "his spirit was roused to anger" (*καρῶξύνετο τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ*), justifies the translation "having a fiery temperament". This translation would be consistent with the assertion that Apollos at this time was a Johannite, although it must be pointed out that the use of the possessive adjective with *τὸ πνεῦμα* in 17. 16 does not make for a complete parallel with the phrase under discussion. Further, the use of *τὸ πνεῦμα* in 17. 16 is unusual, and the description of Apollos as *ζέων τῷ πνεύματι* is perhaps best compared with *τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες* in Rom. 12. 11, a phrase clearly current in the language of Christian edification.⁸⁵

Following this description of Apollos as *ζέων τῷ πνεύματι*, the verse continues, *ἔλαλει καὶ ἐδίδασκεν ἀκριβῶς τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*. Here the claim that Apollos was committed to a distinctly non-Christian allegiance to John the Baptist is at its most vulnerable, for it is not merely stated that he knew the facts about Jesus but that these facts were part and parcel of his preaching. Only if this phrase is omitted as an unhistorical gloss can a good case be made out for regarding Apollos as evidence for the survival of an independent Johannite movement after the Baptist's death.

But if, at this point, the balance of probability would appear to be against the proposition that Apollos before his encounter with Priscilla and Aquila was still a committed Johannite, the concluding clause of this perplexing verse 25, *ἐπιστάμενος μόνον τὸ*

Βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου , makes the question completely open again.

It is this clause which is most frequently quoted as evidence that Apollos must have been a devotee of John the Baptist. The words are usually taken to mean not merely that Apollos knew of the baptism of John, but also that he had been baptized into it. This would indicate at least a measure of commitment by Apollos to the Baptist's cause, and perhaps also his acceptance of the demands of formal discipleship which he had retained up to this point. Some critics have proposed to treat this clause as secondary,⁸⁶ and this certainly clarifies the Christian status of Apollos. However, it must be stressed that if instead the reference to Apollos teaching about Jesus was similarly excluded as an unhistorical gloss, an excellent case could then be made out in support of his Johannite status. It is easier to imagine that a Christian writer would have added the reference to Jesus rather than a reference to John's baptism.

The problem is whether this reference to John's baptism, coupled perhaps with the reference to his being instructed in the way of the Lord, constitutes sufficient grounds for citing Apollos as evidence for the continued existence of a Johannite movement after the Baptist's death. Some support for an affirmative answer might be thought to lie in the improbability that a Christian teacher could have been "fervent in spirit", and yet ignorant of the connection between the possession of the Spirit and Christian baptism. It is, however, uncertain whether Käsemann is correct in asserting that according to the unanimous witness of the New Testament "baptism

is the inescapable presupposition of membership in Christ and in his Body".⁸⁷ Apart from Matt. 28. 19 and Mark 16. 15, there is no evidence that Jesus gave any command to baptize, and even these disputed verses speak only of a command given after his death and resurrection. There is the suspicion too, that in speaking of the practice of baptism from the day of Pentecost the early chapters of Acts are reading back into the past the practice of a later day. These factors leave open the possibility that for a short time the earliest Christian believers did not practise a baptism of their own.⁸⁸ In any event Apollos may be compared with the one hundred and twenty disciples of Jesus on Pentecost morning who received the Spirit without baptism, and regarded as representative of those who had received John's baptism prior to a visitation of the Spirit and consequent entry into the Christian community.⁸⁹ The complementary point to this suggestion would then be that the further information imparted by Priscilla and Aquila to Apollos was that Christian baptism had been commanded by the risen Christ, and that it had become the mark of entry into the Christian community.⁹⁰

But attractive as this last interpretation appears, the conclusion must be that Acts 18. 24-28 is too confusing to admit of a definite interpretation. If, on the one hand, the text is accepted as an accurate historical record, the probability would be that Apollos was a Christian of a primitive type, unacquainted with the practice of Christian baptism. On the other hand if it is stressed that no Christian writer, least of all Luke, would have wished to

acknowledge that Apollos, the well-known missionary, had once held heretical views about the precursor of Jesus, it may be argued that there are sufficient indications in the text to conclude that before his encounter with Priscilla and Aquila Apollos was committed to distinctly Johannite views.⁹¹ In the face of this uncertainty it may only be tentatively suggested that the case of Apollos constitutes some evidence for the survival of a Baptist sect after the death of John; and without other sounder evidence for the continued existence of a Johannite movement it would probably be wrong to attach much significance to Acts 18. 24-28.

However, in contrast to Acts 18. 24-28, the passage 19. 1-7 is regarded by many scholars as a firm indication that there were men who, some thirty years after the death of John the Baptist, held to an interpretation of his mission different from that current amongst early Christians. The passage reads:

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his

hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve of them in all.

Perhaps the first thing to emerge is that the narrative is far from being clear. The second is that despite its lack of clarity the passage does appear to carry some reference to a Johannite group; even Teicher, one of the most ardent critics of the general hypothesis under review, admits that the passage indicates the possibility of the existence of a Johannite sect, and he concedes the logical point that no demonstration is available to prove this possibility impossible.⁹² These two factors dictate the plan of the following discussion. Kraeling asserts that these men are "too enigmatic to clarify another enigma",⁹³ and the perplexing features in the story must serve as a salutary warning to those who have used this passage as the corner-stone of the hypothesis that a Johannite community continued after the death of John. However, it is easy to understand why scholars since the time of Chrysostom have cited this story as evidence for the existence of Johannite groups some years after John's execution. The question is to see how far this citation is justified.

As indicated above, the passage is a well known crux, but were it not for the description of these men as *μαθητῶν* and *πιστεύοντες* it could be argued convincingly that what Paul encounters here is a company or fellowship of Johannites. His opening question clearly implies that there is something unusual, if not distinctly non-

Christian, about the beliefs of these men. This impression is confirmed when in answer to Paul's enquiry they reply, *ἀλλ' οὐδ' εἰ πνεῦμα ἄγιον ἔστιν ἠκούσαμεν*. The RSV translation, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit", is dangerously misleading for it implies that they were ignorant, not only of John's promise of a baptism *ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ* in the not too distant future,⁹⁴ but also of the existence of the divine Spirit known to every pious Jew and Gentile in the Hellenistic epoch.⁹⁵ The RV is more likely to be correct with its translation. "We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given."⁹⁶ This translation can also be defended on linguistic grounds. If the intention had been to indicate ignorance of the very existence of the Spirit a "know" verb would have been more suitable.⁹⁷ As it is, the use of *ἠκούσαμεν* may suggest disappointment at not having heard about awaited news. A comparison can be made too with John 7. 39b, where the words *οὐκ ἔγνω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα* .. require the addition of the word "given" in order to make complete sense.⁹⁸ The point therefore about the men's reply, as indicated further by the events described in v. 6, is just that at this stage they had not received the Holy Spirit. If Romans 8. 9 - "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." - is any guide, this answer means that whatever their particular allegiance it was not properly Christian.

E. Haenchen's comment on the men's answer is, "Wenn es bei den Zwölf so traurig um den Geist bestellt ist, dann kann ihre Taufe nicht in Ordnung sein."⁹⁹ This is Paul's conclusion too for he immediately

links their lack of the Spirit with a baptism which he assumes they had experienced. The men's rejoinder to this assumption is to explain that they had been baptized *εἰς τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα*. It has been claimed that this phrase indicates only the actual act of baptism and not a lasting obligation to John entered thereupon. However, it is not certain on grammatical grounds that *εἰς* is here equivalent to instrumental *ἐν* (as F. F. Bruce maintains¹⁰⁰), and the fact that Paul connects their lack of Christian understanding with this baptism suggests that in this case, if not in 18. 25c, "the baptism of John" can confidently be understood as indicating some distinctive commitment to the Baptist.¹⁰¹

The reply of Paul to the men's rejoinder would appear to confirm that they had a definite commitment still to the teachings of John the Baptist. It is true that Teicher objects that Paul's statement in v. 4 "would make no sense if it had been addressed to the disciples of John the Baptist", representing as it does only a repetition of what they must already have known.¹⁰² But Teicher is mistaken here in his interpretation of the summary which Paul gives of John's message. It is far from certain that this summary would have been stale news to men who were committed solely to the Baptist. According to the Synoptic tradition John does not explicitly identify the Coming One with Jesus, nor indeed does he urge his listeners to believe in the Coming One.¹⁰³ It must be noted too that the concluding words of Paul's summary, *τοῦτ' ἐστὶν εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν*, give the impression that there was a need to stress the identification of Jesus with

the Coming One whom John had proclaimed. This identification would appear to have been readily accepted by the twelve men. They are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit, these two actions, here related, marking their entry into the Christian Church.

The obvious criticism of the above argument is that it fails to take account of the terms *μαθητάς* and *πλιτεύσαντες* which are used to describe these men. It is generally objected that these terms must indicate the men's Christian allegiance since in other New Testament passages where the same terms are used absolutely the reference is always to Christians. The force of this objection is not lessened by the suggestion of J. Thomas that the term does not apply only to the twelve men, but to a larger audience of which they were a small, albeit unorthodox, part.¹⁰⁴ It is also extremely doubtful whether Thomas is correct in suggesting that the use by Paul of the term *πλιτεύσαντες* may reflect only his own error in assuming that these men were Christians.¹⁰⁵

However, it is not obvious that the use of these two terms in this passage demands the rejection of the claim that the twelve men converted by Paul were committed Johannites. In his discussion of the problem, Scobie suggests that since this passage is obviously a special case we would be justified in letting the context, rather than the term *μαθητάς*, dictate the conclusion to be drawn.¹⁰⁶ As so stated his suggestion smacks of special pleading, but it is possible, as is the claim that the use of the word here goes back to

some primitive circles where its meaning was less stereotyped than in later days.¹⁰⁷ It is also possible that more emphasis should be placed on the phrase *τινας μαθητάς*, rather than just the single word *μαθητάς*. "Luc aurait écrit 'certains disciples' pour indiquer que c'étaient des disciples d'un genre spécial."¹⁰⁸ The implication of this is that the two words, *τινας μαθητάς*, might not be inapplicable to a group of non-Christians.

Special mention must be made of Käsemann's conclusion that what we have in this episode is "an overpainting by Luke of the tradition he had to hand".¹⁰⁹ He puts forward the hypothesis that it is Luke's intention to picture "all disciples of John as standing to Christians in the relation of embryos",¹¹⁰ in which case the terms *μαθητάς* and *πιστευόμενοι* would form part of a plan designed to make clear to Johannites, Christians, and critics alike, that despite the dubious beliefs of those Johannites still active, they are to be regarded as Christians of a primitive type since only the slightest pressure is needed to incorporate them into the Christian Church. Alternatively, the use of the words *μαθητάς* and *πιστευόμενοι* may reflect only Luke's reluctance to make explicit reference to an independent movement which still held sole allegiance to the man believed by Christians to have been the precursor of Jesus. It is known that Luke was reluctant to acknowledge the existence of schism and heresy in the earliest days of Christianity,¹¹¹ and this supports Haenchen's argument that "konnte er die Johannesjünger, von denen seine Tradition erzählte, nur als unvollkommene Christen

auftreten lassen, die 'in die Taufe des Johannes' getauft sind".¹¹²

The implication of all this is that Acts 19. 1-7, like most of the other New Testament data considered previously, constitutes strong support for the claim that for a time John's disciples continued to exist as a distinct and independent organization after their master's death. All of these references admittedly fall short of conclusive proof, but this qualification must be judged alongside the consideration that this evidence for the survival of an independent Johannite movement is derived from the New Testament. One would hardly expect to find explicit references there to a group constant in its allegiance to the man believed by Christians to have been the forerunner of Jesus.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NON-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF A
JOHANNITE SECT

The evidence for the survival of Johannite groups after the Baptist's death is not exhausted by those New Testament passages examined earlier. Outside the pages of the New Testament is to be found evidence which, if not as conclusive as many critics have assumed, is of great value in supporting the claim that the movement begun by the Baptist persisted for some time after his death.

A natural starting point is with Josephus, the Jewish historian (A.D.37-97), who supplies the earliest non-Christian reference to John the Baptist in his work *The Antiquities of the Jews* (XVIII, 5, 2). The precise degree of credibility to be attached to this reference is a matter of some debate,¹ although for the purpose of this discussion we may concur with the latest biographer of John the Baptist and accept it as "largely the truth, but by no means the whole truth".² The passage reads:

Some of the Jews (ΤΙΣΙ ΔΕ ΤῶΝ Ἰουδαίων) believed that Herod's army was destroyed by God, God punishing him very justly for John called the Baptist, whom Herod had put to death. For John was a pious man, and he was bidding the Jews who practised virtue and exercised righteousness toward each other and piety toward God, to come together

for baptism (βαπτισμῷ συνιέναι). For thus, it seemed to him, would baptismal ablution be acceptable, if it were used not to beg off from sins committed, but for the purification of the body when the soul had previously been cleansed by righteous conduct. And when everybody turned to John - for they were profoundly stirred by what he said - Herod feared that John's so extensive influence over the people might lead to an uprising (for the people seemed likely to do everything he might counsel). He thought it much better, under the circumstances, to get John out of the way in advance, before any insurrection might develop, than for himself to get into trouble and be sorry not to have acted, once an insurrection had begun. So because of Herod's suspicion, John was sent as a prisoner to Machaerus, the fortress already mentioned, and there put to death. But the Jews (τοῖς δὲ Ἰουδαίοις) believed that the destruction which overtook the army came as a punishment for Herod, God wishing to do him harm.³

It is at once apparent that the passage makes no explicit reference to the disciples of John the Baptist, although this is not to say that it lacks material which could be taken as being consistent with their continued existence after his death. Josephus begins by connecting the Baptist's death with the defeat of the army of Herod Antipas by Aretas, King of the Nabataeans. This occurred in A.D.36, which means that if Luke 3. 1 is correct in

indicating that the Baptist died about A.D.29-30, the interpretation of Herod's defeat as an act of divine vengeance for the execution of John was current several years afterwards. It is not clear from the account of Josephus whether this interpretation was generally held, or if it was held by only a few. The unpopularity of Antipas, coupled with the enthusiastic following which both Josephus and the Synoptic writers attribute to John, make it not unlikely that such an interpretation would have quickly caught the public imagination. "Many of the common people of his day found him not only provocative but compelling, so much so that for almost a decade after his death the question of his vindication was a popular issue."⁴

Alternatively, although there is nothing to support R. Eisler's suggestion that the concluding *τοῖς δὲ Ἰουδαίοις* should really be *πρὸς δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων*,⁵ if the reference which Josephus makes first to *πρὸς δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων* is accurate, it might be conjectured that this refers to a Johannite group loyal to its dead master and convinced that his murderer had not gone unpunished. It is easy to imagine that any particular group holding to this interpretation of Herod's defeat would have been Johannite in character. At one point in his book Kraeling suggests that Josephus is referring to the sympathizers of John himself, the large constituency of those baptized by his baptism who carried on where John had been forced to leave off.⁶ E. Stauffer confidently asserts that it was the "Täuferjünger" who saw in this defeat of Antipas "dass göttliche Strafgericht über den Mörder ihres Meisters".⁷ Equally confident

is Rengstorf who argues that a continuation of a firm circle of Johannites long after John's death is sufficiently attested "by the mere fact that Josephus (90 A.D.) had at his disposal living testimonies of the Baptist".⁸

However, attractive as these claims are, it must be admitted that the text gives no definite indication that the men who held to this interpretation of Herod's defeat were Johannites, and does not demand the deduction that this interpretation was a live issue in the closing decades of the first century. Neither claim can be dismissed as impossible, but the fairest inference from the text at this point is simply that it provides definite evidence for John's death being remembered by at least a few Jews (who may have been Johannites) for a number, and perhaps even a considerable number of years after his execution.

Also relevant to the question whether or not the disciples of John survived their master's death is the claim that the words *ΒΑΠΤΙΣΜῶ ΣΥΝΙΕΝΑΙ* should be translated as "to unite by baptism" or "to come together through baptism". Obviously the likelihood of a Johannite movement continuing after John's death is increased if those baptized by him were thereby bound together in some form of fellowship. On this point critics are divided. Both Scobie and Kraeling remain unimpressed by the arguments of Goguel and H. G. Marsh that *ΒΑΠΤΙΣΜῶ ΣΥΝΙΕΝΑΙ* should be translated as "to come together through baptism",⁹ and this may be taken as significant since neither Scobie nor Kraeling has any difficulty in accepting

that the disciples of John the Baptist remained active after his death. On the other hand, although Scobie is correct in pointing out that the great majority of those baptized must have returned home to their respective occupations,¹⁰ there can be little doubt that John's baptism, whatever its significance, must have resulted in some feeling of fellowship amongst those who had received it, and constituted a bond between them and John. If on grammatical grounds *βαπτισμῷ συνιέναι* can be translated by either "to come together for baptism" or "to unite by baptism", general considerations suggest that the latter translation is perhaps the better one. The phrase *βαπτισμῷ συνιέναι* may then bear the interpretation that the bonds of fellowship forged by John's baptism would have survived the strain of his imprisonment and death.

One difficulty with this, and with the previous point, is that few scholars are prepared to accept the passage in The Antiquities of the Jews as completely reliable. It is true that the main problems lie only with the omission of apocalyptic colour and any reference to Jesus, but it is a doubtful argument which rests on certain points derived from a suspect record. What can safely be said is only that the passage under review is at least consistent with the claim that the disciples of John continued to be active after his death.

In his review of the evidence for the existence of a Johannite sect, Scobie has nothing to say of the various apocryphal writings concerning the infancy and life of John the Baptist.¹¹ Not so

H. J. Schonfield who argues that details in these apocryphal works bear out his claim that there was in existence during the first Christian centuries "a record of the birth of John the Baptist in which he figures as the infant Messiah",¹² and also, by implication, a group of Johannites to originate and transmit this material. It is true that the mere existence of this further apocryphal information about the Baptist's antecedents does not prove that the stories originated in Johannite circles. As one critic of Schonfield's book remarked, "Enquiring spirits naturally turned from Jesus and His mother to look for further information as to His great forerunner, and the writers of the age had little difficulty in supplying it."¹³ But although this observation acts as an effective criticism to many of Schonfield's deductions, there remain indications that some of this apocryphal material concerning John reflects an exaggerated estimate of the prophet's importance and stems from opponents of the Christian Church.

Schonfield makes much of the Commentaries on the Gospels written by Isho'dad of Merv, the Nestorian Bishop of Hadatha. In this work we find with reference to the account of John's birth the following:

But afterwards the Jews inquired of Zechariah about his son, "Where is the prophet that was born to save Israel from the oppression of the Romans?" and he truthfully replied, "I do not know." They answered him cruelly. "Because thou art envious about the liberation of the people, thou hast killed thy son, in order that we may not be freed from bondage"; for they expected a Messiah from the wonders that were per-

formed at his conception and at his birth.¹⁴

Clearly these words go beyond the conception of John as the forerunner of Jesus the Messiah. The significant point here is that although Isho'dad wrote about the middle of the ninth century, he does claim dependence on much older writers. Unfortunately, the mention of the use of older sources is not accompanied by an explicit reference to the derivation of this belief in John as "the prophet that was born to save Israel from the oppression of the Romans". It may be ancient, as Schonfield maintains, but the absence of real evidence to support this claim makes it hazardous to lay much stress on the possibility that this reference of Isho'dad supports the hypothesis of an independent Johannite movement surviving the death of John the Baptist.

Better support for Schonfield's thesis is to be found in the apocryphal work, The Book of James (Protevangelium). The roots of this work go back to about the year 150 A.D., although several chapters are to be accounted later additions.¹⁵ The portion of the work relevant to this enquiry is chapters 22-24. These appear to have been added to the book after the time of Origen since he is evidently dependent upon this work for his information about the first marriage of Joseph, but apparently ignorant of the account of the death of Zechariah which is given in chapter 22ff.¹⁶ There is no reason, however, to suppose that these chapters were added much later than the end of the third century, and as such the story of John the Baptist preserved in them is a priori more likely to be relevant to the present study than the remarks of Isho'dad of Merv.

It is Cullmann's contention that these chapters are "a later addition to the Protevangelium on the analogy of the combination of the John and Jesus traditions in Luke".¹⁷ This may be so, but apart from the first two verses of chapter 22 the account of John's infancy is completely independent of the story of Jesus; and despite the one or two echoes of New Testament language, it contains no distinctive Christian colouring. In the account Elizabeth is treated as a heroine, Zechariah as "a martyr of God", and the possibility raised that John is "to be king over Israel". Whatever the reason for the addition of this material to The Book of James, it is difficult to imagine the story originating in Christian circles. Herod's question, "Is his son to be king over Israel?", clearly implies that in this cycle of legend preserved in The Book of James John is presumed to be the Messiah. The confident suggestion is that the story must go back to circles whose views about John were different from the Christian interpretation of him as the forerunner of Jesus the Messiah.¹⁸

It is Teicher's contention that the locus classicus in the display of evidence for the survival of an independent Baptist party is Acts 19. 1-7.¹⁹ He has nothing to say about the Pseudo-Clementine literature, and this is surprising since many scholars point to it as strong testimony for the survival of an independent Johannite movement. By this term Pseudo-Clementine literature is meant the Clementine Recognitions and Homilies, both of which were probably composed in the early years of the fourth century.²⁰ There is general agreement that these two fictitious works go back to a common

source which was written in the first half of the third century and which itself represents a compilation of earlier sources.²¹

It is significant that Robinson, whose opposition to the hypothesis of a continuing Baptist group has already been noted, concedes that there are two passages in the Clementine Recognitions which constitute "direct evidence that there was such a group".²² These are as follows:

Yea, some even of the disciples of John, who seemed to be great ones, have separated themselves from the people, and proclaimed their own master as the Christ. (1. 54)

One of the disciples of John asserted that John was the Christ, and not Jesus, inasmuch as Jesus himself declared that John was greater than all men and all prophets. "If then", said he, "he be greater than all the prophets, he must be held to be greater than Moses, and than Jesus himself. But if he be the greatest of all, then he must be the Christ."²³ To this Simon the Canaanite answering, asserted that John was indeed greater than all the prophets, and all who are born of women, yet that he is not greater than the Son of Man. Accordingly Jesus is also the Christ, whereas John is only a prophet: and there is as much difference between him and Jesus, as between the forerunner and Him whose forerunner he is; or as between Him who gives the law, and him who keeps the law. (1. 60)²⁴

Having cited these verses, Robinson goes on to emphasize the late date and doubtful historicity of the Pseudo-Clementine literature. This in turn leads him to conclude that at best these passages "cannot provide evidence of anything before the second century".²⁵ Dodd is similarly sceptical of the importance of these references. Rejecting the hypothesis of a conflict between the early Church and a Johannite sect, he asserts that "to base a theory upon the evidence of the late and heretical Clementine romance is to build a house upon sand".²⁶

Against Dodd and Robinson it may be argued that the late date, doubtful historicity, and heretical nature of the Clementine Recognitions, do not automatically invalidate what it has to say about the disciples of John. On the question of when the work was written, even if we accept a date at the beginning of the fourth century, this would not necessarily mean that the references have no relevance to New Testament times. It may be said that in the face of this vivid description of first century heretical Johannites, one must either deduce that their mention in the third or fourth century reflects a concern with a similar contemporary, or near contemporary phenomena, which was in some way connected with this first century movement or else be faced with the problem why anyone should have invented a fictitious account of a first century heretical movement some 150 years or more after the death of John. As for Dodd's emphasis upon the heretical nature of the Pseudo-Clementine literature, this has little or no bearing on the historical value of the references

there to the disciples of John, and is insufficient reason for rejecting its testimony about them.²⁷ Furthermore, the doubtful historicity of the contexts in which are found these references to the disciples of John does not constitute grounds for dismissing as trivial the references themselves. Robinson is quite correct in being sceptical about the assertion in *Recognitions* 1. 53 that John baptized the Scribes and the Pharisees,²⁸ although it remains difficult to see why anyone should write that some of John's disciples had "proclaimed their own master as the Christ" unless this had actually happened at some time or another. It may be suggested that the reference to John baptizing Scribes and Pharisees makes sense only as part of a plan to discredit John, and that this reference is associated with the mention of his heretical disciples in order to imply that master and followers were tarred with the same unorthodox brush.

This last suggestion may be linked with the proposition put forward by Goguel in order to explain these references to the disciples of John in the *Recognitions*. He pays particular attention to the fact that the second of these references is set against the background of a public debate between the apostles and a disciple of John on the Temple steps at the Easter festival, just seven years after the death of Jesus. This Goguel finds quite incredible, and he goes on to suggest that the writer of the *Recognitions* must have put forward this account in answer to claims being made by contemporary groups "qui peuvent n'avoir eu aucune relation directe ou

indirecte avec un groupe baptiste".²⁹ Faced with a situation where one aspect of the opposition to the Christian Church took the form of asserting that John's disciples had not accepted Jesus as the fulfilment of the Baptist's expectations, the writer told of the way in which these claims were effectively met by the apostles. If this is the correct explanation of the account in question, it is particularly interesting that the writer felt free to compose an account of a disputation between Johannites and apostles, but not free to ignore or question the assertion that the disciples of John had been making these outrageous claims about their master for at least a few years after his death. This suggests not only that the tradition of the heretical views held by early Johannites was so well established as to make a denial pointless but also that this tradition was circulating amongst groups which were not Johannite in origin or theology. It would be precisely because the tradition of the unorthodox views of some of John's disciples was current in non-Johannite circles that the writer of the Recognitions could have suggested, without fear of contradiction, that these views need not be taken seriously because of the way in which they had been effectively rebutted by the apostles. This interpretation does not in itself constitute evidence for the prolonged survival of a Johannite movement,³⁰ although it may be taken as a strong indication that John's disciples were for some years critics of the growing Christian Church.

Further evidence that some of John's disciples survived as an independent body after their master's death is provided by what the

Clementine Homilies has to say about John and his followers. Particular attention must be paid to Homilies 2. 23, 24 where we find John linked with the heretic Simon. The passage reads:

There was one John, a hemerobaptist, who was also, according to the method of combination, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus; and as the Lord had twelve apostles, bearing the number of the twelve months of the sun, so also he (John) had thirty chief men, fulfilling the monthly reckoning of the moon ... Of these thirty, the first and the most esteemed by John was Simon; and the reason of his not being chief after the death of John was as follows: He being absent in Egypt for the practice of magic, and John being killed, Dositheus desiring the leadership, falsely gave out that Simon was dead, and succeeded to the seat.³¹

The suggestions that John was a hemerobaptist, a daily baptizer, and that he was the real originator of the dreaded gnostic heresy, are generally judged to rest on the whim of the novelist and to be without adequate historical foundation.³² This is not without significance however, for if these assertions are unhistorical one can only assume that they were made as part of a hostile campaign against those claiming John's precedence over Jesus. The link with Simon and Dositheus, with the implication that John is to be understood as evil and the originator of all later heresy, is hardly credible unless taken as an expression of bitter hatred towards the Baptist. The suggestion that John was a hemerobaptist was also probably meant

as an insult.³³ The implication must be that such an adverse attitude towards the Baptist was directed against a contemporary group which claimed that he was superior to Jesus.

