

NEW LIGHT ON THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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‘New Light on the Fourth Gospel’ is on any showing a bold title to choose for a lecture such as this, since the phrase has about it a character that may at worst be described as presumptuous, and at best as ambiguous. One likely result of this choice is that my readers will have been lured under false pretences, eager to receive completely fresh illumination in this complex region of biblical discussion. Let me then confess at the outset that almost certainly they will be disappointed. New light on the Fourth Gospel there may be; but I make no claims to be shedding it.

None the less, I hope to persuade you in due course that my title is not wholly inappropriate. For the paramount task before us is the reconsideration of the light that has already been shed, and mostly within the last decade, on the Gospel of John.<sup>1</sup> However, the intention is not so much to survey in scrupulous detail the speculations of every scholarly pen, and the relevant secrets of every Qumran jar; it is rather to assess the present drift of the Johannine debate and some of its implications, by looking afresh at the principal areas in which the scholarly lions have been roaring after their prey. Inevitably we shall then be driven back once more to the place and

\*Delivered at Cambridge on July 13th, 1965.

The following special abbreviations are employed:

HE Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

HTFG C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge (1963).

IFG C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge (1954).

1. This description of the Fourth Gospel and Evangelist is not intended to prejudge the issue of authorship.

meaning of history in John, and to the relation in the Gospel between history and the apostolic kerygma.

### THE CURRENT DEBATE

What, then, is the present state of the evangelic parties? What are the live issues in this particular field of New Testament study, and where are they leading us? We are by now very familiar with the chief conclusions of what has been termed the 'new look' on the Fourth Gospel.' The most significant is, of course, the suggested existence of a distinctive Johannine tradition, which has been deduced from the possibility (to my mind, the certainty) that the Fourth Evangelist wrote independently of the Synoptists; and the latest volume of D. Guthrie's *New Testament Introduction, The Gospels and Acts* (Tyndale Press, London (1965) 262-275 and 278-284), has provided us with a masterly survey of the literature on this topic.

A direct line may be drawn from P. Gardner-Smith's small but influential study, *St John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge 1938), to C. H. Dodd's definitive volume, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1963). Both works, and those in between which have pointed in the same direction, such as *The Historicity of the Fourth Gospel*, by A. J. B. Higgins (Lutterworth Press, London, 1960), have attempted to isolate from John an independent primitive tradition which, if established could claim an historical reliability equal to that of the tradition underlying the Synoptic Gospels. And if pre-canonical largely oral tradition of this kind does in fact lie behind the Fourth Gospel, formal contact with an original Aramaic tradition, and geographical association with Palestine, become at once very likely.

This exciting possibility remains as yet without final proof even if it has received weighty support in a number of different directions. Moreover, there are, as we shall see, reasons to

2. So J. A. T. Robinson, 'The New Look on the Fourth Gospel', *Twelve New Testament Studies*, SCM Press, London (1962) 94-106, See also R. H. Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study*, SCM Press London (1963) 120ff.

hesitate before drawing unjustifiably 'conservative' conclusions from such a presupposition; and I have no need in this company to point out that in any case a 'late' date for John (whatever that may mean) must still be found. But at least there is more general reluctance now than there has been since the beginning of this century to remove the author of the Fourth Gospel in time and space from the basic tradition which he represents, and a corresponding readiness to concede that 'history' and not merely 'theology' characterizes that tradition.<sup>3</sup>

Support for both the independence of John's sources and the possibility of their derivation from a (southern) Palestinian location is provided by the topographical information given in the Fourth Gospel. Like the uniquely Johannine occurrence of personal names (such as the hapless Malchus, 18:10), the appearance of place-names in John against the Synoptic Gospels suggests an independent witness with a history of its own. C. H. Dodd's recent volume on the Fourth Gospel expands convincingly in this direction the lines of enquiry suggested in the appendix to his earlier companion volume, on the historical aspect of John.<sup>4</sup> And his conclusions are, as we know well, confirmed by the evidence of archaeology, which if anything upholds the reliability of the Johannine tradition in its singular record of Palestinian topography, as well as of Jewish institutions existing before AD 70.<sup>5</sup>

Concentration on the issue of tradition in John has brought about an inevitable lessening of interest in the actual authorship of the Gospel.<sup>6</sup> If, as I believe (in company with R. V. G. Tasker<sup>7</sup>), the fundamental *paradosis* of the Fourth Gospel derives from John the apostle the son of Zebedee, who is the Beloved Disciple, and the Fourth Evangelist as such was not the apostle but one of his followers, the precise identity of the

3. Cf. J. A. T. Robinson, *loc. cit.* 98f.

4. C. H. Dodd, *IFG* 452f.; *HTFG* 233-247; cf. also A. J. B. Higgins, *op. cit.* 78-82.

5. So, for example, W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth (1960). See also M. Goguel, *Jésus*,<sup>2</sup> Payot, Paris (1950).

6. Cf. B. Noack, *Zur johanneischen Tradition*, Copenhagen (1954).

7. R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St John*, TNTC (1960) 16f.

writer is clearly of secondary importance, and does not affect the apostolic, eye-witness character of the tradition which is being preserved. Even so, the question of authorship is not by any means without its own importance, particularly if—as am certain is necessary—we take the Gospel and the First Epistle of John into one purview. We shall touch on the point again.

The audience and purpose of St. John's Gospel are problems related to those of historical tradition and authorship. For whom did the Evangelist write, and why? There is little reason now to doubt that Jewish as much as Greek influence shaped the background of John's readers. J. A. T. Robinson, for example, has reminded us of the 'unremitting concentration on Judaism' which the Fourth Gospel displays; even if, as he also admits, that emphasis is offset by the 'cosmic perspective to the Gospel', as well as by the obvious fact that John has written 'in Greek and for a Greek-speaking public'.<sup>8</sup> They allow the further possibility that this particular Judaico-Hellenistic combination also typified the environment of the author himself, and even of his sources, affects the legitimacy or otherwise of postulating an original Palestinian setting for the Johannine tradition; and to this we shall also return.

Meanwhile, if John was addressing readers whose background of speech and thought would have caused them to respond to the Graeco-Judaic ethos in which his material was presented, it is highly probable that the audience of the Fourth Gospel is, in part at least, to be located among Greek speaking Jews. Dr Robinson's further suggestion is that while the Gospel was composed from didactic material which took shape within a Christian community in Judaea, it was ultimately addressed to a Greek-speaking diaspora Judaism, to win its members to the faith.<sup>9</sup> Now the evangelistic and indeed apologetic intention of the Fourth Gospel, whatever we make of the grammar of John 20:31,<sup>10</sup> is clear; and our

8. J. A. T. Robinson, 'The Destination and Purpose of St John's Gospel' *op. cit.* 112, 116.

9. *Ibid.*, 124f. See also W. C. van Unnik, 'The Purpose of St John's Gospel', in *Studia Evangelica* I, TU 73, Berlin (1959) 382-411.

