

ESCHATOLOGY IN THE JOHANNINE COMMUNITY :  
A STUDY IN DIVERSITY

by

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to study the diversity of eschatological emphases detected in the writings of the Johannine community. To do so, one must first decide which writings of the New Testament may properly be called Johannine.

The thesis begins with a résumé of previous studies into the relationships of the five books traditionally attributed to an author called John - Gospel, Letters, Apocalypse. The crucial issue in most of these studies has been whether or not the same individual could have written these books. Recent study of the Gospel, however, has strongly suggested community involvement in its production. The question raised, therefore, is whether the five books may have emerged within the one community. The initial hypothesis, based on a respect for the tradition, is that all five books emerged within the one early Christian community.

This hypothesis is examined by a study of particular emphases of theological thought and expression. The community is considered in the first instance to be the community which produced the Gospel, so three theological emphases detected in the Gospel are examined in the other writings: (a) The Relation of the Father to the Son; (b) The Spirit of Truth; (c) The Command to Love. The conclusion is that while the Gospel and Letters almost certainly emerged in the one community, the Apocalypse, while having some contact with Johannine thought, cannot properly be considered a writing of the community.

The thesis finally examines the eschatological expectation of the writers of the Gospel and Letters, suggesting the different emphases were mainly due to different purposes in writing. The expectation of a future Parousia was never denied, but the evangelist is concerned to challenge men to faith in the present, while the letter-writer's aim is to encourage the true believers in the light of the impending end.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is entirely the work of my own research, and that where previous studies have been used they are, to the best of my knowledge, appropriately acknowledged.



TEXT

The English text referred to throughout this thesis is the Revised Standard Version (1952), except where otherwise stated. N.E.B. refers to the New English Bible (1970).

The Greek text cited is normally the United Bible Societies (3rd edit.; 1975). Nestle-Kilpatrick refers to the British and Foreign Bible Society (2nd edit.; 1958).

## ABBREVIATIONS

A.B.	Anchor Bible
A.G.J.U.	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
<u>A.T.R.</u>	<u>Anglican Theological Review</u>
B.E.T.L.	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
<u>B.J.R.L.</u>	<u>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</u>
B.N.T.C.	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<u>B.T.B.</u>	<u>Biblical Theology Bulletin</u>
<u>B.Z.</u>	<u>Biblische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>C.B.Q.</u>	<u>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</u>
E. Bib.	Études Bibliques
<u>Ev.Q.</u>	<u>Evangelical Quarterly</u>
<u>Exp.T.</u>	<u>Expository Times</u>
F.B.B.S.	Facet Books, Biblical Series
<u>Hey.J.</u>	<u>Heythrop Journal</u>
<u>Hib.J.</u>	<u>Hibbert Journal</u>
H.N.T.	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
H.T.C.N.T.	Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament
H.T.K.N.T.	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
I.C.C.	The International Critical Commentary
<u>Int.</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
<u>I.T.Q.</u>	<u>Irish Theological Quarterly</u>
<u>J.B.L.</u>	<u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u>
<u>J.P.T.</u>	<u>Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie</u>
<u>J.R.</u>	<u>Journal of Religion</u>
<u>J.T.S.</u>	<u>Journal of Theological Studies</u>
Meyer K	Meyer, Kritischexegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
M.N.T.C.	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
N.C.B.	New Century Bible

<u>Nov.T.</u>	<u>Novum Testamentum</u>
Nov. T. Sup.	Novum Testamentum Supplement
<u>N.T.S.</u>	<u>New Testament Studies</u>
Numen Sup.	Numen Supplement
<u>R.B.</u>	<u>Revue Biblique</u>
S.B.L.S.B.S.	Society of Biblical Literature, Dissertation Series
S.B.T.	Studies in Biblical Theology
<u>S.J.T.</u>	<u>Scottish Journal of Theology</u>
S.N.T.S.M.S.	Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series
T.B.C.	Torch Bible Commentaries
T.D.N.T.	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
<u>T.L.Z.</u>	<u>Theologische Literaturzeitung</u>
<u>Th.R. (T.Ru.)</u>	<u>Theologische Rundschau</u>
<u>T.S.</u>	<u>Theological Studies</u>
<u>V.C.</u>	<u>Vigiliae Christianae</u>
V.S.	Verbum Salutis
W.U.N.T.	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<u>Z.N.W.</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</u>
<u>Z.T.K.</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</u>

## CONTENTS

Page No.

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Declaration

Text

Abbreviations

Contents

INTRODUCTION

1

CHAPTER 1 : POINTERS TO THE JOHANNINE COMMUNITY

8

The Composition of the Gospel

14

The Apocalypse and the Gospel

35

The First Epistle and the Gospel

39

CHAPTER 2 : THEOLOGICAL EMPHASES OF THE COMMUNITY

47

1. The Relation of the Father to the Son

50

Passages studied: John 5:16-23

52

10:39,38;14:10,11

62

10:25-30

67

1 John 1:3

71

2:22-25 (cf. 2 Jn. 9)

72

4:13-16

74

5:11,12

75

Revelation 3:21

78

6:16,17

79

7:10

81

Appendix A: A Textual Comment on John 10:29

84

	<u>Page No.</u>
<u>CHAPTER 3 : FURTHER THEOLOGICAL EMPHASES</u>	86
2. <u>The Spirit of Truth</u>	86
Passages studied : <u>John 14:15-27</u>	87
<u>14:25-26</u>	95
<u>16:12-15</u>	96
<u>16: 7-11</u>	97
<u>1 John 4:1- 6</u>	100
<u>5:6-12</u>	102
<u>2:18-27</u>	104
<u>Revelation 19:10</u>	109
<u>5 : 6</u>	111
3. <u>The Command to Love</u>	112
Passages studied : <u>John 13:34,35</u>	113
<u>15: 9-14</u>	118
<u>1 John 2:3-11 (cf. 4:7-12)</u>	121
<u>4:19-5.5 (cf. 3:23)</u>	125
<u>Revelation 2:1-7</u>	128
<u>Conclusion as to the Writings of the Johannine community</u>	129
<u>CHAPTER 4 : THE ESCHATOLOGICAL THOUGHT OF THE JOHANNINE COMMUNITY</u>	135
Passages studied : <u>John 3:16-21</u>	136
<u>12:46-48</u>	142
<u>5:24-29</u>	147
<u>11:21-27</u>	155
<u>14:18-24</u>	160
<u>21:20-23</u>	166
<u>1 John 2:18 (cf. 4:3)</u>	170
<u>2:28-3:3 (cf. 4:17)</u>	173



Page No.

<u>CONCLUSION</u> .....	176
<u>APPENDIX B : THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE APOCALYPSE</u>	179
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u> .....	216

## INTRODUCTION

It may be useful as an introduction to the thesis to outline some of the questions in the mind of the author which led to the final topic under discussion. The thesis is sub-titled, "A study in diversity", and this issue of diversity is of particular interest to the writer. The interest has been aroused in reaction to much theological writing which seems to emphasise one aspect of a topic to the exclusion of all related considerations. The danger must always be present for the theologian that he is guided more by his philosophical presuppositions, and the need to be logical and consistent to them, than by the diverse nature of the biblical text. Such a generalisation would, of course, need a thesis in itself if one was adequately to expand and defend it, but all that can be attempted here is to show how the issue has been raised in the mind of the author. This was the stimulus which led to the choice of New Testament topic under discussion.

The question was raised by the writing of two recent, leading theologians - Rudolf Bultmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg. In particular it was their understanding of eschatology which brought the issue into sharp focus.

Bultmann's programme of demythologising is well known.<sup>1</sup> Writing of the future and present aspects of the Kingdom of God he first states - "The Kingdom of God is a power which, although it is entirely future, wholly determines the present. It determines the present because it now compels man to decision; ... - the Kingdom of God is genuinely future, because it is not a metaphysical entity or condition, but the future action of God, which can be in no sense something given in the present.

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1. See e.g. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology (London : S.C.M., 1960).

None the less this future determines man in his present, and exactly for that reason is true future - not merely something to come 'somewhere, sometime', but destined for man and constraining him to decision".<sup>2</sup>

While, then, the Kingdom of God is future power, it is clear that for Bultmann the emphasis lies on that power calling man to present decision before God - "If men are standing in the crisis of decision, and if precisely this crisis is the essential characteristic of their humanity, then every hour is the last hour, and we can understand that for Jesus the whole contemporary mythology is pressed into the service of this conception of human existence".<sup>3</sup>

While, then, the Kingdom of God is the future action of God, man's relation to the Kingdom is determined by his present decision, when challenged by the Word.

To turn to Pannenberg, he too considers the proclamation of the imminent Kingdom of God as central to Jesus' teaching - "Jesus' particular emphasis can be understood as a modification of the Jewish hope: God's Kingdom does not lie in the distant future but is imminent. Thus the present is not independent from that future".<sup>4</sup>

But what is the relation of the present to the future? Instead of man's present decision determining his future, Pannenberg argues - "Rather does the future have an imperative claim upon the present, alerting all men to the urgency and exclusiveness of seeking first the Kingdom of God. As this message is proclaimed and accepted, God's rule is present and we can even now glimpse his future glory. In this way we see

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2. Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, trans. L.P. Smith and E.H. Lantero (London : Fontana, 1958), 44. (His italics).

3. Ibid., 44-45.

4. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, ed. R.J. Neuhaus (Philadelphia : Westminster, 1969), 54.

the present as an effect of the future, in contrast to the conventional assumption that past and present are the cause of the future".<sup>5</sup>

It would be wrong to attempt to set these two theologians in sharp contrast, but each does clearly show a different emphasis in the relation of the present to the future in the Kingdom of God. For Bultmann, the Kingdom is existentially present for the individual in the moment of decision, when challenged by the Word. For Pannenberg, the Kingdom is fundamentally future, but it is a future which determines the present. Each offers a useful insight from his own philosophical standpoint, but one wonders if either does full justice to the biblical texts, or to the total theme. If one accepts Bultmann's emphasis, the eschatological challenge becomes entirely personal, with no cosmological, social, or community implications. If one accepts Pannenberg's emphasis, the community aspects of eschatology become more clear, but it is difficult to see how one retains real individual freedom. The New Testament student is left to consider the diversity of eschatological thought within the New Testament writings, even in individual works.

Already in this introduction the term, "diversity", has been frequently used. If it is to be really useful, however, one must consider what is meant by it. Diversity can only exist within a certain, defined framework. One might, for example, say that the letter 'b' is different from the number '9', but in no meaningful sense could they be said to be diverse, because the term only has meaning if the elements exist within a specified frame of reference. If this thesis is to be a "study in diversity", first the framework must be set in which different emphases can rightly be called diverse.

In this regard, another stimulus to the thesis was provided by Stephen S. Smalley's article, "Diversity and Development in John".<sup>6</sup> It is

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5. *Ibid.*

6. Stephen S. Smalley, "Diversity and Development in John", *N.T.S.*, 17 (1970-71), 276-292.

itself a response to Walter Bauer's influential work, Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum.<sup>7</sup> Smalley argues that, "The major doctrines of the Christian faith ... are presented by the Fourth Evangelist with unguarded diversity".<sup>8</sup> When he goes on to ask why such unguarded diversity should exist in the Gospel, his work becomes most stimulating.

Most scholars, Smalley argues, to explain the variety of theological ideas lying side by side in this Gospel, point to the use of sources and a process of redaction. He accepts some such process, but an examination of six passages illustrating christological diversity, against the widely-acknowledged source hypothesis of Fortna, and the less likely hypothesis of Morton, leads to the conclusion - "John's diversity does not follow any regular pattern, and cannot be attributed merely to successive stages of composition. Furthermore, antithetical theological statements in close proximity can coexist in John, without apparently needing to be balanced precisely".<sup>9</sup> In fact - "John can be undefensively diverse at any point in his Gospel, even within the same stratum of his material; and furthermore, traditional elements appear in the Gospel alongside those which result from development and redaction".<sup>10</sup>

The explanation, then, does not lie in the sources, so how are we to explain the seeming inconsistencies of this Gospel? Smalley argues that the answer lies in the evangelist's intention in writing. If his intention had been to answer some problem or heresy in the church, it would be most unlikely that he would have left such doctrinal diversity.

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7. Eng. trans., Walter Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, trans. Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins, ed. R.A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (London : S.C.M., 1972).

8. Smalley, N.T.S., 17 (1970-71), 285.

9. Ibid., 288.

10. Ibid., 289.



Smalley considers his intention was neither polemic nor apologetic, but simply Kerygmatic - "Writing mostly but not exclusively for the outsider, John (or the Fourth Evangelist or the final redactor) gathers together his materials from a variety of sources, his own and those parallel to synoptic sources, and uses them quite simply to proclaim the gospel; to help his readers (a definite group at the start, but without limits in the end) to see that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God (20:31)."<sup>11</sup>

Smalley's article raises important issues, but its brevity makes it impossible for him to present conclusive evidence. He himself accepts that a study of six passages is statistically a very small sample on which to base any firm conclusion. His work also depends on the accuracy of the initial source hypothesis. It is hoped in this thesis to study further this idea of theological diversity in the Gospel, but concentrating on only one element of thought, that is eschatology.

Smalley's study is limited to the Fourth Gospel, and he emphasises the Kerygmatic intention of the author. "The norm is tradition",<sup>12</sup> writes Smalley, but surely one can be true to tradition without placing divergent, even contradictory statements side by side. In the initial chapter it will be shown how recent studies on the Gospel have tended to focus less on the individual personality of the evangelist, and more on the community to which he belonged and addressed himself. This involvement of the community may prove the key to the diverse nature of the Gospel's thought. It may further prove possible to extend the study to include different literary genres - to be specific the Letters and Apocalypse - each produced at different times within the one community. The frame of reference, then, for the study in diversity will be the writings of the Johannine community, whatever they may prove to be.

This issue of defining the framework within which diversity may be

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11. Ibid., 290.

12. Ibid., 291.

said to exist is so central to the present thesis that an extended discussion is necessary on the question of which writings were in fact produced within the one community, which we designate Johannine. It must be emphasised that this initial part of the study should not in any way be considered a diversion, nor as merely preliminary. It is essential to the very nature of the thesis. No examination of diverse emphases of thought can take place until one has first shown a definite and limited group of writings within which the diversity may meaningfully be said to operate.

In the thesis we have chosen to refer to the Johannine "community" while recognising that many other terms have been used for such a group, or for a similar grouping. Barrett and Brown, for example, refer to a "school",<sup>13</sup> Cullmann a "circle",<sup>14</sup> Käsemann a "conventicle",<sup>15</sup> Meeks a "sect",<sup>16</sup> and no doubt other terms have been used. It must be recognised that each term implies a slightly different definition to the group involved. In this thesis we have chosen to use the term "community" for two reasons. Firstly, while it places a clear restriction on the grouping, it does not imply a very sharp or rigid limitation. In this sense it differs from the pupil-teacher relationship of a school, or the sharply defined circumference of a circle. A community may be somewhat diffuse at the edges, and we suspect that this may have been so in the case under review.

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13. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John (2nd edit.; London:SPCK, 1978), 62, 133; Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, 2 vols. (London : Chapman, 1971), C11. Note esp. R. Alan Culpepper, The Johannine School (S.B.L.D.S 26; Missoula : Scholars, 1975).

14. Oscar Cullmann, The Johannine Circle, trans. John Bowden (London: S.C.M., 1976).

15. Ernst Käsemann, The Testament of Jesus, trans. Gerhard Krodel (London : S.C.M., 1968), p. 39.

16. Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism", J.B.L., 91 (1972), 44-72, esp. 69-70.

Secondly, the term "community" implies a group of people open to new ideas and influences from outside, continually developing with new insights and challenges. This may not be said of a conventicle or sect, and again we suspect that this openness was characteristic of the Johannine group. Of course as the thesis progresses it may become apparent that a more restrictive term is appropriate. Initially, however, it seems wise to use this fairly open, deliberately slightly vague term, to distinguish the Johannine group. It must again be emphasised, however, that it is intended to define a very specific grouping within the early church. The thesis begins, therefore, with the hypothesis of the existence of a Johannine community.

## CHAPTER ONE

POINTERS TO THE JOHANNINE COMMUNITY

The primary aim of this thesis is to study the diversity of eschatological thought which existed in one early Christian community - the Johannine community.<sup>1</sup> Before beginning to consider eschatology, however, we must first defend the hypothesis that a community, which we refer to as Johannine, did exist in the early church. Secondly, we must decide what writings may be used as sources for the thought of that community. The first three chapters of the study will be devoted to a consideration of these problems. Only when we have in some way defined the Johannine community, can we proceed to discuss diversity within it.

At the same time it must be admitted that until the present century prolonged discussion would have been unnecessary. Until then, for most scholars, "Johannine" theology meant simply the theology of the apostle John. There are, of course, in the New Testament five books traditionally attributed to John, son of Zebedee, disciple of Jesus. To discover any aspect of "Johannine" thought, meant simply to study each book in turn and then draw the ideas together. If any apparent discrepancies or inconsistencies were detected, they would normally be explained by the historical situation of the author - that is John - at the time of writing. Until quite recently, then, "Johannine" theology was the apostle's theology, and the sources were obviously the five books which tradition attributed to John.

Today such assumptions are in no way justified. We shall shortly

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1. When we use the adjective, Johannine, in this thesis, the primary reference is to a community, not to an individual John. In discussing previous studies, however, it is often necessary to use "Johannine" in reference either to the apostle, or to the books traditionally attributed to him. Normally the meaning will be clear from the context, but in an attempt to clarify it to some extent we shall use Johannine, without quotation marks, to refer to the community, and "Johannine", with quotation marks, to refer to the apostle and his traditional writings.

look at decisive studies which have called into question the relations of all these writings. No longer is it possible to maintain, without prolonged and detailed discussion, that the books were all written by John, nor that they were all written by the same man, nor indeed that they have any close relation to one another. One cannot even assume that the individual books were the work of one author. It is this change of scholarly attitude towards the "Johannine" writings, especially in the present century, which we shall discuss in this first chapter. To set the discussion in perspective, however, we first raise two points which must be clarified.

The first is the question of apostolic authorship. The present study is an attempt to discern the thought of the Johannine community, not the thought of any individual. To carry out that aim it is not necessary to ask whether the apostle John wrote, either directly or indirectly, any of the books traditionally attributed to him. We need not even consider the related question, whether he was in some way the authority for the tradition which was preserved in the community. These are in themselves interesting issues, but they are not germane to the main purpose of the thesis. Having said that, however, we must also recognise that in the present chapter we are considering studies, some of which were written more than half a century ago. To see them in their proper historical perspective, we must at least be aware of the discussion which has taken place, since the middle of the last century on this question of the apostolic authorship of the "Johannine"



writings.<sup>2</sup>

The debate arose mainly under the influence of F.C. Baur and the Tübingen school. When, in particular, they looked at the Gospel and the Apocalypse, they questioned whether two such writings, so different in style and content, could possibly have been the work of a single author. For some, notably Baur, this meant that they must assert apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse, not of the Gospel.<sup>3</sup> Many conservative scholars of this period, however, considered John's Gospel, above all the other writings of the New Testament, to contain the historical basis of their faith. They argued, quite rightly, that the whole point of the tradition was that it was John, a disciple and eye-witness of the life of Jesus, who wrote these books, and who especially wrote the Gospel. In looking back at this debate today we may discern two separate questions which became, to a large extent, confused. The so-called "critical" scholars considered the writings on a literary level, and on grounds of style and content became convinced that John could not have been responsible for both the Gospel and the Apocalypse. More conservative scholars looked at the questions from the point of view of history. They considered that in order to maintain the historical reliability of the Gospel as a source for the life of Jesus, it was also necessary to maintain direct eye-witness authority. Today there are only a few who would wish to maintain that any

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2. The discussion may be traced in H.J. Holtzmann, Lehrbuch der Historisch-Kritischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament (3rd edit.; Freiburg i.B.: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1892), 458-461. Less detailed, but more readable, are Adolf Jülicher, An Introduction to the New Testament, trans. J.P. Ward (London: Smith, Elder, 1904), 279-282, and from a conservative standpoint, Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. M.W. Jacobus and C.S. Thayer, III (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), 431-433. For discussion in Britain at this period see J. Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament (3rd rev. edit.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, [1918], 501-503, or better Arthur S. Peake, The Revelation of John (London: Holborn, [1919], 54-63.
  3. In English see Ferdinand Christian Baur, The Church History of the First Three Centuries, trans. Allan Menzies, I (3rd edit.; London: Williams & Norgate, 1878), 153-154.

of the Gospels are historical documents in that sense, but if we are to appreciate "Johannine" scholarship, especially around the turn of the century, we must be aware of the very real tension which existed for many on this question of apostolic authorship.

The tension is perhaps best illustrated by a quotation from the period, from one of the most able of the conservative scholars. Lecturing in 1871 on, "Internal Evidence for the Authenticity and Genuineness of St. John's Gospel," J.B. Lightfoot concluded - "I have treated this as a purely critical question, carefully eschewing any appeal to Christian instincts. As a critical question I wish to take a verdict upon it. But as I could not have you think that I am blind to the theological issues directly or indirectly connected with it, I will close with this brief confession of faith. I believe from my heart that the truth which this gospel more especially enshrines - the truth that Jesus Christ is the very Word Incarnate, the manifestation of the Father to mankind - is the one lesson which, duly apprehended, will do more than all our feeble efforts to purify and elevate human life here by imparting to it hope and light and strength, the one study which alone can fitly prepare us for a joyful immortality hereafter".<sup>4</sup>

The tension, then, for many, between critical scholarship and the apparent demands of faith, is a backdrop against which subsequent Johannine studies should be viewed. We repeat, it is not a direct concern of this thesis to discuss the question of apostolic authorship,<sup>5</sup> nor even the more recent question of possible apostolic authority behind the tradition.<sup>6</sup> Our purpose is to discern, not the thought of any individual

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4. J.B. Lightfoot, Biblical Essays (London: Macmillan, 1893), 43-44.

5. For recent discussion see Werner Georg Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. H.C. Kee (Rev. edit.; London: S.C.M., 1975), 234-246, 442-445, 469-472.

6. See especially Rudolf Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John, trans. Kevin Smyth, I (London: Burns & Oates, 1968), 75-104; Brown, Gospel, LXXXVII-CII.

called John, but the thought of a community, which we designate as Johannine. The apostle's role in that community need only be incidentally discussed.

This leads to our second preliminary consideration. To consider the thought of the community, one must decide what writings may be used as sources for that thought. We will only come to a final decision on this issue at the end of the third chapter, and even then it may be tentative, but the point to be made at the outset does not concern the decision itself but the method of reaching that decision. We are convinced that, without careful and detailed examination, it is methodologically wrong to ignore any of the traditionally "Johannine" material. Again it must be emphasised that we are dealing with the thought of a community, and not of an individual called John.

It is interesting to note how many of the outstanding New Testament scholars of recent times discuss "Johannine" theology, while ignoring, without any real discussion, the Apocalypse. Bultmann, in his *Theology of the New Testament*, Part three, discusses: "The Theology of the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles". The Revelation is included in Part four - "The Development toward the Ancient Church".<sup>7</sup> Conzelmann considers that the Apocalypse is "hardly relevant for the investigation of 'Johannine' theology",<sup>8</sup> while Kümmel comments: "It is one of the most certain results of New Testament scholarship, however, that Revelation cannot come from the same author as the four other writings handed down under the name of John ... If Revelation

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7. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, II (London : S.C.M., 1955).

8. Hans Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament*, trans. John Bowden (London : S.C.M., 1969), 321.

must therefore be left completely out of consideration when we consider the Johannine theology ..."<sup>9</sup>

It is here that we see the crux of the issue. So long as "Johannine" theology is considered to be the theology of one man called John, we must agree. Once it has been shown that the two books cannot have been written by the same author, then one or other may be ignored. If it is conceded that Johannine theology is a "school" or "community" product, however, it may not be assumed that any of the writings can be ignored. It is quite conceivable that within one community several works may have been produced, each by a different author, who would use his own style and idiom, and reflect his own views and interests, while at the same time drawing on the peculiar thought of that one distinct community. It is this possibility which we wish to explore more fully in the present thesis, and to do so we must initially discuss all the "Johannine" material. The point has been made with particular regard to the Apocalypse, but it is equally true of smaller literary units. Only on textual grounds will we be justified in excluding from our discussion any of the traditionally "Johannine" material.

What, then, is the specific task of this chapter? It is to look back at some of the most important "Johannine" studies of the present century, and see how each in its own way points to the hypothesis that all the writings were produced within one early Christian community. First we look at recent studies on the composition of the Gospel, and see how the leading scholars in this field argue for some form of community involvement.<sup>10</sup> If a community was involved in the writing of that book, is it

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9. Werner Georg Kümmel, The Theology of the New Testament, trans. John E. Steely (London : S.C.M., 1974), 255.

10. Schnackenburg, Gospel; Brown, Gospel; Barnabas Lindars, Behind the Fourth Gospel (London : S.P.C.K., 1971); Cullmann, Circle.



not possible that the other "Johannine" writings may also have emerged from the same community? To explore this possibility we look back at decisive studies which have attempted to demonstrate the different authorship of the various books.<sup>11</sup> In each case a close affinity of the writings has been assumed, if not clearly argued. Previous studies, then, point us to the hypothesis that while these writings can no longer be accepted as the work of one man, they may have emerged from the one community. This suggestion we shall examine more closely in the subsequent chapters.<sup>12</sup>

### The Composition of the Gospel

There is arguably no area of New Testament study to which scholars have devoted more time in the present century than to the background and origin of John's Gospel. Even today, however, one may echo the words of J.A.T. Robinson - "On almost every question connected with this Gospel it is still possible for the most divergent views to command serious and scholarly assent".<sup>13</sup> It is important, then, if we are not to be distracted by issues not directly related to the present study, that we define as clearly as possible the particular issue which is relevant to it. Other related questions, no matter how important they may be in themselves, must

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11. Especially R.H. Charles, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Revelation of St. John (Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1920); C.H. Dodd, "The First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel", B.J.R.L., 21 (1937), 129-156; Ernst Haenchen, "Neuere Literatur zu den Johannesbriefen", T. Ru., N.F. 26 (1960-61), 1-43, 267-291.
  12. It is not a new suggestion, note especially D. Moody Smith, "Johannine Christianity : some reflections on its character and delineation", N.T.S., 21 (1974-75), 222-248, esp. 228-238.
  13. John A.T. Robinson, "The Destination and Purpose of St. John's Gospel", in Twelve New Testament Studies (S.B.T.334; London : S.C.M., 1962), 107-125, quot. 107.



be resolutely ignored.

Our purpose is to discuss the composition of the Gospel - how the work progressed from traditional, perhaps oral, sources, to the written Gospel which we read today. In this statement we have already made one basic assumption. We have assumed that the work was not the single, continuous effort of one man remembering past events, but that it evolved over a period of time. It is an assumption widely held today,<sup>14</sup> but for all that it must still be defended. We begin, therefore, by looking at some evidence in the Gospel which makes it necessary to assume an extended period of composition.

There is one fact above all others which seems to demand the hypothesis that the written Gospel evolved over a period of time.<sup>15</sup> It is the presence, throughout the Gospel, of apparant breaks in the sequence of thought. Indeed so often, and fully, have these been discussed in recent times, that scholars now employ a semi-technical term - "aporia" - for the phenomenon.<sup>16</sup> We need mention only a few important examples. Whether one decides that 20:30,31 is the ending of a source, or a

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14. Rudolf Schnackenburg, "On the origin of the Fourth Gospel", in Jesus and Man's Hope, I (Pittsburgh : Pittsburgh Theol. Seminary, 1970), 223-246, writes, 224, "the result has been - and this is almost universally accepted - that we are actually faced with a somewhat lengthy process of formation, with levels of composition leading up to a final redaction."

15. It is not the only fact, but the one which we consider most critical. For more complete summaries see, e.g., Schnackenburg, Gospel, 44-48; Robert Tomson Fortna, The Gospel of Signs (S.N.T.S.MS. 11; Cambridge : Cambridge Univ., 1970), 15-22.

16. It is not a term adopted in this study. According to Fortna, Gospel, 2, n.3, it was first used by Schwartz, but he himself adopts it because, "while not in common use in English, the word is useful in the present study as a general term for the various phenomena in question". These phenomena include "the many inconsistencies, disjunctures and hard connections, even contradictions - which the text shows". But is it really useful to summarise such "various phenomena" under the one term, or does it ignore their individual significance? Other scholars, e.g. Lindars, Behind, 14, limit the term to "faulty connections". Why then is it necessary to introduce the word at all?

previous edition, there can be no doubt that it is the ending of some literary unit. It was not originally followed by chapter twenty-one. The sense of 14:31 must demand a move to a different location, but there is no move until the beginning of chapter eighteen. Again, it is difficult to understand the numbering by which the healing of the official's son (4:46-54), was the second sign which Jesus did after he had come from Judea to Galilee (v.54).<sup>17</sup> These are only a few examples, but they will suffice because we are not concerned with the number of these difficulties, nor with the significance of individual passages. Even one such break in the sequence of thought demands explanation. Allowing for the fact that a writer of that period would not share our passion for logical consistency,<sup>18</sup> we still cannot accept this Gospel as the work of one man, at least not at one time.

Attempts to explain the breaks in the sequence of the Gospel may roughly be grouped under three main headings. The first is that of accidental displacement : the original order of the gospel somehow became disturbed, so to understand it properly the original order must first be restored. The second suggests multiple sources : the evangelist, for some of his material, depended on previously written sources which can still be detected. Thirdly, there are theories involving a process of editing, either by the original author or a later redactor. It is perhaps inevitable that with a problem of such complexity most scholars find it necessary to employ a combination of these - Bultmann, it is well known, combines all three.<sup>19</sup>

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17. For further examples see the summary of Brown, Gospel, XXIV-XXV.

18. A fact emphasised by Lindars, Behind, esp. chap. 3, also The Gospel of John (London : Oliphants, 1972), 46-54. See too Schnackenburg, Gospel, 44-45; Cullmann, Circle 4.

19. For a full, if not completely unbiased, summary of literary critical theories since 1796, see Howard M. Teeple, The Literary Origin of the Gospel of John (Evanston : Religion & Ethics Institute, 1974).

We must look now, however briefly, at the theory of composition implicit in Bultmann's Commentary.<sup>20</sup> It is not our intention to concentrate on his theory, but, as on so many other subjects, Bultmann's thought has had such commanding influence on subsequent study that it is necessary at least to be aware of it. In outline, Bultmann suggests that the evangelist used sources, some of which may have been in the form of short written passages or oral tradition, but most important were three major written works - the Offenbarungsreden, the Semeia-Source, and the Passion Source.<sup>21</sup> When the original work had been written, however, for reasons not explained by Bultmann its order became disarranged. It was then a subsequent redactor who rearranged the Gospel, giving it its present form, while at the same time adding some passages which betray his own ecclesiastical interest. On the basis of this theory Bultmann comments not on the Gospel as we know it, but as he believes it should be.

There is much in Bultmann's theory which one cannot accept, and which indeed has not been accepted in subsequent scholarship. Brown has wisely argued - "If one comments on the Gospel as it now stands, one is certain of commenting on an ancient Gospel as it really existed at the final moment of its publication. If one indulges in extensive rearrangement, one may be commenting on a hybrid that never existed before it emerged as the brainchild of the rearranger".<sup>22</sup> We cannot here begin a detailed critique of Bultmann's ideas, but at any rate it is important to grasp the incisive and valuable insights which he offers. No matter how

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20. Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, A Commentary, trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1971). The theory is best followed in Dwight Moody Smith, The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel (New Haven/London : Yale Univ., 1965).

21. The names used by Smith, Composition, IX.

22. Brown, Gospel, XXVII; see too Barrett, Gospel, 21-26.

one may assess the details, his argument contains three basic components which in any theory one would wish to maintain - sources, written and oral; the work of the evangelist; subsequent redaction. Each theory of composition will place different stress on each of these components, but we suggest that to account for all the Gospel material, any adequate theory must employ all three.

There is, however, another feature of the Gospel to which Bultmann did not pay sufficient attention. Few can read through the book without being impressed by an overall sense of unity - a subjective impression, not doubt, but none the less real. In another context Dodd has shown how subjective impressions of this kind may be the starting point for decisive critical studies.<sup>23</sup> Cullmann writes - "It is beyond question that a degree of unity can be followed right through the Gospel : unity of language, unity of style and indeed unity of theological purpose".<sup>24</sup> It is right to stress that the unity is not confined to one single aspect-vocabulary or style or purpose - but is present to some degree in all of these.<sup>25</sup> The problem for the critical scholar, however, is to find objective criteria by which to test subjective impression, and to do so many have turned to stylistic considerations.<sup>26</sup> If unity of style can be shown throughout the Gospel material, that is another fact to be assessed, together with the apparent breaks in sequence.

23. Dodd, B.J.R.L., 21 (1937), esp. 130-131.

24. Cullmann, Circle, 4.

25. For discussion on vocabulary and style see Barrett, Gospel, 5-8; on style, thought and structure see F.-M. Braun, Jean le Théologien (Paris : J. Gabalda, 1959), 3-25.

26. Notably Edward Schweizer, Ego Eimi... (Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939), 82-112; Philippe-H. Menoud, L'Évangile de Jean (2nd edit.; Neuchâtel/Paris : Delachaux & Niestlé, 1947), 14-21; Eugen Ruckstuhl, Die Literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums (Freiburg i.S. : Paulus, 1951), 180-219; Braun, Jean, 11-12, 401-403.



The most impressive work is that of Edward Schweizer, who, in discussing the "Ego eimi" sayings, examined the source question using stylistic criteria. First, he isolated thirty-three elements of style which he considered characteristic of the Gospel, and noted their occurrence not only in the Gospel, but also in the Johannine letters, the rest of the New Testament, and in the Synoptics.<sup>27</sup> His study then proceeded in two directions. His most original contribution was to look for significant groupings of these characteristics within the Gospel, which would indicate sources used by the evangelist. The results, however, merely showed the difference one would expect between narrative and discourse style. He also examined three source theories which were widely held in his day - those of Spitta, Wendt and Hirsch. He found that stylistic considerations gave no support to any of these theories. The characteristics of the Gospel style apparently permeate the whole work. One must be clear, however, exactly what this evidence shows, and the conclusions which Schweizer drew from it.<sup>28</sup> Too often since his study extreme claims have been made, which are neither justified by the facts, nor supported by Schweizer. Any source used in the Gospel would, in all probability, have been worked over by the evangelist with a consequent blurring of stylistic characteristics.<sup>29</sup> Schweizer recognised this, and so his conclusions were modest. At no point does he deny the possibility of written sources, he merely points out that the dominant unity in style makes it difficult to isolate and define such a source.

The second major work in this field, while drawing to a great extent

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27. Schweizer, Ego Eimi, 87-99.

28. Ibid., 108-109.

29. See Smith, Composition, 107-108.



on Schweizer's study, unfortunately did not learn from his careful conclusions. In response to Bultmann's critical theory Eugen Ruckstuhl attempted to show the literary unity of the Gospel. In method his study is almost identical to Schweizer's - increasing the number of characteristics to fifty, and listing them in order of importance. His conclusions, however, are deliberately in contrast.<sup>30</sup> Not only does he deny the validity of Bultmann's analysis, but he denies the very possibility of any source analysis of the Gospel. Such a conclusion, however, cannot be reached on grounds of style alone. The dominant unity in style may make it difficult to isolate and define a previously existing source but equally stylistic considerations cannot by themselves deny the possibility of source analysis.<sup>31</sup>

It will be necessary, then, in assessing any theory of the Gospel's composition, to be aware of the different factors involved. We have emphasised the two most important - apparent breaks in the sequence of thought, and a dominant unity in style - so that they may be kept clearly in view as we turn to more recent studies. We shall look at the work of four scholars, all widely acknowledged in the Johannine field, to ask if any significant agreement has yet emerged.<sup>32</sup> It is no doubt an

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30. Ruckstuhl, Einheit, 190-205, conclusions 218-219. Note reference to Schweizer, 218 n.3.

31. Note Kümmel's remarks, Introduction, 213; also the wise use Fortna makes of Ruckstuhl's criteria, Gospel, 203-218. He concludes: "Far from demolishing our reconstruction, the stylistic tests would seem in the main to have verified it", 214. Recently Ruckstuhl has amended his more extreme conclusions, see "Johannine Language and Style", in L'Évangile de Jean, ed. M. de Jonge (B.E.T.L. 44; Gembloux: Duculot, 1977), 125-147; esp. 128-129. He now writes - "... this identity of style suggests that all the Johannine narratives have passed through the medium of one personality who has somehow rethought and recast the traditional material at his disposal, though he did not imprint his stamp in identical fashion on all the narrative portions". 145.

32. See above, n. 10.

irrelevant observation, but perhaps of passing interest, to note the variety of backgrounds and traditions which these scholars represent. Schnackenburg and Brown are both Roman Catholics, Lindars is an Anglican, while Cullmann is Reformed. Two are Continentals, one an Englishman, and one American. We mention this fact, not in any way to perpetuate the ecclesiastical and national divisions which have for so long diminished the potential of both scholarship and the Church, rather to demonstrate that on this question, at least, the distinctions may be clearly seen to be outdated.

To return to the subject, the first Volume of Schnackenburg's massive Commentary, including the Introduction, was published in the Herder series in 1965. One can hardly fail to be impressed by the thorough and balanced way in which he discusses previous scholarship, and brings out the variety of evidence which must be explained on this complex issue, Schnackenburg accepts that "the Gospel is the aggregate result of a long process of literary formation, comprising 'strata' of diverse age and origin",<sup>33</sup> indeed he acknowledges the three main components which we noted from Bultmann's work - "existing tradition, work of the evangelist, subsequent redaction".<sup>34</sup> We are left in no doubt, however, that it is the evangelist who is the dominant and creative force in this process of formation. He writes - "It is certain that the evangelist gave his work its characteristic form and that it is completely penetrated by his theology."<sup>35</sup>

"The intermediate stage, the re-shaping of the matter by the evangelist, is central and all-important, and one can only ask what elements and materials he worked on, and investigate whether and how far his presentation which prevails on the whole, was subject to the work of redactors." 36

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33. Schnackenburg, Gospel, 59. The relevant section of the Commentary is chapter four, 59-74.

34. Ibid., 60.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., 64.

In dealing first with the traditional material, Schnackenburg suggests that it was mainly oral, although he accepts some written sources. Bultmann's Semeia-source "may be allowed some probability", but "a logia or discourse source must be rejected".<sup>37</sup> He suggests that the evangelist's special traditions were based on "independent and original oral narratives,"<sup>38</sup> although they may have been written down at an early stage. The evangelist may also have incorporated "liturgical or kerygmatic matter which was circulated and preserved in the communities".<sup>39</sup> The history of the traditional material, however, is not so very important. It was used by the evangelist "with sovereign freedom for his way of presenting the Gospel".<sup>40</sup> There are, it is recognized, some restraints on the evangelist. While he was "an independent theological thinker", he also "recognizes at the same time that he is bound by the tradition which he must repeat and transmit".<sup>41</sup> The emphasis, however, is on the evangelist's own creativity.

Turning to a later stage in the formation of the Gospel we find, as one would expect, that subsequent redaction has little part in Schnackenburg's scheme. He acknowledges that after the evangelist's death some redaction, by members of the same theological school, did take place. The redactors were responsible for chapter twenty-one, and for some inversion and displacement of the text (e.g. chapters 5 and 6; 7:15-24). They added a few brief glosses of their own (e.g. 4:2 or 4:1 f.; 4:44; 6:22 f.; 7:39f; 11:2), and included some additional material from the evangelist himself (3:13-21, 31-36; chapters 15-17). To Schnackenburg, however, "it seems

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37. Ibid., 67.

38. Ibid., 72.

39. Ibid., 73.

40. Ibid., 62.

41. Ibid., 59.

unnecessary to suppose major interventions or re-arrangements on the part of the redactors, it likewise seems superfluous to postulate several redactions one after the other".<sup>42</sup> The initiative remains firmly with the evangelist.

It is not our purpose to attempt a detailed critique of any of these studies, rather to use them as stimuli for our own understanding of the Gospel's composition. We shall merely indicate the main issues and interests which are raised by them, whether intentionally or by neglect. We have seen that Schnackenburg, while accepting a process of literary formation, places his emphasis firmly on the role of the evangelist. This is a useful corrective to Bultmann's over-emphasis on sources and redaction, but his concept of the evangelist's role must be questioned. Does he, perhaps, see the evangelist too much as the dominant, individual personality, and not enough as a member of the living community? Schnackenburg accepts that the community did have a role to play in the formation of the Gospel, but only a very minor role. It was the evangelist who, "as the distinctive theologian ... gave its doctrine its unified character".<sup>43</sup> But how was that doctrine formed, purely in the thinking of an individual, or in the life and traditions of a community? In particular, one must consider the part played by the community in forming and developing the special independent traditions to which Schnackenburg himself refers. To develop our thinking along these lines is not so much to disagree with Schnackenburg, as to widen the scope of interest. We too would place emphasis on the creativity of the evangelist, and then go on to ask how his creative thinking was stimulated within the community. It is a question which should be kept in mind as we turn to Brown's work, in the Anchor Bible Commentary.

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42. Ibid., 73.

43. Ibid.

Brown, who published the first volume in 1966, shows greater interest than Schnackenburg in the way in which the gospel tradition developed. While still maintaining a dominant and creative role for one leading figure, he also considers the involvement of others - "a close-knit school of thought and expression". He suggests that the material grew, and took its final form, in a long process of teaching and preaching. Brown writes -

"That this preaching and teaching was the work of more than one man is suggested by the existence of units of Johannine material, like ch. 21, that are different in style from the main body of material. There may have been many such units that did not survive. However, what has gone into the Gospel seems to stem in large part from one dominant source. Since the general traits of Johannine thought are so clear, even in the units that betray minor differences in style, we should probably think of a close-knit school of thought and expression". 44

If Schnackenburg taught us the importance of one creative thinker, Brown, while maintaining that insight, continues his thinking in two useful directions. First, he considers the role of preaching in forming and developing the tradition. Secondly, he draws our attention to the "school" associated with the preacher.

Brown's hypothetical five stages for the growth of the gospel tradition are now widely known so a brief summary may suffice. They are "minimal steps", he writes, "for we suspect that the full details of the Gospel's prehistory are far too complicated to reconstruct".<sup>45</sup> The first stage was a body of traditional material on the words and works of Jesus, similar to, but independent of, the Synoptic tradition. In Stage two, it was developed over a period of several decades to the form and style of the Johannine stories and discourses. The process began through oral preaching and teaching, although by the end of this stage written forms had already taken shape. These units of tradition are mainly the work of

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44. Brown, Gospel, xxxv; for his hypothesis see esp. xxxiv-xxxix.

45. Ibid., xxxiv.



one man, although some must be attributed to the school which had gathered round him. Brown writes -

"This stage was decisively formative for the material that ultimately went into the Gospel. Some of the stories of Jesus' miracles, probably those most used in preaching, were developed into superb dramas, ... The sayings of Jesus were woven into lengthy discourses of a solemn and poetic character, ... All the techniques of Johannine story telling, like misunderstanding and irony ..., were introduced or, at least, developed in the way we now know them. Various factors contributed to the welding of sign and interpretative discourse.. This was not necessarily an artificial joining, for even in Stage 1 a miracle had often carried with it words of explanation. But now the needs of preaching and perhaps, in some scenes (ch. 6), the needs of incipient liturgy demanded longer explanation and a more unified arrangement". 46

In Stage three, the "dominant or master preacher and theologian",<sup>47</sup> organized the material into the Gospel, although he did not include all the material previously developed in preaching. Later, Stage four, he re-edited the Gospel to meet new needs and problems. In Stage five, a member of the school, probably "a close friend or disciple of the evangelist",<sup>48</sup> redacted the gospel, inserting all available material from Stage two, shifting some scenes, and including some material not originally from the evangelist.