This hostile treatment of John is continued elsewhere in the Homilies, and in one of its earliest sources, the "Kerygmata Petrou". Cullmann has emphasized in several places how in this source the theory of "pairs" (συσυγίαι) is brought to bear against the Baptist sect.³⁴ This theory of pairs has as its basis the idea that God has set forth "small things first, and great ones afterwards" (Hom. 2. 5); and in the Homilies the examples of Cain before Abel, Ishmael before Isaac, and Esau before Jacob, are amongst those cited in order to show that of such pairs of human beings the first of the pair is the representative of false prophecy. John the Baptist is then presented in a poor light by being placed before Jesus to form a complementary pair in this same series. According to Cullmann, this presentation must be dictated by the fact that some of John's followers were claiming excellence for him on the grounds that he preceded Jesus. This point, argues Cullmann, is taken up by the writer but turned in such a way as to combat excessive claims which had been made for John as the basis of his chronological relationship to Jesus. "Les disciples de Jean déclarent leur maître antérieur à Jesus, c'est exact. Mais pour cette raison, précisément, il est le faux prophète!"³⁵

It is difficult to resist the impression that this argument is directed against those in the writer's time who were making exaggerated claims for John the Baptist. Although Cullmann and Scobie may

be mistaken in claiming that this theory of pairs is primarily directed against the Baptist and his supporters,³⁶ the placing of John alongside Jesus in a series of complementary pairs, where the first is the last in merit, is properly held to reflect polemic against, and to indicate the existence of, those who held views of John inconsistent with the claim that he was the conscious precursor and witness of Jesus. Indeed, if Cullmann and Scobie are correct in their common claim that the whole purpose of this elaborate series of pairs is to place John in his proper Christian place, and to attack those who urged otherwise, the author of this series must have judged these excessive claims made on John's behalf to constitute the utmost danger to the Christian cause.

It may therefore be fairly concluded that the Pseudo-Clementine literature is indicative of the survival of views which exalted John over against Jesus. It is difficult to be precise with the dating of this phenomenon. We have as a terminus ad quem the early years of the fourth century, although the polemic against extreme opinions of John in the "Kerygmata Petrou" takes us back at least to the beginning of the third century. Thomas confidently speaks of the material dealing with John the Baptist dating from the second century,³⁷ and Robinson similarly concedes the possibility that the Pseudo-Clementine literature may have some relevance to the situation of the second century.³⁸ The conclusion is not likely to be far wrong which claims that the Pseudo-Clementine literature testifies either to the survival of an unorthodox Johannite movement in Syria

during the second or third centuries A.D. or else to the existence at that time of a non-Christian group, which knew that an independent Johannite sect had once existed, and which exploited this knowledge in the interests of its hatred of Jesus and the Christian Church.

Mention must be made at this stage of the seventh or eighth century Mandaean literature, where John the Baptist occupies a prominent and honoured place. At one time it was commonly supposed that the Mandaeans themselves were descendants of a John the Baptist sect,³⁹ but today the consensus of opinion is that the references to John in the Mandaean literature do not constitute evidence for any direct historical connection between his disciples and the Mandaeans. The account which is given of John's marriage and paternity of eight children tells strongly against the claim that the peculiar Mandaean references to the Baptist stem from circles which could claim descent from a first century Johannite movement. In fact, Dodd boldly declares that "there is no single fact recorded in the Mandaean writings which can be supposed to make any contribution to our knowledge of the 'John of history'".⁴⁰ What credible information there is in the Mandaean literature about the Baptist is explicable as borrowing from the New Testament.⁴¹ Thomas emphasizes that John has no role to play in the Mandaean liturgies, and he argues that if the Mandaeans were descendants of a John the Baptist sect then some mention would at least have been made of "le grand baptiseur" in the baptismal prayers.⁴² This hardly suggests that

John was regarded as other than a secondary figure in the Mandaean system: in fact nowhere in the Mandaean literature is he said to be either the Messiah or the founder of the sect.⁴³ He acts instead as the messenger of Enosh-Uthra, and is not identified with this figure. Consequently, no weight can be attached to Stauffer's claim that the oracle of the Epiphany of Enosh-Uthra found in the Ginza reflects a primitive Johannite belief in the return of John the Baptist as Enosh-Uthra before the destruction of Jerusalem.⁴⁴ As a final indication that the references to John do not belong to the earliest strata of the Mandaean literature there is the fact that John's name often appears in Arabic (Jahja). This suggests that John was introduced into the Mandaean system during the Islamic period when freedom from religious persecution was granted by the Moslems only to those sects which could lay claim to a prophet and a sacred book. The Mandaean Book of John includes the characteristic enquiry of the Moslem persecutors. "Wer ist dein Prophet? Sage uns, wer dein Prophet ist, sage uns, was deine (heilige) Schrift ist, sage uns, wen du anbetest."⁴⁵ In view of all these factors, the case for regarding the Mandaeans and their literature as evidence for a first century Johannite movement is an extremely weak one.⁴⁶

There remains, however, one possibility which must be mentioned. The place of honour which John occupies in this Mandaean literature is adequately explained by Moslem pressures. The hostility to Jesus Christ which is also found there would seem to date from the time of the Sasanian Empire when the Christian Church persecuted the Mandaeans.⁴⁷

But there are occasions when we find in the Mandaean literature a reverence for John combined with opposition to Jesus Christ. For example, we read in Ginza II, 1, 151f. the following:

While Yōhānā lives in Jerusalem, gaining sway over Jordan and baptizing, Jesus Christ shall come to him, shall humble himself, shall receive the baptism of Yōhānā and shall become wise with the wisdom of Yōhānā, pervert the baptism of Jordan, distort the words of truth, and preach fraud and malice throughout all the world.⁴⁸

This combination of reverence for John with the representation of Jesus as a renegade from John's baptism may represent only a simple redaction of the two historical factors mentioned above, and in any event would not constitute evidence of a direct link between the Mandaeans and the first century followers of John. But it is just possible that in setting up John as one of its key figures and as a successful rival to Jesus, the Mandaeans made use of certain traditions and arguments stemming originally from Johannite groups which had claimed the Baptist as their head.⁴⁹ In this limited respect only can it be claimed that the seventh century Mandaean literature testifies to the existence of an independent and unorthodox Johannite movement during the first Christian century.

However, even without the possible testimony of the Mandaean literature to the continued existence of a Johannite movement, the other extra-Biblical sources considered previously go some way towards establishing the claim that some of John's disciples must

have flourished independently of the early Christian communities. They certainly indicate that heretical views of John's mission were circulating long after his original followers had passed away, and it is difficult to explain why the Baptist should have been thought of in this way unless a lead had been given by his disciples after his death.

CHAPTER FOUR

JOHN'S MESSAGE AND MISSION

At this point careful consideration must be given to the message and mission of John, for these have often been seen as lying at the heart of the problem whether or not his disciples were active as an independent group after his death. There is force in this insight, although it would be wrong to conclude that if John's mission was that of preparing the way for the Messiah Jesus, this must invalidate the evidence previously brought forward for the existence of an independent Johannite movement alongside the early Christian communities. It is entirely possible that a number of John's disciples may have arrived at a conception of their master's mission different from that held by the Baptist himself. Vielhauer, for example, accepts both that John understood his own mission as that of preparing the way for a supernatural Messiah and that in the Lukan infancy narratives John himself is seen to be a Messianic figure. For Vielhauer, these two considerations are not incompatible. The apparent contradiction between them simply shows: "dass die Täufergemeinde eine andere Messianologie vertritt als der Täufer; als der von Johannes geweissagte 'Messias' nicht erschien, machten seine Jünger ihren Meister selbst zum Messias, aber mit Rücksicht auf die historische Wirklichkeit nicht zum Weltrichter, sondern zum Weltheiland".¹ Cullmann's position is essentially the same as that of Vielhauer. Although he makes no attempt to explain how the

difference arose, he is convinced that whereas in Luke 1. 17 and 1. 76 John the Baptist is seen by his followers "as the eschatological Prophet in the sense of the forerunner of God himself ... it may be said at least that the Baptist did not think of himself as the Prophet of the end time in the sense of the forerunner of God".² If Veilhauer and Cullmann are correct, a reconciliation is clearly possible between the evidence for an independent Johannite movement and what Parsons describes as "the traditional and conventional view that John was the conscious forerunner of Jesus".³

However, such a position can be accepted only when both sides of the coin have been closely examined. The question must be asked first if Cullmann and Vielhauer have too easily accepted the idea that John's mission was that of heralding the imminent arrival of the Messiah, and if, as a consequence, they have dismissed too readily the possibility that John did see himself as fulfilling the role of the eschatological Prophet in the sense of being the forerunner of Yahweh. Since this was the conception held by some of the followers of John the Baptist after his death, some measure of continuity with the views of the Baptist himself would naturally be expected; and if Scobie's procedure is adopted of asking "what John was and did and said, not in relation to someone else, but simply in himself",⁴ the case for believing that John saw himself as the precursor of God, rather than of the Messiah, is considerably strengthened.

Probably the best way to discover the scope of John's mission

is to concentrate on the portrait of him found in Q, that oral or written source common to Matthew and Luke which is generally reckoned to be the earliest and most reliable of the gospel sources.⁵ Information about John from this source is to be found in the following passages: Matt. 3. 9-10; Luke 3. 7-9; Matt. 3. 11-12; Luke 3. 16-17; Matt. 11. 2-6; Luke 7. 18-23; Matt. 11. 7-11; Luke 7. 24-28; Matt. 11. 16-19; Luke 7. 31-35; Matt. 11. 12; Luke 16. 16. These references are important, for although they are not always free from editorial touches the picture they give of John the Baptist is often far removed from the traditional conception of him as the conscious precursor of Jesus.

It seems certain that John's message was concerned with the imminence of the end of days. Matt. 3. 10-12 reads:

Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

A clearer definition of John's message demands an appraisal of the saying concerning the Coming One (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) about to baptize with "the Holy Spirit and with fire" (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ).

There can be no doubt that this reference to the Coming One was presented in the New Testament, always in slightly differing form (Mark 1. 7; Matt. 3. 11; Luke 3. 16; John 1. 15, 27, 30; Acts 13. 25), because it was believed to apply to Jesus. Further, it has been claimed that this was the original intention of the reference since the words, "he who comes after me", are held to reflect a regular New Testament use of *ὀπίω ἔρχεσθαι* for being a disciple (e.g. Mark 8. 34; Luke 14. 27).⁶ On this interpretation, John is admitting that one of his own disciples is mightier than he. Against this it must be pointed out that although the word *ὀπίω* can be used to convey the meaning of discipleship rather than time, it is the temporal meaning which conforms to the normal usage.⁷ More decisively, the interpretation in question is plausible only if the phrase is taken from its context. In Q, as in Mark 1. 7f., it is clear that there is a temporal reference to this Coming One as being expected in the future. The view that in speaking about the one coming after him, John was referring simply to one of his own disciples, must therefore be rejected.

One interesting explanation of this prophecy of John about the Coming One is that which identifies the figure with Elijah. This interpretation was strongly urged by A. Schweitzer,⁹ and in more recent times it has been revived by Robinson.¹⁰ The great defect of Schweitzer's hypothesis is that John is then identified as the forerunner of the forerunner of the Messiah. Robinson, however, cuts across this line of criticism by questioning the common view

that in pre-Christian times Elijah was believed to be the forerunner of the Messiah.¹¹ At this point Robinson's argument is impressive, but the great weakness of his general claim is his failure to explain convincingly how Elijah, who in the Old Testament is represented as coming before the Judgement to bring the people to repentance, could be thought of by John as actually carrying out the work of judgement, and baptizing with holy spirit as well as fire.¹²

The most widely accepted view is that this Coming One of whom John spoke was a Messiah of some sort, although considerable difficulties arise with any attempt at more precise identification. According to T. W. Manson, "there is no indication that John thinks of the Messiah as a supernatural being", and he urges an identification of this Coming One as a "human Messiah endowed with supernatural power and authority".¹³ The great attraction of this judgement is not only the veracity which it gives to John's question from prison, but also the way in which it meets the demand that the description of this Coming One as wearing sandals must indicate that John "thought of him, to some extent at least, as a man".¹⁴ A reference in the Psalms of Solomon 17 to a king who will "purge Jerusalem" and "gather together a holy people" is held to support this claim that the Coming One of John's expectation was an earthly figure.

For God will make him mighty by means of His holy spirit ...

And the blessing of the Lord will be with him; he will be strong and stumble not, his hope will be in the Lord: who

then can prevail against him? (Ps. of Sol. 17. 42-44)¹⁵

This suggested identification of John's Coming One with the national Messiah is not convincing. It must be noted that the picture in the Psalms of Solomon 17 is of the Messiah being given God's holy spirit, and not that of the Messiah as the agent of the holy spirit. Another factor is that the expected work of an earthly Messiah was to involve the overthrowing of the Romans and the purging of Jerusalem, two features absent from John's prophecies.¹⁶ Moreover, the imagery in which John's message is couched strongly indicates the expectation of a supernatural figure.¹⁷

Justice is done to the apocalyptic colour of the Q prophecy under discussion by the interpretation which associates the Coming One anticipated by John with a supernatural Messiah of the Son of Man type. It is interesting to note that the LXX of Dan. 7. 13 - "with the clouds of heaven there came one like the son of man" (ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενος) - links the form ἐρχόμενος with the expectation of the Son of Man. A more general parallel to John's prophecy, particularly to the description of the Coming One as a winnower (Matt. 3. 12), may be provided by Rev. 14. 14-16, which in apocalyptic fashion pictures the Son of Man swinging his "sickle on the earth". On the point of John's reference to a coming baptism with fire, this has been held to reflect the idea of a heavenly Messiah as the agent of fiery punishment which is found in II (4) Esdras. In one passage it is said of the Son of Man:

He sent out of his lips as it were a fiery stream, and out of his lips a flaming breath, and out of his tongue he shot forth a storm of sparks ... And these were all mingled together ... and fell upon the assault of the multitude which was prepared to fight, and burned them all up. (13. 10-11)¹⁸

There are, however, a number of criticisms which may be brought to bear against the interpretation outlined above. Most critics would find it difficult to reconcile John's expectation of an apocalyptic, supernatural figure with his inquiry to Jesus about whether or not he was the Coming One (Matt. 11. 2-3; Luke 7. 19). More decisively, the appeal to the description of the Son of Man in II (4) Esdras is suspect in that this work dates from after the fall of Jerusalem. Equally suspect is the suggestion that the Septuagint version of Dan. 7. 13 offers real support for the claim that the use of the form *ἐρχόμενος* in Matt. 3. 11 indicates John's anticipation of a Son of Man figure. Although clearly *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* was a term with strong eschatological overtones, there is no evidence that its use indicated one particular eschatological figure.¹⁹ In the New Testament the phrase *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* is applied to the eschatological Prophet in John 6. 14, and to Christ, the Son of God, in John 11. 27, whereas in Rev. 1. 4, 8, God is spoken of as the one "who is and who was and who is to come" (...*ὁ ἐρχόμενος*). It is significant too that Scobie, after examining all the usual identifications and suggestively linking this Coming One expected by John with the Son of Man, feels bound to conclude "that to a certain extent John appears

to have been deliberately vague as to the exact type of Messiah he expected".²⁰ This is one way of answering the problem at hand, and the possibility cannot be ruled out that for the Baptist the imminent Coming One connoted only a heavenly Personality of ambiguous nature.²¹

At this point reference must be made to another consideration which is all too swiftly dismissed by commentators on the Q passage Matt. 3. 10-12. This is the suggestion that the Coming One of whom John spoke was none other than Yahweh himself.²² It is too easily forgotten that "eschatologists felt no incongruity in picturing God's action in connection with the establishment of the new age as direct and immediate. When we read Jewish apocalyptic books from the Christian point of view, we may too easily lose sight of the fact that originally there was no need for a Messiah in the eschatological programme."²³ But this point has been rarely accepted as the key to the interpretation of the Baptist's Q prophecy, and three objections are popularly brought forward to explain why this prophecy could not concern the coming of Yahweh. Kraeling, commenting on the comparison which John makes between himself and the Coming One, expresses one of these objections thus: "The fact of the comparison shows that the person in question is not God, for to compare oneself with God, even in the most abject humility, would have been presumptuous for any Jew in John's day."²⁴ Akin to this is the objection that God would not be described as "mightier", but rather as the "Almighty".²⁵ Finally, there is the objection that

God would not be described as wearing sandals.²⁶

Closer examination shows that these points are not so impressive as they might at first appear. The objection that God would not be thought of as wearing sandals is met by Kraeling's own remark that "it belongs to the realm of metaphor and cannot be pressed".²⁷ The intention is obviously to express in vivid terms the speaker's subservience to the one who would come to baptize with holy spirit and with fire.²⁸ To loosen the sandals was the work of a slave.²⁹ The other two objections are more substantial, although they do not succeed in establishing the claim that it is not God who is being spoken about in this Q passage. In the first instance, the very fact that God is not referred to explicitly would have done much to avoid the possibility of John giving offence through making a comparison between himself and the Deity. On the particular point that the description of the Coming One as "mightier" would be inappropriate if the reference was to God, it must be remembered that in the Old Testament and apocalyptic literature God is repeatedly described as the Mighty God. The use of the comparative form here, and the comparison itself, may conveniently be related to the emphasis in the prophecy on the imminence of a coming baptism with both holy spirit and fire. It is entirely possible that John would have made a humble comparison, or rather contrast, between himself and God in order to reinforce the contrast between his own water baptism and God's baptism with holy spirit and with fire.³⁰ Alternatively, the explanation why John should have compared himself

with God is provided perhaps by the Lukan note associated with this prophecy, which reports that "all men questioned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he were the Christ" (Luke 3. 15). Such speculation, quite consistent with a role played by John of proclaiming that the long-awaited intervention of God was nigh, would no doubt have proved disturbing to John in that it carried with it the danger of public interest in his own person rather than in his message. Against such a background John may have felt the need to make a direct comparison or contrast between himself and God in an attempt to stress to everyone that he himself was important only inasmuch as he heralded the imminent coming of God.

At this point, it is convenient to mention a line of argument which attempts to support the claim that John saw himself as the herald of God by asserting that his message as we now have it has been "Christianized" so as to have lost its original meaning.³¹

P. G. Bretscher urges that the references to John's prophecy about the Coming One in Matt. 3. 11, and Acts 13. 25, can stand respectively the translations:

He who is coming after me is mightier than I, of whom I am not worthy to bear (my) sandals.

But behold, there is someone coming after me, of whom I am not worthy to remove the sandals of my feet.³²

According to Bretscher the point of this prophecy of John is his own unworthiness to stand before Yahweh, even with his shoes off: cf.

the episode of Moses and the burning bush where Moses is commanded, "Put off your shoes from your feet" (Ex. 3. 5).³³ Bretscher's argument has a certain attraction, but it must be pointed out that his suggested translations of Matt. 3. 11 and Acts 13. 25, although possible grammatically, are seen to be considerably forced when compared with the usual translations. In any event his argument would remove only the alleged impossibility of God being spoken of as wearing sandals; and it has been argued above that this point is not well taken.

Somewhat similar to Bretscher's argument is the claim made by Parsons "that those passages which represent John as declaring himself unworthy to loose the thong of the Messiah's sandals are Christian interpolations".³⁴ In support of this claim it may be said that the differences in all seven versions of this saying in the New Testament indicate perhaps that we are not completely in touch here with the ipsissima verba of John. It is noticeable too that in Matt. 3. 10-12 the Baptist's confession about the Coming One - "but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry" - appears to interrupt the parallelism and progression of thought found in this pericope. The possibility of Christian editing at this point cannot be ruled out, although the metaphorical nature of the reference to the Coming One's sandals offers no real support for such speculation.

Closer examination of the Q prophecy under discussion and of other related prophecies indicates that John the Baptist may well

have seen himself as the precursor of Yahweh. For example, in referring to the imminent advent of the Coming One, he is reported in Matt. 3. 10 to have declared, "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." The language here recalls the frequent Old Testament usage of the cutting down of trees as a metaphor of judgement. Kraeling instances Is. 10. 33-34, where it is God who is expected to effect judgement on the Assyrians.³⁵

Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts will lop the boughs with terrifying power; the great in height will be hewn down, and the lofty will be brought low. He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon with its majestic trees will fall.

It should be noted too, that whereas in the Old Testament the picture of the felling of trees is used only as a symbol of judgement on the Gentiles, in the inter-testamental literature the same metaphor is applied to Jews (Ecclus. 6. 4; 23. 25; Wisd. 4. 3-5).³⁶

John's description of the Coming One as a winnower, with winnowing fork in hand, about to "clear his threshing floor", is also consistent with the claim that it was the advent of Yahweh which was expected. The metaphor of winnowing is common in the Old Testament. The prophet Habakkuk describes God's judgements as a threshing of the nations. "Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the nations in anger" (3. 12 RV). In IV Ezra the threshing floor is used metaphorically for God's

judgement upon man and his unrighteous deeds. It is explained to Salathiel, "A grain of evil seed was sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning, and how much fruit has it produced to this time and shall yet produce till the threshing floor come" (4. 30).³⁷

Perhaps one of the strongest indications that John expected the imminent and direct intervention of Yahweh concerns his assertion that the Coming One will baptize *ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ* (Matt. 3. 11). The reference to a coming baptism with fire is especially important, despite its omission from the versions of John's prophecy in Mark 1. 8, Acts 1. 5 and 11. 16. Few critics are prepared to dismiss the saying as recorded in Q in favour of these variants, and it is significant that in this same Q prophecy there are other references to fire, as the instrument of punishment. Trees that fail to produce good fruit will be hewn down and "thrown into the fire"; the chaff left over after the collection of the wheat will be burnt "with unquenchable fire" by the Coming One.

The idea of punishment by fire would have been familiar to those who heard John's prophecy since this concept was common in the Old Testament and apocalyptic tradition. According to Enoch 90. 24-27, the guilty will in the Judgement be "cast into the abyss, full of fire and flaming, and full of pillars of fire". More significantly, in Mal. 4. 1 the coming Day of Yahweh is described as "burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble". The idea of a baptism with fire, in the sense that God's punishment could be expressed in such terms,

would very likely have also been familiar to John's hearers.
Special references must be made to T. H. Gaster's translation of
one of the Qumran hymns:

When the hour of judgement strikes,
when the lot of God's anger is cast
upon the abandoned,
when His fury is poured forth upon dissemblers,
when the final doom of His rage
falls upon all the works of Belial;
when the torrents of death do swirl,
and there is none escape;
when the rivers of Belial
burst their high banks
- rivers that are like fire
devouring all that draw their waters,
rivers whose runnels destroy
green tree and dry tree alike,
rivers that are like fire
which sweeps like flaming sparks
devouring all that drink their waters
- a fire which consumes
all foundations of clay,
every solid bedrock;
when the foundations of the mountains
become a raging blaze,

when granite roots are turned
 to streams of pitch,
 when the flame devours
 down to the great abyss,
 when the floods of Belial burst forth
 unto hell itself ...³⁸

The prophecy of John about the Coming One baptizing with fire could thus have been interpreted naturally by his listeners as the coming immersion of the wicked by God in a river of fire. Certainly, as Scobie concedes, "in the Old Testament it is usually God who punishes with fire".³⁹ It is significant too that when Scobie attempts to keep the question open by asserting that "the idea of the Messiah as the agent of punishment is found in the post-Old Testament literature",⁴⁰ his one supporting example is taken from II (4) Esdras 13. 10-11, a reference which, on his own admission, "dates from the period following from the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70".⁴¹

Keener questions concern both the authenticity and interpretation of John's prophecy about the Coming One baptizing *ἐν πνεύματι ζῳίου*. For example, T. W. Manson suggests that the original form of the Q saying was, "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with fire", and that John's message in Mark was in effect "Christianized" by the change of baptism "with fire" into baptism "with the Holy Spirit".⁴² Matthew and Luke are then held to have combined the Q version with that of Mark in order to have produced the version under discussion.⁴³ The main objection to

this view is that Matthew and Luke are thus held to have made an identical conflation of Mark and Q. This is much more difficult to accept than the view that they were both using the same source (Q), especially when it is noted that the saying is linked in both Matthew and Luke with other sayings of John which are commonly agreed to have come from Q.

Another attack on the view that John did speak of a coming baptism *ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ* claims that the original prophecy may have concerned a promise of baptism "with wind and fire" (*ἐν πνεύματι καὶ πυρὶ*).⁴⁴ There is some slight manuscript evidence for this in that a few versions of Luke 3. 16 omit the word *ἁγίῳ*⁴⁵; and the fact that *רוּחַ* (Hebrew) and *πνεῦμα* (Greek) mean both wind and spirit, makes it not unreasonable to suppose that from an original mention of "wind and fire" has developed the forms "Spirit and fire", "Holy Spirit and fire", and simply "Holy Spirit". On this interpretation, John's prophecy originally meant that wind and fire would be the instruments of judgement. It may be suggested that one weakness of this view is that it rests upon a somewhat narrow conception of John's message and overlooks the fact that this was not all judgement without grace.⁴⁶ Not every tree will be cut down; only those that fail to produce good fruit. The chaff will be burnt; but the wheat will be garnered. Another weakness of the claim that John was prophesying a coming baptism "with wind and fire" is that it fails to consider adequately if the Q form of the prophecy might be authentic, but with a different meaning from that

given it in Christian tradition.

It must be recognized that there is nothing inherently improbable in John having spoken about the "holy spirit". This phrase is used in Ps. of Sol. 17. 42, it occurs in the Rabbinic literature, and it is mentioned also in Is. 63. 10-11. In Ps. 51. 11 the plea to God is, "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me." In fact the conception of the spirit of God is part of the heritage of Judaism. This consideration strongly supports not only the authenticity of the Q reference to John prophesying that a Coming One will baptize with both holy spirit and fire, but also the view that this Coming One is none other than Yahweh. The particular idea of God's baptism with holy spirit at the end of days would hardly have been surprising to John's listeners. All would have been familiar with one feature of the new age described in Joel 2. 28, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh." Further, in Ez. 39. 29, God says, "I will not hide my face any more from them, when I pour out my spirit upon the house of Israel." It is true that "baptism" as such is not mentioned here, but I. Abrahams reminds that in these two passages the word used for the "pouring out" (**שָׁפַךְ**) of God's spirit is properly applicable only to liquids.⁴⁷ It may be noted also that the future gift of the spirit is often associated with a symbolic reference to water. A good example is found in Is. 44. 3, "For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring." An even stronger

indication that John may well have spoken of a coming baptism with God's holy spirit is to be found in the Qumran Manual of Discipline. This speaks of the season of judgement (4. 19) and explains that at this time "God will purge by His truth every deed of man, refining for Himself the body of man by abolishing from the midst of his flesh every evil spirit, and by cleansing him through a holy spirit from all wicked practices, and He will sprinkle on him a spirit of truth as purifying water" (4. 20-21).⁴⁸ Against the background of this, and the Old Testament texts cited above, there are solid grounds for asserting not only that John actually did speak of a coming baptism in the holy spirit but also that in doing so he had in mind the expectation of Yahweh at the end of days.

There is some doubt whether in referring to the coming of God's holy spirit the Baptist had in mind a cleansing or an empowering action. At Qumran God's holy spirit appears to have been thought of as a cleansing power,⁴⁹ and Brown believes that when John spoke of a baptism in holy spirit he expected the Coming One "to cleanse the good with a purifying spirit, i.e., a new breath of life".⁵⁰ This in turn suggests that John's own baptism may have symbolized a person's repentance and his hope that as he washed himself by immersion in water so God would wash away his sins on the Day of Judgement.⁵¹ However, the Old Testament references to the out-pouring of God's spirit indicate that this was thought of in terms of life-giving power and blessing. This general conception would link up well with the rest of John's message and with his baptism.