10. There is a variant reading of πιστεύσητε for πιστεύητε (κ\* B θ).

attention to this has been expertly drawn by C. F. D. Moule in his study, 'The Intention of the Evangelists', in the volume of New Testament essays written in memory of T. W. Manson.<sup>11</sup> And with Professor Moule, I am persuaded that the Fourth Evangelist wrote with 'more than half an eye on outsiders'.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, I have argued elsewhere<sup>13</sup> that the scope of this writer is finally as wide as it possibly could be; he is concerned that those inside *or* outside the church, Jew *or* Greek, should perceive with the eye of faith the climactic truth, Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ. This is not to deny that John perhaps begins with the Israelites, wherever they are to be found; but that he begins and ends with the Jews of the dispersion, as Dr Robinson would have us believe, seems to me most unlikely. Quite apart from what we know of the total 'universe of discourse'<sup>14</sup> within which the thought of John moves, we are in that case faced with the extreme difficulty of accounting for the necessity to translate terms (such as Rabbi, 1:38; Rabboni, 20:16; and even more incredibly, Messiah, 1:41), and explain customs (such as the fact that the Passover was a Jewish festival, 6:4; *cf.* 18:28), which can scarcely have been unfamiliar to the most Graecized Jew.

We have so far surveyed the current debate about the Fourth Gospel by glancing at the attention which has been paid to questions of its tradition, authorship, audience and purpose. A further line of enquiry, relevant to the background and date of the Gospel, concerns the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls. There are certainly impressive points of contact between the literature of Qumran and John's Gospel, not only in language but also in thought; and our attention to these has been drawn unceasingly.<sup>15</sup> But the real importance of the

11. F. D. Moule, 'The Intention of the Evangelists', in *New Testament Essays*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins, Manchester University Press (1959) 165-179, esp. 175.
12. *Ibid.*, 168. See also C. F. D. Moule, *The Birth of the New Testament*, A. & C. Black, London (1962) 93f.
13. 'Liturgy and Sacrament in the Fourth Gospel', *EQ* 29 (1957) 161f.
14. The phrase of C. H. Dodd, *IFG* 3.
15. *E.g.* W. F. Albright, 'Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St John', in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube, Cambridge University Press (1956)

Scrolls lies in their witness to the fact that a theological ethos existed much earlier than was ever suspected, which combined Jewish and Greek (perhaps 'pre-gnostic') elements in a way that is entirely characteristic of John. This affinity has led some writers to suggest that the Qumran documents give us body of thought which both in time and place represents 'an actual background, and not merely a possible environment' for the distinctively Johannine thought-forms." If a further line is provided between the Qumran community and the Johannine tradition through John the Baptist, as J. A. T. Robinson firmly believes<sup>17</sup> but H. H. Rowley equally firmly denies,<sup>18</sup> this will again affect strongly our estimate of the primitive character of that tradition, and at least leave still open the question of the date of the Fourth Gospel in its final form.

The other trend in contemporary Johannine studies which deserves mention in this prolegomenon relates to the composition of the Fourth Gospel. A distinguished predecessor in this lectureship, Aileen Guilding, gave us in 1960 the fruits her research into the lectionary background of John.<sup>19</sup> Her now familiar thesis, that the Evangelist composed his Gospel under the influence of a triennial Jewish lectionary, has been recently subjected to careful scrutiny by Leon Morris.<sup>20</sup> He arrives at the conclusion, convincing to my mind and devastating for the theory in question, that the evidence for either the existence or use of a single Jewish lectionary in the first Christian

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153-171; R. E. Brown, 'The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles', in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. K. Stendahl, SCM Press, London (1958) 183-207. But *cf.* also the caveat of C. H. Dodd, *HTFG* 15, n.3.

16. J. A. T. Robinson, 'The New Look on the Fourth Gospel', *op. cit.* 99.

17. J. A. T. Robinson, 'The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community', *ibid.* 11-27. See also W. H. Brownlee, 'John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls', in *The Scrolls and the New Testament* ed. K. Stendahl, SCM Press, London (1958) 33-53.

18. H. H. Rowley, 'The Baptism of John and the Qumran Sect', in *New Testament Essays*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins, Manchester University Press (1959) 218-229.

19. A. E. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship*, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1960).

20. L. L. Morris, *The New Testament and the Jewish Lectionaries*, Tyndale Press, London (1964).

century is sufficiently weak to make dependence upon it by any New Testament writer, and not only the Fourth Evangelist, unlikely if not impossible. Professor Guilding's treatment in any case begs the whole question of the authorship and sources of John, and attributes to the writer, whatever his identity, an intolerably *outré* degree of literary affectation.

A more promising investigation of Johannine methodology is provided by T. F. Glasson, whose significant study, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (SCM Press, London, 1963), seeks to demonstrate the typological links in John with a Jewish 'second Moses' tradition 'already in existence in New Testament tunes'.<sup>21</sup> The esoteric allusiveness which must in this case be claimed for the writer's style presents difficulties, but cannot be regarded as altogether out of character. And the possibility that the Fourth Evangelist was familiar with an early, even pre-Christian, form of Messianic expectation which embodied a strong parallelism between Moses and Christ<sup>22</sup> is surely not without significance in relation to the historical character of the Fourth Gospel.

The critical fishing-lines out in Johannine waters reviewed so far mostly have this in common: that they are waiting to see whether the catch that is landed will add weight to the growing suspicion that the historical value of the Fourth Gospel may be, in P. Gardner-Smith's phrase, 'very great indeed'.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile major issues remain wide open. How certain is it that the Fourth Evangelist was dependent on Synoptic sources; that he was remote in time and place from the background of the tradition he represents and reports; or that his Gospel is a late, theological re-writing of a history which *qua* history does not interest him? More crucially, how far is it possible to establish the presence or absence of an apostolic hand in the composition of the Fourth Gospel? It is not that we have toiled all night and taken nothing; but rather that there is still room to put out into the deep and let down our nets.

21. T. F. Glasson, *op. cit.* 12.

22. *Ibid.* 20ff.

23. P. Gardner-Smith, *op. cit.* 96f. For a further review of the issues involved, see A. M. Hunter, 'Recent Trends in Johannine Studies', *ExpT* 71 (1960) 164-167 and 219-222.

## SOME DEDUCTIONS

If it can for a moment be assumed, since it cannot now be argued, that the Johannine tradition is independent of the other Gospels, certain important deductions follow. One is obviously the claim for historical reliability already mentioned which it is then possible to make for John's sources. Second there will no longer be any justification for regularly preferring the Synoptic to the Johannine evidence concerning (say) the chronology and events of the ministry of Jesus, where there are differences. The problems presented by the witness of the Fourth Gospel, for example, to the cleansing of the Temple, the raising of Lazarus and the incidents leading to the passion, and not now (if they ever were) entirely insoluble.