We have emphasised the second stage, not only because it was the most important for Brown, but also because it is the most suggestive for our study. If the tradition was formed in preaching, then inevitably the community was involved - preaching demands the interaction of the speaker and his hearers. We may develop Brown's hypothesis, therefore, by considering more fully not only the "school" who preached, but the community who heard. Preaching must develop, to some extent, in response to the needs and interests of the hearers. We shall consider this idea more fully in response to Lindar's views, but so far as Brown is concerned, it leads us

46. Ibid., xxxv.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., xxxvi.

to question his clear differentiation of five stages. If the preacher was constantly adapting his material to meet new needs and problems in the community, is it, for example, necessary - or even possible - to differentiate two editions from the evangelist? Perhaps a less rigid understanding of the growth of the Gospel is called for, but such reflection is more a comment on the complexities of the problem, than the usefulness of Brown's theory. He admits - "There remain many inadequacies and uncertainties in such a theory".<sup>49</sup> It is merely "a working hypothesis for the study of the Gospel".<sup>50</sup> and as such it has not been surpassed.

It is in Lindars' work that our questioning is brought to sharpest focus, especially in his stimulating little study published in 1971.<sup>51</sup> This examines, to an extent unprecedented even in the previous two scholars' work, the evangelist's creative role in writing the Gospel. Ultimately we cannot accept some of Lindars' thinking, but his book demands careful and sympathetic consideration.

Having stated the problem, Lindars first deals with the question of sources, criticising the theories of Fortna and Becker.<sup>52</sup> Fortna's case, he argues, rests on two main assumptions which are false. It assumes "that there could have existed a complete Gospel, containing quite a wide variety of material from a form-critical point of view, which nevertheless did not contain any direct teaching of Jesus, apart from conversation within narrative".<sup>53</sup> It secondly assumes "that John is likely to have incorporated virtually the whole source in his Gospel, so that it can be reconstructed simply by stripping off the non-Johannine elements."<sup>54</sup> As

49. Ibid., xxxix.

50. Ibid.

51. Lindars, Behind; also Gospel, esp. 46-54. Recently, "Traditions behind the Fourth Gospel", in L'Évangile de Jean, ed. M. de Jonge, 107-124.

52. Fortna, Gospel; Jürgen Becker, "Wunder und Christologie", N.T.S., 16 (1969-70), 130-148.

53. Lindars, Behind, 31.

54. Ibid., 32.

he claims, these critiques are enough "to shake confidence in the existence of the source as reconstructed".<sup>55</sup> We much prefer Lindars' stress on shorter units of tradition and individual items.

The issue which he wishes to discuss with Becker, is the relation of the evangelist's theology to that of the source. Lindars writes -

"It seems to me very strange that John should take over a source, fully approving of its rather special character as an appeal to wonder, and yet at the same time should make it the major purpose of his own work to subject the source to a radical criticism." 56

We shall argue that if the source was known and respected in the community that might well be exactly what a preacher would do, perhaps not "fully approving", but accepting it as a common starting-point for discussion. Lindars is convinced, however, that while the evangelist relied on source material, he rewrote it before incorporating it in the Gospel. He states -

"I can nearly always agree that, in any given pericope, John has reproduced quite a bit of the source verbatim. But he never does so completely. He always adapts the source to meet his own ends".<sup>57</sup>

The evangelist "dresses up the individual pericopae as ghosts of himself, before presenting himself in more substantial form in his more creative writing which follows them."<sup>58</sup> It is this extensive rewriting of the traditional material by the evangelist, that we find most difficult to accept in Lindars' scheme.

Lindars' suggests, however, that before assessing the evangelist's use of sources one must first study his technique as a writer, so we must follow Lindars' discussion of the evangelist's literary technique. It was essentially, he argues, that of a preacher. Much of the material began as individual homilies, which were only later combined into the more permanent

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55. Ibid., 35.

56. Ibid., 37.

57. Ibid., 33.

58. Ibid., 39.

form of a gospel. Throughout the Gospel one may detect homiletic style and methods. Naïve misunderstanding, delaying the progress of a theme to heighten its emotional impact, and a final emotional climax to each literary unit, are examples of some of the techniques used by the evangelist to build up his material from its original form. The impact of the Gospel, for Lindars, lies in the carefully structured discourses - the miracle stories are often merely illustrative, or used to improve the overall sequence. He uses 8:31-58 as an example of the evangelist's technique. In summary, he writes -

"The passage has shown John's use of traditional sayings, the way he builds up his argument by way of formal exposition of a saying, exposing it phrase by phrase, the delaying tactics whereby the points come over with greater effectiveness, the trick of literal misunderstanding, and above all the emotional impact of a carefully prepared climax. These are not merely the habits of a writer. They are much more the methods of a preacher. Although the discourse is in substance a disputation with the Jews, the form is really that of homiletic, in which the element of emotional effect is just as important as the logic of the argument". 59

The same techniques may be detected in the overall structuring of the Gospel. Lindars suggests that originally it fell neatly into two parts - the ministry of Jesus, consisting of most of chapter 1-10, ending at 10:42; and the passion narrative. While the evangelist added additional passages in a second edition, the original sections show how, as a preacher, he worked up to the final emotional climax. On the first, he writes -

"Looking back over the first ten chapters, we can see that, in spite of the jumble of literary units which they contain, the whole sequence really has much the same pattern as a discourse. The first section in 1:19-51, itself a narrative in discourse style, sets the theme for the whole. The christological titles there displayed announce the fact that the Gospel is to be an essay in Christology. Just as in the individual discourses, the exposition of this basic text does not follow a logical progression, but picks up one facet of Christology after another ... But, even if the sequence has no very logical progression, it is not simply episodic. It is so ordered that it moves steadily towards its climax ... By the time the end is reached the reader cannot escape seeing the personal decision of faith as quite literally a matter of life and death". 60

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59. *Ibid.*, 46-47.

60. *Ibid.*, 71-72.



Already, in reference to Brown's work, we have accepted that the evangelist was a preacher, who creatively used existing tradition in preaching. Lindars' emphasis is on technique - how the evangelist built up the individual homilies from short units of tradition, and then united these into the Gospel. It is an important study on the evangelist's method, Lindars usefully pointing to the many techniques of a preacher which may be detected in the Gospel material; (in passing it may be noted how many of these techniques would also be present in the work of a good thriller-writer). Having accepted, then, the basic thesis that the evangelist used preaching techniques in writing the Gospel, we must also make clear our reservations on several of the issues raised by Lindars. We shall concentrate in particular on two main points - the evangelist's use of sources; and the unitary structure of the Gospel. In both cases we consider that Lindars overplays the individual creativity of the evangelist.

On the use of sources, we have already accepted Lindars emphasis on shorter units of tradition, but we cannot accept his ideas on how the evangelist used these sources. According to Lindars, the evangelist accepted the sources, but rewrote them to fit with his own literary techniques of misunderstanding and development before incorporating the material into the Gospel. In answer to Becker he asks: "Why reproduce verbatim a source which is so grievously inadequate? Why not simply rewrite it, if it must be used for lack of other sources, in such a way as to make the whole Gospel speak with one mind?"<sup>61</sup> We shall leave, for the moment, the question of whether the Gospel does, in fact, speak with one mind, and concentrate on how an effective preacher is likely to use traditional material.

We begin with one assumption - the sources used in the Gospel were

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61. Ibid., 37.



not known only to the evangelist, but were known and respected in the community to which he preached.<sup>62</sup> Whether this is a reasonable assumption must be decided by the reader, it cannot be finally proved. It is conceivable that the evangelist, or preacher, was an outsider who came to the community with new source material for the life of Jesus. If that is the case, the community could obviously exercise no control over his use of that material, and Lindars' argument might well be correct. One wonders, however, if his material was very different from the traditions already held in the community whether he would have become a leading member and preacher. It is possible, but we contend unlikely.

Assuming, then, that the evangelist's sources were already known and respected in the community - perhaps to some extent formed in it - what may we deduce from a preacher's technique? If the preacher, that is the evangelist, wanted to convince the people of a new and fuller understanding of Jesus' life, would he begin by rewriting their traditions, or would he rather build on the foundation of those traditions to lead his hearers to a fuller understanding of their significance? One must be clear, Lindars is not talking of a stylistic rewriting of the sources, which one would accept, but of a rewriting in terms of their theology and meaning. This one must argue is against the best instincts of a preacher. No less than Lindars, we are convinced that the evangelist was an effective preacher, but for that very reason he will not have rewritten his sources. The traditions already held in the community will be the foundation of his preaching, and from the existing understanding of the community he will attempt to lead the people to a fuller understanding of the Christ's life. That, surely, is the technique of effective preaching.

Does the gospel speak with one mind? According to Lindars the answer

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62. See Smith, N.T.S., 21 (1974-75), 236-237; Cullmann, Circle, 39-40.

is a very definite yes, but this is the second point which we must dispute. Lindars attributes both the writing and the structuring of the Gospel, almost in its entirety, to the evangelist. He writes - "Supplementation after the completion of the Gospel is certain in the case of chapter 21. But this is in fact good evidence for the comparatively sacrosanct character of the rest of the Gospel".<sup>63</sup> In two editions, he suggests, one man produced the Gospel almost as we have it today. But what of the breaks in sequence which we have noted, and even the apparent inconsistencies in some passages? Lindars is convinced that all the material may be explained either by the evangelist's literary technique, or the additions of his second edition. We shall assess this hypothesis by looking at two key passages : 14:31, and 5:19-30.

According to Lindars, 14:31 was originally followed by chapter eighteen, but in the second edition, to reinforce "the theme of discipleship in the light of the greatly increased danger to the Church since the first edition was written",<sup>64</sup> the evangelist included chapters fifteen to seventeen. Most commentators would agree that these chapters were introduced to the passion narrative, but were they introduced by the evangelist? Lindars constantly stresses the care with which the evangelist structured his material, both the individual units and the complete Gospel. In this case, however, it would appear that, while free to alter his own first edition, he preferred to leave an obvious and radical break in the progress of thought. We cannot accept that had the evangelist himself added these chapters he would not, as a careful writer, have smoothed the transition. It is better to accept Brown's suggestion that while the material was part of the evangelist's preaching, it was a later redactor who added these chapters, but did not

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63. Lindars, Behind, 18.

64. Ibid., 76.

feel free to alter the evangelist's original work.<sup>65</sup>

The second example, 5:19-30, concerns the more subtle distinction of thought within one of the discourses. Lindars attempts to show how the discourse was carefully structured by the evangelist, looking successively at various aspects of the one problem. "First of all Jesus shows that his participation in God's work means that he has the divine prerogatives of giving life and acting as judge (verses 19-24)... Next Jesus shows how his present work already anticipates the future exercise of these prerogatives, especially that of judgement (25-9)".<sup>66</sup>

Does Lindars do justice to the difference in theological emphasis which may be detected in these verses? Brown, for example, draws the distinction clearly when he comments -

"The contrast, then, between the final eschatology of vss. 26-30 and the realized eschatology of 19-25 is quite marked. For Bultmann, the Ecclesiastical Redactor has been busy in 26-30, specifically in 28-29, trying to conform John's realized eschatology to the official eschatology of the Church. However ..., such a dichotomy between the two eschatologies is unwarranted; and Boismard, ..., makes a good case for considering vss. 26-30 to be the earlier form of the discourse wherein the eschatological outlook resembles that of the majority of synoptic passages. If this is so, 19-25 would represent a rethinking of the same sayings of Jesus at a later date ..." <sup>67</sup>

Detailed discussion of this passage must wait to the later chapter on eschatology,<sup>68</sup> but to anticipate, briefly, we shall argue that the distinction between future and present in the passage is more marked than Lindars' solution would imply. While the evangelist in his preaching emphasised the present aspect of the eschatological theme, the future, more traditional expectation was still held in the tradition and thought of the community. When a redactor brought these verses together we suggest

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65. See Brown, Gospel, xxxvii.

66. Lindars, Gospel, 206.

67. Brown, Gospel, 220.

68. Chap. 4.

that he did so simply on the basis of a common theme, that is the activity of Jesus in judgement, which is indicative of his relation, as Son, to the Father.<sup>69</sup>

We have discussed Lindars' work in some detail because it has been creative for our own thinking. While appreciating much that he has written, it seems necessary to stress more fully the role of the community in preserving the tradition, and that of a redactor in editing the Gospel. We shall include these insights when trying to draw some conclusions, but before doing so we must look, very briefly, at Cullmann's short study, published in 1975 but a synthesis of much of his previous work on John.

Cullmann's main concern is to show how the "Johannine circle", was related to heterodox Judaism. That is not of immediate relevance to us, but for a study of the Gospel's composition the main value of Cullmann's work is to direct attention away from the evangelist as an individual, towards the community. Speaking of the distinctive Johannine type of Christianity, Cullmann writes -

"Nor can the character of this expression of Christianity simply be attributed to the individuality of the evangelist. Of course his strong personality must be considered in every connection. We have seen that he above all is the creator of the basic conception of the Johannine account of the life of Jesus. But behind him there must have been a group of Christians who not only possessed special traditions about Jesus but also had a belief in his person and work which had particular distinguishing features".<sup>70</sup>

Cullmann's emphasis on a group which held special traditions, and had a distinctive outlook on the Christian life and message, may in its present form prove too narrow, but it is an emphasis which may profitably be developed.

To conclude this section we shall try to bring together the insights we have gained, to draw a very broad pattern of how the Gospel may have

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69. Thus while agreeing that there has been redactional activity, we disagree with Bultmann's proposed motive for the redactor's work - see Bultmann, Gospel, 261.

70. Cullmann, Circle, 39-40.

evolved. To attempt to differentiate more strictly the various strands and stages, if possible at all, would involve a much more minute and detailed exegesis of the text than could be attempted here. We refer once more to the basic components of any adequate scheme - existing tradition, the work of the evangelist, subsequent redaction. While accepting the dominant influence of one creative thinker and preacher, we emphasise his role not so much as an individual, but as a leading member of a community. We shall therefore consider the community's influence at each stage.

1. It is rarely disputed that the evangelist drew on existing sources. These were probably short collections and individual items of tradition, some preserved in written form, others remembered orally. In some cases the tradition will have been widely known in early Christianity - sources close to, if not identical with, those used in the Synoptics. The Gospel also preserves, however, traditions peculiar to the Johannine community. Whatever the previous history of the sources, the traditions were preserved, and possibly given their present form, within the one distinct community. In preaching, the evangelist developed his own insights into the meaning of the gospel message, but always his work was to some extent controlled by the traditions already existing and respected in the community.
2. The material which now appears in the Gospel was given its present form in preaching, certainly the preaching of the evangelist, probably other members of the community as well. We would emphasise the reciprocal nature of the relationship which must exist between a preacher and his audience. While the preacher was certainly a creative thinker, his thinking will have developed in response to the needs and outlook of the community in which he worked. Preaching is, in essence, dialogue.
3. While the evangelist was responsible for the main structure of the Gospel, and most of the material in it, there is also evidence of later



redaction, probably by a close friend or disciple. As well as including further material from the evangelist himself, the redactor also added some material from other sources within the community. This was not to correct the original Gospel, but to develop the themes more fully. As the redaction took place in the evangelist's own community, the characteristic style of the additional material need not have differed substantially from his own.<sup>71</sup>

In these ways, then, we suggest that while it was the evangelist who was responsible for writing the Gospel, the community also played an influential part. The next stage of our study is to ask whether the other Johannine writings could also have emerged in the same community. We shall look at influential studies on the relation of the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, to the Gospel.

#### The Relation of the Apocalypse to the Gospel

In its modern form, the question of the authorship of the Gospel and the Apocalypse was first raised in Germany during the last century,<sup>72</sup> but it was in England that the most impressive argument for different authors was produced. The work of R.H. Charles in his Commentary of 1920, is still the decisive study in this field.<sup>73</sup> It was Charles' own opinion that his study was really completing the work of Dionysius of Alexandria, the third century church leader and scholar, so it may be instructive to compare the writings of both these scholars, separated by almost seven hundred years.<sup>74</sup>

71. Meeks, J.B.L. 91 (1972), suggests: "Many of the elements of the unitary style are probably not specific to a single author, but belong to the Johannine 'school'", 48. See also Smith, Composition, 108, n. 178.

72. See Kümmel, Introduction, 469-472.

73. Charles, Commentary, esp. I, xxxix-1.

74. Dionysius' comments are reported in Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History Vol. 2, ed. J.E.L. Oulton, H.J. Lawlor; Eng. trans. J.E.L. Oulton (The Loeb Classical Library: London: Heinemann, 1932), 196-200. A translation of the Dionysius text is found in Werner Georg Kümmel, The New Testament, trans. S. McL. Gilmour and H.C. Kee (London: S.C. M., 1973), 16-18; a good synopsis in G.R. Beasley-Murray, The Book of Revelation (London: Oliphants, 1974), 32-33.

It must be admitted, that while Dionysius produced some critical arguments still valid today, he was motivated more by a concern for church order in the face of chiliasm, than by a desire to give a strictly balanced account of the evidence. Nevertheless, his argument is a useful starting point in any attempt to understand the relation of these two books. He was, of course, concerned only with the narrow question of authorship, not with the broader issue of their relationship, which is of interest to us.

Dionysius agreed that it was a John who wrote the Apocalypse, but that was a common name in the early Church so it need not refer to the apostle. Naturally he assumed that the apostle wrote the Gospel and the first Epistle, and a comparison of these books and the Apocalypse convinced him that the apostle John did not write the Apocalypse. His argument rests on four main points, and although they are not of equal value we shall refer to each.

1. Nowhere in the Gospel or Epistles do we find the author's name, but in the Apocalypse the name "John" is repeated three times in the first nine verses and again at the end. At the same time it is not clear who this John might be. Dionysius has heard of two tombs in Ephesus, both said to be John's, so he supposes a second John in Asia.
2. The conceptions, ideas and word order indicate a difference. He writes: "It is obvious that those who observe their character throughout will see at a glance that the Gospel and Epistle are inseparably in complete agreement. But the Apocalypse is utterly different from, and foreign to, these writings, it has no connexion, no affinity, in any way with them; it scarcely, so to speak, has even a syllable in common with them".<sup>75</sup>
3. While, in his Epistles, Paul mentions his revelations, the Johannine Epistle makes no reference to the Apocalypse, nor the Apocalypse to the Epistle.

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75. Kümmel, New Testament, 17-18.

4. There is a clear stylistic difference between the Gospel and Epistle on the one side, and the Apocalypse on the other. "The former are not only written in faultless Greek, but also show the greatest literary skill in their diction, their reasonings, and the constructions in which they are expressed", but the Apocalyptist "employs uncultivated idioms, in some places committing downright solecisms."<sup>76</sup>

It is interesting that in following up and "completing" this work of Dionysius, Charles in fact concentrated on only one aspect of the study - the linguistic evidence. At the beginning of his discussion he asserts - "We shall deal here only with the linguistic evidence on this question, which is itself decisive".<sup>77</sup> On the authorship question, the linguistic evidence so clearly adduced by Charles has, indeed, proved decisive. As early as 1927, Taylor considered a distinction of authorship to be a position on John's Gospel which "seems definitely won".<sup>78</sup> One must be clear, however, that for Charles the linguistic evidence was decisive for the limited and specific question of authorship. In a neglected, but integral part of his study, he also shows the relation of the two authors and in this he does not confine himself to linguistic considerations.<sup>79</sup> It is when he widens the scope of his study, especially to include a comparison of thought, that Charles clearly disagrees with the conclusions of Dionysius already noted. While Dionysius, determined to weaken the position of the Apocalypse, asserted that the two books were - "utterly different" and "foreign", with "no connexion, no affinity, in any way", Charles was sure that there was, indeed, some relation.

He brings out this relation in a detailed examination of common

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76. Ibid., 18.

77. Charles, Commentary, I, xxix.

78. Vincent Taylor, "The Fourth Gospel and Some Recent Criticism", Hib.J., 25 (1926-27), 725-743; quot. 726. For scholars who maintain identity of authorship see Klümmel, Introduction, 471, n.49; Menoud, L'Évangile, 74.

79. Charles, Commentary, I, xxxii-xxxiv.

expressions and concepts. He compares certain phrases and words used either exclusively in the two writings, or with a common emphasis in each, and points to the spiritual significance attached to such terms as ζωή, θάνατος, δούλῳν, δόξα, κελῳν, νικῳν, and ὁδηγεῖν. There is to be no temple in the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22), and in the Gospel too the temple will cease to exist as the centre of worship (Jn 4:21). He considers that the same Jewish and Christian ideas underlie the phrase ὁ ἁμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (Jn 1:29,36), and the equivalent τὸ ἄρνιον of the Apocalypse. The number "seven" occurs more frequently in the Apocalypse than in all the rest of the New Testament, and while it does not occur at all in the Gospel he concurs with Abbott that it is "permeated structurally with the idea of seven". Such considerations, stimulating for our own study, led Charles to conclude -

"The above facts, when taken together with other resemblances, to which attention is drawn in the Grammar, point decidedly to some connection between the two authors. The Evangelist was apparently at one time a disciple of the seer, or they were members of the same religious circle in Ephesus." 80

To further his argument Charles indicates some interesting parallels from inter-testamental Judaism - the relation of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs to the Book of Jubilees, and 4 Ezra to 2 Baruch. On the first of these parallels he writes -

"The authors of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and of the Book of Jubilees, who wrote at the close of the 2nd century before the Christian era, studied clearly in the same school; for the text of the one has constantly to be interpreted by that of the other. Yet these two writers are poles asunder on some of the greatest questions of their day". 81

This would seem to be an interesting example of diversity within the one school or grouping, but also of interest to us is the distinction which

80. *Ibid.*, xxxiii.

81. *Ibid.* It is interesting to note in this regard that fragments of the Testaments, and the Book of Jubilees have been found at Qumran. For recent research see James H. Charlesworth, *The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research*, ass. P. Dykers (Septuagint & Cognate Studies 7; Missoula : Scholars, 1976), 143, 211.



Charles draws between the Jewish authors and the later Johannine writers.

He suggests -

"In the Seer and the Evangelist we have got just such another literary connection. But the literary connection is much less close than in the case of the Jewish authors just mentioned, while the theological affinities between the Seer and the Evangelist are much closer than those existing between the Jewish writers". 82

If we are to follow Charles' lead, then, to examine the relation which may exist between the two writings we must concentrate on their theological affinities. As we turn to look at some important studies on the relation of the Gospel and the first Epistle, we shall see that this conclusion is strengthened. To understand the relation of all these works we must undertake a comparison of their thought.

#### The Relation of the First Epistle to the Gospel

There is a sense in which Charles' work on the Apocalypse opened up the whole field of Johannine studies. If one accepts that the Apocalypse did not come from the same pen as the other Johannine writings, the way is then open to discuss the authorship and relations of all five books. No-one would deny that the relation of the Gospel to the first Epistle is much closer than to the Apocalypse, but Barrett makes the interesting comment:

"A first glance at these books suggests a very close resemblance between the gospel and the epistles, and a very marked difference between the gospel and the apocalypse. Further examination however results in a lower estimate of both the resemblance and the difference". 83

It was again in the Tübingen school that attention was directed to a critical examination of the relation of the Gospel to the first Epistle.

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82. Charles, Commentary, I, xxxiii.

83. Barrett, Gospel, 59.



In the Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie of 1881-82, Holtzmann published four very detailed articles under the title : "Das Problem des ersten johanneischen Briefes in seinem Verhältniss zum Evangelium."<sup>84</sup> Especially the second of these was taken up in Britain by Law and Brooke in their discussions of 1909 and 1912 respectively.<sup>85</sup> All three are keenly aware, not only of the close affinities in language, style and thought between the two writings, but also of the differences, some of which are very subtle. These differences for Holtzmann are sufficient to suggest a distinction of authorship, but the British scholars in fact used them to support their case for the same author. Law makes the point in the form of a question -

"Would such a mere copyist have ventured to introduce, or have been capable of introducing, so many and important elements of independence both in thought and language?"<sup>86</sup>

The point is a good one if the choice is, as he assumes, between the same author or a copyist, even as Brooke suggests an intelligent copyist, but it surely loses its point if we consider two authors brought up in the same community, and so immersed in the same traditions and expressions of the Christian message. This is conceded by Brooke in his nicely-balanced conclusion -

"It is practically impossible to prove common authorship, as against imitation, or similarity produced by common education in the same school of thought ... But there are no adequate reasons for setting aside the traditional view which attributes the Epistle and Gospel to the same authorship. It remains the most probable explanation of the facts known to us."<sup>87</sup>

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84. H. Holtzmann, "Das Problem des ersten johanneischen Briefes in seinem Verhältniss zum Evangelium", Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie (1881), 690-712; (1882), 128-152, 316-342, 460-485.

85. Robert Law, The Tests of Life (Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1909), esp. 339-363. A.E. Brooke, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles (Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1912), esp. i-xxvii.

86. Law, Tests, 358.

87. Brooke, Commentary, xviii.

For most scholars it was to remain the most probable explanation until, in his famous essay of 1937, C.H. Dodd chose to re-examine the issues involved.<sup>88</sup> Even today many, probably a majority of scholars, accept these two books as the work of one man.<sup>89</sup>

As one would expect, Dodd gives a detailed but clear presentation of the argument for a distinction of authorship. He begins by accepting, as obvious, the close relation of the two writings, but then suggests-

"When, however, we have fully recognised the close kinship of the two writings, we must also observe that there are differences between them, both in form and content, which are by no means negligible".<sup>90</sup>

He goes on to present these differences, first by a comparison of style and language, then by a comparison of thought. It is important to note that only after a detailed discussion of all these aspects, does Dodd reach the cautious conclusion that, "it is perhaps simpler to conclude that the two works are by different authors".<sup>91</sup> The cumulative nature of Dodd's argument has not always been appreciated by his critics.

Reaction to Dodd, especially in Britain, is of interest in the present context because it centres almost exclusively on linguistic considerations. It ranges from the important study of Howard,<sup>92</sup> itself heavily biased towards the linguistic side, to the incredible statement of Salom, who writes - "Dodd discusses the question of unity of authorship

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88. Dodd, B.J.R.L., 21 (1937), 129-156.

89. For a discussion of scholarship see Kümmel Introduction, 442-445; Rudolf Schnackenburg, Die Johannesbriefe (5th rev. ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1975), 34-38.

90. Dodd, B.J.R.L., 21 (1937), 130.

91. Ibid., 155.

92. W.F. Howard, "The Common Authorship of the Johannine Gospel and Epistles", J.T.S., 48 (1947), 12-25. See also W.G. Wilson, "An Examination of the Linguistic Evidence Adduced against the Unity of Authorship of the First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel", J.T.S., 49 (1948), 147-156.

from the viewpoint of grammatical and linguistic style and comes to the conclusion that the two books could not have been written by the same author".<sup>93</sup> As we have seen, that was not Dodd's conclusion, even after the second, slightly longer section of his work comparing their thought. Why this obsession among many responsible scholars with the linguistic evidence?

In our discussion of Charles' study on the Apocalypse, we suggested that linguistic evidence is decisive only for the narrow question of whether one man could have written both books. To decide the relation of the two writings it is necessary to include other aspects of study, especially a comparison of thought. The same judgement is borne out by Dodd's critics. They were intent on maintaining identity of authorship, and quite rightly concentrated on linguistic evidence. Characteristics of language and style, while not certain guides to an individual writer,<sup>94</sup> are the most objective possible. If one wishes to discuss, however, not the identity of the author but the relation of two writings to one another, other considerations become more important. We suggest that the most important is a comparison of thought.

There is no doubt that the main aim and impact of Dodd's study was to deny that the two writings were the work of one man. Whether he was successful in that must be judged by the individual, a decision is not in fact crucial to the present thesis.<sup>95</sup> It is of interest, however, to look more closely at Dodd's argument. Obviously in any study of this kind it is the conclusion which will not be readily accepted by others that must be argued most closely. What is already a consensus opinion

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93. A.P. Salom, "Some Aspects of the Grammatical Style of 1 John", J.B.L., 74 (1955), 96-102; quot. 96.

94. See above, n. 72.

95. The most important studies in disagreement with Dodd are Kümmel, Introduction, 442-445; Schnackenburg, Johannesbriefe, 34-38; Howard, J.T.S., 48 (1947), 12-25. Wilson, J.T.S., 49 (1948), 147-156, is important on the use of statistical evidence.

may be referred to more briefly. This is in fact what Dodd does. Differences between the two works are argued in great detail, but the overall affinity, which is really the framework for his study, is merely assumed. In his initial comments Dodd writes -

"That the two works are, at any rate, very closely related is obvious. Most of the themes treated in the Epistle are present also in the Gospel, and in a general way the theological standpoint represented in the two writings is the same, at least in comparison with any other part of the New Testament. This point I need not elaborate". 96

Not only are the themes and theological standpoint broadly the same, but the ideas are expressed in similar ways and style. The picture which Dodd builds is of an overall similarity in thought, language and style, but with distinct and particular differences in each case. How do we account for both the close affinity, and the differences?

Dodd examines two possibilities - "either the two works are from one hand, or the writer of the one was influenced, not superficially but profoundly, by the other, whether that influence was due to personal discipleship, or to a deep and prolonged study of his work, or to both".<sup>97</sup>

Towards the end he conjectures -

"I conceive the First Epistle of John, then, to have been written by an author who was quite possibly a disciple of the Fourth Evangelist, and certainly a diligent student of his work. He has soaked himself in the Gospel, assimilating its ideas and forming his style upon its model. He sets out to develop, commend and apply certain of these ideas to meet the particular needs of the situation". 98

He decides, in other words, on the second possibility. In the light of recent research on the Gospel, already discussed, we would wish to phrase the conclusion a little differently. The writer of the Epistle was a member of the Johannine community, who drew on the tradition of the evangelist's preaching - probably himself having heard him preach - but adapted

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96. Dodd, B.J.R.L., 21 (1937), 129.

97. Ibid., 130.

98. Ibid., 156.



some of the evangelist's ideas to meet a new situation then facing the community.

We have noticed that in Britain scholars have tended to concentrate on linguistic and stylistic considerations, with some attention being paid to the theological tendencies of the two writings. In Germany, however, another aspect of the study has been emphasised - the situation of the community reflected in each of the books. Some have claimed that the situation reflected in the first Epistle is so different from that of the Gospel, that the same man could not have been responsible for both. Bultmann writes -

"The close affinity in language and content between the two books makes it understandable that the identity of the authors has often been asserted and is frequently asserted even today. I cannot agree with this supposition. The decisive argument against this identification, as Haenchen has correctly observed, is the following: the Gospel of John and 1 John are directed against different fronts. Whereas the Gospel is opposed to the 'world', or to the Jews who are its representatives, and therefore to non-Christians, the false teachers who are opposed in 1 John are within the Christian community and claim to represent the genuine Christian faith. This shows that 1 John originates in a period later than the Gospel". 99

It does not necessarily follow, of course, that the same author may not have written the two books at a different time - Haenchen's argument is much more comprehensive than Bultmann's comments would suggest. It is only after a long review of recent literature on 1 John, that Haenchen concludes -

"Dass der Brief mit einem späteren Problem zu tun hat als das vierte Evangelium - nicht mehr mit dem Unglauben an Jesus, sondern mit einem falschen Christusglauben -, schliesst freilich noch nicht aus, dass der Autor des vierten Evangeliums auch unsern Brief verfasst hat. Aber wenn wir all das ins Auge fassen, was an Unterschieden zur Sprache gekommen ist, vom Stil angefangen und mit der Naherwartung des Endes schliessend, dann werden wir gegen Howard und Wilson mit Dodd die Verschiedenheit der Verfasser für das Wahrscheinliche halten". 100

99. Rudolf Bultmann, The Johannine Epistles, trans. R.P. O'Hara with L. C. McGaughey and R.W. Funk; ed. R.W. Funk (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), 1.

100. Haenchen, T. Ru., N.F. 26 (1960-61), 43.



Like Dodd's the argument is cumulative, but with an important emphasis on the situation in the community which the writings reflect. As Conzelmann had previously pointed out, "Es genügt nun nicht, Evangelium und Briefe einfach zu Konfrontieren; man muss nach der Kirchen - und dogmengeschichtlichen Situation fragen, in welche die Briefe einzustellen sind".<sup>101</sup>

This emphasis on the situation in the community, indicates a further important direction along which our thesis should proceed. It is not concerned with the narrow question of authorship, but with the relation which exists between all five "Johannine" writings. The hypothesis to be examined is whether all these writings emerged in the one community. Already it has been suggested that to support that hypothesis a comparison of the thought of the various writings is necessary, to see if they contain distinctively Johannine concepts. The emphasis of the German scholars has now directed our attention to another issue - the different problems and situations reflected in each book. Few would deny that the Gospel and 1 John were written in the same community, whether or not they are by the same author, but we must also consider the situation reflected in the Apocalypse. Could all five writings, reflecting very different situations in the early church, be the work of the one, continuing early Christian community?

In this survey of previous scholarship we have attempted to show that our hypothesis of a Johannine community is well-founded. Recent work on the composition of John's Gospel led to the conviction of community involvement in its development, while important studies on the authorship of the other "Johannine" writings encouraged the idea that they too may have emerged in the same community. Perhaps more important, if we are to use this hypothesis as a basis for further research, is the way in which the previous

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101. Hans Conzelmann, "'Was von Anfang war'", Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann, ed. Walther Eltester (B.Z.N.W. 21; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1954), 194-201, quot. 194.

studies have pointed to issues which demand further consideration. In particular two questions have been raised. 1. Does the thought and expression of theological ideas in each book support the view that they all emerged in the one distinct community? 2. Does the situation reflected in each of the writings support the contention that they all emerged in the same, on-going Christian community? The two questions are not indeed distinct, but in the next section we shall concentrate on an examination of theological emphases in the various writings, to assess the probability that all five emerged in the one community. The situation in the community reflected by the theological, in particular the eschatological thought of the writings, is a matter for later consideration.

CHAPTER TWOTHEOLOGICAL EMPHASES OF THE COMMUNITY

The hypothesis which it is now the intention of this thesis to examine, states that all five traditionally "Johannine" books emerged in the one early Christian community. In this chapter we shall attempt some comparison of theological thought and emphasis. There are, of course, many problems involved in such a study. When one is comparing the thought of individual writers there is usually some evidence, in style and content, for their individuality. If, however, the question is not concerned with individual authors, but whether the writers may have been active in the one community, over a period of time, then the relations of thought and emphases become much less distinct, and an assessment more difficult to make. In examining the theological thought of these books we must constantly bear in mind the two necessary conditions for the justification of this hypothesis. 1. There must be some evidence of a similarity in theological emphasis in the Johannine writings, even though the individual writers involved may at times reflect their own personal outlook and purpose of writing. 2. While much of the Johannine theological thinking will reflect the common traditions and understanding of the early Church, there must be some evidence that the emphasis in the Johannine writings is distinct from that of other early Christian communities represented in the New Testament. It is clear that the task before us involves a very subtle comparison, and perhaps the most important consideration of all is that of method.

The body of material with which we are concerned consists of three main theological works, and two shorter, more personal, letters. To attempt thoroughly to examine all the similarities and differences of

thought which occur is clearly a task beyond the scope of the present thesis. The number of possible combinations and permutations involved is immense so some simpler approach must be found, even at the expense of rigour. One must be realistic in the methodology adopted, always remembering that at no stage in the thesis will it be claimed that the suggestion is more than a reasonable working hypothesis.

When T.W. Manson set out to examine the theological ideas of the Gospel and the First Epistle, he too had first to decide on the methodology to be adopted - his interest, of course, was whether they were both the work of one man. Manson argued -

"We must first examine the Johannine theology in its relatively pure state, free from the historical complications of the Gospel. This means that the proper method is to begin with the Epistle and there find what are the leading theological ideas of the author ..."<sup>1</sup>

One must argue that the Epistle too is not free from complications, if it is to be used as a theological norm. The writer was dealing with specific problems and issues important to that congregation, and not portraying his theological ideas in a reflective, systematic way. Nevertheless, the main point of Manson's method seems to be accurate - to establish a norm of Johannine theological ideas, and then to look for similar ideas and emphases in the rest of the material. The point at issue is what material one should use to establish the norm of Johannine thought. It is the thought of the community which we wish to examine - the community which, it has been previously argued, was involved in the production of the Gospel. It seems clear, therefore, that unlike Manson we must begin with the distinctive thought and emphases of the Gospel, and then examine the other writings for the presence of a similar logical outlook.

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1. T.W. Manson, On Paul and John (S.B.T.; London : S.C.M., 1963); 87-88.

Our method, then, is to choose several important emphases in the Gospel, and then examine the other books for evidence of the same ideas. Again one must accept the limitations of the present study. It is not possible to argue in detail that the themes which we shall consider are the most important to the Gospel's theology, nor even that they are distinctive of this Gospel in comparison with the rest of the New Testament. That such considerations are important is, of course, not in any doubt. Within the constraints imposed by the nature and aim of the thesis, however, it is possible only to offer an exegetical examination of three themes, widely accepted as important to the evangelist's theological understanding. Others may choose different themes, or even examine different emphases within the same themes, indeed they must be encouraged to do so. It is only by further detailed examination that the hypothesis will ultimately stand or fall. Once the methodology is agreed, the task of comparison is a continuing one.

One final point must be made by way of introduction. It is recognised that in some of the writings we are about to consider questions of sources and redaction abound, indeed we have already considered some of the issues with regard to the Gospel. The purpose of the present chapter, however, is to consider whether the theological emphases of these writings in their present form, indicate a common background of thought and understanding. Traditio-historical questions, therefore, need not at this stage concern us. It is the texts as a whole that we must examine, the only alteration being made on the basis of textual evidence.



### The Relation of the Father to the Son

In any Gospel the most important emphasis must be on christology, the purpose is, after all, to proclaim Jesus, the Christ. If, therefore, one can detect a particular stress in the evangelist's presentation of Jesus in John's Gospel, it must provide an essential element to our discussion. Fortunately most scholars are agreed, at least in general terms, on the main christological emphasis of this Gospel. Lindars has written - "The central aim of the Johannine christology is to expound the intimate relationship of Jesus and God",<sup>2</sup> while Pollard remarks similarly - "The Gospel of St. John is pre-eminently the Gospel of 'the Father and the Son'."<sup>3</sup> Other scholars have argued, persuasively, that the evangelist not only considered the relationship of Jesus to the Father to be in itself the vital element of christology, but also used that relationship as a paradigm for other relations in the Gospel. The relation of the Father to the Son is mirrored in that of the Son to the believer (6:57; 15:9-10), of both Father and Son to the believer (14:20-24), and in the unity of believers (17:11; 20-23).<sup>4</sup> Schnackenburg is surely right to characterize the Father-Son relationship as "der Schlüssel zum Verständnis des joh. Jesus".<sup>5</sup>

But if the Father-Son relationship is the key to the evangelist's understanding of Jesus, what is the particular nature of the relationship stressed in the Gospel? To that question there is no agreed answer.

Bultmann speaks of the "paradox" in John's approach-

2. Barnabas Lindars, "The Son of Man in the Johannine christology", in Christ and Spirit in the New Testament, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge : University, 1973), 43-60; quot. 59.
3. T.E. Pollard, Johannine Christology and the Early Church (S.N.T.S.M.S. 13; Cambridge : University, 1970), 15.
4. See esp. C.H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel (pap.ed.; Cambridge : University, 1968), 195-197; Brown, Gospel, 511-512; Käsemann, Testament, 57-59.
5. Rudolf Schnackenburg, Das Johannesevangelium, II (H.T.K.N.T. 4; Freiburg : Herder, 1971), 151.

"He [the evangelist] accordingly presents the fact that in Jesus God encounters man in a seemingly contradictory manner: in one direction by statements that declare that Jesus has equal dignity and rights with God, or even that God has abdicated His rights to Jesus, so to speak, In the other direction, John declares that Jesus speaks and acts only in obedience to the will of the Father and does nothing on his own authority". 6

In exegesis we shall find statements on both the unity of the Father and the Son, and the subordination of Jesus to God, (cf. e.g. 10:30; 14:28); neither can be ignored.<sup>7</sup>

In our exegesis, however, we shall concentrate mainly on the statements of one-ness, as they seem to distinguish particularly the Johannine portrayal of the relation of Jesus to the Father. One need not accept the excesses of Kasemann's study to argue that the idea of unity - or we would prefer "one-ness" - with the Father is central to the Johannine understanding of Jesus.<sup>8</sup> It is perhaps unfortunate, though certainly inevitable, that the issue has been, and continues to be, one of the most controversial in theology.<sup>9</sup> What did the evangelist intend to convey by his statements on the one-ness of the Father and the Son? In answering that question one must try at all times to avoid later, and more developed, issues of christological controversy. The evangelist was a preacher and thinker in a very early Christian community, and can only be misunderstood if he is assessed as a theologian of the later church. We can only determine the evangelist's understanding on any issue, by a careful exegesis of relevant statements within their context in the Gospel.

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6. Bultmann, Theology, II, 50. See also Kummel, Theology, 269, Pollard, Christology, 15-18.

7. On the theme of dependence see J. Ernest Davey, The Jesus of St. John (London : Lutterworth, 1958); more recently C.K. Barrett, "'The Father is greater than I' (Jo 14,28) : Subordinationist Christology in the New Testament", in Neues Testament und Kirche, ed. J. Gnilka (Vienna : Herder, 1974), 144-159.

8. Kasemann Testament, esp. 4-26. See recently Mark L. Appold, The One-ness Motif in the Fourth Gospel (W.U.N.T., 2.1; Tübingen : J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1976).

9. For early christological interpretation see Maurice F. Wiles, The Spiritual Gospel (Cambridge : University, 1960); Pollard, Christology.



There are three verses which will not be discussed in the present chapter, but on which some comment might be expected.<sup>10</sup> In each of them (20:28; 1:1; probably 1:18) the evangelist refers to Jesus - or more precisely the pre-existent Logos, or the risen Christ - as God. The verses may well be a useful indication that the evangelist does not hesitate to apply the title "God" to Jesus, at least when he is the risen Lord, but they do not really clarify our understanding of the relationship which the evangelist intends between the Father and the Son. To understand the nature of that relationship, at times described in terms of one-ness, we must look at some of the evangelist's more important statements on the one-ness of the Father and the Son. One must, of course, consider not only the statements themselves, but the contexts in which they are set.

JN.5:16-23: One of the more difficult tasks for any commentator on John's Gospel is to decide how the chapters and passages should be divided for the best understanding. We previously noted something of the evangelist's method - interweaving several ideas together to develop the main themes; using misunderstanding as a means of emphasising and clarifying some points; sometimes deliberately holding back the development of the passage to provide a final climax. Such techniques may well provide some of the fascination of this gospel, but they do not ease the task of understanding it. To be more specific, on the relation of the Father and the Son it is not difficult to see that chapter five is an important christological passage, central to the evangelist's thinking. In v.18 we are told that the Jews attacked Jesus because he "called God his Father, making himself equal with God", and the subsequent discourse expounds this theme of Jesus' one-ness with the Father. Clearly this discourse will prove central to our

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10. See B.A. Mastin, "A neglected feature of the christology of the Fourth Gospel", N.T.S., 22 (1975-76), 32-51. Raymond E. Brown, Jesus God and Man (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968).

study, but how do we define the discourse, and where does it end? What verses should be considered most carefully to understand the evangelist's concept of the equality of Jesus and God?