The care which he took lest unworthy people be the recipients of this baptism suggests perhaps that something more wonderful than a future cleansing from sins was involved. It may be deduced that those who repented and received John's baptism, those depicted as the wheat to be gathered into the barn, were confident that as a consequence they would be the recipients at the time of God's coming of his holy spirit and of all the blessings which that entailed. As recipients of God's holy spirit they would then have been enabled, "as men endowed with Spirit, to pass through the Judgement to the Kingdom".⁵²

The interpretation urged above of the Q passage found in Matt. 3. 9-12, together with the suggested explanations of the significance of John's baptism, not only enable points of contact to be drawn with the portrait of John the Baptist traceable in the Lukan infancy narratives and with the other evidence brought forward earlier as indicating the existence of unorthodox views of his mission but they also have the effect of supporting the authenticity of Matt. 3. 2, where John is said to have preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Some support for the trustworthiness of this reference is provided by Scobie's suggestion that one is almost forced to accept that John did speak of a coming Kingdom in order to establish some common ground which he and Jesus must have shared.⁵³ There is merit also in K. Chamblin's argument that the people's thanksgiving in Luke 7. 29 is difficult to understand unless they had realized that their favourable response to

John's message prepared them for entry into the Kingdom (cf. Matt. 21. 31f.).⁵⁴ But an even stronger plea for the authenticity of Matt. 3. 2 is the way in which it complements the interpretation given above to Matt. 3. 9-12. If John's role was really that of the eschatological Prophet, the herald of the coming intervention in the present order of the world by Yahweh himself, he would have naturally believed that God's Kingdom was thus about to be established. Cullmann's words are worth recalling here. "The function of the eschatological Prophet in the Jewish texts consists primarily in preparing the people of Israel and the world by his preaching for the coming of the Kingdom of God. He fulfils this function, not simply as the former Old Testament prophets did, but in a much more direct way as the immediate Preparer of the way for the Kingdom of God itself. He comes endowed with unique eschatological authority. His call to repentance is final and requires final decision. This gives his preaching a final, absolute character such as the preaching of the ancient prophets did not have ... for when he speaks, he points to the Kingdom of God already approaching."⁵⁵ It is worth noting also Stauffer's emphasis that there is no incompatibility between John's announcement of the coming Kingdom of God and his warning of the imminent universal conflagration.⁵⁶ He points out that both these expectations had been intimately connected in Jewish apocalyptic since the time of Daniel, and he goes on to draw a parallel between John's message and the Sibylline Oracles, which pass beyond a threatened world conflagration to a promise of the coming

Kingdom where God will pour out his spirit upon the eschatological covenant people (4. 187ff.).⁵⁷

Other support for the claim that John's mission was that of the eschatological Prophet is found in the first and third verses of the third chapter of Matthew's Gospel. The first verse speaks of John "preaching in the wilderness of Judea", a note echoed by the other two Synoptic writers (Mark 1. 4; Luke 1. 80; 7. 29f.). It is possible that John's association with the desert reflected only his ascetic bent, but it must be remembered also that the wilderness area had distinct religious and historical associations for Jews. Commenting on the significance of John the Baptist's appearance in the wilderness area, G. Bornkamm writes, "Since ancient times the desert is the place with which Israel's expectations of the end were associated; for it is an ancient belief that the end shall be as the beginning. Far away from the places of worldliness, but also far away from the sacred places of worship, Israel as of old shall prepare for the final revelation of God."⁵⁸ Scobie argues along similar lines, and in support of the idea that the wilderness would be associated with the scene of God's future deliverance of Israel he refers to Hos. 2. 14-15, where God says of Israel:

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. And there I will give her her vineyards and make the valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days

of her youth, as at the time she came out of the land of
Egypt.⁵⁹

If John was the eschatological prophet, the area where he chose to exercise his ministry could not have been more appropriate.

A further indication that John's mission was that of heralding the imminent coming of Yahweh is provided by Matt. 3. 3, which links John's work with the fulfilment of the prophecy of Is. 40. 3. In fact all four Gospel writers associate this prophecy with the ministry of John the Baptist. The significant point is that the prophecy had an original reference to the coming of Yahweh, as can be plainly seen from the extended quotation found in Luke 3. 4-6.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Apart from the fact that this quotation is found in a Christian Gospel which proclaimed the good news that Jesus was *ὁ κύριος*, there is nothing in the immediate context of Luke, or in the Matthaean parallel, to indicate that John was the herald of anyone but Yahweh.

In contrast to this, the same quotation from Deutero Isaiah is presented in the Markan context (1. 1f.) in such a way as to

leave no doubt that the Lord whose way John was preparing is "Jesus Christ, the Son of God". However, it must be noted that Robinson properly describes as "a very botched affair" the context in which this identification is put forward.⁶⁰ The reference from Deutero Isaiah is prefixed by what is evidently a loose quotation from Mal. 3. 1, which has been altered from, "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me", to, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way". The original statement in Malachi which prophesies that Yahweh will send someone - Elijah according to Mal. 4. 5f. - has clearly been modified to make explicit the claim that John was the messenger, not of Yahweh, but of "Jesus Christ, the Son of God". This may reasonably be judged a strong indication that John was once thought of, and probably saw himself as, the herald of Yahweh.

Drawing a line under the evidence considered in this chapter, it can be said that there appear to be solid grounds for accepting that John's historical role was that of Elijah redivivus, the eschatological Prophet, the precursor of Yahweh and his Kingdom. This interpretation of John's mission explains not only the origin of a definite Johannite movement but also why it survived for at least some years after the death of its founder. It is worthy of mention also that in the inter-testamental literature there are many references to martyr prophets; and during the time of Jesus the graves of these prophets appear to have been objects of veneration (Matt. 23. 29; Luke 11. 47). Against this background it is

entirely possible that John's disciples should have felt that by his death their master, the last and greatest of the prophets, had suffered the traditional fate of the prophet.⁶¹ Far from invalidating his message, the Baptist's violent end may well have been taken by his disciples as confirmation of his prophetic role as the herald of Yahweh's imminent intervention in history. This would have been especially probable if the puzzling reference made by Jesus in Mark 9. 13 to the prophecy ("as it is written") concerning the tragic nature of Elijah's second ministry is counted as evidence for the existence of some uncanonical book which foretold a martyr's death for the returning Elijah.⁶²

CHAPTER FIVE

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS

The propositions that John had the role of the eschatological Prophet preparing the way for the coming of Yahweh in apocalyptic fulfilment, and that some of his disciples remained committed to this view after his death, are factors that have a direct relevance to the long-debated question of the historical relationship between John and Jesus. This question is made particularly complex by the discrepancy at this point between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics, a discrepancy which, as Dodd points out, cannot reasonably be removed.¹ However, since the Fourth Gospel presents the view of an harmonious relationship between John and Jesus, it is not unreasonable to concentrate the investigation into what actually happened on the Synoptic Gospels. It is then possible to argue that these contain sufficient indications of John's relationship to Jesus being such as to supplement and confirm the evidence brought forward for the survival of Johannite groups after the death of John and for the interpretation of his mission as that of the eschatological Prophet.

According to the Synoptic record, the only adult contact between John and Jesus was when Jesus was baptized (Mark 1. 9-11, and pars.) and when on one occasion John communicated with Jesus through intermediaries (Matt. 11. 2-6; Luke 7. 19-23). That Jesus was baptized by John is beyond question²; that John ever inquired

of the status of Jesus in the manner described in Matthew and Luke has often and strongly been questioned. In Matthew's Gospel the account of this inquiry reads as follows:

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offence at me."

One of the strongest challenges to the authenticity of this episode is put forward by Kraeling, who argues that the story "has all the earmarks of the early Christians' own efforts to resolve the problem of faith and history, and to this extent appears to provide little evidence of historical value for our knowledge of the contacts between John and Jesus".³ There can be no doubt that the reference to τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Matt. 11. 2) is Christian editing, and this offers some support for Kraeling's claim that the whole incident is nothing more than a Christian invention designed to prove from the mighty works of Jesus that he is the Coming One of whom John spoke.⁴ The assertion is a forceful one, but it may be said to have two serious weaknesses. The first is cogently expressed by H. G. Marsh. "One might ... surmise that if the story had been an invention it would most surely have contained an

account of the impression that the Master's answer had upon John. Invented stories are usually fairly detailed and complete."⁵ The second weakness of Kraeling's assertion concerns its failure to allow for any alteration in John's original outlook. Quite correctly emphasizing the difference between the human Jesus of Nazareth and the transcendent Coming One spoken of by John in Matt. 3. 7-12 and Luke 3. 7-9, 15-17, Kraeling argues that if the incident under discussion is authentic, then there must have occurred a break in John's thinking, a break for which, in Kraeling's estimation, "there is no adequate justification".⁶ In other words, Kraeling finds it so difficult to believe that John would ever have considered that a man baptized by him could possibly be the Coming One, that he forthwith rejects the evidence which suggests that this is what did in fact happen. Clearly, to argue in this way is to beg the question at issue.

Another challenge to the authenticity of this incident is suggested by Dodd's critical question, "Would John, it may be asked, imprisoned in the fortress of Machaerus because Antipas thought his influence politically dangerous (Josephus, Antiq. XVIII, 5, 2), have been permitted free intercourse with his adherents, and allowed to send messengers to potential accomplices outside?"⁷ A negative reply to this question could carry with it the implication that John's inquiry and the answering words of Jesus are as unhistorical as the setting of the incident. However, this line of argument is open to two possible objections. The first lies in questioning the

assumption that the reference to John's inquiry being asked from prison has a vital bearing on the issue of the authenticity of the inquiry itself and the reply of Jesus to it. For example, M. Dibelius makes the suggestion that the account of Q referred originally only to John sending his disciples to Jesus, the mention of John's imprisonment being a minor detail added later for some reason or another. Certainly it is only Matthew who notes that John was in prison when he asked this question, and the Lukan setting is perhaps the more accurate. The second objection is to support the trustworthiness of the Matthaean version by giving due weight to the suggestion that the fact of John's disciples having access to him during his imprisonment is not so surprising as Dodd's question implies. We are told that "Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly" (Mark 6. 20). According to this account, prior to his execution John was not harshly treated by Herod, and it may therefore be considered likely that he enjoyed special privileges. It must be noted also that other references in the New Testament indicate that prisoners were not necessarily forbidden to have visitors (Matt. 25. 36, 39, 44; Acts 24. 23; Phil. 1. 12f.; 4. 18; Col. 4. 7-14; Eph. 3. 1).

To urge that the record of John's inquiry to Jesus should not immediately be rejected as unhistorical is a necessary prolegomena to the question of the interpretation of this incident. One view

is that John himself was in no doubt about the status of Jesus, but that he asked the question for the sake of his disciples whose faith was not as strong as his own.⁹ This argument rests squarely on the premise that John was once firmly committed to Jesus; and since this premise is shared by that argument which sees in John's question the beginning of his doubts about Jesus, attention must be paid here to the claim that prior to this incident John had acknowledged Jesus as the Coming One of whom he had spoken.

It may be said at the outset that on the basis of the Synoptic data there is insufficient evidence to claim that John had early in his ministry identified Jesus as the expected Coming One. There is nothing in Mark's account of the baptism of Jesus by John to indicate that at this stage John was in any way committed to Jesus. The other two Synoptic writers intimate that the opening of the heavens and the voice from heaven associated with the baptism were public experiences (Matt. 3. 16-17; Luke 3. 21-22), but this alone cannot support the claim that by this time John must have recognized Jesus as the Coming One. The one definite indication that he had done so is confined to the Matthaean report of John's reluctance to baptize Jesus.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"
(Matt. 3. 13-14)

But it is doubtful if this particular incident actually occurred.

Apart from the difficulty of reconciling the episode with John's description of the Coming One as a heavenly supernatural figure, if not Yahweh himself (Matt. 3. 7-12; Luke 3. 7-9, 16-17),¹⁰ the reference has the appearance of being secondary material designed to explain the problem why the sinless Jesus should have undergone a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The treatment of the story of Jesus' baptism in The Gospel According to the Hebrews confirms the embarrassment felt by early Christians at this point.

Behold the mother of the Lord, and his brethren said unto him, John the Baptist baptizeth unto the remission of sins; let us go and be baptized of him. But he said unto them: Wherein have I sinned that I should be baptized of him, unless peradventure this very thing that I have said is a sin of ignorance?¹¹

On the basis therefore of the Synoptic accounts of Jesus' baptism it may reasonably be assumed that at this time John would have regarded Jesus as an ordinary baptismal candidate. The implication of this for the interpretation of John's question (from prison) is that it cannot be regarded either as a machination by John for the benefit of his disciples or as a wavering in his commitment to Jesus - unless it is assumed that between the baptism of Jesus and this incident John had come to recognize Jesus as the Coming One.

If the incident of John's question to Jesus is not to be rejected as Christian invention, the best interpretation of it is that John, towards the close of his ministry, began to consider that his original expectations may have been mistaken. There

are good reasons for believing that even such a dominant personality as John would have been prepared to re-examine his fundamental eschatological convictions. Whatever the precise meaning of John's eschatological expectations, they were clearly characterized by their immediacy. The fact that these expectations had not been quickly fulfilled, coupled probably with depression about his imprisonment and fear for his life, may well have led John to question the eschatological programme which he had proclaimed. All the more so in view of the reports about the ministry of Jesus which were reaching him. According to Matthew, it is "the deeds of the Christ" which prompted John to ask his question; Luke reports that John asked the question after being told "of all these things". The reference is primarily to the wonders of healing and preaching variously described in Matt. 7-8 and Luke 7. 1-17. John could hardly have been unaware of their possible eschatological significance. Especially against a background of imprisonment and personal disappointment, any news of the healing miracles performed by Jesus would very likely have led John to wonder if he had been wrong and if Jesus could enlighten him on these matters.

One difficulty with analyses such as that above has been thought to be the form of words used by John in this question to Jesus: *οὐ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ἢ ἕτερον προδοκῶμεν* (Matt. 11. 2).¹² Critics generally find the words *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* difficult to reconcile with their usage in Matt. 3. 11, where the context strongly suggests that the reference is to a supernatural figure, if not to Yahweh himself.¹³

Even allowing for some change in his position, it is argued that John could not possibly have asked Jesus whether or not he was the apocalyptic supernatural figure whose coming John had proclaimed at the outset of his ministry. John would have seen as well as anyone, what the miracles of Jesus could not disguise, that the man from Nazareth was not the heavenly Coming One of his expectations.

This objection has an obvious force, but it may be said to rest on too easy an assumption that what John meant by his question to Jesus was, "Are you the Coming One of whom I spoke, or must we look for another?" The fact that the phrase *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* is common to John's question and to his prophecy about the Coming One in Matt. 3. 11 cannot be ignored, although the absence of the qualifying *ὀπίσω μου* (Matt. 3. 11) in John's question from prison may well indicate a significant difference in usage. It must be remembered that *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* was a term which could be used to describe more than one eschatological figure. It is variously used in the New Testament of the eschatological Prophet (John 6. 14), of the Messiah (Matt. 21. 9; Luke 19. 38), and of God (Rev. 1. 4, 8).¹⁴ The phrase is aptly described by Scobie as "the vaguest possible title"¹⁵; and the same writer draws attention to the fact that S. Mowinckel uses the phrase, "He that Cometh", as a title of a book describing the whole range of Messianic beliefs.¹⁶ Against this background it would be wrong to assume at once that in using the phrase *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* in two different contexts the Baptist had in

mind the same definite eschatological figure.

It would be wrong to assume also that reports of the miracles of Jesus reached John without any indication of the impression which these deeds were making on the people. There is possibly some significance in the fact that Luke implies that one of the "things" which led John to ask this question was an account of the resurrection of a widow's son at Nain. Luke reports that the reaction of the people to this miracle was to declare, "A great prophet has arisen among us!", an exclamation which "spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country" (7. 16-17). If the inference here is that Jesus was believed to be the eschatological Prophet, then on the basis of John 6. 14 it may be surmised that the phrase *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* would perhaps have been used to describe the Messianic status of Jesus. But the Lukan account of the resurrection of the widow's son aside, there would be nothing improbable in reports of Jesus' work coming to John the Baptist complete with speculation that Jesus might be *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, the Messiah.

It is clearly possible therefore that in the first half of this question from prison, where he inquired if Jesus was *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, John was taking up current speculation about Jesus and not his own prophecies about the Coming One. John knew as well as any the difference between the heavenly figure of whom he had spoken and the man Jesus of Nazareth,¹⁷ as the second half of his question possibly confirms. In Matthew, and perhaps also in Luke, this reads, *ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν, ἕτερον* having probably the meaning

"different". Plummer translates, "Or must we look for another different in kind?"¹⁸ (my italics), and in support of this translation consideration must be given to the emphatic use of *ἕτερος* when used in the sense of "another", or "different", in Mark 16. 12, Rom. 7. 23, and I Cor. 15. 40. There appears to be at least a trace of a sharp antithesis between the two halves of John's question to Jesus, and this is consistent with the suggestion that the probable reference in the second is to his own view that the Coming One was to be Yahweh, a view which stood in contrast to the conception of the Coming One as a human person. It may also be significant that the same verb, *προσδοκᾶω*, is found in the parable of the servant and the master (Matt. 24. 45-51; Luke 12. 42-46), where it is used of the master (God) returning. In 2Pet. 3. 12-14 the verb is associated with waiting for *τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας*

One interpretation then of John's inquiry to Jesus is that it indicates how, despite the news of the work and words of Jesus, the details of his own earlier expectations remained unchanged. Whereas the first of the two questions to Jesus suggests that John was at least considering in the light of the new situation if his own mission had been invalid, the second shows that he still hoped to find confirmation that his original eschatological expectations were essentially correct. For the Baptist it was a choice he had to make between holding to his original expectations, or rejecting them in favour of what he heard about Jesus. At the time of asking he was unable to see that Jesus could possibly be the fulfilment of his own prophecies.

This interpretation of the Baptist's question is consistent both with the claim that independent Johannite groups survived his death and with the reply of Jesus (Matt. 11. 5-6; Luke 7. 22-23), which can be understood as an invitation to John to believe, not that his own prophecies had been wrong, but that they were being fulfilled by Jesus. The closing words of the reply, "And blessed is he who takes no offence at me", indicate "that Jesus was deeply sensitive to John's perplexity. If he was to be rescued from disillusionment and despair, he must somehow be brought to the conviction that God's promises to him had already come true, though not in the way he expected."¹⁹ The invitation made by Jesus was that in the summary of his work (Matt. 11. 5; Luke 7. 23) John should see the signs that the Kingdom of God which he himself had proclaimed was even now breaking through; cf. the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 11. 20, "But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you." It was not the intention of Jesus that men should apply Messianic or other honorific titles to him; what he wished was that his listeners generally, and John in particular, should not be prevented by his personal behaviour from seeing in his healings and sayings the sign that the Kingdom was in some sense present.²⁰ The strong implication of the answer of Jesus to John is that the basic difference between them need not constitute a stumbling-block to John. Jesus had indicated that the Kingdom whose imminence John had proclaimed was actually in a real sense already present, and John was

invited to accept this happy news.²¹

Other Synoptic sayings of Jesus about John also suggest this distinction between John's fundamental idea of the Kingdom as imminent and Jesus' conception of the Kingdom as already a present reality. Particularly interesting is a statement recorded by both Matthew and Luke.

From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force. (Matt. 11. 12)

The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone enters it violently. (Luke 16. 16)

The full and original meaning of these verses is properly described by Farmer as "one of the unsolved mysteries of gospel criticism",²² but it does seem clear that for Jesus the ministry of John marked the ending of one era and the beginning of a new one. The basic idea appears to be that the Kingdom is now present, and that it is either exercising its power or being under attack by enemies.²⁴

John therefore marks the dividing line between the period of anticipation and the period in which the Kingdom is present.²⁵ The important question for the present study is if John is placed in the new age breaking through with the ministry of Jesus, if in fact *ἀπὸ ... τῶν ἡμερῶν Ἰωάννου (ἀπὸ τότε*, Luke) should be understood in an inclusive, or in an exclusive sense. Grammatically, *ἀπὸ* may be either inclusive or exclusive,²⁶ and judgement on the correct

meaning in this context must involve a decision on whether or not John recognized that the Kingdom was bound up with the person and mission of Jesus.

On this issue, in view of the strong probability that until he inquired of Jesus' status John had not come to recognize the man from Nazareth as a significant figure in the expected eschatological drama, a vital consideration is a particular reference made about John by Jesus after this inquiry.

Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matt. 11. 11. Luke 7. 28 speaks of "the Kingdom of God")

Kraeling is doubtful if both halves of the statement represent the ipsissima verba of Jesus, and he suggests that the reference to the least in the Kingdom being greater than the Baptist is a later addition designed to play down what was considered to be an exaggerated tribute to John's greatness.²⁷ Against a supposed background of conflict between Johannite and Christian groups Kraeling's suggestion is not unattractive, but it must be recognized that there is no textual evidence to support the omission of Matt. 11. 11b and Luke 7. 28b, and that a better balance is given both to the text and the thought if the whole verse is considered as an integral unit.

A recognition that the statement under discussion should be considered as a whole leaves uncertain still the meaning of the same. If the reference to the Kingdom reflects the idea of its future

eschatological revelation, the meaning would appear to be that John the Baptist is excluded from it.²⁸ This would then constitute strong evidence that at the time of his death John had failed completely to grasp the significance of the mission of Jesus, and offer support for the claim that John's disciples remained committed to Johannite ideals after their master's death. But this line of reasoning is suspect. The strong implication of the reply of Jesus to John (Matt. 11. 4-6; Luke 7. 22-23) is that the Kingdom is a present reality. Similarly, in the statement of Jesus under review the reference to the Kingdom appears to reflect the idea that it is already present, at least partially.²⁹ John is not said to be excluded from the future Kingdom - from which neither the patriarchs nor the prophets would be excluded (Matt. 8. 16; Luke 13. 28) - but inasmuch as the Kingdom is now coming with the ministry of Jesus John has no share in it. As a consequence the disciples of Jesus, compared with John, "are greater, not in their moral character or achievements, but in their privileges".³⁰ On this interpretation, the inference is that John, either because of temperament or because of sudden death, had failed to recognize that the Kingdom was already breaking through with the ministry of Jesus. He had not realized that the Kingdom of God whose coming he had announced was both present and future; he had not appreciated that the purport of the reply given to his question by Jesus was an invitation to consider that the Kingdom was already coming with the ministry of Jesus, as his words and works demonstrated. Accordingly, although John was "the cul-

mination of the prophetic line, a notable representative of the varied channels of divine revelation",³¹ he was nevertheless overshadowed by those who had already tasted "the powers of the age to come".³²

The interpretation given above to Matt. 11. 11 and Luke 7. 28 strongly suggests that when Jesus spoke of the Law and the prophets being until John (Matt. 11. 13; Luke 16. 16) the intention was to place the Baptist within the old era, and not within the new era of the present manifestation of the Kingdom. This in turn complements what the absence of any account of how John responded to the reply of Jesus (Matt. 11. 4-6; Luke 7. 22-23) probably implies, that he was permitted no more than a glimpse of the possibility that the Kingdom of God was already dawning with the words and deeds of Jesus. If, as appears to be the case, John's final communication to Jesus was from the dungeon of Machaerus, it may reasonably be thought that he was called to the execution block without having come to a proper understanding of the ministry of Jesus, and clinging still to the belief that God was about to establish the Kingdom in the near future. Perhaps Jesus had this situation in mind when he declared how blessed were those eyewitnesses of his actions who were able to appreciate the significance of this activity.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it. (Matt. 13. 16-17;

Luke 10. 23-24)³³

Some further support for the claim that John failed to appreciate the significance of Jesus' ministry is provided by a consideration of certain differences of temperament between John and Jesus, differences which may have made it especially difficult for John to accept that the Kingdom was already present with the ministry of Jesus. The challenge for John was not just to alter his own eschatological expectations, but to accept that they were being fulfilled by a man whose conduct stood in sharp contrast to his own. Hence most probably the point behind the closing remark in the answer given by Jesus to John's inquiry, "And blessed is he who takes no offence at me" (Matt. 11. 6; Luke 7. 31-35). John would hardly have regarded with favour the fact that Jesus was not an ascetic (cf. Matt. 11. 16-19; Luke 7. 31-35), and, in view of his own preference for the wilderness area and his apparent practice of expecting the people to come to him, rather than vice versa (cf. Mark 1. 5; Matt. 3. 5; Luke 3. 7), he would probably have felt uneasy too about Jesus' familiarity with cities and sinners.

In view of the important differences between John and Jesus on matters of conduct and eschatological outlook, it is somewhat surprising to find the Synoptic writers reporting not only that Jesus expressed a high opinion of John but also that he related his own mission to that of the wilderness prophet. The explanation of this apparent paradox is almost certainly provided by the fact that Jesus had been baptized by John. Although there are obvious dangers

in attempting to trace a development in Jesus' consciousness of his divine mission, this one act must signify that he began by identifying himself very closely with the Johannite outlook.³⁴ It is entirely credible to deduce, with Scobie, that "when Jesus was baptized, along with the crowds who had heard John preach, he was aligning himself with those who believed that they were living in the last days and that God was about to break into human history. He was demonstrating his approval of John's movement and his sympathy with John's view that orthodox Judaism was lacking in something and that men must make a decision and, by repentance and righteous living, prepare to enter the Kingdom."³⁵ This commitment to Johannite thought was to prove only temporary. The realization that the Kingdom which John prophesied was already beginning to come would have led Jesus to move decisively away from the Johannite position. At the same time a measure of common ground must have remained. It was not as if the expectations of John were false: the point of difference was that, contrary to his own belief, these expectations were being fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus. The Kingdom of which John had spoken was even now arriving. This, more so than any sense of loyalty to a former mentor, explains why Jesus would have continued to speak highly of John and why he would have seen a real continuity between their respective ministries. It was John who had first announced the coming Kingdom; and the new age already dawning with the words and deeds of Jesus was the fulfilment of this prophecy. John, speaking

when he did, had been right (although not in the way he had anticipated).

The close relationship between the missions of John and Jesus is clearly reflected in the following words of Jesus:

But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market place and calling to their playmates, "We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn." For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds. (Matt. 11. 16-19; Luke 7. 31-35)

There is a real connection between the response of men to John's message and their response to Jesus. The majority of their contemporaries fail to heed both "the solemn warnings of the Kingdom approaching as judgement and the good news of the Kingdom arrived as mercy".³⁶

The vital measure of continuity which Jesus saw between his own mission and that of John is further indicated by the incident where the authority of Jesus was challenged by members of the Sanhedrin (Mark 11. 27-33; Matt. 21. 23-27; Luke 20. 1-8). Significantly, Jesus answered this challenge by way of another question, "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" By this answer Jesus immediately took his stand beside John and insisted that if

they had known how to form a true estimate of John and his work, they would have known how to do the same for him. This point is emphasized again by the declaration of Jesus to the chief priests and elders that they stood condemned by their failure to respond to John's message.

Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him. (Matt. 21. 31-32)

In God's plan John was preparing the way for the ministry of Jesus. "Task and destiny", writes Bornkamm, "unite them both."³⁸

The same idea is reflected in a tribute of Jesus to John that emphasized his prophetic role and the way in which his ministry fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (Matt. 11. 7-10; Luke 7. 24-27). Here Jesus appears to be taking up the role which John believed himself to be playing, that of the eschatological Prophet ("more than a prophet"), and relating it to his own ministry. John was the prophet expected at the end time; and, as the reply of Jesus to John's question from prison had indicated, the end time was in one sense already present. God's Kingdom was now breaking through in the ministry of Jesus and thus John's role as the eschatological Prophet was vindicated. For this reason Jesus could say of John,

This is he of whom it is written, "Behold I send my messenger

before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee."