Third, reason will no longer exist for assuming that the theological characteristics of John which belong to him alone are inevitably the product of his inventiveness. The Johannine presentation of the person of Christ, with its open and immediate acknowledgment of the identity of Jesus is a case in point. On the showing of possible Johannine independence, we are no longer compelled to dismiss even the declaration of John the Baptist, Ἴδε ὁ Ἀμνὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ (Jn. 1:29, 36), as an imported theological confession. There are indications from the Synoptic accounts of the Baptist's ministry, such as the famous 'restraint' passage of Matthew 3:13-15, that the identity of Jesus was not completely unknown to John in the first place.<sup>24</sup> And in fact, as we shall see, John tells us something more than the Synoptists about the person of Christ, but not necessarily something *else*.

A similar conclusion is possible in the case of the teaching of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. It is well known that John casts this teaching into new forms, notably the leisurely discourse with an Ἐγὼ εἶμι saying as its text, introducing new themes in characteristic language. But the possibility that the discourses of John 14-16 contain a groundwork (if no more) of the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus need not be automatically rejected if the Fourth Evangelist worked from an historical as much as a

24. But *cf.* C. H. Dodd, *HTFG* 288-301.

theological point of departure. One small piece of supporting evidence may be suggested, and must suffice. What is the λόγος Κυρίου to which Paul refers in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, when he speaks of the relation of living and dead Christians to Christ at the *parousia*? J. A. T. Robinson tentatively suggests a connection between that λόγος and the saying of John 14:3, 'I will come again and will take you to myself',<sup>25</sup> while P. Nepper-Christensen, of Aarhus, has proposed (privately) the Ἐγὼ εἶμι, saying of John 11:25f. ('I am the resurrection and the life') as the logion which Paul recollects. If either guess is correct, we are not far from an authentic *paradosis*, however restricted in its extent, to which common appeal could be made by both Paul and John.

There is little doubt that the theological ebb and historical flow of the Johannine tide (to change the image slightly) will be welcomed in a Fellowship for Biblical Research such as this; and rightly so. But there is, as we all recognize, need for caution before we rush so much to one side of the boat that we overbalance it completely. C. H. Dodd himself is aware of this danger; and in his recent volume on the Fourth Gospel he distinguishes readily between pre-Johannine tradition and the 'individuality' and original literary and theological creativeness of the Fourth Evangelist.<sup>26</sup> He quotes the saying about the mutual knowledge of Jesus and the Father, which appears in John 10:15 and Matthew 11:27 = Luke 10:22, as a classic illustration of this distinction.<sup>27</sup> Even if the line here between 'traditional material' and the 'theological fabric' of John is somewhat too sharply drawn, it cannot be doubted that the three evangelists have 'caught' this saying, which evidently belongs to 'a solid body of common tradition',<sup>28</sup> in different ways. And in the case of the Fourth Evangelist, the expression of the dominical word is consonant, to go no further, with his theological norm.

Stronger words of warning come from F. W. Beare, review-

25. J. A. T. Robinson, *Jesus and his Coming*, SCM Press, London (1957) 25, n. 1.

26. C. H. Dodd, *HTFG* 18, 430.

27. *Ibid.* 359-361.

28. *Ibid.* 360.

ing the Dodd volume, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* in a recent issue of *New Testament Studies*.<sup>29</sup> He reminds us of what we all know, that there is a Johannine 'theology' as such. No-one doubts for a moment, indeed, that the Fourth Evangelist was aware of the theological implications of the tradition—I would wish to say, the *apostolic* tradition—which he was shaping. The question is, how much pre-canonical tradition is left in John, or was present to begin with; and how far away from that tradition has the Evangelist's 'shaping' taken us. F. W. Beare, for one, is reluctant to concede more than a scattered historical tradition in the Gospel, which he claims is in any case 'submerged in the Evangelist's own constructions and all but dissolved in his theological expositions'.<sup>30</sup> And his scepticism over the efforts of his colleagues to uncover an 'historical' tradition (the quotation marks are his) behind John drives Beare to reassert that the real interest of this Gospel lies in 'the developed theology of the Evangelist', rather than in 'such occasional fragments of actual *verba Christi* as may be uncovered by patient search'.<sup>31</sup>

The efforts of this academic King Canute to push back the rising tide of Johannine historicism may be regarded as extreme if not fruitless; but they provide as it happens a convenient bridge to the next section of this study. It is less and less tenable in the 1960s to deny the presence of history as well as theology in John. But, as J. M. Robinson has been so fascinatingly forcing us to consider,<sup>32</sup> what is the meaning of 'history'? His suggestion, in the *New Quest* monograph, is that we are no longer to think in terms of nineteenth-century historiography when we come to assess the 'historical' content of the kerygma, or of the kerygmatic Gospels; for throughout the kerygmatic tradition itself and its significance is uppermost in the minds of the Evangelists, and leads to the actual writing of the Gospels. Questing for the historical Jesus in its original form is out; a new quest is now possible, in which the keryg-

29. *NTS* 10 (1964) 517-522.

30. *Ibid.* 521.

31. *Ibid.*

32. J. M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, SCM Press, London (1959).

matic understanding of the existence of Jesus can be tested, to see if it 'corresponds to the understanding of existence implicit in Jesus' history, as encountered through modern historiography'.<sup>33</sup> This sounds dangerously as though Robinson wishes to have it both ways; but his thesis is none the less immensely relevant to our present purposes, particularly when he openly claims that the Gospel of John, more self-consciously and explicitly than the Synoptics, 'speaks of Jesus in terms of the *kerygma*'.<sup>34</sup> It is to the presence of *kerygma* in John, and its possible wider implications, that we must now turn.

### KERYGMA IN JOHN

Let us first be reminded that the basic purpose behind the writing of the Fourth Gospel is, broadly speaking, evangelistic. In the words of B. F. Westcott, the aim is to create in the leaders the double conviction that Jesus is at once the Christ and also the Son of God, and 'in virtue of that conviction to bring life to them'.<sup>35</sup> We have already noticed that the ultimate scope of the evangelism of John is probably as wide as it could be; but whatever the precise range of the audience of the Fourth Gospel, its object manifestly centres in the presentation of the Christian preaching about Jesus of Nazareth, just as John's First Epistle is concerned with the preservation of that preaching.

It is therefore no surprise for us to discover in John all the basic elements belonging to the pattern of apostolic preaching, with which we have been familiar since C. H. Dodd, following Seeberg and M. Dibelius,<sup>36</sup> isolated them for us in his famous book, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1936). That there ever existed one *paradosis* of preaching, to which the writers of the New Testament were in common indebted, and which contained such

33. *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 94.

34. *Ibid.* 54.