To these questions there is no one answer - there is a sense, of course, in which the whole Gospel is important. The discourse runs at least to the end of chapter five, but does it really end there? In 7:21 we read: "I did one deed, and you all marvel at it", and what was this deed? Surely it must have been the healing of chapter five. Some object that there is no reaction of θαύμα reported in chapter five,<sup>11</sup> but it is certainly not excluded by the statement of 5:20. The theme of Jesus' relation to God is again under discussion. Bultmann, in fact, suggests 8:13-20 as the probable conclusion to the whole discourse. He writes -

"the key-words μαρτυρία and κρισις of 5:30-47; 7:15-24 appear again in 8:13-9, and the ironic appeal to the law of Moses 5:45-47; 7:19-23 has its climax in the pes-tiche in 8:17f".<sup>12</sup>

While not accepting Bultmann's analysis of the Gospel's literary composition, it is true to say that the themes of witness and judgement do provide strong evidence for linking these passages together.<sup>13</sup> We shall not attempt to define clearly the extent of the discourse which begins at 5:19, but the implications of the accusation in 5:18 are still being considered by the evangelist in subsequent chapters. This we hold to be part of his method.

We shall in fact consider only a few verses of this discourse material, although the broader context should always be in mind. Not unnaturally it is the verses immediately following the initial statement on equality (v. 18) which introduce the main lines of the evangelist's thinking, subsequently

11. The point is argued by J.H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John, ed. A.H. McNeile (I.C.C.; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1928), 262-263; cf. Bultmann, Gospel, 277.

12. Bultmann, Gospel, 238-239.

13. See also Lindars, Gospel, 316; Brown, Gospel, 343.



amplified and developed. We shall concentrate, therefore, on vv. 18-23, but to set the scene for the discourse we begin the exegesis at v.16.

V.16, while in one sense a conclusion to the healing story (vv.2-15) is also the evangelist's generalisation from that story. The imperfect tense, ἐποίει, together with the plural, ταῦτα, suggests that this healing was only one example of Jesus' activity on the Sabbath which so angered the Jews. It is noteworthy that another healing story in John (9:1-12) also took place on the Sabbath, and of course the theme is frequent in the Synoptics (e.g. Mk. 2:23-3:6; Lk. 13:10-17; 14:1-6). So far as this verse is concerned the reason for the Jews' persecution of Jesus was that he broke the Sabbath law (cf. Mk. 3:6), but the evangelist then develops the theme to show the significance of this activity for the relation of Jesus to God.

V.17 is only loosely linked to the preceding statement. It is gratuitous to remark, as Lindars does -

"It must be assumed that the Jews' 'persecution' of Jesus meant that they searched for him at once, and having found him (still in the Temple, perhaps; cf. verse 14) challenged him with the point at issue". 14

The evangelist was not concerned with such logic. The connection of the two verses lies in the development of the theme. Jesus' answer - which Bultmann rightly notes as the "starting point for Jesus' subsequent discourse"<sup>15</sup> - fulfils the function of changing the discussion from the issue of Jesus breaking the Sabbath law, to his relation, as Son, with the Father, "My Father is working still, and I am working" (v.17). The answer forms a pivot in the development of the passage. Not only is it a justification for his breaking the Sabbath law, but more importantly it is the

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14. Lindars, Gospel, 218.

15. Bultmann, Gospel, 244.



stimulus for the subsequent discourse.<sup>16</sup> Indeed the discourse is the evangelist's attempt to expound the significance and meaning of v.17. If one accepts that the discourse material took form in preaching, then v.17 must surely have been an important text.

Let us consider the statement first as a reply to the accusation of having broken the Sabbath law. Jesus does not deny the charge - clearly he cannot - but instead he claims to have the authority to work on the Sabbath. This claim is based on his relation to the Father. God works on the Sabbath day, so too may the Son. Most commentators produce a wealth of rabbinic and Philonic parallels to show current Jewish exegesis that God was continually active. We shall not examine it here, as the Father's working is not the point of dispute. Barrett concludes -

"It may be said then that when John was written there was a current exegesis of God's sabbath rest sufficient to support the argument of the evangelist".<sup>17</sup>

Dodd, in his more detailed discussion, claims, interestingly, that it is precisely the functions of Jesus emphasised in John - namely to give life and to judge (vv.21,22) - which are the activities Philo and some of the rabbis distinguish as continuous activities of God.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the parallels may be, the Jews as portrayed by the evangelist did not question the fact that the Father was active on the Sabbath. Their argument was with Jesus, and in this statement they could see, quite rightly, that he was claiming in some sense to be equal with God.<sup>19</sup> It is important to recognise, however, that the statement concerns the activity of Jesus, and of the Father, The equality which is implied is an equality of action. Jesus' activity on earth is the activity of God -

16. See Hugo Odeberg, The Fourth Gospel, I (Uppsala : Almqvist & Wiksells, 1929), 202-203.

17. Barrett, Gospel, 256.

18. Dodd, Interpretation, 320-323.

19. The claim is not fundamentally different from some synoptic statements - esp. "The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath" (Mk. 2:28; cf. Matt. 12:8; Lk. 6:5) - but the basis of that understanding, which is the relationship of the Father and the Son, is more clearly set out. See Bernard, Commentary, 236; R.H. Lightfoot, St. John's Gospel. A Commentary, ed. C.F. Evans (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), 139.

"My Father is working still, and I am working". It is the relation of Jesus' activity on earth to the Father's activity, that is further developed in the discourse.

The evangelist's understanding of v.17 is best amplified by v.19, 20, but first we must consider the Jews' misunderstanding, as it is given in v.18. They were now even more enraged because Jesus, "not only broke the sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God" (v.18). To the Jew to be equal with God meant to be independent from God, so in claiming the right to work on the Sabbath because God continually works, Jesus was claiming to act independently of God, and hence to be equal with God.<sup>20</sup> From the Jewish point of view this was indeed blasphemy, but to the evangelist that was a total misunderstanding of the relation of Jesus to the Father. For the evangelist, Jesus' work on the Sabbath did not show his independence of God, but his unique relation to God, a relation emphasised in v.18 - though not in the R.S.V. translation - by the use of ἴσους. The N.E.B. more adequately translates: "by calling God his own Father he claimed equality with God".<sup>21</sup>

In the saying of v. 17, it is true that Jesus claimed a 'special' relationship to God, but not independence from God. The equality is based on the one-ness of their work, a theme soon to be developed further. To ask, as some commentators do, whether the evangelist would himself claim that Jesus was equal with God is to beg the question what equality means in this context. For the evangelist, Jesus was in a unique way carrying out God's work on earth (cf. 4:34; 9:34; 10:37,38; 15:24), and in that sense he may be called equal. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the subsequent discourse.

At first sight v.19 may seem to contradict the thought of v.18 - "the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the

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20. See the discussions of Odeberg, Fourth Gospel, I, 203; Dodd, Interpretation, 325-328.

21. See Dodd, Interpretation, 325.

Father doing" (v.19; cf. 5:30; 8:28). It does indeed prohibit any idea of the Son's independence of God, but it encourages the interpretation that the special relation of Jesus to God is that he carries out the work of the Father on earth. There is a one-ness of activity, which in vv.19,20 is based on the love of the Father for the Son (v.20), and the obedience of the Son to the Father (v.19), Bultmann is right to argue -

"The same claim lies behind v.19 as was made openly in v.17; for v.19, by describing both negatively and positively Jesus' absolute dependence on the Father, is intended to lay bare the ground of the equality of his work with the divine work, and not to show his subordination to the Father". 22

That was the intention of the evangelist, although it must be said that an element of subordination remains.

Dodd and Gaechter have maintained that vv. 19,20a originally formed a parable - "the parable of the Son as Apprentice".<sup>23</sup> Dodd argues -

"On the face of it, we have a simple picture of a son apprenticed to his father's trade. The article with *πατήρ* and *υἱός* is generic, indicating that the statement applies to any father and any son... The son watches his father at work and imitates him; the father shows the son all the several operations of his craft, so that, by closely following the father's example, rather than experimenting at his own sweet will (*ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ*) he may himself become a master of the craft. After this point the elements of the picture are allegorized, the father and son of the parable becoming God the Father and Christ the Son". 24

By itself, however, the parable describes "in the simplest and most realistic terms a perfectly familiar situation in everyday life".<sup>25</sup> If, as

22. Bultmann, Gospel, 248.

23. C.H. Dodd, "A hidden parable in the Fourth Gospel" in More New Testament Studies (Manchester : University, 1968), 30-40; quot. 39; Paul Gaechter, "Zur Form von Joh.5, 19-30", in Neutestamentliche Aufsätze, ed. J. Blinzler, O. Kuss, F. Mussner (Regensburg : Friedrich Pustet, 1963), 65-68, cf. also Joachim Jeremias on Matt. 11:27, in New Testament Theology I, trans. J. Bowden (London : S.C.M., 1971), 56-61; John A.T. Robinson, "The use of the Fourth Gospel for christology today" in Christ and Spirit in the New Testament, 1973), 61-78; esp. 69-73.

24. Dodd, More New Testament Studies, 31-32.

25. Ibid., 39.

seems probable, this interpretation is correct, then it is interesting that to illustrate the relation of the Father and the Son the evangelist has chosen a parable of work. The son learns and carries out the work of the father, so too Jesus on earth is fulfilling the work of God, the Father. Again the emphasis in the relationship is on the common activity of the Father and the Son.

The evangelist's development of the theme is found in the second part of v.20, continuing through vv.21-23. In healing the sick man, and indeed the other "signs" so far related in the Gospel, Jesus has been doing the work of his Father, but the Father has still to show him "greater works than these ... that you may marvel" (v.20). The "you" (ὁμοίως) in this sentence is emphatic - even those who now attack him, will one day marvel. But what are these "greater works" which will have such a profound effect? In the immediate context we are told, "the Son gives life to whom he will" (v.21), and the Father "has given all judgement to the Son" (v.23) - to "give life", and to "judge". In the Old Testament these are the prerogatives of God alone (e.g. Deut. 32:39; Ps.82:8; 1 Sam. 2:6), but here they are "delegated"<sup>26</sup> to the Son. It is not to say, of course, that the Father does not still act in these matters - ὡσαύτως ... οὕτως καὶ (v.21), while grammatically qualifying only the statement on life, also, in the sense of the passage, qualifies the statement on judgement. To give life and to judge are still the activities of God, but, in obedience, the Son carries out the work of the Father. Barrett refers to the "exact parallelism between the Father and the Son".<sup>27</sup>

It is well known that in this Gospel there are several different, and apparently contradictory, statements on judgement - for example, one may contrast v.22 with the statement of 8:15, "I judge no one". Detailed

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26. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, ed. F.N. Davey (London : Faber & Faber, 1940), 299.

27. Barrett, Gospel, 260.



discussion must wait until the chapter on eschatology, but briefly the evangelist's understanding is best seen in a passage such as 3:16-21 - "this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light" (3:19). The judgement of Jesus should be seen in the context of the offer of life which he brings, and a consequence of its refusal. Dodd comments:

"... κρίσις and ζωοποίησις are obverse and reverse of the same process. Positively, the work of Christ is to bring life and light, negatively, it results in judgement upon those who refuse the life and turn away from the light". 28

Similarly we must briefly refer to the discussion among commentators as to whether the "greater works" (v.20), refers to the future activity of Jesus on earth, or his ultimate eschatological activity as the risen and glorified Lord (cf. vv.28,29). Lindars writes -

"These 'greater works' ... will cause men to 'marvel', because what they have so far seen is only a faint shadow of the full scale of the eschatological task which Jesus will perform when he is glorified; cf. verse 28". 29

Perhaps too sharp a distinction is unnecessary, and indeed unwise. While the evangelist looked forward to Jesus' future activity in glory, it is probable that he was here thinking more particularly of the future acts of Jesus while on earth - note the raising of Lazarus (11:1-53). The "signs" which Jesus gives while on earth, and indeed his own resurrection, anticipate his future eschatological activity as glorified Lord.

These issues have been briefly raised to aid our understanding of the development of the evangelist's discussion, but we must return now more specifically to the question of the relation of the Father and the Son. In vv.22,23 we read:

"The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him".

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28. Dodd, Interpretation, 256.

29. Lindars, Gospel, 222; cf. John Marsh, The Gospel of St. John (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1968), 259-65.



This statement forms the conclusion of the section (vv.19-23), discussing Jesus' claim (v.17), and its implications for his relationship to God. Because the Father has delegated to the Son responsibility for judgement, so men must honour the Son, just as they would honour the Father. One must accept that grammatically the  $\epsilon\upsilon\chi$ -clause (v.23) is connected to the statement on judgement, but we have suggested above that Jesus' role in judgement is a consequence of his life - giving activity, so in that sense both the activities of giving life and judgement demand honour from men. Bligh has argued:

"Because he [Jesus] shares in the divine activities of life-giving and judgement, he is entitled to be honoured exactly as the Father is honoured; and it is the will of the Father that he should be so honoured". 30

This final statement contains perhaps the most characteristic of all Johannine christological statements - the Son is the one who has been "sent" by the Father - and it certainly demands some comment. Dodd observes -

"all through the gospel the Son of God is presented as one 'sent' by the Father. The verbs  $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\mu\pi\epsilon\iota\nu$  and  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$  used apparently without any difference of meaning, occur in this connection over forty times in all parts of the gospel. God is referred to as  $\acute{\omicron}\ \pi\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\rho\ \mu\omicron\upsilon$ , or,  $\acute{\omicron}\ \pi\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\rho\ \acute{\omicron}\ \pi\acute{\epsilon}\mu\pi\alpha\varsigma\ \mu\epsilon$ , or simply,  $\acute{\omicron}\ \pi\acute{\epsilon}\mu\pi\alpha\varsigma\ \mu\epsilon$ . We may therefore take it to be a regulative idea that the Son of God is he who is commissioned or delegated by God to mankind". 31

Haenchen describes this expression of the one sent by God as "die kennzeichnendste christologische Formel des vierten Evangeliums",<sup>32</sup> while Käsemann maintains -

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30. John Bligh, "Jesus in Jerusalem", *Hey. J.*, 4 (1963), 115-134; quot. 127.

31. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 254.

32. Ernst Haenchen, "Vom Wandel des Jesusbildes in der frühen Gemeinde", in *Verborum Veritas*, eds. O. Böcher, K. Haacker (Wuppertal: Rolf Brockhaus, 1970), 3-14; quot. 12; also "Der Vater, der mich gesandt hat", *N.T.S.*, 9 (1962-63), 208-216.

"In the Gospel, the formula 'the Father who sent me' therefore alternates continuously with the concept of the oneness with the Father, and the former receives its peculiar christological meaning through the latter". 33

While we are not convinced on this last remark, it is true that both ideas are closely related in the passage now being studied. Perhaps it is best to consider, "the Father who sent me" (v.23), as a summary of the ideas on teaching, obedience and delegation, implicit in the preceding verses.

In a recent article Borgen has persuasively indicated the Jewish background to this concept.<sup>34</sup> He traces it in the halakhic principles of agency, especially as adopted in the early stages of Merkabah mysticism. In Merkabah mysticism, he argues, "we find a combination of halakah, heavenly figures and the heavenly world as is the case with the idea of agency in the Fourth Gospel". The similarities he lists succinctly as follows:

"(a) the unity between the agent and his sender - (b) although the agent is subordinate, (c) the obedience of the agent to the will of the sender, (d) the task of the agent in the lawsuit, (e) his return and reporting back to the sender, and (f) his appointing of other agents as an extension of his own mission in time and space". 35

We cannot discuss the details of Borgen's study, which raises complex issues of rabbinic interpretation, but for our understanding of the present passage his first and main point is particularly important. In Jewish thought, "an agent is like the one who sent him",<sup>36</sup> and it is as an agent carrying out the will and the work of the Father, that the Son

33. Käsemann, *Testament*, 11.

34. Peder Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel", in *Religions in Antiquity*, ed. J. Neusner (Numen Sup., 14; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 137-148. See also Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King. Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Nov. T. Sup., 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 301-302.

35. Borgen, *Religions*, 144.

36. *Ibid.*, 138. Borgen, n.2., cites the following references: "Mek.Ex. 12:3, 12:6; Berakoth 5:5; Baba Metzia 96a; Hagigah 10b; Qiddushin 42b, 43a; Menahoth 93b; Nazir 12b, etc." Obviously the dating of these will vary, but we accept that this idea was present in Judaism at the time of the evangelist.

may be considered "equal with God" (v.18). As the obedient Son, sent by the Father (v.23), and taught by the Father (v.20), Jesus was carrying out the work of God on earth, and so must receive the honour due to God alone (v.23).

These verses have been studied with some care, as they introduce what the author considers to be the evangelist's most characteristic understanding of the relationship of Jesus to God. As the obedient Son, taught by the Father and sent to carry out the Father's work on earth, Jesus may even be considered equal with God. But it is an equality only in terms of activity - in Jesus' work on earth the Father is acting too: "My Father is working still, and I am working" (v.17). The one-ness of the Father and the Son, as it is portrayed in these verses, is a one-ness of action. Let us consider now some other passages, from different areas of the gospel material, to see if they will reinforce, develop, or contradict this suggested interpretation.

JN.10:37,38; 14:10,11: One may deal more briefly with two other statements which have obvious relevance to the relationship between the Father and the Son, and first that of 10:38: "the Father is in me and I am in the Father". A similar statement may be found at 14:11: "I am in the Father and the Father in me", so it is of interest to consider both passages together. Not only are the statements virtually identical, but the contexts of the verses are also closely similar. In both cases Jesus is trying to explain his relation to the Father - in one case to the Jews (chap.10), in the other to the disciples (chap.14). In both instances, too, he appeals to the evidence of his works, or more precisely the activity of the Father working in him (10:37,38; 14:10, 11). The works bear witness to the fact that the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son. It does not seem necessary to suggest, as Bultmann does, that the "works" in this context must refer to "Jesus'

revealing activity as a whole".<sup>37</sup> It is admitted that the evangelist does use ἔργον in this sense at 17:4, but in the passages now under discussion, as in 5:17-23, we suggest that the "works" of Jesus refer to his healing activity on earth, which anticipates his future eschatological activity in giving life, and judgement (5:21-23). These works, which Jesus does for all to see, bear witness to the fact that "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (14:11).

It is true that at 14:10 Jesus also refers to the authority of his "words" -

"The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works".

Jesus' words have authority because of his unique relation to the Father, which is seen in the fact that the Father works in him. It is, however, the activity of Jesus which most clearly demonstrates his relation to the Father. Brown comments -

"From Jesus' point of view both word and work are revelatory, but from the audience's point of view works have greater confirmatory value than words".<sup>38</sup>

In both these passages (10:37, 38; 14:10,11) the works of Jesus, which are the works of the Father, provide the evidence for his assertion: "I am in the Father and the Father in me".

In dealing with these sayings, many commentators refer to the Hellenistic, philosophical concept of "mutual indwelling".<sup>39</sup> Dodd has been particularly influential in this regard with his study on the philosophical and religious use of the phrase ἐν θεῷ in Hellenism.<sup>40</sup> What is by no means certain, however, is that when the evangelist wrote these

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37. Bultmann, Gospel, 390.

38. Brown, Gospel, 622.

39. See e.g. Barrett, Gospel, 386; Lindars, Gospel, 376, 474.

40. Dodd, Interpretation, 187-192; see recently David L. Mealand, "The Language of Mystical Union in the Johannine Writings", Downside Review, 95 (1977), 19-34.



words he was thinking in Hellenistic, philosophical terms. In recent studies much more attention has been paid to the Jewish background of the evangelist's thought, and with justification. With regard to the statements at present under review we return to the interesting and stimulating study of Borgen, on the Jewish concept of agency.<sup>41</sup> We have seen that he suggests the halakhic principles of agency as background for the evangelist's understanding of the Son having been "sent" by the Father (as e.g. 5:23). Could this primarily judicial idea of agency also have been in the evangelist's mind when he wrote: "I am in the Father and the Father in me"? Borgen claims that it could, but before looking at his argument let us consider two points of context which seem relevant.

We have noted that in both passages (10:37,38; 14:10,11), the justification for the assertion, "I am in the Father and the Father in me", lies in the evidence of Jesus' works. "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, ..." (10:37,38). It is interesting that the evangelist presents a closely similar argument in chapter five - "... 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" (5:36). The works bear witness, but to what? Not in this case that, "I am in the Father and the Father in me", (14:11, cf. 10:38), but rather to the fact that "the Father has sent me" 5:36). One should not, of course, make any too certain claims on the evidence of such scattered material, but it is surely of interest that the evangelist can draw both conclusions from the evidence of Jesus' works. They show on the one hand that Jesus was "sent" by the Father (5:36), and on the other that he is "in the Father"

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41. Borgen, Religions, 137-148; see esp. 139.



(10:37, 14:11). May one not, with some justification, ask whether the evangelist would have in fact intended the kind of differentiation between the two statements so often assumed today?

Our questioning may gain some credibility when we consider the immediate context of 10:37,38. Jesus is here once more defending himself against the accusation of the Jews that he had made himself God (10:33, cf. 5:18). The details of the defence - based on a quotation from Ps. 82:6 - need not concern us, but essential to the success of the argument is the fact that Jesus is the one "whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world" (10:36). The proof of this assertion may be seen in his works - in reality the works of the Father - "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; ..." (10:37). As the discourse continues, however, it becomes clear that these same works also demonstrate the truth of Jesus' claim: "the Father is in me and I am in the Father". (10:38). It would seem that in this closely argued passage, the evangelist does not clearly distinguish between the assertions that Jesus is the one "whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world" (10:36), and that he is the one who can rightly claim: "the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (10:38). One wonders if they are more than different ways of expressing the one truth - that in the activity of Jesus on earth, the Father is working too. We suggest that both statements, when understood in the context of Jesus work on earth, are best interpreted in terms of the Jewish concept of agency.

At first glance it might appear that we are therefore in agreement with Borgen's study, and in general terms we are. We do, however, differ in our interpretation of this saying - "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (14:10,11; cf. 10:38). Borgen accepts that the statement implies "personal identity between the Son and the Father", and therefore extends the halakhic principle of agency into "a judicial mysticism", which said

that "the agent is a person identical with the sender". He argues -

"Thus not only his authority and his function are derived from the sender, but also his qualities. Qiddushin 43a formulates this mysticism in the following way: the agent ranks as his master's own person". 42

One's suspicions are immediately aroused on recognising that Borgen cites only one rabbinic source. The important question, however, is whether even that one possible source in fact provides the evidence he needs. Let us look more closely at the rabbinic statement. The discussion is whether or not an agent can become a witness. The school of R. Shila maintained - "An agent cannot become a witness; since a Master said: 'A man's agent is as himself', he ranks as his own person".<sup>43</sup> We are not convinced that this shows the kind of "personal identity" Borgen intends. In particular it says nothing of the agent deriving his "qualities" from the sender. The context is firmly that of the law-court; the agent cannot give evidence because in this respect, he ranks as the one who sent him. It says nothing at all of personal qualities, nor any form of identity.

How, then, may we maintain that the evangelist's thought still lies within the Jewish understanding of agency? Borgen's argument - just rejected - is in fact only necessary if one accepts that the Johannine saying implies "personal identity". In our examination of the contexts, however, it appears that the evangelist is implying no more by this statement, than when he wrote that Jesus was "consecrated and sent" (10: 36) by the Father. Both statements are made on the basis of Jesus works, or at least it is the evidence of the works which provides their proof. Dodd writes -

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42. Ibid., 139.

43. The Babylonian Talmud. Seder Nashim, Kiddushin 43a, trans. I. Epstein (London : Soncino, 1936), 216.

"the relation so described is either constituted by, or at least manifested in, an activity which, though its proximate agent is the Son, is in reality that of the Father". 44

This is not a statement of personal or metaphysical identity, but of activity. Because the Father is active in the works of Jesus on earth, so the claim can be made - "I am in the Father and the Father in me". It would seem, therefore, that the evangelist's intention in this saying (10:38;14:10,11), is not substantially different from that of 5:16-23. It is as the obedient Son, consecrated and sent by the Father, that Jesus can claim: "The Father is in me and I am in the Father". The one-ness of the Father and the Son is a one-ness of purpose, and of action.

JN.10:25-30: We must finally consider the clearest of all the statements in the Gospel on the unity of the Father and the Son - "I and the Father are one" (10:30; cf. 17:21). The evidence is again the witness of his works (v.26), but in this discourse - unlike the other passages we have discussed - it is important to realise that the statement on the one-ness of the Father and the Son is not so much a conclusion, as a basis for the assurance to the disciples - and hence to all believers - "no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (v.28).

The discourse is developed from the parable of the sheep-fold (vv. 1-5). Jesus promised to give "eternal life" (v.28) to those who "hear" his voice, and who "follow" him (v.27). "They shall never perish", he says, "and no one shall snatch them out of my hand", (v.28). In its setting in the Gospel the statement is directed to the disciples, but no doubt the evangelist was especially thinking of his own community - an early group of believers facing opposition, and perhaps disappointment.<sup>45</sup> Here Jesus himself offers the security that they are safe in his power, but what is the basis for such an assurance to the believers? It must

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44. Dodd, Interpretation, 194.

45. See chap. 3, and esp. the thesis of J. Louis Martyn, History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel (New York : Harper and Row, 1968).

be true, because of the parallel statement of v.29 - "No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand", and the logical link is v.30 - "I and the Father are one". That God is able to provide his people with security is not in doubt (e.g. Ezek. 34:25-31; Ps.23; cf. Deut. 32:39; Isa. 43:13; Wisdom 3:1). Because Jesus and the Father are one, therefore, he too can offer security and comfort. "No one shall snatch them out of my hand" (v.28), because "I and the Father are one" (v.30).

This seems to be the sense of the passage, whatever one makes of the notoriously difficult textual problem of v.29. In his commentary Barrett clearly sets out five possible variants, based on various combinations of ὅς , ὅ and μείζον , μείζων.<sup>46</sup> The text favoured by the critics and adopted in both the Nestle-Kilpatrick and United Bible Societies editions, is ὁ δέδωκέν μου πάντων μείζόν ἔσται; the sentence then being translated by Barrett: "As to my Father, what he has given me is greater than all, and no one can snatch..."<sup>47</sup> It is not usually acceptable textual criticism to reject a reading because it does not seem to fit with the context of the passage, but in this case the reading so obviously conflicts with the progress of the argument that it must reluctantly be set aside. The fact that the variants must have appeared at a very early stage in the Gospel's transmission, and that the evidence for no one reading clearly dominates, makes this procedure more acceptable.<sup>48</sup>

Most commentators adopt one of two readings - ὁ δέδωκέν μου

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46. Barrett, Gospel, 381.

47. Barrett, Gospel, 381.

48. Textual evidence is best set out in the U.B.S. apparatus. It is interesting that the editors evaluate the degree of certainty of the adopted reading as {D} , indicating "a very high degree of doubt", xiii.



πάντων μείζων ἐστίν<sup>49</sup> or ὃς δέδωκέν μου μείζων πάντων  
ἐστίν<sup>50</sup>. The first may be translated: "My Father in regard to

what he has given me is greater than all" (Lindars), while the second, adopted by both the R.S.V. and N.E.B., reads: "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all,..." A decision between these two is finely balanced,<sup>51</sup> but in fact whichever is chosen the essential meaning of the passage remains the same. Some have claimed that the first reading restricts the power of God, but does it not rather define where the power of God in this instance may be seen to operate - that is, in his flock? Whatever reading is adopted, the thread of the evangelist's thinking seems clear enough - those who have followed Jesus are secure in him, because he is one with the Father, and the Father is greater than all.

What then do we learn from this passage about the one-ness which the evangelist intends between the Father and the Son? Again we find no evidence for a metaphysical or personal unity. Because there is a one-ness of purpose, there is a one-ness of power. Because in Jesus it is the Father who acts, so the believers may rest secure in him. Brown describes it as "a unity of power and operation".<sup>52</sup>

In conclusion, then, we suggest that one of the distinctive aspects of this Gospel is the emphasis on the relation of one-ness between the Father and the Son. This should not be seen as any kind of ontological

49. See Brown, Gospel, 403; Lindars, Gospel, 369-70; J. Neville Birdsall, "John x.29", J.T.S., N.S. 11 (1960), 342-344.

50. Bernard, Commentary, 347; Dodd, Interpretation, 433, n.1; Bultmann, Commentary, 386, n. 3; John Whittaker, "A Hellenistic Context for John 10,29." V.C., 24 (1970), 241-260. Many scholars invert the reading to πάντων μείζων, for reasons which are not at all clear. This variant - admittedly only a minor one - has little textual support, and should not be adopted.

51. See Appendix A.

52. Brown, Gospel, 407.



unity, however. It is a one-ness of action, of purpose, and of power. Jesus may be said to be one with the Father because, as the obedient Son, the Father works in him.

### THE EPISTLES

The Epistles of John, more obviously than the Gospel, were written to influence a specific situation in the community or communities to which they were sent. One must expect, therefore, that the theological emphases of these letters will be influenced by the situation with which they are concerned, and to which they respond. A detailed consideration of that situation, however, together with some discussion of the relation of the three letters, is more properly a topic for a later chapter.<sup>53</sup> At present we shall only consider the division in the community which becomes apparent in the First Letter, insofar as it affects the writer's presentation of the relationship of the Father to the Son. There is no doubt that at least one issue of dispute - one suspects the major issue - was christological in nature, and so in a study of this kind it cannot be ignored.

In his study of the First Epistle, Law noted the change in christological emphasis with respect to the Gospel - "its doctrinal emphasis is not upon the relation of Divine Father and Divine Son, but upon the relation of the Divine Son to the historic Jesus".<sup>54</sup> He also noted, however, that as in the Gospel, the writer portrays and assumes a close relation between the Father and the Son. Law wrote -

"The Son, no less than the Father, is the object of religious faith (5:13), hope (3:3), and obedience (3:23). He that confesseth the Son hath the Father also (2:23). Our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ (1:3). Believers are exhorted to 'abide' in Christ (2:28), as elsewhere to 'abide' in God ... again and again it is left uncertain whether 'God' or 'Christ' is the subject of statement, an ambiguity which would be reckless except on the presumption of their religious equivalence".<sup>55</sup>

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53. See concluding chapter.

54. Robert Law, The Tests of Life, 99.

55. Ibid., 98. See also Bultmann, Theology, II, 50.

While one may be reluctant to use the term "equivalence", Law's able and comprehensive summary does indicate the close relation assumed in this letter between the Father and the Son. In our consideration we shall attempt to see more clearly the writer's understanding of this relationship, but first we shall consider something of his aim in writing, and the nature of the dispute within the community.

1 JN. 1:3: The aim of writing the First Epistle is stated at 1:3 -

"that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (cf. 5:13).

The intention was to offer fellowship and encouragement to those who "believe in the name of the Son of God" (5:13), reminding them of the promise to them of eternal life (2:25; cf. 5:13, 1:2). In this Epistle, written to a divided community (e.g. 2:19,26; 4:1), "fellowship" - *κοινωνία* - is clearly an important term, even if rarely used (1:3,6,7). The translation is difficult - "fellowship", as it is used today is too weak a term, while "communion", with its semi-technical emphasis, is even less acceptable. Dodd suggests the fundamental meanings of "partnership", or "joint-ownership",<sup>56</sup> but it may be best to continue to use "fellowship", while recognising that it has a special significance. Bultmann notes -

"The term *κοινωνία* ("fellowship") is encountered only here and in vss. 6f., but the motif runs throughout the whole Epistle is a series of different expressions that speak of being in God (2:5; (5:20)) or of remaining in God (2:6,24), and in the reciprocal formula : we in God and he in us (3:24; 4:13)." 57

True fellowship is "with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1:3). Those who remain firm in the authentic doctrine "which was from the beginning" (1:1), will be in this fellowship with the Father and the Son,

56. C.H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles (M.N.T.C.; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), 6.

57. Rudolf Bultmann, The Johannine Epistles, 13.

and so in fellowship with the author as well. The thought in this verse seems similar to, if not identical with, that of Jn. 17 (esp. 20-23). While in the Epistle the one-ness of the Father and the Son is not expressly stated, the idea of the Gospel would seem to be implied, and indeed assumed. Because the Father and the Son act as one, so too should the believers on earth, and if they are true believers they will have fellowship with one another.

1 JN. 2:22-25 (cf. 2 JN. 9): In these verses, which may well be considered the central christological statement of the Epistle, the nature of the controversy becomes apparent. The "liar" and the "antichrist" is the one who "denies that Jesus is the Christ", which is in effect to deny both the Father and the Son. "No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also" (v.23).

To consider first the false teaching, it might be assumed from these verses that hostile to the writer was a group of Jews who persistently refused to accept that Jesus was the Christ,<sup>58</sup> indeed that situation seems to be reflected in the Gospel (e.g. 4:25,26; 7:25-31; 9:22; 10:24; 20:31). From other verses, however, it becomes clear that that was not the situation in 1 John. 1 Jn. 2:19 suggests that the group of "antichrists" were people who had once been members of the Christian community, indeed they probably still considered themselves to be Christians, but they had gone out from the community, not only in the physical sense but also in the sense that their doctrine had gone beyond true Christian teaching (2 Jn. 9). In 2 Jn. 7 - a letter which reflects the same controversy as the first letter - one reads: "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh". The dispute was not about whether Jesus

58. See e.g. J.C. O'Neill, The Puzzle of 1 John (London : S.P.C.K., 1966).

was the Christ, but whether Jesus Christ had really come in the flesh (cf. 1 Jn. 4:2). It was in essence a dispute on the reality of the Incarnation.

"Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?  
This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son"<sup>59</sup>  
(v.22)

To deny the reality of the Incarnation - to deny that the human Jesus really is the Christ - is to deny both the Son and the Father. The believer's relation to the Father is determined by his relation to the Son. To deny the Son is also and inevitably to deny the Father (2:23; cf. 4:15; 5:12). Schnackenburg paraphrases the thought of the passage - "Jesus, der geschichtliche Jesus, ist wirklich (ἔστιν) der "Christus", der als der Gottessohn in engster Gemeinschaft mit dem Vater steht und dahin auch die an ihn Glaubenden führt".<sup>60</sup>

Again in this passage the one-ness of the father and the Son is assumed by the author rather than discussed. Presumably it was part of the common tradition of the community, and so needed no argument. The statement of v.23, has obvious parallels in John's Gospel (e.g. 5:23; 12:44-45; 13:20; 14:6-9), and also to Synoptic sayings (cf. Matt. 10:40; Lk. 10:16; Matt. 11:27; Lk. 10:22). There is, however, one interesting distinction. In the Gospel it is not said of the believer, as it is in the Epistle, that he has (ἔχειν) God (cf. 2 Jn. 9). Bultmann wisely comments -

"This term does not differ materially from γινώσκειν ("know"), since the latter does not denote a theoretical knowledge, but that relationship in which the one knowing is determined existentially by the one who is the object of knowledge".<sup>61</sup>

While one should not make too much of a difference in terminology, the writer's use of ἔχειν, here and at 2 Jn. 9, does suggest some influence,

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59. Bultmann, Epistles, 35.

60. Rudolf Schnackenburg, Johannesbriefe, 157.

61. Bultmann, Epistles, 39.



whether deliberate or unconscious, of gnostic form of expression (cf. 5:12).<sup>62</sup> The thought of the passage, however, is essentially that of the Gospel.

1 JN. 4:13-16: While the passages we have already considered imply a close relation between the Father and the Son, they do not discuss the nature of the relationship. We may consider briefly two further passages in this regard. Dodd describes 1 Jn. 4:13-18 as "a balanced, comprehensive and singularly impressive account of the grounds of Christian assurance".<sup>63</sup> The Spirit working in the believer assures him of the love of God (v.16), already evident in that "the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world" (v. 14; cf. 1 Jn. 4:9,10). In the Gospel we detected an emphasis on the sending of God's Son as the Father's agent in the world. In this verse he is sent as "the Saviour of the world" (cf. Jn. 4:42).

The designation of Jesus as "the Saviour of the world" is not common in the New Testament. Houlden suggests -

"The evidence indicates, then, that in so far as early Christians made use of the term, they were as likely to apply it to God - as the Old Testament had done (e.g. LXX of Deut. 32:15; Isaiah 12:2; 17:10, 45:21f) - as to Jesus, and it only becomes at all common in the later years covered by the writings of the New Testament".<sup>64</sup>

The term as it is used here has an obviously active meaning - to bring salvation, or in Johannine terminology "life" to those who believe. One may compare 1 Jn. 4:9 - "God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him". So in v.14 it is stated - "the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world". The Son of God, the Saviour of the world, brings life to those who believe.

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62. See also Dodd, Epistles, 57; Schnackenburg, Johannesbriefe, 158,n.1.

63. Dodd, Epistles, 116.

64. J.L. Houlden, A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles (London : Black, 1973), 116; see also Brooke Foss Westcott, The Epistles of St. John, new introd. F.F. Bruce (Abingdon : Marcham Manor, 1966), 153-154.



1 JN. 5:11,12: The life-giving activity of the Father acting in and through the Son is again found in these verses. The "testimony" of God, is that in his Son he offered eternal life to those who believe - "He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life". (v. 12). In 2:23 we learnt that to "have" the Father one must confess the Son, now it is stated that to "have" the Son, is to have life (cf. 1 Jn. 2:25).

The theme of "life" is, of course, an important one in the Gospel. In discussing Jn. 5:19-23 we saw that the two particular activities of the Son on earth are to give life and to judge (Jn. 5:21,22). Even if we cannot go so far as to claim, with Dodd, that the author had a specific Gospel passage in mind,<sup>65</sup> there can be little doubt that he was recalling the themes, and even the language, of the Gospel. He was using the tradition of the Johannine community to remind the believers of true faith, and encourage them in the face of opposition. The Father bore witness to the Son whom he sent into the world to act for him, giving life to those who believe (cf. Jn. 5:19-47; esp. 21-24, 37-42). "I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life". (1 Jn. 5:13).

On the basis of this christological evidence, then, one may make some suggestion as to the tensions in the Johannine community, and the relation of the Gospel to the First Epistle. In the Epistle the relation of the Father to the Son is not explicitly discussed, but some kind of one-ness seems to be assumed. The nature of that one-ness, however, is more difficult to assess. In the Gospel we noted that the one-ness of the Father and the Son was expressed in terms of action and purpose. God sent his Son to be his agent in the world. The controversy in the

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65. Dodd, Epistles, 132.

Epistle, it would appear, reflects a more Hellenistic understanding of unity. The "antichrists" and "liars", were those who, understanding the unity of Jesus and God in terms of being, could not accept the complete unity of human and divine in Jesus Christ. The letter-writer was recalling believers to the early traditions of the community, and the relation of the Father to the Son which was indicated in the Gospel. The Father and the Son are one, because God sent his Son as the Saviour of the world, to bring life to those who believe (1 Jn. 4:9,14). One cannot decide from a study of this single issue the relation of the written Gospel to the First Epistle but the thought in this instance is so close that one must posit some contact and common tradition between the two writings.

#### THE APOCALYPSE

In comparing the Gospel and the Letters, one must be aware of the different aims of the writings, and the situations to which they were addressed. In comparing the Gospel and the Letters with the Apocalypse, the difficulties become much more obvious and acute. Any theological comparison, but perhaps especially a christological comparison, must accept the different forms and expressions of these writings. In the Gospel, and to a lesser extent the Letters, the writer was mainly considering the human Jesus and his activity on earth. The emphasis and vision of the Apocalypse, however, is on the heavenly activity of Jesus, the risen and glorified Lord. The comparison is not a simple or straightforward one.

There are, however, two considerations which encourage the undertaking, and indicate the validity of such a comparison. While the emphasis of the Apocalypse is on the activity of the glorified Lord, the author leaves no doubt that the heavenly Lord is in reality the earthly Jesus,

now risen and glorified. It is "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1), or again, "I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches" (22:16). The name "Jesus" by itself is frequently used (1:9; 12:17; 14:12; 17:6; 19:10; 20:4; 22:16), together with "Lord Jesus" (22:20), and "Jesus Christ" (1:1, 2, 5; 22:21). There is no doubt that the heavenly Lord of the Apocalypse is the earthly Jesus, who by his death conquered death (1:5, 1:18; 5:5,9), and became the "first-born of the dead" (1:5). Nowhere is this more vividly stated than in the image of the Lamb "standing, as though ( $\omega\varsigma$ ) it had been slain" (5:6), which prompted the refrain:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!" (5:12).

The glorified Lord is none other than the crucified but risen Jesus. As Caird remarks -

"John's Christology, and therefore his theology, is firmly anchored in the Jesus of history". 66

To make a comparison one should also consider the nature of the gospel statements. They too were written from the perspective of Easter faith, so while John's Gospel, like any of the Gospels, contains elements of very early historical tradition, they must be considered primarily as documents of the early church. When the evangelist wrote: "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (14:10), or "I and the Father are one" (10:30), these were not words of the earthly Jesus, but confessions of the evangelist's faith. Certainly they were rooted in the teaching of Jesus - perhaps the parable of 5:19-20a - but they took their present form after the events of Jesus' death and resurrection. One may therefore suggest, that while it is true there is a difficulty in comparing

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66. See G.B. Caird, A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine (BNTC; London : Black, 1966), esp. 290-292, 296-297; quot. 290. Also Charles, Revelation, I, cx-cxiv.

the christological statements of the Gospel and the Apocalypse, with their different emphases and aims, in both books the risen Christ is identified with the human Jesus, and so the comparison is by no means impossible or invalid.

Many commentators have noted the close relationship which exists between Christ as he is presented in the Apocalypse, and God the Father.<sup>67</sup> Rissi considers -

"The most important and central confession, however, states that God is the 'father' of Jesus Christ (1:6; 2:28; 3:5, 21; 14:1). God's fatherhood is referred only to Christ, who lives in an exclusive relationship with God. For the Father speaks his word through Christ (19:13), and also acts through him, executing his will (6:1ff)".<sup>68</sup>

It is also frequently pointed out that in the Apocalypse prerogatives which in the Old Testament would be attributed to God, are also exercised by Christ, either alone (e.g. 1:18; 2:23, 3:7,19), or acting with the Father (e.g. 5:13; 6:16,17; 7:10; 11:15). Descriptions and designations of God in the Old Testament are applied to Christ (e.g. 1:13-16, cf. Dan. 7:9, 10; 5:6, cf. Zech. 4:10; 17:14, cf. Deut. 10:17), and worship is offered both to God and to the Lamb (5:13, 14; 7:9-12), who sits on the Father's throne (3:21; 22:1-3). To be a priest of God is also to be a priest of Christ (20:6). In our study we shall concentrate on some verses which express this relationship of God, the Father, and his Christ, and indicate their joint activity in relation to men.

REV. 3:21: One such verse is Rev. 3:21 -

"He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne".

The promise to those who are faithful in the church of Laodicea is that they will one day reign with Christ, as he now reigns with the Father

67. Note esp. Charles, Revelation I, cxi-cxii; Caird, Commentary, 290; Wilfred J. Harrington, The Apocalypse of St. John (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969), 44; J. Comblin, Le Christ dans L'Apocalypse (Théologie Biblique 3,6; Paris: Desclée, 1965), 191-194.

68. Matthias Rissi, "The Kerygma of the Revelation to John", Int., 22 (1968), 3-17; quot. 6.



(cf. 20:4; 22:5), but it is a promise which will only be fulfilled after a time of testing (vv. 18,19). The expectation that the Messiah will sit on a throne of glory may be found in 1 Enoch (e.g. 45:3; 51:3; 55:4), but in Revelation it is a present reality. The throne is "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (22:1,3), and on it the Father and the Son reign together (cf. 21:22,23). Kiddle comments -

"Christ's sharing of God's throne is, of course, simply a metaphorical expression for his sharing in God's power and authority". 69

It is the fact that Jesus already reigns with God - that he has conquered (3:21) - which gives point and assurance to the promise to the faithful that they too will reign with him (cf. 2 Tim. 2:11-13; 1 Cor. 6:2). This present reality of the reign of Jesus with the Father, as the basis for the hope of faithful believers, may be contrasted with the similar idea of Matt. 19:28,29 (but cf. Luke 22:29,30). There the Son of Man will one day reign, but in Revelation Jesus already sits with his Father on his throne. The thought of the passage, although not the form of expression, is closely similar to Jn. 17:20-24. The hope of the faithful is based on the fact that Jesus already reigns with the Father - "I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne" (3:21).