(Matt. 11. 10; Luke 7. 27)

Farmer points out that this loose rendering of Mal. 3. 1 is generally regarded as a later insertion into Q,³⁹ and since the effect is to make John appear as herald of the Christ and not of God only, it is possible to think of the verse as a Christian interpretation of the Old Testament prophecy.⁴⁰ We know from the synthesis of Mal. 3. 1 and Is. 40. 3 in Mark 1. 2-3 that Old Testament prophecies which spoke of the preparation for God's eschatological intervention were re-phrased by Christians and applied to John the Baptist in order to reflect their belief that God had chosen to intervene in the person of his Messiah Jesus.⁴¹ But it is not certain that the reference in Mal. 3. 1 in Matt. 11. 10 and Luke 7. 27 should be understood in this way. The modified references to Mal. 3. 1 and Is. 40. 3 in Mark 1. 2-3 are part of an editorial framework which proudly proclaims "the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God". There is no such indication of Christian editing in the immediate context of the report that Jesus himself cited Mal. 3. 1 in such a way as to express the close relationship between John's mission and his own. The distinct possibility must therefore be allowed that the adaptation of Mal. 3. 1 reported in Matt. 11. 10 and Luke 7. 27 had its origin in the creative mind of Jesus: he could see that John's work as the eschatological Prophet, preparing the way for God's eschatological intervention, was bound up with his own ministry and he thus re-phrased Mal. 3. 1 in order to make this clear.⁴²

The declaration of Jesus to the crowds about John, "And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come" (Matt. 11. 14), is probably similar in character to Matt. 11. 9-10 and Luke 7. 26-27. There is no reliable pre-Christian evidence for the belief that Elijah was to be the forerunner of the Messiah,⁴³ and this helps support the suggestion that the conception originated with Jesus. In order to emphasize the continuity between John's mission and his own, and in order to stress the importance of the former, Jesus may have taken up the idea that Elijah redivivus, the eschatological Prophet, was to be the immediate preparer of the way for the Kingdom of God, confirmed that John was this person and thus indicated, to those who were prepared to listen, that the Kingdom was already coming with Jesus' own ministry. Later these words were understood to mean that John the Baptist, Elijah redivivus, was the forerunner of Jesus the Messiah rather than, as Jesus himself probably intended, the forerunner of the Kingdom.

At this point in the investigation the several tentatively drawn conclusions begin to fall into place. The evidence brought forward to indicate that after John's death some of his followers did not immediately find their way into the Christian Church receives some confirmation from a critical analysis of John's message and mission which reveals that he most probably conceived his role as that of the eschatological Prophet, preparing the way for Yahweh's decisive intervention in history. These claims are in turn complemented by the indications in the Synoptic Gospels that

at no time in his ministry did John make an open declaration of faith in Jesus. Finally, the favourable references made by Jesus about John are seen to be credible against this background, and do not demand the rejection of it.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND THE SUPPORTERS OF JOHN

The major qualification to the position summarized at the end of the previous chapter must be that this has been reached without consideration of the Fourth Gospel's account of John the Baptist and his disciples. This qualification is an important one, for the Johannine picture, both of a positive relationship between Jesus and John and of the smooth transference of the loyalty of John's disciples to Jesus, stands as a contradiction to much of the evidence brought forward in earlier chapters to indicate the existence of certain groups holding views about John different from those current in the early Church. The immediate question is thus to decide if the information given by the Fourth Evangelist concerning John and his disciples undermines the claim that, for a time at least, some of these disciples remained outside the Church and took up an unfriendly attitude towards it.

Much of the comment on the Fourth Gospel's presentation of the ministry of John provides a firm negative answer to this question. In fact, the Fourth Evangelist's testimony to the harmonious relationship between Jesus and both John and his disciples is often taken as a substantial indication of later tension between Johannine and Christian groups! It is claimed that only against the background of such tension is it possible to make sense of the

contradictions between the Synoptic and Johannine records, particularly in respect of the early and unqualified witness which John is reported in the Fourth Gospel to have made to Jesus as the Lamb of God, Son of God and the pre-existent Logos. The popularity of this line of interpretation is due largely to the influence of Baldensperger's thesis that not only is the Fourth Gospel's treatment of John the Baptist and his disciples dictated by polemic and apologetic against a Johannite sect claiming Messianic status for its founder but also that the prime intention of the Fourth Evangelist in writing his work was to combat the influence of these Johannite claims.¹ However, in recent years the extreme elements in Baldensperger's thesis, together with the more modest claim that the Johannine presentation of the Baptist's ministry has been influenced by a contemporary conflict between Johannites and Christians, have been strongly challenged. A summary of the important aspects of the arguments of Baldensperger and of others who have taken up some of his ideas is therefore given below as a basis for discussion and appraisal.

The first mention of John in the Fourth Gospel occurs in the midst of the Prologue.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not that light, but came to bear witness to the light. (John 1. 6-8)

Many scholars feel that at this point there is a break in the Pro-

logue's thought and poetic structure, and the explanation is often found in taking these verses as a piece of polemic against a Johannite party. Relating his comment to Baldensperger's thesis E. F. Scott remarks, "Even the prologue is interrupted in order to emphasize the inferiority of the mere witness, to Him who was the light itself."² Baldensperger's own views are particularly interesting here, for he argues that the language of vv. 6-8 is carefully chosen in order to contrast with other clauses in the Prologue and so to impress on any followers of John the Baptist the great difference between the Logos and John. Thus the **Ἐγένετο** of v. 6 is meant to stand in contrast with the **ἦν** of v. 1, both verbs appropriately distinguishing between John who came onto the stage of history at a particular moment in time and the Logos who was from the beginning. According to Baldensperger, there is also an intended contrast between the description of John as **ἄνθρωπος** (1. 6) and the opening reference to the Logos as **θεὸς** (1. 1). The same desire to give John a secondary status alongside the Logos is further indicated by the contrast between him being sent as a servant **κατὰ θεοῦ** (1. 6) and the exalted position of the Logos **πρὸς τὸν θεόν** (1. 1); and any inclination to worship John is challenged by the point that men only come to believe **δι' αὐτοῦ** (1. 7), whereas of the Logos it is said that men believe **εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ** (1. 12).³ This is a good example of how Baldensperger tends to spoil a good case by overstating it, for these alleged contrasts do not naturally bear the interpretation which he places upon them.⁴ On the other hand

his basic contention that vv. 6-8, and especially the last of these,⁵ should be understood as polemic-apologetic against a Johannite party is more reasonable and is reflected in much later comment. Schnackenburg, for example, writes confidently, "Erst v. 8 ist deutlich polemisch, und der von Evangelisten gesetzte Akzent ist nicht zu verkennen: Der Glaube soll sich nicht auf Johannes, sondern durch ihn und sein Zeugnis auf den anderen richten, der als das 'Licht' bezeichnet wird."⁶

Other evidence that the Evangelist's treatment of John the Baptist is shaped by a polemic against an independent Johannite group is frequently found in v. 15 of the Gospel's opening chapter. Referring to Jesus, John says, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me'" (1. 15). The majority of critics link this with the previous reference to Jesus as the pre-existent Logos and see John's declaration as reflecting a polemic against a Johannite group which claimed superiority for him on the grounds that he had preceded Jesus in time. Cullmann argues that such a chronological argument would have carried considerable weight, as can be seen by the way in which the writer of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies tries to combat this principle with the theory that where there is a complementary pair of figures the first in time always represents the evil principle, and the second the good. Because of this theory of pairs (*συσυγγλυ*) it can be said that John comes as the first, *πρῶτος* (Hom. 2. 17), without in any

way undermining the superiority of Jesus. According to Cullmann, the Fourth Evangelist, anxious to refute Johannite arguments that John's temporal priority was proof of a superior rank, approaches the problem in a different way from that followed in the Pseudo-Clementine literature. Instead of attacking the validity of the chronological argument he accepts it, while at the same time urging that it is not John who precedes Jesus, but the other way round. Jesus is to be regarded as the **πρῶτος** (John 1. 15) by virtue of his pre-existence.⁷

Cullmann also suggests that the Fourth Evangelist tackles this chronological argument in a different way in verses 26 and 30 of his opening chapter. Here the Baptist is made to emphasize that Jesus "who, in virtue of his pre-existence, is actually prior to himself, was present among men before his baptism in the Jordan, although at that time he did not know him (verse 30). Before he was known by others, before he had even begun his public ministry, Jesus stood among them: **μέσος ὑμῶν στήκει** (verse 26)."⁸ The intention, says Cullmann, is "to prove that even in the sphere of historical chronology the priority of John the Baptist is not as absolute as the other side, depending on the Synoptic account, tried to make out".⁹

More indications of Johannine polemic against a Baptist sect are held to be present in the account of John's encounter with a deputation of priests and Levites sent to inquire who he is (1. 19-28). In reply John "confessed, he did not deny, but confessed, 'I

am not the Christ'"(1. 20). The denial is made without any reference to a suggestion that he might be the Messiah, and this gives credence to the view that we have here "the language of the Christian apologist, not of the rugged prophet of the desert whose explanation of himself would have rung with robust pride in his mission".¹⁰ Noting the pointed way in which John denies that he is the Christ, Scott thinks it obvious that the Evangelist "must know of some who have claimed this dignity for him. Not only so, but he must regard the question with more than just historical interest. It may well have been that in the Baptist's own lifetime extravagant claims were put forward on his behalf; but if they had been abandoned after his death there was no need to disprove them by elaborate evidence. Since this is done in the Fourth Gospel, we can only infer that the relative positions of John and Jesus were still debated in the circles for which the Gospel was written, and that in his account of the person and work of the Baptist the writer is influenced by direct polemical intention."¹¹

It is also argued that the Fourth Evangelist is so concerned to attack those who claimed Messianic dignity for John the Baptist that he has John deny the suggestion that he might be either Elijah or the expected prophet (1. 21). These denials, states E. L. Titus, "would be meaningless apart from the assumption that claims to a special status for the Baptist were being advanced in the area where the Gospel was written".¹² The contradiction to Synoptic tradition is strange, although entirely understandable when it is

appreciated that as Elijah redivivus or the eschatological Prophet John would have had Messianic status.¹³ It may therefore be suggested that John's rejection of the titles of Elijah redivivus and of the eschatological Prophet is in fact part of a threefold denial of his claim to the same Messianic office. He is not the Messiah, or Elijah redivivus, or the eschatological Prophet: he is not the final human eschatological figure before the end time. The emphatic way in which this denial is made indicates the heat of the Evangelist's polemic, and there is no need to accept Goguel's suggestion that John's first statement, "I am not the Christ", is the work of a later redactor "qui n'a pas compris que l'hypothèse de Jean-Messie était déjà éliminée par l'affirmation qu'il n'était pas le prophète".¹⁴

It is often felt too that the Evangelist's desire to restrict the influence of a contemporary Johannite movement provides the most suitable explanation of the declaration which John is reported to have made on seeing Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (1. 29) Emphasizing the phrase, "who takes away the sin of the world", Scobie argues that this declaration by John is meant to be understood as a reference to the atoning death of Christ, and that John the Baptist is thus made to anticipate a theological interpretation of the death of Christ worked out later in the early Church.¹⁵ The Pauline reference to the fact that "Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed" (I Cor. 5. 7), comes some twenty-five years after John's ministry,

and the usual verdict is that the Fourth Evangelist is himself creating freely here in order to combat a Johannite group which may perhaps have claimed that acceptance of John's message and baptism was all that was necessary for the remission of sins.¹⁶

The Fourth Evangelist's determination to deal with a troublesome Johannite group is also alleged to be present in the manner in which he treats John's baptismal activities. John is not given the title "the Baptist", most probably because this aspect of his ministry was an important factor in the exaggerated esteem in which he was held.¹⁷ The Evangelist refuses to make explicit reference to the baptism of Jesus by John, and commentators generally see this as touching on an issue which must have been a serious bone of contention between Christian and Johannite groups. It is entirely credible that in hostile dialogue with the Christian Church the Johannites were quick to argue along the same lines as Bultmann does today. "Die in ihrer Geschichtlichkeit nicht zu bestreitende Tatsache, dass sich Jesus von Johannes hat taufen lassen, beweist, dass Jesus eine Zeit lang zu den Täuferjüngern gehört hat."¹⁸ This being so the Fourth Evangelist, unable to deny the event which carried with it an implication that John's prestige was greater than that of Jesus, alludes to it in such a way as to neutralize such deductions.

And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to

me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'" (1. 32-33)

The baptism of Jesus is important only in that it is the occasion when John in a prophetic vision recognizes Jesus as he who is come to give the Holy Spirit. This would effectively answer the charge that Jesus was subordinate to John; if there is any subordination inherent in the event then it is that John, unlike Jesus, does not possess the Spirit. The subtle allusion to the baptism of Jesus is made also the occasion for John's open declaration that Jesus is the Son of God (1. 34), a declaration considered by Scobie to be an "anachronism" designed to make quite clear the unique and honoured position of Jesus.²⁰

This witness of John the Baptist to Jesus as the Son of God is reported to have been followed on the next day by a declaration that Jesus was the Lamb of God (1. 36). The statement is made in the presence of two of John's disciples. Consequently they leave their master to follow Jesus and acknowledge him to be the Messiah (1. 41). This Johannine account of the calling of the first disciples differs significantly from the Synoptic record, and the explanation is said by some to lie in the Evangelist's desire to attack the Johannite party and win it over to the Christian Church. The story is told so as to suggest that John himself welcomed the transference of loyalty from himself to Jesus; and Baldensperger argues further that the response of these disciples is put forward as an example for other Johannites to follow.²¹ The account might

be expected to have some appeal for any Johannites wavering in their allegiance to their own traditions and attracted perhaps to the Christian Church.²² They are to be "no longer in any doubt as to the proper procedure. If any persist in clinging to the Baptist movement, it is in the face of the manifest testimony and intent of their master."²³

Another difference between the Johannine and Synoptic Gospels concerns the question whether or not there was an overlap of the ministries of Jesus and John. The Markan note, "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God" (1. 14), with its possible implication that the ministry of Jesus was second-best to the one tragically curtailed by Antipas, is contradicted by the Johannine picture of the contemporaneous ministries of Jesus and the Baptist (3. 22-24; 4. 1). It is argued that this picture of parallel ministries is emphasized by the Evangelist in order to thwart any objections that Jesus is merely John's successor. In deliberate contrast perhaps to the Synoptic picture of widespread support for John the Baptist (Matt. 3. 5; Mark 1. 5; Luke 3. 7), the Fourth Evangelist has John's own disciples report to their master that all are going out to Jesus (3. 26).²⁴ The success of Jesus, and the fact that both he and John were working alongside each other, is reported in such a way as to rule out any speculation that there was rivalry between the two men. "The fact that Jesus had eclipsed him does not rouse the Baptist to rivalry - not in this story. He accepts what has

happened as inevitable for two reasons. First, since he finished his own work with the identification of Jesus, he had expected to become less and less important. Second, he had already identified Jesus in the highest possible categories; therefore, the church (the bride) belonged to Jesus, and he himself could claim significance only inasmuch as he was a friend of Jesus (3. 25-30)."²⁵ All this can conveniently be set against a background of conflict between Christian and Johannite groups.²⁶

If the hand of the Evangelist is to be seen in the corrective of John 4. 2, that Jesus did not himself baptize (contra. 3. 22, 26; 4. 1), then the implication would be that the inconsistency is due to the intensity of his polemic. "The literary opportunism of the author permits him to have Jesus outbaptize John, that is, to beat him on his own terms, and so satisfy the demands of the immediate context. But he does not wish to give the impression that this was really Jesus' mode of operation, so he hastens to make the correction."²⁷

Specific confirmation that the followers of John the Baptist continued to be active as an independent body after his death, and that this has influenced the account in the Fourth Gospel of the Baptist and his disciples, is sometimes found in the Johannine reference to a dispute that some of John's disciples had with a Jew (μετὰ Ἰουδαίου) over the question of purifying (περὶ καθαρισμοῦ) (3. 25). Instead of "a Jew", some manuscripts read Ἰουδαίων; and this uncertainty lends some support to the con-

jecture that the original reading was τῶν Ἰησοῦ, or τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Acceptance of either of these two readings as the original text is strongly advocated by Coguel, who argues that the present version is due to the Fourth Evangelist's reluctance to supplement the story of the Baptist's testimony in chapter 1 by a reference to a disputation between his disciples and those of Jesus, if not Jesus himself. It would have discredited his polemical cause to acknowledge that the present tension between the Johannites and the Christian Church was not without a basis during the ministries of Jesus and John, when there was disagreement on the question of purification.

The other references to John in the Fourth Gospel are similarly claimed to represent not so much a contradiction to the evidence for a continuing Johannite movement as an attempt to attack this very phenomenon. John's role as a witness to Jesus is an honoured and an important one, but the Fourth Evangelist is apparently so concerned to combat the exaggerated views of John's importance held by a contemporary Johannite party that he avoids stressing overmuch even this aspect of John's ministry. Jesus has a greater witness than that of John, whose good work in illuminating the mission of Jesus was but temporary (5. 35-36). This concern to qualify strictly the significance of John is found again in 10. 40-42. Included with references to the truthful testimony of John to Jesus (v. 41), and to the success of Jesus in an area where John had first operated (v. 40), there is a mention of the fact that

"John did so sign" (v. 41). This point must be compared with Mark 6. 14, which implies that John did work miracles. Luke's reference to the common speculation that John was the Messiah (3. 15) also leaves room for the inference that miracles performed by John had played their part in encouraging this belief.²⁹ Certainly the working of miracles by John could have been understood as an indication of his Messianic authority. The note in John 10. 41 is perhaps then to be taken as a rather obvious piece of polemic against the followers of John the Baptist who, rightly or wrongly, affirmed that their master had worked miracles.

Against the background of the non-Johannine evidence for the existence of heretical views of the Baptist's mission there is much that is impressive in this argument that the distinctive account of John's person and work given by the Fourth Evangelist is dictated by polemic against a Johannite sect. On the other hand, it is important to remember that though the indications outside the Fourth Gospel of the existence of extreme views about John the Baptist greatly strengthen the argument which seeks to interpret the Johannine references to John as part of an anti-Johannite polemic, much depends also on whether or not there is reason to suspect the accuracy of the picture of John given in the Fourth Gospel. A decade or so ago such suspicion was general, but recent studies have tended to emphasize the credibility of the report of John's ministry found in the Fourth Gospel.³⁰ This is a significant development, for the more likely it is that the Johannine references

to John reflect a reliable historical tradition of his work, the less definite it becomes that the Fourth Evangelist is conducting a strong polemic against a contemporary Johannite movement. The type of interpretation outlined in the preceding pages, which is characterized by a general suspicion of the trustworthiness of the Johannine record about John the Baptist, would clearly stand in need of substantial revision if it could be demonstrated that the information given about John in the Fourth Gospel is based upon the actual historical circumstances of his ministry.

An important initial question here is that of the possible dependence of the Fourth Gospel on the Synoptic Gospels. If dependence could be demonstrated it would be natural to suppose that the peculiar aspects of John's ministry in the Fourth Gospel are due to the creative, if not to the polemical activity of the Evangelist. However, most critics no longer believe such a demonstration to be possible. The trend today, as Fuller points out, "is to require a high percentage of verbal agreement plus agreement in order before concluding literary dependence".³¹ This makes especially suspect the claim that the Fourth Evangelist is dependent on the Synoptic Gospels for at least some of his information about the Baptist; and the most satisfactory explanation appears to be that the author of the Fourth Gospel has derived information about John from an independent tradition of his work.³² The implication of this is that each distinctive feature of the Johannine presentation of John's mission and relationship to Jesus must be examined in order to see

if the information given is trustworthy.

A convenient starting point for this study is the reference of the Baptist to Jesus which is reported in John 1. 15 and 1. 30. "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me'" (v. 15). As indicated earlier, this statement is regarded by Cullmann and others as polemical fantasy rather than historical fact.³³ But this judgement has not gone unchallenged, and various attempts have been made to establish the essential historicity of John's remark.

For example, Dodd, taking 1. 30 as more likely to be traditional than 1. 15, argues that *ὁπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἄνθρωπος* is not to be understood in a temporal sense, but as meaning "there is a man following me".³⁴ He then suggests that *πρώτός μου* might mean "my superior" and that a possible translation of the whole verse would be, "There is a man in my following who has taken precedence of me, because he is and always has been essentially my superior."³⁵ Dodd believes that this makes sense as a reliable piece of tradition, reflecting the fact that Jesus was at one time a follower of John the Baptist. Against Dodd's argument must be stressed the gulf between the claim that Jesus was once an adherent of John and the assertion that John freely recognized the superiority of his former follower. There is little or no reliable indication in the Synoptic Gospels that the Baptist made this recognition,³⁶ and it must be considered doubtful if Dodd's analysis of John 1. 30 makes it reasonable to accept that this was the

attitude taken by John to Jesus. It is not certain that 1. 30 has a greater claim to be more traditional than 1. 15; and Dodd admits that his proposed translation of John's words reported in 1. 30 is less natural for 1. 15 and Matt. 3. 11, where the phrase **ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος** is found. Further, an earlier analysis of John's message, based on the Synoptic data, strongly indicated that he pictured the one coming after him not as one of his own disciples, but as a figure expected in the future.³⁷ It is also significant that Dodd is careful to note that his translation of **πρῶτός μου ἦν** is no more than a possibility, and that the phrase may have been added by the Evangelist in order to link the statement of John with his own doctrine of the pre-existent Logos.³⁸

An alternative attempt to give John 1. 15 and 1. 30 a grounding in the historical circumstances of the Baptist's ministry is made by Brown, who takes up Robinson's claim that John the Baptist saw himself as preparing the way for an Elijahlike figure.³⁹ Brown suggests that against the background of Robinson's thesis, the statement, "He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me", is explicable as an authentic utterance of John. "Of no other figure in the Old Testament could John the Baptist have said that as truly as of Elijah, who had existed nine hundred years before him, and yet who was expected to come as a messenger before God's final judgement."⁴⁰ The great weakness of Brown's argument is that he does not examine critically Robinson's claim that John looked forward to the coming of Elijah, a claim which is inconsistent with

much of the Synoptic data and which rests upon an incorrect interpretation of Mal. 3. 1-3.⁴¹

A similar type of suggestion to that of Brown has been made by Brownlee, who believes that the statement in question is consistent with the Baptist's expectation of the Son of Man "of whom it was easy to infer pre-existence from the pictures given in I Enoch."⁴² Here too, the weakest point of the argument is its initial premise, in this case the claim that John the Baptist expected a Son of Man type figure. The evidence in support of this claim is far from conclusive,⁴³ and Brownlee's own reliance on the evidence of II (4) Esdras about the Son of Man is especially suspect since this information most probably dates from the period following the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

It would appear therefore that there is little to support the claim that John the Baptist really spoke the words reported in John 1. 15, 30. It is significant too that both Dodd and Brownlee concede that these verses are in agreement with the Logos doctrine of the Fourth Gospel.⁴⁴ Brown goes further and rightly insists that in the Sitz im Evangelium John's utterances are meant to be understood with reference to the view of Jesus as the pre-existent Logos⁴⁵; and the strong probability must be that the Fourth Evangelist created these words in order to establish this connection. This does not of course prove that he was most concerned to attack a Johannite sect, but it does clearly indicate that he exercised some freedom in presenting his account of the person and work of John the

Baptist.

A similar conclusion is demanded by an analysis of the whole section John 1. 19-37, which deals with the Baptist's mission and its relation to that of Jesus. This section opens with an account of a deputation of "priests and Levites" sent by the Jews of Jerusalem to inquire of John's status (1. 19). Dodd rejects the charge that this reference constitutes a hint that we have here an "ideal scene" constructed by the Evangelist in order to "introduce the denial of John's claim to messianic status and the assertion of the claim of Jesus".⁴⁶ He does not accept the suggestion that the reference to "priests and Levites" is a literary reminiscence of the Old Testament, and he argues that if the Fourth Evangelist was composing freely here then he would surely have followed his usual practice of naming the leaders of the Jewish opposition.⁴⁷ In Dodd's view, the best explanation is that the Fourth Evangelist is here drawing on a tradition going back to the period before A.D. 70 when the twofold ministry of "priests and Levites" was still functioning conspicuously at Jerusalem.⁴⁸ This conclusion is not a satisfying one. Too much weight must not be given to Dodd's claim that if the Fourth Evangelist was inventing this scene then he would have mentioned the ἀρχιερεῖς or φαρισαῖοι as the leaders of the deputation. F. E. Williams makes the relevant point that "'chief priests' are hardly appropriate messengers to be sent by the 'Jews'". As for the Pharisees, ordinarily prominent in the fourth gospel, they do not appear in John 1. 19 because they are needed a little later."⁴⁹

Williams also argues against the credibility of the account of the deputation to the Baptist described in John 1. 19 on the grounds that Levites, sacerdotal assistants with carefully defined duties, would probably not have associated with priests on an errand of this kind.⁵⁰

In the case of John's denial of Messianic status in 1. 20, Dodd believes that like v. 19 this rests on an earlier tradition which may be historically reliable.⁵¹ Echoes of this same denial are found in Luke 3. 15 and Acts 13. 25, and it is arguable that these two references owe more to earlier traditions than to the hand of Luke.⁵² It seems clear also from the report of John's message given in Matt. 3. 11 and Luke 3. 16 that he was concerned to point away from himself and his own baptism to a greater one about to come with a spirit-baptism. These considerations give an element of veracity to the Baptist's denial that he was the Messiah and offer support to the claim that the note in John 1. 20 should be understood as a genuine piece of historical information. The following verse, where John is reported to have rejected suggestions that he might be Elijah, or "the prophet", is perhaps of a similar character. It is true that John's denial of the name Elijah is strange when set against the Synoptic record (Mark 9. 13; Matt. 17. 11; Matt. 11. 14; Luke 1. 17), but it may be argued that the Fourth Evangelist is in touch here with a reliable tradition on the grounds that the Synoptic accounts do not describe John himself claiming to be Elijah.⁵³ It is possible that John

conceived the character of the impending crisis, and his own relationship to it, in general terms only, and that he consequently rejected any attempt to classify his own person in terms of current eschatological thought. If so, this would also explain his rejection of the suggestion that he might be "the prophet", most probably the eschatological Prophet of the end time.

In the present context, the great weakness of this attempt to establish the accuracy of John 1. 20-21 is that the greater the degree of historicity to be found in the Baptist's denial that he is the Messiah, Elijah, or the eschatological Prophet, the more probable becomes the view that John exercised a Messianic role in preparing for Yahweh's imminent intervention in history. If, as Dodd claims, the Baptist "placed the ideal figure of the Messiah fully in the centre of the crisis now impending",⁵⁴ it is difficult to see how the belief that the Baptist was himself the Messiah could have been so widespread that, in the Johannine context at least, he must reject this identification before it is put to him formally by his questioners. If, on the other hand, John's role was that of preparing for the Kingdom of God, it would explain adequately the views of him as the Messiah, Elijah redivivus, and the eschatological Prophet, which are apparently reflected in the episode described in 1. 20-21. That John should in turn have been concerned to deny this speculation is explicable on the grounds that acceptance of these formal titles might have resulted in misconceptions about his ministry, and concentrated attention onto his

own person and away from the awesome coming of Yahweh.