35. B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St John*, Murray, London (1898) xl.

36. A. Seeberg, *Der Katechismus der Urchristenheit*, Leipzig (1903); M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, E.Tr., Nicholson & Watson, London (1934).

elements of fixity as to produce the recognizable phenomenon of an 'apostolic kerygma' to which universal appeal could be made, has of course been questioned. C. F. Evans, for example in an article on this subject, finds himself more ready to accept the presence of 'kerygmata' than 'the kerygma' in the speeches of Acts.<sup>37</sup> Again, D. E. H. Whiteley, in his recent book *The Theology of St Paul*, speaks of the kerygma as an 'activity' of proclamation which gathered to itself a continually expanding but not unalterable content.<sup>38</sup> And in the course of his second thoughts on the matter, J. P. M. Sweet has this year been drawing attention to the points at which Dodd's initial thesis is in fact open to question: the actual content of the supposed kerygmatic pattern, the methodology of its definition, and the understanding of kerygma as 'content' rather than 'activity'.<sup>39</sup>

It is very probable that we should think of the tradition of apostolic preaching behind the New Testament in terms of discernible patterns, rather than rigid structurings. C. F. D. Moule's work on the 'circumstantial' aspects of so much New Testament doctrine is a timely reminder that in any case these writers did not work from predetermined theological blueprints.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, as D. E. H. Whiteley points out it is very difficult to deny the presence in the New Testament of what he terms a kerygmatic 'hard core': the fulfilment of prophecy, the coming of the Messiah, and the crucifixion and resurrection.<sup>41</sup> And it so happens that those four kerygmatic strands, and indeed all six belonging to Dodd's scheme, appear in John.

The central point of the apostolic preaching in the New

37. C. F. Evans, 'The Kerygma', *JTS* ns.7 (1956) 25-41. See also my article, 'The Christology of Acts', *ExpT* 73 (1962) 358f.

38. D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St Paul*, Blackwell, Oxford (1964) 10.

39. J. P. M. Sweet, 'Second Thoughts: VIII. The Kerygma', *ExpT* 76 (1965) 143-147.

40. C. F. D. Moule, 'The Influence of Circumstances on the Use of Christological Terms', *JTS* ns. i o (1959) 247-263; and 'The Influence of Circumstances on the Use of Eschatological Terms', *JTS* ns. 15 (1964) 1-15. See also my article, 'The Delay of the Parousia', *JBL* 83 (1964) 41-54.

41. D. E. H. Whiteley, *op. cit.* 9f.

Testament, as represented by the speeches in Acts,<sup>42</sup> is the redemptive activity of God in Christ. God has spoken decisively in and through Jesus the Christ (Acts 10:36); the death of His Son took place with God's foreknowledge (2:23); and God raised Him from the dead (3:15). The unifying theme of the apostolic account of the *Heilsgeschichte*, therefore, is God's final, covenant visitation of the nations in the person of His Son.<sup>43</sup>

It can scarcely be too fanciful to propose that we have in the Fourth Gospel an expansion of precisely this basic kerygmatic motif. The argument of the Prologue makes it abundantly clear that in the Logos made flesh we are face to face with God's visitation *par excellence* (1:14). It is now possible to point to Jesus and say, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!' (1:29, 36); 'this is the Son of God' (1:34); He is a teacher 'come from God' (3:2). And not surprisingly this is equally the witness of Jesus about Himself. He is continuing the work of God in time and space (5:17); He has Come from God and is going to God (13:3); he who has seen Jesus has seen the Father (14:9). The dominant category of 'witness' (Father to Son and Son to Father) emphasizes the central position in John of this idea.

Even more significant in this respect is the clue provided by the Lucan formulation of the notion of visitation, when Zechariah sees the birth of his son John as part of God's plan to 'visit and redeem' Israel (Lk. 1:68).<sup>44</sup> The Fourth Evangelist does not use the verb ἐπισκέπτομαι at all; but the thought of the visitation of Israel is nevertheless strongly present in his Gospel. God has visited His people in terms that are inescapably historical; although, as the Fourth Gospel goes on to show, Israel has not understood or accepted the visitation: 'his own people received him not' (1:11; *cf.* Acts 13:26f.). The climactic moment of Jewish opposition-rejection

42. For a recent reappraisal of the original character of these speeches, with reference to Thucydidean literary method, see T. F. Glasson, 'The Speeches in Acts and Thucydides', *ExpT* 76 (1965) 165.

43. *Cf.* Acts 15:14.

44. *Cf.* Ex. 4:31, where the LXX uses the same verb; *cf.* also Lk. 7:16. The common ground between John and Luke is, again, not without significance in this discussion; *cf.* C. F. D. Moule, 'The Individualism of the Fourth Gospel' *Novum Testamentum* 5 (1962) 174f.

occurs when the self-disclosure of the identity of Jesus reached its climax, and He uses the divine title absolutely: 'before Abraham was, I am' (12:58f.). 'I am', not unimportantly, is a title associated in the Old Testament with a period when through Moses, God 'visited' His people Israel (Ex. 3:14f; 4:31). This pattern of constant rejection in the face of visitation provides the evangelistic thrust of John's Gospel with its peculiar force, since the writer is agonizing throughout for the faith rather than the faithlessness of (in part, at least) Jewry.<sup>45</sup>

It is just here that the obvious connections between the Fourth Gospel and the epistles of Ignatius are illuminating. The 'urgent insistence' on 'flesh', both his and Christ's, that is characteristic of Ignatius,<sup>46</sup> indicate a truly Johannine pre-occupation with what E. C. Hoskyns calls 'the Christian answer to the problem of history'.<sup>47</sup> Both John and Ignatius are clear that the basis of Christian spiritual experience is to be located in the historical person and work of Jesus. For them both, the glory of the Word made flesh is completely historical and completely beyond history; flesh is now seen to be the possible carrier of spirit. Ignatius speaks of the 'union (ἔνωσις) of the flesh and of the spirit which are Jesus Christ's' (*Magnesians* I), as his desire for the churches. For John, the σάρξ of Christ, closely associated with and interpreted by the imagery of ἄρτος, becomes in answer to faith the means of receiving ζωὴ αἰώνιος (6:48-58). Ignatius was seeking, in the light of the End, to restate the apostolic testimony to the incarnate Christ, which he regarded as preserved if in obscurity, by the bishops and presbyters; and so to recall the church to its true life and mission (*Ephesians* 11, *al.*). The content of the Fourth Gospel differs from that of the Ignatian letters in several obvious respects; but the purpose of John is without doubt similarly kerygmatic. Both writings were called forth by kindred situations, and represent a common intellectual and spiritual climate. And both move from

45. Cf. 4:22 ('salvation is from the Jews'); but notice also the significant appearance of 'Greeks' at 12:20f. and (possibly) 7:35.

46. E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*<sup>2</sup>, ed. F. N. Davey, Faber & Faber, London (1947) 101.