REV. 6:16,17: One of the activities of Jesus and the Father on the throne is reflected in the fear of the men who call to the mountains and the rocks,

"Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand before it?"

The Almighty God and the Lamb together shall judge.

The scene in chapters 4-8 does not change as the vision is unfolded. The elders before the throne of God, worship the one who created all

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69. Martin Kiddle, The Revelation of St. John, ass. M.K. Ross (M.N.T.C.; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1940), 60.

things - "... by thy will they existed and were created" (4:11). God on his throne is "the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (4:8), so the elders fell down in worship (4:10). In his right hand God held a scroll, sealed with seven seals, and the only one worthy to open the seals was Jesus, the Lamb who had been slain - "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God ..." (5:9). As each seal was opened, the vision developed further, and when the sixth seal was opened the author saw the events of the day of judgement, pictured in vivid apocalyptic imagery (cf. Joel 2:31; Isa. 34:4; Matt. 24:29-31; Mark 14:24-27; Luke 22:25-28). It is these events (vv.12-14) which prompt all men, whatever their status and background in life (v.15), to hide in fear "from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (v.16; cf. Gen. 3:8; Hos. 10:8).

The expression "the wrath of the Lamb", has provoked considerable controversy, mainly from those commentators unwilling to attribute "ὄργη" to such a figure of self-sacrificing love (cf. Mark 3:5). Charles notes Vischer, Spitta, Weyland, Völter and J. Weiss, among those who

"have variously urged that elsewhere in the Apocalypse the Lamb has always a peaceful role, whereas the wrath of God is frequently spoken of: 11:18; 14:10,19; 15:7; 16:1,19; 19:15. Further, that six verses earlier, i.e. 6:10, where the martyrs cry for judgement, God and not the Lamb is addressed; and that this is so in the present passage is shown by the αὐτοῦ in 17". 70

To consider first the textual point, we consider with Nestle-Kirkpatrick and U.B.S. that αὐτῶν rather than αὐτοῦ is the more likely reading of v.17. Even if αὐτοῦ is adopted, however, it does not necessarily eliminate the phrase τῆς ὄργης τοῦ ἀρνίου in v.16. As well as αὐτοῦ referring to God alone, Beckwith notes two other possibilities -

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70. Charles, Revelation, I, 182.

"If the singular  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ , his, found in some Mss., be adopted, it may refer to the Lamb alone, the Lamb's wrath because of the hostility of the world being the thought uppermost in mind; or while both God and the Lamb are thought of, the singular may be used because their wrath is conceived as one, see on  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , v. 8, also the use of the singular, 22:3, ..." 71

We suggest that the Almighty God and the Lamb are both considered to act together in judgement, men being judged by their response to Jesus (e.g. 3:20,21). As in the Gospel the Father gives the role of Judgement to the Son (Jn. 5:22) but still retains his own authority (Jn. 5:30), so in the Apocalypse the wrath is not only of God Almighty, seated on the throne, but also of the Lamb who was slain. The method of expressing the concept is very different, but the thought of the Gospel and the Apocalypse at this point seems very similar.

REV. 7:10: If the Lamb has a role to play in judgement, what then of the other activity of the Son in John 5, that of giving life? (Jn. 5:21). In Rev. 7:10 we read: "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" (cf. 12:10; 14:1). The scene is the same as in the passage above, but rather than those who are condemned hiding themselves from the wrath of God and the Lamb, attention shifts to those who have been faithful. Caird insists that  $\eta\ \sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\iota\alpha$  in this context should be translated "victory" - the victory of martyrs who have triumphed through persecution,<sup>72</sup> but there seems no reason to limit those "clothed in white robes" (v.9) to martyrs. All true believers who have been faithful in this life - "a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues" (v.9) - shall enjoy the salvation which "belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb" (v.10). It is not their victory in the face of persecution that the faithful are celebrating, but the salvation which belongs to God, and by his death also to the Lamb.

71. Isbon T. Beckwith, The Apocalypse of John (reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), 530.

72. See Caird, Commentary, 100.

"These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (v.14).

So the Apocalyptist may paint a glorious picture of the future for believers -

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes". (v.17)

God and the Lamb together bring salvation to the faithful, The Lamb "will guide them to the springs of living water"; he will give life to those who truly believe. As in the Gospel the Son is active in giving life and in judgement, so in the Apocalypse the Lamb plays his part, together with God, in these functions.

In comparing the Gospel and the First Epistle, a common christological tradition emphasising the one-ness of action of the Father and the Son seemed almost certain. One may be fairly sure that those writings emerged in the same milieu of thought, although whether it may rightly be called a community is an issue for later discussion. A decision on the relation of the Gospel to the Apocalypse is much more difficult, and it would be unjustified to draw any firm conclusion from this one aspect of study alone. The terminology and method of expression are clearly very different, as are the issues of concern to the respective authors. At the same time the relation of God to Jesus in the Apocalypse is a very close one, and they are often considered to act together. As in the Gospel the obedient Son is active in giving life and judgement, so in the Apocalypse these functions are attributed to the Lamb who was slain - a clear reference to Jesus and his obedience in death. There is no doubt that the two writings do have a certain affinity in christological emphasis, although any decision as to their overall relationship will require further study. In the next chapter we



shall consider two other emphases of the Gospel - the role of the Spirit of Truth, and the demand to keep the commandments.

## APPENDIX A

A TEXTUAL COMMENT ON 10:29<sup>1</sup>

In this thesis we have suggested that it is best to adopt one of two readings - ὁ δέδωκέν μου πάντων μέγιστον ἔστω; ὡς δέδωκέν μου μέγιστον πάντων ἔστω. These may be briefly considered.

The first suggestion, attested by N L W Ψ and supported by the D variant, is rejected by Metzger, presumably with the support of some of his colleagues, as "impossible Greek" which "cannot be construed".<sup>2</sup> It is a strange judgement considering the attempted translation of Barrett, Brown, and more recently Lindars.<sup>3</sup> Metzger presumably means that he does not agree with the proposed translations, but "impossible" seems a very strong judgement. A more balanced statement is that of Whittaker -

"this bold use of a relative clause, without antecedent, to limit the meaning of an adjectival predicate would be unique in NT Greek and not easy to parallel elsewhere".<sup>4</sup>

It is fair to say that it is an unlikely construction.

The second possibility, accepted by the R.S.V. and N.E.B. translations, has now received support from the reading of P<sup>66</sup> - ὡς ἔδωκέν μέγιστον πάντων ἔστω. It is sometimes unjustifiably rejected without discussion on the grounds that "if original [it] would almost certainly not have been altered".<sup>5</sup> That, however, is to ignore Bernard who showed very clearly how it might have been altered.<sup>6</sup> A more serious consideration of how other variants might have arisen if this reading is adopted seems necessary.

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1. For much of this discussion I am indebted to a conversation with Dr. I. A. Moir, although the comments should not of course be taken as his opinion.
  2. Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, with Editorial Committee of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 232.
  3. Barrett, Gospel, 381.
  4. Whittaker, V.C., 24 (1970), 241.
  5. Again Metzger, Commentary, 232; also Lindars, Gospel, 370; Barrett, Gospel, 381.
  6. Bernard, Commentary, 347-348; see also Whittaker, V.C., 24 (1970), esp. 244-245.

First we consider the possible change from  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}\varsigma$  to  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}$ . While  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}\varsigma$  makes good sense as it stands,  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}\delta\omega\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  in the present reading is missing an object.  $\delta\ \pi\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\rho\ \mu\omicron\upsilon$  is already the subject of the sentence, so it is not inconceivable that a scribe "motivated, whether consciously or unconsciously, by the desire to provide an explicit object to  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}\delta\omega\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ ",<sup>7</sup> made the alteration. We consider that the motivation would most likely have been unconscious, aided by the fact that he had already written  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\delta\omega\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \mu\omicron\upsilon$  (6:39), and would do so again (18:11; cf. 16:37, 17: 2,4,24). Unconscious harmonization to these admittedly distant phrases is not impossible, especially with the added motivation of providing an object.

What then of the other variants? The reading adopted by Barrett<sup>8</sup> -  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}\varsigma$  ... -  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\zeta\omicron\nu$  - would involve the change from  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\zeta\omega\nu$  to  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\zeta\omicron\nu$ . This might be explained as a transcriptional error, although it is also possible that a scribe was not so concerned as we are today with clear grammatical differentiation. In any case the change is not inconceivable, and is in fact relatively minor. This leaves the B reading -  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}$  ...  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\zeta\omicron\nu$  - to be explained. There would be two possibilities. If  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\zeta\omega\nu$  had already changed to  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\zeta\omicron\nu$  there is an even greater possibility of harmonization to  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\delta\omega\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \mu\omicron\upsilon$ , while if  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}\varsigma$  had become  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}$  the change to  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\zeta\omicron\nu$  might be introduced to make less clumsy Greek.

It is very difficult to decide between these two readings:  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}$  ...  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\zeta\omega\nu$ ;  $\overset{\epsilon}{\omicron}\varsigma$  ...  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\zeta\omega\nu$ . In conclusion one must indicate a slight preference for the former, mainly because it is the more difficult reading. One suspects, however, that no definite decision can really be taken on the basis of current evidence, and in the text of the thesis we have suggested that whatever textual decision is taken the meaning is not materially altered.

7. Whittaker, V.C., 24 (1970), 244.

8. Barrett, Gospel, 381.

## CHAPTER THREE

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

When one turns from the christology of the Gospel to the pneumatology, the statements which immediately come to mind as offering a new and unique insight into the work of the spirit are those in the farewell discourses, concerning the Paraclete - Spirit of Truth. The term ὁ παράκλητος is found only five times in the New Testament, at Jn. 14:15,26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 Jn. 2:1, while τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας occurs at Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16-13; 1 Jn. 4:6. While one must not assume that a peculiar term necessarily implies a unique understanding, or a new emphasis in content, many scholars do consider the figure of the Paraclete to be, as Schnackenburg writes, "ein eigentümliches und einzigartiges Phänomen im N.T."<sup>1</sup> That is not, however to agree with Windisch who considered the Paraclete-sayings to be "alien entities in the course of both dialogues (chaps. 13-14, 15-16)."<sup>2</sup> Discussing chapter 14 he wrote: "The sending of the Spirit, ..., is an entirely new idea which is not prepared for in what comes before and is not referred to in what follows".<sup>3</sup> One cannot now accept that judgement.<sup>4</sup> Earlier, in chapter one, the evolution of the gospel material in preaching was discussed, and the possible basis on which it may have been brought together to preserve as much material as possible. If some such theory of composition is accepted, any theory of interpolation, such as that of Windisch becomes unnecessary. The return of Jesus, and the coming of the Paraclete, were both promises of encouragement to the early community, and there is no

1. Rudolf Schnackenburg, Das Johannesevangelium, III (H.T.K.N.T. 4; 2nd ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 156.

2. Hans Windisch, "The Five Johannine Paraclete Sayings", in The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel, trans. J.W. Cox (F.B.B.S. 20; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 3.

3. Ibid., 2.

4. See Johnston, Spirit-Paraclete, esp. 61-67. He considers the Gospel was by the same author as 1 John, and draws parallels between 1 John and the Paraclete passages.



reason why they should not have been placed side by side when the Gospel was finally produced. The lasting contribution of Windisch's study is to emphasise the special nature of the five Paraclete-sayings.

In his comparison of the Gospel and the First Epistle, Dodd also detected a special emphasis in the sayings of the farewell discourses. He wrote -

"But in the closing discourses of the Fourth Gospel the Spirit is more unequivocally personal than anywhere else in the New Testament... The Epistle, on the other hand, applies the term παράκλητος to Christ alone, and uses the term pneuma in a way which approximates to popular usage as we know it from Paul and the Acts". 5

It would seem that in fact Dodd is comparing the teaching of the First Epistle only with the farewell discourse material, while ignoring the rest of the Gospel. Johnston makes the useful observation -

"Our own investigations into the Fourth Gospel suggest that the spirit-paraclete passages must not be isolated from John's Christology, and quite certainly not from everything he has to say about 'spirit'". 6

It is a caution well made. While we also concentrate on the farewell discourse sayings, it is to detect a special emphasis, not to suggest that this is the only teaching on the spirit contained in the Gospel. The study, therefore, centres on the terms ὁ παράκλητος and τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, to consider if they indicate a special function of the spirit.

14:15-17. The first Paraclete-saying offers a useful introduction.

While written as a saying of Jesus, it is clear that the evangelist primarily had in mind the needs of the early community facing opposition.<sup>7</sup>

The promise of the Paraclete is to encourage those who believe -

5. Dodd, B.J.R.L., 21 (1937), 146-147.

6. Johnston, Spirit-Paraclete, 83. See also l de la Potterie, "Parole et Esprit dans S. Jean" in L'Évangile de Jean, ed. M. de Jonge (B.E. T.L. 44; Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1977), 177-201.

7. Note esp. the study of J. Louis Martyn, History and Theology.

"If you love me you will keep<sup>8</sup> my commandments, And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, 9 to be with you for ever (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), ...; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you". (vv. 15-17).

In one sense the promise was fulfilled when Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection and "breathed on them" (20:22), but in another sense the Paraclete will be present with each believer, to encourage and support those who love Jesus and keep his commandments.

The tension which exists in the evangelist's writing between the future promise of Jesus to the disciples, and the present activity of the Paraclete in the community of his own time, is reflected in the confusion of tenses in v. 17. One may accept <sup>10</sup> ἔσται as the most probable reading, simply because it follows two present tenses - γινώσκετε and μένει - and is therefore unexpected.<sup>10</sup> Even the present verbs, however, must be understood in a proleptic sense.<sup>11</sup> From the standpoint of the evangelist the Paraclete was already present in the church, and with individual believers, but for the disciples before the crucifixion, the coming of the Paraclete could only be anticipated as a future event.

In v.16 one learns that when the Spirit of Truth comes, as a Paraclete, he will not be the first Paraclete, but " ἄλλον παράκλητον ". In 1 Jn. 2:1, Jesus in his heavenly activity after the resurrection is described as a Paraclete. It would seem that the evangelist intends to

8. The sense of the passage is not altered by the textual variants of

τηρέω.

9. παράκλητος is here translated "Counsellor", N.E.B. "Advocate". It seems preferable, in agreement with many scholars, simply to transliterate the term as "Paraclete". There is no one English word which adequately conveys the evangelist's understanding - Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, III (H.T.K.N.T. 4; Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 159, emphasises the distinctive Johannine understanding of the concept.

10. Cf. Brown, Gospel, 640.

11. See Barrett, Gospel, 463, who considers <sup>11</sup> ἔσται to be a probable correction.

attribute the term to Jesus also in his earthly activity. Some commentators have tried to avoid this interpretation by translating, "another, a Paraclete",<sup>12</sup> but while linguistically possible this does not seem to elucidate the thought of the evangelist. The continuity between the work of Jesus and the work of the Paraclete has been powerfully argued by Brown -

"John presents the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit in a special role, namely, as the personal presence of Jesus in the Christian while Jesus is with the Father".<sup>13</sup>

He draws many parallels between the coming and activity of Jesus in the world, and the future coming and activity of the Paraclete. Indeed, Brown claims - "Virtually everything that has been said about the Paraclete has been said elsewhere in the Gospel about Jesus".<sup>14</sup> It should be noted, however, that Brown does not intend to identify Jesus and the Paraclete; the two have different roles.<sup>15</sup>

This approach has gained strong support from Leaney, in his discussion of the Johannine Paraclete and the Qumran Scrolls. Leaney suggests -

"The correct balance in understanding this matter may be won by remembering that for Judaism God himself is the Paraclete, he who brings final paraklesis to his people. No documentation is needed for the claim that according to the Fourth Gospel God has come to his people in Jesus : the Paraclete has taken flesh and offered his final consolation and redemption by his sacrifice of himself, ..." 16

He offers the following formulation for the relationship between Jesus

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12. E.g. Sanders, Gospel, 327. This understanding is reflected in the N.E.B. translation.
13. Brown, Gospel, 1139-1141, quot. 1139; also "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel", N.T.S., 13 (1966-67), 113-132, esp. 126-128. The parallelism is also noted by Bultmann, Gospel, 567.
14. Ibid., 1140.
15. See ibid., 1141.
16. A.R.C. Leaney, "The Johannine Paraclete and the Qumran Scrolls", in John and Qumran, ed. J.H. Charlesworth (London: Chapman, 1972), 38-61, quot. 47.

and the Paraclete -

"The Paraclete is a Spirit sent by God to take the place of Jesus, and his task is to assist and inform the disciples of Jesus, or the Christian Church, so that they can succeed in their task of self-defence". 17

To accept that designation, is immediately to raise one of the most contentious issues in the recent debate concerning the background and meaning of the term.<sup>18</sup> It is the relationship of the personal and the impersonal in the evangelist's presentation of the Paraclete - Spirit of Truth.<sup>19</sup> Dodd's opinion that, "in the closing discourses of the Fourth Gospel the Spirit is more unequivocally personal than anywhere else in the New Testament",<sup>20</sup> has already been noted. While that would still be the view of a majority of scholars, Johnston has challenged "the assumption without further ado that in John 'paraclete' is the title of a person and that it is possible to speak about 'the Paraclete'."<sup>21</sup> He concludes that "the spirit or the spirit-paraclete, ... is the power of God in the life and teaching of Jesus, and the power of God and of Christ in the life and doctrine of the Church".<sup>22</sup> Criticising Johnston, Malatesta in his turn claimed -

"The most serious weakness of the entire presentation seems to be the author's apparent inability to go beyond the concept of the spirit as power ... and his hesitancy to conceive of the Spirit in John as a person". 23

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17. Ibid., 59. Also on this topic see Ulrich B. Müller, "Die Parakletenvorstellung im Johannesevangelium", Z.T.K., 71 (1974), 31-77; Edward Schweizer, in Spirit of God, trans. A.E. Harvey (London: A. & C. Black, 1960), 95-97; Kümmel, Theology, 315-317; James D.G. Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit (London: S.C.M., 1975), 350-351.
18. Useful summaries of recent research include Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, III, 163-169; Johnston, Spirit-Paraclete, 80-126; Otto Betz, Der Paraklet (A.G.J.U. 2; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), 4-35; D.E. Holwerda, The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in the Gospel of John (N.V. Kampen: J.M. Kok, 1959), 25-38.
19. On this note esp. Johnston, Spirit-Paraclete, 80-87; Brown, N.T.S., 13 (1966-67), 119-126; both of whom draw on the study of Betz, Paraklet.
20. Dodd, B.J.R.L., 21 (1937), 146.
21. Johnston, Spirit-Paraclete, 81.
22. Ibid., 151.
23. Edward Malatesta, "The Spirit/Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel", Biblica, 54 (1973), 539-550; quot. 540.



"Hesitancy" is indeed a good word to choose in this context, as the present writer must confess some confusion as to exactly where Johnston stands on the matter. The above quotations seem clear enough, yet Johnston interprets παράκλητος as "a particular kind of functionary", and considers "the most useful word in English to cover all the meanings of the Greek παράκλητος is the word 'representative'!"<sup>24</sup> (His italics). Are these terms not usually applied to people?

Perhaps the issue may be somewhat clarified if one considers the relationship of the Paraclete to the Spirit of Truth in 14:16,17. One cannot accept Johnston's "inescapable conclusion" that in these verses "the paraclete is secondary to 'the spirit of truth'".<sup>25</sup> (His italics). While the designation "Spirit of truth" (v.17), further defines the Paraclete (cf. "the Holy Spirit", 14:26), the two terms are in apposition and should be treated as co-ordinate. Johnston, on the other hand, argues that "ἄλλον παράκλητον are adjectival to τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας", and -

"It follows that paraclete in 14:26; 15:26 and 16:7 has in Greek the definite article, not because 'the Paraclete' is a title for a personal figure, but for good grammatical reasons: the article is a virtual demonstrative, and the reference is to the preceding 'another paraclete'. The same consideration applies to the use of ἐκεῖνος. This pronoun does not turn the spirit-paraclete into a second heavenly ambassador, or a manifest teacher, or another revealer who is a successor to Jesus". 26

Brown again makes a useful contribution to the debate. He writes -

"Undoubtedly in early Christian thought there was a progression in understanding the Holy Spirit, from a stage where the aspect of a God-given prophetic force or impetus was dominant, there was a progression to a stage where more attention was given to the personal concept of the Spirit... John brings the personality of the Spirit more to the fore by giving the Spirit the masculine title παράκλητος and by referring to the Paraclete/Spirit with masculine personal pronouns, but in this the Evangelist was making more specific an attitude that already existed". 27

24. Johnston, Spirit-Paraclete, 84, 87.

25. Ibid., 84.

26. Ibid., 84-85.

27. Brown, N.T.S., 13 (1966-67), 124. It is interesting, and somewhat confusing, to note that Johnston apparently quotes Brown with approval, Spirit-Paraclete, 87.

There is no doubt that the use of ἑκεῖνος (14:26; 15:26; 16:8,13,14) and αὐτὸν (16:7) does suggest very strongly that the evangelist understood παράκλητος in a personal sense.<sup>28</sup>

If there is a personal understanding in the evangelist's use of the term ὁ παράκλητος, what then is his understanding of the co-ordinate term, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας? Johnston, as one might expect, considers the term in an impersonal sense - "the power of God and of Christ in the life and doctrine of the Church".<sup>29</sup> Recent study of the background of this concept has wisely turned to the inter-testamental literature, and especially the thought of the Qumran sectarians. Brown notes -

"The Qumran literature (and the Testament of Judah 20:1-5) supplies the only pre-Christian instances of the title 'Spirit of Truth' which John uses synonymously with the Paraclete".<sup>30</sup>

It is unfortunate for our understanding of the Johannine term, therefore, that the Qumran writings themselves are not entirely clear in their interpretation. Some scholars emphasise a psychological understanding of "the spirits of truth and falsehood" (1 Q.S. 3:18; 4:23) - "the tendencies or propensities which are implanted in every man's heart."<sup>31</sup> Others look more to a background in Jewish angelology.<sup>32</sup> In his discussion of

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28. Note also Bernard on 14:26, Gospel, 500; also Leaney, John and Qumran, 52. This is not to suggest that all references to "the spirit" in John should be interpreted in this way - see n. 6 above.
29. Johnston, Spirit-Paraclete, 151.
30. Brown, N.T.S., 13 (1966-67), 122. The study of the Inter-Testamental background has been especially stimulated by Betz, Der Paraklet, although his conclusions cannot be fully accepted.
31. Marco Treves, "The Two Spirits in the Rule of the Community", Rev. Q., 3 (1961-62), 413-441; also P. Wernberg-Møller, "A Reconsideration of the Two Spirits in the Rule of the Community (1 Q.S. 3:13-4:26)", ibid., 413-441; Marie-Emile Boismard, "The First Epistle of John and the Writings of Qumran", in John and Qumran, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, 156-165; esp. 162. See also the discussion of James H. Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1 Q.S. 3:13-4:26 and the 'Dualism' contained in the Fourth Gospel", N.T.S., 15 (1968-69), 389-418; esp. 394-402; now in John and Qumran, 76-106.
32. Esp. Betz, Der Paraklet, but also Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), 277-289; Helmer Ringgren, The Faith of Qumran, trans. E.T. Sander (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 68-93.

dualism in 1 QS 3:13-4:26, Charlesworth defends the view that the passage contains a cosmic dualism against Wernberg-Møller's argument for a psychological interpretation. He concludes -

"Accordingly, far from accepting Wernberg-Møller's position, we contend that this passage clearly expresses a cosmic dualism, even though there may be some hints of a psychological perspective. For example, in 3:25 it is stated both that God created the two spirits and that He founded upon them every work. Since for post-exilic Jews angels (the terms angel and spirit are sometimes used synonymously throughout this section of 1 QS) were unquestionably cosmic beings and not merely psychological projections, anyone advocating a psychological rendering of this passage must necessarily explain why here particularly 'Angel of Darkness' or 'Angel of Truth' should be drained of their cosmic force. He will also be forced to explain why the scribe wrote  $\gamma^{\prime}$  'for him' and not  $\gamma^{\prime}$  'in him' in 3:18". 33

Brown also considers the dominant understanding of the Spirits of Truth and Falsehood at Qumran to be of cosmic beings. He writes -

"The title at Qumran is somewhat ambiguous in its use. The evidence of QM that Michael and Belial were thought of as the leaders of light and darkness suggests very strongly that the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Falsehood of QS are these angels, especially since the 'Prince of Lights' and the 'Angel of Darkness' are mentioned specifically in the midst of the two-spirit passage of 1 QS (3:20-21). Yet one also gets the impression that the two spirits are taken in a wider, psychological sense of a way of life and of something that penetrates man's very being. For instance, in 1 QS 4:23-24 we hear: 'Until now the spirits of truth and falsehood struggle in the hearts of men, and they walk in both wisdom and folly'. The personal and impersonal aspects of the Spirits of Truth and Falsehood are not at all contradictory; it is natural to shift from speaking of two personal Spirits who exercise a dominion over man to speaking of the two corresponding spirits according to which a man acts and shows his adherence to the respective domination. A similar variation between the personal and the impersonal is encountered in the description of divine Wisdom in the late Jewish sapiential writing". 34

It seems clear that in Qumran the dominant concept of the Spirit of Truth was of a cosmic being opposed to the Spirit of Falsehood, but their effect could be understood in a psychological sense as acting

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33. Charlesworth, *N.T.S.*, 15 (1968-69), 398. See also Herbert G. May, "Cosmological Reference in the Qumran Doctrine of the Two Spirits and in Old Testament Imagery", *J.B.L.*, 82 (1963), 1-14.
34. Brown, *N.T.S.*, 13 (1966-67), 122-123.

within men. In what sense was the term used by the evangelist in the Gospel of John?

Perhaps one of the difficulties in understanding the use in the Gospel is the assumption that if it was used in a personal sense then it must indicate a cosmic, angelic being. Charlesworth, in a different context, has indicated a shift from Qumranic to Johannine dualism. He suggests -

"the Qumranic dualism is based upon belief in two warring cosmic spirits; the Johannine 'dualism' evolves out of an assumed belief in a spiritual world above and an evil world below". 35

It is therefore not a cosmic dualism but a dualism of two worlds. "In terms of emphasis", Charlesworth argues,

"it is not misleading to suggest that Qumran's dualism is primarily cosmic and secondarily ethical but John's 'dualism' is essentially soteriological and only tacitly cosmic". 36

He comments -

"In John there are not two warring spirits but only one man Jesus who is rejected, betrayed and persecuted by men". 37

We would suggest that there has likewise been a shift from the concept of the Spirit of Truth as an angelic being, to the idea of the Spirit of Truth as the Paraclete.<sup>38</sup> This does not make it any less a personal term - it has been argued above that *παράκλητος* must be understood in a personal sense. It is now personal, however, not in the sense of an angelic being, but as the presence of the now glorified Jesus in the world. In that Jesus was a man on earth, so his continuing presence with the disciples and in the Church was seen as a

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35. Charlesworth, N.T.S., 15 (1968-69), 412.

36. Ibid., 412.

37. Ibid., 411.

38. There may even be some point to Johnston's claim that "the author of the Fourth Gospel combined 'spirit of truth' with 'paraclete' in a deliberate rebuttal of heretical claims for an angel-intercessor as the spiritual guide and guardian of the Christian Church" (cf. Gal. 1:8; 3:19; Col. 2:18ff.; Heb. 1:4ff.), Spirit-Paraclete, 119; see 119-126. In this respect one must disagree with Leaney, John and Qumran, 52.



personal presence - the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. It is as the presence of Jesus that he acts as a person.<sup>39</sup>

In 14:15-17, then, the evangelist has introduced the figure of the Paraclete, who is the Spirit of Truth. When Jesus has gone this other Paraclete will come to the faithful believers, and remain with them for ever. But what role does the evangelist portray for the Spirit of Truth; what function does he perform in the world, in the church, and for individual believers? To understand this aspect of the evangelist's teaching we must look at other relevant passages in the farewell discourses, not to examine them in detail but to ask the one question - What is the function on earth of the Spirit of Truth?

14:25-26. With this second saying, the evangelist begins to draw to a close the discourse of chapter 14. There is a limit to what Jesus can tell the disciples while he is with them, but the Paraclete<sup>40</sup> will come to "teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you". (v.26). This saying in fact brings out the evangelist's main understanding of the role of the Spirit as Paraclete - to act as a teacher. Barrett has noted: "One of the primary functions of the Paraclete is to teach".<sup>41</sup> To say that, however, does not avoid the main difficulty of these verses, namely how the evangelist intended to relate the two clauses - "he will teach you all things", and "bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you". Are they purely co-ordinate, two separate but related functions of the Paraclete, or does the second

39. See above, n.13.

40. The Paraclete is here defined as the Holy Spirit. There is little textual ground for amending τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἄγιον, although Barrett, Gospel, 467, suggests τὸ πνεῦμα (sin.) may be original - see also Lindars, Gospel, 484. On adopting the longer reading it is not necessary to suggest a trinitarian concept of the Spirit. τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἄγιον is found in the LXX (Isa. 63:10,11; Ps. 50:13), where it refers to the spirit of God. Note also Leaney's discussion of Spirit in Qumran thought, The Rule of Qumran and its Meaning (London: S.C.M., 1966), esp. 34-37.

41. Barrett, Gospel, 467.

clause qualify the first so that "all things" is restricted to "all that I have said to you"? In the first case it would appear that the Spirit may offer new teaching and interpretation, while in the second he will merely repeat what Jesus has already said while on earth. The issue is not an easy one, and perhaps to formulate such a clear distinction is to be unfair to the subtlety of Johannine thought. It seems best to leave the problem for the present, as the thought of the evangelist is more fully expressed at 16:12-15.

16:12-15. One is immediately introduced to the problem by the opening statement that Jesus has been restricted in what he could say to the disciples while he was on earth - "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (v.12; cf. 14:25). It is the Spirit of Truth who will "guide you into all the truth" (v.13). This saying is in apparent contradiction to 15:15, where Jesus said to the disciples: "all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (cf. also 4:25), but the thought of the evangelist is well expressed by Bultmann when he writes - "Jesus cannot state all that the future will bring, and yet he has said it all, everything, that is that makes the believer free and ready for it".<sup>42</sup> It is with this idea in mind that one should understand the work of the Spirit of Truth. He does not speak "on his own authority", but "he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (vv. 13,14). As Bultmann, again, has written -

"The Spirit will not bring new illumination, or disclose new mysteries; on the contrary, in the proclamation effected by him, the word that Jesus spoke continues to be efficacious",<sup>43</sup>

Thus the Spirit of Truth is a "witness" to Jesus (15:26).

It is not necessary to assume, however, that the Spirit will merely repeat and remind the disciples of the words of Jesus while he was on earth. While Müller probably makes too much of a distinction between

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42. Bultmann, Gospel, 573.

43. Ibid. 575.

the sayings of chapter 14, and those of chapters 15, 16,<sup>44</sup> it is true that the latter passage (15:18-16:15) does emphasise more particularly the hatred and opposition of the world - "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you" (15:18); "They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God" (16:2). The context of this saying (16:12-15), therefore, suggests that the community was facing increasing opposition and persecution by the Jews, and it is to this new situation that the Spirit of Truth will speak - to "declare to you the things that are to come" (v.13).<sup>45</sup> His role is not simply to repeat the words of the earthly Jesus, but to interpret them within the present situation of the community - to "take what is mine and declare it to you"(v.14).<sup>46</sup> Brown comments - "the declaration of the things to come consists in interpreting in relation to each coming generation the contemporary significance of what Jesus has said and done".<sup>47</sup>

16:7-11. It is becoming clear that the main function of the Spirit of Truth is to interpret the words and deeds of Jesus to a community now facing increasing opposition and persecution. There are, however, two further sayings (15:26-27; 16:7-11) in which the forensic function of the Paraclete becomes more apparent.<sup>48</sup> We shall consider the second of

44. See Muller, Z.T.K., 71 (1974), 65-75.

45. In v. 13, ἀκούσει (BD\*W) has stronger textual support than ἀκούει (N), although Bultmann, Gospel, 574, n.5, and Brown, Gospel, 707, note that ἀκούει would be more easily assimilated to ἀκούσει than vice-versa (cf. 14:17). In either case the idea seems to be of future, and indeed continuous, revelation to the Spirit.

46. There is a similar idea in the synoptic tradition, e.g. Matt. 10:19,20; Mk. 13:11; Lk. 12:11, 12, specifically related to persecution.

47. Brown, Gospel, 716.

48. Johannes Behm writes: "Thus the history of the term in the whole sphere of known Greek and Hellenistic usage outside the N.T. yields the clear picture of a legal adviser or helper or advocate in the relevant court", "παράκλητος", in T.D.N.T., V, 800-814; quot. 803. See also Holwerda, Holy Spirit and Eschatology, 26-38.

these, which is probably the most difficult of all the Paraclete-sayings to understand.

The problem is concerned mainly with the interpretation of ἑλέγχειν (v.8). In his study Brown notes two possible meanings in the context - "to bring to light, expose", or "to convict someone of something".<sup>49</sup> He considers the first to be more appropriate in governing all the clauses of the statement - of sin (v.9), of righteousness or justice (v.10), and of judgement (v.11). Brown then translates -

8. "And when he does come,  
he will prove the world wrong  
about sin,  
about justice,  
and about judgement.
9. First, about sin,-  
in that they refuse to believe in me.
10. Then, about justice -  
in that I am going to the Father  
and you can see me no longer.
11. Finally, about judgement -  
in that the Prince of this world has  
been condemned." 50

This seems a very adequate translation, but there is one further problem. Will the world, as the one accused, be made aware of its conviction, or will the real situation of the world be made clear only to the disciples? There are two main considerations which support the view of Brown and Lyonnet - both citing Berrouard - that the proof of the world's guilt will be made clear only to the believers.<sup>51</sup> Firstly, it has already been stated (14:17) that the world cannot receive the Spirit

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49. Brown, Gospel, 705; but see also the discussion of Barrett, Gospel, 486-487; Lindars, Gospel, 501; Stanislaus Lyonnet, "The Paraclete", in Ignace de la Potterie and Stanislaus Lyonnet, The Christian Lives by the Spirit, trans. John Morris (Staten Island: Alba House, 1971), 57-97; esp. 72-73. We suggest both meanings are present in the passage. The emphasis is on exposing the real situation of the world before God, but in so doing the Spirit inevitably convicts the world.

50. Brown, Gospel, 703.

51. Note esp. the discussions of Brown, Gospel, 711-714; Lyonnet, in The Christian Lives by the Spirit, 72-66; but cf. Leaney, in John and Qumran, 59-60; Lindars, Gospel, 500-504.



of Truth, and so is presumably unaware of the Spirit's activity, whatever that activity might be. Secondly, more importantly, is the context of the saying. We have noted the situation reflected in 16:1-4 - the community facing opposition and persecution by "the world". It would seem reasonable in this context to suppose that, as in the other sayings, the Paraclete will come to encourage and support the believers, by revealing the real situation of the world, and its guilt. The Paraclete's primary function is still one of teaching and encouragement in the believing community, although in so doing, "he will prove the world wrong about sin, about justice, and about judgement."

In summary, then, the Spirit of Truth will come primarily as a teacher, not only to remind the believers of the words and deeds of Jesus, but also to show the real significance of Jesus in each new situation which the community must face. Thus to a community facing opposition and persecution he will reveal the true situation, and show that "the ruler of this world is judged" (v.11; cf. Jn. 12:31).

#### THE FIRST EPISTLE<sup>52</sup>

It is well known that the First Epistle is the only writing in the New Testament, other than the Gospel, to use the term παράκλητος (2:1), but equally well known that in context the term refers to Jesus Christ, not to the spirit. Its use in the letter, therefore, can neither prove nor disprove a relationship between the Gospel and the Epistle. More significant are three passages where the role of the spirit, as it is understood by the writer of the Epistle, may be discerned. The most obvious is probably 4:1-6, where the activity of τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας is discussed - again the only occurrence of this term in the New Testament outside the Gospel. Another passage of relevance is the teaching of 5:6-12

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52. The other two letters contain no significant teaching on this topic, so do not enter the discussion at this point.

on the witness of the spirit. Finally, we shall compare the function of the Spirit of Truth in the Gospel, with the references to anointing in 1 John 2:20,27. It is these three passages which offer the clearest insight into the writer's understanding of the role of the spirit in the community. 4:1-6. While discussing the background of the Paraclete-Spirit of Truth concept used in the Gospel, we considered briefly the thought expressed in some of the inter-testamental literature, especially the writings of the Qumran sectarians (notably 1 Q.S. 3:13-4:26). In this passage, 1 John 4:1-6, the affinity with the thought of the Jewish sectarians is more clearly marked.<sup>53</sup> While the Gospel emphasised the personal nature of the Spirit of Truth, as a Paraclete sent by God to continue the work of the now glorified Jesus, the Epistle considers two spirits or inclinations working within men and influencing their thinking - the spirit of truth (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας), and the spirit of error (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης) (4.6). It is probably wrong to consider that πᾶν πνεῦμα implies a great diversity of spirits (vv.2,3; cf. 1 Cor. 12:10). There are two spirits which influence men, one the πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ, the other the [πνεῦμα] τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου but they become apparent in men in a variety of ways. Bultmann writes -

"when the warning refers to 'spirits' in the plural, it is undoubtedly for the reason that the 'spirit of error' is operative in a plurality of seducers". 54

All men are under the influence of either the "spirit of truth", or the "spirit of error".<sup>55</sup>

In the Community Rule of Qumran one reads -

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53. Note Marie-Emile Boismard, "The First Epistle of John and the Writings of Qumran", in John and Qumran, 156-165; also Johnston, Spirit-Paraclete, 61-67.

54. Bultmann, Epistles, 61.

55. This influence is seen as a fact in the lives of men. If on reflection the teaching raises predestinarian questions they are not discussed by the writer, if they were even recognised.

"[God] created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation : the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness". 56  
(1 QS 3:18,19)

The thought expressed in the letter seems to be more directly related to the thought of Qumran than was that of the Gospel, but of course one cannot suppose that this type of thinking was exclusive to the Qumran community. While the clearest evidence for such dualistic Jewish thinking is found in the Qumran scrolls, it was probably much more widespread in heterodox Jewish thought at that time.<sup>57</sup> One need not postulate any direct contact between the letter-writer and the Qumran sectarians, but it is best to consider that both the letter-writer and the evangelist were influenced by the dualistic thinking of sectarian Judaism. In the Gospel, however, much more than in the Epistle, the Jewish concepts have been developed to indicate the Spirit of Truth as a personal figure who continues the work of Jesus on earth.<sup>58</sup>

While discussing the christological theme, we pointed to the dispute obviously taking place between the author, with his followers, and those who had now left the community. The issue was the real humanity of Jesus. This christological conflict also determines the specific role of the spirit in this passage - "every spirit which confesses that

56. The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, trans. G. Vermes (revised; Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1968), 75.

57. Cf. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, esp. Test. Jud. 20:1; Test. Aaher 1:3-6. While the dating of these works and their relation to other Jewish and Christian writings is debatable, Charlesworth detects a consensus that the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs was not written by the Qumran sectarians, but is Christian with a Jewish foundation - see James H. Charlesworth, "Reflections on the S.N.T.S. Pseudepigrapha Seminar at Duke on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", N.T.S. 23 (1976-77), 296-304. On the concept of the two spirits in other Jewish writings note Oscar J.F. Seitz, "Two Spirits in Man : An Essay in Biblical Exegesis", N.T.S., 6 (1959-60), 82-95.

58. A more directly Jewish background for this letter is also indicated by the use of the term "Spirit of God" (v.2) - not specifically used in the Gospel, although underlying the evangelist's thought. See Houlden, Epistles, 111, who detects "a consistent tendency of 1 John to be more theocentric and less christocentric in its doctrinal pattern than the Gospel".

Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God" (vv. 2,3). Put more bluntly -

"Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (v.6; cf. 1 Cor. 12:3).

The spirit of truth, then, prompts in man the true confession that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh", and so may be recognised as the Spirit of God.

In comparison with the Gospel, the spirit is not here portrayed in such personal terms as the Paraclete-Spirit of Truth, yet the function is very similar. We argued that in the Gospel the Spirit of Truth has mainly a teaching role - interpreting the words and deeds of Jesus to each new situation faced by the believers. When this letter was written, the issue facing the community was whether the Messiah had really come to earth in the human Jesus. It is the spirit of truth which prompts in believers the true recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, come in the flesh. Admittedly the role of the spirit in this passage is not so much to remind the believers of the words and deeds of Jesus while he was on earth, as to emphasise the nature of Jesus' humanity, but surely this is in fact the most profound interpretation of the words and activity of the human Jesus. In asserting that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh", the spirit is acting, as the Gospel promised, as a witness to Jesus, teaching the true significance of his life to the present community of believers.

5:6-12. The theme of the witness of the spirit is taken up again in this later passage of the Epistle, where the writer asserts: "And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth" (v.16) - not "the Spirit of Truth", but "the Spirit is the truth". One is reminded of the saying of Jesus in the Gospel: "I am the way, and the truth, and



the life; no one comes to the Father but by me" (Jn. 14:6). A few verses later the Epistle states - "He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life" (v.12). Man's relation to Jesus determines his relationship with God, and the spirit witnesses to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. the witness of the Baptist, Jn. 5:33). Law writes - "And it is because 'the Spirit is Truth' that He recognises and reveals Christ who is the embodiment of the Truth (John 15:6, sic.)."<sup>59</sup> In 4:1-6 the spirit prompted the confession that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh", now in 5:5-12 the witness of the spirit is to the related confession that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. 4:15; Jn. 1:34, 20:31).

Dodd rightly relates the witness-theme of this passage to the discourse of Jn. 5:19-47.<sup>60</sup> In the Epistle the witness of the spirit is that "God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (v.11). We have previously noted the emphasis in the Gospel on the life-giving activity of the Son -

"For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will ... Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life" (5:21, 24).

The themes of "witness", "sonship", "truth", and "life" expressed in this passage of the Epistle are so integral to the evangelist's thought - especially in the discourses, though not particularly the farewell discourses - that it seems almost certain that the writers must have been influenced by a common Christian tradition of thought and expression. The spirit is the witness (cf. Jn. 15:26), to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. Jn. 1:34), and gives life to those who believe (cf. Jn. 20:31).

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59. Law, Tests, 119. The reference should be to 14:6.

60. See Dodd, Epistles, 131.

2:18-27. Perhaps a less obvious passage for consideration in this context is the assertion that believers "have been anointed (lit. ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε) by the Holy One, and you all know... the truth."<sup>61</sup> (vv. 20,21). The anointing "abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you; as his anointing teaches you about everything ..." (v.27). One is reminded of the teaching role of the Paraclete in the Gospel, who will be "with you for ever" (14:16), to "teach you all things" (14:26), and "guide you into all the truth" (16:13). Dodd, however, considers that χρίσμα is not here intended in any sense as a reference to the spirit. He argues -

"Most commentators suppose that the reference is to the Holy Spirit. If we substitute the term 'Spirit' for 'chrism' we get a good sense ... This is in harmony with what is said about the Spirit as Paraclete in John 14:16-17, 26. On the other hand, the author of the Epistle, when he comes to give his own doctrine of the Spirit, does not bring it into connection with the chrism. His teaching in 4:1-6 is not that doctrine must be tested by inspiration, but that inspiration must be tested by the Gospel ..." 62

Dodd suggests that χρίσμα refers to:

"the Word of God, that is, the Gospel, or the revelation of God in Christ, as communicated in the rule of faith to catechumens, and confessed in Baptism". 63

The opposing view is clearly expressed by Bultmann in his commentary. He refers the writer's concept of knowledge, which, according to v.20, all believers possess, to the activity of the spirit as stated in 3:24, 4:13 - "And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us", (3:24). Thus anointing refers to "the reception of the 'spirit' on the part of the believers".<sup>64</sup> Bultmann further suggests -

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61. We accept πάντες as the original reading, with the variant πάντα arising from the lack of an object - see Metzger, Textual Commentary, 710. The true object is τὴν ἀλήθειαν (v. 21).