But the attempt to establish the historical reliability of John 1. 20-21 cannot be pressed too far. If, as suggested earlier,⁵⁵ the titles of Messiah, Elijah, and the prophet, indicate the same basic office of preparing the way for Yahweh's Kingdom, then it is natural to suppose that this pointed threefold denial to the one role is dictated by the Fourth Evangelist's theological motives. It must be noted also that the immediate introduction to the Baptist's denial of Messiahship - *καὶ ὠμολόγησεν καὶ οὐκ ἤρνήσατο, καὶ ὠμολόγησεν* .. - is clearly editorial, the use of the verbs *ὁμολογεῖν* and *ἀρνεῖσθαι* suggesting the theme of confessing and denying Christ which is found both in the Fourth Gospel (9. 22; 12. 42; 13. 38; 18. 25, 27) and elsewhere in the New Testament.⁵⁶ This probably constitutes some further support for the claim that the whole of John 1. 20-21 is the result of the Evangelist's creative imagination.

Following his assertion that he is not the Messiah, Elijah redivivus, or the eschatological Prophet, John declares positively,

I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight (*εὐθύνατε*) the way of the Lord," as the prophet Isaiah said. (1. 23)

The argument of Dodd here is that the Fourth Evangelist drew this quotation of Is. 40. 3 from a good independent tradition which represented John the Baptist as citing this verse in order to define his own mission.⁵⁷ It is certainly possible that the use

of εὐθύνετε, instead of the ἑτοίμαζετε of the Synoptics and LXX, indicates the Fourth Evangelist's reliance on a source other than the Synoptic Gospels and not a condensation or paraphrase of their citation of this phrase.⁵⁸ There is also some force in the argument that since the text is associated with John's mission in all four Gospels "the most natural explanation of the connection would seem to be, as the fourth Evangelist says, that it was used by the Baptist himself".⁵⁹ Both Dodd⁶⁰ and Robinson⁶¹ cite a passage from the Qumran Manual of Discipline in support of their common contention that John himself might have interpreted his role against the background of Is. 40. 3.

When these things come to pass for the community in Israel, by these regulations they shall be separated from the midst of the men of error to go to the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord, as it is written, "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." This is the study of the law as he commanded through Moses.⁶²

Dodd comments, "If the men of Qumran believed themselves to have been called (or believed that they might in future be called, according to the interpretation adopted) to fill the role of the Voice in the Wilderness, so may John the Baptist have believed himself called, though his conception of the role went somewhat beyond 'the study of the law'."⁶³ The general argument is attractive and should probably be accepted, although it is interesting

that Dodd himself is careful to note that "since our author is concerned .. to present the Baptist in the character of 'witness', par excellence, it may be that he placed the quotation in the mouth of the witness with deliberate intention".⁶⁴

In vv. 26a and 27 of John's first chapter there is a distinct echo of the Synoptic report of the Baptist's description of his own water-baptism, and of the contrast which he makes between himself and the Coming One with reference to the metaphor of the task of removing sandals. But in noting John's description of his own baptism and that of the Coming One, the Fourth Evangelist widely separates the two references (1. 26a and 1. 33b), and he makes no mention of the Coming One's baptism with fire, as recorded in Matt. 3. 15 and Luke 3. 16. Objection to the accuracy of John's reference to the Coming One baptizing in the holy spirit (1. 33b) would be wrong,⁶⁵ but the separation in the Fourth Gospel of this aspect of John's prophecy from the reference to his own water-baptism is suspect, for as Dodd points out, "we can hardly doubt that in the earlier tradition the contrast between water-baptism and spirit-baptism was expressed in a single antithetical sentence".⁶⁶ This at least confirms the considerable freedom exercised by the Fourth Evangelist in presenting his account of John's mission; and it may be surmised that he places the prophecy of the holy spirit where he does (after John had acknowledged Jesus), and neglects to mention John's prophecy of the coming baptism of fire, because he wishes to treat John's reference to the holy spirit as a prophecy of the dis-

tribution of the Holy Spirit both at Pentecost and through Baptism.⁶⁷

It is doubtful if we are in touch with a reliable historical tradition in John 1. 26b, where the Baptist says of Jesus to the priests and Levites, "But among you stands one whom you do not know." Dodd's attempt to maintain the accuracy of this statement on the grounds that it is credible as a recognition by John of Jesus as the unknown or hidden Messiah, is not convincing,⁶⁸ demanding as it does a rejection of the indications elsewhere that John identified the expected Coming One as Yahweh himself. More importantly in the present context, if, as Dodd suggests, John really did declare that the Messiah was already *μέσος ὑμῶν*, though incognito, it would be difficult to understand the supernatural or apocalyptic element of John's prophecy so prominent in Matt. 3. 7f. and Luke 3. 9f. Equally significant is Dodd's admission that Justin appears to provide the earliest datable evidence for the Jewish belief in an unknown Messiah,⁶⁹ a consideration which must tell against the claim that John the Baptist could have anticipated a hidden or unknown Messiah. Further, there is, as Williams suggests, more than a suspicion that 1. 26a has been created by the Fourth Evangelist as part of his general theological scheme. "'There standeth one among you whom you know not' resembles John 1. 10f. so closely that the 'unknown Messiah' .. in the Jewish sense does not seem relevant."⁷⁰

A more important aspect of the possible accuracy of the Fourth Evangelist's record of the ministry of John the Baptist concerns

the declaration which the Baptist is reported to have made on seeing Jesus. Ἰδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἀίρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου (1. 29).⁷¹ Dodd sees the key to the understanding of this utterance in the picture found in Jewish apocalyptic writings of a conquering lamb destroying evil in the world. He believes ἀμνὸς refers to this lamb as a Messianic symbol, the words ἀίρων ἁμαρτίαν reflecting the function of the Messiah to abolish sin and destroy evil.⁷² Dodd's explanation has found little support, at least in respect of his intimation that in the Sitz im Evangelium John's words are to be understood as a reference to the apocalyptic lamb. A more convincing explanation is that which recognizes that in the Gospel setting the words contain an allusion to the paschal lamb, but which nevertheless maintains that John the Baptist could well have uttered these words in the apocalyptic sense.⁷³ This interpretation gives John's utterance an important grounding in the historical circumstances of his ministry, although it recognizes the creative work of the Fourth Evangelist in applying the words to Jesus and in terms of the passover and eucharist.⁷⁴

If the Coming One expected by John was Yahweh himself, the assertion in the Fourth Gospel that he spoke of a coming Lamb of God must necessarily be rejected. But in this context a decision on whether or not John really did speak the words recorded in 1. 29 may be left open: the important point to note is F. W. Beare's forceful emphasis that "John the Baptist did not in fact hail Jesus as the Lamb of God".⁷⁵ Even if the Baptist's statement about the

Lamb of God is not simply dismissed "as an imported theological confession",⁷⁶ but accepted as an accurate record of what he did in fact say, the reported application of these words to the human Jesus must be counted as the work of the Evangelist, and regarded as indicative of the freedom which he exercised in presenting his account of John's work.

Another important part of the Fourth Gospel's report of John's ministry is found in 1. 32-34, with its references to the descent of the dove upon Jesus and to John's acclamation of Jesus as Son of God or God's Chosen One. Whether dependence on the Synoptic tradition be proved or not, it is clear, as Dodd admits, that the hand of the Evangelist himself is at work in this section. This does not of course prove that there are no accurate pieces of information to be found in these verses, although serious doubt must be expressed at any attempt to find here a more reliable account of the circumstances surrounding the baptism of Jesus than that given in the Synoptic Gospels. In particular, objection must be made to the suggestion that at the time of the baptism of Jesus John actually witnessed the descent of the Holy Spirit, and declared, "And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (1. 34). It is clear from the Synoptic accounts that the baptism of Jesus by John must have posed great problems for early Christian thinkers⁷⁸; and if the Fourth Gospel's picture of this event is based on an historically reliable tradition then it is inconceivable that the Synoptic writers would not themselves have come across this as they

puzzled over the possible implications of the baptism of Jesus. It is in fact extremely difficult to accept that John declared Jesus to be the Son of God, or God's Chosen One, even in the sense of simply using these terms as Messianic titles.⁷⁹ Most critics are agreed that this declaration of John marks the Christology of the early Church; and the likelihood is that the solemn affirmation of Jesus as the Son of God, or God's Chosen One, has been placed by the Fourth Evangelist onto the lips of John.⁸⁰

The strong probability has therefore emerged that John 1. 19-34 does not constitute a reliable source of historical information about the ministry of John the Baptist.⁸¹ Here and there fragments of accurate information are to be found, and it may well be that the topographical note in 1. 28 does indicate an area in which John actually worked. But the general picture given of John in these verses is suspect, and although this does not necessarily mean that the record has been dictated by theological motives of a polemical nature, it does go some way towards removing a possible major objection to the type of argument generally put forward by those who believe the Fourth Evangelist to be conducting a polemic against a Baptist sect.

If, then, John 1. 19-34 is considered a doubtful source of accurate information about the Baptist's ministry, it is possible that John 3. 22-30 should also be judged to be of a similar nature. Such a judgement would go against some recent critical opinion which regards this section as reflecting early and accurate historical

traditions. Certainly, as Dodd insists, these verses constitute a distinct unit "contrasting in form, manner and language with what precedes and follows".⁸² But this does not in itself necessarily indicate the existence of a reliable historical tradition, and the view must be carefully examined which seeks to find in this unit a source of accurate information about the ministries of both John and Jesus.

It has been claimed that the reference to the activity of John at Aenon in Samaria (3. 23) may reasonably be accepted as one of the reliable topographical notes found here and there in the Fourth Gospel. This assertion is not without merit,⁸³ but it must be recognized that the only substantial piece of evidence in support of the accuracy of 3. 23 is the persistent tradition which locates John's burial place in Samaria. From this tradition, if it is reliable, one could infer that the Baptist would naturally have been laid to rest in an area where he had exercised a successful ministry. On the other hand, the possibility must be allowed that the location of John's grave might have been chosen only out of a desire by John's disciples to find their master's body a resting-place outside the jurisdiction of the hated Antipas. For this reason it would be wrong to defend the veracity of the passage 3. 22-30 on the basis of the alleged trustworthiness of the reference to John's activity at Aenon in Samaria.

The indications in 3. 23 and 3. 26, and also in 4. 1, that Jesus himself baptized, are difficult to assess as reliable

references. In the Synoptic Gospels there is no note about the baptismal activities of Jesus, but this does not necessarily mean that the Johannine references are incorrect. The baptism of Jesus by John must indicate some measure of common ground between the two men, and on these grounds alone the possibility that Jesus did baptize, at least for a time, cannot be ruled out. It is, however, clear that the writer of John 4. 2 did not accept this possibility. "Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples." Dodd suggests that this corrective is "the work of a subsequent editor, who took objection to the idea that Jesus was (as it were) a second Baptist".⁸⁴ This view is attractive, and might conceivably be extended in order to explain why the Synoptics do not mention that Jesus himself baptized. On the other hand, as M. Simon points out, Dodd's explanation about the relationship of 4. 2 to the three references to Jesus baptizing could just as easily be reversed.⁸⁵ Simon suggests that the Fourth Evangelist is so deeply concerned with the sacramental nature of Christianity that he would not be reluctant to trace the origins of Christian baptism to Jesus himself. "The purpose of the redactional parenthesis in IV. 2, if it really is one, could therefore be to put things in their right historical perspective rather than to prevent the unwelcome suggestion that Jesus had first put himself on the same level with John."⁸⁶ Simon's objection may be taken as a valid check to any claim that these three references in the Fourth Gospel to Jesus baptizing are historically accurate.

The uncertainty about the reliability of the references not only to John's activities in Aenon but also to the baptismal activities of Jesus, acts as a caution against accepting too quickly as historical both the words spoken by John about Jesus in 3. 27-30 and the framework of their parallel ministries in which is set this whole section 3. 22-30.

The question whether or not John and Jesus did exercise contemporaneous ministries is an important one. In 3. 22-23 it is clearly stated that while John worked in Aenon near Salim, Jesus operated in Judea. Such a period of parallel ministry appears to contradict the Synoptic record, and some critics have felt that this overlap between the two ministries has been fabricated by the Fourth Evangelist in order to provide an impressive setting for John's witness to Jesus in 3. 27-30 and the demonstration of Jesus' superiority over John. But not all scholars are sceptical about the trustworthiness of this Johannine reference to a concurrent ministry of Jesus and John: A. M. Hunter, for example, declares that "there is nothing historically improbable about it".⁸⁷ If this statement is allowed to stand, the paradox would seem to be that such a concurrent ministry is more credible when set in the context of what has previously been inferred from the Synoptic record about the relations between John and Jesus than when placed in the context of what the Fourth Gospel has to say about John and his relationship to Jesus. The point of the note in 3. 23, that this parallel ministry occurred before the imprisonment of John, must be

that it occurred after the baptism of Jesus by John and not before. This clearly implies some inconsistency between John 1. 19-37 and John 3. 22-30. If the Baptist confessed Jesus at the baptism, and if his followers then went quickly over to Jesus, it is hard to understand why he should have continued his ministry alongside that of Jesus. However, if, as an examination both of the Synoptic record and John 1. 19-37 leads us to suppose, the Baptist did not, at least at the time of the baptism, recognize Jesus as the Coming One of whom he spoke, then it is perfectly credible that he should have continued his work while Jesus was beginning his.

Whatever may be thought of the accuracy or otherwise of the Johannine reference to the contemporaneous ministries of John and Jesus, it would appear that the thoughts of John's relationship to Jesus noted in 3. 27-30 are the considered opinion, not of the wilderness prophet, but of the Fourth Evangelist himself. The clause *ὃ σὺ μεμαρτύρηκας* in 3. 26 is clearly the Evangelist's attempt to link this episode with the suspect record of 1. 29-34. The thought and language of 3. 27 also smack of his work. Dodd suggests that 3. 29-30 may be from a traditional source, but he is careful to note that the last clause of v. 29 "has the clear stamp of Johannine authorship".⁸⁸ The most which can properly be said of the remainder of these two verses is that the language is not distinctively Johannine; but in view of the character of the other verses in this passage, and the way in which 3. 29-30 accords with the picture given in John 1. 29f., the probability must be that the closing words of this section are not the ipsissima verba of the

Baptist.

This examination of John 3. 22-30 has indicated that it is similar in character to John 1. 19-34, and includes only fragments of accurate historical detail. There is little in either of these two passages to support Dodd's claim that on the whole the Fourth Gospel provides a more reliable record of John's ministry than does the Synoptic tradition. In considering two reports as possible sources of accurate information it is much more reasonable to concentrate on the one which appears to be inconsistent with later understanding of the situation. It is hardly too strong to say that the Fourth Gospel's account of John's person and work is too good to be true. Significantly, Dodd himself recognizes in his conclusion that the explicit mention of John's early and definite recognition of Jesus as Messiah is to be understood as "a dramatic and symbolic picture".⁸⁹ The conclusion therefore must be that although here and there the Fourth Evangelist may have included certain accurate pieces of information, the whole picture given of John the Baptist and his relations with Jesus is hardly credible as a very reliable record of what actually happened.

The undermining of the Fourth Gospel's claim to provide a reliable account of John's ministry removes one of the strongest possible objections to the medley of views which was presented earlier and which interpreted the Johannine references to the Baptist as part of a polemic against a Johannite sect. In referring to such views, Robinson rightly speaks of their estimate "of the Evangelist's por-

trait of John as a picture drawn almost wholly from theological motives of a polemical nature and possessed of very little historical value".⁹⁰ The demonstration of the inaccuracies in the Johannine record could thus be thought to support the judgement that the Fourth Evangelist is conducting a polemic against a contemporary Johannite party.

But it may be that in this context it is wrong to make too strong a dichotomy between polemic and historical accuracy. For example Brownlee, although attempting to establish the reliability of the Johannine picture of the Baptist, does not deny that there is "undoubtedly a polemical purpose in the Gospel, designed to prove that Jesus, not John the Baptist, was the messianic 'light' which was to come into the world".⁹¹ Brownlee wisely points out that "not always is it necessary to misrepresent the truth in order to uphold one's cause in debate"; and he goes on to argue that any polemic against a Johannite sect "would be all the more powerful if the arguments employed were founded upon historical fact".⁹² Robinson too, although convinced of the trustworthiness of the Johannine record of the Baptist's ministry, considers that the Fourth Evangelist may have had an apologetical eye to persuading those who "were brought up in the Baptist's teaching to believe in Jesus as the one to whom John pointed".⁹³

There thus emerges the interesting proposition that the inaccuracy of the Johannine picture of John's ministry, although at first sight supporting the claim that the Fourth Evangelist is con-

cerned to attack a Johannite sect, or to persuade its members to join the Christian movement, really indicates a fundamental weakness in this claim. If, as may now reasonably be thought, the account of John's work in the Fourth Gospel is not historically reliable, none would have seen this better than his original followers and any later adherents to the Johannite movement. An attempt to attack the views of these men, and to win them perhaps into the Christian Church, would very likely have been seriously discredited by the presentation of an inaccurate report of the Baptist's ministry.

This last point must be considered alongside what we can reasonably suppose about the way in which John the Baptist came to hold such a prominent and honoured place in the Gospel record. If, as has been tentatively established, John heralded the coming of the Lord Yahweh and the future Kingdom,⁹⁴ it is not too difficult to see how the early Christians could have come to accept John as the precursor of their Lord Jesus. Jesus himself almost certainly saw that his mission was related to the preparatory work of John, and that John's prophecies about the coming Kingdom were already being fulfilled with his own ministry.⁹⁵ In the light of the Pentecost experiences the connection between John and Jesus (and the risen Lord) would have become even clearer to the early believers. John's prophecy of the imminent outpouring of the holy spirit would have been seen to be true, as would have been his claim to prepare the way of the Lord. In fact, the incidence of baptism, prayer and fasting in the early Church probably indicates the incorporation of

many Johannite practices into the life of the Church as a consequence of former followers of John having come to recognize that Jesus had fulfilled the expectations of their old master (albeit in a way only glimpsed by the wilderness prophet himself). The account of the twelve "disciples" in Acts 19. 1-7 may offer some substantial support for this suggestion. It appears that these men before their encounter with Paul were still attached to the Johannite movement; but according to Luke they were brought into the Christian movement without much trouble. Few would accept that the twelve men joined the Christian movement as easily as Luke suggests, but the account may provide a reliable indication that the majority of Johannites did come to see that their proper place was within the Christian Church. Commenting on Acts 19. 1-7, A. Schlatter asserts that "what is true of all the pictures Luke gives us of Paul's activity, namely, that everything had a typical significance, is true also of this narrative".⁹⁶ Although some Johannites doubtless clung fiercely to their original ideals, the account in Acts 19. 1-7 may be taken as an indication not only that "in many of the towns which Paul visited, he found disciples of John, even as far away as Ephesus",⁹⁷ but also that the movement launched by the Baptist was without too much difficulty absorbed into the Christian Church. This is one implication of the character of the Lukan infancy narratives which represent probably, as H. L. MacNeill suggests, an early attempt at linking together the traditions of the Johannite and Christian movements.⁹⁸

It may be argued too that although the report of the Baptist's ministry given in the Fourth Gospel is not strictly accurate, it could have been understood by former Johannites already in the Christian Church as drawing out and making clear the real significance of their old master's work. There is some merit in Robinson's suggestion that the Fourth Evangelist may have been one of John's supporters before being associated with the Christian movement.⁹⁹ If so, this could well have given him an added insight into the true significance of John the Baptist, and led him to read back into the circumstances of the Baptist's ministry the process by which he and others had been led into the Christian Church. But what they had perceived by faith would most probably have been rejected by any Johannite sceptics outside the Church who were intimately acquainted with the actual circumstances of the Baptist's ministry. It is not easy to imagine that any dedicated Johannites opposed to the Christian movement would have been attracted to, or silenced by, the Fourth Gospel's account of their master's ministry. If they were engaged in a controversy with the Christian Church, their immediate reaction would doubtless have been to challenge the Fourth Evangelist's record of what John said and did.

Critics are still divided on the question when the Fourth Gospel was written, but a date around the turn of the first century is unlikely to be far wrong. By this time the Johannite movement may have lost most of its dynamic. If Acts 19. 1-7 is at all representative of what happened to the followers of John the Baptist then, as

Dodd suggests, after about A.D. 55-57 the numbers of those committed to the Johannite cause declined rapidly.¹⁰⁰ It is true that after this time there are indications that the Baptist was not always thought of as the forerunner of Jesus,¹⁰¹ and that the Clementine Recognitions make explicit reference to an heretical group of "disciples of John". These references are important, although there is some doubt if they indicate the survival of a widespread Johannite movement into the second century A.D. and beyond. The references to the Baptist in The Antiquities of the Jews, The Book of James, and perhaps also the Mandaean literature, can be understood as indicating the survival of extreme opinions about John rather than the survival of groups which could properly be described as Johannite. The references to John the Baptist and his disciples in the Pseudo-Clementine literature, and the clear traces there of polemic against exaggerated views of John's importance, may be also explained adequately against the background of conflict with a group which made use of certain aspects of Johannite history in its opposition to Christians.¹⁰² Alternatively, there is merit in the suggestion that the testimony of the Pseudo-Clementine literature and Ephrem Syrus indicates only the survival of a Johannite party in a particular restricted area. If in the second and later centuries the Johannite movement was a widespread phenomenon, one might have expected to hear about it from other early Christian writings. The absence of references to disciples of John in the lists of heretics given by the early Fathers strongly suggests that by the second and

third centuries the Johannite sect was too small to merit much attention.¹⁰³ The Pseudo-Clementines, concludes Scobie, "do not come from the mainstream of Christian tradition, and probably by the second century the disciples of John were to be found only in some Syrian backwater".¹⁰⁴

The probability that by the end of the first century there were but few men committed completely to the Johannite cause may be taken as confirmation that the Fourth Gospel's account of the Baptist's ministry is not part of a polemic against a Johannite movement. On the other hand, the very definite way in which the words and deeds of John are presented does suggest that the Fourth Evangelist is influenced at this point by something other than general theological considerations. The abruptness with which John is introduced in the Prologue (1. 6-8); the denial that he is "the light" (1. 8); the forceful way in which he is described as disclaiming Messianic status (1. 19-21; 3. 28); his denial that he is prior to Jesus (1. 15, 30); his explicit testimony to Jesus (1. 29, 32f.); the acceptance of his testimony by his disciples (1. 35f.) whose transference of loyalty to Jesus is similar to the response of the masses (3. 26) and clearly pleasing to John (3. 29-30); the gradual eclipse of John's ministry by that of Jesus while the former was still at liberty (3. 22 - 4. 2); the intimation that his witness to Jesus is not vital (5. 34, 36); and the note that he performed no miracles (10. 41) - all this collectively constitutes a strong indication that the Fourth Evangelist is systematically correcting a false estimation

of John the Baptist which challenged the supremacy given to Jesus by the Christian Church.

The problem now emerges of explaining the existence of this exaggerated opinion of the Baptist without reference to the activity of a strong Johannite movement at the time when the Fourth Gospel was written. The absence of any reliable indications that John the Baptist was given an honoured place in an early gnostic system of thought does not permit the suggestion that the Evangelist's desire to limit the importance of John over against Jesus is part of a general attack on gnosticism.¹⁰⁵ However, it is possible that information about John was being cited and exploited by a non-gnostic group as part of its opposition to the Christian Church. There are indications that the Pseudo-Clementine literature presupposes this type of phenomenon¹⁰⁶, and this lends support to the argument that the Fourth Evangelist was also confronted with a non-Johannite group which knew of certain embarrassing aspects of Johannite history and which was attempting to use what jaundiced information it possessed in an attempt to discredit Jesus and the early Church.

Reference is demanded at this point to the suggestion that the distinctive Johannine presentation of the Baptist's ministry is in some way bound up with the Fourth Evangelist's polemic against "the Jews". Scott, who argues that the Fourth Evangelist was confronted in his own age and neighbourhood by a Baptist community claiming that their master was the Christ, considers it very probable that this con-

troversy was specifically related to the larger Jewish one.¹⁰⁷

According to Scott, the Jewish leaders had from the beginning regarded John with a certain measure of sympathy, and he believes that the Jews may well have thrown their weight on the side of the Baptist party in their opposition to the Church. "Here", he suggests, "was a powerful weapon laid ready to their hands. A sect existed, kindred in some respects to the Christians, which yet subordinated Jesus as a rival prophet, and made out that His work was secondary and derivative. For the purposes of their own polemic the Jews would take up the cause of John, and support his followers in their antagonism. This may partly account for the important place occupied in our Gospel by the Baptist controversy. Whatever may have been the actual strength of the sect which revered John as the Messiah, it afforded cover to the Jewish opposition, and for this reason, if for no other, was dangerous."¹⁰⁸

One weakness of Scott's position is that it is open to the objections made above to the claim that the Fourth Evangelist was concerned to combat a definite group of Johannites. His argument also suffers from predicating an alliance between Johannites and "Jews" at the time the Fourth Gospel was written. Even if there were some Johannites still active around the turn of the century in the area in which the Fourth Gospel first circulated, the suggestion that they were in alliance with the Jewish opposition to the Christian Church rests on what Scott admits is "a somewhat obscure reference in Justin (Trypho 80)", where a group of "Baptists" are "Jews".¹⁰⁹

Scott believes this reference to indicate that the followers of John took rank among the orthodox Jews and also therefore that Johannites survived into the middle of the second century. Scott is not alone in citing Justin's reference as evidence for the survival of the Johannite movement,¹¹⁰ but it must be emphasized that Justin's reference is isolated and that the "Baptists" he mentions are known only by name.¹¹¹ Although there remains a possibility that by the term "Baptist" is signified a group stemming from John's original followers, the absence of any supporting evidence for this makes it likely that these "Baptists" known to Justin are related to the general baptismal movement common around the turn of the era rather than in some special way to John alone.

Scott's argument does, however, have the merit of explaining why Jewish opposition to the Christian Church might have taken the form of emphasizing certain aspects of Johannite history. Even if the bulk of John's followers had quite quickly been absorbed into the Christian Church, critics of the Christian movement may have been glad to seize upon what was probably a vague recollection both of John's independent role and of the survival of a Johannite movement for a time after his death in an attempt to undermine the authority of the Christian cause. G. H. C. Macgregor is sympathetic to this historical reconstruction, and he argues that the Fourth Evangelist may well have so pointedly emphasized the subordination of the Baptist to Jesus precisely in order "to counteract a contemporary Jewish movement which sought to buttress its opposition to the spread

of Christianity by exalting the Baptist at the expense of Christ".¹¹²
 This opinion is echoed by D. Lamont, who claims that "earnest Jews, to whom the Cross was a stumbling-block, were ready to set up the Baptist as a rival to Jesus or even to teach that he was more truly in the succession of the prophets of Israel than Jesus was".¹¹³

Some confirmation of this interpretation is provided by a tantalizingly brief reference in Origen's *Contra Celsum*, where it is said that "the Jews do not connect John with Jesus, nor the punishment of John with that of Jesus" (1. 48).¹¹⁴ This reference falls short of saying that the Jews set John over against Jesus, but it is probably significant that the reference comes at the end of a discussion about "a Jew who raises difficulties in the story of the Holy Spirit's descent in the form of a dove to Jesus" (1. 46). Origen appears to argue against Celsus' Jew that as he had in some way accepted John as a baptist in baptizing Jesus (1. 47), then he ought to consider the words of the Baptist reported in John 1. 51 (1. 48) rather than so quickly attack as fiction the story "about the descent of the dove upon the Saviour when he was baptized by John" (1. 40). The point should perhaps not be pressed too far, but this section of Origen's work could mean that in the middle of the third century the Jewish opposition to the Church was emphasizing certain aspects of John's ministry in an attempt to discredit the historical truth of Christianity.