47. *Ibid.* 102.

factual 'apostolic reminiscence' to desirable 'apostolic apprehension' with an authority deriving from the *fons et origo* of their message.<sup>48</sup>

Not only, therefore, is the Fourth Gospel 'kerygmatic' in the general sense of being written under the constraint of an evangelistic appeal; it also contains the features belonging to a pattern of actual 'kerygma', in the sense we have already defined that term. First, prophecy has been fulfilled in the incarnation (Jn. 1:1f., 14, a profound interpretation of Is. 60:19). Second, in the framework of fulfilment appear the humanity and even Davidic descent of Jesus (1:14; 7:42), His death (11:49-52) and resurrection (20:8f.). Third, by the exaltation of Jesus the new and true Israel, of which He is Messianic head, has been established (15:1-6). Fourth, the Holy Spirit given to the church is the sign of Christ's presence and power (7:39; 14:18; 20:21ff.). Fifth, an eschatological consummation, accompanied by the *parousia* of Christ, is anticipated (6:39f., 44; 14:3); and sixth, on the basis of all that has been said, an evangelistic appeal is made (20:31).

It so happens that all six kerygmatic strands which have just been isolated from the fourth Gospel can be paralleled with ease from both Mark and Acts.<sup>49</sup> This need not surprise us. The late N. B. Stonehouse, in his posthumously published volume, *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*,<sup>50</sup> dealing with the subject of the apostolic transmission of the gospel, has described the proclamation of the apostles as essentially an activity of 'witnessing'.<sup>51</sup> In terms of the Lucan Prologue and the slice of pre-Pauline *paradosis* in I Corinthians 15:1-5 (and in 15:15), the apostles may be regarded as passively eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ, and actively witnesses to it. And certainly the primitive preaching recorded in Acts is undertaken by apostles who are persistently referred to as 'witnesses' (Acts 3:15; 5:32; *al.*). In Peter's speech to Cornelius and his

48. *The Fourth Gospel*, 106.

49. Mk. 1:2; 11:10; 14:4; 16:7; 12:1-11; 1:8; 13:26f.; 1:15. Acts 3:18; 13:23; 2:23; 2:24-28; 2:36; 2:16, 33; 3:20; 3:19.

50 N. B. Stonehouse, *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels: Some Basic Questions*, Tyndale Press, London (1964).

51. *Ibid.* 129.

family in Acts 10, the twin poles of this theme of witness emerge very clearly. Peter describes the apostles as witnesses (μάρτυρες) of the life and death of Christ, who appeared after His resurrection to specially chosen witnesses (μάρτυσιν) and commissioned them to testify (διαμαρτύρασθαι) to His judgment.<sup>52</sup>

In Mark and John, then, we have a literary version, however conscious, of the kerygmatic activity reflected and reported in the speeches of Acts. The Evangelists, like the apostles, are witnesses in a double sense; and in the process they transmit and even fix the fundamental notes of the kerygma. Whatever relation the First Epistle of John bears to the Fourth Gospel (and I must confess that I remain unconvinced by attempts to drive a wedge between them), it certainly has in common with the Gospel, intensified to a degree, the category of witness. For apparent doctrinal reasons, the writer of the letter emphatically testifies to the reality of the person (1:1) and work (2:2) of the incarnate Christ, who is the carrier of eternal life (1:2, using μαρτυροῦμεν).

#### JOHN AND PAUL

But the parallels between John and the other New Testament documents in terms of 'kerygmata' do not stop with the Synoptic Gospels and Acts. I have always been impressed with the amount of common theological ground between John and Paul; and without wishing for the renaissance of a cause long forgotten, if not lost, it will not be irrelevant, I hope, to explore this connection in the direction of kerygma and history which we are following.

The extent of Paulinism in John must not be overestimated.<sup>53</sup> In soteriology, ecclesiology and eschatology there are wide differences; and leading terms and categories in Paul, such as δικαιοσύνη and νόμος are either absent from John altogether or used by him differently.<sup>54</sup> But striking agreements nevertheless exist, for which parallels in 1 John can also be found.

52. Acts 10:39, 41 and 42.

53. Cf. R. H. Fuller, *op. cit.* 128-130.

54. Cf. Jn. 1:17 and Eph. 2:15.

There is affinity in the estimate of Christ's person (Jn. 1:1, 14; Phil. 2:6f.), and work of revelation (Jn. 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:4-6) as well as redemption (Jn. 10:10f.; Rom. 3:25f.). There is also close correspondence in the treatment of the relation between Christ and the Father, which is seen to be one of identity in respect of their person (Jn. 10:30; Col. 1:15), love (Jn. 1:18;<sup>55</sup> Col. 1:13), work (Jn. 5:17; Eph. 3:10f.) and teaching (Jn. 7:16; I Cor. 1:24). Again, links between John and Paul can be discovered in their representation of Christ's relationship to the Spirit (Jn. 15:26; Rom. 8:10f.), to the church as the true Israel (Jn. 15:1-6; Rom. 9:6-8<sup>56</sup>) and as one (Jn. 17:1-26; Eph. 2:14-18), and to the Christian.

It is in the last area, the Christ-Christian relationship, that parallels of far-reaching significance especially occur. Most marked of all is the appearance of a doctrine of individualism within the Johannine and Pauline literature, in spite of the evident expression in both of the corporate unity of the *ecclesia*; arid Professors Schweizer and Moule have both been pointing to this aspect of the presentation of Christian experience in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>57</sup> So, for example, it is the individual who is to abide in Christ, the true Vine (Jn. 15:5f.); and it is also the individual who becomes incorporated by baptism into Christ (Rom. 6:3-11. Yet in both cases the corporate dimension to personal commitment is present. The relation between Christ and the Christian also finds corresponding expression in both Paul and John when they speak of salvation (Jn. 3:17f.; Rom. 5:8-11), the status of being 'in Christ'<sup>58</sup> (Jn. 15:4f.;

55. Following the reading ὁ μονογενής υἱός of A W Θ, *al.*

56. Passages of the 'sermon' in Rom. 9-11, dealing with the relation of the Gentiles to 'Israel', are extremely close to the thought of Jn. 12:36b-50, even to the quotation of identical texts from the Old Testament: Jn. 12:38=Rom. 10:16 (Is. 33:1); Jn. 12:40=Rom. 11:8b (Is. 6:10; though *cf.* Is. 29:10).

57. E. Schweizer, 'The Concept of the Church in the Gospel and Epistles of St John' in *New Testament Essays*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins, Manchester University Press (1959) 230-245, esp. 233-237; C. F. D. Moule, 'The Individualism of the Fourth Gospel', *Novum Testamentum* 5 (1962) 171-190.