62. Dodd, Epistles, 62.

63. Ibid., 63.

64. See Bultmann, Epistles, 37.

"That the author mentions 'anointing' rather than 'spirit' probably owes to the fact that 'anointing' played an important role in Gnosticism, viz., as the sacrament of anointing". 65

While one is reticent to attribute practices to the writer's opponents for which we have no evidence, the suggestion is a possibility, especially in this context where the opponents' false teaching is being so rigorously opposed. It may be that the writer is adopting his opponents' own terminology. What does seem certain is that the expressions of 2:20,21, 27, must have been consistent in the author's mind with 3:24, 4:13. The "anointing", and the activity of the "spirit", both inspire knowledge of the truth.

In one of the most recent studies of this passage - first published 1959, but more recently translated with additions into English, 1971 - de la Potterie attempts to reconcile the two views stated above. After a careful and persuasive semantic study he concludes -

"The analysis we have given leans toward the latter interpretation [i.e. the word of truth accepted in baptism], while adding to it some important nuances which bring it closer to the common interpretation [i.e. the work of the Spirit instructing the Christian from within]: the anointing is indeed God's word, not as it is preached externally in the community, but as it is received by faith into men's hearts and remains active, thanks to the work of the Spirit. Only this synthesis of the various points of view does full justice to the two passages". 66 (his italics).

Especially important in de la Potterie's study, is his linking of v.24 with v.27 - an insight which he attributes to Reitzenstein. V.24 reads, "Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you ...", while, according to v.27, "the anointing which you received from him abides in you..." It seems clear that "what you heard from the beginning", is related in

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65. Ibid.

66. Ignace de la Potterie, "Anointing of the Christian by Faith", in The Christian Lives by the Spirit, 79-143, esp. 99-117; quot. 114-115.

some way to the "anointing".<sup>67</sup>

Our own interpretation is in close agreement with that of de la Potterie. The main thought of the passage seems to refer the "anointing" to the teaching which the believers had received and accepted "from the beginning" - the tradition of the community. In the face of the opponents' false teaching it is important for the believer to remember and rely on the true teaching, which he accepted at his conversion - "the teaching communicated by Christ and transmitted in the Church, where it is preserved as coming from Jesus (ἔχετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ)"<sup>68</sup> (cf. v.27). Again with de la Potterie, we suggest that "John has in mind not so much the act of their baptism as the Gospel which has been preached to them and which they have accepted".<sup>69</sup> In the light of other statements, however, (4:13; 3:24), it seems likely that the writer considered it the function of the spirit to inspire in the believer acceptance of the true understanding and knowledge of the Christian tradition.

This emphasis on tradition is an important one for our comparison, because in the farewell discourses the Paraclete, acting as a teacher, will "bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (14:26). In the Epistle the anointing "teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, ..." (2:27). In this case the reference back may be more specifically to the tradition of the community than to the words of Jesus,

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67. We suggest that in both 2:24 and 27 the primary sense of ἀπ' ἀρχῆς is to the time when the believer accepted the Christian teaching, although the tradition naturally goes back to the beginning of the church. See, however, Hans Conzelmann, in Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann, ed. W. Eltester, 194-201; esp. 195.

68. De la Potterie, in The Christian Lives by the Spirit, 105. If v.27 is intended the reference should be ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ

69. Ibid., 102.



but perhaps too great a distinction should not be made. The true tradition of the community was based on, and contained, the authentic teaching of Jesus. The role of the Spirit of Truth, therefore, in reminding the believers of the teaching of Jesus, does have a close parallel in this passage, even though the terminology is quite different.

In conclusion, we suggest that while the Spirit of Truth is not present as a Paraclete in the Epistles, the role which the writer of 1 John understands the spirit to perform is very similar to that of the Spirit of Truth in the Gospel. The spirit will act as a witness to the true significance of Jesus, reminding the believer of the tradition which was "from the beginning". The testimony of the spirit is that "God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (5:11) - a distinctive theme in the Gospel. The understanding of the function of the spirit in 1 John seems closely related to that of the Spirit of Truth, even though the terminology of the Gospel is not used.

#### THE APOCALYPSE

It is possible to deal more briefly with the pneumatology of the Apocalypse, always assuming that the book does have some teaching on the spirit. Charles considered: "There is no definitely conceived doctrine of the Spirit in our author",<sup>70</sup> while Ford has written more recently:

"Revelation exhibits an almost complete absence of Christian pneumatology in even its primitive development as found in the earliest epistles of Paul where the apostle vacillates between the 'person' of Jesus and the 'person' of the Spirit".<sup>71</sup>

That is to assume, of course, that Christian pneumatology demands a personal understanding of the spirit, an assumption which we would dispute.<sup>72</sup>

70. Charles, Commentary, cxiv.

71. J. Massyngberde Ford, Revelation (A.B., New York: Doubleday, 1975), 19.

72. See Johnston, Spirit-Paraclete, esp. 3-28; and above on 1 John 4:1-6.

It is more accurate to argue that in Revelation "the dominant concept is that of the Spirit of Prophecy (19:10)",<sup>73</sup> and is therefore closely related to Old Testament thought. It was when he was "in the Spirit" (1:10, 4:2, 17:3, 21:10) that the author received his message, and he writes as a prophet (1:3; 22:6,7). It must be noted, however, that he is a Christian prophet-exiled "on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (1:9, cf. 1:2).<sup>74</sup>

In this prophecy it is not surprising to find that the concept of the spirit is different in emphasis from that of the Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel, or from the teaching of the First Epistle. The emphasis is quite naturally on the "spirit of prophecy", which is not a major theme in the other writings. Having said that, however, it is still possible that one may detect an aspect of the teaching of the Apocalypse resembling the thought of the Gospel-Epistle, which may indicate a common tradition. One promising line of inquiry would seem to be the relationship of the spirit in the Apocalypse to the glorified Jesus.

In the Gospel we noted the promise that the Paraclete-Spirit of Truth would come to remind the believers of the words of Jesus, and interpret his teaching when he was no longer on earth. In the Apocalypse there is a very close relation between the words of the glorified Jesus, and the message of the prophetic spirit. This may be seen in the letters to the seven churches. Each one begins: "The words of ...", and continues with an obvious reference to the glorified Lord (e.g. 2:1, cf. 1:12, 16; 2:8, cf. 1:17,18).<sup>75</sup> Indeed the motive for John writing to the churches is the command of "one like a son of man" (1:13). Yet at

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73. Schweizer, in *Spirit of God*, 104; cf. F.F. Bruce, "The Spirit in the Apocalypse", in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, eds. B. Lindars and S.S. Smalley, 333-344, esp. 337.

74. On this see David Hill, "Prophecy and Prophets in the Revelation of St. John", *N.T.S.*, 18 (1971-72), 401-418.

75. Other comparisons are 2:12 cf. 1:16; 2:18 cf. 1:14,15; 3:1 cf. 5:6, 1:16; 3:7 cf. 1:18; 3:14 cf. 1:5.

the conclusion of each letter one reads: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). It would seem that for the Apocalyp<sup>h</sup>list the words of the risen Jesus are conveyed by the Spirit (cf. Jn. 14:26; 16:13). One must add, however, that while in the Gospel Jesus' promise is to send the Paraclete to all who love him and keep his commandments (Jn. 14:15), in the Apocalypse the message is conveyed through prophets, and in particular the prophet John.<sup>76</sup>

19:10. The relationship of the words of Jesus to the spirit of prophecy may be further considered in the context of the difficult saying - "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (19:10). How should one relate "the testimony of Jesus", to "the spirit of prophecy"? Some agree with Charles' suggestion that τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας is a marginal gloss on τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ, subsequently incorporated into the text, noting also the comparison with 22:8,9, where this sentence is absent.<sup>77</sup> There is no textual reason, however, for removing the saying from its present position, and so it should be understood in this context.

The major point at issue is whether Ἰησοῦ is intended as a subjective or objective genitive. Elsewhere in the Apocalypse the phrase is used at 1:2, 1:9, 12:17, 20:4, and earlier in 19:10. In the other four verses the phrase is linked to τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ (1:2,9; 20:4), or τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ θεοῦ (12:17) - phrases in which the genitive is clearly subjective. Indeed there can be little dispute that in 1:2 Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is also subjective. Further, one should note that the phrase used in 12:17, 19:10 (cf. 6:9) is ἐχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ. Hill writes -

76. We do not accept that 19:10 implies the spirit of prophecy is in all believers - see e.g. J. Massyngberde Ford, "For the Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy" (Rev. 19:10)", I.T.Q. 42 (1975), 284-291; cf. Hill, N.T.S., 18 (1971-72), 401-418, esp. 413-414. On the testing of prophetic utterances see James D.G. Dunn, "Prophetic 'I'-Sayings and the Jesus Tradition: the Importance of Testing Prophetic Utterances within Early Christianity", N.T.S., 24 (1977-78), 175-198.

77. See Charles, Commentary, II, 130-131. He mistakenly notes the parallel passage as 22:10.

"Moreover, if ἡ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ means 'witness to Jesus', the verb ἔχω is a quite unusual one (even in the Greek of this book) to connote the bearing of that witness by Christians: 'to have the witness of Jesus' is better understood therefore as meaning 'to possess', i.e. to receive and faithfully preserve, Jesus' witness (cf. μαρτυρίαν λαμβάνειν, John 3:32f.), though this will include witnessing to Jesus", 78

Finally, in the two other places in the Apocalypse where μαρτυρία is mentioned (11:7; 12:11), the genitive is clearly subjective, which is the normal understanding of the construction.<sup>79</sup> There seems strong ground, therefore, for suggesting that in this phrase too the genitive is subjective.

But does it make sense in the present passage? Let us consider the context. The angel has given John a prophetic message - the "true words of God" (v.9), and in response John fell at his feet to worship him (v.10). The angel, however, refuses to allow John to worship him because one must worship God alone (v.10). Then comes this statement - "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy". The angel rejects the worship of John because he is not the source of prophetic insight, it is the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy. One must worship God who reveals himself in the witness of Jesus. Caird writes - "It is the word spoken by God and attested by Jesus that the Spirit takes and puts into the mouth of the Christian prophet".<sup>80</sup> While one should not force too close a parallel, this is reminiscent of the activity of the Spirit of Truth, who will "take what is mine and declare it to you" (Jn. 16:14). The Spirit of Truth in the Gospel, and the spirit of prophecy in the Apocalypse, both have their basis in the testimony of Jesus.

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78. Hill, N.T.S., 18 (1971-72), 411.

79. See Austin Farrer, The Revelation of St. John the Divine (Oxford : Clarendon, 1964), 194.

80. Caird, Commentary, 238.



5:6. Another passage which may repay further study is the description of the Lamb in chapter five - "I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth".<sup>81</sup> The vision, of course, is of the risen Jesus - the Lamb ἑστῆς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον. One may compare the similar conception of 4:5, where the seven spirits of God are the seven torches of fire burning before the throne of God (cf. 1:4), but one must emphasise the idea that the spirits have been "sent out (ἀπεσταλμένων) into all the earth" (5:6). What, then, is the significance of the seven spirits? Charles points to the relation of the "seven spirits of God", and the "seven stars" in 3:1. He considers that these are "kindred conceptions", and as the seven stars are identified in 1:20 as the "angels of the seven churches", so the πνεύματα are also "angelic beings".<sup>82</sup> One cannot accept this argument, however, while certainly related concepts, the "seven spirits of God" in 3:1 are distinguished from the "seven stars", just as in 1:20 the "seven stars" have a different significance from the "seven lamp-stands". The two are related, but distinct conceptions. Perhaps our understanding will be advanced if we begin from the vision of Zechariah 4, which almost certainly underlies the apocalypticist's picture. Caird writes -

"A more important source of his ideas is Zechariah 4, where the prophet describes a candelabra (Israel) with seven lamps ('the eyes of the Lord which range over the whole earth')." 83

The purpose of the vision is to proclaim the message of Zech. 4:6 - "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts". Caird

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81. The R.S.V. translation is a little ambiguous; in this case the N.E. B. paraphrase seems better - "a Lamb with the marks of slaughter upon him".

82. See Charles, Commentary, I, 11-13; also cf. Edward Schweizer, "Die Sieben Geister in der Apokalypse", in Neotestamentica (Zürich: Zwingli, 1963), 190-202; esp. 198-200.

83. Caird, Commentary, 15; see also Beckwith, Apocalypse, 424-425.

therefore suggests that "the seven spirits represent the Spirit of God in the fulness of his activity and power".<sup>84</sup> It would seem that the seven spirits of the Apocalypse have been suggested by the seven lamps of Zechariah 4, but that they represent in its fulness the ~~nae~~ spirit of God (Zech. 4:6; cf. Isa. 61:1).

For our study the interest of this verse is that the "seven spirits of God" are clearly related to the risen Christ (cf. 3:1), and emanate from him - it is as the eyes of the Lamb that they are "sent out into all the earth". In the Gospel it is said that, "the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (7:39; cf. 14:26, 15:26). Now Jesus has been glorified as the risen Christ, and so the spirit, as the "seven spirits of God", has been sent into all the earth. The terminology is peculiarly apocalyptic, but the concept is to some degree similar to the idea in the Gospel that Jesus, after the resurrection, would send his Spirit into the world to proclaim his message.

Once more the relationship of the Apocalypse to the Gospel is difficult to assess. While the thought - world of the Apocalypse is obviously different from that of the Gospel, or the Letters, one may detect in the relation of Jesus to the Spirit one common theme - the Spirit is sent into the world by the now glorified Jesus to proclaim his teaching. Whether this common idea, however, is enough to justify the inclusion of the Apocalypse within the Johannine writings must be questionable. A firm decision will be taken at the end of the following study.

#### THE COMMAND TO LOVE

We turn now for a third comparison of theological emphasis to an ethical issue; to consider the command of Jesus to "love one another"

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84. Caird, Commentary, 15.

(Jn. 13:34,35; 15:12,17). Brown relates the story of Jerome, that in John's old age his message was reduced to one demand - "My little children, love one another"<sup>85</sup> - an improbable story perhaps, yet it does point to an important emphasis in the evangelist's thought. Schnackenburg holds that "the exhortation to love of the brethren is the characteristic feature of Johannine moral teaching",<sup>86</sup> while Kümmel comments - "the crucial commandment of God and of Christ is love for one's brother".<sup>87</sup> It must be admitted that both the command to "love one another", and the peculiar understanding of the Spirit which we have already studied, are ideas particularly emphasised in the farewell discourses, but while that fact is of interest to a study of the tradition - history of the Gospel, this thesis takes the Gospel in its entirety as the product of a community, and so it seems justifiable to concentrate on these points as particular emphases of that community. We shall consider, therefore, the commandment as it is found in two passages - Jn. 13:34,35; Jn. 15:9-14. In both cases a study of the context is an important factor in the interpretation.

John 13:34,35. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (v. 34). The saying occurs during the Johannine account of the Last Supper, when the final events of Jesus' life are about to take place. As Judas leaves the room the evangelist makes the significant comment - "it was right" (v.30). The final conflict between light and darkness - a familiar motif in this Gospel - has now begun, and God will glorify his Son

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85. Brown, Gospel, 607; also Bernard, Gospel, 527.

86. Rudolf Schnackenburg, The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, trans. J. Holland-Smith and W.J. O'Hara (London: Burns & Oates, 1965), 323.

87. Kümmel, Theology, 303.

by receiving him on the Cross (v.32). The command is given to the disciples, now to be left behind in the world, but in this Gospel it is intended not only for the historic group of disciples but for the evangelist's contemporary community.<sup>88</sup> It too must obey the command to love.

It has frequently been pointed out that this is not in fact a new commandment. Lindars writes -

"it is difficult to see what is new about it, seeing that it is embedded in the Jewish Law (Lev.19:18), referred to in the Summary of the Law (Mt. 22:39, paras.). Indeed the fact that, in one sense, it is not new is taken into consideration in the exposition of this commandment given in 1 Jn. 2:7-11".<sup>89</sup>

Furnish goes further, alleging -

"the substance of the command - to love one another - was by no means novel or unheard of: parallels abound in the Old Testament, in the rabbinic traditions, and in other literature of the Graeco-Roman world".<sup>90</sup>

Unfortunately Furnish does not consider it necessary to give details of these parallels. As well as the obvious reference already noted at Lev. 19:18, Barrett mentions P. Aboth 1:12,<sup>91</sup> and Brown adds Lev. 19:34,<sup>92</sup> but one is not led to believe that the parallels were very extensive.

88. *ἡ ἀγάπη* (v. 33) is found nowhere else in the Gospel, but is frequent (7 times) in 1 John - see Brown, Gospel, 606; Lindars Gospel, 463. Barrett describes the group as "a messianic community living between the advents of the Messiah", Gospel, 451; similarly Lucien Cerfaux, "La charité fraternelle et le retour du Christ (Jn. 13:33-38)", in Recueil Lucien Cerfaux, II (B.E.T.L. 6-7; Gembloux : J. Duculot, 1954), 27-40.

89. Lindars, Gospel, 463.

90. Victor Paul Furnish, The Love Command in the New Testament (London: S.C.M., 1973), 138.

91. Barrett, Gospel, 452.

92. Brown, Gospel, 613; see also Bultmann, Gospel, 527, ns. 1, 2.



While it must be admitted that the commandment was not a completely unique principle of religious understanding, the newness is to be understood from the second statement - "even as I have loved you, that you also love one another".<sup>93</sup> The commandment is new because it was given to the new community of believers founded on earth by the activity of Jesus. Schrenk writes -

"The new factor is not the law of love as such, nor a new degree of love, but its new christological foundation. They are to love one another as those who are loved by Jesus".<sup>94</sup>

Discussion has also centred on whether any specific reference is intended by the phrase, "even as I have loved you" (v.34); does it refer to any particular incident? Some consider the footwashing episode (vv.4-11) to be the example of Jesus' love for the disciples which the evangelist intends,<sup>95</sup> but in v.1 he looks forward with the words: "having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end", and vv. 2,3 clearly refer to Jesus' death. While the footwashing scene may provide an example of Jesus' service to the disciples, the full extent of his love can only be discerned in the crucifixion, and this would seem to be the evangelist's ultimate reference. Schanckenburg writes -

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93. As Bultmann suggests *καθώς* in this context means both "as" and "because" - "i.e. it states both the manner and the cause of this love", *Theology*, II, 81. One cannot, however, accept his translation of *ἵνα* as "in order that", which would seem to suggest a motivation for Jesus' and therefore God's love.

94. Gottlob Schrenk, "ἑντολή", in *T.D.N.T.*, II, 545-556; quot. 553; see also Bultmann, *Gospel*, 526-527, Brown, *Gospel*, 612-613, may be to an extent justified in relating the "new commandment" to the theme of covenant, but it does not seem to be the primary thought of the evangelist. The relationship is presented strongly, but unconvincingly, by R. Percival Brown, "ἑντολή KAINH (St. John 13: 34)", *Theology* 26 (1933), 184-193; see also Furnish, *Love Command*, 138-139.

95. See Sanders, *Commentary*, 316, n.6.

"Für sie ist das Gebot gegenseitiger Liebe dadurch neu, daß es durch Jesus, sein Dienen (vgl. die Fußwaschung) und seine Hingabe in den Tod (vgl. Joh. 15,13; 1 Joh. 3,16) eine einzigartige Profilierung erfährt. Denn in ihm, dem Gottessohn, hat uns Gott selbst seine letzte und unüberbietbare Liebe erwiesen". 96

There has been much valid discussion among the commentators on the apparent limitation implied by the command - ἀγαπάτε ἀλλήλους (vv.34,35). Is the intention to limit the demand for love only to the members of the community, because if so it would seem to impose a restriction on the Synoptic ideal of love for one's neighbour (Lk. 10:27; cf. Lev. 19:18), and even one's enemies (e.g. Matt. 5:43-48; Lk.6:27-36)? Many have tried to avoid this conclusion, usually referring to the universal love of God stated in 3:16, but one should not confuse the all-inclusive love of God in sending the Son, with the response of the believers to the world who rejected the Son. The coming of Jesus, and the response of men to him, has had the effect of separating the community from "the world", and so the command is to "love one another". There is implied in this command a restriction which cannot be ignored.

That is not to say that one would entirely agree with Käsemann that, "John here sets forth an unmistakable restriction such as we also know from the Qumran community".<sup>97</sup> While the Johannine command is in some ways similar to the Qumran teaching (1 QS 1:9-11), the evangelist, unlike the sectarians, does not advocate hatred for one's opponents. An important distinction is made by Brown -

"While for Qumran love is a duty consequent upon one's belonging to the community, for John, Jesus' love for men is constitutive of the community". 98

96. Rudolf Schnackenburg, Das Johannesevangelium, III (H.T.K.N.T. 4; 2nd ed., Freiburg : Herder, 1976), 59-60.

97. See Käsemann, Testament, 59-60; quot. 59; cf. also Clayton R. Bowen, "Love in the Fourth Gospel", J.R. 13(1933), 39-49; Furnish, Love Command, 143-148.

98. Brown, Gospel, 613.

The important distinction is that for the evangelist the love of God is always ready to draw men from the ranks of "the world", into the community of believers, and so while the command is to love "one another" within the community, the community will always bear witness to the love of God in the world - "I, when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all men to myself" (12:32; cf. 17:21). The position is well summed up by Bultmann -

"Thus the ἀγαπᾶν, as the criterion of eschatological existence, is limited not because it has to do with a group that is oriented on the world, but because it has to do with the eschatological community, and this means that the world always has the possibility of being included within the circle of the ἀγαπᾶν. It excludes itself only when it rejects the faith to which it is continually challenged by the community's existence, whether the challenge be by the word it proclaims, seeking to win the world over (16:7ff), or by the offence it presents to the world - also a means of winning it over". 99

The world will recognise the disciples of Jesus by the love which they have for one another (v.35). That love is thus a means of witness. Barrett comments - "The mutual love of Christian disciples is different from any other; it is modelled upon, and in some measure reveals, the mutual love of the Father and the Son".<sup>100</sup> The love, then, does not only as Knox puts it "prescribe the spirit of the new community",<sup>101</sup> it is essential to the witness of that community in the world. V.35 states: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another", (cf. 15:8). Clearly the evangelist did not intend the love which should exist within the community to isolate it from the world, but by the love for one another which constitutes the true community, the believers witness to the mutual love of the Father and the Son.

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99. Bultmann, Gospel, 528-529.

100. Barrett, Gospel, 452.

101. John Knox, The Ethic of Jesus in the Teaching of the Church (London: Epworth, 1962), 93.

15:9-14. The same theme is developed in slightly different form in chapter fifteen, indeed Bultmann describes 15:1-17 as "a commentary on 13:34f., in the sense that it goes more deeply into the grounds of the command of love".<sup>102</sup> There is no general agreement as to how the discourse on the vine (vv. 1-17) may be subdivided, and it should really be treated as a unity, but Bultmann suggests -

"the first part of the discourse, vv. 1-8, is an exhortation to constancy of faith in the language of *μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί* and the second part (vv. 9-17), which defines *ἐν ἐμοί* more closely as *ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐμῇ*, places the command of love on this foundation",<sup>103</sup>

The discourse, then, expounds the relationship of faith and love (cf. 1 Jn. 3:23,24). Kümmel has commented -

"Faith in Jesus Christ and love for one's brother belong for John so closely together that for him faith is real faith at all only when the one who believes has become the one who loves".<sup>104</sup>

While the discourse is a unity, the topic which we wish to consider in detail is the demand to keep his commandments which Jesus has placed on the disciples (v.10), specifically the command to love one another (v.12). We concentrate, therefore, on vv. 9-14 as a useful focus of the evangelist's thought on the command to love. The central command is found in v. 12 - "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (cf. 13:34).

It is of interest to note the way in which the discourse has been developed to this point. The overall theme, reflecting the farewell situation, is that the disciples should abide in the love of Jesus (v. 9; cf. the image of the vine, v.2), but if they are to abide in his love then they must keep his commandments (v.10), summed up in the one command

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102. Bultmann, Gospel, 529.

103. Ibid.

104. Kümmel, Theology, 303.



of v.12.<sup>105</sup> It is in responding to the love of Jesus by love for one another that the disciples reflect the same obedience as Jesus himself was about to show in response to the Father's love - obedience even to death (v.13). The argument seems to be that the love of Jesus for the believers is founded on the love of the Father for the Son, and so the real ground of the believers' love for one another is the Father's love for the Son (v.9).<sup>106</sup> Brown comments on "the chain of love that is found in vss. 9 and 12 : the Father loves Jesus; Jesus loves the disciples; they must love one another".<sup>107</sup> If the disciples keep the commands of Jesus they will abide in his love, and so their joy will be complete (v.11, cf. 16 : 20-24).

The love which the disciples must have for one another, and Jesus' love for them, is further explained in vv. 13, 14 - "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you". While v.13 may well have been a traditional saying<sup>108</sup> there is little doubt that the evangelist here intended it to be a reference to Jesus' death, and also perhaps a hint that the love of the believers for one another might ultimately lead to the sacrifice of life itself (cf. 1 Jn. 3:16). The community of believers - οἱ φίλοι - is constituted by the self-sacrificing love of Jesus, so those who are truly members of that community will obey the commands of their Lord. Bultmann comments -

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105. The distinction between ἐντολαί (v. 10) and ἐντολή (v.12) does not seem to be important (see Bultmann, Gospel, 541, n.4), Schrenk, T.D.N.T., II, 554, writes - "The ἐντολαί, always summed up in the one command of love, do not imply a Jewish multiplicity of ordinances, but the radiating of the one ἐντολή out into the manifoldness of the obedient life". Note later comments on 1 Jn. 2:3-11.

106. Brown commenting on v.9, Gospel, 663, notes: "For John *Kathos* is not only comparative but also causative or constitutive, ... The Father's love for Jesus is the basis of Jesus' love for his disciples both as to origin and intensity".

107. Brown, Gospel, 682.

108. See Brown, Gospel, 682; Bultmann, Gospel, 542, n. 7.

"It is not a question of their still having to become his friends by fulfilling his commands; they are his friends already, as v.15 states; the phrase ἐὰν κτλ. specifies the condition whereby what they already are can be fully realised in them", 109

The true Christian community has been constituted by the love of the Father and the obedience of the Son. In response to that love, and in obedience to Jesus' command, the believers must love one another if they are truly to be the φίλου of Christ. A similar thought is to be found in 14:21 -

"He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him".

The abiding relation of the Son to the believer is formed and constituted by the obedient response of the believer. This relationship of love and obedience is pointed to by Barrett, commenting on v.10 - "The parallel shows that love and obedience are mutually dependent. Love arises out of obedience, obedience out of love".<sup>110</sup>

In summary, then, the new community is a fellowship of love, ultimately grounded on the love of the Father for the Son, and constituted in the world by the obedient response of the Son to the Father, shown on the Cross. Members of that community must also, in obedience to the command of Jesus and in response to his love for them, love one another. In this way they will bear witness to the mutual love of the Father and the Son.

#### 1 JOHN

Turning to 1 John, one can hardly fail to note the similarity of thought on this theme of the love-command. Culpepper writes -

109. Bultmann, Gospel, 543.

110. Barrett, Gospel, 476.

"The writer's primary appeal, repeated in countless variations in the course of the epistle, is for his readers to abide (ΜΕΝΕΙΝ occurs 24 times in 1 John) in the love of God (ἀγάπη occurs 18 times in 1 John) by keeping (τηρεῖν) the commandments (ἐντολὰς; these words appear in conjunction five times in 1 John), especially the 'new commandment' (2:7-8; 3:11,14,23; 4:7,11,12,21) and by remembering what they heard (ἀκούω occurs 14 times in 1 John) 'from the beginning' (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς : 2:7,24;3:11)." 111

Furnish states - "This commandment to love one another, already prominent in the Fourth Gospel where it is presented as Jesus' farewell legacy to his followers, is now one of the major themes in 1 John".<sup>112</sup> To support these two statements we shall now consider some of the main passages which relate to this command to love.

2:3-11; cf. 4:7-12. The context of 2:3-11 is clearly once more debate with the opposition, who considered themselves to have a superior knowledge of God. For this author there is only one basis for knowledge of God, and that is obedience - "by this we may be sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (2:3). Whether αὐτόν here refers to God or to Christ is of no great importance - knowledge of God is mediated through Christ (cf. 2:1; 4:9), indeed Westcott suggests - "perhaps it is best to suppose that St. John assumes a general antecedent 'Him to whom we turn as God' without special distinction of Persons".<sup>113</sup> At any rate it is the one who "keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected" (2:5).

At this point, however, one must disagree with the R.S.V. translation. In the phrase ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ (2:5), the genitive may of course be objective, as here translated, but, with Bultmann, it seems more likely that the author intended it to be subjective.<sup>114</sup> It is the love of God for man which prompts the believer's response of love to his brother. This interpretation gains support from 4:7-11. Here the author

111. Culpepper, The Johannine School, 281.

112. Furnish, Love Command, 156.

113. Westcott, Epistles, 47.

114. Bultmann, Epistles, 25; see also Westcott, Epistles, 48; Brooke, Commentary, 32.

states clearly - "Love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God" (4:7). Indeed "God is love" (4:8), and has taken the initiative in sending his Son into the world (4:9). So it is not that "we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (4:10,11). Love, then, is the initiative of God, and our love for one another is the obedient response to his love for us. Indeed obedience is the test of our abiding in him - "he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (2:6; cf. 4:12).

To this point in chapter two no specific commandment has been mentioned, but in vv. 7ff. the commandment becomes singular, and it is clear that the essential demand is love for the brethren - by previously introducing 4:7-11 we have already noted this emphasis. "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still. He who loves his brother abides in the light ..." (2:9,10). One need not make too much play of the distinction between singular and plural, for this author the commandments of God are summed up in the one command to love one's brother. Schrenk notes - "There is never any discussion of the ἐντολαί without reference to the ἐντολή (in the reverse order in 1 Jn. 4:31 ff. (sic)). This arrangement, which is an established characteristic, makes it clear that the law of love, the ἐντολή κατ' ἐξοχήν, is the true content of the ἐντολαί.<sup>115</sup>

Of greater interest for this study, however, is the sense in which the love-command may be considered new. This issue was raised in the discussion of the Gospel texts, but here the author seems to deliberately focus on the dichotomy between old and new. In v.7 he states - "I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning" (cf. 2 Jn. 5), but then in v.8 - "Yet I am writing

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115. Schrenk, *T.D.N.T.*, II, 554. The reference should be to 1 Jn. 4:21ff., cf. Furnish, *Love Command*, 149-150; Bultmann, *Epistles*, 27.



you a new commandment, which is true in him and in you". How should these two statements be related?

In the discussion of the Gospel texts it was suggested that the essential newness of this command was its christological basis. The fact of Christ, and the significance of his activity on earth, made the commandment new. At that point it was stated - "The commandment is new because it was given to the new community of believers founded on earth by the activity of Jesus".<sup>116</sup> It is still in this sense that the author of the Epistle understands the commandment as a new command - "true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining".(2:8). The activity of Christ, who has acted in the world and is acting in and through the believers, makes the commandment new. Schanckenburg has written -

"... erst durch die eschatologische Sendung des Gottessohnes und seinen äußersten Liebeserweis, den Kreuzestod, sichtbar und wirksam geworden ist, wird man auch die „eschatologische“ Neuheit jenes Gebotes mit zudenken haben".<sup>117</sup>

The author, however, also wants to emphasise in the face of the "progressive" teaching of his opponents (cf. 2 Jn. 9), that the commandment was present in the tradition of the community from the very beginning, and so had authority.<sup>118</sup> Hence the stress of v. 7 - "the old commandment is the word which you have heard" - the word proclaimed by Jesus and maintained in the tradition. This particular emphasis is not present in the Gospel, but it is due to the changed circumstances of the community facing a particular situation and challenge. In discussing these verses Klein points to the different viewpoints of the inner-church situation and the situation of the church in the world -

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116. See above on Jn. 13:34.

117. Schnackenburg, Johannesbriefe, 111-112; see also Bultmann, Epistles, 27.

118. On this see Hans Conzelmann, "Was von Anfang war", in Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstag, ed. Walther Eltester (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1954), 194-201; esp. 198.

"Im Blick auf die innerkirchliche Geschichte (v.7) walten rein chronologische Gesichtspunkte, im Blick auf die Geschichte der Kirche in der Welt (v.8) wird das chronologische Zeitmaß eschatologisch relevant". 119

There is thus no inconsistency in the author's thinking. The command is new in the eschatological sense with the event of Christ, but old in the history of the community's tradition.

Another consideration discussed in the Gospel context is again raised in this passage, and further expanded in 3:10-18. Is the command to love inclusive only to members of the community, or should it be directed outwards to all men? In the Gospel we suggested that while the command was specifically to love one another within the community, the very reason for the community's existence was to proclaim the love of God to the world, and so it was open to all. The Epistle now seems to reflect similar thinking, although modified by the obvious friction between the two groups. One cannot agree with Bultmann that one's brother means "not especially the Christian comrade in the faith, but one's fellowman, the 'neighbour'."<sup>120</sup> While the command does not hint at the exclusion of outsiders - the opponents have excluded themselves from the true community (2:19) - the specific demand is for love within the Christian community.

This interpretation is disputed by Furnish, citing Schnackenburg. He rightly points out that in 2:9-11, the one who "hates his brother" refers to the writer's opponents, and goes on to argue that -

"It is unlikely that this writer would think of them as 'Christians' or 'fellow Christians' - indeed, they would belong to 'the world' which stands in radical opposition to the faithful community (3:13)".

Thus he argues that "brother" is used in the general sense of "fellowman".<sup>121</sup> While it is true that 3:13 refers to the hatred of the world,

119. Gunter Klein, "Das wahre Licht scheint schon. Beobachtungen zur Zeit-und Geschichtserfahrung einer urchristlichen Schule", Z.T.K. 68 (1971), 261-326; quot. 306.

120. Bultmann, Epistles, 28; cf. Schnackenburg, Johannesbriefe, 117-121; Furnish, Love Command, 152-154.

121. Furnish, Love Command, 153.

the real dispute in this Epistle is not with the world in general, but with another group who also claim to be Christian. In this sense it remains a conflict within the Christian community, even though the opponents have put themselves outside the true community (2:19). While the writer would deny the Christian claims of the opposition, the conflict remains within the context of the Christian community, and the dominant question is how to recognise the true members of that community (2:19; 3:10,19; 4:1,13; 5:2). The answer is love for the brethren (3:14). It is by a failure of love, i.e. by breaking the fellowship of brotherly love within the community (2:19), that the opponents have shown that they are not true Christians. The command, then, and the test, is for love within the Christian community.<sup>122</sup> In this the author seems merely to be developing the thought of the Gospel in the new situation facing that community.

4:19-5:5 (cf. 3:23). These verses raise the important question of the relationship of faith to love. In 3:23 the commandment has been stated with two prongs which are closely inter-related - "this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us". The inter-relation is more fully explained in the passage now under discussion.

The basis and reason for Christian love is the love which God has already demonstrated to the world. This fact is simply stated in v.19 - "we love, because he first loved us" (cf. 4:7-11). It is in response to the love of God for us that we must love. Many commentators find it necessary to suggest an object for the Christian's love - whether God, or our fellowmen, or the Christian brothers<sup>123</sup> - but the author does not seem to think it necessary. Dodd probably comes nearest to the

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122. See Ernst Haenchen, "Neuere Literatur zu den Johannesbriefen," T.Ru. 26 (1960-61), 1-43; esp. 37.

123. E.g. Bultmann, Epistles, 75; Houlden, Commentary, 120.

writer's thought when he comments -

"Our very capacity to love, whether the object of our love be God or our neighbour, is given to us in the fact of our being loved by God". 124

God has revealed his love in sending his Son into the world (4:9,10), and so our love, our very capacity to love, is related to our faith in Christ which determines our relation to God.

"Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and every one who loves the parent loves the child". (5:1).

Undoubtedly the most difficult point of interpretation in this passage is 5:2-3a. Bultmann describes it as "almost incomprehensible", and indeed his exposition would seem to illustrate the point.<sup>125</sup> While the author frequently argues that love for one's brothers is the test of true love for God - indeed has just done so (4:20,21) - he now appears to turn the argument round: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments" (5:2). Love for God has become the criterion of love for the children of God. Indeed the argument would seem to be circular - we know that we love the children of God when we love God (5:2); we love God when we keep his commandments (5:3); the emphatic command of God in this Epistle is to love one's brother (e.g. 4:21). How does one break this circle of thought?

Perhaps not enough attention has been paid in the commentaries to the starting point, which is the epistemological question of how to know that we love the children of God. It is normally assumed that the stress should be on the adequacy of our love, but surely the crucial question in context of this Epistle is rather the identity of the children of God. Are those whom we love - for the author those who have stayed within his

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124. Dodd, Epistles, 123.

125. Bultmann, Epistles, 77.



community - truly the children of God? We will recognise the children of God when we love God, and obey his commandments (5:2). Thus the question becomes one of faith. The believer's relationship to God creates in him the true vision of the children of God, and one's relationship to God is founded on the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (5:1,5). The community of believers is constituted by faith in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, and within that community one must exercise brotherly love. Within its own situation, the thought of the Epistle on this command to love clearly reflects the teaching of the Gospel.<sup>126</sup>

#### THE APOCALYPSE

On turning to Revelation, as one might imagine, the material relevant to this topic becomes more difficult to find. Schrenk notes -

"the commands of God, ..., are again linked with references to faith in Jesus or witness to Him, so that once more we see the Johannine peculiarity of never speaking of the <sup>Ἐντολὴ</sup> without mentioning Jesus (cf. 12:17; 14:12; 22:14...).<sup>127</sup>

It is an interesting point, but in relation to the present study one must note that no-where in the Apocalypse are the commands of God condensed into the one command of love. Furnish considers it to be implied -

"While these are nowhere specifically summarized in the single commandment to love, it is clear that concrete deeds of love within the beleaguered congregations are the prime evidence and content of their patient endurance".<sup>128</sup>

That seems, however, to be an assumption without adequate exegetical support. There is only one passage in the Apocalypse which would seem to warrant closer study in this regard, and then only briefly.

126. The distinction which Schrenk makes, T.D.N.T., II, 554-555, that the Epistles, do not contain "the profound christological basis of loving as he loved", is surely unnecessary. It is not specifically stated, but it is certainly assumed.

127. Ibid., 555.

128. Furnish, Love Command, 170.

2:1-7. In writing to the Ephesian church, the author first praises their continuing work and patience in opposing false teaching -

"I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary" (2:3).

Speaking in Christ's name, however, he condemns their one critical fault - "you have abandoned the love you had at first" (2:4). The congregation must "repent and do the works you did at first", or else judgement will follow (2:5). In this the Ephesians may be contrasted with the congregation at Thyatira, who are commended for their love, faith, service, and patient endurance (2:19). What is not clear, however, is to whom the love demanded of the congregation should be directed. Is it love to God, or to the brothers within the community, or to all their fellowmen? While there is no strong evidence for any of these interpretations, Charles is probably right to limit the thought to brotherly love, by which he presumably means love within the community.<sup>129</sup> This preference gains some slight support from the laudable hatred of the Nicolaitans' works although it should be noted that hatred of the Nicolaitans themselves is not advocated (2:6). While the Ephesian community has patiently endured in the face of opposition, it has ultimately failed in its response to God by its lack of love, presumably love within the Christian community. Ladd comments - "Doctrinal purity and loyalty can never be a substitute for love".<sup>130</sup> Here are echoes of the Johannine understanding, but is one not reminded even more strongly of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians - "faith, hope, love abide, these three but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13)? One must conclude that it is impossible to detect any distinct trace of the Johannine understanding of the love-command in the Apocalypse.

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129. Charles, Revelation, 51; also Ladd, Commentary, 39.

130. Ladd, Commentary, 39.

It now becomes necessary to draw some conclusions from the study of these three theological emphases. The point at issue is whether all five writings, traditionally attributed to John, should be considered as works which have emerged from the one early Christian community. Tradition cannot simply be ignored, and so the initial hypothesis of this thesis was that all five writings should be included as having emerged within the community. The studies of the previous two chapters, however, must seriously question that hypothesis. If the concept of an early Christian community is to have any value, then there must be some evidence of a common milieu of thought. This has been shown to be true of the Gospel and First Epistle, indeed one can have little doubt that they emerged in the one community. Likewise, while they are too short for detailed theological study there seems no good reason for separating off the other two letters. Indeed there are some statements, especially in 2 John (e.g. 7,9; 5,6), which closely reflect emphases detected in the Gospel and 1 John. The same cannot be said, however, of the Apocalypse.

In the case of the Apocalypse we have seen that while there are some slight affinities of thought in regard to christology and pneumatology, the modes of expression used are almost totally different. We found no distinct trace of the Johannine understanding of the love-command. This leads to the conclusion that the Apocalypse cannot be considered as a work of the community, but one must still explain the slight affinities of thought which have been found.

One cannot deny the possibility that the book was written by an eccentric individual or group still within the Johannine community, but far removed from the mainstream of its thought. If that was the case, however, one would have assumed that however eccentric the writer(s) may have been the work would betray greater evidence of distinctive Johannine concepts. Even unconsciously, the writer would have been influenced by the thought and modes of expression of the community, especially if, as

we have suggested, the community's thought was dominated by the powerful preaching of the evangelist. To widen the hypothesis of a Johannine community to include this work would be to divest it of any useful definition.

The other possibility, which is favoured by the present writer, is that the Apocalypse was written outside the community, but that those responsible for it did have some contact and interaction with the thought of the Johannine community. This is the possibility favoured by Dr. Elizabeth Fiorenza in her recent study.<sup>131</sup> While the present thesis began by attempting to define some widely accepted theological emphases in the Gospel and then looking for similar traces in the other writings, Fiorenza examines similarities noted by previous scholars between the Gospel and the Apocalypse. Thus her work may be used as a useful complement to our own.

She begins with a study of the vocabulary of the two works, pointing out that they have only eight words in common which are found nowhere else in the New Testament - ἀρνίον; Ἑβραϊστί; ἐξεκένειν; κυκλεύειν; ὄψις; πορφύρεος; φῶνιξ; σκηνοῦν - some of which could be derived from Old Testament text or general usage. Furthermore the Apocalypse uses different words than the Gospel to express the same idea: ἀρνίον (Apoc.) - ἀμνός (Gosp.); Ἱερουσαλήμ (Apoc.) - Ἱεροσόλυμα (Gosp.); ψεῦδης (Apoc.) - ψεύστης (Gosp.); ἰδοὺ (Apoc.) - ἴδε (Gosp.). She also notes characteristic Johannine theological expressions and phrases not found at all in the Apocalypse, and vice-versa. In particular one should note that κόσμος is not understood in a dualistic sense in the Apocalypse. Finally she points out that while the Apocalypse and the Gospel have only eight words

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131. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'The Quest for the Johannine School: The Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel', N.T.S. 23 (1976-77), 402-427.



common to them alone, the Apocalypse and Paul share thirty-three such words and the Apocalypse and Luke almost as many. If one compares words which both authors use at least twice she claims the Apocalypse and Gospel share forty-six such words, while the Apocalypse and Paul have one hundred and fifty-seven in common.<sup>132</sup> A purely linguistic study can never be decisive when the issue is not between two individual writers, but Fiorenza is right in suggesting from this evidence that "the linguistic distinctive Eigenart of both writings appears not to be too great".<sup>133</sup> While it is not of immediate concern to this thesis one would like to see the Pauline affinities developed in greater detail.