Turning to the Fourth Gospel, there are one or two indications in the text which suggest that the Evangelist's concern to combat

an exaggerated estimate of the Baptist is bound up with his definite and unqualified opposition to "the Jews". It is especially noteworthy that when John first emphatically denies claim to Messianic status the denial is made, not to his own disciples, but to a deputation of priests and Levites sent by the Jews (l. 19-22). Dodd's attempt to establish the historical reliability of this account is not impressive,¹¹⁵ and it would appear that we do have here an "ideal scene" constructed by the Fourth Evangelist in order to introduce John's denial that he is the Messiah. The mention in l. 24 that these priests and Levites had been sent by the Pharisees is especially suspect, and it may be surmised that the Evangelist is bringing the Pharisees into the picture at this point in order to make clear to a contemporary Pharisaic party that John had not only disclaimed Messianic status but that he had also given unambiguous testimony to Jesus, testimony moreover which had been properly accepted by John's own disciples. If there is an attack in this section on an exaggerated view of John's importance, it seems clear that "the Jews", or more particularly perhaps, the Pharisees, are implicated in one way or another.

It is tempting to link this suggestion with the curious reference to the Pharisees included in the explanation given by the Fourth Evangelist for Jesus' withdrawal from John and journey into Galilee.

Now when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ..

he left Judea and departed again to Galilee. (4. 1-2)

It is possible that the mention of the Pharisees in connection with the move of Jesus away from John is bound up with the embarrassment which the Church might have felt because Jesus had broken forth into Galilee only after John had been taken captive by Antipas (Mark 1. 14; Matt. 4. 12). There was perhaps a strong tendency for critics of the Church to assert that Jesus had only taken advantage of the void left by John's imprisonment; and, although the reference to the contemporaneous activities of John and Jesus is possibly not without some historical foundation,¹¹⁶ there is much to be said for the claim that the Fourth Evangelist gives an account of a period of parallel ministry in order to oppose any suggestion that Jesus was a second-rate successor to John. Such a policy may have proved successful in silencing one line of criticism against the Church, but the reference to a concurrent ministry of Jesus and John could have encouraged another, and led opponents of the Church to assert that John and Jesus had been, if not rivals, at least largely independent of each other. In 4. 1-2 it seems that the Fourth Evangelist is aware of this danger, for here, as with the report of parallel ministry in 3. 22-30, it is clearly indicated that there was no sense of rivalry between John and Jesus. It was not the case that the gradual overshadowing of John by Jesus, marked finally by the entry of Jesus into Galilee, owed anything to tension between the two men. In fact, the reason why Jesus moved into Galilee is said to be precisely in

order to anticipate any objection from the Pharisees that the two men were in competition with each other. Few scholars agree that Jesus did enter Galilee because of the unwelcome attention of the Pharisees to his greater success than John in Judea, and this supports the view that this explanation why Jesus withdrew to Galilee is put forward by the Fourth Evangelist in order not only to anticipate any awkward questions which might have been raised about John and Jesus working separately but also to combat particularly the Pharisees of his own time, who were trying to stress the importance of John over against Jesus by reference to a spirit of competition and rivalry which had allegedly marked their respective ministries.

The clearest indication that in attacking distorted views about the Baptist the Fourth Evangelist had Jewish, rather than Johannite opposition in mind, is found in John 5. 31-36. Addressing himself to his Jewish opponents, Jesus says,

If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true; there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that the testimony which he bears to me is true. You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony which I receive is from man; but I say this that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me.

In this passage can be traced polemic both against extreme claims made for John and against the Jewish opposition to the Church. A desire to attack those who exaggerated the importance of John's ministry is clearly evident in the way in which the superiority of Jesus to John is demonstrated by the reminder that Jesus stands in no real need of John's witness to him. Complementing this strict limitation of John's significance is the insistence that those who do set store by John's words should consider that his witness is to Jesus and that his witness is true. The vital consideration here is that those who are mindful of the ministry of John the Baptist are said to be Jews, the same body of men who in John 1. 19f. are reported as showing such an interest in the Baptist's status. Further, it is emphasized that their interest was a shallow thing and that John had been acceptable to them only "for a while". There may be an accurate reflection here of the widespread excitement which John aroused amongst Jews, although it is easy to think that the Fourth Evangelist is addressing himself primarily to a contemporary situation. He can see, and wants his readers to see, that the present Jewish interest in the Baptist has not been continuous since the time of his ministry. Any interest they showed then was but temporary; and the interest shown now is likewise for a season only and born of a desire to exploit him for their own malicious purposes. If the Jews are genuinely concerned with the import of John's mission, they would not persist in their opposition to the Christian Church but would recognize the truth of John's wit-

ness to Jesus.¹¹⁷

The above analysis of the Johannine presentation of the person and work of John the Baptist may be held to indicate that at the time the Fourth Gospel was written those making the name of the Baptist "the watchword of direct antagonism to Christianity"¹¹⁸ were, not Johannites, but orthodox Jews. The fact that the attempt to exaggerate the importance of John did not come from a group directly connected with him, enabled the Fourth Evangelist to exercise considerable freedom in attacking these pernicious views. Probably a former Johannite himself, he was able to complete the process of "Christianizing" John's role as precursor of Jesus in such a way as not only to prove satisfying to those Johannites already in the Church but also to mock the attempts of those Jews who tried to exploit the tension which had for a time existed between Jesus and John and between their respective movements.

CONCLUSION

The present study claims to establish the strong probability that John the Baptist brought into being a movement which for some time at least remained independent both of Jesus and the early Christian communities. If the references in the Synoptic Gospels to John's disciples fasting and praying are not to be dated post mortem Joannis, they are nevertheless important as constituting sound evidence for the existence of a Johannite community during John's lifetime. This judgement must be complemented by Luke's reference to certain disciples of John ministering to their master during his imprisonment (7. 18-19). Such loyalty is indicative of a firm commitment to the Johannite cause, and it is significant too that Mark and Matthew report that an unspecified number of John's disciples were on hand to entomb their master's corpse (Mark 6. 29; Matt. 14. 12).

In reconstructing the history of John's associates after his death a vital consideration is the intimation of the Synoptic record that John's mission was that of the eschatological Prophet, the precursor of Yahweh's decisive intervention in history. His message was that men should respond to his call to repentance and baptism in order to escape a punitive baptism with fire and in order to be the recipients of God's spirit on the imminent Day of Yahweh. Although there are signs that near the end of his life John was reconsidering his own eschatological expectations in the light of

Jesus' ministry, it would appear that these thoughts came to naught. The important point here is that there is no inconsistency between John's failure to appreciate the significance of the mission of Jesus and the fact that Jesus himself was baptized by John and testified to the importance of his work. The distinction between the missions of John and Jesus was a creative one of fulfilment. Implicit in his baptism by John was the acceptance by Jesus that the wilderness prophet had been correct in proclaiming that God was about to break into human history¹; and there is a certain continuity between this and the later realization of Jesus that the Kingdom whose imminence John had proclaimed was in a real sense already present with his own ministry.² John was the herald of the coming eschatological drama, and Jesus the fulfilment of it. John himself had been unable to appreciate this: consequently, when Jesus paid tribute to John and said that none greater had been born of women, he noted also the good fortune of those who were permitted a share in the present manifestation of the Kingdom (Matt. 11. 11; Luke 7. 28).

There are sufficient indications to claim that the later history of John's supporters reflected John's own failure to recognize the vindication of his mission by that of Jesus, and also the way in which Jesus related his own ministry to that of John and emphasized the continuity between them. Some of John's followers remained committed for a time to fixed Johannite ideals and were independent of the Christian Church. Others recognized quite quickly that John's expectations had come true with the mission of

Jesus and entered into the fellowship of the early Christian communities.

An interesting pointer to this latter development is provided by the character of the Lukan infancy narratives. It would have been entirely natural for a Johannite community to preserve traditions about their master, and there is good reason to suppose that such traditions underlie the story of John's antecedents in Luke 1. The Evangelist's view is clearly that John is the precursor of the Lord Jesus, but it is possible to trace in this chapter the conception of John as Elijah redivivus, the forerunner of Yahweh. The best explanation of this is that when the disciples of John were absorbed into the Christian movement they brought with them traditions of their old master which were then re-interpreted in the light of their new commitment. Jesus himself had not only related his own mission to that of John³ but had also confirmed his role as the eschatological Prophet ("more than a prophet"). It was thus entirely proper for traditions of John's role as the herald of Yahweh's imminent intervention in history to be re-applied to the mission of Jesus. Chamblin points out that Is. 40. 3 and Mal. 3. 1, two passages which originally referred to the coming of Yahweh, are used in the Gospels generally to indicate the significance of John's ministry because "as far as Jesus and the early Church were concerned, John did prepare the way for the LORD himself - the LORD present in the person of his eternal, only-begotten, and now incarnate Son".⁴ This judgement is particularly applicable

to the way in which traditions concerning the role of John as the eschatological Prophet are recast in the Lukan infancy story in order to make clear that Jesus is the Lord whose precursor John was. Men who had been led from their former commitment to John to accept Jesus as their Lord would doubtless have wished to incorporate treasured memories of their old master into the traditions of their new faith; and the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel are best understood as the product of a blending of what were once distinctively Johannite traditions into a framework of Christian belief. The entry of former Johannites into the Christian Church also conveniently explains the large amount of information given about John the Baptist in the Gospel tradition. It is clear that John had an important role in the Gospel story, but this in itself does not explain completely why so much information should have been preserved about him, especially concerning the circumstances of his birth and death.

Particular significance must be attached to the reported conversion by Paul in Acts 19. 1-7 of twelve men who had been baptized into John's baptism. Although the narrative does not admit of a definite interpretation, the best explanation seems to be that about A.D. 55-57 Paul was instrumental in encouraging committed Johannites at Ephesus to accept Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of John's prophecies, and so to enter the Christian Church. The suggestion has been made that this incident is typical of the response made by former Johannites to the Christian cause, and the evidence

for this is not confined to the character of Acts 19. 1-7 and the Lukan infancy narratives. Just as the detailed information given about John in the Gospels is best explained against a background of Johannites joining the Christian communities, so also is the practice of prayer, fasting and baptism in the early Church. All these features of early Christian worship can be understood as having entered the life of the Church as a consequence of Johannites accepting Christian fellowship.⁵ Another consideration is to be found in the factors operative in the rapid increase in the numbers of Christian believers in the immediate post-Pentecost period. The intrinsic dynamic of the Christian cause could itself explain the large number of converts given in the first few chapters of Acts, but this success may well have been due in part to many Johannites accepting, as their master had not been able to do, that there was an intimate relationship between his mission and that of Jesus, that the Holy Spirit was no longer a future possibility, and that their proper place was thus within the Christian Church. Convinced already that a new era was about to dawn, and being made mindful of the continuity between John's mission and that of Jesus, a considerable number of Johannites would no doubt have been particularly receptive to the Christian message and have become believers more quickly than most.

The other side of the coin is that not all Johannites recognized so naturally the importance of the ministry of Jesus. The retention by some of John's supporters of allegiance only to Johan-

nite teaching and ideals would have been a natural consequence of John's own failure to recognize that his mission was vindicated by that of Jesus. Further, the role of John as the eschatological Prophet was consistent with Messianic dignity, and this factor would have made it inevitable for a number of John's followers to accept for some time after his death that the correct course of action was to retain their independence and to champion still the convictions of their dead master. Paul's encounter with the twelve men at Ephesus may be taken as a pointer to the existence of men committed to a distinctly Johannite position nearly thirty years after the death of John. To this must be added the indications outside the pages of the New Testament that not all of John's supporters found their way quickly into the Christian Church.

Some significance should probably be attached to the record about John the Baptist given by Josephus in *The Antiquities of the Jews*. This relates that several years after John's death the defeat of the army of Herod Antipas by that of Aretas was regarded by at least some Jews as just punishment by God for Herod's murder of John; and since Josephus wrote near the turn of the first century there is just a suspicion that at this time too the question of John's death was a live issue, presumably amongst men who were concerned still with the import of John's ministry. The independent conception of the mission of John alluded to in the apocryphal *Book of James* is also significant as being consistent with the continued existence of a Johannite community which propagated trad-

itions about the importance of its founder's work. But by far the most impressive evidence for the protracted survival of a Johannite party is provided by the Pseudo-Clementine literature, which not only reflects a hostile attitude to John himself but also makes direct references to heretical disciples of John who were in conflict with the first Christian believers. So definite is the hostility towards John, and so vivid are the references to the disciples of John who believed their own master to be the Christ, that many scholars have concluded that the Pseudo-Clementine literature must testify to the existence of a militant Johannite sect in Syria during the second and third century A.D.

But if the pointers in non-canonical works for the survival of specifically Johannite groups after the death of John cannot be dismissed as trivial, their significance must not be over-emphasized. Consistent as they are with the indications in the New Testament that not all of John's supporters immediately took up the Christian cause, at no point do they establish the existence of a widespread independent Johannite movement active more than a decade or two after John's death. The relevant references in The Antiquities of the Jews, The Book of James, the Pseudo-Clementine literature, and perhaps even the Mandaean literature, indicate at most no more than the existence of a fairly small party clinging to the conception of John as the eschatological Prophet, the Messiah, a party that, to judge from its failure to make an impression on other ecclesiastical writers, must have become increasingly inward-looking and

remote from the mainstream of the important religious conflicts of the day.

Close attention to the presentation of John's ministry in the Fourth Gospel does not bear out the familiar claim that this must reflect a polemic against a Johannite sect which set up its own founder as Messiah. Although there may have been some Johannites active in certain areas when the Fourth Gospel was written, and although these would have naturally venerated John as the eschatological Prophet or Messiah, these two factors do not explain the distinctive character of the Johannine references to him and his relationship with Jesus. The demonstrable inaccuracies in the account of John's ministry given by the Fourth Evangelist tell against, rather than support, the view that he was concerned to present a polemic against a Johannite party. If anyone would have been likely to know that John had had little contact with Jesus, and that he had never recognized him as the Son of God or acknowledged his superiority in any other way, it would have been precisely those men who clung absolutely to the belief that John was the last eschatological figure before the imminent end of days. Any attempt to attack their views by giving an inaccurate account of the Baptist's ministry would very probably have been disadvantageous in that it would have given such independent Johannites an ideal opportunity to take the offensive by stressing the errors of fact in the Christian position.

It must also be recognized that the portrait in the Fourth

Gospel of John as the conscious forerunner of Jesus may owe little or nothing to polemical factors and represent a reading back into the circumstances of his ministry the role of precursor to Jesus which in God's plan he had had, and which had been correctly perceived by Jesus himself. Properly judged John's mission was to prepare the way for Jesus, and the representation by the Fourth Evangelist of John as the enthusiastic witness to Jesus can be understood as an attempt to make this point clear. The freedom and confidence with which the interpretation is presented is striking, and although this is consistent with the lead given by Jesus in relating his own mission to that of John, there may be an indication here that the Fourth Gospel was written by one who had special reason to appreciate that John's ministry was divinely related to that of Jesus. There are good reasons for believing that former Johannites did accept that their proper place was in the Christian Church - the description in the Fourth Gospel of disciples of John leaving him during his lifetime to serve Jesus probably accurately represents later developments - and if the Fourth Evangelist had himself become a Christian believer as a consequence of starting with John the Baptist, it would have been entirely natural for him to represent the historical relationship between John and Jesus in such a way as to make absolutely clear the vital measure of continuity between their missions.

However, a recognition that there may have been positive reasons why the Fourth Evangelist depicted John as the ideal wit-

ness to Jesus leaves open still the question why at so many points in the Gospel the importance of John is strictly qualified. This clearly is the intention behind the abrupt note in the Prologue that John is not the light, and the aside in 10. 41 that he did no sign. John's own threefold denial of Messianic office in 1. 20-21 is especially pointed, as is also the reference in 4. 1 to Jesus baptizing more disciples than John. In 5. 34, 36 it is even suggested that the witness of John to Jesus is unnecessary. These references leave the distinct impression that along with stressing the positive relationship between John's mission and that of Jesus the Fourth Evangelist is seeking to combat extreme views about John.

At this point reference must be made to the suggestion that the Jewish opposition to the Christian movement would hardly have been completely unaware either of the way in which John had exercised his ministry independently of Jesus or of the survival after his death of Johannite groups, some of which must have engaged in controversy with the early believers about the respective merits of Jesus and John. These points, when noted to the exclusion of John's rôle in God's plan as the precursor of Jesus, and to the neglect of the natural assimilation of Johannites into the Christian Church, would have no doubt proved very attractive to those trying to discredit the Christian cause. Indeed the possibility must be seriously entertained that it was such opponents of the Church, and not men claiming allegiance only to a Johannite sect,

who were responsible for the survival into the second half of the first century and beyond of exaggerated views of John's status. Certainly the indications of extreme opinions about John in the extra-Biblical literature mentioned earlier as constituting some evidence for the continued existence of Johannite groups, can be explained alternatively as stemming from antagonists of the Church who were simply attempting to make their own use of some singular features of Johannite history. This judgement applies particularly to the Pseudo-Clementine literature, for there is much to commend Goguel's suggestion that the references there to John and his disciples reflect a polemic against a group that had no direct contact with any Johannite sect,⁶ a group whose knowledge of Johannite history was probably as superficial as it was malicious. Further support for the argument that because of the use made of certain aspects of its history the Johannite movement proved indirectly troublesome to the Christian Church, is provided by the note in Origen's *Contra Celsum* that "the Jews do not connect John with Jesus, nor the punishment of John with that of Jesus" (1. 48). The whole tenor of Origen's argument at this point can bear the implication that in the middle of the third century a number of Jews were attempting to present a one-sided picture of John's ministry in an effort to discredit the Christian cause.

The character of the references in the Fourth Gospel to John the Baptist, particularly those which have the effect of limiting his distinction, appear to reflect similarly concern, not about a

Johannite movement opposed to the Christian Church, but about a Jewish party which sought to exploit for its own purposes what knowledge it had of any tension there had been between the ministries of John and Jesus, and between the early Christian believers and those Johannites who for some years after the death of John had retained their old ideals. It is noticeable that when the Baptist is reported as making a threefold denial of Messianic dignity (l. 20-21), this comes in response to a deputation of priests and Levites sent by the Jews, or rather by the Pharisees (l. 24), to inquire of his status. Since the intention behind this episode is evidently to anticipate any suggestion that John might be the Messiah, the inference to be drawn is that the Fourth Evangelist was faced with a threat from a contemporary Pharisaic party striving to press the Messianic claims of John, at least to the extent of teaching that his credentials to this office were superior to those of Jesus. The acceptance by John's own disciples of his unqualified testimony to Jesus (l. 29f.) may be understood also as an attempt by the Fourth Evangelist to combat allegations from the Jewish opposition that, as his relations with Jesus and the later history of his movement indicated, John was not the forerunner of Jesus as the Christian Church claimed.

Another attack on a Jewish party seeking to buttress its opposition to the Christian Church by setting up John as a rival to Jesus appears to be present in the explanation given by the Fourth Evangelist for the withdrawal of Jesus from the company of

John and his consequent journey into Galilee (4. 1-2). The reference to the danger of the Pharisees dwelling on the fact that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John is probably bound up with the picture given in the Fourth Gospel of the contemporaneous activities of John and Jesus. Whether this mention of parallel ministries is completely, or only partially accurate, any suggestion that John continued to operate with his own disciples alongside Jesus and his would have given critics of the Church an opportunity to assert that John could not therefore have been the conscious forerunner of Jesus. The Fourth Evangelist would have been aware of this danger but, either because he had good reasons for doubting the Synoptic picture of Jesus beginning his work in Galilee only after John had been arrested, or because he felt compelled to present an account of contemporaneous ministries in order to combat the critical suggestion that Jesus was a second-rate successor of John, appearing on the scene in Galilee only after John had been incarcerated at Machaerus, he nevertheless boldly notes how Jesus and John had operated alongside each other and avoids any unwelcome speculations about rivalry between the two men by adding that it was precisely in order to avoid the danger of such allegations from the Pharisees that Jesus moved away from John to work in another area. This point would have been especially forceful if at the time the Fourth Gospel was written, Pharisees were asserting that the relationship between John and Jesus was not as harmonious as the Christians made out.

There is nothing in the denial that John is the light (1. 8), and in the assertion that he did no sign (10. 41), to indicate that Jewish rather than Johannite opponents of the Church are the author's concern, but in the passage 5. 31-36 it is difficult to resist the impression that the evident desire of the Evangelist to check extreme views about John is bound up with his general and unqualified polemic against "the Jews". In these verses it is made clear that John's witness to Jesus should be especially relevant to Jews, and that Jesus is in no way dependent for his authority upon the testimony of John. The juxtaposition of these two points is striking, and the best explanation is that they are alternative ways of facing up to the challenge provided by Jews of the Evangelist's own time who stressed the independence of John against Jesus in an attempt to embarrass the Christian Church. Against the present malicious interest by Jews in John should be set not only the transient attention paid to him by Jews during his lifetime, but also the way in which John himself had borne witness to Jesus when questioned by Pharisees in his own day. This would have constituted a powerful thrust against a Jewish party whose knowledge of what John actually said and did, to judge both from the general freedom exercised by the Fourth Evangelist in presenting his account of the Baptist's ministry and from the absence of any evidence of an alliance between Johannites and Jews, must have been essentially superficial. As for any Jews who were somehow better informed, and thus able to dispute the

accuracy of this and other of the references made by the Fourth Evangelist to particular points in John's ministry, they should consider that whatever they allege about John and about his relationship to Jesus, the real proof of Jesus' status is the witness, not of John, but of the Father.

The conclusion of this investigation must be therefore that neither the character of the references in the Fourth Gospel to the Baptist nor the history of the movement which he brought into being is consistent with the claim that the Fourth Evangelist was concerned to present a polemic against those whose sole allegiance was to the man believed by Christians to be the forerunner of Jesus. It was the attempt made by Jews to undermine the status of Jesus by reference to the ministry of John that led the Fourth Evangelist to place strict limits on the importance of the wilderness prophet. As for the positive way in which John is depicted in the Fourth Gospel as the ideal witness to Jesus, this presupposes not a long-standing conflict between Johannites and Christians, but rather a firm acceptance by the great majority of those formerly pledged to John that their proper place was in the Christian Church.

APPENDIX

THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN AND GNOSTICISM

It has been claimed that the reference to John the Baptist in John 1. 8 - "He was not the light ($\tau\omicron\ \phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma$), but came to bear witness to the light" - was designed by the Fourth Evangelist in order not only to emphasize the superiority of the Logos but also to oppose the veneration of John as "the light" by his followers. This is a view primarily associated with Bultmann, to whom we owe the claim that the Prologue had its origins in a John the Baptist sect as a gnostic cultic hymn celebrating John as the pre-existent incarnate Logos. Bultmann argues that the author of the Fourth Gospel was once a member of the "Täufersekt", and that after his conversion to Christianity he applied this gnostic hymn to Jesus. By the addition of vv. 6-8 and v. 15 to the hymn, the Evangelist succeeded both in emphasizing the role of John as a witness to Jesus and in rejecting the belief in John as the Light and as the pre-existent Logos. This claim of Bultmann is intimately bound up with his general argument that the background of Johannine theology is oriental gnosticism. According to Bultmann, the figure of the gnostic heavenly redeemer coming into the world to offer salvation is transferred from John the Baptist and attached

by the Evangelist to the historic Jesus in order to interpret his person and mission.¹

In a critique of Bultmann's views, Fuller concentrates his attention on the claim that the so-called gnostic redeemer myth is attached to the real historical figure of Jesus. Fuller's verdict is that the evidence for the existence of such a gnostic redeemer myth in pre-Christian times is inconclusive.² There is no pre-Christian documentary evidence for the existence of this myth; and Bultmann's attempt to establish the pre-Christian origins of the myth by style-criticism of the Johannine discourses does not succeed in outweighing the distinct possibility that the alleged traces of a gnostic redeemer myth in the Fourth Gospel are best explained by the claim that the myth is a deviation originating from within Christianity itself.³ This criticism tells strongly against Bultmann's complementary hypothesis that the gnostic redeemer myth was originally applied in the Logos hymn to the Baptist by his followers. It is significant that the attempt to connect the Logos hymn or song with a gnostic Johannite sect has found few supporters. In fact, Bultmann's views at this point have been strongly criticized by one of his former students in favour of the judgement that the Evangelist used as the basis for his Prologue an already existing hymn of Christian origin.⁴ There are good grounds also for resisting Bultmann's contention that the term "the prophet" (which he claims was used by the Johannite sect of its founder) must be understood against a gnostic background.⁵

The Qumran discoveries, and other evidence considered previously, strongly suggest that the term "the prophet", as used to describe John the Baptist, should be understood as an eschatological figure in a distinctly Jewish expectation.⁶

However, the seemingly pointed way in which it is denied in John 1. 8 that the Baptist is τὸ φῶς, has persuaded many that some of his followers must have honoured him as "the light". Recent studies rule out the possibility of finding the clue to the import of this denial in the Mandaean texts,⁷ and this helps give a certain credibility to the view which seems a connection between an interpretation of John 1. 8 as a piece of anti-Johannite polemic and the latter half of the Benedictus, with its reference to the coming of the ἀνατολή ἐξ ὕψους in order "to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1. 78-79). It is probable that this passage reflects still the beliefs of a Johannite sect, and that the metaphor ἀνατολή ἐξ ὕψους may have originally applied to Yahweh, whose forerunner John was.⁸ This interpretation differs from that advocated by Vielhauer who, reading in Luke 1. 78 the aorist ἐπεσκέψατο rather than the future ἐπισκέψεται, believes that the Johannite sect revered John as ἀνατολή ἐξ ὕψους. Vielhauer then connects his interpretation with the statement in John 1. 8 that the Baptist "was not the light". He sees in this denial a clear polemical thrust against the belief in John as the rising light, traceable in Luke 1. 78.⁹ But even if Vielhauer's premises are granted, that τὸ φῶς should

be understood as a Messianic ascription and that the aorist *ἐπεσκέψατο* should be read instead of *ἐπισκέψεται*, his interesting hypothesis falls short of conviction. The alleged parallel between a description of John as *ἀνατολή ἐξ ὕψους* and a description of him as *τὸ φῶς* is imperfect, and does not justify the attempt to explain one expression in terms of the other.