58. Although John does not use the exact phrase, this idea is present in the Fourth Gospel.

Phil. 3:8f.), baptism, with its concomitants of faith and love (Jn. 3:5; I Cor. 6:10, and the Christian life, with its tension between bondage and freedom, flesh and spirit (Jn. 8:31-47; Gal. 4:21-30.<sup>59</sup>

These links, impressive as they are, do not of course prove or even suggest that John depended directly on Paul. They simply indicate, as C. K. Barrett points out,<sup>60</sup> a common dependence on the primitive Christian tradition. As it happens this conclusion was reached as long ago as 1905 by the conservative W. Sanday, in his book *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*. Unlike his contemporary, B. W. Bacon, who saw the teaching of John simply as 'a more developed Paulinism', out of contact with historical tradition or apostolic witness,<sup>61</sup> Sanday regarded the 'two great Apostolic cycles'—Johannine and Pauline—as standing apart, but connected in what he called the 'main underground'.<sup>62</sup> We have even more reason now to agree with this proposal; and if it is true, it lends added support to the theory that the Fourth Gospel depended on its own, original sources. Again, while the common ground between John and Paul throws by itself no light on the actual identity of the Fourth Evangelist, the theological parallels between the Gospel and the First Epistle which can also be traced in Paul may not be altogether without significance in the discussion about the authorship of the two Johannine documents.

More instructive still for our present purposes are the points of contact between John and Paul that become evident when the kerygmatic patterns in both are examined. Once again a uniform background of tradition is possible. As in Mark, Acts and John, so in Paul, strands of kerygma appear which

59. Cf. 1 Jn. 1:1; 5:20; 4:10; 2:23; 4:9 (using μονογενής; 4:14; 5:20; 4:13; 3:24 and 2:19 (cf. 5:10); 5:11f.; 1:2; 5:20; 5:8; 2:15-17.

60. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, SPCK, London (1955) 45-49; cf. also D. Guthrie, *op. cit.* 294f.

61. B. W. Bacon, *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate*, T. Fisher Unwin, London (1910) 295, 438f. So also E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology*<sup>2</sup>, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh (1908) 46-53.

62. W. Sanday, *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1905) 231f.

gather around the six themes already suggested.<sup>63</sup> Prophecy has been fulfilled in the gospel (Rom. 1:2), notably in and through the life (Rom. 1:3), death (1 Cor. 15:3) and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:4) of Jesus Christ. Through Him also the true Israel has been established (Gal. 6:16) and the Holy Spirit given to the church (Eph. 2:21). At present Christ's *parousia* is anticipated (I Thes. 4:15-17), and in the interim an appeal is issued to respond to the preaching about Him (Acts 13:38-41).

The Jerusalem kerygma, it has often been noticed, contains references to the life and ministry of Jesus (although not in superabundance<sup>64</sup>) which appear to be absent from the kerygma of Paul.<sup>65</sup> Such historical data, as C. H. Dodd maintains, may in fact have featured in the Pauline preaching, if the speech at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41) is any guide;<sup>66</sup> while their lack of prominence in the Pauline corpus of letters is possibly accounted for both by Paul's subject-matter and his concern for the theology, and not merely the factuality, of the incarnation.

Whether or not this is so, in the Fourth Gospel the 'historical' section of the kerygma is present and elaborated. We are unable to escape an almost brutal emphasis on the reality of Christ's humanity, and on the sober history of what He was doing (Jn. 1:14; 6:56; 11:54, *al.*). For John, as we know, time and eternity cohere; but the theatre of this coherence, which the Fourth Evangelist as much as any New Testament writer treats with desperate seriousness, is unavoidably historical. Perhaps Eusebius was not so wide of the mark after all when in his curious treatment of the relation between the

63. The connections between Mark and Paul are pursued by J. C. Fenton, the article, 'Paul and Mark', in *Studies in the Gospels*, ed. D. E. Nineham, Blackwell, Oxford (1955) 89-112.

64. Unless we follow C. H. Dodd, 'The Framework of the Gospel Narrative', in *New Testament Studies*, Manchester University Press (1952) 1-11, when he detects an interest in the chronology of the ministry of Jesus underlying the second Gospel, and assumes that this can be traced to a kerygmatic source. For a critique of this suggestion, however, see J. M. Robinson, *op. cit.* 56-58.

65. *Cf.* Acts 2:22; 10:36-39, *al.*

66. C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*<sup>2</sup>, Hodder & Stoughton, London (1944) 28-31.

four Gospels, he concluded that one of John's objects in writing was to present his readers with a fully rounded account of the ministry of Jesus; to give us *inter alia* 'the things which Christ did before the Baptist was cast into prison'.<sup>67</sup>

What conclusions are suggested by the evidence we have collated? First, any lines which may be drawn between John and Paul, or between John and the Synoptics it may be added, are lateral and not vertical in direction. Probably underlying them all is a stratum of apostolic testimony, however shaped, concerning the activity of God in Christ. The presence in the Fourth Gospel of original, traditional material is made doubly probable, incidentally, if the thesis of J. A. T. Robinson about the relation of the Prologue to the remainder of the Gospel is correct. Robinson's proposal, which appears in a recent collection of studies on *The Authorship and Integrity of the New Testament* (1965),<sup>68</sup> is that the Johannine writings were composed in the order: the body of the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Epilogue and Prologue of the Gospel.<sup>69</sup> He goes on to suggest that the Gospel originally began with the verses in the Prologue and first chapter which concern John the Baptist (1:6-9, 15, 19ff.), and that a 'second layer' of poetic meditation and theological commentary upon this was added later.<sup>70</sup> If so, two possible conclusions follow. One is that the Logos theology of the Prologue properly belongs to the environment of the Fourth Gospel rather than to its background. The other is that the history of the Gospel 'has its own primacy'.<sup>71</sup> On this showing, John is no less theological; but now the Prologue is seen to be reaffirming the truth that for the Fourth Evangelist history as the *locus* of revelation is decisive.<sup>72</sup> If this position

67. Eusebius, *HE*, 111.24.12. Eusebius places John chronologically in 'the fourth place' (24.2).

68. J. A. T. Robinson, 'The Relation of the Prologue to the Gospel of St John', in *The Authorship and Integrity of the New Testament*, SPCK Theological Collections 4, London (1965) 61-72. The thesis, in its main outline, is not original. It was advanced, for example, by W. Sanday, *op. cit.*, 211f.

69. *Ibid.* 67.

70. *Ibid.* 70.

71. *Ibid.* 72.

72. *Ibid.*

contains any truth at all, it will bear significantly on our present discussion. In terms of tradition, words like 'secondary' and 'contrived', once again, cannot be applied to the Fourth Gospel with intelligent facility. Like Paul, John not improbably was indebted to the witness of those who were 'in Christ' before him.