Fiorenza goes on to note the expressions most often cited as indications that the Apocalypse and the Gospel belong to the same tradition and school - "lamb" (Apoc. 28 times, Jn. 1:29,36); "word" (Rev. 19:13; Jn. 1:1,14); the image of shepherding, and that of water for eternal life (Rev. 7:17; 21:6; 22:1,17; Jn. 4:14; 6:35; 7:37f.); the absence of a Temple (Rev. 21:22; Jn. 2:19,21; 4:20ff.); the dwelling of God or Christ among people (Rev. 7:15; 21:3; Jn. 1:14).<sup>134</sup> One cannot comment here in detail on the studies which she has undertaken which complement the studies of the present thesis, but she finds, for example, that both the christological titles - "lamb" and "word" - are used in a quite different way in the two writings. In the Apocalypse the kingly, messianic features of the Lamb predominate, while in the Gospel the emphasis is on the expiatory function of the Lamb.<sup>135</sup> Similarly with the title "Logos", the pre-existent figure of the Prologue is not present in the Apocalypse, but

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132. Ibid., 410-411.

133. Ibid., 410.

134. Ibid., 412.

135. Ibid., 412-414.

is used there to emphasise the messianic power of the parousia Christ as the fulfilment of the words of prophecy.<sup>136</sup> Only in the image of "living water", or "water of life", does Fiorenza find any evidence of drawing on a common school tradition. She argues that the saying of Rev. 21:6 is patterned on the form of the revelatory saying typical of the Gospel, and that the affinities in imagery and form between this verse and the Gospel "could be an indication that the image of the 'living water' is derived from a common (school) tradition".<sup>137</sup> On the other hand, "whereas in the Apocalypse the speaker is God and the image refers to the eschatological fulfilment, in the Fourth Gospel the speaker is Christ and the image refers to the christological realization of the eschatological promise".<sup>138</sup> She concludes that even if one cannot establish a common tradition for this image, it is possible that the author of the Apocalypse was familiar with the Johannine school tradition, but then goes on to claim that Rev. 21:7 shows traces of Pauline Style.<sup>139</sup>

Fiorenza's final examination is of the use and transmission of traditional material from both the Old and New Testaments in the two works, and particularly concentrates on the common citation of Zechariah 12:10 in the Theodotion text-form (Rev. 1:7; Jn. 19:37b.).<sup>140</sup> She considers that while the evangelist understood the text, in the strict sense of the Old Testament, as a salvation prophecy, the conflation of Zech. 12:10 with Dan. 7:13 found in the Apocalypse refers not to the death of Jesus but to his parousia. This is an example of the apocalyptist's use of the Old Testament tradition to make his own theological statement.

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136. Ibid., 414-416.

137. Ibid., 418.

138. Ibid.

139. For the full discussion see Ibid., 417-418.

140. Ibid., 419-421; also 412.

In a similar way he uses the New Testament tradition. The same verse (Rev. 1:7) shows great affinities with Matt. 24:30 - the "apocalyptic discourse". Throughout the Apocalypse, she argues:

"Greatest affinities are found to the eschatological-apocalyptic traditions of the gospels, especially the so-called Synoptic apocalypse, to Q traditions and to the eschatological parable tradition". 141

To Fiorenza, this use of both early Christian prophetic-apocalyptic traditions and Old-Testament prophetic-apocalyptic material suggests that the author of the Apocalypse was not a member of the Johannine school, but of an early Christian prophetic-apocalyptic school. While in a relatively short article Fiorenza has not been able to present very extensive evidence, the argument which she does adduce seems convincing to the present writer.<sup>142</sup>

At the same time, however, Fiorenza does not doubt, that the Apocalypst did have access to both Pauline and Johannine school traditions, although she claims that there are more affinities with Pauline than Johannine language, tradition and form.<sup>143</sup> On this assertion one must judge that a more detailed comparison of the Pauline letters with the Apocalypse is necessary before Fiorenza's conclusion can be finally accepted, but it is certainly a stimulating possibility. Her overall picture is of several schools and theological circles co-existing and intersecting in Asia Minor at the end of the first century. Her final statement on the "dialectical exchange of theological thought"<sup>144</sup> between the different schools and traditions, while far from proven, is of interest to the present study. She writes -

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141. Ibid., 421.

142. On this see Ibid., 419-424.

143. Ibid., 425.

144. Ibid., 426.

"For instance, it is clear that the Apocalypse and the fourth Gospel represent opposite eschatological options. Yet we cannot assume that the eschatology of the fourth Gospel was developed in direct confrontation with the Apocalypse or vice versa, since the differences in the eschatological language and imagery of the fourth Gospel and of the Apocalypse do not indicate a direct literary dependency. However, it is possible that the eschatological option of the Johannine school has developed or was modified in dialogue and in dialectic interaction with the early Christian prophetic-apocalyptic school tradition that is also developed in the Apocalypse". 145

Our own conclusion was that the Apocalypse was written outside the Johannine community, but by someone who had contact with and was in interaction with Johannine thought. This conclusion has been strengthened by Fiorenza's study, and so it will no longer be useful to include the Apocalypse within the definition of Johannine writings. One must note, however, Fiorenza's comments on the dialectical interaction of the two traditions in any attempt to postulate the development of eschatological thought within the Johannine community.

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145. Ibid., 426-427.



CHAPTER FOURTHE ESCHATOLOGICAL THOUGHT OF THE  
JOHANNINE COMMUNITY

It is now possible to discuss the specific topic of the thesis, so in this chapter we turn to an examination of the eschatological thought of the Johannine community. In the previous studies of theological motifs the task was a comparison of emphases in the various writings. This involved the detection of a particular emphasis in the Gospel presentation and a search for the same or similar stress and expression in the other writings. By that method it was decided that the Gospel and the Letters emerged from the one community of thought but that the Apocalypse, while written by someone who had some contact and interaction with the Johannine community, should not be considered a product of that community. The task before us now, however, is to evaluate the diverse strands of eschatological thought which run through the Gospel and Letters. No longer is it permissible to concentrate on one emphasis, rather one must produce an hypothesis for the growth of the tradition which accounts for the variety of emphases which may be detected in the writings, and the diverse nature of the material.

To do so, the approach adopted is again based on the exegesis of certain key texts, concentrating on four inter-related eschatological themes - judgement, eternal life, resurrection, and the return of Jesus. In particular the apparent tension which has been so often noted between present fulfilment and future expectation must be fully explored. The question must be answered as to how the present and future emphases, so often seen as contradictory, came to be held in the thought and tradition of one community. First, then, the various strands of thought in the community must be elucidated by exegesis, and

then some explanation sought as to how they ended up side by side in the writings of this community.

John 3:16-21. These verses may be taken as a useful sub-division of the discourse which follows Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus.<sup>1</sup> In v. 15, for the first time in the Gospel the important concept of ζωὴ αἰώνιος has been introduced, and as one has learnt to expect the evangelist then elaborates on that key phrase. In vv. 13ff., eternal life is portrayed as a gift to those who believe in the Son of Man who descended from heaven, and has now ascended into heaven.<sup>2</sup> The development in vv. 16ff. first emphasises that it is a gift from God out of his love for the world, but then leads to the inevitable corollary of judgement on those who refuse to accept the gift.

The purpose of God in sending his Son is clearly stated in v. 16. It was to offer life to the world, only incidentally is the alternative (ἀπολλύναν) mentioned. This is further emphasised in v.17 - "God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (cf. Jn. 10:9,10; 12:32; 1 Jn. 4:9). One cannot agree with Käsemann that this statement of God's love for the world is not central to the Gospel message. He considers - "we have every reason to consider this verse as a traditional primitive Christian formula which the Evangelist employed".<sup>3</sup> It may have been a traditional formula, but it is still central to the evangelist's theology of the Incarnation. God sent his Son to offer life to the world (cf. 4:14; 5:24; 6:35; 8:12; 10:10); that was the purpose of the Incarnation (1:4).

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1. So e.g. Brown, Gospel, 137; Lindars, Gospel, 158.

2. The use of the perfect, ἀναβέβηκεν, indicates that this was a discourse of the evangelist rather than actual words of Jesus, see Brown, Gospel, 132; Schnackenburg, Gospel, 393.

3. Käsemann, Testament, 59-60; quot. 60.

The idea that God loved the world and so gave his only Son, is closely paralleled to the concept of the Father sending the Son into the world which has previously been noted as a central Johannine theme.<sup>4</sup> It is true that in v. 16 the verb used is ἔδωκεν while one might expect ἀπέστειλεν (as v. 17), but the distinction is not important. As Brown has pointed out the two verbs are used in John without any apparent distinction of meaning to refer to the mission of Jesus (cf. references to the Paraclete; 14:16,26).<sup>5</sup> In these verses we come close to the heart of the Johannine gospel. God loves the world and so gave the gift of his only Son, in order that those who believe in him might have life. It is true that those who refuse to believe and therefore refuse the gift of life must perish, but that is only incidental to the evangelist's thought. Bultmann writes -

"Unbelief, by shutting the door on God's love, turns his love into judgement. For this is the meaning of judgement, that man shuts himself off from God's love".<sup>6</sup>

The intention of God's love, however, is to give life to the world, and the method he chose was to send his only Son.

The act of sending the Son has had the effect of clearly differentiating two groups in the world, and these are defined in v.18 -

ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται;  
ὁ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται

The tenses of the verbs in this verse are important. Those who believe

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4, See chap. 2. In vv. 16,17 the expression υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (vv.13,14) has become the simple υἱός, but Bultmann is right to see these as identical terms in the evangelist's intention. He points out that it is "only as a result of his mission that the Son becomes the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου", Gospel, 153 n.3. Similarly the υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (v.18) should not be seen as distinct from the υἱός given, or sent, by God (vv.16,17).

5. Brown, Gospel, 134, see also Schnackenburg, Gospel, 399. Bultmann suggests that they are distinct in the sense that ἔδωκεν stresses God's gift in the mission of the Son, Gospel, 153 n.3.

6. Bultmann, Gospel, 154; see also Barrett, Gospel, 180.

in the Son are not condemned, those who do not believe are already condemned - the ἦδη adding stress to the perfect. Schnackenburg and Brown point out that the perfect - ΠΕΡΙΣΤΕΥΚΕΝ - indicates a "persistent state"<sup>7</sup> of "continuing disbelief,"<sup>8</sup> but the condemnation has already taken place. Dodd makes the interesting comparison with Mark 16:16 - "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."<sup>9</sup> The contrast brings out sharply the [Marcan] expectation of future salvation or condemnation, compared with the Johannine emphasis on judgement having already taken place in one's response to the gift of the Son.

In these verses κρίνεν is used in the sense of "to condemn"; it is the opposite of σώζεν. Van Hartingsveld writes - "Das Verbum κρίνεν meint nicht nur : als Richter tätig sein (iudicare), sondern auch : verurteilen, strafen, verdammen (condemnare). Das Substantiv κρίσις ist nicht nur Gericht (iudicium), sondern auch Verurteilung, Strafe, Verdammung (damnatio). Im letzten Fall ist κρίνεν = κατακρίνεν und κρίσις = κατάκρισις".<sup>10</sup> Even in v. 19 it may be better to translate as "condemnation" rather than "judgement" (R.S.V.).<sup>11</sup> By man's response to the light, and his refusal to come to the light, he is already condemned. There is not a separate act of judgement. The decisive event was God's sending of his Son - the light into the world. By man's response to that gift he is either condemned, or finds eternal life.

Having introduced the idea of condemnation, the evangelist then reflects on the nature of ἡ κρίσις (vv. 19-21). This is a feature of

7. Schnackenburg, Gospel, 402.

8. Brown, Gospel, 134.

9. C.H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, (Cambridge : University, 1963), 357-358. See Brown, Gospel, 148.

10. L. Van Hartingsveld, Die Eschatologie des Johannesevangeliums (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1962), 36-37.

11. See Lindars, Gospel, 160.



the evangelist's style, and these verses are better understood as an amplification rather than a development of vv. 16-18. Some commentators have found here evidence of a Johannine theory of predestination, but it is interesting how Barrett has amended his views. In the first edition of his commentary he wrote, starkly - "In vv. 19-21 the predestinarian teaching of this gospel comes clearly to light. Men are divided into two classes, those who do evil and those who do the truth. The former inevitably reject Christ and are rejected; the latter as inevitably accept him. The distinction between the two groups appears to exist before they are confronted with Christ himself; there seems to be no question of those who do evil being changed into men who will do the truth".<sup>12</sup>

In the revised edition, he makes the same statement but claims that that is not the whole of John's meaning, going on to quote Bultmann with approval. Bultmann's statement reads - "If vv. 20f. only meant that immoral men are predestined to ἀπώλεια and moral men to ζωή, then the seriousness of the basic idea of ch. 3 and indeed of the whole Gospel would have been forfeited, and all that would be left would be a mythologically embellished moralism. This is certainly not what is intended. Rather what is meant is that in the decision of faith or unbelief it becomes apparent what man really is and what he always was. But it is revealed in such a way that the decision is made only now". The "encounter with the Revealer", is the "moment of true decision for men".<sup>13</sup>

One wonders if the idea of predestination is really present at all in this passage. The stress of the evangelist here, as in vv. 16-18, is

12. Barrett, Gospel (London: S.P.C.K., 1955), 182. It must be admitted that he does qualify the statement slightly in the Introduction, 68. Now cf. ibid. (2nd ed.; 1978), 218. [Other references are to the 2nd ed.].

13. Bultmann, Gospel, 159; see also Brown, Gospel, 148-149.

on the love of God in sending his Son as the light into the world. While vv.19-21 should not be seen as a strict development of the argument they must be understood in that context. The fact that "men loved darkness rather than light" (v.19) is, from the evangelist's viewpoint, simply a statement of historical fact. Jesus had been rejected by men, and his coming had separated men into two groups - those who came to the light and those who do not (vv. 20,21; cf. v.18). In the situation of a community facing opposition from the Jews, the evangelist characterizes those who do not believe, i.e. the Jewish opposition, as the ones who "do evil", and those who believe, i.e. his own community, as those who "do the truth". It should be noted that in vv. 20, 21 apart from the subjunctive clauses the verbs are mainly in the present tense.<sup>14</sup> The action of doing evil or doing the truth is taking place at the present time - it is a way of characterizing the two opposing groups. Only in v.19 where the evangelist is referring to the historical fact of the rejection of Jesus is the imperfect tense used.<sup>15</sup> The group who rejected Jesus are those whose deeds were evil, and they are in continuity with those who reject him still. One can agree with Charlesworth's comment - "In the sense but only in the sense that one's response to Jesus reflexively categorizes him as dwelling in darkness or in light, there are two exclusive groups in John. In the Fourth Gospel, therefore, we find the idea that all men are in darkness and the suggestion that men are divided into different categories according to their response to Jesus".<sup>16</sup> It

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14. πράσων; μισεῖ; ἔρχεται (v. 20), ποιῶν; ἔρχεται (v. 21).

15. ἦν - a continuous state of being evil.

16. Charlesworth, N.T.S., 15 (1968-69), 405.

is an historical fact that some have rejected Jesus, and some continue to reject him when challenged by the preaching of the community - they belong to the opposition who do evil. The possibility is always open, however, for all men to respond in faith.<sup>17</sup> These verses must be understood in the context of vv. 16, 17, which contain the primary thought of the evangelist. In the sending of the Son men are challenged either to believe in him or to reject him, and by their decision they find either life or condemnation.

There is no doubt that the entire emphasis of this passage lies on the present decision of men already resulting in the experience of eternal life or condemnation. Schnackenburg comments on 3:18- "The 'realized eschatology' which is involved in the fact that the eschatological revealer and redeemer has already come, is nowhere so palpable as here".<sup>18</sup> Must one then agree with Bultmann, commenting on v.19 - "There can be no mistaking the attack which this statement makes on traditional eschatology, even though the Evangelist does not specifically refer to it."<sup>19</sup> It is a false argument to suggest that because there is no statement in this passage of a more traditional, futuristic eschatological understanding, the evangelist is therefore engaged on an all-out attack on any such ideas. Certainly his stress is on the present demand for decision, which is what one would expect from an evangelist and preacher, but it does not follow that he would dispute the validity of a future expectation. One cannot argue from silence, especially when the silence involves a more traditional belief which may have been widely held in the community and assumed by the

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17. One cannot agree that "the moment an individual responds in a negative manner to the proclamation of the Johannine community, he is irrevocably condemned by God". - David Edward Aune, The Cultic Setting of Realised Eschatology in Early Christianity (Nov. T. Sup. 28; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 122; see Lindars, Gospel, 161.

18. Schnackenburg, Gospel, 401.

19. Bultmann, Gospel, 157.

evangelist. Schnackenburg gives a more balanced judgement - "The purpose of the evangelist is not to combat the traditional eschatology, but to display the personal responsibility of unbelievers and the horror of their act in its true colours".<sup>20</sup> This passage shows clearly the evangelist's own emphasis on present decision leading to the present possession of life (or condemnation), but his relation to the more traditional sayings of future expectation will be discussed further on 5:24-29.<sup>21</sup>

#### JOHN 12:46-48

Boismard has made an interesting comparison between 3:16-19, and 12:46-48. He argues - "Malgré certaines variantes, ces deux discours reproduisent les mêmes thèmes, en termes identiques ou équivalents, et dans le même ordre, sauf en ce qui concerne la venue du Christ - lumière, placée soit en tête (12:46) soit en finale (3:19) du morceau. On a l'impression d'être en présence, non de deux discours différents, mais de deux éditions différentes d'un seul et même discours, l'une à la première personne et l'autre à la troisième personne".<sup>22</sup> He does note certain differences. The discourse of chap. 3 is in his opinion nearer in style to 1 John. He also detects a difference of christology - in chap. 12 Jesus is presented as the prophet, the new Moses of Deut. 18:18-19, while in chap. 3 he is undoubtedly the only Son of God. Most important for our study, however, is the different timing for the judgement of men.

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20. Schnackenburg, Gospel, 404.

21. See below; it is not enough to say without discussion that traditional eschatological passages are "suspected to be the result of redaction" - Rudolf Bultmann, "The Eschatology of the Fourth Gospel", in Faith and Understanding, ed. R.W. Funk, trans. L.P. Smith, I (London: S.C.M. 1969), 165-183; quot. 166.

22. M.-E. Boismard, "L'Évolution de Thème Eschatologique dans les Traditions Johanniques", R.B., 68 (1961), 507-524; quot. 508. See also Brown, Gospel, 147-148.



The strong emphasis of 3:16-21 has already been noted - "he who does not believe is condemned already" (3:18), but in chapter 12 the judgement on those who reject Jesus has still to take place - ἐν τῇ ἑσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ (12:48).

There is no doubt that these two passages take up the same important themes - the light which has come into the world; the judgement which stems from man's response to that light; and the purpose of God which is to save. One is not entirely convinced, however, that 3:16-19 should be considered a "relecture"<sup>23</sup> of 12: 46-48. Certainly the two passages have drawn on the same pool of Johannine thought, but they may have emerged quite independently. Brown makes the interesting point that "in this typically Johannine discourse (12:44-50) there are many individual sayings with Synoptic parallels".<sup>24</sup> He compares vv. 44-45 with Matt. 10:40, and notes the Lucan character of the verb ἀθετεῖν (e.g. Lk. 10:16) in v. 48.<sup>25</sup> He also compares v. 47a with Matt. 7:26, and 47b. with some manuscripts of Lk. 9:56. Brown also follows Boismard in noting the "many echoes of Deuteronomy" in the passage, especially Deut. 17:18-19; 31:19,26. All this would suggest that the discourse of 12:44-50 was built up from a number of traditional sayings and motifs familiar in the Johannine community. 3:16-19 will have drawn on the same traditions, but need not necessarily have been based on the finished discourse of chap. 12, indeed one finds this unlikely. Both passages will have been used by preachers in the community - perhaps the same preacher - to present the demand for decision created by the light having come into the world (cf. 8:12).

23. Boismard, R.B., 68 (1961), 514.

24. Brown, Gospel, 491; see also Barrett, Gospel, 434.

25. See also Bernard, Commentary, 447.

One has to say "perhaps" the same preacher because there are differences in the presentation of the two passages. In 3:16-19 it is belief or non-belief in the Son, sent by God, which determines man's status of having eternal life, or having been condemned. This can also be expressed as belief "in the name of the only Son of God" (3:18). In 12:47-48, however, the criterion is man's response to τὰ ῥήματά μου, summed up as ὁ λόγος which will act as judge at the last day.<sup>26</sup>

While the terms used are different, the thinking behind the two passages is in fact very similar. In chap. 3 it is as the one sent by God that the Son calls men into judgement, so in chap. 12 the words of Jesus have the same effect because they are spoken by the authority of the Father (12:49). It is clear, of course, from the Prologue that Jesus is himself ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο (1:14). While men respond to the words (ῥήματα) which they hear, judgement is based on the word (λόγος) - the total mission of Jesus (cf. 8:47 with 43, 51; 15:7 with 3; 17:8 with 6,14).<sup>27</sup> The λόγος calls men into judgement, but the result of that judgement is apparent by their response to the words of Jesus, and by extension the words of the Church.<sup>28</sup>

A more important difference is the difference of eschatological timing. In 3:16-21 the condemnation of those who do not believe in the Son has already taken place, and similarly those who do believe have eternal

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26. Barrett, Gospel, 434 suggests: "The ῥήματα are the λόγος which Jesus bears as it is split up into particular utterances; λόγος is a kind of collective noun for the ῥήματα", cf. Bernard, Commentary, 447. We are suggesting that the λόγος - is more than the summation of all the words spoken by Jesus, it is the total event of Jesus in the world.

27. See Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, II, 527-528.

28. See Josef Blank, Krisis (Freiburg i.B : Lambertus, 1964), 309.

life. In 12:46-48 the development is more complex. Again it is stressed that Jesus has come as light into the world in order that those who believe may not remain in darkness (v.46) - that was the purpose of his coming. The effect, however, has been that those who reject him by not keeping (v.47), or receiving (v.48), his *ρήματα* are condemned.<sup>29</sup> That was not God's intention in sending the light into the world, and so it is not Jesus who condemns (v.47),<sup>30</sup> but man's refusal to receive him - the *λόγος* in the world - is his condemnation. What is not so clear in these verses is when the judgement takes place. In v. 48a it seems that the word is already the judge - *ἔχει τὸν κρίνοντα αὐτόν*, but in 48b the word will be his judge - *κρινεῖ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἑσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ*. Of course the problem is solved if with Bultmann one attributes 48a to a source, most of 48b to the evangelist's exegetical comment, and the last phrase to an ecclesiastical redactor, but Bultmann offers little evidence for this - it is, to him, "quite obvious".<sup>31</sup>

What does seem obvious is that whoever wrote down v. 48 did not see a contradiction in the two sentences. The *λόγος* has come into the world and so is a judge, but the judgement will become apparant on the last day. One must accept that it does seem unlikely that the evangelist, with his strong and natural stress on man's present decision when confronted by the *λόγος* (as detected in 3:16-21), would have introduced the final statement of v.48.<sup>32</sup> A process of composition for the Gospel has

29. Again we suggest that the idea of the passage is condemnation rather than judgement.

30. There is little textual support for the dropping of *μὴ* before *φυλάξῃ* (P66cD(II) and others, according to Lindars, *Gospel*, 440); indeed the variant is not mentioned in U<sup>4</sup>B.S.

31. Bultmann, *Gospd*, 345n.6; note the comment of Bernard on Wendt, *Commentary* clxii.

32. Thus we agree with Bultmann that the last phrase - *ἐν τῇ ἑσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ* - was not the work of the evangelist, but it seems quite impossible to detect the tradition-history of these sayings. Certainly one cannot precisely divide the verses phrase by phrase. See also Schnackenburg, *Johannesevangelium*, II, 528.

already been suggested<sup>33</sup> - the main work of the evangelist - a preacher - being supplemented by a redactor who included a variety of material held and respected in the community. Some of this material would have come from the evangelist himself, but other passages will have been developed by different members of the community, perhaps based on traditional sources and sayings. We suggest that this statement of final judgement will have been brought into the Gospel by the redactor, indicating that the more traditional expectation clearly seen in other New Testament passages (e.g. Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 2:12-16) was still held with respect in the Johannine community (cf. Jn. 6:39, 40,44). It is important to emphasise that the evangelist's stress, and this more traditional expectation of a future judgement were not held in tension in the community, nor would they have been seen as contradictory by the evangelist himself. They were accepted as complementary to one another. The evangelist stressed the need for present decision but the effect of that decision will be fully realised in the future. One must finally add that it now seems impossible to the present writer to distinguish with precision which of the statements of vv. 44-50 came directly from the evangelist and which were from other sources. If the redaction had resulted in two incompatible ideas being forced side by side, it might well be possible to detect a break in the development of the passage, but to the redactor there was no conflict involved.<sup>34</sup>

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33. On this see chap. 1.

34. Note the comments of Marinus de Jonge, Jesus: Stranger from Heaven and Son of God, ed. and trans. J.E. Steely (S.B.L.S.B.S. 11; Missoula : Scholars, 1977), 185, n. 9.



JOHN 5:24-29

The same shift of eschatological emphasis is found in the discourse following the Bethzatha incident.<sup>35</sup> Already we have studied part of this discourse, noting the one-ness of action, of purpose and of power between the Father and the Son (v.17ff.).<sup>36</sup> In particular the Son has been given the functions of life-giving, and conversely of judgement (vv. 21,22). This section of the discourse reaches its climax in v. 23, where the impossibility is pointed out of honouring the Father without honouring the Son whom he has sent.<sup>37</sup> Thus the evangelist defends the original assertion of v. 17 - "My Father is working still, and I am working".

In vv. 24ff. the themes of life and judgement are further developed.<sup>38</sup> The  $\alpha\mu\eta\upsilon\ \alpha\mu\eta\upsilon$  formula with which both v. 24 and v. 25 begin suggests that they were originally isolated sayings,<sup>39</sup> but there seems no reason to suggest that they were not included here by the evangelist himself. It is characteristic of his writing that when an argument has been developed to its climax he should return to pick up some of the themes passed over briefly on the way (vv. 21,22). The statement of v.24 may be usefully compared with 3:16-18, which we suggested was a development of the evangelist's characteristic thought. There it was pointed out that the purpose of God in sending his Son was to offer life to all men (3:16,17), and that the

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35. Again Boismard, R.B., 68 (1961), 514-518, develops a parallel between vv. 19-25, and vv. 26-30a, but while providing an interesting comparison it is not convincing; see too Brown, Gospel, 219-221.

36. On this see the discussion of chap. 2 above.

37. So too Lindars, Gospel, 223.

38. See Blank, Krisis, 127.

39. Brown, Gospel, 214.

giving of eternal life, or the alternative condemnation, already takes place in the response of men to Jesus (3:18). 5:24 is a re-statement of that emphasis - the one who "hears my word"<sup>40</sup> and believes him who sent me,<sup>41</sup> has eternal life; he does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life" (cf. 1 Jn. 3:14).

While in 3:19-21 the distinction was between those who came to the light, and those who remain in darkness, the dualism of 5:24 is between those who are in the realm of life, and those who remain in death. Again a better understanding may be obtained if κρισις is thought of as "condemnation".<sup>42</sup> The believer is assured that he will not be condemned, and so in that sense he has already passed from death to life; the judgement has taken place. Bultmann comments - "The situation of being confronted with the word is the situation of judgement. Naturally the statement is not to be confined to the external situation and time described in ch. 5. It is true for all time and for all places. Everyone who hears the word of Jesus, wherever or whenever it may be, stands before the decision between life and death".<sup>43</sup> It does not necessarily follow, however, that in his thinking the evangelist did not retain a more traditional

40. See comment above on 12:47, 48; also Blank, Krisis, 128-129.

41. In 3:18 it is to believe "in him", i.e. the Son; here the reference is to the Father, but as the discourse has just shown the oneness of action between the Father and the Son, and the necessity to honour both equally, the distinction cannot be important. It seems unnecessary to suggest that - "dieses πιστεύειν mit dem Dativ heisst nicht : an den Vater glauben, sondern ihm glauben, dass er Jesus gesandt hat", Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, II, 137.

42. So Brown, Gospel, 213.

43. Bultmann, Gospel, 257.

expectation of future judgement. The stress of this verse and indeed of the Gospel, is that the verdict has already been decided by man's response to the Son.<sup>44</sup> The decision for life or death is taken in the present, when confronted by Jesus through the preaching of the community. That is the challenge which the evangelist wants to present to his hearers, and any speculation about the future would only be a distraction.

This new state of the believer having passed from death to life triggers another thought contained in v. 25 - again, probably, an originally independent saying. As in v. 24 we see no reason why this saying should not have been included by the evangelist himself, although the tradition-history of individual sayings in the discourses must remain a matter of speculation.<sup>45</sup> Certainly there is nothing in the statement which would seem to conflict with the evangelist's characteristic emphasis on present decision - "those who hear will live" (v.25).

The present emphasis is underlined by the phrase - "the hour is coming and now is"<sup>46</sup> (cf. 4:23). Bultmann comments - "v.25 stresses with all possible emphasis that the eschatological moment is now present in the word of revelation".<sup>47</sup> That is true up to a point, and yet there is still surely a future orientation - "the dead will hear (ἀκούσουσιν) ... and those who hear will live (ζήσουσιν)". While for the evangelist "the hour" of Jesus is passed, that was not so within the historical

44. See Lindars, Gospel, 224; but cf. Blank, Krisis, 131.

45. See above on 12:46-48.

46. Lindars is right to dismiss the few texts which omit Gospel, 224. Note the use of the continuous present - καὶ νῦν ἔσται ἐρχεται

47. Lindars, Gospel, 258. Note also Käsemann, Testament, 14-16.

setting of the discourse. In the gospel, "the hour" of Jesus was the hour of his passion (13:1; 12:27), and glorification (12:23; 17:1) - "the hour of his return to the Father".<sup>48</sup> While that event could be anticipated, and was indeed inevitable in that the Father had sent the Son into the world, it had not yet taken place - Jesus' hour had not yet come (7:30, 8:20). This phrase, then, is primarily a statement of christology. One must agree with Blank, "das  $\nu\omicron\nu$  ist, in seinem letzten Grunde, ein christologisches  $\nu\omicron\nu$ , und darum ein eschatologisches".<sup>49</sup> The hour is present in the sense that Jesus is already in the world and the final outcome of his mission is assured. For each individual the hour is "now" when he is challenged by the word of Jesus, perhaps through the preaching of the community.<sup>50</sup>

That only brings us, however, to the real problem of this verse, which is whether "the hour" of Jesus, i.e. his return to the Father, heralds the resurrection of the dead. Many commentators avoid the problem by understanding  $\nu\epsilon\kappa\rho\upsilon$  in the sense of the spiritually dead,<sup>51</sup> yet there seem to be compelling arguments why this verse should be understood in the sense of the physically dead. The comparison which is often noted to support a spiritual understanding is Eph. 2:1; 5:14 (but cf, Eph. 1:20), but in the Gospel itself there are clear examples of  $\nu\epsilon\kappa\rho\upsilon$  used in a physical sense - of the resurrection of Lazarus (12:1, 9, 17), and of Jesus (2:22; 20:9; 21:14). In the immediate context it is the power of God to raise the physically dead which is referred to in v. 21. It would be unique if the evangelist was here to use  $\nu\epsilon\kappa\rho\upsilon$  in a

48. Brown, Gospel, 517; see 517-518; also Alf Corell, Consummation Est (London: S.P.C.K., 1958), 105-108.

49. Blank, Krisis, 136; see 134-143; also Käsemann, Testament, 16.

50. Ibid., 140-141.

51. E.g. Bultmann, Gospel, 259; Brown, Gospel, 215; Barrett, Gospel, 262; Bernard, Commentary, 243.



spiritual sense.<sup>52</sup> The dualism of two spheres in v. 24 is between  $\beta\omega\eta$  and  $\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$  (cf. 8:51, 52)<sup>53</sup> - a state of life and a state of death.

In v. 24 the promise was that those who believe have already passed from death to life. In v. 25 it is pointed out that this can be true even for those who are physically dead - when they hear the voice of the Son of God, and respond,<sup>54</sup> they too will pass from death to life. The evangelist does not by that statement imply an immediate resurrection for those who are dead, any more than in v. 24 he suggests a physical change of state for those who believe. The dualism is between "life" and "death", but one can enter the sphere of "life" in whatever physical state one happens to be (cf. 11:25,26). The question of how the voice of the Son of God comes to those who are physically dead is not discussed by the evangelist, but that he could communicate with the dead is apparent in the raising of Lazarus (11:1-44). V. 25, then, while extending the scope of the mission of Jesus to include those who are dead, does not preclude a belief in the future physical resurrection of the dead. In fact it has nothing to say about it.

That a different conception is contained in the statement of vv.28, 29, can hardly be doubted. Here the author does refer to a general, physical resurrection of the dead. Paolo Ricca, in a footnote, points to some stylistic differences in these verses -  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\kappa\rho\iota\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$  is a hapax legomenon in the Fourth Gospel, and indeed the entire New Testament;

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52. One cannot agree with Blank, Krisis, 143; see Aune, Cultic Setting, 118; Van Hartingsveld, Eschatologie, 45-50.

53. We do not wish to suggest, however, that  $\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$  is always used in a spiritual sense; cf. 12:32; 18:32; 21:19.

54.  $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  has the sense not only of those who hear, but also obey - Brown, Gospel, 215; Lindars, Gospel, 225. One cannot agree with Aune, Cultic Setting, 118-119, that those who hear have previously accepted the word of Jesus.

the phrase τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιῆν is found nowhere else in the Fourth Gospel; its negative τὰ φῶλα πράσσειν is found at 3:20, but there the alternative is "to do what is true" (3:21); ἀνάστασις βωῆς seems to be achieved on the basis of good works, whilst the established teaching of the Fourth Gospel is that the destiny of men is decided by their faith or non-faith.<sup>55</sup> He goes on, however, to argue that while v.28 is an apocalyptic variation of v.25 - the two different christological titles "Son" and "Son of man" leading to a different eschatological statement - the two sayings are tied together by v. 20. The "greater works" of v. 20 is the raising of the dead (vv. 28,29). Ricca writes - "Insofern er vom zukünftigen Handeln des Menschensohnes redet, stimmt Vers 28 wesentlich mit der ganzen Perikope überein und ist kein Fremdkörper in der joh. Eschatologie... Es bleibt jedenfalls die Tatsache, dass ihre Aussage, auch wenn sie nicht im Zentrum des joh. Denkens steht, nicht einfach das Überbleibsel einer überholten Eschatologie darstellt, sondern den notwendigen Abschluss des eschatologischen Geschehens bezeichnet und ein integrierender Bestandteil des christologischen Kerygmas des 4 Ev ist."<sup>56</sup> One cannot accept that this is an integral part of the evangelist's christology - his aim in this discourse was to defend the statement that, "My Father is working still and I am working" (v.17), not to attribute every activity of the Father to the Son. The differences enumerated by Ricca and expanded by Schanckenburg, seem to the present author to support the suggestion that vv. 27b-29 were the addition of a redactor.<sup>57</sup>

55. Paolo Ricca, Die Eschatologie des Vierten Evangeliums (Zürich: Gott-helf, 1966), 147 n. 332. He calls them stylistic differences but they are really linguistic and conceptual differences. See also Blank, Krisis, 174-176; and esp. Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, II, 144-145; as well as the obvious omission of  $\nu\theta\nu$ , note that  $\phi\omega\nu\eta$  is now a word of command from which non-one can withdraw (cf. v. 25), and that the resurrection to life (v. 21) has become resurrection of life or of judgement (cf. Matt. 25:31-46; Dan. 12:2).

56. Ricca, Eschatologie, 149; see discussion, 147-149; on use of "Son of man" title see Corell, Consummatum, 103-104.

57. So also Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, II, 144-147, esp. 146-147.

Van Hartingsveld also makes an interesting distinction between vv. 25 and 28, although he uses it to show that vv. 28,29 are integral to the discourse. He writes - "In 5:28 ist φωνή die Stimme Jesu, die alle Toten aus den Gräbern ruft; in 5:25 ist φωνή auch die Stimme Jesu, die einige Tote auferweckt".<sup>58</sup> This distinction between individual and corporate eschatological fulfilment has been strongly argued by C.F.D. Moule.<sup>59</sup> His thesis can be seen in the following statement - "The references to judgement or acquittal as having already taken place (3:18, 5:24), and to the passing from death to life as a fait accompli (5:24), are in terms of individuals ... Conversely, the only quite clearly 'collective' and 'corporate' allusion ... is in terms not of 'realized eschatology' but of the 'orthodox' future event, not yet realized (5:28f.). This confirms the view that the only 'realized eschatology' in the Fourth Gospel is on the individual level; and such a type of 'realized eschatology' so far from replacing a futurist eschatology, need be only its correlative."<sup>60</sup>

Moule considers that this distinction between the individual and collective expectation is made explicit in the conversation with Judas (14:21-23). Judas is surprised at the saying of Jesus that he will manifest himself to the believers only, and by implication not to the world. In reply to his question, however, Jesus simply confirms Judas' individual understanding. Moule comments - "It would be difficult to say more clearly (more Johanneo, by means of a groping question, amplified or

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58. Van Hartingsveld, Eschatologie, 49; see 46-50.

59. In two articles: C.F.D. Moule, "The Individualism of the Fourth Gospel", Nov. T., 5 (1962), 171-190; "A Neglected Factor in the Interpretation of Johannine Eschatology", in Studies in John (Nov. T. Sup. 24; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 155-160.

60. Moule, Nov. T., 5 (1962), 174.

corrected by the Lord's insight) that collective eschatology is not here in view at all".<sup>61</sup>

One must agree with that insight, yet on balance not with Moule's conclusion - "Returning, then, to the Fourth Gospel it is possible to see such future references as it does contain, not as vestigial relics, nor as interpolations, nor as concessions, merely, to convention, but as those points at which, now and again, the individualistic message is set side by side with the more collective (and, therefore, still future) expectation, of which the writer is all the time aware".<sup>62</sup>

The solution proposed in the present thesis is first, in agreement with Moule, to emphasise that the characteristic thought of the evangelist is that the individual believer moves from the realm of death to life by his response to the word of Jesus in the present (5:24, 25; 3:18).<sup>63</sup> One would also agree that the writer was aware of a more collective future expectation, as exemplified in 5:28,29. The issue is whether this saying was introduced by the evangelist himself. To answer that question one must remember that the literary genre under examination is a gospel. The evangelist, first as a preacher, then as a writer, was concerned to present the demands of Christ to his hearers. His natural emphasis was on individual decision, and a saying such as 5:28,29, in its shift away from the individual, would in no way have aided him in his task.<sup>64</sup> We suspect, therefore, that 5:27b-29, correctly isolated by Ricca as a "Son of man" saying, was introduced by a later redactor, concerned to preserve as much as possible of the community's tradition.<sup>65</sup>

51. Moule, Studies, 157.

62. Ibid., 159.

63. See below on 11:21-27.

64. Note also the shift from the demand for faith, to the judgement of works (cf. Matt. 25:31-46; Re v. 20: 11-15).

65. In attributing these verses to a redactor one is in agreement with Bultmann, Gospel, 260-262; but not with his proposed motive i.e. "to reconcile the dangerous statements in vv. 24f. with traditional eschatology", 261.



That is not to say that the evangelist was opposed to the saying of future expectation,<sup>66</sup> nor on the other hand that the redactor was trying to correct a one-sided view of the evangelist. They were both engaged in different tasks - the one to write a gospel challenging men to believe, the other to preserve the tradition of the community. They complemented, rather than opposed one another. In the last analysis one must assume that for the redactor the two views brought together in this passage were not contradictory,<sup>67</sup> and we suggest that they were also held without conflict in the community as a whole, and by the evangelist. It is the evangelist's purpose in writing which has placed the emphasis on the individual decision, and as a result the present possession of life, or condemnation to death.

11:21-27. That this is the emphasis of the evangelist is confirmed in the dialogue with Martha, where the distinctive Johannine technique of misunderstanding is used to bring out the important meaning.<sup>68</sup> Again the eschatological consequences stem from the christological fact that Jesus is "the resurrection and the life", (v.25).<sup>69</sup>

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66. There is no reason to attribute 6:39,40,44 to the redactor - Bultmann, Gospel, 219 - the thought is of individual resurrection assured to the believer (cf. 5:21).

67. If one was to accept Bultmann's motive for the redactor, then the views would, of course, be contradictory, but Bultmann himself sees the problem, Gospel, 261. If such a thoroughgoing revision was required surely the redactor would have re-written the Gospel, rather than appear inconsistent. His suggestion that - "Perhaps he thought that the κρίσις which takes place in Jesus' present activity was an anticipation of the last judgement ..." - is more likely to apply to the evangelist himself.

68. See Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, II, 146; Dodd, Interpretation, 364-365.

69. While καὶ ἡ βωή may be omitted in some manuscripts - notably P<sup>45</sup>; old lat.; syiac (U.B.S. notes P<sup>45</sup> as offering apparent support but difficult to verify) - the overwhelming textual evidence is for its inclusion - P<sup>66,75</sup>; N, A, B, C, D, W etc. So Bultmann, Gospel, 403 n.2; Lindars, Gospel, 395; but cf. Barrett, Gospel, 396; Brown, Gospel, 424.

The dialogue begins with a statement of faith, by Martha. Bultmann is right to point out that it is formulated as a confession rather than a request, nor is it a statement of reproach, but "painful regret".<sup>70</sup> It starts from the established fact that Jesus can heal the sick (e.g. 5:1-9; 9:6-7), and Martha has no doubt that had Jesus been there her brother would not have died, but even now she still believed that Jesus can do something. Exactly what she expected him to do is not very clear, she obviously did not expect her brother to come out of the grave (vv. 24, 39).<sup>71</sup> As a statement of faith, however, Martha is affirming, in a very inadequate way, that God will act at the request of Jesus, and the outcome must be for the best (cf. Mary's instruction, 2:5). Perhaps she did entertain the faint hope that God might raise her brother from the dead,<sup>72</sup> but she clearly did not expect it to happen. For the evangelist Mary is simply making an initially inadequate statement of faith in the person of Jesus, which will be amplified and deepened in the succeeding discourse.

Jesus' response is intended by the evangelist to be ambiguous - "Your brother will rise again" (v.23). Martha interprets it at the level of popular belief in the resurrection at the last day (v.24),<sup>73</sup> but at the deeper level, about to be expounded by Jesus, it is a christological

70. Bultmann, Gospel, 401.

71. Brown, Gospel, 433-434.

72. Barrett, Gospel, 395.

73. This belief is first noted at Dan. 12:2, and is still in dispute in the first century (Mk. 12:18-27; Acts 23:8). Barrett, however, produces evidence to suggest that it was "a firm constituent of Pharisaic Judaism", Gospel, 395, and Lindars considers it "representative of a considerable body of Jewish opinion" at the time, Gospel, 394-395. In fact the belief is clearly presupposed in Johannine passages (e.g. 5:28-29; 6:39-40), and is not in dispute here. The question is whether God has given to Jesus the power to raise men.

statement - it concerns the nature of Jesus as the Son who gives life (5:21, 26; 10:10). Jesus explains to Martha - "I am the resurrection and the life" (v.25) - and so challenges her to a more profound faith in him. She responds - "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world" (v.27). These three Messianic titles are found elsewhere in John (1:41; 1:49; 6:14),<sup>74</sup> but here they are brought together to a "highpoint"<sup>75</sup> of christological confession (cf. 20:31).<sup>76</sup> The evangelist has moved Martha's, and he hopes his hearers', understanding of Jesus' mission and purpose in the world. Jesus is not just a holy man to whose requests God will listen (v.22), but he is the Messiah, the Son of God (v. 27).