It is also doubtful if either Luke 1. 77-79 or John 1. 8 on their own offer any support for the hypothesis that the Johannite movement expressed its veneration for John in gnostic terms. The conceptions behind Luke 1. 77-79 are Jewish, not gnostic. There is nothing in the language of Luke 1. 77 to justify Fuller's deduction that the Johannite sect must have "revered John the Baptist as the bringer of a gnostic type of revelation ... which it defined in the gnostic terms of light and life".¹¹ It is true that the phrase *γνώσις σωτηρίας* is not found in the pre-New Testament writings and that the Hebrew equivalent is absent from the Qumran scrolls, but D. R. Jones emphasizes that the ideas of the knowledge of God and of salvation for his people are common in the Old Testament. Jones also points out that the use of abstract nouns became more common in the New Testament period, and he concludes that the phrase *γνώσις σωτηρίας* can thus be readily understood as a summary of the Old Testament hope.¹²

The denial in John 1. 8 that the Baptist was "the light", together with the positive echoes of this idea in John 5. 35, do not by themselves constitute strong evidence that he was venerated in some gnostic quarters as *τὸ φῶς*. A respect for John as "the

light", or "the lamp", would not be out of place in the context of Jewish expectations, and the possibility that John was regarded as "the light" can thus not properly serve as a basis for attributing gnostic beliefs to any Johannite group in the mind of the Fourth Evangelist as he wrote his gospel. Further, the absence of any other support for the claim that John the Baptist was thought of as "the light" strengthens the argument that the denial of this title to him in John 1. 8 was dictated simply by the immediate context and by a desire to emphasize the uniqueness of Jesus.¹³

There is one remaining avenue of approach which might lead to the conclusion that any Johannites known to the Fourth Evangelist held views of a gnostic character. It will be seen that this approach is marked by a tortuous combination of possibilities, although it does have the merit of taking for its starting point a valid interpretation of the Johannine reference to a ministry exercised by John at "Aenon near Salim" (John 3. 23). A tradition dating from the fourth century A.D. places Aenon some eight miles south of Scythopolis, on the west bank of the Jordan, and within the boundaries of Samaria. This identification must be considered suspect in that it makes inane the Johannine note that "there was much water there" (John 3. 23). A better proposal comes from W. F. Albright, who takes Salim to refer to the Samaritan town of the same name lying about three miles to the east of Shechem. Several miles to the north-east of Salim there lies the modern village of 'Ainun, and it is this place which

Albright confidently believes to be the Aenon referred to in John 3. 23.¹⁴ The evidence is impressive; and since the trend of recent Johannine scholarship has been away from the view that "the geographical data of the fourth gospel .. are hardly worthy of consideration",¹⁵ the claim that John worked for a time in Samaria must be taken seriously.

It is no longer possible to dismiss the assertion that John had a ministry in Samaria on the grounds that as a loyal Jew he would not have operated there.¹⁶ Even if the words, "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (John 4. 9), are meant to indicate a general principle,¹⁷ this would have referred primarily to the lack of contact and sympathy between orthodox Judaism and orthodox Samaritanism. Scobie assembles evidence to suggest that on the sectarian level there were many similarities in doctrine, practice and general outlook, and he argues that the possibility of contact at this level between Jews and Samaritans cannot be ruled out.¹⁸ It must also be recognized that as the eschatological Prophet John the Baptist would have made a certain appeal to those Samaritans looking forward to the coming of the Taheb, a figure who, on the basis of Deut. 18. 15, was conceived of as "the prophet like unto Moses". Although it seems likely that John's role as the eschatological Prophet was primarily thought of in terms of the returning Elijah,¹⁹ it is possible that John himself conceived of his role as the eschatological Prophet in general terms and that he left to his followers the work of defining this role more exactly.²⁰

If so, any Samaritan listeners would have been able to interpret his ministry in terms of the Moses-like prophet.²¹ Another relevant consideration is that one of John's warnings to his Jewish listeners had universal implications.

Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. (Matt. 3. 9; Luke 3. 8)

Against this background it is not difficult to believe that John could have journeyed to Samaria with his call for repentance, a call which his Samaritan listeners would have been able to associate with the work of the expected Taheb.²²

Some support for the claim that John did exercise a Samaritan ministry has been found in a rather perplexing conversation between Jesus and his disciples, reported in John 4. 31-38. This conversation has clearly some reference to the preceding account of Jesus' encounter with a woman of Samaria (4. 7-27) and his consequent enthusiastic reception from the men of Shechem (4. 30). It is this encouraging response which leads Jesus to tell his disciples that in this instance sowing and reaping take place together (4. 36). Jesus then continues,

For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour. (4. 37-38)

According to Scobie, a new element is introduced into the conver-

sation at this point, and he argues that Jesus is here referring to the previous labours in Samaria by John the Baptist and his disciples.²³ Scobie believes that confirmation of this conjecture is provided by the fact that the report of this conversation between Jesus and his disciples "follows almost immediately after the account of the overlapping ministries when John baptized at Aenon near Salim (John 3. 23)".²⁴ This interpretation of John 4. 37-38 suggested by Scobie is not convincing. The mention of John's activity at Aenon near Salim does not associate his disciples with his work there, and it is doubtful if the followers which John is reported to have won in the area explain satisfactorily the reference to the "others" mentioned in 4. 38. Furthermore, if there is a real connection between the reference to the Baptist's activity at Aenon (3. 23) and the conversation in question of Jesus with his disciples (4. 35f.), it is difficult to understand why this has not been made explicit by the Fourth Evangelist, for it would have complemented admirably the picture in his opening chapter of John's disciples going over to Jesus and of the old order giving way to, and being intimately related with, the new. But as the Gospel now stands the two episodes are not even placed side by side. These considerations make it dangerous to accept that the speech of Jesus to his disciples in John 4. 35-38 offers any support for the claim that John exercised a ministry in Samaria.

However, the claim itself should probably be accepted on the basis of the reference in John 3. 23 to the Baptist's activity at

Aenon near Salim. There is perhaps some significance too in the persistent tradition that John was buried at Samaria. This tradition is first recorded in the fourth century by Eusebius and Theodoret, but it may be based on earlier tradition, or owe something to a recollection of John's ministry in the area. A. Parrot surmises that the disciples of John would not have buried their master's body near Machaerus and that for safety reasons they would have chosen to "go further afield to Samaria, thus avoiding Herod's jurisdiction".²⁵

If one accepts the premise that John enjoyed a successful ministry in Samaria and that his followers there might have been joined by the more intimate circle of John's disciples after his death, the interesting question arises whether or not the outlook of the Johannites in this area was decisively affected by the Samaritan environment. It is Stauffer's confident belief that "ihr Täuferglaube musste demnach von vornherein eine ganz andere Form annehmen als die Täufertheologie ihrer jüdischen Nachbarn in Judäa oder Galiläa"²⁶; and since both Simon Magus and the gnostic heresy known as Simonianism were associated with Samaria, the suggestion that any Johannites ensconced in that region may have adopted gnostic views cannot be ignored.²⁷

Our earliest source of information about Simon Magus is given in Luke's account of Philip's missionary activity in Samaria (Acts 8. 5-24). Of particular interest is the high esteem which Simon is reported to have enjoyed in this area. His many acts of magic

(8. 11) were one factor in his popularity; another was his claim to be "somebody great" (8. 9). Luke explains that prior to his encounter with Philip the whole country was of the opinion that Simon was "that power of God which is called Great" (*ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ καλουμένη Μεγάλη*) (8. 10). If it could be said that this account indicates that Simon was a fully-fledged gnostic, and if it could be said that there were followers of John domiciled in Samaria, one possibility would be that amongst the large section of the population of Samaria paying keen attention to what Simon was saying were a number of Johannites who were ready to accept gnostic views. But the important factor here is that the description of Simon as "that power of God which is called Great" does not necessarily indicate an acceptance of him by the Samaritans as "the manifestation on earth of the great Power, i.e. the Deity".²⁸

In fact, it is quite possible to understand this popular description with reference to ideas belonging to the realm of magic and not with reference to gnostic views.²⁹ Further, references by Justin and Irenaeus to a gnostic sect of Simonians which flourished in Samaria during the second century A.D. cannot confidently be cited as evidence that the Simon mentioned in Acts 8. 9-24 could at that time have been the possessor of gnostic views similar to those described by these two writers. Despite the common Samaritan background, it is not definite that the head of the Simonian gnostic heresy is to be identified with the Simon of Acts 8. Significantly, Justin does not make this identification, although he himself was a native

of Samaria and knew that Simon, the founder of Simonianism, came from Gitta in Samaria. Equally significant are the indications in the second-century descriptions of Simonianism that certain aspects of Simonian thought were based on the New Testament writings, for this suggests that the probable creation of the Simonian gnostic system of belief should be placed near the beginning of the second Christian century. These considerations make it difficult to accept that the case of Simon Magus offers support for the claim that any Johannites surviving in Samaria after John's death would not only have retained their basic commitment to John but also have quite quickly presented their views afresh within a gnostic framework.

There is, however, one other factor which at first sight does appear to implicate the Johannite movement with gnostic heresy. This is the intimation of the Pseudo-Clementine literature that John was the originator of Simonianism and Dositheanism. In the Homilies John is linked directly with Simon, and indirectly with Dositheus.

There was one John, a hemerobaptist, who was also, according to the method of combination, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus; and as the Lord had twelve apostles, bearing the number of the twelve months of the sun, so also he (John) had thirty chief men, fulfilling the monthly reckoning of the moon ... Of these thirty, the first and most esteemed

by John was Simon; and the reason of his not being chief after the death of John was as follows: He being absent in Egypt for the practice of magic, and John being killed, Dositheus desiring the leadership, falsely gave out that Simon was dead, and succeeded to the seat. (2. 23, 24)³¹

Loisy's verdict that in historical strictness neither Simon nor Dositheus was a successor of John reflects the general view of the accuracy of this Clementine reference.³² But a recognition of the doubtful historicity of the reference still leaves the problem why Simon and Dositheus should have been described as successors of John: hence the suggestion that John's name would not have been linked with these two arch-gnostics, however inaccurately, unless there was an affinity in outlook, or formal alliance, between the movements which they had brought into being. More so than any other evidence, this passage in the Homilies makes credible the suggestion of a connection between any followers of John ensconced in Samaria after his death and the clear witness of Justin to a fully-developed gnostic system well-established in that area during the second century. John's supporters in Samaria, it may be surmised, became syncretistic and amalgamated with Simonian gnosticism; consequently, the connection between the two movements was reported to have originated in direct contact between John and Simon.³³

But the temptation to use the association of John with Simon in the Homilies as support for the existence of a Johannite gnostic movement in first or second century Samaria must be resisted. It

is significant that the direct references to "the disciples of John" in the Recognitions do not attribute gnostic doctrines and speculations to them, but place their views within the framework of Jewish expectations.³⁴ Further, the Recognitions does not directly link John with Simon and Dositheus, and does not couple its references to the heretical "disciples of John" with outright opposition to John personally. This is in contrast to the Homilies which, by the application of the theory of pairs to John and Jesus, betrays a hatred of John himself.³⁵ The best explanation of this is that the writer of the Homilies was so concerned to combat those who set up John as greater than Jesus that he was prepared to attack the traditionally honoured forerunner of Jesus. The alleged connection of John with Simon and Dositheus, and the suggestion that he was a hemerobaptist, are completely understandable as part of this violent polemic. "The link with Simon and Dositheus was in fact one of the biggest insults that could be directed against John."³⁶ Schnackenburg's considered verdict is that this particular testimony of the Homilies is "tendenziös" and that the novelist has invented this idea of John the Baptist as the spiritual father of the Samaritan gnostics.³⁷ This judgement is confirmed by the lack of any indication in the Pseudo-Clementine literature, or elsewhere, that John held an honoured place in either the Dosithean or Simonian systems.

This excursus has revealed a lack of reliable evidence in support of the claim that some of John's followers developed views of a gnostic character. The implication of John 3. 23, that the

Baptist enjoyed a successful ministry in a country which later became a stronghold of gnostic heresy, is interesting, but it cannot be complemented by accurate information as to the spiritual fate of any Johannites domiciled in Samaria after the death of their master. It is possible that some of John's followers there, and perhaps also elsewhere, did adopt gnostic views, but in the absence of any concrete indications to the contrary the probability must be that their original views would have been quickly lost and their change of outlook complete. If the Fourth Evangelist was troubled by the popularity of malicious views of John's status, there are no real grounds for supposing that these were related to the wider gnostic threat.

NOTES

Chapter One

1. W. Baldensperger, *Der Prolog des vierten Evangeliums*.
2. The adjective "Johannite" may conveniently be given to things and people pertaining to John the Baptist, and the adjective "Johannine" reserved for what pertains to John the Evangelist.
3. R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*.
4. M. Goguel, *Au Seuil De L'Évangile: Jean-Baptiste* (henceforth *Jean-Baptiste*); C. H. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*; C. H. H. Scobie, *John the Baptist*.
5. O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (henceforth *Christology*), p. 28.
6. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel; Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (henceforth *Interpretation, and Historical Tradition*).
7. W. L. Knox, *Sources of the Synoptic Gospels*, Vol. 2, p. 43.
8. J. L. Teicher, 'Has a Johannine sect ever existed?' *JJS*, 4(1953), pp. 141-153.
9. J. A. T. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', in *Twelve New Testament Studies*, p. 49 note 49.

Chapter Two

1. For a valuable discussion on circular argument and historical reasoning see D. M. Smith Jr., *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 14-15.
2. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 131.
3. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 131-132.
4. Ketubot 96a. R. Joshua ben Levi (c. A.D. 250). Cited by Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 67.
5. K. H. Rengstorf, '*μαθητής*', in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 4, ed. G. W. Bromiley, p. 456.
6. T. W. Manson, *The Servant Messiah*, p. 46.
7. Manson, *The Servant Messiah*, p. 46.
8. Cf. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, p. 164.
9. On this see G. H. Darton, *St. John the Baptist and the Kingdom of Heaven (henceforth John the Baptist)*, p. 50.
10. Cullmann, 'The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity', in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. K. Stendahl, p. 23.
11. Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, p. 45.
12. C. R. Bowen, 'Prolegomena to a New Study of John the Baptist' (henceforth 'Prolegomena'), in *Studies in Early Christianity*, ed. S. J. Case, pp. 144-145.
13. Bowen, 'Prolegomena', p. 145.
14. Bowen, 'Prolegomena', p. 146.
15. J. Thomas, *Le Mouvement Baptiste en Palestine et Syrie (henceforth Le Mouvement Baptiste)*, pp. 110-111.
16. E. Stauffer, *Jerusalem und Rom im Zeitalter Jesu Christi (henceforth Jerusalem und Rom)*, p. 100.

17. W. R. Farmer, 'John the Baptist', in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 2, pp. 956-957.
18. P. Benoit, 'L'Enfance de Jean-Baptiste selon Luc 1' (henceforth 'Jean-Baptiste'), *NTS*, 3(1956), pp. 169-194.
19. Benoit, 'Jean-Baptiste', pp. 169f.
20. Benoit, 'Jean-Baptiste', p. 180.
21. Benoit, 'Jean-Baptiste', pp. 182f.
22. See N. Turner, 'The Relation of Luke 1 and 11 to Hebraic Sources and to the Rest of Luke-Acts', *NTS*, 2(1955), pp. 100-109.
23. Benoit, 'Jean-Baptiste', p. 171 note 4.
24. P. Winter, 'Some Observations on the Language in the Birth and Infancy Stories of the Third Gospel' (henceforth 'Infancy Stories'), *NTS*, 1(1954), p. 120.
25. Winter, 'Infancy Stories', pp. 120-121.
26. Winter, 'Infancy Stories', pp. 114-115.
27. Although V. Taylor asserts that Luke's own stylistic features are more strongly marked in the annunciation to Mary (l. 26-38), in the visit of Mary to Elizabeth (l. 39-45, 56), and again in the narratives of Luke 2, than they are in the Baptist stories (l. 15-23, 57-86), it is significant that he offers no evidence and cites no authority in support of this claim. ('St. Luke's Gospel', in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, p. 185)
28. J. R. Wilkinson, *A Johannine Document in the First Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel*, p. 9. Benoit mentions in a foot-note to his article that he was unable to consult this work. ('Jean-Baptiste', p. 169 note 1)
29. P. Vielhauer, 'Das Benedictus des Zacharias', *ZThK*, 49(1952), pp. 256f.
30. Benoit, 'Jean-Baptiste', p. 194.
31. Bowen, 'John the Baptist in the New Testament' (henceforth 'John the Baptist'), *AJT*, 16(1912), p. 95.

32. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 17.
33. E. W. Parsons, 'The Significance of John the Baptist for the Beginnings of Christianity' (henceforth 'John the Baptist'), in Environmental Factors in Christian History, ed. J. T. McNeill, M. Spinka and H. R. Willoughby, p. 8.
34. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 19.
35. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 19.
36. There is little to be said for the claim that the phrase, *ΜΕΓΛΣ ΕΝΩΚΙΟΝ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ* (1. 15), is a designation of divinity, and reflects an ascription given to John by his followers who regarded him as Messiah. This particular phrase is best taken to mean no more than that John is "a man of God". On this see H. H. Oliver, 'The Lucan Birth Stories and the Purpose of Luke-Acts', NTS, 10(1964), p. 224.
37. F. W. Young, 'Jesus the Prophet. A re-examination' (henceforth 'Jesus the Prophet') JBL, 68(1949), p. 292.
38. Young, 'Jesus the Prophet', pp. 286f.
39. On this see R. H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Christology, p. 46.
40. W. A. Meeks, The Prophet-King. Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology (henceforth The Prophet-King), pp. 168-169.
41. Cf. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 119.
42. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 119.
43. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', pp. 29-31.
44. Cf. K. Chamblin, 'Gospel and Judgement in the preaching of John the Baptist', The Tyndale House Bulletin, 13(1963), p. 11.
45. Cf. The Jerusalem Bible, pp. 1546-1547 note b.
46. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', pp. 34f.
47. Dialogue with Trypho, 8. 4; 49. 1.

48. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 125.
49. **נביא. עד בוא נביא ומשיחי אהרון וישראל** is anarthrous, but in the Qumran writings the article is often omitted with definitive substantives, and almost all translators insert the article here. See Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, p. 168 note 4.
50. K. G. Kuhn, 'The Two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel', in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, p. 63.
51. M. Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, p. 145.
52. W. H. Brownlee, 'The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline', in *Bulletin of American Schools of Oriental Research*, Supp. Studies 10-12, pp. 34-35.
53. Translation taken from Manson, *The Servant Messiah*, p. 31.
54. D. E. Nineham, *Saint Mark*, p. 46.
55. Cf. Cullmann, *Christology*, p. 44.
56. Both passages as cited by Young, 'Jesus the Prophet', pp. 295-296.
57. Strack-Billerbeck, Vol. 2, p. 480. Cited by Young, 'Jesus the Prophet', p. 296.
58. S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, p. 322.
59. H. Riesenfeld, *Jesus als Prophet*, pp. 135ff. Cited by Cullmann, *Christology*, p. 23 note 1.
60. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 294; Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, p. 71.
61. Cf. Bowen, "Here we have a very clear picture of the messianic expectation as it exists, e.g. in Malachi: the expectation of an anointed prophet who appears to prepare the way for Jahweh, who is himself to establish his kingdom. In other words, John is announced as the prophetic Messiah." ('John the Baptist', p. 98)
62. Vielhauer, 'Das Benedictus des Zacharias', pp. 265-266; G. H. C. Macgregor, 'John the Baptist and the Origins of Christianity',

- ET, 46(1934-35), p. 359; J. Steinmann, Saint John the Baptist and the Desert Tradition (henceforth John the Baptist), p. 57.
63. P. Winter, 'Infancy Stories', p. 113.
64. Benoit, 'Jean-Baptiste', p. 182. On this see R. McL. Wilson, 'Some Recent Studies in the Lucan Infancy Narratives', in *Studia Evangelica*, ed. K. Aland, p. 240.
65. Cf. Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, p. 106.
66. Brownlee, 'John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls' (henceforth 'John the Baptist'), in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, p. 45.
67. Cullmann, *Christology*, p. 29.
68. Strack-Billerbeck Vol. 4, pp. 789-792. Cited by Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 37 note 21.
69. So Vielhauer, 'Das Benedictus des Zacharias', p. 266.
70. So Bowen, 'John the Baptist', p. 104.
71. Winter, 'Two Notes on Lk. 1-2', *Studia Theologica*, 7(1953), pp. 160-161.
72. Parsons, 'John the Baptist', p. 12.
73. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 55.
74. R. A. Aytoun, 'The Ten Lucan Hymns of the Nativity in their Original Language', *JTS*, 18(1917), p. 284.
75. Bowen, 'John the Baptist', pp. 99-102.
76. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 52 note 53.
77. Bowen, 'John the Baptist', p. 100.
78. Cf. Parsons, 'John the Baptist', p. 9.
79. Parsons, 'John the Baptist', p. 1.
80. Cf. Farmer, 'John the Baptist', p. 80. It is often claimed that the Magnificat (Luke 1. 46-55) should properly be ascribed to Elizabeth and regarded as having been originally a hymn of a

Johannite sect. Granted the premise of a Johannite group cherishing traditions about their master, this claim is impressive in that there is not only some slight textual evidence for reading "Elizabeth" and not "Mary" is l. 46a but also certain indications both in the psalm and the context in which it is set that make it reasonable to assume that originally Elizabeth was the speaker. However, these considerations do not warrant the claim that the Magnificat can be cited as evidence for the existence of an independent Johannite movement, and it should be noted too that W. Wink argues strongly against the points usually made in support of the suggestion that the Magnificat was originally ascribed to Elizabeth. (John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition, pp. 62-65) Wink also claims that there is no real evidence of a 'Baptist Nativity' behind Luke 1 which attributed Messianic titles to John (pp. 56ff.), but the present writer is not persuaded that Wink's thesis is conclusive at this point.

81. "This account shows that the preaching of the Baptist had spread to the Egyptian 'diaspora', and it thus gives us a clear indication of the influence of the Baptist on the Jewish world as a whole (Cf. Mt. 3. 5 with Luke 3. 15; John 1. 19f.)." (Rengstorf, 'μαθητής', p. 456 note 271)
82. This suggestion might be strengthened if the omission here, by *ϱη* and *β* of the article before *κυρίου* is the authentic reading. We would then have an identical parallel with Is. 40. 3. However, the fact that *β* elsewhere tends to omit the article before *κύριος*, and the lack of consistency in both the Septuagint and the New Testament about the omission of the article before *κύριος* when referring to God, make it unwise to build anything upon this variant.
83. Cf. S. V. McCasland, 'The Way', JBL, 67(1948), pp. 222-230.
84. Cf. E. Haenchen, Die Apostelgeschichte, p. 485 note 7.
85. E. Käsemann, 'The Disciples of John in Ephesus' (henceforth 'Disciples of John'), in Essays on New Testament Themes, p. 143.
86. See Käsemann, 'Disciples of John', p. 144; Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, p. 247 note 1.
87. Käsemann, 'Disciples of John', p. 144.

88. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 189 note 3.
89. Cf. G. R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p. 110.
90. Cf. B. T. D. Smith, 'Apollon and the Twelve Disciples at Ephesus', JTS, 16(1915), p. 242.
91. It would, however, be wrong to cite the later inter-Christian rivalry at Corinth between the followers of Paul and those of Apollon in support of this judgement.
92. Teicher, 'Has a Johannine sect ever existed?', p. 143.
93. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 59.
94. For the argument supporting the authenticity of John's prophecy at this point see pp. 78-82.
95. Cf. Käsemann, 'Disciples of John', p. 138.
96. Cf. the Western text, *ἀλλ' οὐδ' εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον λαμβάνουσιν τινες ἠκούσαμεν*. "We have never heard that anyone has received the Holy Spirit."
97. Cf. Chamblin, 'Gospel and Judgement in the preaching of John the Baptist', p. 9.
98. R. P. C. Hanson, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 190.
99. Haenchen, Die Apostelgeschichte, p. 488.
100. F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles: the Greek text with Introduction and Commentary, p. 354.
101. Cf. Darton, "Their baptism had been effective as making them in some sense a company or fellowship; they were still dedicated men who were trying to live a new life and looked back to the new start that had been given them." (John the Baptist, pp. 40-41)
102. Teicher, 'Has a Johannine sect ever existed?', p. 147.
103. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of the Acts: the English text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes, p. 386 note 11. See also pp. 88ff.

104. Thomas, *Le Mouvement Baptiste*, p. 100.
105. Thomas, *Le Mouvement Baptiste*, p. 100.
106. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 188.
107. Cf. C. S. C. Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, p. 291.
108. E. Jacquier, *Les Actes des Apôtres*, p. 565. Cited by Thomas, *Le Mouvement Baptiste*, p. 100.
109. Kasemann, 'The Disciples of John', p. 148. Haenchen, referring to this conversation of Paul with the twelve disciples, writes, "Dass es nicht so verlaufen sein kann, wie es in der 'verdichtenden' Darstellung des Lukas lautet, darüber ist man sich heute einig". (*Die Apostelgeschichte*, p. 491)
110. Käsemann, 'The Disciples of John', p. 148.
111. Käsemann, 'The Disciples of John', p. 145.
112. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, p. 492.

Chapter Three

1. See I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, Vol. 1, pp. 30f.; C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 26-28; R. Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist*, pp. 246f.; H. G. Marsh, *The Origin and Significance of the New Testament Baptism (henceforth New Testament Baptism)*, pp. 50-51, 55, 62-64, 73-74; Scobie, *John the Baptist*, pp. 18-19, 110-111, 179-184.
2. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 19.
3. Translation by H. St. John Thackeray, in *Loeb Classical Library*.
4. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, p. 4.
5. Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist*, p. 248.
6. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, p. 161.
7. Stauffer, *Jerusalem und Rom*, p. 100.
8. Rengstorf, *μαβθηῆς*, p. 456.
9. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, pp. 131-132; Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, p. 119; Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, p. 16 note 1; Marsh, *New Testament Baptism*, pp. 44, 64.
10. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 132.
11. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, pp. 187-202.
12. H. J. Schonfield, *The Lost 'Book of the Nativity of John'*, p. ix.
13. In *ET*, 41(1929-30), p. 252.
14. Cited by Schonfield, *The Lost 'Book of the Nativity of John'*, pp. 13-14.
15. Cf. Cullmann, *'The Protevangelium of James'*, in *New Testament Apocrypha*, Vol. 1, pp. 372f.
16. Cullmann, *'The Protevangelium of James'*, p. 373.