Equally, the 'lateral lines' between John and other New Testament documents keep in existence the likelihood that an apostolic hand was at some point connected with the traditional material which the Fourth Gospel transmits. If these lines are also projected towards the First Epistle of John, which as we have seen evinces among other things the same kind of concern for kerygma as the Gospel, they possibly suggest a similar indebtedness to an apostolic groundwork on the part of the writer of the epistle.<sup>73</sup> Can we go further, and be unfashionable enough to suggest that both Gospel and Epistle reveal their apostolic connection because they originate from a Johannine 'school', formal or otherwise? And in this case, was there any connection between the 'schools' of John and Paul, perhaps through Ephesus? Again, following the clue of Paul's encounter at Ephesus with 'disciples of John' (Acts 19:1-7; cf. 18:24-28), can the Baptist provide us with another lateral line between the Johannine and Pauline traditions in the same locality?<sup>74</sup> These are tantalizing questions, which at the moment must remain such.

### KEYGMA AND HISTORY

In this concluding section we must attempt to focus more sharply the meaning of the terms 'kerygma' and 'history' as these are to be used and understood with reference to the Fourth Gospel, in view of the new light which has been thrown on Johannine problems. 'Kerygma', as J. Sweet reminds us, 'is a slippery term.'<sup>75</sup> It can mean both the activity of preaching

73. For a careful defence of the apostolic authorship of I John, see J. R. W. Stott, *The Epistles of John*, TNTC (1964), Introduction 13-41.

74. But cf. J. A. T. Robinson, 'Elijah, John and Jesus', in *Twelve New Testament Studies*, SCM Press, London (1962) 49.

75. J. P. M. Sweet, *loc. cit.* 147.

(the school of Bultmann) and its content (the school of Dodd). It can suggest a body of confessional material in general, or the doctrinal framework of one moment of proclamation in particular. If we agree that kerygma in some sense lies behind the making of the Fourth Gospel, or (with J. M. Robinson<sup>76</sup>) that John actually speaks of Jesus in terms of the kerygma what is implied? How is the ground between kerygma and what Luke (1:1) calls διήγησις covered, and where does the journey begin?<sup>77</sup> We have claimed no more than 'patterns' of kerygma for the background to the composition of the New Testament. With the obvious exception of the composition of the speeches in Acts, it is unlikely that any New Testament writer consciously attempted to reproduce in his work a fixed kerygmatic structure.<sup>78</sup> This is apparent at once, for example, from the fact that the strands of kerygma which we extracted from Paul a moment ago had to be culled from widely separated parts of the Pauline corpus. The most we can say is that an indebtedness to primitive tradition inevitably produced in the New Testament documents (notably those we are considering) parallels which are linked by their association with the apostolic preaching.

But this does not alter the fact that in the Fourth Gospel, precisely because of its evangelistic *raison d'être*, the patterns of kerygma seem to be very plain. What meaning, however, are we to give to the term 'kerygma', as we are using it here? J. M. Robinson, as we know, distinguishes between kerygma as 'historical precedent' and 'eschatological event'.<sup>79</sup> For him the quest of the historical Jesus in the former sense is manifestly pointless, since the kerygma itself in any shape reveals no interest in the details of Jesus's biography. Attempts to find these on the part of Dodd, like the suggestion earlier in this lecture that the Fourth Evangelist may have been concerned to contribute such details to the general kerygmatic *schema* which John's Gospel betrays, on this showing stand condemned.

76. J. M. Robinson, *op. cit.* 54.

77. See *ibid.* 54, n.1.

78. Unless we accept C. H. Dodd's theory about the Marcan *Sammelberichte*; see note 64.

79. J. M. Robinson, *op. cit.* 48f.

In Robinson's view we are to recognize that a theological, and not a 'positivistic', approach to history 'actually characterized primitive Christianity'.<sup>80</sup> We can no longer avoid, as a result, the task of clarifying the meaning of history in this context.

Just how much history can the historical tradition of the Fourth Gospel, if we allow that such a tradition exists, be said to contain? The view of history represented by the school of Rudolf Bultmann, with its easy distinction between *Historie* and *Geschichte*, makes it possible to consider the 'events' surrounding the person of Jesus theologically, and in detachment from chronology. This means that connection between the historical Jesus and the kerygma about Him is established 'at the level of meaning if not of terminology'.<sup>81</sup> Gunther Bornkamm, for example, in his *Jesus of Nazareth*, claims that the evangelists did not transmit in their Gospels verifiable facts about Jesus, but instead illuminated the distinctive character of His person and work. In this sense, but only in this sense, the primitive tradition about Jesus can be described as 'brim full of history'.<sup>82</sup> Bultmann himself sees John's task not as the handing down of an historical tradition about Jesus, but as the presentation of the eschatological occurrence centred in the Christ-event in such a way that it impinges existentially upon the believer.<sup>83</sup>

No one, of course, denies the presence in the Fourth Gospel of *Geschichte*. Bultman as it happens does not allow to John the perspective of covenant *Heilsgeschichte* in terms of Israel as such,<sup>84</sup> but Oscar Cullmann's recent *New Testament Studies* article, for example, 'L'Evangile Johannique et L'Histoire du Salut',<sup>85</sup> points out the way in which in the Fourth Gospel the incarnate life of Jesus throws light backwards and forwards on the whole history of salvation in such a way as to reformulate

80. *Ibid.* 49.

81. J. P. M. Sweet, *loc. cit.* 146.

82. G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, ET, Hodder & Stoughton, London (1960) 26.

83. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament II*, ET, SCM Press, London (1955), 69.

84 *Ibid.* 8f.

85. O. Cullmann, 'L'Evangile Johannique et L'Histoire du Salut', *NTS* 11 (1965) 111-122.

the Old Testament pattern of creation followed by the history of Israel.<sup>86</sup> And the essay by N. A. Dahl on 'The Johannine Church and History', in the Otto Piper *Festschrift*, while denying that John is strictly either an historian of the past or a theologian of *Heilsgeschichte*, appeals to the christocentric and forensic view of history contained in the Fourth Gospel, by which the significance of the Christ to whom witness is borne may be understood and appropriated.<sup>87</sup>

But the question remains; to what extent (if at all) do *Historie* and *Geschichte* in the Fourth Gospel part company? In this connection the Fourth Evangelist's use of the Old Testament is relevant. Bishop Stephen Neill has recently restated his belief that the central clue to the understanding of John's Gospel is to be found in the writer's use of the Old Testament.<sup>88</sup> This is perhaps an overstatement; but it is clear that Old Testament quotation is a feature of this Gospel of considerable importance. C. K. Barrett opened up a productive line of John's investigation in this respect in his article 'The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel'.<sup>89</sup> Barrett's main contention is that John's comprehensive knowledge of the Old Testament enabled him to use its testimony material in a characteristically complex and significant manner. *Testimonia* emerge in the Fourth Gospel, directly and through the Synoptics,<sup>90</sup> not as verbal parallels, but in the form of themes based on the Old Testament and as part of the theological texture of the whole work (*cf.* 1:29; 10:1-16, *al.*). In this way John offers us a summation of the Old Testament, which demonstrates the essential more than the historical relation existing between the Old Testament and Christ.

In his recent volume on the Fourth Gospel, C. H. Dodd has also given his attention to John's use of the Old Testament, but

86. *Ibid.* 120.