This christological development, however, has eschatological implications which are explained in vv. 25, 26. The fact that Jesus is the resurrection and the life obviously has implications not just for the future, but in the present. Ricca writes - "Das Joh-Ev zeigt ein tiefes theologisches Bewusstsein der Realität und der Fülle der eschatologischen Vollendung, wie sie sich in der Geschichte and besonders in der Person Jesu verwirklicht hat ... Wir haben deshalb vorgeschlagen, die joh. Eschatologie eine 'personalisierte' Eschatologie zu nennen."<sup>77</sup> Up to a point one would agree, although the evangelist seems to present Jesus as the anticipation rather than the actualisation of the eschatological events which have still to take place. He is the guarantee of what will happen, and one's relationship to him is decisive, but the future is

74. See Lindars, Gospel, 396; Barrett, Gospel, 397.

75. So Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, II, 417; cf. Bultmann, Gospel, 404.

76. Martha still, however, does not fully understand the implication of the words (cf. vv. 39,40). They may later become a baptismal, confessional statement, but here they are brought together as independent titles, to emphasise the unique relation of Jesus to God. See Barrett, Gospel, 397; Lindars, Gospel, 396.

77. Ricca, Eschatologie, 128; note also Blank, Krisis, 155-156.

not subsumed in the present. That this is the evangelist's understanding may be seen in the expansion of v. 25 into v. 26. Much has been written on these two verses, which are in some way parallel -

ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ καὶ ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται

πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

It should be noted that this is a general statement, and while it may by implication refer to Lazarus, it does not specifically do so.<sup>78</sup> Indeed Martha does not understand it as a promise that her brother will immediately be raised from the dead, in the physical sense. One cannot, therefore, agree with van Hartingsveldt that v. 25b refers to Lazarus, and v. 26 to Martha and the other believers.<sup>79</sup> The parallel is between two groups of believers - the first group, of which Lazarus is one member, has died; the second is still alive, although members of the second will one day become members of the first. The difference reflects the Johannine dualism of those who are in the realm of life, and those in the realm of death. The believer belongs to the realm of life, and it makes no difference whether he is presently alive, and still to face physical death (v. 26), or has already died (v. 25b). In this the evangelist is reflecting once more the thought of 5:24,25, and indeed the thought of Paul in Romans 14:8 - "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."<sup>80</sup>

The raising of Lazarus which is about to take place is a sign, and in a sense an anticipation of the end, but it is not intended to eliminate

78. See Bernard, Commentary, 389; Lindars also observes that "the raising of Lazarus does not exactly fit the terms of reference", Gospel, 396.

79. Van Hartingsveldt, Eschatologie, 55-56; see also Aune, Cultic Setting, 120-121.

80. See Blank, Krisis, 155-158.



all future eschatological expectation.<sup>81</sup> By its very nature it was a unique event intended only to signify that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. It was not a general resurrection of all believers, only of one. In vv. 25, 26, it is pointed out that all believers are in the realm of life, whatever their physical state. In a sense the Lazarus episode only gave an excuse for this conversation between Jesus and Martha, which could have taken place in the abstract, whether or not Lazarus was raised from the dead.<sup>82</sup> The raising of Lazarus was tangible evidence that the Father had given all power to the Son, even over life itself (5:20) - it was a sign. The truth which the evangelist really wants to proclaim, and with which he challenges all men - as he challenged Martha - is that Jesus is himself the resurrection and the life. It is one's response to the person of Jesus that really matters, and those who believe in him have already passed from death to life. So Bultmann comments - "The two lines [vv. 25b, 26] say the same thing, positively and negatively; by a paradoxical mode of expression they remove the concepts of death and life into another sphere, for which human death and human life are only images and hints : the believer may suffer the earthly death, but he has "life" in a higher, in an ultimate sense".<sup>83</sup>

So once more we find this characteristic stress of the evangelist. It must be noted that he does not attack, or even deny, Martha's expectation of the last day (v. 24). It is for him totally irrelevant. The issue which matters, and on which he argues with all his force, is man's

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81. Note James P. Martin, "History and Eschatology in the Lazarus Narrative, John 11:1-44", S.J.T., 17 (1964), 332-343, esp. 339-340.

82. There is no doubt that the raising of Lazarus is an example of the eschatological drama referred to in 5:28,29, cf. Dodd, Interpretation, 365. It does not follow, however, that v. 25b should be interpreted in those terms.

83. Bultmann, Gospel, 403.

relationship to Jesus, who is himself the resurrection and the life (v.25). In man's response to Jesus he either moves into the realm of life or remains in the realm of death, his physical state becomes unimportant (vv. 25b, 26). So Martha, representing the true believer, makes her confession of faith in the person of Jesus (v. 27).

JOHN 14:18-24.

The same pattern of the traditional expectation ignored rather than denied by the evangelist may be detected in the teaching on the coming again of Jesus in the Farewell Discourses. In chap. 14 (strictly from 13:31)<sup>84</sup> one finds the typical Johannine pattern of question and answer, ambiguity and misunderstanding, as the evangelist explores the theme of Jesus' going and coming again. Moule's comment on the Judas episode may be extended to cover the whole discourse - it is strictly Johanneo.<sup>85</sup>

One is not surprised therefore to find a statement of Jesus (14:3) which appears to be ambiguous, then amplified and defined later in the discourse. Jesus said to the disciples, clearly in preparation for his death; "when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also". What event is intended by this coming again to receive the disciples? Not unnaturally some commentators look to a Parousia at the end time, similar to 1 Thess. 4:16,17; Rev. 1:7,<sup>86</sup> others to Jesus coming at his resurrection,<sup>87</sup>

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84. See Dodd, Interpretation, 403-409.

85. Moule, Studies, 157.

86. Bernard, Commentary, 535; Ricca, Eschatologie, 162; Holwerda, Holy Spirit, 84-85; Aune, Cultic Setting, 129. For various interpretations see Van Hartingsveld, Eschatologie, 106-110.

87. See Moule, Nov. T., 5 (1962), 178-180; Lindars, Gospel, 471.

or to his receiving believers at their death.<sup>88</sup> Again it is not surprising to find in some comments a combination of these various aspects of interpretation. Brown considers that 14:2,3 - "originally referred to the parousia and possibly was reinterpreted in terms of the death of the Christian".<sup>89</sup> We suggest that the ambiguity of the saying was intentional on the part of the evangelist. The immediate thought of his hearers would be of an expected eschatological fulfilment at the Parousia, and the evangelist does not explicitly deny the validity of such a view. His own concern, however, is for his hearers' immediate relationship to Jesus (vv. 23, 24). Just as he did not deny Martha's expectation of a final resurrection (11:24), but pointed to the necessity for a present decision on Jesus' significance in the world (11:26), so here the final expectation of the Parousia is not attacked as invalid, but is shown to be insignificant as a result of Jesus' presence already in the world.

The first two questions - those of Thomas and Philip - concern the way to the Father, but then at v.18 the evangelist takes up once more the thought of Jesus' coming to the disciples. It is entirely characteristic that having gone off to some extent at a tangent (v. 4ff.), he should now return to develop and explain the statement of v. 3. Schnackenburg notes, citing J. Becker: "Bis v.17 dominiert das Thema vom Weggang Jesu, ab v.18 das von seinem Wiederkommen".<sup>90</sup>

It is in vv. 18-24 that one finds the evangelist's own emphasis on Jesus' coming again, and its significance for believers. Again one

88. Bultmann, Gospel, 600-603.

89. Brown, Gospel, 626; cf. Barrett, Gospel, 457, Hoskyns, Gospel, 534; Dodd detects echoes of the traditional language of the Church's eschatology, but reinterpreted to mean "that after the death of Jesus, and because of it, His followers will enter into union with Him as their living Lord, and through Him with the Father, and so enter into eternal life", Interpretation, 403-405; quot. 405.

90. Schnackenburg, Johannesevangelium, III, 64.

must ask what is intended by the statement: "I will come to you" (v. 18). Lindars points out that if Jesus' departure is his death, then his return must be his resurrection,<sup>91</sup> and this would certainly seem to be included in the thought of verse 19 - "a little while and the world will see me no more but you will see me". The thought of the evangelist, however, extends beyond the resurrection to the life and experience of the early community. Because of the resurrection the certainty of eternal life is offered to all believers - "you will see me because I live, and you will live"<sup>92</sup> (v. 19). Bultmann notes - "The early Christian Easter-message is that the one who was given over to death is alive, and bound up with that that the life of the believers is grounded in his resurrection life".<sup>93</sup> This extension of the significance of Jesus' resurrection into the present experience of the Christian community seems to be the thought reflected by the evangelist in this verse.

If the evangelist had simply been reporting the Last Supper, and Jesus' words of consolation to the disciples, then the return of vv. 18, 19 could simply be a reference to the resurrection appearances of chap. 20. It is clear, however, that the evangelist also intended these words to offer consolation to the believers in his own community. They would not see Jesus in the sense that the disciples did at the resurrection, and yet they too may be assured of life. Brown comments - "it is obvious that Jesus is speaking of a more continued presence than was possible in

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91. Lindars, Gospel, 471; cf. Barrett, Gospel, 464; Brown, Gospel, 645; Bultmann, Gospel, 619. This is denied by Holwerda, Holy Spirit, 70, 72.

92. For this translation see Brown, Gospel, 640, but cf. Barrett, Gospel, 464; note Bultmann, Gospel, 619.

93. Bultmann, Gospel, 619.



the brief period of post-resurrectional appearances - not only the words 'I shall not leave you orphans' but the whole tone of his remarks imply permanency".<sup>94</sup> One would agree with Holwerda - "If Jesus' coming is fulfilled only at the Parousia, the disciples continue to be orphans until the end of the world; and if his coming is fulfilled in the resurrection appearances, the disciples would again be orphans after the ascension".<sup>95</sup> Clearly the evangelist intends Jesus' continued presence with the believers, but in what sense?

That was the question which puzzled Judas who was still thinking of a visible manifestation at the end-time. Clearly such a Parousia would be visible not only to the disciples/believers, but to the world. Now, in response to this misunderstanding of Judas, the evangelist focuses on the essential meaning - "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (v.23). In the *μωνή* of v. 23 one finds a clear reference back to v. 2 and so the presentation of the evangelist's thought has reached its climax.<sup>96</sup> It would be difficult to conceive of a more Johannine statement - faith identified as love for Jesus, which is demonstrated by keeping his word; the response of the Father's love; and because the Father and the Son act as one the promise that "we will come to him and make our home with him".

Holwerda draws interesting parallels between 14:15ff. and 14:21ff. He writes - "Both the coming of the Spirit and the coming of Jesus occur within the same framework of love to Jesus. Those who love Jesus will keep His commandments, and the Father will send the Spirit to dwell in them. It

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94. Brown, Gospel, 645-646; cf. Barrett, Gospel, 464.

95. Holwerda, Holy Spirit 67. For the evangelist, of course, Jesus' ascension to the Father was on the Cross - there was no separate act of ascension. Holwerda presumably means that they would again be orphans when the resurrection appearances had ceased.

96. See Lindars, Gospel, 483; Bultmann, Gospel, 624.

is within this same manifestation of love in obedience that Jesus manifests Himself. As the world cannot receive the Spirit because it exists outside the love relationship to Jesus, so Jesus will not manifest Himself to the world because it does not love Him".<sup>97</sup> Brown detects the same parallelism between vv. 15-17 and vv. 18-21,<sup>98</sup> while Boismard finds three parallel sections. He notes - "il faut aimer le Christ en gardant ses commandements pour que l'Esprit vienne en nous et que nous puissions le voir (14:15-17); il faut aimer le Christ en gardant ses commandements pour que le Christ se manifeste à nous et revienne (14:18-21); il faut aimer le Christ en gardant ses commandements pour que le Père et le Christ viennent faire leur demeure en nous (14:23). La structure trinitaire du morceau est évidente: Esprit, Christ, Père".<sup>99</sup>

While we would not wish to attribute any trinitarian thought to the Evangelist, it would seem that in vv. 15-24 he does not want to make any clear distinction between the coming of the Paraclete, the return of Jesus, and the coming of the Father and the Son.<sup>100</sup> While it does not seem to the present writer that the evangelist employs any clear pattern of parallels, he is using the same ideas to explore his topic in different ways. The coming of Jesus, which is essentially the coming of the Father and the Son to dwell with the believer, is his coming in the Spirit, and should not be differentiated from the coming of the Paraclete.

Boismard's formulation clearly points to the intention of the evangelist which is to distinguish between those who love Jesus and keep his

97. Holwerda, Holy Spirit, 72.

98. Brown, Gospel, 644-645; see also Bultmann, Gospel, 617.

99. Boismard, R.B., 68 (1961), 519.

100. Holwerda, Holy Spirit, 65 rightly points out that there is no confounding of persons - cf. the one-ness of action of the Father and the Son, chap. 2. See also Brown, Gospel, 645.

commandments,<sup>101</sup> and the world which has rejected him. It is to those who love him that Jesus will come; thus he shows that he is writing as an evangelist challenging men to true faith. The Christian message is one of consolation, but not for the world. The promise is only to the believer that "we will come to him and make our home with him", (v.23). So the phrase "ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ" (v.20),<sup>102</sup> while having undoubted apocalyptic overtones (cf. Mk. 13:32) is intended by the evangelist to refer historically to the day of resurrection, but more importantly to signify the day on which the hearer responds to Jesus in faith, and becomes one of those who love him and keep his commandments. In this we agree with Bultmann - "precisely in the coming of the Spirit, Jesus comes himself; precisely in the community's Spirit - inspired proclamation of the word he himself is at work as Revealer".<sup>103</sup> In the post-resurrection community it is when a man responds to the proclamation of Jesus, and comes out of the world, that Jesus and the Father come to dwell with him and so offer consolation.

We contend, then, that as in the other passages previously studied, the evangelist does not set out to deny, let alone to counteract, a belief in future eschatological fulfilment at the Parousia. This is for him a matter of no importance, as he goes about his task of challenging men to faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (20<sup>2</sup>31). For him the important time, of vital significance to the hearer, is the time when the

101. There is no distinction between the keeping of his commandments (vv. 15, 21), and of his word (v. 23).

102. See Barrett, Gospel, 464; Brown, Gospel, 640, cf. 16:23, 26. In 16:16-24 the thought again seems to be of the resurrection appearances of Jesus, but extended to the continued experience of Jesus in the believer in the post-Easter community.

103. Bultmann, Gospel, 617-618; but one cannot agree that "the experience of Easter is seen as the fulfilment of the Promise of the Parousia" (his italics), 619, cf. 585-586.

hearer is challenged by the word, and offers his response to Jesus presented in the preaching of the community.<sup>104</sup> The Father and the Son will dwell with those who respond to Jesus in love, and future expectation of a Parousia thus loses its significance.

- APPENDIX -

JOHN 21:20-23

The interpretation given thus far of the evangelist's thought may be supported by a brief comment on the redactor's work at 21:20-23. It seems quite clear that chapter 21 is the addition of a redactor. That it is an addition is shown by the undoubted ending at 20:31, and we maintain it was added by a redactor rather than the evangelist himself because the evangelist would surely have amended his material to smooth the transition.<sup>105</sup> What is less clear is the tradition history of the various sayings.<sup>106</sup> We maintain that this material evolved within the Johannine community, but to attempt to decide how it evolved, or which sayings, if any, might have been used by the evangelist, is to enter the realms of speculation. What concerns the present study is how the redactor, and his community, understood the saying of v. 22.

Peter, whose own death has just been predicted, asks what is going to happen to the disciple whom Jesus loved (vv. 20, 21). The reply of Jesus (v. 22) seems likely to have been a traditional saying of the community, perhaps a variant on the more general synoptic expectation (Matt. 10:23; 16:28; Mk. 13:30; 14:62), and the Pauline hope (1 Cor.

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104. See Moule, Studies, 157; Nov. T., 5 (1962), 173. Aune's argument, Cultic Setting, 128-133, that the evangelist primarily intends a "recurring cultic 'coming' of Jesus in the form of a pneumatic or prophetic visio Christi within the setting of worship 'in the Spirit' as celebrated by the Johannine community", 129, is not convincing.

105. See Bultmann, Gospel, 700-702; Brown, Gospel, 1077-1082.

106. Note Brown, Gospel, 1118.



15:51, 1 Thess. 4:15)<sup>107</sup>. Some commentators point out that grammatically this statement would point to an actual expectation of Jesus rather than an hypothetical possibility<sup>108</sup> - that Jesus really did intend that this disciple should remain until the Parousia. The redactor, however, clearly sees an ambiguity. The community, or some members of it at least, have interpreted, with some justification, the intention of Jesus to be that the disciple should still be alive when Jesus comes. The redactor,<sup>109</sup> in the true style of the evangelist, seizes on the possible ambiguity to explain the real meaning.

It is clear that reference to the coming of Jesus in this verse can only be to a coming at the end - the traditional apocalyptic expectation of a visible Parousia. It was that event which the community expected to happen before the death of the disciple (v. 23). The redactor does not deny that it is an event to be expected sometime, but by repeating the first part of the saying of v. 22 he clearly intends to move the emphasis. If it was once a statement of Jesus' intention that the disciple should live until his coming at the Parousia, the redactor stresses the hypothetical nature of the saying. It seem clear that these verses were devised either to explain the disciple's death, or to prepare the community for his imminent death.

That was almost certainly the redactor's prime intention, but in so doing he also moves the stress of v. 22 onto the final command. If it was ever a saying used by the evangelist, one can be sure that he too would have placed all his emphasis on that final command - Follow me!

107. Ibid.

108. Lindars, Gospel, 639; Brown, Gospel, 1109.

109. It is possible that the dialogue here had been developed by the evangelist himself but added only later by the redactor. It seems more likely that the redactor developed the thought in response to the death or impending death of the beloved disciple, remembering the techniques of the preacher/evangelist.

Peter wants to speculate about the future (v. 21), but what really matters, not only for him but for the hearers of this Gospel's message, is that they should follow Jesus. Indeed both the R.S.V. and N.E.B. translations are rather weak - the Greek reads You (emphatic) follow me.<sup>110</sup> The future expectation is not denied, but it becomes unimportant in the face of the present decision to follow. In that sense the future eschatological expectation has been already anticipated by the event of Jesus in the world, and loses its ultimate significance. The redactor is not correcting the evangelist's eschatological understanding, but reaffirming it, and calling his hearers to decision.

### 1 JOHN

On turning from the Gospel to the first Epistle, two distinctions must immediately be noted. The first is the situation of the community at the time of writing, the second is the purpose in writing. Both these factors must inevitably affect the expression of eschatological thought.

In dealing earlier with the emphasis of christological expression in the letters it was suggested that one major issue of dispute was the real incarnation of Jesus as the Christ, "come in the flesh" (1 Jn. 4:2; cf. 2 Jn. 7, 1 Jn. 2:22). Those who had gone out from the community (1 Jn. 2:19), did not fully accept that Jesus was the Christ (2:22).<sup>111</sup> The situation, therefore, was one in which the author was trying to define the limits of the true community, and to encourage those within it, in the face of opposition from others who had once been members of the community, but had, in his view, moved outside it. As Conzelmann has written - "... so muss jetzt die Richtigkeit des Glaubens festgestellt werden, ... Im Evangelium wird durch die Offenbarung der Unglaube als solcher entdeckt und qualifiziert; im Brief besteht die neue Lage, dass

110. See Barrett, Gospel, 586; Bultmann; Gospel, 715.

111. See above, chapter 2.

falscher Glaube existiert".<sup>112</sup> The purpose in writing these letters,<sup>113</sup> was not simply to present Jesus as "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6), thus challenging men to have faith in him, but to argue against the false teaching being propounded by the author's opponents. They had moved out from the true community, but were obviously still in close contact with it, and able to draw others away from true faith, as the author saw it. It may even be that these two groups were still within the one worshipping community, but those who propounded the false teaching were, so far as the writer is concerned, outside the true community of faith.<sup>114</sup> This would explain the powerful influence of Diotrephes (3 Jn. 9), the only named opponent of the writer, who clearly had influence within the church itself.<sup>115</sup> The letters were written, then, not to call men from unbelief to faith, but to deal with a specific situation of conflict within the Johannine community.

If we take up once more the three related themes of eternal life, judgement, and the return of Jesus,<sup>116</sup> some interesting comparisons may

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112. Conzelmann, "Was von Anfang war", 195; see also Holwerda, Eschatologie, 178-180.
113. In our study we concentrate on the first Epistle, which offers most material for theological comparison. There seems little doubt that the second Epistle was written from the same background of thought, to deal with a very similar situation (cf. 2 Jn. 5, 6 1 Jn. 2: 7-11; 2 Jn. 7, 1 Jn. 4:2; 2 Jn. 9, 1 Jn. 2:18-25). The third Epistle is much more personal, but there seems no reason to suggest that it was not written by the same author, and certainly within the same milieu.
114. John Bogart, Orthodox and Heretical Perfectionism in the Johannine Community as evident in the First Epistle of John (SBLDS, 33; Missoula: Scholars, 1977), makes the interesting suggestion that "went out from us" (1 Jn. 2:19) means that they were sent out in the name of the community as itinerant preachers; see chap. 5. The suggestion, however, is not convincing.
115. Haenchen, T.Ru. 26 (1960-61), 36, is right to point out one cannot assume that the writer's group was dominant in either numbers or influence.
116. There is no specific reference to resurrection in the Epistle.

be made between the Gospel and the first Epistle, but first one must note the strong similarity of outlook. As in the Gospel, eternal life is a gift from God, made manifest in his Son (1:2, 2:11). So it may be said that "he who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life" (5:12). To the believer, who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, there is the assurance that "God abides in him, and he in God" (4:15). The writer is convinced that "the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining" (2:8). These are sentiments and expressions one would expect from a writer steeped in the tradition of the Johannine community.

In a recent work,<sup>117</sup> Brown argues that the author of 1 John has qualified the expression of realised eschatology understood in the Johannine tradition in two ways, in order to distinguish his understanding from that of his opponents. Firstly, he attaches an ethical requirement to the claims of realised eschatology.<sup>118</sup> Secondly, he appeals to future eschatology. The ethical requirement has already been discussed in the previous chapter, and so we shall now look at statements which seem to indicate a future orientation to the writer's eschatological outlook.

2:18 (cf. 4:3). In 2:18 the author asserts very firmly that *ἔσχατη ὥρα ἐστίν* - the lack of a definite article seems to indicate that this was a characteristic of the period rather than a reference to a specific point in time.<sup>119</sup> The community is living in "the last hour". Houlden is right to see a syllogism in the verse - "The coming of the Antichrist will be a sign that the last hour has arrived. Antichrist has

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117. R.E. Brown, The Community of the Beloved Disciple (London: Chapman, 1979), 136-138.

118. See also Bogart, Perfectionism, esp. chap. 2.

119. See Brooke, Commentary, 51; Westcott, Epistles, 69. One cannot agree with Westcott, however, that the phrase refers to 'a last hour', not 'the last hour'. It is a period of time leading to the final consummation.



has come (in multiple form); therefore it is the last hour".<sup>120</sup>

The phrase, ἔσχατη ὥρα, is not found in the Gospel, nor indeed anywhere else in the New Testament. Most commentators, in attempting a comparison with the evangelist's thought, refer to the similar phrase τῇ ἔσχατῇ ἡμέρᾳ (Jn. 6:39, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48), which refers to the last day of resurrection and judgement - a specific moment in future time. It may be more useful, however to look at the evangelist's use of the concept ὥρα.<sup>121</sup> Again it refers to a specific moment, when the Son is glorified in being lifted up from the earth (12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1), but from the community's standpoint that was a moment in the past. In the early chapters of the Gospel the "hour" of Jesus was still to come (2:4; 7:30; 8:20), although it could be anticipated with certainty by his presence on earth (4:23; 5:25; 16:32). The real "hour" of Jesus, however, was his glorification on the Cross. There is a sense, therefore, although he did not state it, in which the evangelist would have considered the community was living in "the last hour". The decisive "hour" had already past, so this was the final period of history.

The letter-writer, however, seems to imply a more specific period leading up to the final act. Brooke has described it as "the last period of the interval between the first and second coming of the Christ".<sup>122</sup> The writer has no doubt that the presence of his opponents - the ἀντίχριστου (2:18, 22); ψευδοπροφήτου (4:1); πλάνου (2 Jn. 7) - is a sign that the final act is about to take place. That there would be signs of "lawlessness" (cf. 1 Jn. 3:4) in the period leading up to the end is not unique to this writer in the New

120. Houlden, Commentary, 76.

121. Note Westcott, Epistles, 69; Klein, Z.T.K., 68 (1971), 291-304. We refer to the particular use by the evangelist, it is of course also used in a more mundane sense (4:6, 52; 19:14).

122. Brooke, Commentary, 51.

Testament (note esp. 2 Thess. 2:1-12, Mark 13:22). He is, of course, the only one specifically to use the term ἀντίχριστος but it seems clear that the idea of a coming antichrist to herald the end was a widely accepted tradition in the community.<sup>123</sup> Thus the writer could say with confidence - καθὼς ἠκούσατε (2:18).

What the readers may have found more surprising, however, is the use of the plural - ἀντίχριστου. They expected an antichrist but now many antichrists have come. Brooke points out that the preposition, ἀντί- can denote either one who takes the place of another, or one who opposes another. He suggests, therefore, that ἀντίχριστος may mean, "one who, pretending to be the Christ, really opposes Him and seeks to destroy His work".<sup>124</sup> This would seem to be the writer's intended meaning in the sense that the opponents pretended to be carrying on the true tradition of Christ, while in reality they denied that Jesus was the Christ (2:22).<sup>125</sup> Earlier, while dealing with the Spirit of Truth, we saw that the term could either refer to a personal being, or to an inclination within man - the latter being the understanding of this author (cf. 4:3). The same would seem to be true of the antichrist theme. While there was a traditional expectation of an antichrist, the author has used the concept to indicate an inclination motivating his opponents in their denial of the real Christ. That such people existed as a threat to the community could not be denied and it was to him a clear sign that the last days were approaching.

In this statement, then, there is an expectation of the nearness of the end - time which is not found anywhere in the Gospel. In the Gospel

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123. For the background to the antichrist theme see Brooke, Commentary, 69-79; Schnackenburg, Johannesbriefe, 145-149.

124. Brooke, Commentary, 52; see also Westcott, Epistles, 70.

125. See Van Hartingsveld, Eschatologie, 175-177.

we have already suggested, the evangelist does not deny an expectation of the Parousia, but it is unimportant. The real "hour" is the hour of Jesus' glorification on the Cross, which challenges men to faith in him (Jn. 12:32). By the very nature of his work as an evangelist, the preacher of the Gospel was concerned to challenge men to believe in the One whose hour had come when he was raised on the Cross (Jn. 13:1; 17:1). The letter-writer, however, had a different purpose in view. His task was to encourage and nurture the true community in the light of the false teaching being propounded by his opponents. In doing so he emphasised his conviction that the community was living in the last days. To his mind the very fact of his opponents' activity was confirmation that the last hour had come. This consciousness of the end, no doubt encouraged the members of the community to re-examine their own faith according to the tradition which they had heard "from the beginning" (2:7). That is not to suggest that his near expectation of the end was simply a ploy to further his purpose. He genuinely believed that the last hour had come, even though he was misguided.

2:28-3:3 (cf. 4:17). It is with this near expectation of the end in view that the author refers to the coming of Jesus (2:28-3:3). <sup>Exv</sup>

φανερωθῆ (2:28; 3:2) is not intended to imply any doubt as to the fact of his coming, although there is uncertainty as to the exact timing.<sup>126</sup>

The author is convinced, however, that the Parousia will take place soon. There is much to be said for Houlden's contention that the <sup>vov</sup> (2:28) is "probably deliberate", meaning "at this crucial time" (cf. 3:2; 4:3).<sup>127</sup> It is a call for steadfastness in "the last hour"

(2:18).

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126. See Westcott, Epistles, 81; Houlden, Commentary, 87.

127. Houlden, Commentary, 85.

Houlden writes - "The writer of 1 John oscillates between two kinds of awareness of the Christians' position in the world. On the one hand, there is the virtually timeless state of affairs introduced by Christ characterized by such expressions as 'dwelling in the light' (2:10), or 'knowing the truth' (2:21). This is the dominant tone of the Gospel of John. On the other hand, there is the sense that the End is near, and in 1 John this is no less strong than the first kind of awareness. Yet his theological vocabulary and stock of ideas belong chiefly to that first category, and as he writes this standpoint continually comes to the fore and takes charge. So from time to time he has to stop, somewhat abruptly, to direct attention once more to the impending crisis".<sup>128.</sup>

One would agree that the letter-writer draws from the common Johannine milieu of thought, but the letter was written with the constant awareness of the impending end - that was not a theme merely introduced from time to time. The reality of the believers' abiding in Christ should give them confidence at his coming. The false opponents have denied that Jesus is the Christ, but the true followers who "abide in him", that is in Christ, need have no fear but can look forward to the Parousia with confidence (2:28).<sup>129</sup>

The imminence of the Parousia should encourage the believers not only to abide in Christ, but also in their fellowship as "children of God". There is no doubt that they are already τέκνα Θεοῦ (3:1), so speculation as to what they shall be like is useless. Bultmann comments - "... being children of God is a present affair : νῦν τέκνα Θεοῦ ἐσμεν ('we are God's children now'), but sonship finds its

128. Ibid.

129. As Westcott points out, Epistles, 82, the use of the term only here in the Johannine writings warns against "drawing conclusions from the negative phenomena of the books of the New Testament". The future expectation of a Parousia was still known and held in the tradition of the community, the author's novel contribution was to suggest that it was imminent.



fulfilment in the future : καὶ οὕτω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα ('and it does not yet appear what we shall be').<sup>130</sup> The certainty is, however, that "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (3:2). The true believer can look forward to the future with confidence, but as he becomes aware of the imminence of that future, it should encourage him to "purify himself as he [Christ] is pure" (3:3). Thus the near expectation of the Parousia encourages also an ethical response. The opponents are guilty of "lawlessness", which is sin (3:4). The true believer, who abides in Christ, may have complete confidence at his coming, but the imminence of that coming demands that he should examine his own purity of thought and action (cf. 4:17).<sup>(131)</sup>

The letter-writer, then, writing in a situation of conflict, and with the purpose of defining the true community and encouraging its members in their faith, is convinced that the Parousia is imminent. This is not to be feared by those who abide in Christ - they can have confidence at the day of his coming, but all members of the divided community should examine themselves to see that they are pure, as Christ himself is pure.

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130. Bultmann, Epistles, 48.

131. See Brown, Community, 137.

CONCLUSION

It is now possible to attempt to draw together the results of this exegetical study in a more concise and punctiliar form.

1. The writings which illuminate the thought of the Johannine community are the Gospel and the three Letters, although the Apocalypticist did have some contact with Johannine thought and expression.

2. The evangelist, in his preaching, was challenging his hearers to respond to Christ in faith, and thus to move from the sphere of death into the sphere of life. He did not deny a future eschatological expectation, but it was not an issue for him. The decisions of the end-time were already certain, decided by one's response to Jesus Christ as he was presented in the preaching of the community. The vital time of eschatological decision is now, when one is confronted by the claims of Christ to obedience.

3. A later redactor introduced some statements of future expectation which were held within the tradition of the community. In this he did not consider that he was correcting, still less contradicting the evangelist, whose work he held in great respect. He was simply adding from the community's store of tradition, statements which he did not consider to be in conflict with the evangelist's own thinking.

4. At a later stage, the community went through a traumatic period of conflict when some teachers apparently denied the real incarnation, and separated themselves off from those who held to the traditional Johannine belief. At this period a leading figure, formerly held with respect in the community, wrote letters in support of the traditional understanding of Jesus as the Christ.<sup>132</sup> He was convinced that the

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132. We consider it most likely, though not certain, that the three letters were written by the one man.

presence of the false teachers was a sign of the end-time, and used this to add urgency to his plea that the members of the community should hold to the tradition which they had from the beginning, while also showing visible evidence of their faith by their love for one another. The letter-writer's concern for eschatological expectation was its imminence.

In the Introduction, we set out some of the concerns which prompted the writing of this thesis. Its purpose was to study the diversity of eschatological thought apparent in one early Christian community. It has suggested that there was not so much a development of eschatological thought as a diversity of emphases in response to the differing aims and concerns of the writers. This is true diversity; not one writer seeking to impose his view and deny every other view, but each drawing on the tradition of the community while creating his own emphasis for his own purpose. We suggest that for theology and the church today this study in diversity has two main implications:-

(a) Theological writing must not become dominated by any one set of philosophical presuppositions or cultural milieu. Different writers must be encouraged to write from their own perspective and reflecting their own concerns, without the one being constantly set in opposition to the other. The bond which holds them together must be their common respect for the biblical tradition, without which they cease to be Christian theologians.

(b) The ecumenical debate within the church must turn away from its preoccupation with creeds and statements, to concern itself instead with common action. The love of God in the world can be proclaimed by the whole church community, without first seeking the unity of doctrinal

definition. All who truly confess that Jesus is the Christ are members of his community on earth, and within that community diversity of thought and concerns and outlook should be welcomed as enriching the tradition of the church.



APPENDIX BTHE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE APOCALYPSE

The intention of the thesis was to study the diverse nature of the eschatological thought of one early Christian community, namely the Johannine community. Clearly the first task was to consider which writings of the New Testament should be considered the work of that community, produced within it and reflecting its particular emphases and concerns. Initially, as a working hypothesis, we considered that all five books which tradition has ascribed to "John" should be considered. A study of three important theological emphases detected in the Gospel, however, has convinced the present writer that the Apocalypse cannot in any meaningful way be considered a writing of the Johannine community. While accepting that the Apocalypse had some connection with the community, the theological evidence adduced in the study led to two possible conclusions. The Apocalypse may have been written by an eccentric individual or group within the Johannine community but removed from the mainstream of its teaching and thought. Secondly, it may have been written by someone outside the community but who had been influenced either consciously or unconsciously by some aspects of its thought. In the text of the thesis we have favoured the second solution, but in either case the Apocalypticist's teaching is not going to be of value in a study of diversity where the material under review must of necessity be kept within specific bounds.

This position has been more fully argued in the thesis proper, but it leaves what many may consider a gap in the overall study of eschatological thought. Because the Apocalypse has traditionally been so closely associated with the Johannine works, it may reasonably be expected that the scope of the thesis should include some discussion of the relation of the eschatology of the Apocalypse to that of the community itself. In this Appendix, we shall attempt by an exegetical examination of some important

passages in the Apocalypse, to discover the characteristic eschatological emphases of the Apocalypticist, and then compare these with the community's eschatological thought already detected in the Gospel and Letters. In the discussion of the community's thought we concentrated on four main themes - judgement, eternal life, resurrection and the return of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> These will recur now, but we shall allow them to do so within the framework of an exegetical study of some passages which we consider crucial to an understanding of the Apocalypticist's eschatology.

Introduction : Rev. 1:1-8.

The Apocalypse is set within the framework of an Introduction (1:1-8), and an Epilogue (22:6-21). Both are important to our present study. The Introduction itself may be divided into two parts - the Title or Superscription (1:1-3) and the Prologue (1:4-8). In the Title, indeed in the first verse, the emphasis is placed firmly on the nearness of the events to be foretold - "what must soon (ἐν τάχει) take place" (1:1). Again the immediacy of the events is emphasised in v.3 - ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς (1:3). This theme, so strongly stated in the Introduction, is repeated again throughout the work (e.g. 3:11, 10:6) and must be considered characteristic of the Apocalypticist. He clearly expected the near return of Jesus, and that provides the context in which the whole work should be understood.

Which is not to suggest that John looked only to the future with little sense of history. Beasley-Murray points to "the inseparability of Christology from eschatology."<sup>2</sup> The Apocalypse is "the revelation

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1. See above, 135-175.

2. Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 25.

of Jesus Christ" (1:1), who is "the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth" (1:5). He is the One "who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a Kingdom, priests to his God and Father." (1:5,6). The Christ who is soon to come in triumph (1:7), is the same Jesus who has been to earth and died. While the Apocalyptist places his stress on the future return of Jesus in glory, the decisive event has already taken place in his death. It is as the Lamb who was slain (5:6,12) that he is able to open the seals and bring about the events of the End-time.<sup>3</sup>

Ford, in her Commentary, has argued that the christology of the Prologue (1:4-8), is "richer than the rest of this apocalypse."<sup>4</sup> She therefore considers that it is a "second prologue", which "may have been written by a Jewish-Christian who knew about the death and resurrection of Jesus and, like the very early Church (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18), expects a second coming soon."<sup>5</sup> This fits in with her over-all thesis that the Apocalypse should be divided into three parts - a revelation given "not to John the evangelist after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, but to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus before his public ministry"<sup>6</sup> (chaps. 4-11); an expansion by a disciple of the Baptist, "who knew about Jesus but who may not have known all the facts about his character, life, death, resurrection and ascension"<sup>7</sup> (chaps. 12-22); a redaction by "a later writer who knew more details about Jesus Christ"<sup>8</sup> (chaps. 1-3). We are not convinced by her evidence. From the exegetical studies of this Appendix we shall argue that the near expectation of the Parousia permeates the whole work and is grounded in the

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3. On the christology of the Apocalypse see above, 76-83.

4. J. Massyngberde Ford, Revelation (A.B.; New York; Doubleday, 1975), 379.

5. Ford, Revelation, 380.

6. Ford, Revelation, 50.

7. Ford, Revelation, 54.

8. Ford, Revelation, 55.

past event of Jesus in history. In the death and resurrection of Jesus lies the certainty of his triumphant return.

John's perception of history may also be seen in the titles which he gives to God. In 1:4,8 he uses the periphrasis - ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ᾄων καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (cf. Ex 3:14).<sup>9</sup> One may compare - "the Alpha and Omega" (1:8), "the first and last" (2:8), "the beginning and the end" (21:6). While John looks to God's activity in the future the One who will act then is the One who was and is. Rissi writes - "He is the one who had already made himself known in the past, who is revealing himself, and who will do so tomorrow."<sup>10</sup> While the specific task of the Apocalypticist is to reveal "what is and what is to take place hereafter" (1:19), it is clear that he sees the events of the future as continuous with, and contingent on, the activity of God in the past.

At the same time it is interesting that in adding a third element to the Old Testament phrase (Ex 3:14), the Apocalypticist changes the verb. Where one would expect the future participle of εἶμι, he writes in fact the present participle of ἔρχομαι.<sup>11</sup> Even in this phrase, linking past, present and future, John points not so much to the continuing being of God as to his decisive coming, which will take place very soon. His main concern is with the future coming of Jesus Christ, in whose coming God himself comes also.<sup>12</sup>

The vision of v.7 is clearly of central interest to the present study. It echoes two Old Testament passages - Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10. It is interesting to note that the same idea, though not the

9. See Charles, Revelation, I, 10; Caird, Revelation, 16; Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 54.

10. Mathias Rissi, "The Kerygma of the Revelation to John, Interpretation, 22 (1968), 3-16; quot. 6.

11. On the Old Testament background see esp.. Charles, Revelation, I, 10.

12. On this see Austin Farrer, The Revelation of St. John the Divine, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 61, Ford, Revelation, 376-377.



same wording or order, is found in Matthew 24:30. This has led many commentators to suggest that John and Matthew are both drawing on a source of earlier Christian tradition.<sup>13</sup> It is indeed quite possible that these two Old Testament predictions were brought together quite early in the development of Christian thought, although their use by the New Testament writers provide no evidence for a written source. John, as always, uses the Old Testament freely and for his own purpose.<sup>14</sup> While Zechariah 12:10 is also reflected in John 19:37, it is not there combined with the eschatological vision of Daniel, so any significant comparison must be with the Matthew passage where the context is also of a future eschatological event.

The comparison with Matt. 24:30, however, leads to a difficulty in interpretation. In the Zechariah passage the mourning of the people is clearly seen as a sign of repentance. It is then followed by pardon, cleansing, and restoration (chap. 13). In Matthew, on the other hand, the mourning is the people's cry at their own impending and inevitable destruction. The End will be for them a time of trial. Many commentators assume that the passage in Revelation reflects the same understanding as Matthew - remorse and self-pity as the End approaches.<sup>15</sup> This interpretation is strengthened if one accepts a common source in early Christian tradition.

Some, notably Caird, argue strongly that the Apocalypticist reverts to the original understanding of Zechariah. Caird states - "What John in fact says is that men will see the pierced but triumphant Christ and will lament, not for these ~~es~~, but for him. This can only mean that

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13. E.g. Revelation, I, 19; Caird, Revelation, 18; Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 58.

14. Note Preston and Hanson, Revelation, 36-44.

15. So Charles, Revelation, I, 17; Farrer, Revelation, 63; Kiddle, Revelation, 9.

they will have compunction for the wounds they have caused him. Whether this grief will amount to a true repentance John does not for the present discuss ..., for he is here concerned, not with the ultimate fate of men, but with the ultimate vindication of Christian faith."<sup>16</sup>

While it would be foolish to make any dogmatic comment until other passages have been studied, in particular those concerned with judgement, it does seem to the present writer that Caird makes a strong point. Certainly the Apocalyptist does see a time for repentance (9:20; 16:9ff). Even if the Matthew passage reflects an early Christian tradition there is no reason why John, steeped in the Old Testament, would not have reverted to the original understanding of Zechariah. For the present all one can say is that either interpretation is possible.

#### Epilogue 22:6-21.

As was suggested earlier, it is useful to see the body of the Apocalypse as set within the framework of an Introduction (1:1-8) and an Epilogue. It is not therefore illogical to jump now to the Epilogue and see the understanding of eschatology reflected there. Again great emphasis is placed on an expectation of the near return of Jesus Christ, but while the argument of the Prologue was developed in fairly logical style, the Epilogue seems to be a series of loosely related sayings, brought together as the final thoughts of the author. This should not lessen their importance, indeed we would suggest that these are the vital points which the author wants to ensure he has made clearly.

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16. Caird, Revelation, 18-19; see also Mathias Rissi, The Future of the World (S.B.T., second series 23; London: S.C.M., 1972), 83. Beasley-Murray is undecided as to the correct interpretation, Revelation, 58-59.

The fact that these verses seem to contain independent sayings only loosely related has led a number of commentators to indulge in extensive re-arrangement.<sup>17</sup> Kiddle sounds a note of caution - "The epilogue is ejaculatory in style; its broken utterances are those of a man whose heart has swelled at the mystery and overwhelming bliss of the beatific vision."<sup>18</sup> Beasley-Murray too, while agreeing that "the epilogue creates an impression of haphazardness", points out that - "The two themes of the opening paragraph, verses 6f., namely, the authenticity of the work as a revelation from God and the nearness of the fulfilment of its message, reappear in the various utterances which follow and bind them into a sort of a unity ..."<sup>19</sup> It seems to the present writer that these are the concluding statements of a man whose mind is rushing from one thought to the next. Some of the sayings have been more rationally developed within the body of the Apocalypse (e.g., cf. 22:6,7, 1:1-3; 22:8,9, 19:10), but now as the Apocalypticist draws his work to a close he wants to be very sure that his most important ideas have been stated clearly, and understood. One of these, as Beasley-Murray has rightly pointed out, is the nearness of the End-time.

The similarity of content between the opening verses of the Epilogue (22:6,7) and the Introduction (1:1-3), has often been noted.<sup>20</sup> Both indicate the author's intention in writing. At a time of growing persecution and impending crisis in the Church "the Lord God who inspired the prophets",<sup>21</sup> gave this prophecy to John. It is intended to

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17. E.g. Charles, Revelation, II, 174-226; Ford, Revelation, 329-424, Preston and Hanson, Revelation, 127-145.

18. Kiddle, Revelation, 447.

19. Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 334.