17. Cullmann, 'The Protevangelium of James', p. 373.
18. Cf. Bowen, "This Johannine source is clearly a Baptist product, written in the interest of devotion to John, and borrowed by the Christian writer". ('John the Baptist', pp. 102-103)
19. Teicher, 'Has a Johannine sect ever existed?', p. 145.
20. E. J. Goodspeed and R. M. Grant, A History of Early Christian Literature, p. 83.
21. Cf. M. R. P. McGuire, 'Clementine Literature', in Encyclopaedia Britannica, pp. 797-799; G. Strecker, 'The Kerygmata Petrou', in New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 2, pp. 110-111; J. Irmscher, 'The Pseudo-Clementines', in New Testament Apocrypha, Vol. 2, pp. 533-534.
22. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 50 note 49.
23. Bowen notes that a similar statement is ascribed to the fourth century Ephrem Syrus. "The disciples of John also boast of John and declare him to be greater than Christ." ('John the Baptist', p. 105) But this reference is a solitary one in Ephrem's work, making it difficult to assess as anything more than an echo of the traditions found in the Pseudo-Clementine literature. See Thomas, Le Mouvement Baptiste, pp. 115-118.
24. Both passages as cited by Scobie, John the Baptist, pp. 191-192.
25. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 50 note 49.
26. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 298 note 1.
27. Cf. M. Simon's review of Dodd's book in JTS, 18(1967), p. 191.
28. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 50 note 49.
29. Goguel, Jean-Baptiste, p. 107.
30. R. Schnackenburg, on the other hand, although admitting that the context in which these Johannite claims are set is fictitious and perhaps without a grain of truth, insists that the description of these disciples is so vivid as to suggest the writer's concern with a contemporary Johannite movement directly related to the first century heretics. "Die Charakterisierung der Johannesjünger aber ist so klar und

überzeugend, dass man an ihrer Existenz und Konkurrenz zur christlichen Gemeinde nicht zweifeln kann." ('Das vierte Evangelium und die Johannesjünger', Historisches Jahrbuch, 77(1958), p. 25)

31. As cited by Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 192.
32. See Appendix, pp. 182-184.
33. Cf. Thomas, Le Mouvement Baptiste, p. 136. See also Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 193.
34. Cullmann, Le Problème Littéraire et Historique du Roman Pseudo-Clementin; 'ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος', in The Early Church, pp. 177-182; Christology, pp. 23-42; 'The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity', pp. 23-27.
35. Cullmann, Le Problème Littéraire et Historique du Roman Pseudo-Clementin, p. 241.
36. Cullmann, Christology, p. 41; Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 195. The anti-Pauline polemic is probably the major interest of the writer, Peter and Paul forming the last pair in the series.
37. Thomas, Le Mouvement Baptiste, pp. 117-120.
38. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 50.
39. See Scobie, John the Baptist, pp. 23f.
40. Dodd, Interpretation, p. 123.
41. Cf. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 30.
42. Thomas, Le Mouvement Baptiste, p. 259.
43. Cf. Thomas, Le Mouvement Baptiste, p. 259.
44. On this see Schnackenburg, 'Das vierte Evangelium und die Johannesjünger' (henceforth 'Die Johannesjünger'), pp. 28-30.
45. M. Lidzbarski, Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer, p. 89. Cited by Schnackenburg, 'Die Johannesjünger', p. 28 note 29.
46. It is significant that on this subject the author of the most important recent work on the Mandaean concludes, "Johannes

der Täufer und seine Jüngerschaft haben nach dem Befund der uns zugänglichen Quellen keine Beziehung zu den Mandäern gehabt". (K. Rudolf, Die Mandäer, Vol. 1, p. 79. Cited by Meeks, The Prophet-King, p. 13 note 6)

47. Cf. F. C. Burkitt, 'The Mandaeans', JTS, 29(1928), pp. 229-230.

48. Cited by Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 26.

49. Cf. Schnackenburg, "Aber was beweist dies alles? Doch nur, dass den Mandäern gewisse Traditionen und Argumente zugekommen sind, die vielleicht tatsächlich aus Kreisen von Johannesjüngern herrühren und von den Mandäern in ihrer verwirrten Weise verarbeitet wurden." (Die Johannesjünger, p. 31)

Chapter Four

1. Vielhauer, 'Das Benedictus des Zacharias', p. 269.
2. Cullmann, *Christology*, p. 25.
3. Parsons, 'John the Baptist', p. 9.
4. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 12.
5. See Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, pp. 15-21; Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study*, pp. 73-74; Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 17.
6. See E. Lohmeyer, 'Zur Evangelischen Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer', *JBL*, 51(1932), pp. 311-317; K. Grobel, 'He That Cometh After Me', *JBL*, 60(1941), pp. 397-401; Cullmann, 'ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος', pp. 180-181; Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, pp. 271-275.
7. See Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s.v. ὀπίσω .
8. Cf. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, p. 55; Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 30; Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 64.
9. A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 371-374.
10. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', pp. 28-52.
11. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', pp. 36-37.
12. See also pp. 20-23, 78f.
13. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, p. 41. Cited by Scobie, p. 77.
14. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 67.
15. Cited by Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 76.
16. Cf. Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, p. 39.
17. See pp. 74f.
18. Cited by Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 69.

19. Cf. F. V. Filson, A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, p. 316.
20. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 79.
21. A. H. M'Neile, The Gospel according to St. Matthew, pp. 34-35, 151.
22. On this see A. Loisy, The Gospel of Jesus, p. 65. W. R. Farmer is one of the few modern critics prepared to accept that the passage as it stands might refer to "the Lord (God) himself". ('John the Baptist, p. 956) Favourable, but passing comments on this view are made also by Käsemann ('The Disciples of John', p. 142), and by G. O. Williams ('Baptism in Luke's Gospel', JTS, 45(1944), p. 34)
23. S. J. Case, 'The Rise of Christian Messianism', in Studies in Early Christianity, p. 315.
24. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 54. Cf. also F. C. Grant, The Gospel of the Kingdom, p. 41.
25. Brownlee, 'John the Baptist', p. 41.
26. Cf. Stauffer who, in answer to the question of the identity of this Coming One, writes, "Bestimmt nicht Gott selbst. Denn Gott, der Herr, kommt nicht in Sandalen." (Jerusalem und Rom, p. 91)
27. Kraeling, John the Baptist, pp. 54-55.
28. Granted that the reference to the Coming One wearing sandals is metaphorical, it may still be objected that the metaphor would have been inappropriate if applied to God. However, since the point of the metaphor was probably to emphasize the comparative inferiority of John, rather than to indicate the character of the Coming One, this objection may be resisted.
29. D. Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 266-267.
30. Cf. J. R. Hookey, "John the Baptist spoke of the Mightier One in terms of a greater baptism. John was to baptize with water, but the coming one will baptize with Spirit and fire ... The Mightier One, then, is mightier in that he will bring the judgment which John the Baptist merely proclaimed." (John the Baptist in the Context of Contemporary Religious Movements Within Judaism, p. 179)

31. P. G. Bretscher, "'Whose Sandals"? (Matt. 3. 11)', JBL, 86(1967), pp. 81-87.
32. Bretscher, "'Whose Sandals"? (Matt. 3. 11)', pp. 83f.
33. Bretscher, "'Whose Sandals"? (Matt. 3. 11)', p. 84.
34. Parsons, 'John the Baptist', p. 10. Farmer notes the common assumption that these words were early Christian polemic designed to show the superiority of Jesus over John. ('John the Baptist', p. 956)
35. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 44.
36. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 44.
37. Cited by Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 41.
38. IQH 3. 27-32. T. H. Gaster, The Scriptures of the Dead Sea Sect, pp. 142-143. The whole question whether or not John was ever connected with the men of Qumran remains an open one. The present thesis therefore avoids building too much on a supposed connection between Qumran and the Baptist. Where, as in this instance, the Qumran Scrolls are cited, the intention is only to attach a similar degree of importance to these references as would normally be given to any other contemporary, or near contemporary source of information. But the greater the probability that John did at one stage have some contact with the Qumran sect, the greater the emphasis which can be laid upon the attempt to explain his message with reference to Qumran parallels. For a convenient discussion on this question of the Baptist's relationship to Qumran see Scobie, John the Baptist, pp. 32-59.
39. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 69.
40. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 69.
41. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 69 note 1.
42. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus, p. 41.
43. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus, p. 41. On this see Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 70 note 1.
44. For this view see Barrett, The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition, p. 126.

45. These are the MSS 63, 64, and Tertullian (de Bapt. 10), Augustine (de Cons. Ev. 2. 26), and Clement of Alexandria (Elog. 25).
46. Cf. G. S. Duncan, Jesus, Son of Man, pp. 80-81; R. E. Brown, 'John the Baptist in the Gospel of John' (henceforth 'John the Baptist'), in New Testament Essays, p. 136.
47. Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, Vol. 1, p. 43. Cited by Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 72.
48. Cited by Brown, 'John the Baptist', p. 135.
49. Cf. E. Best, 'Spirit-Baptism', NT, 4(1960), p. 237.
50. Brown, 'John the Baptist', p. 136.
51. Cf. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 113.
52. Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, p. 232.
53. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 62.
54. Chamblin, 'John the Baptist and the Kingdom of God', The Tyndale House Bulletin, 15(1964), p. 12.
55. Cullmann, Christology, p. 43.
56. Stauffer, New Testament Theology, p. 23.
57. Stauffer, New Testament Theology, p. 23.
58. G. Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 45.
59. Cited by Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 45.
60. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 34.
61. Scobie, John the Baptist, pp. 188-189.
62. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 189.

Chapter Five

1. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 296.
2. Cf. Barrett, Jesus and the Gospel Tradition, p. 5.
3. Kraeling, John the Baptist, pp. 130-131.
4. Kraeling, John the Baptist, pp. 129f.
5. Marsh, New Testament Baptism, p. 98.
6. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 129.
7. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 294 note 1.
8. M. Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel, p. 33.
9. A. Plummer, The Gospel according to St. Luke, p. 202; M'Neile, The Gospel according to St. Matthew, pp. 151-152.
10. See pp. 74ff.
11. Quoted in Jerome, Contra Pelagium, III, 2. Cited by Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 148.
12. Luke 7. 19, in the majority of versions reads **ἄλλον** and not **ἕτερον**. Plummer claims that this is a corruption and that the true reading is **ἕτερον**, as attested in **8BLRE**. (The Gospel according to St. Luke, p. 202) His judgement is not shared by modern textual critics who generally prefer the reading **ἄλλον**; and H. J. Cadbury's intimation that Luke has a preference for **ἕτερος** instead of **ἄλλος** might be thought to confirm that **ἄλλον** is the best reading here. (Style and Literary Method of Luke, p. 194) However, certainty is impossible on an issue such as this, and Cadbury himself concludes that the original reading of Q at this point must be judged very uncertain. Another consideration is M'Neile's reminder that the same Aramaic word underlies both **ἕτερον** and **ἄλλον**. (The Gospel according to St. Matthew, p. 151) There is some doubt also if a clear distinction can be drawn between the usage of these two words in Hellenistic Greek. They are certainly used inter-changeably in 2 Cor. 11. 4, and probably also in Gal. 1. 6-7. See further E. D. E. Burton, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, pp. 420f.

13. See pp. 74f.
14. See p. 74.
15. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 79.
16. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 79 note 1.
17. The baptism of Jesus by John, and John's communication with Jesus from prison, suggest that there may once have been some degree of intimacy between the two men. This explains the possible note of astonishment in the Baptist's inquiry whether or not Jesus was the Coming One. The element of surprise would not have been so much because the Coming One was conceived of in human terms - although this was not John's view he could hardly have been ignorant of the fact that many did expect the Coming One to be a man-- but because the Coming One might be a man well known to him and who had received baptism at his hands. It is probable that this factor would have made it especially difficult for John to accept that his own expectations needed re-examination in the light of Jesus' ministry.
18. Plummer, The Gospel according to St. Luke, p. 202. Cf. also Filson, A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, p. 136.
19. G. B. Caird, Saint Luke, p. 112.
20. Dibelius, The Sermon on the Mount, p. 83.
21. Cf. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 152.
22. Farmer, 'John the Baptist', p. 958.
23. On this interpretation *βλῆται* is taken as a middle. See R. Otto, The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, pp. 108-112.
24. According to this view, *βλῆται* is interpreted not as a middle but as a passive.
25. Kraeling, John the Baptist, pp. 156-157.
26. See Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 285-286.

27. Kraeling, John the Baptist, p. 138.
28. Chamblin accepts that Matt. 11. 11b refers to the future Kingdom, but he does not believe that John is said to be excluded from it. For Chamblin, the contrast of the whole verse "is really drawn, not between John and 'the least' in the Kingdom, but between 'the Kingdom of men' and 'the Kingdom of God'. If all belong to the former, only some belong to the latter. And the meanest (*μικρότερος*) citizen of the latter Kingdom is greater than the greatest of the former - not because of superior merit (merit he may lack completely), but simply because he is a citizen of the Kingdom of God." ('John the Baptist and the Kingdom of God', pp. 13f.) But it is difficult to accept that the reference to John the Baptist is as incidental as Chamblin imagines, and it must be said that he offers no real evidence to support his assertion that John does not really figure in the contrast so evidently intended in this verse.
29. Cf. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 157.
30. S. E. Johnson, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 7, p. 382. Cited by Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 157. An alternative interpretation is to understand this verse as stressing a difference between John and Jesus. According to Loisy, the second half of the reference should be understood in a strictly comparative sense: "'he that is smaller than John' - in the order of time, junior by age and manifestation, that is to say, Jesus - 'is, in the Kingdom of heaven, greater than he'." (The Birth of the Christian Religion, p. 65 note 11) A similar interpretation is proposed by Cullmann. ('ὁ οὐκ ἴσως μου ἐρχόμενος', p. 180) This interpretation is certainly possible, but it is easier to think that Jesus would have drawn a contrast between the Baptist and his own disciples rather than between himself and John. On either view the Baptist is not thought to be aware of the present manifestation of the Kingdom.
31. Parsons, 'John the Baptist', p. 163.
32. Heb. 6. 5. Cf. B. W. Bacon, 'New and Old in Jesus' Relation to John', JBL, 48(1929), p. 70.
33. Cf. J. Denny, 'Jesus' Estimate of John the Baptist', Expositor, 7(1909), p. 70.
34. Cf. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 39.

35. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 148.
36. T. W. Manson, 'John the Baptist', BJRL, 36(1953-54), p. 401.
37. Manson, 'John the Baptist', p. 401.
38. Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 50.
39. Farmer, 'John the Baptist', p. 957.
40. So Loisy, The Origins of the New Testament, p. 128.
41. Cf. Nineham, Saint Mark, p. 60.
42. Cf. Caird, Saint Luke, p. 113.
43. See pp. 20-23.

Chapter Six

1. Baldensperger, Der Prolog des vierten Evangeliums.
2. E. F. Scott, The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology (henceforth The Fourth Gospel), p. 78.
3. Baldensperger, Der Prolog des vierten Evangeliums, pp. 4-9.
4. For a detailed criticism of Baldensperger's arguments at this point, and of the other extreme aspects of his thesis, see C. W. Bishell, 'Baldensperger's Theory of the Origin of the Fourth Gospel', JBL, 20(1901), pp. 38-49.
5. Baldensperger argues that John 1. 8 would not have been written except to contest a contrary assertion. This touches on the important question whether or not the Johannite sect to which the Fourth Evangelist was allegedly opposed held views of a gnostic character. For a discussion of this issue see Appendix, pp. 172-185.

The idea that in vv. 6-8 there is a desire, if not to discredit John, then at least to limit his importance over against Jesus, has not been accepted by all scholars. One especially interesting attempt to deny that in these verses there is an attack on a Baptist group comes from H. Sahlin. ('Zwei Abschnitte aus Joh 1 rekonstruiert', ZNW, 51(1960), pp. 64f.) Finding it difficult to accept that the Fourth Evangelist would have gone out of his way in the Prologue to attack a Baptist sect, and arguing also that the respectful reference to John in v. 7 is inconsistent with a polemical thrust in v. 8 against those who held excessive views of his status, he suggests that vv. 6, 7 and 9 originally referred to the Logos. He reconstructs the original version as follows:

(6) Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ Θεοῦ . (7) οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ (9) ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

Sahlin's claim is that this paragraph was misunderstood, and that the echo of the language of Mark 1. 4 - ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης - led to the addition of the words ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης in a mistaken attempt to make the meaning of the passage clear. The final stage in the evolution of the text to its present state, argues Sahlin, was the addition of v. 8, not to limit John's importance as such, but to distinguish him (v. 7) from the Logos (v. 9).

This rather complicated explanation of the present state of vv. 6-9 does not carry conviction. Before such speculations about the history of the text are accepted it is necessary to establish that the verses as they stand prove difficult to interpret. This Sahlin fails to do. Without rejecting as untenable the claim that the Fourth Evangelist was concerned to combat those who held excessive ideas about John's importance, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the reference in the Prologue to John's role was dictated by a strong desire to check a malicious interpretation of his mission. The greater the heat of the polemic, the more likely that the Baptist's significance would have been definitely indicated at an early point in the writer's work. Further, and contrary to Sahlin's judgement, the positive appraisal of John's role in v. 7 is not inconsistent with a polemical intention in v. 8. In order to oppose the influence of exaggerated views of John's status it would not have been either desirable or proper to discredit John himself, especially if there was also an aim to persuade the holders of these views to accept an interpretation of John's mission which did justice to his role as precursor of Jesus. Verse 7, with its reference to John being the honoured witness to the light, is entirely credible against this background, and consequently there is no need to accept Sahlin's analysis in order to explain the reference to John in vv. 6-8.

6. Schnackenburg, 'Die Johannesjünger', p. 33.
7. Cullmann, '*ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος*', pp. 178f.
8. Cullmann, '*ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος*', p. 181.
9. Cullmann, '*ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος*', p. 181.
10. E. C. Colwell and E. L. Titus, *The Gospel of the Spirit. A Study in the Fourth Gospel*, p. 130.
11. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 79.
12. E. L. Titus, *The Message of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 70.
13. See pp. 23ff.
14. Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, p. 78.
15. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 150.

16. Cf. G. H. C. Macgregor and A. C. Purdy, *Jew and Greek: Tutors unto Christ*, p. 115.
17. Cf. Bacon, *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate*, p. 290.
18. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, p. 76 note 4.
19. Cf. Colwell and Titus, *The Gospel of the Spirit*, p. 131.
20. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 149.
21. Baldensperger, *Der Prolog des vierten Evangeliums*, p. 67.
22. Cf. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 83-84.
23. Parsons, 'John the Baptist', p. 159.
24. Cf. Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer*, pp. 109-111.
25. Colwell and Titus, *The Gospel of the Spirit*, p. 132.
26. Polemic against a Johannite sect might also explain satisfactorily 3. 31f. where there is perhaps a sharp contrast between Jesus as "he who comes from above" and John as "he who is of the earth". Such a bold contrast would clearly constitute a blow against those who held John in the highest esteem, and this note could be taken as an indication of the lengths to which the Fourth Evangelist was prepared to go in order to attack the Baptist sect. The difficulty with this interpretation is that John the Baptist may not be specifically in view in 3. 31. In fact, there is some doubt whether vv. 31-36 are properly placed in their present context. For a good discussion on these verses see Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 125-127.
27. Titus, *The Message of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 75.
28. Goguel, *The Life of Jesus*, pp. 274-275.
29. Cf. Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, p. 257 note 1.
30. See especially Brown, 'John the Baptist'; Brownlee, 'John the Baptist'; Dodd, *Historical Tradition*; Robinson, 'The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community', 'The New Look on the Fourth Gospel', in *Twelve New Testament Studies*; S. Smalley, 'New Light on the Fourth Gospel', *Tyndale Bulletin*, 17(1966),

pp. 35-62; L. Morris, 'The Fourth Gospel and History', in Contemporary Evangelical Thought. Jesus of Nazareth: Saviour and Lord, ed. C. F. H. Henry, pp. 123-131.

31. Fuller, The New Testament in Current Study, pp. 123-124.
32. But see the interesting, if somewhat inconclusive, argument by F. E. Williams, 'Fourth Gospel and Synoptic Tradition: Two Johannine Passages' (henceforth, 'Fourth Gospel and Synoptic Tradition'), JBL, 86(1967), pp. 311-319.
33. See pp. 113-114.
34. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 274.
35. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 274.
36. See pp. 88ff.
37. See p. 67.
38. Dodd, Historical Tradition, pp. 272f.
39. Brown, 'John the Baptist', pp. 138-140.
40. Brown, 'John the Baptist', p. 140.
41. See pp. 20-22, 88ff.
42. Brownlee, 'John the Baptist', pp. 47-48.
43. See pp. 69-71.
44. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 272; Brownlee, 'John the Baptist', p. 47.
45. Brown, 'John the Baptist', p. 132.
46. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 263.
47. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 263.
48. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 263.
49. Williams, 'Fourth Gospel and Synoptic Tradition', p. 318 note 9.
50. Williams, 'Fourth Gospel and Synoptic Tradition', p. 318.

51. Dodd, Historical Tradition, pp. 256f.
52. Dodd, Historical Tradition, pp. 257-258.
53. Brownlee, 'John the Baptist', p. 46.
54. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 300.
55. See pp. 23ff.
56. Cf. Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John, p. 144.
57. Dodd, Historical Tradition, pp. 252-253.
58. But see Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John, pp. 144-145. Also Williams, 'Fourth Gospel and Synoptic Tradition', p. 310 note 10.
59. Robinson, 'The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community', p. 13.
60. Dodd, Historical Tradition, pp. 252-253.
61. Robinson, 'The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community', p. 13.
62. Translation by M. Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 382. Cited by Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 253.
63. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 253.
64. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 252.
65. See pp. 78ff.
66. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 66.
67. Cf. Brown, 'John the Baptist', pp. 135-136.
68. Dodd, Historical Tradition, pp. 266-268, 300-301.
69. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 268 note 1.
70. Williams, 'Fourth Gospel and Synoptic Tradition', p. 317 note 7.
71. The same utterance, but in a shortened form, is found also on John's lips in l. 36.
72. Dodd, Interpretation, pp. 230-237; Historical Tradition, p. 270.

73. See Barrett, 'The Lamb of God', NTS, 1(1955), pp. 210-218. Brown, 'John the Baptist', pp. 136f.
74. Some critics have seen a reference to the Suffering Servant in the Baptist's words as recorded in John 1. 29. But if the allusion was intended by the Evangelist there is no real evidence to support the claim that John himself would have predicted a suffering Messiah. The Qumran literature cannot properly be cited in this connection and one searches in vain there for a clear identification of Messiah and Suffering Servant. For the view that John did speak of a Suffering Messiah see Brownlee, 'John the Baptist', pp. 50-51. The case against is well put by Scobie, John the Baptist, pp. 150-151. See also Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John, p. 214.
75. F. W. Beare, in a review of Dodd, Historical Tradition, NTS, 10(1964), p. 521.
76. Smalley's phrase, 'New Light on the Fourth Gospel', p. 42.
77. Dodd, Historical Tradition, pp. 260-261.
78. See pp. 92-93.
79. For the evidence that "Son of God" was used as a Messianic title in John's day see Cullmann, Christology, pp. 273-275.
80. So, significantly, Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 298.
81. There may be some accurate information to be found in John 1. 35-37 and 10. 40-42. But the editorial line of the Evangelist is clearly evident, and it is significant that Dodd does not attempt to trace a reliable traditional source behind these verses. They may be regarded as the composition of the Fourth Evangelist, designed to accord with the dogmatic scheme put forward in 1. 6-8 and with the account given in 1. 19-34. See Dodd, Historical Tradition, pp. 276-278.
82. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 279.
83. See Appendix, pp. 176ff. Also Dodd, Historical Tradition, pp. 236f.
84. Dodd, Historical Tradition, p. 285.

85. M. Simon, in a review of Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, JTS, 18 (1967), p. 191.
86. Simon, review, pp. 191-192.
87. A. M. Hunter, *The Gospel according to John*, p. 42.
88. Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, p. 282.
89. Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, p. 301.
90. Robinson, 'The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community', pp. 25-26.
91. Brownlee, 'John the Baptist', p. 45.
92. Brownlee, 'John the Baptist', p. 45.
93. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', p. 50 note 49.
94. See pp. 20ff., 70ff.
95. See pp. 103ff.
96. A. Schlatter, *The Church in the New Testament Period*, p. 162.
97. Darton, *John the Baptist*, p. 40.
98. H. L. MacNeill, 'The Sitz in Leben of Luke 1. 5 - 2. 20', JBL, 65(1946), pp. 123-130.
99. Robinson, 'The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community', p. 26.
100. Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, p. 300.
101. See pp. 45ff.
102. See pp. 55-60. Also Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, p. 107.
103. Cf. Thomas, *Le Mouvement Baptiste*, p. 132.
104. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 202.
105. See Appendix, pp. 172-185.
106. See pp. 55-60.
107. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 82.

108. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 82.
109. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 82.
110. See also Bowen, 'John the Baptist', p. 105; A. D. Heffern, *Apology and Polemic in the New Testament*, p. 206.
111. Cf. Thomas, *Le Mouvement Baptiste*, p. 138.
112. MacGregor, *The Gospel of John*, p. XXX
113. D. Lamont, *Studies in the Johannine Writings*, p. 81.
114. This translation, and other citations, from H. Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum*.
115. See pp. 127-128.
116. See pp. 139-140.
117. For an interesting alternative interpretation see A. T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 12f.
118. The phrase is that of J. B. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 401. Cited by H. L. Jackson, *the Fourth Gospel and some recent German Criticism*, p. 125.

Conclusion

1. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 148.
2. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, p. 148.
3. See pp. 98f.
4. Chamblin, 'Gospel and Judgement in the preaching of John the Baptist', p. 11 note 13.
5. Cf. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, pp. 172f.
6. Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, p. 107.

Appendix

1. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*. A convenient summary of Bultmann's views is found in Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel*.
2. Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study*, pp. 135-137.
3. Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study*, p. 136.
4. Käsemann, 'Aufbau und Anliegen des johanneischen Prologs', in *Libertas Christiana: Friedrich Delekat zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. W. Matthias and E. Wolf, pp. 75-99.
5. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, pp. 61f.
6. See pp. 18ff.
7. See pp. 60ff.
8. See p. 29.
9. Vielhauer, 'Das Benedictus des Zacharias', pp. 268f.
10. Cf. Schnackenburg, 'Die Johannesjünger', pp. 34-35.
11. Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study*, p. 141.
12. D. R. Jones, 'The Background and Character of the Lukan Psalms', *JTS*, 19(1968), pp. 36-37.
13. Cf. Bishell, 'Baldensperger's Theory of the Origin of the Fourth Gospel', pp. 43-45. See also Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition*, p. 103 note 1.
14. W. F. Albright, 'Some Observations Favouring the Palestinian Origin of the Gospel of John', *HTR*, 17(1924), pp. 193-194; 'Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John', in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, pp. 157f.
15. C. C. McCown, 'Gospel Geography, Fact, Fiction and Truth', *JBL*, 60(1941), p. 18. For an alternative view see Robinson, 'The New Look on the Fourth Gospel', pp. 101-102.
16. So Bacon, 'New and Old in Jesus' Relation to John', p. 55.

17. For a convenient discussion on the meaning of this reference see Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, pp. 194-195.
18. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, pp. 168-173.
19. See pp. 18ff.
20. For the variance of views as to the precise identity of the eschatological Prophet see Cullmann, *Christology*, pp. 61f.
21. Cf. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 174.
22. Cf. M. Gaster, *Samaritan Eschatology*, pp. 251-252. Cited by Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 175.
23. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, pp. 175-176. Scobie acknowledges his debt to Robinson, 'The "Others" of John 4. 38', in *Twelve New Testament Studies*, pp. 61-66. See also Hunter, *The Gospel according to John*, pp. 51-52.
24. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, p. 176.
25. A. Parrot, *Samaria, the Capital of the Kingdom of Israel*, p. 124.
26. Stauffer, *Jerusalem und Rom*, p. 101.
27. This view is argued especially by Bacon, 'New and Old in Jesus' Relation to John', pp. 49f. However, his attempt to link John with such sects as the Masbothaeans, Sabbaeans, and Hemero-baptists, can be dismissed as being based on the faulty premise that John was the originator of the whole baptist movement which flourished on the fringe of Judaism during the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. In any event too little is known about these sects to claim that a connection between them and John is evidence that some of John's followers became gnostics.
28. The words are those of G. W. H. Lampe, 'Acts', in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 897.
29. See R. McL. Wilson, 'Simon, Dositheus and the Dead Sea Scrolls', *ZNW*, 9(1957), pp. 23f. See also R. P. Casey, 'Simon Magus', in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. 5, ed. K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury, pp. 151-163.

30. Cf. R. M. Grant, 'Simon Magus', HDB, p. 916.
31. As cited by Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 192.
32. Loisy, The Birth of the Christian Religion, p. 300.
33. Cf. Kraeling, John the Baptist, pp. 182-183.
34. Schnackenburg, 'Die Johannesjünger', p. 38.
35. See pp. 57-58.
36. Scobie, John the Baptist, p. 193.
37. Schnackenburg, 'Die Johannesjünger', p. 26.

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