87. N. A. Dahl, 'The Johannine Church and History', in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, ed. W. Klassen and G. F. Snyder, SCM Press, London (1962) 124-142.

88. S. C. Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961*, Oxford University Press, London (1964) 320.

89. C. K. Barrett, 'The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel', *JTS* 48 (1947) 155-169.

90. Barrett assumes at least the dependence of John on Mark and L.

to rather different effect. His suggestion, with particular reference to the passion narrative, is that the 'theological canon' which controlled the Fourth Evangelist's selection of testimony material depended on the testimonies themselves, and not the reverse. The 'facts' in the tradition dictated the choice of Old Testament *testimonia*, and John's selection provides the same key to the interpretation of the suffering and death of Christ as that which is evident from the Synoptic Gospels, and which is certainly primitive. 'There is embedded in the Passion narrative of the Fourth Gospel an understanding of the Passion in terms of the Righteous Sufferer of the Psalms, the Suffering Servant of deutero-Isaiah, and the martyred leader of Zechariah, which we have every reason to believe primitive, and which John may fairly be supposed to owe to pre-canonical tradition.'<sup>91</sup> In other words, where John's passion narrative includes testimonies drawn from parts of the Old Testament in which the early church as a whole was particularly interested from the standpoint of unfulfilled prophecy, it is probable that we are in contact with 'the common tradition of the Church' rather than with a distinctively Johannine 'theological construction'.<sup>92</sup>

If this conclusion about John's understanding and use of the Old Testament is correct, it will relate significantly to the character of his sources, as well as, possibly, to the composition of his audience. The supposition that the world of thought in which the Johannine tradition took shape was Hebraic and even Palestinian as much as Greek, which has been mentioned already, now gains strength in one further direction. This is not to diminish the implications of what (in Barrett's view, at least) John was doing with the Old Testament. But if the Old Testament formed one starting-point within the Fourth Evangelist's circle of thought for the formulation of his estimate of the person of Christ, and belonged, as Dodd suggests, to the pre-canonical tradition he probably used, we are not com-

91. C. H. Dodd, *HTFG* 47.

92. *Ibid.* 49. See the whole section on testimonies in the Johannine passion narrative, *ibid.* 31-49. See also B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, SCM Press, London (1961) 265-272.

pelled to conclude either that John ignored the seriousness with which what may be termed factual, chronological history was taken by the Old Testament writers themselves, or that he deliberately strayed so far from history in a theological direction that he lost contact with it altogether.

Another piece of related evidence can be said to support this view. When John draws on the thought and even text of the Old Testament, he often uses the Septuagint version. But occasionally (as at 12:40, quoting Is. 6:10 and 19:37) the Hebrew seems to have been followed; in which case either John preferred the Hebrew or, possibly, the use of Hebrew at that point actually belonged to his sources.<sup>93</sup> If so, the primitive anchorage of John's tradition appears to be even firmer.<sup>94</sup>

Is it being intolerably conservative and unfashionably unphilosophical to insist that, whether we like it or not, at least a *residuum* of sober history belongs to the sphere of activity in which the incarnation took place; that the Gospel writers (to go no further) worked within a theological circle which recognized and accepted that historical environment, and allowed it to be the carrier of their tradition and testimony about Jesus of Nazareth? It seems we cannot have it both ways. Either these things took place in time and space, or they did not. F. W. Beare, in the review already cited,<sup>95</sup> speaks with amazing composure of the things which were not done by the 'Jesus history', in spite of John's witness to them. He did not, for example, talk to a ruler of the Jews about regeneration, was not arrested by a cohort of Roman troops, and above all 'did not address his hearers in the structured dialogue and monologue of the Fourth Gospel'.<sup>96</sup> Apart from the obvious ques-

93. Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, SPCK, London (1955) 22-24, and *ad loc.* 359f., 464.

94. The argument that the characteristic use of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel derives from sources independent of those underlying John, because it is typical of the Gospel but not the Epistle, is inconclusive. The length as well as the occasion of I John alone could account for the variation.

95. F. W. Beare, *loc. cit.* 521.

96. *Ibid.* Admittedly, the issues involved in the Johannine account of

tion, how we know He did not, there is the more serious likelihood that on this view the 'patently unhistorical aspects' of the Johannine picture of Jesus, as Beare calls them,<sup>97</sup> will in time take over. Then all history ends, and we are left with the impossible situation, in biblical terms at least, of meaning detached from the reality which makes it possible. Even Bultmann speaks of Jesus as a 'definite historical man' in the first place;<sup>98</sup> while J. M. Robinson's position is that 'Jesus' understanding of his existence . . . is a possible subject of historical research'.<sup>99</sup> Surely, then, we have no cause to abandon completely the factually historical content of the theological circle which surrounded and shaped the early Christian *paradosis*. And knowing him as we do, it is probable that the Fourth Evangelist would be alarmed if we did.

We are at this moment in history, therefore, in a better position than ever to focus the meaning of the Clementine phrase which described John as πνευματικὸν εὐαγγέλιον,<sup>100</sup> and to redress the imbalance in the critical assessment of this Gospel between theology and history. With the Bishop of Woolwich, in the latest version of the 'new look' position, we may ask what is essentially, for this period of New Testament scholarship, a new question, whether John is among the synoptists.<sup>101</sup> The answer to that question is two-fold. The Johannine tradition, as Robinson says, is not merely a parallel source of material; none the less, its derivation is sufficiently pre-canonical to warrant its consideration alongside the tradition underlying the Synoptic Gospels, and not in isolation from it. We are to be open-minded now about the presence of history in all four Gospels, and to recognize that the quiddity of John's achievement was 'to draw out the full implications

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the arrest and trial of Jesus are complex. See, for example, G. D.

Kilpatrick, *The Trial of Jesus*, Oxford University Press, London (1953).

97. F. W. Beare, *loc. cit.* 522.

98. R. Bultmann, *op. cit.* 69.

99. J. M. Robinson, *op. cit.* 72.

100. Clement of Alexandria, *apud* Eusebius, *HE* VI.I4-7•

101. J. A. T. Robinson, 'The Place of the Fourth Gospel', in *The Roads Converge*, ed. P. Gardner-Smith, Edward Arnold, London (1963) 73.

of the common tradition'.<sup>102</sup> The christology and eschatology of the Fourth Gospel, for example, may differ in depth from the Synoptics; but in kind and in content there is basic unity rather than glaring contradiction.<sup>103</sup>

A springtide in the history of Johannine critical study has occurred. It remains to be seen whether this tide will turn once more, and run in a 'theological' direction; or whether, as seems more likely, it will carry us further out into the 'historical' deep. In either case, we must be prepared to receive any new light that may still be shed by the academic Leviathans who take their pastime therein.

102. 'The Place of the Fourth Gospel', in *The Roads Converge*, 73.

103. *Ibid.* 69-73.