20. Farrer, Revelation, 224; Caird, Revelation, 282.

21. Caird's translation of 22:6, Revelation, 282.

encourage the faithful and offer hope to believers. The persecution which they face will be brought to an end by the return of the Lord - "I am coming soon" (22:7, cf. 1:3). The promise is offered to the faithful - "Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book" (22:7). It seems, therefore, that to accept John's teaching is a mark of faithfulness (cf. 1:3).

Some commentators wish to make a distinction between the beatitude of 1:3, spoken by John, and that of 22:7, spoken by Jesus Christ.<sup>22</sup> To the present writer, such discussion of exactly who is speaking where in this prophecy is futile. John has made his position clear at the very beginning (1:1) - This is the revelation of God, which He gave to Jesus Christ, who made it known through his angel to John.<sup>23</sup> John then wrote down the prophecy and sent it to the churches. Exactly who is speaking at any given time is unimportant. The authority for everything written is derived from God - the One who has always inspired the prophets (22:6) - and the purpose in writing is to show "what must soon take place (22:6). Those who accept the prophecy and remain true to its teaching are blessed, because they realise that the End-time is near, and for them that will be a time of joy and triumph.

Throughout his Commentary, Caird maintains that the expectation of the Apocalyptist is not of the End-time when Jesus Christ will return in judgement and victory, but of the time of persecution for the Church. Caird writes - "... John's coming crisis was simply the persecution of the Church, ... all the varied imagery of his book has no other purpose

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22. E.g. Charles, Revelation II, 218; see also Rissi, Future, 84, but note Kiddle, Revelation, 447, Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 334.

23. Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:1) is a subjective genitive, not objective as Ford, Revelation, 373, suggests; so Charles, Revelation, I, 6.



than this, to disclose to the prospective martyrs the real nature of their suffering and its place in the eternal purposes of God or, in Bunyan's language, to take them about to the backside of the wall."<sup>24</sup> Commenting on 22:6,7, he therefore argues that "what must happen soon" is the persecution and death of faithful believers. The Lord is coming to meet each, individually, "at their own Calvary."<sup>25</sup> He suggests - "... what must happen is that they are to prophesy not only with their lips but with their lives (11:3). In the death and resurrection that awaits them they will find their Lord keeping his trust with them, reliving in his conquerors his own victory-in-defeat."<sup>26</sup>

One cannot accept Caird's thesis, especially in the light of references throughout the Apocalypse to future judgement. We shall shortly be looking more specifically at this aspect of John's eschatology, but already in the passages we have studied the twin themes of the judgement of the unbeliever, and the vindication of the faithful are becoming apparent (1:7; 22:12). Caird has individualised the coming of Christ, seeking support from 3:20. Commenting on 1:7 he states - "The Christ who will come one day in the sight of all comes constantly to those who have the faith to perceive him (3:20)."<sup>27</sup> This is no doubt a correct insight and a possible interpretation of 3:20, but it is surely not what the Apocalypticist was trying to say at 1:7, when the whole imagery of the verse implies a visible and indeed spectacular coming to "all tribes of the earth." Again, in 22:12 Caird interprets *μισθός* only in the sense of reward for the faithful,<sup>28</sup> but why then should the Apocalypticist use the emphatic *ἐκώστω*? Surely it will be

24. Caird, Revelation, 12.

25. Ibid., 283.

26. Ibid., 283.

27. Ibid., 19.

28. Ibid., 284-285.

to each one that the Lord will come (cf. 22:11), bringing either reward or judgement. We maintain that the coming of Christ portrayed in both the Introduction (1:7), and the Epilogue (22:10-13), is a visible coming to the whole world in triumph and judgement.

The theme of Christ's immanent coming permeates the closing verses of this prophecy - 22:7, 10, 12, 20. One cannot, however, assume that every time the verb ἔρχομαι is used the Apocalyptist is referring to the coming of Jesus Christ. In 22:17, commentators dispute the correct interpretation of ἔρχου. Many assume that it is the cry of the Church for the Lord to return,<sup>29</sup> but Charles has produced a powerful argument against such an interpretation. He points out that where ἡ νύμφη is used at 21:9 (cf. 21:2), the reference is to the heavenly Jerusalem, that is to the Church triumphant and victorious after the Parousia. If the same interpretation is given to ἡ νύμφη in 22:17, then the verse is an invitation from the Spirit of Christ and the Church of Christ, to those who are still outside to "Come", and to "take the water of life without price." Charles suggests that ἔρχου is "the invitation of the Spirit of Christ, of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and of those who accepted the message, to the world of men that were still thirsting for life and truth or were willing to accept them."<sup>30</sup> The interest of this verse for the present study is not as a cry for the return of Jesus,<sup>31</sup> but as an invitation to those outside the Church to repent.

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29. See Beckwith, Apocalypse, 778; Farrer, Revelation, 226; Kiddle, Revelation, 456; Ford, Revelation, 424.

30. Charles, Revelation, II, 180; see also Caird, Revelation, 286-287; Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 343-346.

31. The cry is made in what seems like a liturgical setting at 22:20, although it should be noted that Μαρτυρα ἔστω (cf.: Cor. 16:22), is not used - see Caird, Revelation, 288.

### The Visions of the Future

So far we have only considered the frame into which the Apocalypse is set - the Introduction and the Prologue. - Already one may detect the Apocalyptist's keen expectation of Christ's triumphant return to judge the wicked and vindicate the righteous. His Parousia would be soon and would be visible to all. Our task now must be to examine some passages within the body of the Apocalypse which indicate the eschatological understanding of the writer. Immediately one is faced with the problem of selection. In a short study of this kind it would be unrealistic to attempt an exegesis of every passage which has eschatological implications. We have argued that the content of the entire book is one of eschatological expectation. How then is one to justify a selection of passages for further consideration?

The task is made easier if one accepts that the Apocalypse consists of a series of vivid picture-images, each intended to illustrate the events of the End-time when the unbeliever will be judged and the faithful rewarded. By concentrating our attention on certain of these pictures one may get an overall understanding of the Apocalyptist's eschatological viewpoint. One must recognise that this view runs contrary to the vigorously argued interpretation of Charles. He states - "... the Apocalypse exhibits, except in a few passages, and especially in chap. 18, a structural unity and a steady development of thought from the first chapter to the close of 20:3. Now this is what we should expect in an Apocalypse which is designed to be a philosophy of history and religion from the standpoint of the author. It was a combination of vision and reflection."<sup>32</sup>

This view has led Charles himself into difficulties, in his interpretation of the last three chapters of the book. There he can find no

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32. Charles, Revelation, II, 144, (his italics).

"steady development", but having postulated it as a characteristic, not only of the author but of apocalyptic writing in general, he is left with a serious problem. Charles admits that the final chapters "are all but wholly wanting in these characteristics, and - so far from advancing steadily to the consummation that all the preceding chapters postulate - exhibit many incoherencies and self-contradictory elements."<sup>33</sup> To overcome the problem he concludes that, "John died either as a martyr or by a natural death, when he had completed 1-20:3 of his work, and that the materials for its completion, which were for the most part ready in a series of independent documents, were put together by a faithful but unintelligent disciple in the order which he thought right."<sup>34</sup> Charles proceeds to re-arrange these chapters as he thinks best.

The problem, however, does not arise if one is not looking for a steady development throughout the Apocalypse. Rather than embark on a reconstruction of the text, we prefer the interpretation of many recent commentators who argue that the visions are a series of images, each intended to create a picture in the mind of the reader of the period surrounding the Parousia.<sup>35</sup> For John this period had already begun with the persecution of the Church.

This position is argued by Kiddle - "In fact, each new vision must be regarded as one of a whole series of visions, all interrelated, and all vouchsafed to John for the sake of the churches that they might the better understand what was about to happen. This is not to say that John attached no importance to time, for the movement of time towards Judgment meant everything to him. It was because he realized that all history was divinely planned and controlled, and that the intervening period

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., 147.

35. As well as those noted below see Farrer, Revelation, 51-58.



during which Antichrist would be allowed to persecute the saints was strictly determined, that John could assure his fellow-Christians that God was in supreme authority over the world's destiny. But with the exact order of the events preceding the End he was not concerned."<sup>36</sup>

Caird maintains a similar understanding - "The unity of John's book, then, is neither chronological nor arithmetical, but artistic, like that of a musical theme with variations, each variation adding something new to the significance of the whole composition. This is the only view which does adequate justice to the double fact that each new series of visions both recapitulates and develops the themes already stated in what has gone before."<sup>37</sup>

If one accepts this view of the structure and development of the Apocalypse, one is then justified in looking at certain of the pictures without studying each one in detail. Admittedly it means that every variation is not discovered, but it may give sufficient insight into the overall theme.

#### The Opening of the Seven Seals (6:1-8:1).

Earlier in the thesis, while discussing the christology of the Apocalypse,<sup>38</sup> we noted the importance of the Throne-scene (chaps. 4,5) in the development of the Apocalypticist's thought. Beasley-Murray suggests that these chapters are in fact the "fulcrum" of the whole book. He writes - "Chapters 4-5 may be viewed as the fulcrum of the Revelation. In relation to what has gone before they provide a fuller understanding of him who dominates the letters to the churches. In relation to the rest of the book they serve the double purpose of initiating the

36. Kiddle, Revelation, xxxi-xxxii.

37. Caird, Revelation, 106; see also Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 29-32.

38. See above, 76-83.

series of judgements which lead to the final advent and descent of the city of God to earth, and of supplying the form for the series of messianic judgements (the seven seals) which immediately follow. In this respect these chapters constitute the pivot of the structure which holds the book together, for the rest of the visions dovetail into this main structure."<sup>39</sup>

The scene is indeed of central importance in discovering not only the Apocalypticist's christological thought, but also his eschatological understanding. The two are so fully intertwined that they can never be separated. It is "the Lamb standing, as though it had been slain" (5:6), who is able to open the scroll and to break the seven seals. Whatever is revealed of the future can only be revealed by the One who died in the past. The future is secure because of the victory of Christ on the Cross, and so the four creatures and the twenty-four elders worship the Lamb -

"Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals,  
for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God  
from every tribe and tongue and people and nation,  
and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on earth" (5:9, 10).

Indeed every creature, both living and dead, in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea must give worship and praise to the Father and the Son -

"To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing  
and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!" (5:13).

This is John's vision of the ultimate climax of all history when God and the Lamb will rule together in glory (cf. 21:21-22:5).<sup>40</sup> For him the

39. Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 108.

40. See ibid., 108-111. Note also Caird, Revelation, 82-83.

victory of Christ's death is so complete that it is inconceivable that any creature should fail to worship (cf. Col. 1:20). First, however, there will be a time of trial and persecution depicted by the opening of each of the seals. Each opening reveals not only the course of history, but God's plan within history. The judgements are inevitable and inescapable, but they are due to the rebellion of man. God's ultimate purpose of salvation is already secured by the death of Jesus on the Cross.

That the visions must be interpreted in the light of the victory already won by Jesus on the Cross, is emphasised by Rissi. He writes - "... his dominion of the world does not rest on his divine status, but on his work accomplished in history; through his life on earth he has overcome the rebellion of the whole world... The word <sup>ἐνίκησεν</sup> [5:5] marks the centre of the Revelation's Christology."<sup>41</sup> Rissi continues - "Here in 5:5 (cf. 3:21) we feel the heartbeat of the whole Christology of John. The understanding of this concept of Christ's victory is of the greatest consequence for the interpretation of the entire book. It is in his death that Christ overcomes his enemies, the world - not on the bloody eschatological battlefield, not through condemnation and annihilation, but through redemption. The word <sup>νικᾶν</sup> therefore, never designates any destructive judgement upon the enemies. John has consistently maintained this view throughout the whole book. For him there is only one victory of Christ, it was won in the past and resulted in the debilitation of all enemy powers, once and for all."<sup>42</sup>

Accepting that it is the victorious Christ alone - the Lamb who had been slain - who is able to open the seals, what is revealed when they are broken of relevance to our understanding of John's eschatology? Charles makes a detailed and interesting comparison with the short synoptic

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41. Rissi, *Interpretation*, 22 (1968), 7.

42. *Ibid.*, 8. Rissi sees one exception in 17:9b-17, which he attributes to a secondary interpreter, but that passage need not concern us here.

apocalypse (Mark 13; Matt. 24; Luke 21), which he believes is based on a prior "Little Jewish-Christian Apocalypse."<sup>43</sup> He sets out the following parallels -

" Matt. 24 : 6, 7, 9a, 29	--	Mark 13 : 7-9a, 24-25
1. Wars		1. Wars
2. International strife		2. International strife
3. Famines		3. Earthquakes
4. Earthquakes		4. Famines
5. Persecutions		5. Persecutions
6. Eclipses of the sun and moon; falling of the stars; shaking of the powers of heaven.		6. (As in Matt.)
Luke 21 : 9-12a, 25-26	--	Rev. 6 : 2-17, 7:1
1. Wars	Seal	1. War
2. International strife	"	2. International strife
3. Earthquakes	"	3. Famine
4. Famines	"	4. Pestilence (Death and Hades)
5. Pestilence	"	5. Persecutions
6. Persecutions	"	6. (6:12-7:3) Earthquakes, eclipse of the sun, ensanguining of the moon, falling of the stars, men calling on the rocks to fall on them, shaking of the powers of heaven, four destroying winds." <sup>44</sup>
7. Signs in the sun, moon and stars; men fainting for fear of the things coming on the world; shaking of the powers of heaven.		

Charles goes on to argue that the Apocalyptist was dependent on the same pre-existing eschatological scheme as the Evangelists, although he does adapt it for his own use. In his adaptation of the first five woes, John "recasts them as to give three or possibly all of them a more or less

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43. Charles, Revelation, I, 159; see ibid., 158-161.

44. Ibid., 158; cf. Ford, Revelation, 104, Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 130-131.



clear historical reference to contemporary events."<sup>45</sup>

It seems likely that John was aware of a scheme of eschatological events similar to, or identical with, the one known to the synoptic writers. As with all his traditional material he has used it with great freedom, adapting it to his own ideas and imagery, nevertheless the traditional apocalyptic scheme does seem to underlie his thinking.

His imagery, as one would expect, is drawn mainly from the Old Testament, and in particular Zechariah seems to give the background to the four horsemen who ride out as each of the first four seals is broken. The pattern in each of the four instances is very similar. In each case one of the four living creatures beside the throne (4:6) says "Come!", and a horseman rides out on a different coloured horse. Zechariah had a vision of a man riding a red horse, and behind him were red, sorrel and white horses. When Zechariah asked "What are these, my Lord?" he was told, "These are they whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth." (Zech. 1:8-11). Zechariah does not specifically state that there were riders on each horse, nor do they seem to have been sent out in judgement, rather as reporters. Certainly each horse (and horseman?) did not have a specific task assigned to him as is the case in the Apocalypse. Nevertheless John must surely have had this passage in mind.

A similar vision is again found in Zechariah 6:1-8. On this occasion Zechariah sees four chariots coming from between two mountains. The first was drawn by red horses, the second black, the third white, and the fourth dappled grey. Again their task was to patrol the earth, but only after "presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth." (6:5). Again the vision is not identical with that of John, but the two Zechariah passages serve to emphasize that the horsemen are

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45. Charles, Revelation, I, 160 (his italics).

sent by God himself, at the command, in the Apocalypse, of one of the living creatures beside the throne (cf. Ezekiel 1). Each horseman has a similar and related task. There seems no question that the first horseman, on the white horse, is in any sense different from the other three.<sup>46</sup> Each one is sent from the Lord sitting upon the throne and remains under his control. That they come to bring destruction and judgement is due to the disobedience of man. The Lord's hand can still be seen to act even through conquering and oppressive powers (e.g. Daniel 5:24-27).

Preston and Hanson describe this section as "a Theology of Power."<sup>47</sup> They state - "John begins from the belief that all power comes from God. God is absolute ruler of the world. But when God gave man free will (it is what made him man), he had to allow the possibility that man might misuse the power thereby entrusted to him, and this possibility was realised. In the world of John's day it seemed that a greater amount of physical power than ever before was being wielded by the most evil hands the world had yet seen. Rome ruled the civilised earth. This did not mean, however, that God was helpless, frustrated by his own gift of power to man. The world was still God's and was still ruled according to his eternal laws of right and wrong. The way God's power was shown in the world was that the misuse of power entailed suffering and disaster. Wars, starvation, devastation, these were the means whereby it was made plain that power abused was still under God's control. These were the 'judgements' of God, the working out on the plane of history of his inexorable moral laws."<sup>48</sup>

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46. On this point see Ford, Revelation, 104-106; Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 131.

47. Preston and Hanson, Revelation, 78.

48. Ibid., 78-79.

Zechariah provides the background to John's vision of the horses, but the tasks given to the horsemen find their background in other Old Testament passages. The first horseman, on the white horse, carried a bow and wore a crown. He went out "conquering and to conquer" (6:2). Isaiah (5:26-30) and Jeremiah (50:14) both picture invading, pilaging armies carrying bows and conquering other nations. The idea of the crown also suggests the concept of one sovereign nation invading another, to conquer and subdue it. The first order, then, brings war between nations.

The second horseman, riding the bright red horse, was given a great sword. He "was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that men should slay one another" (6:4). The idea is perhaps of more general uprising and civil disorder, rather than the more formalised invading forces of the first seal. To use as illustration a modern parallel, the first rider would have been responsible in this century for the two World Wars, the second rider would have caused all the minor uprisings, undeclared wars, and terrorist activity which have taken place in the intervening years and continue today.

The third horseman, on the black horse, carries a balance and signifies famine (6:5). It will not be total starvation, but food will have to be carefully weighed and rationed. Ezekiel predicts a time when "they shall eat bread by weight and with fearfulness; and they shall drink water by measure and in dismay" (Ezek. 4:16, cf. Lev. 26:26). Famine is the inevitable consequence and partner to war and strife.

So too is the fourth rider, on a pale horse. His name was Death, and Hades followed him (6:8). For John the two were inseparable (1:18, 20:13, 14). Only the faithful would escape the punishment of God. In a sense the work of this fourth horseman is a culmination of the other three. Death may come through various agents - the sword, famine, pestilence, wild beasts. It will be given power over one-fourth of the earth

(6: 8 cf. Zech. 6:8).

The ideas which John uses in these pictures are not new. In Leviticus the threat of the ravages of war and famine is made to those who will not keep the commandments (Lev. 26:14-20). In Ezekiel 5:12 the punishment of the Lord God is pronounced on those who have defiled the sanctuary - "A third part of you shall die of pestilence and be consumed with famine in the midst of you; a third part shall fall by the sword round about you; and a third part I will scatter to all the winds and will unsheath the sword after them" (Ezek. 5:12). The four agents of death in Rev. 6:8 are the same as the "four sore acts of judgement" in Ezek. 14:21. Habakkuk 3:4-15 also provides a pool of ideas which may have been developed by the Apocalyptist.<sup>49</sup> The newness of John's prophecy lies not in the images used, but in the timing of these acts of judgement. It seems clear that the violence and famine and death which the Apocalypse predicts will happen very soon, indeed the events have either already begun, or the signs make them inevitable.

Charles links each rider to a contemporary group or event. The rider with the bow indicates the Parthian empire which was to overthrow Rome. The second, with the sword, may refer to Rome itself as the source of social disorder. The third, famine, may be a reference to an edict of Domitian intended to switch the use of land from vineyards to grain cultivation, which resulted in so much opposition that it had to be rescinded. Charles does not give a specific reference to the fourth horseman - death encompassed all these events.<sup>50</sup>

Charles is right to suggest that while the material included in this passage is traditional, it is used in such a way as to indicate contemporary events which are either already beginning to have an effect, or

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49. See Ford, Revelation, 102.

50. Charles, Revelation, I, 160.



are likely to do so in the near future. His specific suggestions are all possible, but perhaps one should now simply say that John was commenting on the political and social order of his time, and asserting that even though there would be periods of death and destruction, God was still supreme.

On the opening of the fifth seal, attention is shifted from the world order, to the fate of the martyrs who "had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne" (6:9). Ford writes - "The fifth seal may be seen as the key to the whole chapter for it looks backward to the concept of the "martyr" Lamb in chapter 5 and forward to the number of those sealed and the configuration of angels in chapter 7. It confirms that all the seals are in the context of the just judgment of God."<sup>51</sup>

Many commentators believe that John had in mind all martyrs who died in God's service, whether Christian or pre-Christian. They may well be right, but the passage gains its significance from the martyrdoms of John's own time.<sup>52</sup> The question "How long?" is a familiar one in times of danger and oppression. Caird cites the following Old Testament references - Ps. 6:3, 13:1f; 35:17; 74:9; 79:5; 80:4; 89:46; 90:13; 94:3f; Isaiah 6:11; Jer. 47:6; Hab. 1:2; Zech. 1:12.<sup>53</sup> While the Old Testament writers were, on the whole, looking for a time of restoration in Israel, the cry of the martyrs in the Apocalypse is for a time of justice - "how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" (6:10). This request should not be seen so much a vindictive outburst as a cry that the justice of God should be seen to act.

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51. Ford, Revelation, 110.

52. See e.g. Kiddle, Revelation, 119; Caird, Revelation, 84; Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 135; Ford, Revelation, 110, but cf. Charles, Revelation, I, 174, 171.

53. Caird, Revelation, 84.

The answer, was for each to be given a white robe symbolising their ultimate victory and justification (cf. 7:13, 14), but then to be told that they must wait a little longer until the number of the martyrs is complete (6:11). It is not necessary to imagine a specific number.<sup>54</sup> John is looking forward to the day when God's activity on earth is complete, and the martyrs will then be vindicated. This will happen in God's time (cf. 4 Ezra 4:33-37), but the martyrs are already secure.

The sixth seal reveals cosmic disorder - an earthquake which affects not only the whole earth but the entire universe (6:12-14). All men, whatever their status in society, will be found hiding in caves and calling to the mountains to fall on them, in order to escape the wrath of the Lamb. No-one can stand before it (6:15-17). Again the imagery is drawn from traditional apocalyptic understanding (cf. Ezek. 38:19, 20); Joel 2:30-3:3; Amos 8:8-10; Hos. 10:8; Jer. 4:23-28; Isaiah 2:10-22; 24:23; 34:4; Matt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; Lk. 21:25-28). It is not relevant to discuss how men would survive the initial turmoil to be found hiding in caves. John is using apocalyptic imagery to assert once more the sovereignty of God, and of the Lamb.

The structure of John's work is of interest at this point. Most commentators consider the events which follow the breaking of the sixth seal to be contained in 6:12-17. Chapter 7 is then an intermission<sup>55</sup> or interpolation.<sup>56</sup> If, however, one includes Chapter 7 with the vision of the sixth seal it becomes a summary or restatement of the first five. The first four seals were cosmic in proportion (6:1-8); the opening of the sixth seal is even more universal in its effect (6:12-17). On the opening of the fifth seal the martyrs were told they must wait until

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54. The 144,000 who are sealed (7:1-8) is intended to signify completeness - see Farrer, Revelation, 106-108.

55. Ford, Revelation, 120.

56. Caird, Revelation, 93; Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 139.

their number is complete (6:9-11); in chapter 7 the vision is of martyrs in white robes worshipping and serving before the throne (7:9-17), the complete number - 144,000 - having already been chosen (7:1-8). We suggest that this is an interpolation only in the sense that John is pausing to restate, in similar but slightly different imagery, the argument he has advanced in 6:1-11. Where previously he emphasised the inevitable destruction which is a consequence of man's disobedience, and indicates the nearness of the End, now he centres his attention on the judgement of those who refuse to believe, and the salvation of the faithful - in particular those who have maintained their faith through martyrdom. It would be interesting to know what John considered the position of those believers who died a natural death to be, but it is not a pertinent question. For him, the present persecution was all-encompassing, and his intention was to encourage the faithful, whom he was sure would one day face death.

Austin Farrer is one commentator who emphasised the continuity of the three visions under the sixth seal (6:12-17; 1-8; 7:9-17). He writes - "The theme is perfectly unbroken; it deals with the fulfilment of the martyrs' prayer and of the promise made to them in the previous unsealing. The great earthquake of 6:12-17 shows the figure of the vindication against their enemies for which they prayed; but wrath is manifested only that it may be held back until the saints have been sealed against its effects. A last vision (7:9-17) will show how the sealing, and the endurance of the great persecution under Antichrist, give God the multitude of saints he desires. The unexpected prolongation of the sixth unsealing gives almost physical expression to the delay which the impatience of the saints must learn to stomach."<sup>57</sup>

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57. Farrer, Revelation, 104; Note also Charles, Revelation, I, 188-189.

For our study it is important to note the role of the Lamb in judgement and vindication. While God, the "Sovereign Lord", is judge and avenger (6:10), it is the "wrath of the Lamb" (6:16) which is to be feared. We previously suggested that God and the Lamb act as one in judgement.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, while the 144,000 are sealed with "the seal of the living God" (7:2), the multitude stand and worship before the Lamb (7:9). It is not necessary to make a distinction between the 144,000 (7:4) and the "great multitude which no man could number" (7:9). In 7:1-8 John wants to emphasise the complete number of the saved, in 7:9-17 he is more concerned with the worship they offer to the Lamb. Again, God and the Lamb act together in salvation (7:10).<sup>59</sup> Chapter 7 is an expansion of 6:11. The martyrs must wait until their number is complete, but their vindication is secure because "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14).

On the opening of the seventh seal there is a pause-silence in heaven for about half an hour - then a whole new series of visions begins (8:1). We too must pause to consider what has been learnt of the Apocalypticist's eschatological expectation in the breaking of the seven seals. His images are traditional, drawn mainly from his deep knowledge of the Old Testament texts, especially the prophets. No doubt he was also drawing on Inter-testamental writers, but almost every image used by the Apocalypticist has an Old Testament parallel. He uses these traditional apocalyptic images for his own purpose, which is to provide encouragement for the faithful in the face of persecution and martyrdom. The signs of the End are clear to him, his vision is of "what must take place after this" (4:1), but his message is that all the events which lead up to the final judgement of the wicked and vindication of the faithful are still within the purposes of God. God never leaves his

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58. See above, 77-81.

59. See above, 81-82.



throne, and the fate of the martyr is secure - he will reign for ever and ever. At the same time it is not for the martyrs, nor those facing immanent martyrdom, to rush the activity of God. They must wait until the total number He has sealed has been gathered in, then they will see the final judgement and vindication.

One further comment may be added at this point, though not explicitly stated in the chapters just reviewed. The period of waiting while the judgements of God may be seen on earth, is also an opportunity for repentance.<sup>60</sup> This is seen most clearly in the other two cycles of the trumpets (chaps. 8-11), and the bowls (chaps. 15,16). In these John points specifically to the lack of repentance among men (9: 20, 21; 16:9, 11). Ford suggests that John is presenting a, "theology of the remnant".<sup>61</sup> She writes - "This is an important part of most of the prophetic proclamation in the O.T. but, although Paul deals with it in Romans 9-11, it is not a prominent theme in the N.T. theology. The concept of the remnant has three facets - destruction, salvation, and an opportunity for the sinners to repent."<sup>62</sup> These three facets are indeed reflected in the eschatological understanding of the Apocalypse.

#### The Return of Christ (Rev. 19:11-20:3)

The breaking of the seven seals gives considerable insight into the pattern of John's eschatological thinking, but in the final chapters he concentrates more specifically on the period from Christ's return, to the final judgement and salvation (Rev. 19:11-22:5).<sup>63</sup> We must now look at

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60. See Rissi, Future, 13.

61. Ford, Revelation, 120.

62. Ibid.

63. These chapters are the basis for Rissi's study, The Future of the World.

the essential character of these events surrounding the End-time. His thinking may be considered in three phases -

1. Christ's triumphant return (19:11-20:3)
2. The martyrs' reign (20:4-10)
3. The final judgement and salvation (20:11-22:5).

The return of Christ in triumph is the image portrayed by the figure on the white horse, riding out to judge and make war (19:11). The imagery used is again reminiscent of Zechariah, but there is no real comparison with the rider who appeared on a white horse at the breaking of the first seal (6:2). Most scholars would, in general, agree with Caird - "The other rider was part of a fourfold scourge, active only through the divine permission, fit company for Death and Hades. This Rider is the Christ, in whom the eternal purpose of God has come to full expression and achievement."<sup>64</sup>

The description of the Christ returning in triumph and glory is a powerful one, although to our modern thinking it seems to lack coherence.<sup>65</sup> Image is piled on image with little apparent concern for consistency, but then that was not John's concern. The impact of this passage is to portray Christ as the one who rides out victorious over all the powers of evil, which to the church in John's day seemed overwhelming and insuperable.

Rissi makes the interesting suggestion that this is in fact a carefully constructed passage, with two groups of statements about the returning Christ, separated by the description of the "armies of heaven" (19:14). He writes -

64. Caird, Revelation, 240.

65. See Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 277-278.

"The first group contains seven elements:

1. Christ is called 'faithful and true'.
2. He judges with justice and wages war.
3. His eyes are (like) a flame of fire.
4. On his head there are many diadems.
5. He bears a name that is written, which nobody knows but himself.
6. He is robed in a garment dipped in blood.
7. His name is called 'the Word of God.'

The second group has four parts:

1. From his mouth there issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations.
2. He will shepherd the nations with an iron rod.
3. He will tread the winepress of judgement.
4. On his robe and on his thigh there is written the name of the Omnipotent Ruler."<sup>66</sup>

Rissi suggests that far from being a "haphazard heaping together of formulae", these two groups are intended, in the first case to relate to the church, and in second case to the world. He writes "... all the assertions in both of the above groups point to this double significance of Christ's parousia. The two numbers, seven and four, are evidence precisely of that fact. For John, seven is especially the number of the fullness of the church and of the Spirit. Four is the traditional number of the cosmos, and of the earth."<sup>67</sup>

It is an interesting and novel suggestion, but perhaps seeks a structure where none is intended. John here brings together the attributes of

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66. Rissi, Future, 19.

67. Ibid., 20.

the triumphant Christ, many of which have been stated elsewhere in the Apocalypse, to create a vivid and memorable picture of Christ's majesty, authority and power.<sup>68</sup> We cannot in this study look at each statement individually, but there are two images in the vision which are of importance to our understanding of John's eschatology, and in particular its relation to christology.

The first is the picture of Christ, clothed in 'a robe dipped in blood' (19:13).<sup>69</sup> The question is immediately raised, whose blood? Beasley-Murray gives a useful summary of scholarship - "Patristic writers interpreted this as meaning that the robe was stained with the blood of Christ's own sacrifice, a view which may claim support from 1:5, 5:9 and 7:14."<sup>70</sup> Most modern commentators hold that the blood is intended to be that of his enemies,<sup>71</sup> while Caird understands it as stains of martyr blood.<sup>72</sup> The context, however, above all verse 15, demands our recognition that the figure is drawn from Isaiah 63:1ff., and that it is used in a similar manner as in its Old Testament source ... It indicates his function as executor of the divine wrath."<sup>73</sup>

We have seen before that while John uses Old Testament imagery he uses it with great freedom and for his own purpose. It is always a mistake to interpret the Apocalypse by an Old Testament passage, however relevant it may be. This vision is certainly a picture of Christ coming to execute God's judgement, but he does so as the one who shed his own blood (1:5, 5:9, 7:14, 12:11). This is the sense, we believe, in which 19:13 is to be understood. Each statement in the vision adds to our knowledge of the nature of Christ. This statement is a reminder that

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68. See Farrer, Revelation, 198. Beasley-Murray, Revelation 277-279.

69. *βεβαμμένον* seems the most likely reading.

70. More recently Farrer, Revelation 197.

71. Charles relates it directly to the "Parthian kings and their armies", Revelation, II, 133.

72. See Caird, Revelation, 242-244.

73. Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 280; also Kiddle, Revelation, 384-385.



redemption is secure, because of Jesus' own sacrifice. Such an interpretation is developed by Rissi, who goes on to show how the early church, by assimilation to Isaiah 63:1-4, may have changed the reading from *βεβαμμένον* to *περιβεβαμμένον*. He concludes - "The garment of the coming Christ thus reveals the truth and reality of his redemption in its eternal validity for the church."<sup>74</sup> The Christ who comes in triumph is the same Jesus who was slain (cf. 5:6).

The other point of particular note is that while there is an elaborate picture of the birds of prey gathering for the spoils of battle (19:17-18), and the armies facing one another (19:19), there is no report of any battle. The victory was complete - the beast and the false prophet were captured and thrown into the lake of fire (19:20); the rest were slain by the sword (19:21); even the birds were gorged (19:21); and the dragon representing the Devil and Satan was bound for a thousand years (20:1-3). All this without any apparent struggle.

Again we suggest that this is because the struggle had already taken place and the victory was secure. Commenting on the title "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16), Caird writes - "... the title is the ground, not the result, of the coming victory; he will conquer the monster and the kings because he is already King of kings and Lord of lords (cf. 17:14). The warrant for the title is the initial victory of the Cross."<sup>75</sup> Once more the inseparable connection between John's eschatology and his christology becomes apparent.

This is particularly emphasised in Rissi's study. He comments - "A decisive feature in this picture of the parousia is that John never gives up his central christological conception. For him there is only

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74. Rissi, Future, 24; cf. Preston and Hanson, Revelation, 120.

75. Caird, Revelation, 246.

one battle and victory of Christ, which already lies in the past. With his birth into this world, his death and his exaltation, he hurled the dragon from his place in heaven and enabled his church to win the victory (12:5, 10f.). As the slain lamb he has become 'the lion of Judah' who is everywhere victorious ( $\epsilon\nu\acute{\iota}\kappa\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu$ ), and into whose hands dominion over the world has been committed (5:5). John knows nothing of any other battle or victory of Christ. Since the issue has already been decided in the death of Jesus, the eschatological war, for which God's enemies prepare, will not take place.<sup>76</sup>

The Millennial Reign (20:4-10). While the dragon is bound on the return of Christ, it is only for a thousand years, and then he must be "loosed for a little while" (20:1-3). One of the most puzzling aspects of John's eschatological scheme is this concept of a thousand years when the martyrs would reign with Christ (20:4). It is not enough to suggest, either that John was slavishly copying the pattern of Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezekiel 35-48),<sup>77</sup> or that he was trying to provide a distinctive reward for the martyrs.<sup>78</sup> One can see even less justification for the extensive re-arrangement of this section by Charles.<sup>79</sup> The vision of the millennial reign is part of John's prophecy, and should be interpreted as an integral part.

John's thinking, as one would now expect, is rooted in Old Testament prophecy. Beasley-Murray writes - "The conception of a limited kingdom of the Messiah is not found in the Old Testament, but its nature as the

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76. Rissi, Future, 26-27. The one exception which Rissi sees to this view is 17:9b-17, which he considers an interpolation. We would suggest that again the victory of the Lamb is secure (17:14). For a contrary argument see Oscar Cullmann, "The Kingship of Christ and the Church in the New Testament", in The Early Church, ed. A.J.B. Higgins (London: S.C.M., 1956), 101-137, esp. 112-113.

77. This seems to be the implication of Farrer's comment, Revelation, 204; cf. Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 289-292.

78. So Preston and Hanson, Revelation, 124.

79. See Charles, Revelation, II, 144-154.

divine sovereignty manifested within history and in the earthly scene is basic to the prophetic hope. For almost all descriptions of the kingdom in the Old Testament picture it in terms of this world. They not only set the kingdom in the context of this earth, but frequently and characteristically represent it as centred in the Holy Land, and above all in Jerusalem."<sup>80</sup> One may cite such well-known passages as Isaiah 9:2-7; 11:1-12:1, 34:1-35:10; Amos 9; Micah 4,5; Zephaniah 3; Zechariah 14; Daniel 7:1-14. Caird reminds his readers that, "throughout the formative period of Old Testament eschatology from Amos to Daniel the Jewish people had no expectation of an after-life. When they looked forward to the intervention of God in human affairs, in which he was to vindicate his oppressed people and introduce the new age of righteousness and peace, they inevitably conceived that new age as a direct continuation of earthly existence."<sup>81</sup> In his conception of the millenium John is continuing this Old Testament expectation in terms of the reign of Christ on earth. Why he considered that this reign would last a thousand years is not so clear,<sup>82</sup> but equally not so important. There is no reason to believe that John thought of it literally as that specific period of time.<sup>83</sup> From the situation of persecution in the church, John was looking forward to the time when Christ, and the martyrs, would reign supreme on earth.

This seems to be the interpretation of 20:4-6 (cf. Dan. 7:9-22; Matt. 19:28, Lk. 22:30), As was noted at 6:9-11, John does not comment on the position of believers who had died, but not as martyrs. The

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80. Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 287.

81. Caird, Revelation, 253.

82. There is much speculation from contemporary Jewish sources, see, e.g. Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 288-289; Ford, Revelation, 350-354, but there is no clearly agreed time period for any messianic reign on earth. The thousand years may be an echo of Ps. 90:4.

83. See Rissi, Future, 34.

question does not concern him. His concern is to encourage those who face persecution and death. The fate of other believers in this interim period was not an issue for him, however much it would make our understanding more complete.<sup>84</sup>

The central problem for our understanding of the Apocalypticist's eschatology, and in particular its relation to Johannine eschatology, is the relation of the millennial reign to the reign of Christ already begun at his death and resurrection. It has previously been argued that for the Apocalypticist also the victory has already been secured on the Cross. In what sense, then, is the reign of Christ during this thousand year period different from the reign of Christ which has existed from the resurrection, and in which the believer may share by faith?

Rissi points to the fact that the dragon, representing Satan, had previously been defeated at 12:8.<sup>85</sup> In chapter 12, however, the vision is a heavenly one (cf. Lk. 10:18; John 12:31). It portrays in pictorial terms the actual state of affairs, but that is not apparent in the world. In chapter 20, the binding of the dragon means the elimination of Satan's power which should be obvious to all. There is in this vision no hint of a time for repentance. That time is past, and the events of the End-time have begun. The martyrs will reign with Christ over those who have refused his call. Rissi adds - "The apparent power of the dragon, which has already been overcome by Jesus' historical victory, but which is still dangerous for those who do not believe in Christ, has now 'objectively' - that is, in a manner recognizable by the world as well-ceased

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84. Note Farrer, Revelation, 205-207.

85. In 20:7-10, the release of Satan at the end of the millenium is only to instigate his complete destruction. The victory of Christ and his kingdom is not at issue.



to exist. This conception carries with it a paraenetic element for the church : she should never at any time bow to this apparent power before the consummation."<sup>86</sup>

The expectation of the reign of Christ on earth is not unique to the Apocalypse in the New Testament. It is reflected, for example, in the beatitudes of the sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:5,6) and the petition of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:10).<sup>87</sup> A similar, but not identical, pattern is developed by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:20-28. Nevertheless, the emphasis placed in the Apocalypse on the earthly reign of Christ and the martyrs, is, in our view, unique within New Testament writings. So, too, is the limitation of that reign to one thousand years. John lived at a time when the powers of evil and Satan seemed to have gained the upper hand, the Church was being persecuted, and faithful believers were being martyred. In response to this situation, John emphasises first that the victory of evil is imaginary - the real victory has already been won by Jesus Christ. Secondly, there will be a time when the victory of Christ and his martyrs will be apparent on earth for all to see. This vision of the millenium is integral to John's thinking because it offers the hope to those facing persecution and death that Christ's reign is not only in the other world, but in this world also.

The Final Judgement and Salvation (20:11-21:4). In the last chapters of his Apocalypse John does turn his attention from the earth to a vision of the final judgement (cf. Dan. 7:9-10; Matt. 25:31-46). The scene is in Heaven - before the Figure on the white throne, "earth and sky fled away and no place was found for them" (20:11). The dead are raised to

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86. Rissi, Future, 32.

87. See Beasley-Murray, Revelation, 290.

judgement which is final and irrevocable (20:12,13). Death and Hades are themselves thrown into the lake of fire (20:14). The vision is of the complete destruction of evil, even of death itself. The judgement is made on the basis of whether or not one's name appears in the book of life (20:15), that is on the basis of one's relation to Jesus Christ. Rissi points out that the judgement is really "the universal unveiling of decisions that have already been made."<sup>88</sup> There is also the obverse aspect - the victory of the faithful. John vividly pictures the new creation - "new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (21:2). For those facing oppression this is the ultimate hope - "... God himself will be with them; and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." (21:3,4). For our purpose it is only necessary to note that John retained a very clear conception of a final and glorious apocalyptic happening, when all things would be made new.

#### The Eschatology of the Apocalypse in Relation to the Johannine Community

This Appendix did not set out to discuss every detail of the Apocalyptic's Visions of the future, and it certainly has not done so. What may reasonably be claimed is that by making forays into the wealth of apocalyptic material at certain key points, we have detected essential aspects of John's eschatological understanding. These may be summarised under five headings:-

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88. Rissi, Future, 37. He compares this conception with John 3:18f., but we cannot fully accept the close relationship he suggests.

1. The End is near (1:3; 6:11; 22:10,20), but there is still time to repent (9:20; 16:9).
2. Christ will return as the One who has already conquered (1:5,6; 5:5-14; 19:11-16).
3. The victorious Christ, and the martyrs, will reign on earth for a period - one thousand years (20:1-10).
4. There will follow the final judgement (20:11-15), and salvation (21:1-22:5).
5. All these events, even when evil seems to dominate on earth, are under the control of God, who never leaves the throne (4:1; 20:11).

All these aspects, with the exception of the concept of the millennium, may be found in other New Testament writings. The question for us is how they relate specifically to Johannine thought. One must, as always, take into account the situation and purpose which prompted the writing. The Apocalypticist wrote to encourage and offer hope to the faithful in a time of persecution, which he believed would continue until Christ's triumphant return. His purpose was entirely different from the Evangelist or the Letter-writer, and this must be recognised in any comparison. Having said that, however, distinctive affinities between the eschatological thought of the Apocalypse and the Johannine writings must be judged to be slight.

There are two areas of comparison worthy of comment. While looking at the eschatological expectation of the First Letter, we discovered that its writer also had a lively expectation of living in the "last hour" (1 Jn. 2:18; cf. 4:3).<sup>89</sup> This was because he believed false prophets (1 Jn. 4:1) and antichrists (1 Jn: 18,22) were at work in the community.

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89. See above, 168-175.

His message to the faithful - that is those who agreed with him - was that Christ would soon come to vindicate their cause (1 Jn. 2:28-3:3). His concept really was of Christ returning to settle a dispute within the community, it bears little resemblance to the imagery and scope of the Parousia to which the Apocalyptist pointed his followers. Superficially, both expected that the End-time was near, indeed had already begun in the events around them, but their reasoning and their vision of the End-time, have little in common.

The Evangelist, had no such interest in speculation about the future. He saw his task as calling men to faith in the present, by the challenge of his preaching. Speculation about future events could only distract from the critical nature of man's present decision. By his decision now the individual would either enter the realm of life or remain in the realm of death. The challenge to which all men must respond was the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is not always recognised that the death and resurrection of Jesus is also the crucial event for the Apocalyptist. While he speculates about the future return of the victorious Christ in vivid apocalyptic imagery, Christ only returns as the One who had already been to earth, and who had died - the Lamb who had been slain. We have noted this emphasis several times even in our short study. While the visions of the future are intended to encourage the faithful believers, they do so only because the Christ who returns is the same Jesus who died and in whom they believe.

The conclusion of this Appendix, however, must ultimately reinforce the conclusions already reached in the thesis itself. There are broad areas where one sees similarities of thought, but no more so than with other New Testament writings. Unlike Rissi we see no conception which



could be said to be "related to the Gospel of John in the profoundest way."<sup>90</sup> Indeed in our view this study of eschatological thought has moved the Apocalypse even further from the mainstream of Johannine thinking. Our conclusion remains the same. That while the Apocalypticist may have had some contact with the Johannine community, he cannot be considered a member of it.<sup>91</sup>

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90. Rissi, Future, 37.

91. It has not been possible to consider the recently published articles in L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament, ed. J. Lambrecht (B.E.T.L. 80; Gembloux: Duculot, 1980).

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